

# **National Events Strategy Review: Consultation**

**March 2023**

# National Events Strategy Review: Consultation

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## 1. Introduction and Background

### 1.1 Purpose of the survey

Scotland's national events strategy, 'Scotland the Perfect Stage (2015 – 2025)', is being reviewed and updated. This will extend its term to the end of 2035. The Scottish events sector, Scottish Government and VisitScotland are working together with trade unions and local authorities to do this.

[Scotland the Perfect Stage](#) was first published in 2008 in response to Scotland's burgeoning potential to be a global leader in the events industry. It was last reviewed and updated in 2014 to cover the period 2015 – 2025. Its vision is that Scotland's reputation as the perfect stage for events is recognised nationally and internationally. It looks to use and develop Scotland's assets to deliver a portfolio of events that provide world leading authentic experiences for Scotland's residents and visitors.

Although Scotland has had many successes under the current strategy, the event sector has recently endured a period of unprecedented disruption. This presents a number of challenges and potential opportunities for the sector in Scotland, as set out in [Annex A](#). Scottish Government has therefore [committed to supporting another review](#) and update of Scotland the Perfect Stage.

Discussions in December 2022 with industry, trade union, local authority and public sector representatives have informed this survey. Those discussions considered themes of business and economy, Fair Work and skilled workforce, environmental sustainability, and wellbeing. These are referred to in this survey as "Themed Groups."

This survey provides everyone with a role in Scotland's world-class event industry the chance to shape the sector's updated strategy. You can complete the survey on [Citizen Space](#) or by sending a [downloadable copy](#) to the Scottish Government [Major Event team's mailbox](#). It takes about 30-40 minutes to complete.

### 1.2 Who we want to hear from

This survey is aimed at:

- People who attend or would like to attend events in Scotland, and groups who represent them
- People living in communities where events are held, and groups who represent them
- Organisations and people working in and with the Scottish event industry, across the public, private and third sectors

We would also welcome views from people and organisations from outside of Scotland, to hear about their experiences of Scottish events and working with the Scottish events sector. We would also like to hear about approaches that the private, public and third sectors take to events in other countries.

We are seeking views on:

- The ambition and priorities for events and the event sector in Scotland
- The accessibility of events
- What it is like to work in events
- How events in Scotland can continue to collaborate and innovate
- How events can promote cities, regions and Scotland as a whole internationally

## **2. Developing a Shared Ambition**

### **2.1 Definition of an event**

For the national events strategy, events are public-facing events and festivals. That means anyone can attend either for free or by buying a ticket, or by viewing it on television or digitally. In addition, the strategy includes business events. These business events are for designated groups which the general public cannot access. Examples of business events include corporate meetings, product launches, exhibitions and conventions, and incentive travel. The strategy does not cover family or personal events such as weddings, funerals and birthday parties.

Events can be fixed – happening each year or more regularly in the same place permanently. They can be recurring – happening each year in the same place for a set number of years, often on a biennial or quadrennial basis. Or they can be one-off – usually bid for and brought in a single staging.

Events also vary widely in size, from local and community events all the way up to mega events hosted across borders.

### **2.2 Role of the strategy**

The updated strategy will provide strategic focus for all involved in any aspect of planning, securing, supporting and delivering events of all sizes in Scotland through to the end of 2035. It is important that the strategy has a clear shared ambition that we can collectively work towards.

Themed Groups considered what success looks like. For them, this meant an event sector that:

- is financially robust and sustainable
- delivers significant economic benefit for Scotland
- is an attractive sector for employment that fairly rewards its workforce in payment, conditions, security and opportunity
- is environmentally responsible and delivering the sectors just transition to net zero
- showcases Scotland and our values and assets globally, and
- is contributing positively to the physical, mental and social health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.

This suggests an **Ambition** for the coming ten years could be

An event sector that, in 2035, is:

- globally recognised as a world leader in the development and delivery of responsible business, sporting, arts and wider cultural events – the ‘*perfect stage for events*’
- creator and host of a relevant, diverse and inclusive portfolio of world-class event experiences that deliver positive economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits to Scotland
- delivering Fair Work for all who work in the sector, with employers providing a positive and secure working environment, and supporting a skilled, committed and well-paid workforce

Understanding progress toward this ambition could be supported by a number of **Indicators** that measure:

- the national and international profile of Scottish events
- the economic contribution of events across regions and to Scotland as a whole
- the health of the events sector, including stability and capacity to deliver
- what the event sector is like as a place to work, integrating the Fair Work dimensions of effective voice, security, respect, opportunity and fulfilment
- the event sector’s just transition to net zero and environmental sustainability
- the accessibility of events’ contribution to physical, mental and social health and wellbeing for individuals and communities

We are seeking views on whether this is the right ambition for the strategy.

