



Delivering a Just Transition for Moray

Briefing on a strategic package of transformational projects for Moray



BE-ST

Background

Unlocking opportunities for a Just Transition in Moray

Moray stands at a pivotal moment. The region faces significant economic, environmental and demographic challenges, but also extraordinary opportunities. Offshore renewables, nature restoration, community energy, low-carbon housing, and green enterprise investment draw on the region's strengths and can secure long-term benefits for local people - but only if the right investment is made available, and soon.

To date, Moray has received **less than 4% of Just Transition Fund allocations***

Based on an indicative 40/40/20 split between the Fund's three local authority areas, Moray could expect to receive **around £81 million**.

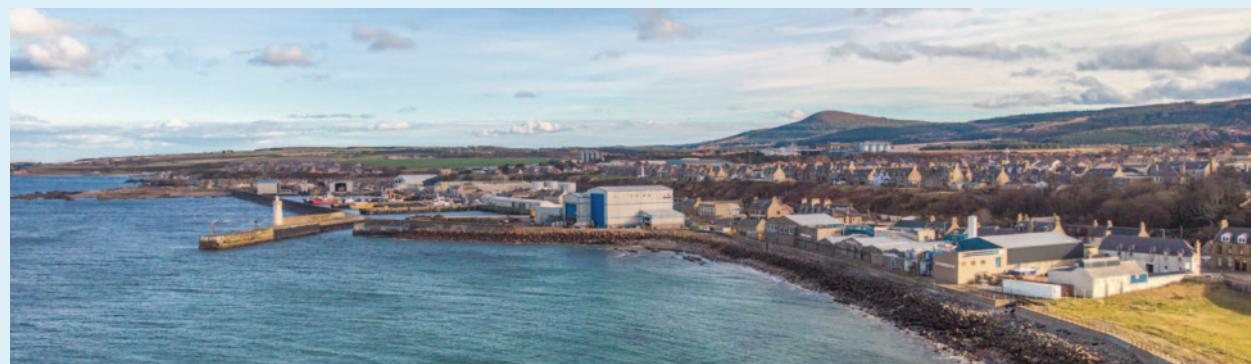
The projects in this prospectus represent a compelling, strategic and deliverable route to achieve that aspiration.

The current Just Transition Fund is limited to capital funding, which restricts the development of strategic, multi-year projects. Revenue funding is essential to initiate activity, support project development and meaningfully engage people and communities.

