

Democracy
Matters

Democracy Matters

The title 'Democracy Matters' is presented in two lines. The word 'Democracy' is in a light green color, and 'Matters' is in a dark blue color. The letters are large and bold. Several icons are integrated into the text: a person with a cane, a person in a wheelchair, a person pushing a stroller, and a person standing on a brick wall. Each icon is accompanied by a speech bubble, suggesting that everyone has a voice in the democratic process.

Your Community. Your Ideas. Your Future.

OVERVIEW OF HOW DECISIONS ABOUT PUBLIC SERVICES ARE TAKEN

The Democracy Matters conversation has been set up to hear your voice and the voices of your friends and neighbours in a discussion about local communities deciding their own future.

The levels of locally elected representation and local people's involvement in decision-making varies across public services. This is a short overview of how decisions are currently taken in Scotland. It is designed to help you take part in the conversation about local democracy.

You'll find information on key public sector organisations like the NHS, police, councils, the Scottish Government, and a whole range of public bodies responsible for services like local enterprise, housing and transport.

The Scottish Government

The Scottish Government¹ is the devolved government for Scotland and has a range of responsibilities that include: the economy, education, health, justice, rural affairs, housing, environment, equal opportunities, consumer advocacy and advice, transport and taxation. A variety of public bodies with the specialist knowledge and skills to focus on specific issues play an important role in delivering public services in Scotland.

Some powers are reserved to the UK Government. These include: immigration, the constitution, foreign policy and defence.

Who runs government

After a Scottish Parliamentary election, a First Minister is formally nominated by the Scottish Parliament and appointed by Her Majesty the Queen.

The First Minister then appoints the Scottish ministers to make up the Cabinet with the agreement of the Scottish Parliament and the approval of The Queen.

The First Minister leads the Scottish Government, with the support of the cabinet secretaries and ministers.

The Civil Service

The civil service helps the government of the day develop and implement its policies as well as deliver public services. Civil servants are accountable to ministers, who in turn are accountable to Parliament.

¹ <http://www.gov.scot/>

The Scottish Parliament

Government is separate from parliament. The Scottish Parliament² is made up of all elected members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) and is the law making body for devolved matters. It considers any proposed legislation and scrutinises the activities and policies of the Scottish Government through debates, parliamentary questions and the work of committees.

Legislation

A bill is a proposal for a new law or a major change to an existing one. Most bills are introduced to the Scottish Parliament by the Scottish Government and the process begins with the formulation of policy by the government.

A bill becomes law once it is agreed by the Scottish Parliament and then by The Queen. From then on it becomes known as an act.

The National Health Service in Scotland

The NHS³ is the term used to cover a variety of services. These services are often provided by GPs, dentists, pharmacists, but also include hospital and social care. Local authorities have the statutory responsibility for social care.

The responsibility for delivering health services is mainly devolved to the health boards. There are 14 territorial health boards which arrange services for their local population. Boards also have a duty to cooperate on the delivery of services and do this through both regional and national planning.

Since 2016, territorial health boards and local authorities have been required to integrate certain health and social care services. This has resulted in the creation of 31 integration authorities, usually called Integrated Joint Boards (IJBs).

Health boards are accountable to Scottish Ministers and ultimately to the Scottish Parliament. Their performance is monitored through a number of measures such as their annual operational plans and they have annual reviews that are held in public. Health Boards have a duty to encourage public involvement in the planning and development of services.

Integration Authorities

NHS Boards and Local Authorities are required to integrate the planning and service provision arrangements of adult social care services, adult primary care and community health services and some hospital services. Each Integration Authority must identify localities within its area to provide an organisational mechanism for the planning of services.

² <http://www.parliament.scot/>

³ <https://www.scot.nhs.uk/>

Integration Authorities are accountable to Local Authorities and NHS Boards, and ultimately Scottish Ministers, Parliament and the public for delivering nationally agreed outcomes.

The majority of Integration Authorities in Scotland have adopted a body corporate model (Integration Joint Board) where decisions are taken by local councillors, members of the local Health Board with a range of other representatives, including health and social care professionals, service users and carers providing advice to the board to assist the decision making process.

Where an Integration Authority has adopted a lead agency model (Highland Partnership) involving the transfer of functions between Local Authority and Health Boards, decisions making takes place within the governance structures of these organisations. The delivery is overseen by an Integration Joint Monitoring Committee whose role it is to scrutinise the operation of the lead agency arrangement and provide assurance to both the Health Board and the Local Authority that it is achieving the aims and objectives as set out in the Strategic Plan.