**Question 1:** To what extent do you support, or oppose the proposed Ambition?

- strongly oppose
- oppose
- neutral
- support
- strongly support
- don’t know

**Question 2:** How important do you think each of these strategic priorities are for events over the next ten years? Give a score of one to five for each, where one is not important at all and five is very important, or “don’t know”:

- Boosting the economy
- Enhancing well-being and community engagement
- Contributing to the drive towards net zero and environmental sustainability
- Making the event sector a better place to work
- Showcasing and promoting Scotland’s assets

**Question 3:** What other strategic priorities, (if any), do you think should be included in a refreshed strategy?

### 3. Delivering a Shared Ambition

Themed Group discussions suggest that there were shared areas of focus to achieve the Ambition. These are:

- Excellent Event Experience
- Best Practice, Innovation and Continuous Improvement
- Promotion and Profile
- An Approach of Partnership and Collaboration

### 4. Excellent Event Experience

Optimising the event experience is central to commercial success for the industry. It could have knock on benefits for recruiting and retaining staff, and attracting major and mega events to Scotland. Positive event experiences can contribute to the physical, mental and social health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.

We believe the national events strategy should support partners to deliver an overall portfolio of events that are:

- **Inclusive**, accessible and attractive to a wide range of audiences.
- **Diverse and representative** with a broad range of hosted and homegrown events spread across regions. These would represent the diverse voices, experience and energy of Scotland, enhance the reputation of cities and communities, and contribute to a sense of civic pride and place.
- **Successful and popular**, enhancing the event and tourism sectors as well as the wider economy.
- Delivered with communities to ensure local people are **involved** in their design and delivery.
- **Supportive of wider ambitions in other sectors and industries**, particularly in key industries and emerging markets for Scotland, and through the development of Scottish companies in the supply chain.
- Protecting and promoting Scotland's natural capital in their delivery, with partners across the sector committing to **drive down emissions and adapt to climate change** as part of a just transition to net zero.

#### 4.1 Audience engagement

Scotland's culture sector is seen as [inclusive in engaging audiences and community, and as having diverse audiences](#). Fostering this audience and its reputation could be an asset to Scotland's overall reputation as a place to hold events.

We know that some people face additional barriers to accessing and enjoying events, and that [attendance at cultural events varies across different groups](#). We know that barriers include [ticket cost, travel, the event being too far away, health problems and childcare](#). As part of this survey, we want to understand how the national events strategy could address that.

**Question 4:** People attend events for a range of different reasons. Can you identify what is important for you in creating an excellent event experience?

**Question 5:** To what extent do you agree, or disagree that events in Scotland are:

- Accessible (strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, strongly agree, or don't know)
- Affordable (strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, strongly agree, or don't know)
- Inclusive (strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, strongly agree, or don't know)
- Welcoming (strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, strongly agree, or don't know)

**Question 6:** We are also interested in knowing about why people might not be able to attend events. Can you identify any reasons for not attending the events you would like to?

## 4.2 Community engagement

Festivals and events play an important role in [improving perceptions of place](#). Themed Groups suggested that there can be a tension between commercial events running for multiple days in order to be viable, and the increased local disruption this can cause. They also suggested that using local knowledge can relieve this tension, and that establishing relationships with local charities and social enterprises can also improve routes to specific communities.

We are keen to understand about community experiences of events in Scotland and whether more can be done to ensure that local communities benefit from events.

**Question 7:** To what extent do you agree, or not, that event organisers involve communities in planning the events they hold?

- strongly oppose
- oppose
- neutral
- support
- strongly support
- don't know

**Question 8:** To what extent do you agree, or not, that event organisers communicate about how the events taking place will affect local people?

- strongly oppose
- oppose
- neutral
- support
- strongly support
- don't know

**Question 9:** How could the benefits of events be increased for local communities?



### 4.3 Variety

The current strategy takes a portfolio approach to events. This allows for a variety of large and small, sport and culture, fixed, recurring and one-off events to be identified and supported. VisitScotland co-ordinates the national public sector approach, working closely with the relevant local authorities to make best use their different relative strengths and resources. This is in addition to events being secured within the private sector and other organisations.

Over a sustained period, Scotland has developed a [calendar of events](#) ranging in size, type and region. The current strategy supports a wide geographical and seasonal diversity of events to spread the benefits across the year and the country, including through VisitScotland's [event funding programmes](#). It also promotes equality and diversity by including events for different demographics including the elderly, young people, families, those with disabilities and disadvantaged groups, as well as respecting individuals' human rights.