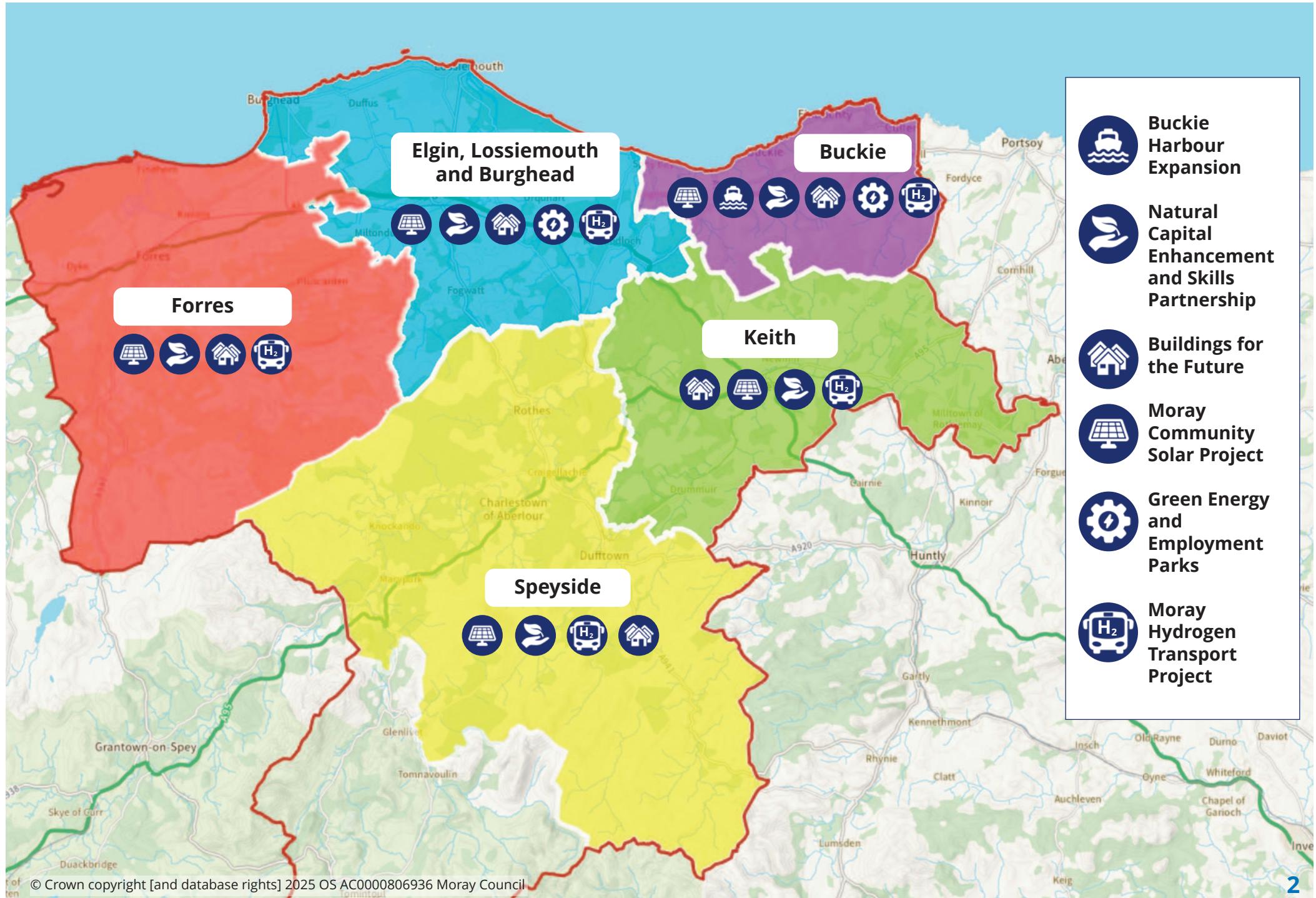
This prospectus sets out a coherent multi-year package of six investable projects shaped in partnership with community and industry partners. This work builds on projects and development activities commissioned through Just Transition Fund support. Lessons learned from previous projects, along with feedback from earlier unsuccessful community bids, have been used to strengthen proposals and shape a package that delivers on local, regional and national priorities.

Together, the six projects form a coherent package that builds on Moray's unique assets, supports SME-led net zero innovation, demonstrates replicable rural decarbonisation models, embeds community co-design, and strengthens employment, youth retention and skills pathways. This coordinated approach will ensure tangible benefits for all parts of Moray.

The projects remain under development with partners, and it is our expectation based on earlier engagement that the Scottish Government will consider a coordinated bid to enable a more strategic approach to delivering a Just Transition in Moray during the next funding round in 2026/27.



* Approximately £3m of the £87.5m spend to date.





Buckie Harbour Expansion

Lead:
Moray Council

Funding ask:
£15m
(revenue)



Strategic purpose

To position Buckie as a major operations and maintenance hub for offshore wind and Scotland's growing low-carbon maritime industries alongside wider opportunities for development such as those building on the harbour's seafaring heritage, emerging commercial markets and tourism.

Why it matters

- Nearest operational harbour to Moray Firth offshore wind generating 3.8GW over 50 years
- Current facilities cannot accommodate required future vessel types
- Essential to unlocking major private and public investment for construction phase
- Supports regional supply chain growth and new jobs and skills

What funding will deliver

- Outline and Full Business Cases (2026-2029)
- Environmental impact assessments
- Planning and marine licensing
- Crown Estate Scotland consents
- Detailed engineering design
- Construction-ready approvals

Outcomes

- Infrastructure-ready harbour for offshore renewables
- 250-350 new direct jobs and port-related industry
- Increased inward investment

Details of the Buckie Harbour Masterplan are available here:

<https://tinyurl.com/mvy3hd4j>

Natural Capital Investment and Skills Partnership

Lead:
Moray's three catchment organisations – Findhorn, Nairn and Lossie Rivers Trust, Spey Catchment Initiative, and Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust

Funding ask:
£6.6m
(£4.8m revenue,
£1.8m capital)

Strategic purpose

To deliver region-wide habitat restoration, nature-based solutions and community engagement that strengthens climate resilience, land management and access to the outdoors for recreation and tourism.

