

100% of delegates like the principles of democracy | **16% like how it works in practice** (2021vSRP)

UK and Scottish democracy is inaccessible, constrained by uncodified rules; by complex, siloed legislation and by lack of investment in the structures of local governance and community empowerment including Community Councils and Anchor organisations.

18% of people feel they can influence local decisions
(Scottish Household Survey 2019)

- **We expect** the **reform of local governance** to deliver smaller local councils with greater fiscal and functional authority and a more powerful community-level tier of local democracy building on Community Councils. One cannot happen without the other.
- **We expect** the **National Planning Framework (NPF4)** to prioritise climate action and wellbeing and champion the Place Principle. We expect Local Place Plans to give real power to communities over their future development.
- **We expect** the **community empowerment agenda** to deliver guaranteed funding and investment in communities and to act as a vehicle for advancing equality and social justice.

We also expect...

Participation

An evidence-led National Volunteering Strategy that supports and builds capacity of governance volunteers - members of Boards and Community Councils.

Research into the feasibility of setting up a body able to support community structures to manage conflict in positive ways.

Local democratic structures

Action research to test approaches which enhance public engagement with Community Councils and increase the diversity in their membership. This should be linked to a high-profile national campaign in the run up to the 2023 elections.

Investment in network organizing across Community Council areas with a view to achieving greater integration of local activities and greater collaboration amongst CCs, other community anchors, planners and the local council.

Community Empowerment

A top-up of the 1% Framework Agreement commitment by a further 0.2% with the allocation going to addressing persistent structural inequalities in the design and delivery of local authority Participatory Budgeting activities.

Guaranteed funding for anchor organizations' main salaried post and a reasonable allocation to organisational overheads. Funding must come with capacity building support & scrutiny on advancing equality and inclusion.

National initiatives

National and local government to pilot digital platforms for involving citizens in democratic deliberations, including crowdsourcing policy initiatives.

Scottish Government to invest in inclusive consultation and co-design processes, including dedicated mini-publics, to shape the local governance reform and NPF4.

Scottish Parliament to demonstrate leadership and commitment to these three linked agendas through an early debate and launch of Committee and Cross-Party Group.