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Kenneth J Gibson MSP  
Convener  
Finance and Public Administration Committee

By email

Copy to: all other committees

16 February 2026

Dear Kenneth,

I am writing to you as the Convener of the Finance and Public Administration Committee (FPAC) to provide an update on the National Performance Framework (NPF). I also am sending a copy of this letter to all fifteen committees given the wide-reaching nature of the NPF and the positive involvement from committees during the Inquiry into proposed National Outcomes.

As you know, following the Government's review of the NPF and the subsequent FPAC-led joint committee inquiry, the collective evidence was clear that while the NPF remains an important vision for Scotland, we recognise that it can be improved and updated to make it more fit for purpose as we head towards the middle of the 21st century.

My officials held productive meetings with you and other MSPs from across the chamber last September. In those meetings, we outlined that the reformed NPF was being designed as a compelling and aspirational vision of sustainable and long-term wellbeing for the people of Scotland and that it must encompass our social, economic and environmental needs, providing a clear vision for a future in which we all want to live.

We have now developed a proposed new draft model for the NPF based on international good practice. Importantly, we have taken that evidence and adapted it to fit our Scottish context. We have drawn upon the OECD<sup>1</sup> Measurement of Wellbeing Framework<sup>2</sup> which has gained international recognition and has been successfully implemented in other countries like Canada and New Zealand.

<sup>1</sup> Office for Economic Cooperation and Development

<sup>2</sup> [Measuring well-being and progress | OECD](#)

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](#)



We have developed these draft proposals with extensive internal engagement across the Scottish Government and advice from our NPF Reform Advisory Group<sup>3</sup> which is comprised of experts in wellbeing such as Carnegie UK, leading academics, specific interest groups, and those who will be key partners in delivering towards the outcomes like COSLA.

## Next steps

I am pleased to enclose the engagement document that will guide the next phase of this work from now to the dissolution of parliament. This sets out the proposed changes and is being sent to partners and stakeholders for written feedback. Scottish Government officials will also run complementary engagement sessions including, but not exclusively, with local government - through COSLA officer level forums; and public bodies - through existing sponsor team routes of engagement.

The aim is to use this feedback to prepare a final proposal for the next government to consider following the election. Pending the outcome of that decision, I would hope that parliament would then agree to debate the reformed NPF in the chamber after summer recess to help cement its role in how we do government and public service reform.

I, or my officials, would be pleased to meet with representatives of the committees over the coming months if this would be useful and diaries allow.

Yours sincerely,



**KATE FORBES**

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<sup>3</sup> Further details on membership were provided to the [SJSS Committee](#), on 28 November 2025. Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](#)



## **ANNEX A – NPF Engagement Document**

**Scottish Government  
Directorate for Strategy and Delivery**

# **National Performance Framework – Scotland’s Wellbeing**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

We want Scotland to be a prosperous and fair country where people are doing well, regardless of their start in life, and live in sustainable, thriving communities with access to effective public services. This future cannot be achieved by anyone working alone but instead, requires different people and organisations from across the public, private, and voluntary sectors to work closely together.

Launched in 2007, the National Performance Framework (NPF) is Scotland's long-term wellbeing framework to support the delivery of our national outcomes which are established in the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. The NPF was substantially updated in 2018 and, in line with the Community Empowerment Act, the Scottish Government reviewed the national outcomes in 2022. As per the legislation, the Scottish Parliament then conducted a detailed inquiry into the Government's proposed changes to the national outcomes<sup>4</sup>.

Both the Government's review and the Parliamentary inquiry included extensive consultation with a range of organisations, as well as calls for evidence, and this resulted in a substantial body of evidence on the NPF.

That evidence was clear that while the NPF remains an important vision for Scotland, we recognise that it can be improved and updated to make it more fit for purpose as we head towards the middle of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The Scottish Government has now developed a refreshed model and refocussed vision for the future of the National Performance Framework. These proposals have been built on the evidence from recent reviews, from international evidence, and from the advice of the NPF Reform Advisory Group.

### **Public Services Reform Strategy**

The national outcomes can help guide better public services and the Public Services Reform (PSR) strategy includes the reform of the NPF as an objective, under workstream two, to "*ensure a clear connection between outcomes, ways of working and accountability across Scotland*"<sup>5</sup>. Workstream one of the PSR Strategy (leadership and culture change) is also highly relevant as it focusses on "*creating the conditions for excellent, collaborative, public service leadership*".

The resulting accountability and leadership approaches from PSR will be important in helping to embed NPF principles and expectations to ensure we have a functioning system of performance, accountability and improvement. There are also wider ways of working principles that we should introduce to ensure the national outcomes are embedded in all that we do.

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<sup>4</sup> See: [Finance and Public Administration Committee | Scottish Parliament Website](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Public Services Reform](#)

## Your Views Matter

Your organisation's feedback will help inform the future of the NPF which will be considered by the incoming government following the 2026 Scottish Parliament Election. This is not a formal consultation, and we are welcoming feedback on the current proposals as well as suggestions from organisations on what future implementation of the National Performance Framework could look like.

Rather than consultation questions, throughout this document you will find various prompts for discussion and feedback. We would encourage you to reflect on these points and submit feedback directly to the NPF project team here:

[NationalPerformance@gov.scot](mailto:NationalPerformance@gov.scot)

Given its design and purpose, the NPF is deeply connected to a variety of work and activity across Scotland. Notably, the NPF is a key component of the Public Services Reform Strategy (PSR), acting as the unifying framework, setting direction for all public service strategies and informing decision-making by providing a stable long-term anchor against which priorities, investment and performance can be tested. As such, your feedback on these proposals will also inform the work being taken forward under the PSR.