Why it matters

- Responds to recent drought impacts on distilleries, agriculture and communities
- Action to address wildfire and water scarcity risks
- Tackles deer pressures that inhibit woodland and peatland regeneration
- Builds on previous JTF investments and is supported by HIE as a regional transformational opportunity

What funding will deliver

- Woodland, peatland and coastal habitat restoration
- Natural flood management
- New and improved outdoor access infrastructure
- Integrated deer management
- Skills, training and community engagement

Outcomes

- Stronger ecological resilience across Moray
- Support for agriculture, whisky, tourism and rural communities
- Carbon sequestration and biodiversity gains
- Landowner and community-led transition in practice



Buildings for the Future

Lead:
Moray Council

Funding ask:
£32m
(£31.5m capital,
£0.5m revenue)



Strategic purpose

To accelerate the delivery of affordable, low-carbon homes and buildings in Moray by transforming long-stalled brownfield and derelict sites, upgrading poor performing properties, strengthening local construction capacity and using more locally grown timber.

Why it matters

- Tackles some of Scotland's worst performing homes and buildings
- Advances Moray's Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES)
- Reduces fuel poverty and carbon emissions
- Revitalised brownfield and derelict town centre sites

What funding will deliver

- Net zero homes and buildings using modern construction methods
- Retrofit and redevelopment of vacant, derelict and inefficient properties
- Support for local SME supply chain and increased use of Moray-grown timber
- Skills and employment pathways with UHI Moray and BE-ST

Outcomes

- Lower household energy bills
- High quality green construction jobs
- Stronger local supply chains
- Regenerated, vibrant town centres

Moray Community Solar

Lead:
Community Energy Moray with Zero Carbon Moray and Energy4All

Funding ask:
£600k
(£300k capital,
£300k revenue)

Strategic purpose

To create the first of Moray's large-scale, community owned renewable energy projects, and to deliver a national demonstration of innovative virtual microgrid technology.

Why it matters

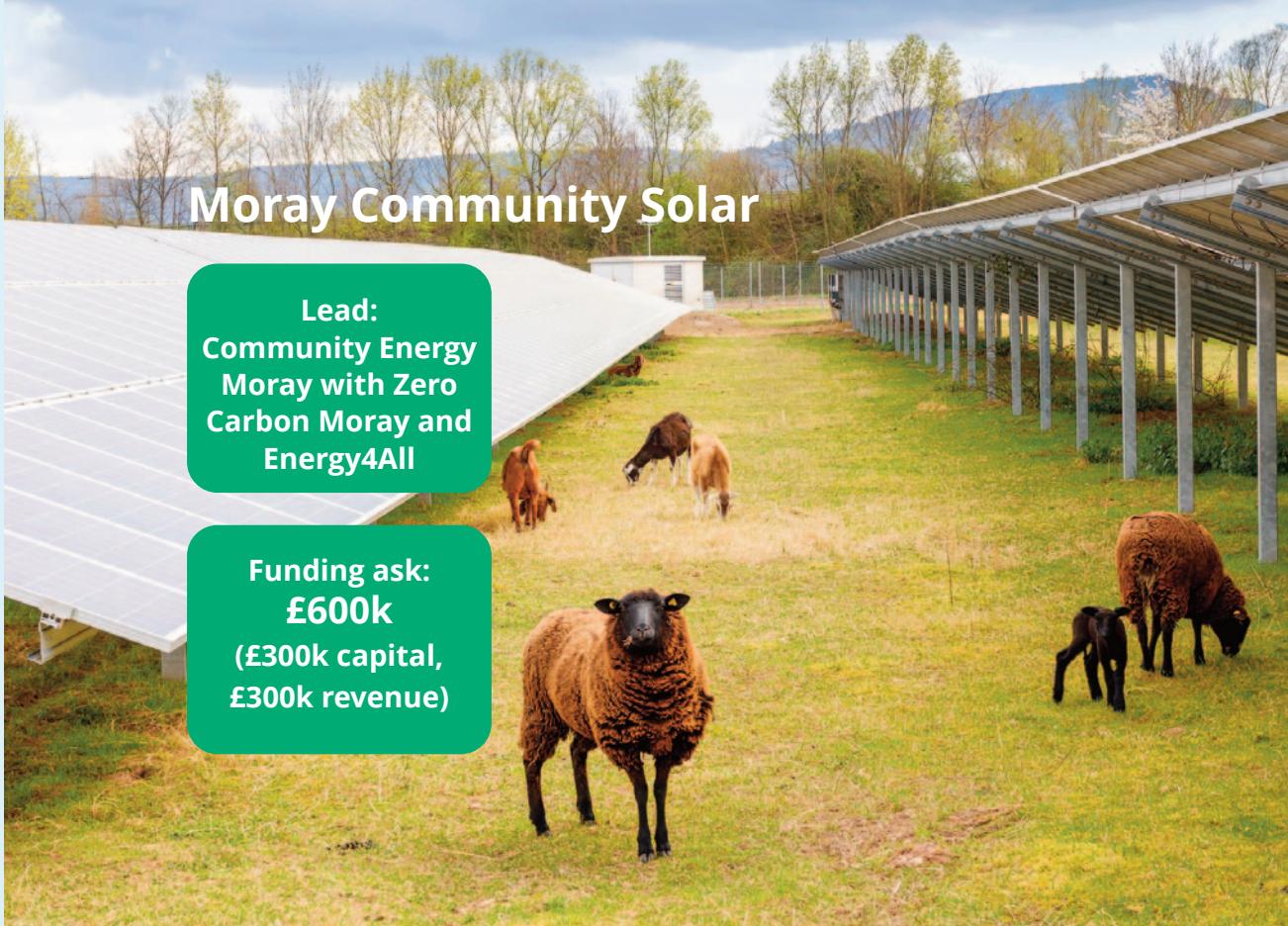
- Helps 200-400 homes access affordable renewable energy
- Pioneers a "virtual microgrid" model for Scotland
- Directly shaped by Burghead Local Place Plan
- Builds community wealth and reduces fuel poverty