A portfolio approach has a range of other potential benefits. These can include:

- encouraging and nurturing innovation and entrepreneurship
- encouraging and enabling sustainable tourism by showcasing our natural environment, culture and heritage
- offering combined experiences across regions and sectors
- creating communities and enhancing places

When done well, Themed Groups thought that a spread of authentic audience and memorable participant experiences can deliver events that are unique to individual places. They also thought that it can deliver events that foster a sense of civic pride, and celebrate Scottish culture to encourage fresh international collaboration.

**Question 10:** How important is the diversity of events in Scotland in terms of each of the following? Give a score of one to five for each, where one is not important at all and five is very important, or “don't know”:

- Range of size
- Spread of location
- Variety of type

**Question 11:** What barriers, if any, are there to holding a diversity of events in Scotland?

## 5. Best Practice, Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The current national events strategy identifies the need for all relevant agencies to take responsibility for ensuring that Scotland continues to innovate within the events sector and that innovation is supported and nurtured. It also recognises a role for all partners in bringing best practice from around the world and in promoting our own best practice internationally.

To stay at the forefront internationally, events in Scotland will need to innovate and continuously improve in response to new challenges and opportunities. This part of

the survey seeks your views on where the strategy could support further innovation and continuous improvement.

## 5.1 Fair Work and workforce development

Internationally, Scotland's people have a [reputation for being hard-working, honest and skilful](#). Themed Groups recognised the workforce, including the supply chain, as a key strength and area for development.

Over the course of planning and delivery, the workforce supporting an event can change a lot. It can grow from being a small core planning team for most of the year, then balloon into a wider workforce. This ranges from contractors, sponsor activations and other stakeholders through to temporary staff brought in for the day, such as caterers, bar staff and stewards. This means there is a wide variety of experiences, opportunities, qualifications, employment arrangements and pay for those working in events. It also means that people can move into and out of events quite quickly.

We are interested to hear views on how attractive working in the sector is from those with experience of working in events, whatever their role. We are also interested to hear views from those looking at the sector from the outside.

**Question 12:** Do you think the event sector is an attractive place to work?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Question 13:** Please tell us why you selected yes, no or don't know here.

### 5.1.1 Fair Work practices

We want Scotland to be a leading Fair Work Nation by 2025, where fair work drives success, wellbeing and prosperity for individuals, businesses, organisations and society.

In our [Refreshed Fair Work Action Plan](#), we set out the actions we will take to promote fair and inclusive workplaces across Scotland, where workers experience the five [Fair Work Dimensions](#) – defined by the Fair Work Convention as Effective Voice, Security, Respect, Opportunity and Fulfilment. A key action includes our strengthened approach to conditionality in public sector funding. From 1 July 2023, all public sector grants will include a requirement to pay at least the Real Living Wage to all employees, and to provide appropriate channels for effective voice.

Themed Groups identified fair work as an important part of attracting people to work in the events sector. This means continuing to implement fair work practices, providing safe and secure working environments and promoting positive workplace cultures where staff are engaged, can make a valued contribution, and have an effective voice.

**Question 14:** If you work in the event sector, what are your experiences of Fair Work practices in the sector?

**Question 15:** If you work in the event sector, is there anything you would like to see change in relation to Fair Work practices?

### 5.1.2 Workforce planning and skills development

Themed Groups suggested that having such a mobile workforce can make it challenging to ensure everyone involved in an event is educated, empowered and accountable. Businesses can find it difficult to justify investing in education and training beyond their core team. Events are competing with each other, [other sectors](#) and other countries for staff. A number of sectors that events draw on, such as [hospitality](#), are facing similar recruitment and retention challenges.

Themed Groups identified an opportunity for clear pathways into and through a career in events in response to these challenges, alongside mentoring and good career information and advice. This could attract young people, those who are currently inactive in the labour market, and increase diversity.

Themed Groups also suggested career stability, transferable skills, different working patterns, sharing good practice, and supporting good quality volunteering opportunities were part of this picture. They noted that there was both excellent and more mixed practice around volunteering in the sector, and that there is under-representation of disadvantaged groups in formal volunteering roles. [Volunteering delivers economic, health and social benefits](#), as well as helping people develop skills and increase their employability, but [should not be used in place of paid roles](#).

**Question 16:** Do you think there are sufficient opportunities to do each of the following? Give an answer of yes, no, or don't know for each:

- learn about what it is like to work in the sector
- gain the skills and experiences you need to work in the sector
- further a career in the sector
- learn from the lessons and good practice of others in the sector

**Question 17:** How do you think access to these opportunities could be improved?

## 5.2 Environmental Sustainability

The current strategy states that all events in Scotland must set targets for resource efficiency thereby helping preserve one of Scotland's key assets, our natural environment. At present, there are [standards in international event sustainability \(ISO 20121\)](#). There are a number of initiatives to support individuals and organisations to be more environmentally sustainable, including through [Scottish Business Climate Collaboration](#)'s Climate Action Hub and [Creative Carbon Scotland](#).

