

Energy Transition Zone Ltd

NET ZERO PRINCIPLES 2026



Updated 2026

PIONEERING BEST PRACTICE IN NET ZERO

ETZ's Vision is for North East Scotland to remain a global leader in energy excellence with a world class supply chain, pioneering low carbon projects and a thriving economy.

Part of delivering this vision is the establishment of the Energy Transition Zone (ETZ) a significant majority of revitalised brownfield accommodation alongside a new release of development sites, providing businesses with the unique opportunity to invest in the largest dedicated energy transition complex in Scotland.

As part of our ongoing investment programme to deliver market-ready 'properties and development sites we aim to embed consideration of net zero into all decision making processes.

Our Net Zero Principles set out the ambition for all developments across five key themes. The principles are supported by a decision making framework that drives decision making centred on net zero. Whole life carbon assessments are undertaken to provide quantitative data to inform the decision making process.

All contractors and supply chain companies in receipt of ETZ Ltd funding are required to follow the principles. We also encourage their adoption by our partners.

OUR NET ZERO PRINCIPLES

1. Circular Economy
2. Building Performance
3. Green Energy Strategy
4. Landscape, Environment and Biodiversity
5. Community and Place



CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Our aim is to reduce, as far as possible, the embodied carbon emissions of projects by aligning with circular economy principles:

Using existing structures

- Existing materials and structures will be reused wherever possible. Retrofit and retention of existing buildings should always be considered as a first option. Re-use of materials on site should be considered for both retrofit and new build developments.
- When retrofitting an existing building a survey and condition audit will be undertaken with the aim of retaining as much of the existing building structure as possible.

Designing for ease of disassembly

- Consideration will be given to the total building lifecycle especially in relation to new build where materials selection and building design should consider ease of disassembly and potential options for reuse.

Longevity and flexibility

- All buildings should be designed for durability and flexibility to reduce obsolescence and avoid carbon emissions associated with demolition and new construction.
- Emissions associated with future maintenance, repair and replacement over the building's life cycle will be considered at the design stage.

Designing out waste

- Minimising waste throughout the building lifecycle will be considered including considerations of modular build, off site construction, efficient procurement, and design to minimise waste and off cuts.

Reuse/Recycle

- The options for integrating reused materials into the design will be investigated.
- Where new materials are required low embodied carbon materials will be identified where possible.
- Opportunities to support local circular economy providers to re-condition, re-manufacture, and recycle will be evaluated.

BUILDING PERFORMANCE

All buildings will be designed to be as energy efficient as possible reflecting end user requirements.

- A 'fabric first' approach to building design should be adopted to minimise energy use.
- Solutions to minimise mechanical plant and services in favour of natural lighting and ventilation should be prioritised.
- Design will consider optimising site conditions such as maximising the opportunity for solar gain and use of renewables.
- The design of heating and lighting requirements should reflect end user needs.
- Whole life carbon assessments taking into account operational and embodied carbon emissions should be undertaken during the project and at the point of practical completion of the project to provide quantitative data to inform decision making.
- Relevant reporting and performance measurement should be agreed at the outset of each project.

GREEN ENERGY STRATEGY

Renewable energy will be incorporated into new build and refurbishment projects wherever possible, and all buildings must be net zero ready or have a pathway to net zero by 2030. A net zero ready building is defined as one that is electrically operated and will therefore meet net zero operation when the national grid is decarbonised.

- The potential to incorporate renewable energy should be considered in relation to all projects.
- Where clusters of buildings are proposed the potential for shared energy resources should be considered.
- Where possible ETZ projects should be developed to be net zero ready from day one.
- Where this is not immediately practical, potential pathways to net zero must be determined.

LANDSCAPE ENVIRONMENT & BIODIVERSITY

All developments must be sensitive to the surrounding environment and contribute to the development of a blue green infrastructure enhancing the biodiversity across the development area.

- Opportunities for developments to enhance the local environment should be actively explored across all sites.
- The potential for environmental impacts should be comprehensively assessed and monitored where appropriate.
- Incorporation of tree planting and other habitat features within the soft landscaping of development plots should provide amenity and support biodiversity.
- Planting should include native tree species & hedgerows to support habitat connectivity.
- Links to greenspace and community infrastructure should be considered.
- The potential suitability of green roofs should be considered to create additional roofscape habitat.

COMMUNITY & PLACE

All developments should consider their relationships with the local community and support improvements to local amenity and wellbeing.

- Opportunities to support health and wellbeing through integrated active travel should be considered including identifying how individual sites and developments connect to these and can enhance access.
- The development should seek to support skills training within the local community and partners will be asked to consider how they can support this.
- The sourcing of local suppliers and materials is encouraged to support reduced emissions and provide local social and economic benefits.
- All development should have regard to local context and seek to minimise the impacts on any local heritage sites.
- Workplace cycle parking and electric charging points should be provided.

ADDITIONALLY

All developments will consider the opportunity to support the local supply chain, develop skills and capabilities to enter or expand the low-carbon energy market.

- Opportunities to support the supply chain trial or demonstrate new technology should be considered.
- Innovation that reduces carbon emissions in any aspects of the development process will be considered and encouraged.
- Delivery teams should seek to find ways to build low carbon skills within the supply chain.