What funding will deliver

- Development and consenting work
- Site preparation
- Community engagement to build on the demonstration site and identify projects and energy users elsewhere in Moray
- Unlock capital investment through Energy4All community share offer

Outcomes

- Replicable model for community owned affordable renewable energy
- Increased energy resilience
- Reduction in fuel poverty
- Community benefit funds and local ownership



Green Energy and Employment Parks at Dallachy and Mosstodloch

Lead:
Moray Council with
HIE and Crown
Estate Scotland

Funding ask:
£25.5m
(£25m capital,
£0.5m revenue)



Strategic purpose

To unlock 115ha of constrained land for renewable energy industries, green manufacturing and innovation.

Why it matters

- Removes key barriers to renewable energy production
- Enables hydrogen, battery storage, anaerobic digestion and low-carbon industrial clusters
- Supports decarbonisation of existing public and private sector facilities
- Creates skilled, long-term employment in the green economy

What funding will deliver

- First phase site design and enabling works
- Investment-ready plots for green industry and manufacturing

Outcomes

- Approximately 200 construction jobs and 45 long term O&M jobs plus associated local supply chain activity
- Major renewable energy generation capacity
- Infrastructure first approach to attracting future industry

Moray Hydrogen Transport Project

Lead:
Moray Council
with TH2ISTLE
consortium

Funding ask:
£1m
(mix of capital
and revenue)

Strategic purpose

To integrate Moray into North East Scotland's Hydrogen Valley, supporting decarbonisation of council and private sector fleets including heavy/hard to electrify transport.