On one hand, Themed Groups identified a desire across the event sector to drive progress in achieving a just transition to net zero. That included innovation and investment already happening in the sector. On the other, they felt that, in general terms, there was still a poor understanding of how to host a sustainable event. This

included that sufficient emphasis is not always placed on 'big ticket' items like [sustainable transport](#) (and the need to reduce car use), heat and energy use at venues, and catering.

This survey is seeking views on how we can address the challenges outlined below:

- **Building skills and expertise.** Themed Groups identified a lack of local specialised suppliers as a barrier – both to reducing environmental impact and to maximising local economic benefits from events.
- **Accessing and sharing information.** Themed Groups said that information being provided by lots of different organisations is resulting in a lack of clarity for the sector. Businesses are also having to find creative solutions to reduce environmental impact around aspects of sponsorship and merchandising. Themed Groups felt that working with one another and collaborating with other sectors could drive improvement.
- **Standards and collective practice.** Themed Groups felt that there is not yet a standard industry approach to environmental sustainability. A collective code of practice or principles across the sector could improve this and help customers to understand what they need to do more easily. Examples of this might be a charter like the [Green Events Code](#) of Vision 2025, or a procurement code or guidelines for events.

**Question 18:** What do you think would enable events to become more environmentally sustainable?

### 5.3 Financial sustainability

Events attract income from a number of different streams. These streams vary from event to event but can include ticket sales, sponsorship and grant funding. With our changing context (detail at [Annex A](#)), innovation will be needed for events in Scotland to continue to generate sustainable income streams. There is also a role for public policymakers at both national and local level to work with the event industry where there are areas of public value.

**Question 19:** What sources of income do you think events should be developing to be financially sustainable?

### 5.4 Measurement

Being able to measure and evaluate progress is critical to innovation and continuous improvement. Being able to evidence impacts can be helpful for some events in securing funding. That said, event organisers do not always have the expertise, capability, or capacity to evaluate effectively. The [eventIMPACTS](#) toolkit provides resources to help event organisers across the UK improve their evaluation of the impacts associated with staging sporting and cultural events.

Themed Groups suggested that there were a number of areas where better measurement and tools could support continuous improvement. In turn, this could help highlight where events deliver on wider outcomes for Scotland.

**Question 20:** What would support the event sector to measure the importance of events?

**Question 21:** We would welcome evidence on the measurable impacts of events, particularly those held in Scotland. This could include, but is not limited to impacts on:

- Local business
- Job opportunities
- Opportunities for participants to develop skills
- Environment
- Health and wellbeing of individuals or groups
- Community connections and cohesion
- Promoting diversity
- Profile and promotion of your area

Please go to the next question (question 22) if this is not relevant to you.

## **6. Promotion and Profile**

### **6.1 Brand Scotland**

Scotland's international [reputation has improved](#) in culture, tourism and overall since 2014. Internationally, people think of Scotland as a [fascinating, exciting and relaxing place to visit](#).

With fierce global competition and limited budgets, it pays to present our country's image, values and story consistently – domestically and internationally. With this in mind, Scotland has a single nation brand and associated nation brand strategy: [Brand Scotland](#). Its vision is for Scotland to be recognised as a leading global citizen and a dynamic, fair and inclusive country in which to live, work, study, visit, trade and invest.

### **6.2 Promotion through events**

Since 2014, Scotland has developed its experience of delivering world-class events of all sizes and types, and regularly successfully hosted [events of high international profile](#). As well as helping Scotland secure [more of these high profile events](#), Themed Groups said that this reputation encourages their peers in other countries to approach them for advice and guidance.

Major events can [enhance the reputation](#) of Scotland's cities and communities internationally, and build a sense of pride and confidence at a national level. Promoting Scotland's place in this way can also be used to promote our other assets. These include our natural environment, culture and heritage, diversity, food and drink, strong TV and film locations, history, sport and education. Events of different types and sizes can also generate profile for different sectors or regions. In

this way, all kind of events make a significant contribution to tourism and local economies across the whole of Scotland.

Beyond this, large-scale events provide a platform for Scotland to 'live our values on the world stage', in line with [Scotland's Global Affairs Framework](#). They have the potential to be one of the most powerful nation branding vehicles we have – an opportunity to tell a unified brand story. That story would both showcase our country and challenge perceptions internationally, and reinforce our values, with authenticity, at home.

