

## Scottish elections 2016 – Response from the Scottish Green Party

*Ahead of the 2016 Scottish elections, the Campaign for Science and Engineering (CaSE) wrote to the leaders of all political parties with at least one MSP, inviting them to set out their party's policies on science and engineering.*

*Below is the response from the Scottish Green Party.*

### **1. Ensuring that a high quality science, technology, engineering and maths education is sustainably funded and open to all; at school, in further and higher education.**

Scottish Greens believe that all school pupils should have access to a high quality STEM education. We know that a large part of delivering this depends on our teachers being supported to plan and creatively use resources to inspire the next generation of scientists and engineers. To support this, we support the hiring of an additional 4,000 teachers across primary and secondary education to ease the pressure on existing teachers and give more time to focus on their activities in the classroom. We also believe that the school curriculum must reflect modern industries, such as computer programming, bioscience and technological innovation.

Beyond school, Green MSPs will call for increased support for apprenticeships in science and engineering fields. We want to see the Modern Apprenticeship Scheme address gender-segregation in STEM areas as well as offer a decent wage. This will offer a path to science and engineering careers for school pupils outside of further and higher education.

Our manifesto calls for greater investment in further education courses and we maintain a commitment to ensuring higher education remains funded and accessible to all.

### **2. Improve and embed the use of research and scientific advice to inform policy-making in government**

From developing renewable energy technology, providing high-quality healthcare and conserving our environment, Scottish Greens recognise the importance of using the latest scientific and research advice to design effective policy. Our Holyrood manifesto includes a specific commitment to base decisions for Scotland's new Marine Protected Areas and marine planning system on scientific evidence, and this is a principle we support across other policy areas too.

### **3. Ensure that Scotland has the diverse pool of talented people it needs to drive future success**

Scotland can have a highly-skilled science and engineering workforce. To support this, Green MSPs will push for action to break down the barriers to further and higher education. Scottish Greens' student support proposals are designed remove financial barriers to education and we agree with the

Commission on Widening Access that “inequality in higher education is unfair, damaging and unsustainable”. We will use its findings and recommendations published in March to ensure action on access to education is as bold as it can be. We will also continue to place pressure on the UK government to reintroduce the post-study work visa – a scheme which allows international students to stay in Scotland after their studies. We believe that someone who has chosen to study here should be given the opportunity to stay in Scotland and contribute to their chosen field.

#### ***4. Nurture an environment that encourages industries based on science and engineering to locate in Scotland, and that encourages higher levels of investment in research and development***

Scotland has world-leading offshore engineering skills and a wealth of natural resources around our shores. With skills in sub-sea engineering concentrated in Aberdeen we have an opportunity to excel in offshore wind, tidal and wave energy. The Scottish Greens’ *Jobs in Scotland’s New Economy* report, published in 2015, demonstrates how to create over 200,000 new jobs by 2035, compared with the 156,000 jobs currently provided by the Scottish fossil fuel extraction industry. Green MSPs will support measures to increase access to these new jobs for groups underrepresented in science, technology and engineering, including women and people from minority ethnic communities.

Green MSPs will also support Scotland’s diverse economy with investment in sustainable industries and services which improve quality of life and reduce carbon emissions. We will promote sustainable expansion in areas such as food production, clean chemical sciences, digital and creative industries, medical and life sciences, construction, engineering, forestry and the energy industry. We will support development and sustainable practices in sectors such as research and development, independent retail, tourism and sports, waste reuse and recycling, shipbuilding, textiles and design. Science and engineering research and design has a crucial role to play in all of these sectors.

There will also be opportunities for science and engineering in responding to the challenges of climate change. Scottish Greens will support measures to transition to climate-ready neighbourhoods that reduce emissions, limit flood risks and increase resilience to extreme conditions. This includes designing more permeable paved surfaces, increasing greenspace and shade cover, retrofitted buildings, as well as better active travel facilities. We need urgently to develop greater flood protection measures and invest in harbour infrastructure, creating job opportunities in engineering and sciences. Moving to a circular economy and low carbon public infrastructure also demands that we have the science and engineering skills to face this challenge head on.