Why it matters

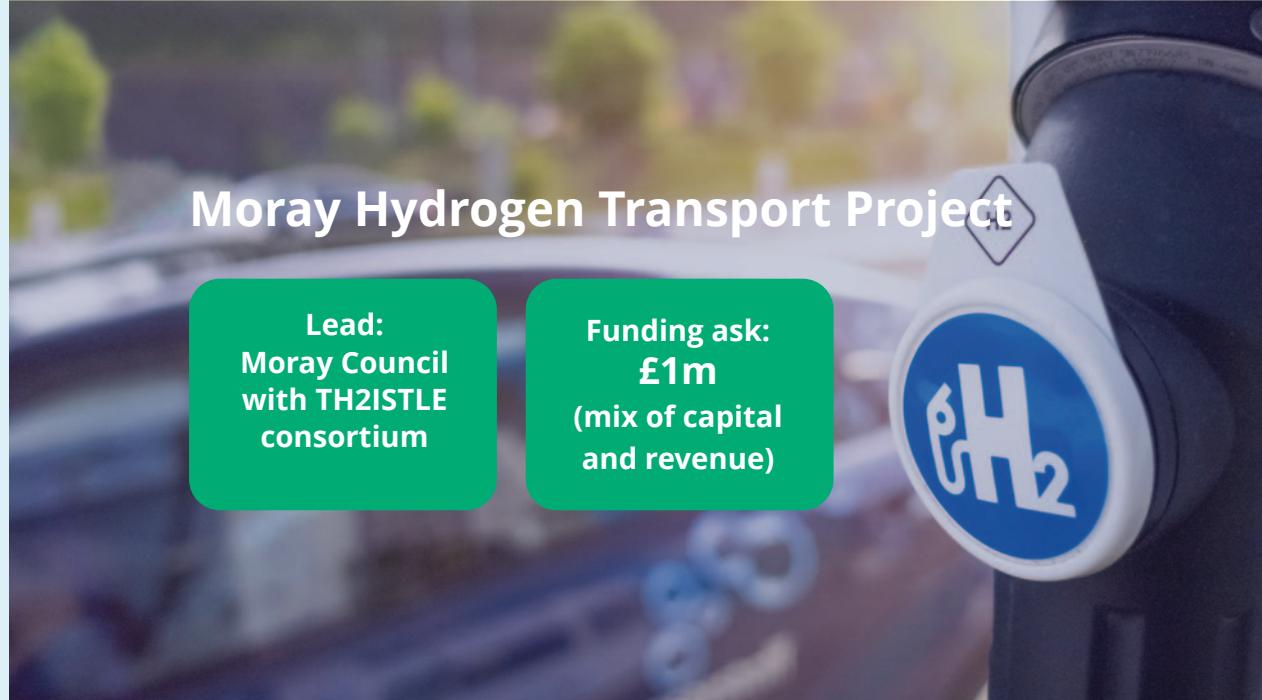
- Builds directly on the existing TH2ISTLE project
- Provides a practical pathway for the trial/adoption of hard to electrify vehicles
- Offers procurement and technical support through regional partnership approach
- Supports businesses looking to transition to hydrogen

What funding will deliver

- Year 1 strategic plan for fleet transition
- Site identification for refuelling and maintenance
- Initial vehicle and refuelling investment
- Operational planning, training and integration with regional infrastructure

Outcomes

- Reduced tailpipe emissions from vehicles
- Moray included in major international hydrogen initiative
- Opportunities for local fleet operators to expand knowledge and to decarbonise their fleets
- Practical decarbonisation within tested pathways



Estimated costs - £80.7m (£59.4m capital, £21.3m revenue)

Estimates subject to change as projects develop. Project management office (PMO) costs are included within this figure.

A tabular presentation of links between the projects and both national Just Transition priorities and Moray Council's Corporate Plan priorities is produced below.

Projects	Buckie Harbour	Natural Capital	Buildings for the Future	Community Solar	Employment Parks	Hydrogen Transport
Priorities						
Just transition:						
● Community involvement						
● SMEs						
● Skills, employment and training						
● Replicable at scale						
● Build on distinctive assets						
National and local priorities:						
● Tackle poverty and inequality						
● Build thriving, resilient, empowered communities						
● Build a stronger, greener, vibrant economy						
● Community wealth building						
● Community energy						
● Social value						

Next Steps

Following Council approval of the shortlisted projects (at Full Council on 28 January 2026), Officers will continue to work closely with stakeholders to develop the business cases and KPIs for projects to refine what is a cohesive regional bid to the Just Transition Fund.

This collaborative, partnership-based approach has been strongly encouraged by Scottish Government Just Transition Fund officials and was recommended as the most effective way forward by the University of Aberdeen's Just Transition Lab. While it will not prevent other organisations from submitting their own bids, following on extensive engagement and collaborative discussions, it is suggested that the short-listed projects represent the key strategic areas of work required to deliver a Just Transition for Moray.

At the time of writing, no information is yet available regarding the future structure of the fund or any indication of when applications for 2026/27 will open. Given the upcoming 2026 Scottish Parliament elections, there is a possibility that opening of the funding window may occur earlier or later than previous years.

Officers will maintain ongoing engagement with the Scottish Government to seek clarity on these matters, but there may be difficulties associated with the politically restricted period which impact on council decision making around bid content and these should be fully considered in determining timescales.

Key contact for further enquiries

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