There are already assets that promote [festivals](#) and [events](#) across Scotland to audiences. Promoting events is a way to attract people to work in the sector or to attend and feel the [wellbeing benefits of events](#). Themed Groups felt there was more the sector could do to communicate what it is doing to become more environmentally sustainable, and to promote Scottish events as a place to work. They also identified the potential of events as a platform for influencing behaviours. This included making more sustainable choices, for example, [promotion of active travel](#) through the 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships.

**Question 22:** In what way do you think events can promote Scotland internationally?

### 6.3 Mega events

Mega events are a unique type of event that are only available to Scotland when there is strong partnership working. In the UK, the [following indicators are considered](#) in deciding what is a mega event. An event need not necessarily fulfil all criteria to be considered a mega event:

- Event represents the pinnacle of the sport at World or European level
- Event is itinerant – i.e., not considered as permanently resident in the UK
- Event is likely to have a staging cost more than £10 million
- Event is likely to attract more than 100,000 spectators
- Event may require partial or full underwriting by the public sector
- Event may require government guarantees
- Event may entail significant delivery complexity

Following on from the [2014 Commonwealth Games](#), the current strategy supported Scotland in attracting and delivering a number of these large one-off events, including the [2018 European Championships](#), [COP26](#) in 2021, and the [2023 UCI Cycling World Championships](#). This is alongside a programme of high profile, international fixed events hosted each year, such as the Edinburgh Festivals.

The Scottish Government is trialling a framework to help understand how well a mega event might align to strategic aims in Scotland and inform decision-making. That framework looks at the event's size, scale and type, putting it in the context of other mega events that may be planned for Scotland. It assesses the event's potential across Profile, Innovation, Legacy, Economy, Participation and Sustainability with the aim of delivering a balance of these over time.





This approach draws on the [eventIMPACTS](#) Toolkit and informs any business case for government investment based on the [5 case business case model](#). Where investment is made, it then informs detailed development of event policy priorities, legacy strategy, delivery plans, and ongoing assurance.

**Question 23:** What specific aims would you prioritise for mega events?

## 7. Partnership and Collaboration

Since 2003, Scotland has had VisitScotland, including EventScotland, to help support and co-ordinate events activity across the sector, and a cohesive strategic approach between Government, public agencies and industry. This has supported building [relationships and sharing practice](#), approaches to [collaborating with communities](#) in event design and delivery, and [understanding of the industry](#) across the public sector.

At its best, Themed Groups felt that collaboration across the sector can deliver great events, through strong and accessible links to industry networks, inclusive events delivery, sharing of best practice, and working with the supply chain to reduce environmental impact.

Themed Groups also suggested that there are areas where we could improve partnership and collaboration. These are set out below.

## 7.1 Technology and infrastructure

Themed Groups highlighted that collaboration between industry and academia could help events plan for and adapt to the opportunities of current and new technologies. It could also help regions to access the benefits that come with events.

Already, there are examples of environmental sustainability being built into [industry-relevant college and university courses](#). There are also examples of conference venues working closely with local authorities to deliver on Net Zero ambitions, and [Glasgow rates highly in the Global Destination Sustainability Index](#).

Themed Groups identified indirect emissions, also known as [‘Scope 2’ and ‘Scope 3’ emissions](#), as an area where the industry needs to plan and collaborate with others. These include energy and transporting workforce and audiences sustainably to events. Integrating the customer journey could both reduce environmental impact and lead to safer travel for attendees and employees, especially after dark. Short and long term planning of events with local and national government could help reduce Scope 3 emissions. This could involve linking into [Mission Zero for transport, route map to 20 per-cent car kilometres reduction by 2030](#), and [free bus travel for under 22s](#), for example.

## 7.2 Local Authority experience

Local Governments are elected to make decisions based on the priorities and needs of local people. As such, Local Authorities each have their own local circumstances and priorities, including around events for the communities they serve. They may therefore take different approaches. Some have their own event strategies. Local Authorities each have varying experience with different types and sizes of events.

Themed Groups suggested that variation in messaging, joined up support, licensing and risk appetite can make it more difficult to plan for and organise events. They felt that Local Authorities that are able to take a planned approach to events were more likely to gain opportunities to generate employment, value and promote established events, and to sustain communities through events. There are examples of working across Local Authorities, such as among event officers or Environmental Health Officers during the Covid-19 pandemic, to develop shared understanding and promote good practice. Themed Groups felt that building on these networks could deliver a range of benefits.

