



Manifesto for the Future



A summary of the
SCVO Policy Forum's
blueprint for Scotland

The challenges of the next decade are significant, and they are real.

- By 2030, Scotland's population will be larger and older.¹
- The ongoing advancement of technology will radically change the jobs market and the world of work.
- The free movement of people, goods and money between Scotland and its neighbours will be fundamentally changed by Brexit.
- Slow growth and possible recession has been predicted in some quarters.³
- The success of populist and divisive politicians has profound implications for all countries.
- A radical global response to the climate emergency and nature crisis must be agreed and enacted to limit warming to 1.5 degrees and reverse the loss of biodiversity.

Scotland's voluntary sector is wide reaching and covers every area of society, it remains a constant presence amongst ongoing environmental, political, social and economic uncertainty. However, with these challenges, noted above, comes the opportunity for Scotland's voluntary sector to come together in unity and take action which can result in long-lasting positive consequences for future generations. Led by our politicians in collaboration with business, academia and civil society, Scotland must be ready to respond to these challenges. With the right drive and vision, and by delivering on Scotland's commitment to meet the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, it is possible to make our response an historic opportunity to build a fairer, greener and more prosperous country.

A thriving, sustainable voluntary sector is critical to the realisation of these goals.

This manifesto is a rallying cry from Scotland's voluntary sector to collaborate to achieve the visionary transformation these challenging times call for. The SCVO Policy Forum has identified three areas of significant importance which require action:

1. **Planet:** We want Scotland to secure environmental action and take responsibility for the planet and its future generations.
2. **Humanity:** We want Scotland to lead the world in supporting human rights, equality and wellbeing for all.
3. **Citizenship:** We want Scotland to foster an environment which enhances citizenship, democracy and participation.

This manifesto outlines the foundations required to ensure that Scotland stands ready to share its knowledge and expertise to face the challenges of the next decade and help to build a fair and prosperous future for everyone.

Planet

To achieve responsible environmental action for Scotland and the planet for future generations, Scotland must address the climate emergency and secure nature's recovery, according to the principles of environmental justice.

By 2030:

1. **Ambitious targets:** More ambitious environmental targets are required in Scotland, targets which must be set now. To reach these ambitions, there must be widespread

agreement on what is required to reverse the trends which are significantly impacting Scotland's biodiversity.

- 2. Stress-testing and empowerment:** Environmental stress testing should be implemented for every new policy and budgetary decision made in Scotland, alongside the embedding of robust environmental governance practice. If Scotland wishes to protect the environment, sustainability needs to be moved into the heart of all policymaking, and should be present throughout the policy cycle.
- 3. Restore biodiversity:** Scotland must maintain, restore and enhance biodiversity in order to mitigate climate breakdown, adapt to changes in climate, and increase the resilience in both rural and urban environments. Committed action must be taken to protect and restore Scotland's biodiversity and natural assets.
- 4. Future looking:** Scotland should adopt a Future Generations principle which moves beyond political and economic short-sightedness and recognises Scotland's responsibility as a global citizen. This approach may help to curate cross-sector solutions to long term challenges such as climate change in a long-term, non-partisan way.

Humanity

Scotland must be a place where all policy and public services support human rights, social justice, equality and wellbeing for its people, and whose politicians and public bodies are accountable to the people for delivering on these principles.

By 2030:

- 1. Embedding human rights:** Human rights must be embedded into the very foundations of Scots law. Taking this approach would ensure that citizens have their rights vehemently protected and upheld, given that obligations to meet them would be statutory.
- 2. Transport accessibility:** Universally accessible transport must be made available to all throughout Scotland. Scotland has a duty to ensure that its transport system is flexible and accessible for all of those who require it. Transport inequality is a significant challenge in Scotland, and any solutions aimed at addressing this challenge must be rights based in order to ensure human rights to education, employment and health are met.
- 3. Facilitate diversity:** Scotland must look to implement processes which provide universally accessible physical, technological and human infrastructure to sustain all of our people. This means that diversity should be enshrined within the foundations of decision-making.
- 4. New approach to budgeting:** A human rights based approach to budgeting, with a focus on wellbeing outcomes, should be implemented in Scotland. This would mean that resources would be distributed in a manner which puts people first. Human rights budgeting grounds budgeting decisions in five human rights principles which include universality, equity, transparency, accountability and participation.

Citizenship

People in Scotland have grown ever more critical of those with decision-making power. Trust between policymakers and the public has fallen and continues to do so.³ With this growing mistrust and cynicism comes the need to find ways of opening up decision-making processes throughout the country, making them accessible and transparent for all.

By 2030:

- 1. Open policy development:** Communication relating to public policy development at all levels should involve a two-way communication process. Scotland's decision-making bodies should engage with citizens to support policy development in a pro-active and accessible manner but should also engage with citizens on how and why the development is being undertaken throughout the process.
- 2. Empower people to be active citizens:** Decision-making bodies in Scotland should explore innovative ways to gather insight from the public in a meaningful way that places emphasis on those furthest from the decision-making process. Ensuring that all barriers are removed from participation, and no one's voice or lived experience is more important than another's.
- 3. Transparency:** Comprehensive transparency processes provide citizens with the opportunity to independently scrutinise and examine governmental functions. In line with this, institutions across Scotland should publish timely data in an open format. It should ensure all data is presented in an interrogative state as well as easily understood by the general public. This should include all detail relating to finance (including procurement activity), performance, and policy decision-making/delivery.

Beyond the Manifesto

We want Scotland's voluntary sector to herald its work which aligns with the core themes contained within this Manifesto, work that is already underway that aims to improve human rights, protect the environment and empower people in Scotland to become active citizens. The Manifesto for the Future's Best Practice Bank highlights voluntary sector activity which is making a significant difference in Scotland and has the potential to be replicated on a wider basis. SCVO is keen to champion these ideas throughout the next year and beyond, and are calling upon voluntary sector organisations in Scotland to submit their activity to the Best Practice Bank to be used as evidence to support the sector's engagement with parliamentarians and policymakers throughout the decade.

About the SCVO Policy Forum

The Policy Forum is an SCVO initiative to strengthen the voice of the voluntary sector in Scotland. Members of the Forum are supported by SCVO to take a lead role on behalf of SCVO and the wider voluntary sector to think about the future of the social, political, environmental and economic context within which the sector operates.

¹ Scotland's population is projected to increase and age (2017) Scottish Government. Available: <https://news.gov.scot/news/scotlands-population-is-projected-to-increase-and-age>

² State of the economy: September 2019 (2019) Scottish Government. Available: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/state-economy-september-2019/>

³ Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2017: Attitudes to government, the economy and public services (2017) Scottish Government. Available: <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/statistics/2018/06/scottish-social-attitudes-attitudes-government-economy-public-services-2017/documents/00537402-pdf/00537402-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/00537402.pdf>