Integration Authorities are required to engage and consult with a range of stakeholders, working with local communities and professionals to improve outcomes and sustainability.

Public Health

Public health is defined as the science of protecting the safety and improving the health of communities through education, policy making and research for disease and injury prevention.

Public health seeks to prevent and avoid poor health rather than treating it. It does this by trying to improve the places where people live, work and play; by making it easier for people to be healthy; and by delivering certain programmes – such as vaccination – to protect people from serious disease. Public health experts can also lead the response to outbreaks of infectious disease, or to other hazards to health from chemicals or radiation. Public health professionals can be based in NHS Boards, Integration Authorities and local government functions, however, the range of factors that impact on the public's health is wide ranging, therefore, improving the public's health is everyone's responsibility.

Increasingly, the focus of public health is moving from medical programmes to looking at things that might drive poor health such as inequality, poverty, and educational attainment. Public health in the future will look to address these issues to make it easier for people to be healthy.

Local Government

Local government in Scotland⁴ is made up of 32 local authorities. Each local authority represents a geographical area in Scotland and is responsible for providing a range of public services for the local population. There are 1,227 Councillors who are elected to local authorities by the electorate of the area they represent (known as a council ward). Voting is based on a system of proportional representation, and all wards are represented by 3 or 4 councillors whose job it is to represent their constituents on local issues and priorities.

Local councils in Scotland are led by the Leader of the council. Councillors deliver a wide range of roles including making decisions and setting policy, scrutinising and investigating effectiveness and efficiency of current policies and services, and regulatory functions such as planning applications and building standards.

Some committee members are appointed as specialists from the community, such as teachers, business leaders and leaders of religious institutions. These are often non-voting members and act as a source of expertise and knowledge in a particular field. Councils have a range of ways of collecting local views and engaging people in their decisions. For example, all councils have agreed to spend at least 1% of budgets through participatory budgeting. Currently, the Scottish Government and other public services do not engage in participatory budgeting and their spending decisions are largely made centrally.

Together, local authorities employ over 240,000 people - almost 10% of all jobs in Scotland. Local councils are responsible for providing public services to the local community. The major areas of local government responsibility are education, environmental protection, social care, roads and transport, economic development, housing and planning, waste management, and cultural and leisure services.

Local authorities sometimes also delegate some of their functions to Arm's Length External Organisations (ALEOs). These are companies, trusts and other bodies that are separate from the local authority but are subject local authority control or influence. Examples of the services they deliver include leisure, transportation, property development, and more recently, care services.

The Scottish Government provides approximately 82% of local authority funding, with the remainder met from council tax income.

Police

Police Scotland⁵ is led by a Chief Constable and comprises police officers, police staff and special constables. Police Scotland's purpose is to improve the safety and wellbeing of people, places and communities in Scotland.

⁴ <http://www.cosla.gov.uk/>

⁵ <http://www.scotland.police.uk/>

There are 13 local policing divisions, each headed by a Local Police Commander (Chief Superintendent) who ensures that local policing in each area is responsive, accountable and tailored to meet local needs. Each division encompasses response officers, community officers, local crime investigation, road policing, public protection and local intelligence. Alongside the local policing divisions, there are a number of national specialist divisions.

Police Scotland's priorities are outlined in its Annual Police Plan and are aligned to the strategic police priorities set by the Scottish Government and the strategic objectives outlined by the Scottish Police Authority. They are also informed by the local policing plans set at local authority and ward level. The priorities in the Annual Police Plan are informed in part by public consultation through Police Scotland's 'Your View Counts' survey. Each local authority in Scotland has its own arrangements for providing local scrutiny of policing, usually through a designated council committee

Transport

While transport is in the main devolved to the Scottish Parliament there are significant regulatory and legal powers that remain with Westminster (covering road transport; rail transport and provision and regulation of railway services; marine transport, including navigational rights and freedoms; air transport; and transport of radioactive material).

Transport Scotland⁶ is an executive agency of the Scottish Government, has national transport responsibilities, and is accountable to Parliament and the public through Scottish Ministers.

There are seven Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs). These were established in 2005 as independent bodies corporate to strengthen planning and delivery of regional transport. Each has a statutory responsibility to prepare a regional transport strategy and also prepare delivery plans. RTPs bring together local authorities and key regional stakeholders.

The 32 local authorities are responsible for delivery of local transport infrastructure/ services, including local bus services and maintenance/ improvement of local road and path networks.