## 7.3 Policy alignment

Themed Groups suggested that good dialogue across both local and national government could improve awareness of the benefits delivered by different types and sizes of event. In turn, this could strengthen events’ role in delivering shared outcomes and associated funding, such as those around culture, sport, education and health. It could also help identify a wider range of policies that might affect the event sector, and promote early engagement to minimise commercial market disruption.



Collaboration across sectors around events could also support other objectives, for example around trade promotion or diplomatic engagement, whether that was a business, [sport](#) or [cultural](#) event.

Themed Groups suggested some things that grant funders could consider that would help deliver on local or national outcomes. These included how easy the application and reporting processes are, incentivised funding structures, investment to leave lasting benefit, and criteria that promote collaboration.

Themed Groups also felt that it was important for UK Government, Scottish Government, other devolved governments and Local Authorities to work together to have consistent approaches in some areas, for example around policing and terrorism threat.

**Question 24:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that event organisers make connections between events and their ability to deliver broader positive impacts for society?

- strongly agree
- agree
- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree
- strongly disagree
- don't know

**Question 25:** We would welcome evidence on how event organisers are working together with local and/or national bodies to deliver outcomes. This could include, but is not limited to:

- Delivering events that have a positive impact on wellbeing
- Meeting the needs of local people
- Being more environmentally sustainable
- Supporting local business
- Attracting people to work in events
- Developing the event workforce

Please go to the next question (question 26) if this is not relevant to you.

## 8. Equalities

We have begun to identify opportunities for harnessing the full potential of the review to boost equality, inclusion and diversity. This includes building on the successes and lessons/learning from the previous [Themed Years](#), Major Events, and VisitScotland's [Inclusive Tourism](#) Project. This also means linking into key strategies such as the [2030 Tourism Strategy](#) and the Scottish Government's [Race Equality Framework and Action Plan](#).

Significant wider partner activity to boost equality through tourism and events is already underway. Examples include the suite of tools to boost inclusive tourism available from [VisitScotland's website](#) and commitment in the 2030 tourism strategy

to ensure that Scotland is an [inclusive and accessible destination](#). Building on this activity could be a central component of the Strategy Review.

### **8.1 Intersectional**

One of the most effective ways to welcome all of the protected groups to events is through focused marketing and PR activity to underline the welcome and to ensure that people see their communities reflected in media. For example 73% of respondents to [Equality Network/VisitScotland research on LGBT tourism](#) said that an LGBT friendly reputation was an important factor in their choice of destination.

### **8.2 Age**

[Levels of cultural attendance](#) in Scotland are generally higher among the younger age groups. There are opportunities to indirectly boost child rights and well-being. This includes learning from the 2018 Year of Young People to enhance wellbeing and boost empowerment through models like co-design. It also includes helping [address child poverty through Fair Work Practices](#), and using good volunteering opportunities to build skills and attract a future workforce.

### **8.3 Race/Multi-cultural communities**

Feedback from representative groups in recent years is that Major Events have significant potential to boost race equality and cultural diversity. This can be through bespoke events or as part of a wider package of programme activity. Examples include activity around the 2018 European Championships.

### **8.4 Disability**

[A fifth of people in Scotland](#) had a long-term activity-limiting health problem or disability in 2011. There is a growing body of evidence related to the engagement of disabled and older people in tourism, culture and events – boosted by data gathered in support of VisitScotland's Inclusive Tourism Project. Providing full and clear information on accessibility of events (travel and on-site) emerges as the central ask of disabled people.

### **8.5 Sexual orientation**

Existing annual events like LGBT History month and PRIDE related activities (virtual or in person) appear to offer particular opportunities to engage the LGBTI community. In addition, mainstreaming LGBTI content across marketing and PR activity helps boost visibility, under-line the welcome and raise awareness across wider society of Scotland's journey towards LGBTI equality. The welcome is also key for the trans community alongside safety and respect for example around security searches.

### **8.6 Socio-economic inequalities**

There is an opportunity for Scotland's events to reduce inequality of outcomes caused by socio-economic disadvantage. This could be through, for example,

increased community participation at events, volunteering and broader cultural engagement.

Measuring impact is a key consideration for the refreshed national events strategy. This presents an opportunity to incorporate inequality of outcomes caused by socio-economic disadvantage. This could include:

- Economic impact of events on geographic and thematic deprivation as evidenced through the [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation](#) and also other proxy data-sets such as the [Scottish Household Survey](#)
- Integration of Fair Work practices, development of career pathways, and other actions to attract people to work in the event sector
- Accessibility of events, harnessing their potential to boost civic pride, community spirit, social inclusion, empowerment and sense of place

## **8.7 Island communities**

The islands provide a unique events destination building on their world-renowned landscapes, history and traditions. This currently largely focuses on cultural activity but the [2025 International Island Games](#) have potential to broaden this out to include multi-sports too.

