

# Carbon Literacy Guide



## Section 1 : A Low Carbon Community Vision

2018

# Contents

■	Introduction	4
■	A low carbon community vision	5
■	A low carbon vision for Home energy	6
■	A low carbon vision for travel	7
■	A low carbon vision for food	8
■	A low carbon vision for waste and resources	9

An aerial photograph of a tropical island, likely in the Pacific or Caribbean, showing lush green vegetation, brown rocky terrain, and turquoise water. The sky is filled with large, white, fluffy clouds. The image is used as a background for the text overlay.

*Climate change is real. It is happening right now, it is the most urgent threat facing our entire species and we need to work collectively together.*

Leonardo Di Caprio in his acceptance speech for Best Actor at the 2016 Oscars

# Introduction

Climate change is an issue many people are aware of, and an ever-increasing number are concerned about. A recent survey showed over half of Scots think climate change is an immediate and urgent problem<sup>1</sup> – even Hollywood stars are talking about it. With this rising awareness, it's vitally important that people understand the problem properly, and even more important that they know what they and others can do about it. It's not necessary to be a climate scientist or a carbon accountant to tackle climate change, but having the motivation to act, plus an awareness of the carbon costs and impacts of everyday activities, is vital for individuals and communities to play their part.

The Scottish Government's Climate Challenge Fund (CCF) is set up to provide grants and support for community-led organisations to tackle climate change by running projects that reduce local carbon emissions. These projects are important because they lead to direct emissions reductions whilst also improving communities and the lives of people who live there. This means they are an excellent opportunity to engage with people on the issue of climate change, making positive connections between climate change and community action.

This guide has been developed for those who are applying for, or running, a CCF project, however, we hope that anyone interested in taking local action on climate change will find it useful and interesting. A key part of the CCF is to build a greater level of climate literacy within communities across Scotland and therefore this resource is not just for those involved with running a CCF project but also for wider use. To help with sharing information, each section ends with a short summary – these can be used directly by groups to help inform communities why they are doing their project.

## What is carbon literacy?

Carbon literacy has three key elements:



Carbon literate people are aware of the causes and impacts of climate change.



Carbon literate people can identify actions and opportunities to reduce carbon emissions.



Carbon literate people are empowered to take action and encourage action in others.

'Keep Scotland Beautiful works with the Carbon Literacy Project to offer people in Scotland to be certified as 'Carbon Literate'.  
<http://www.carbonliteracy.com>

<sup>1</sup><http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/09/6853/12>

# A low carbon community vision

Through a series of four workshops in 2016, representatives of community-led organisations running CCF projects produced a vision of what their communities would be like in a low-carbon future. Each of the workshops focussed on a different aspect of our lives – home energy (how we light and heat our homes and community buildings), food (how we feed our families), travel (how we make journeys) and waste and resources (how we get and dispose of the stuff we need).

Each of these ‘visions’ of the future represent a snapshot of what life could be like. Working towards a better future is why communities are taking action on climate change, so we think it’s important to have these positive images in mind when considering the science of climate change and the practicalities of taking action.

It may be that your vision of the future is different that these presented here. Why not run a ‘visioning exercise’ in your community to develop your own unique picture of what you’re working towards? You may find the four themes we’ve used helpful to organise ideas.

**Ask people individually, or in small groups, to imagine their community in a low-carbon future and consider:**

- Where will get our energy from and heat our homes? How will we use energy in the home, and what for?
- What will our diets be like and where will we get our food from? What will meal times be like?
- What journeys will we be taking and how will we make them? What will our streets look like?
- What ‘stuff’ will we have in our lives and how will we get it? What will we do with things we no longer need?

You could ask people to write down their ideas, talk about them, or perhaps even draw them. You could ask people to imagine taking a walk round their community and ask them what they see, or to imagine a day in their life and what it will be like. Encouraging people to go through this process of engaging with the future they’d like to see is a really important first step in the journey to creating low carbon communities.

Climate Conversations’ is Scottish Government initiative designed to encourage a discussion around climate change. This would be a great way to introduce the topic and get people thinking prior to running a visioning exercise

Climate Conversations How to Guide:  
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00506055.pdf>

There are lots of online guides to running ‘visioning exercises’. The Transition Network have two options here:

<https://transitionnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Visioning-a-post-Transition-future.pdf>

The Scottish Government outlined their vision for a low carbon Scotland in their Climate Change Plan in 2018 (page 22):

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0053/00532096.pdf>





## Low carbon vision for home energy



- Access to local, community owned renewable energy brings benefits to the local economy.
- Low carbon heating systems provide the majority of heat for homes and community buildings.
- Well insulated homes are warmer, improving people's health and well being.
- More economical and comfortable community buildings.
- Well maintained buildings improve the appearance of the built environment.
- Lower energy bills mean people can spend more of their money in the local economy.
- Well-paid and skilled jobs in the low carbon economy – in energy efficiency and renewable heat and electricity industry.
- The electricity we use at home comes from zero-carbon technologies, such as wind, solar and hydro power.



## Low carbon vision for travel



- Improved public transport means everyday journeys by bus or train are convenient and affordable.
- Traveling is more affordable for all – lift sharing, active travel, public transport and electric cars all cost travellers less.



- Fewer vehicles on the road mean safer streets for our children.
- Improved air quality in our cities and near major roads.
- Cycling is normal – there are more bikes than cars in cities and they have priority.



- Health and the environment are more of a priority over convenience and time.
- There's less need to travel – more of what we need can be found locally.



- Improved cycle infrastructure makes cycling safe and convenient.
- Healthier, more active people.



## Low carbon vision for food



- People have more time to grow and prepare food and to enjoy it with families and friends.



- We know what our food is and where it comes from
- We have healthy seasonal diets.



- Farms and food producers are able to run a sustainable and profitable business and farming is a valued career opportunity.

- There's a culture of growing your own and everyone has space to grow something.

- Food waste by producers, retailers and consumers is minimal.

- We value our food more and waste less of it.

- Consumers understand about the carbon footprint of food and make informed choices.





## Low carbon vision for waste and resources



- We buy services rather than products, reducing resource use and increasing productivity.
- Passing on repair skills brings communities together.
- Everything has a use – nothing is sent to landfill.
- A strong market in reusing, repairing and refurbishing means we can get what we need at affordable prices.
- Products are valued more, and are built to last.
- Sharing of resources is common – owning consumer goods is less important.
- Shops selling good quality, value for money second hand goods are popular.
- Producers are responsible for disposal, encouraging a circular economy and products that are easily repaired.
- Well-paid, skilled jobs in refurbishing and repairing products.

Now you know what you're working towards, the rest of this guide will first explore the problem. Section 2 looks at what is climate change, section three examines the steps we can all take to get us there and section 4 details what a community-led project might look like.



We support the Sustainable Development Goals.

Keep Scotland Beautiful is the charity that works with organisations and communities to help people to reduce carbon emissions, improve local areas and adapt to the impacts of climate change. It's part of our work to make Scotland clean, green and sustainable.



Your charity for Scotland's environment

T: 01786 471333 E: [ccf@keepscotlandbeautiful.org](mailto:ccf@keepscotlandbeautiful.org)

 [facebook.com/ClimateChallengeFund](https://www.facebook.com/ClimateChallengeFund)  [@CCFScot](https://twitter.com/CCFScot)

[www.keepscotlandbeautiful.org/ccf](http://www.keepscotlandbeautiful.org/ccf)