There are also a number of national third sector delivery bodies, such as *Sustrans* and *Paths for All*, that receive some government funding and provide local level infrastructure, initiatives, and support for cycling, walking and behaviour change.

⁶ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/>

The private sector is involved in the provision of services for rail, bus, ferries, and also maintenance of the Scottish trunk road network and the freight sector.

Transport Scotland has wider ranging policy and delivery responsibilities including: rail (funding and setting the strategy for Scotland's rail network including funding the Abellio ScotRail and Caledonian Sleeper franchises); road safety; accessibility to transport; aviation including the funding support for lifeline services in Scotland's Highlands & Islands; bus policy; ports; harbours and freight policy; national integrated smart ticketing and Scotland's National Concessionary Travel Scheme; ferries and policy on sustainable and active travel.

Transport Scotland is also responsible for management and maintenance of Scotland's trunk road network, for transport planning and for planning and delivering major transport infrastructure policy. Scottish Ministers' set national transport strategy and Transport Scotland is currently taking forward a collaborative review of its National Transport Strategy which includes a review of transport governance.

Economic Development

Enterprise and Skills Strategic Board

The Scottish Government's Purpose is to make Scotland a more successful country, with opportunities for all to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.

A new Strategic Board will align and co-ordinate the activities of Scotland's enterprise and skills agencies, including a new South of Scotland Enterprise Agency.

Skills Development Scotland

Skills Development Scotland⁷ (SDS) is the national skills body for Scotland. Through collaboration with partners at national, regional and local levels SDS is working to create a Scotland where:

- employers are able to recruit the right people with the right skills at the right time
- employers have high performing, highly productive, fair and equal workplaces
- people have the right skills and confidence to secure good work and progress their careers
- there is greater equality of opportunity for all

Scottish Enterprise

Scottish Enterprise⁸ (SE) is Scotland's main economic development agency with a remit to focus on the best opportunities to stimulate growth in Scotland's economy. SE's work is guided by the Scottish Government's economic strategy and focuses on

⁷ <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/>

⁸ <https://www.scottish-enterprise.com/>

four key outcomes to achieve more internationalisation, investment, innovation and inclusive growth.

Specifically SE:

- provides tailored support to industries and access to global industry networks
- encourages and secures international investment in Scotland
- helps Scottish businesses to grow, export, innovate and create sustainable employment 4. Supports projects that will help significantly improve Scotland's economic performance and competitive standing globally

Highlands and Island Enterprise

Highlands and Islands Enterprise⁹ (HIE) is a non-departmental public body of the Scottish Government, delivering Scotland's Economic Strategy across a region that covers half of Scotland's land mass and is home to around 470,000 people.

HIE pursues the four complementary themes of Scotland's Economic Strategy – investment, innovation, internationalisation and inclusive growth – through the delivery of four priorities to address the specific needs and opportunities of the Highlands and Islands. These are:

- Supporting businesses and social enterprises to shape and realise their growth aspirations
- Strengthening communities and fragile areas
- Developing growth sectors, particularly distinctive regional opportunities
- Creating the conditions for a competitive and low carbon region

Scottish Funding Council

The Scottish Funding Council¹⁰ (SFC) is helping to make Scotland the best place in the world to educate, to research and to innovate. Investing around £1.5 billion of public money each year, SFC's funding enables colleges and universities to provide life-changing opportunities for hundreds of thousands of people across Scotland.

Community Planning

Community Planning Partnerships¹¹ (CPPs) bring together local public services and the communities they serve to plan for, resource and provide or secure services that improve local outcomes with a view to reducing inequalities.

Each CPP is required to produce a Local Outcomes Improvement Plan which provides a vision and focus for the improvement of outcomes based on

⁹ <http://www.hie.co.uk/>

¹⁰ <http://www.sfc.ac.uk/>

¹¹ <https://beta.gov.scot/policies/improving-public-services/community-planning/>

collaboratively agreed local priorities. CPPs must make reasonable efforts to secure the participation of community bodies, particularly those representing the interests of persons who experience inequalities throughout. They are accountable to their communities and must publicly report on progress annually. The report sets out the extent to which the CPP has participated with community bodies in carrying out its functions and the extent to which that participation has been effective in enabling community bodies to contribute.

Community Councils

Community councils¹² are the most local tier of statutory representation in Scotland. They bridge the gap between local authorities and communities, and help to make public bodies aware of the opinions and needs of the communities they represent. There are around 1,200 active community councils in Scotland.

Local authorities have statutory oversight of community councils and are required by statute to consult community councils about planning applications and licencing matters.

¹² <http://www.communitycouncils.scot/>