There is already a strong existing portfolio of events across many of the islands. Events include: Up Helly Aa (Shetland); SEALL Small Halls Festival (Skye); Isle of Arran Mountain Festival; Hebridean Celtic Festival; Eilean Dorcha Festival (Uist); Bute Fest; Orkney International Science Festival; Isle of Mull Car Rally; Tiree Wave Classic; and the Lagavulin Islay Jazz Festival.

Significant challenges remain for the islands in terms of fully harnessing the many benefits associated with events. These include transport and connectivity, lower population density, and the capacity of the tourism and hospitality sector to welcome large numbers of visitors attending a major event.

## **8.8 Contribution to impact assessments**

We are seeking the views of stakeholders and the public on any potential equality issues. We are assessing what impact the strategy may have across protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation). We are also looking at impacts in terms of socio-economic status and geographical location. We are looking at [business and regulatory impacts](#) too.

Impact assessments will be further developed alongside the drafting of the refreshed national events strategy. If you would like to be engaged in the impact assessment process, please email the [Scottish Government's Major Events Team](#).

**Question 26:** If there is anything else that you think we should be considering as part of impact assessments, please give details here.

**Question 27:** If there are any other changes to the current National Events Strategy you wish to see, please give details here.

## **9. Annex A: A Changing Context**

### **9.1 The return of events**

2022 was a significant summer for events in Scotland, following the significant restrictions in place from March 2020 through to spring 2021. Achievements included Dandelion's creative celebration of growing, music and community. The summer of golf in 2022 saw Scotland host five high profile events in consecutive weeks, headlined by the 150<sup>th</sup> Open at St Andrews. However, the event industry is still feeling the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Culture and events were among the first sectors to close and last to reopen. A combination of the [pandemic, Brexit and the energy crisis fuelled by Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, have sent prices spiralling](#). Rising costs are significantly hampering the ability of these sectors to recover following the pandemic, affecting supply chains, workforce and audience. Regrowth is therefore particularly important to the industry.

The industry is also having to respond to a number of recent changes and proposals around regulation in areas that affect them. These include new powers for local authorities to regulate [Short Term Lets](#), new requirements to reduce environmental impact such as the [Deposit Return Scheme](#), the requirement to pay the [Real Living Wage in order to access public sector grants](#), and potential future restrictions on [alcohol marketing](#).

### **9.2 Transition to Net Zero**

Climate change is one of the biggest threats facing humanity. If global temperatures continue to rise at the same rate as they have been, the increase in heat will drive regional and seasonal [temperature extremes](#), reduce [snow cover](#) and [sea ice](#), intensify [heavy rainfall](#), and change or destroy habitat ranges for [plants](#) and [animals](#), changing our planet in ways that will affect us all significantly. There are signs that the cost of living crisis may be [limiting consumer's ability to prioritise environmental sustainability](#).

There is an opportunity for the sector to be at the forefront of developments in this area, and scope to benefit from that investment in the longer term. An environmentally sustainable experience is an asset in making Scotland an attractive host of events and, with the [adoption of sustainable lifestyles on the rise](#), attractive to customers. The Scottish Government has set climate change ambitions to [become a net zero greenhouse gas emitting nation by 2045](#), with interim targets of 75% by 2030 and 90% by 2040, against 1990 baseline levels. It has also committed to doing this in a way that is just and fair for all people across Scotland. These are ambitious targets and require a collective effort from all corners of society to play their part, including governments, businesses, organisations, communities and households.

### 9.3 International engagement

Emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic, international tourism is reopening and presents an opportunity for the industry. There is also opportunity to engage with other nations again, including through links to an [international culture strategy](#) and the kind of '[sporting diplomacy](#)' being considered by other UK nations. At the same time, [Brexit presents fresh challenges](#) for the industry, including around [workforce and transportation of goods](#).

### 9.4 Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing

Positive mental wellbeing [encourages better quality of life](#) overall, healthier lifestyles, better physical health, improved recovery from illness, better social relationships, and higher educational attainment. We know that [significant mental health inequalities](#) exist in Scotland.

Early intervention and prevention are key priorities for the Scottish Government in taking forward our approach to mental health and wellbeing. Our aim is to support people to positively engage with their mental health at an early stage, promoting and supporting the conditions for good mental health and wellbeing at a population level.

Our mental health and wellbeing are influenced by many factors, such as our home life, our work, our physical environment and housing, our income, our relationships or our community. Events can [contribute positively to individual and community wellbeing](#).

### 9.5 International competition

Themed Groups told us that Scotland can seem an expensive place to host events compared to some other countries due to the cost of employment practices. This higher cost does, however, come with an existing infrastructure for hosting, people who are ready and have the skills to do the work, and the experience to deliver within the timeframe.

Against the backdrop of continued impacts from Covid-19, public spending constraints and the cost of living crisis, Scottish Government and the wider public sector have had to make difficult choices to live within budgets. At a time when [other countries are investing significant resource in events](#), the pressure of these challenges has had an effect on the public sector and the funds available for events in Scotland. Themed Groups were concerned that this could restrict how competitive Scotland is in attracting events, damaging its international reputation. It could mean less support for the development and delivery of future events in general, affecting the benefits that come from them. This meant that for those events looking to access public funds, a strategy that helps clearly evidence the benefits of events and their contribution is particularly important.

## 10. ANNEX B: Summary of Questions

**Question 1:** To what extent do you support, or oppose the proposed Ambition?

- strongly oppose
- oppose
- neutral
- support
- strongly support
- don't know

**Question 2:** How important do you think each of these strategic priorities are for events over the next ten years? Give a score of one to five for each, where one is not important at all and five is very important, or "don't know":

- Boosting the economy
- Enhancing well-being and community engagement
- Contributing to the drive towards net zero and environmental sustainability
- Making the event sector a better place to work
- Showcasing and promoting Scotland's assets

**Question 3:** What other strategic priorities, (if any), do you think should be included in a refreshed strategy?

**Question 4:** People attend events for a range of different reasons. Can you identify what is important for you in creating an excellent event experience?

**Question 5:** To what extent do you agree, or disagree that events in Scotland are:

- Accessible (strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, strongly agree, or don't know)
- Affordable (strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, strongly agree, or don't know)
- Inclusive (strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, strongly agree, or don't know)
- Welcoming (strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, strongly agree, or don't know)

**Question 6:** We are also interested in knowing about why people might not be able to attend events. Can you identify any reasons for not attending the events you would like to?

**Question 7:** To what extent do you agree, or not, that event organisers involve communities in planning the events they hold?

- strongly oppose
- oppose
- neutral
- support
- strongly support
- don't know

**Question 8:** To what extent do you agree, or not, that event organisers communicate about how the events taking place will affect local people?

- strongly oppose
- oppose
- neutral
- support
- strongly support
- don't know

**Question 9:** How could the benefits of events be increased for local communities?

**Question 10:** How important is the diversity of events in Scotland in terms of each of the following? Give a score of one to five for each, where one is not important at all and five is very important, or "don't know":

- Range of size
- Spread of location
- Variety of type

**Question 11:** What barriers, if any, are there to holding a diversity of events in Scotland?

**Question 12:** Do you think the event sector is an attractive place to work?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Question 13:** Please tell us why you selected yes, no or don't know here.

**Question 14:** If you work in the event sector, what are your experiences of Fair Work practices in the sector?

**Question 15:** If you work in the event sector, is there anything you would like to see change in relation to Fair Work practices?

**Question 16:** Do you think there are sufficient opportunities to do each of the following? Give an answer of yes, no, or don't know for each:

- learn about what it is like to work in the sector
- gain the skills and experiences you need to work in the sector
- further a career in the sector
- learn from the lessons and good practice of others in the sector

**Question 17:** How do you think access to these opportunities could be improved?

**Question 18:** What do you think would enable events to become more environmentally sustainable?

**Question 19:** What sources of income do you think events should be developing to be financially sustainable?

**Question 20:** What would support the event sector to measure the importance of events?

**Question 21:** We would welcome evidence on the measurable impacts of events, particularly those held in Scotland. This could include, but is not limited to impacts on:

- Local business
- Job opportunities
- Opportunities for participants to develop skills
- Environment
- Health and wellbeing of individuals or groups
- Community connections and cohesion
- Promoting diversity
- Profile and promotion of your area

**Question 22:** In what way do you think events can promote Scotland internationally?

**Question 23:** What specific aims would you prioritise for mega events?

**Question 24:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that event organisers make connections between events and their ability to deliver broader positive impacts for society?

- strongly agree
- agree
- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree
- strongly disagree
- don't know

**Question 25:** We would welcome evidence on how event organisers are working together with local and/or national bodies to deliver outcomes. This could include, but is not limited to:

- Delivering events that have a positive impact on wellbeing
- Meeting the needs of local people
- Being more environmentally sustainable
- Supporting local business
- Attracting people to work in events
- Developing the event workforce

**Question 26:** If there is anything else that you think we should be considering as part of impact assessments, please give details here.

**Question 27:** If there are any other changes to the current National Events Strategy you wish to see, please give details here.





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