We are primarily seeking feedback from organisations across the public, third, and private sectors rather than individual members of the public as we are progressing with several targeted focus groups to gain specific feedback from public audiences.

The final deadline for feedback is 09 April 2026.

## 1.1 Summary of the Proposal

<b>What</b>	<p><b>Scotland's vision</b> To improve the wellbeing of people living in Scotland now and in the future.</p>					
	<p><b>Scotland's National Outcomes</b></p> <table><tr><td><b>Connected</b> We participate freely in the civic, cultural and social life of our communities.</td><td><b>Healthy</b> We live longer, healthier and more fulfilling lives.</td><td><b>Secure</b> We live safe lives, free from violence and injustice.</td></tr><tr><td><b>Prosperous</b> We have a successful wellbeing economy which supports a good standard of living for everyone, with fair work and the opportunity to thrive.</td><td><b>Skilled</b> We have the knowledge and skills we need throughout our lives to realise our full potential.</td><td><b>Sustainable</b> We live in a healthy environment, enjoy the natural environment and protect it for future generations.</td></tr></table>	<b>Connected</b> We participate freely in the civic, cultural and social life of our communities.	<b>Healthy</b> We live longer, healthier and more fulfilling lives.	<b>Secure</b> We live safe lives, free from violence and injustice.	<b>Prosperous</b> We have a successful wellbeing economy which supports a good standard of living for everyone, with fair work and the opportunity to thrive.	<b>Skilled</b> We have the knowledge and skills we need throughout our lives to realise our full potential.
<b>Connected</b> We participate freely in the civic, cultural and social life of our communities.	<b>Healthy</b> We live longer, healthier and more fulfilling lives.	<b>Secure</b> We live safe lives, free from violence and injustice.				
<b>Prosperous</b> We have a successful wellbeing economy which supports a good standard of living for everyone, with fair work and the opportunity to thrive.	<b>Skilled</b> We have the knowledge and skills we need throughout our lives to realise our full potential.	<b>Sustainable</b> We live in a healthy environment, enjoy the natural environment and protect it for future generations.				
<b>How</b>	<p><i>These outcomes apply equally to everyone in Scotland and localise the UN Sustainable Development Goals</i></p>					
	<p><b>Measuring what matters</b> National progress measured through the streamlined national outcome indicator set (top level of Scotland's performance and accountability system). Considering measures of distribution – fairness, equality, income and wealth, geography, inter-generational, future impact, and our place in the world – apply to all the outcomes and allows us to understand whether all communities are progressing. Impact and good practice are communicated through qualitative evidence (e.g. case studies on collaboration)</p>					
	<p><b>Legislative underpinning</b> National outcomes and the need to report progress towards them are established in law through the <u>Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015</u>.</p>					
<b>How</b>	<p><b>Scotland's Ways of Working</b> Shared 'ways of working' that deeply embed a culture of strategic, long-term planning, where the national outcomes are positioned at the apex of decision making.</p>					
	<p>This should reflect international good practice and the strong foundations that already exist in Scotland for efficient and effective public service (e.g. the Christie Pillars).</p>					

## 1. CONCEPT

### 1.1 Collective Wellbeing

Collective wellbeing means that everyone should have what they need to live well - now and in the future. Improving people's lives requires an extremely careful balancing of different factors. We know as individuals that sometimes trade-offs must be made in our lives, and this is true at the national level as well.

Governments around the world recognise that improving people's lives is complex and focussing only on one element of society is not sufficient. To improve our quality of life it is important we consider not only material prosperity but also the other conditions that shape people's economic options, their quality of life, and their relationships<sup>6</sup>.

Making use of a broad range of measures, beyond purely economic measures, allows us to understand how people are really faring and support more informed discussions and better policy decisions to improve the lives of people in Scotland.

The concept of collective wellbeing takes a long-term view, asking how policies and decisions today will improve life for everyone, not just right now, but for generations to come. It is fundamentally about creating societies where people can thrive, not just economies that can grow.

### 1.2 NPF Concept

*Our vision is to improve the wellbeing of people living in Scotland now and in the future.*

The proposed National Performance Framework (NPF) has been designed as a compelling and aspirational vision of sustainable and long-term wellbeing for the people of Scotland. It encompasses our social, economic and environmental needs, and is intended to provide a clear vision for a future in which we all want to live.

The framework is for all of Scotland and anyone working for the public good should use the framework to support their decision making. In particular, the Scottish Government, Local Authorities, and public bodies should continue to have regard to the National Outcomes through their daily activity<sup>7</sup>.

The revised framework is built on a firm international evidence base and we have taken that learning and adapted it to fit our particular Scottish context. We have drawn upon the OECD<sup>8</sup> Measurement of Wellbeing Framework<sup>9</sup> which has gained international recognition and has been successfully implemented in other countries like Canada and New Zealand.

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<sup>6</sup> [Measuring well-being and progress | OECD](#)

<sup>7</sup> As per the duties in the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act (2015).

<sup>8</sup> Office for Economic Cooperation and Development

<sup>9</sup> [Measuring well-being and progress | OECD](#)

As the proposed model has a much greater focus on long-term wellbeing, the word 'performance' might no longer reflect the purpose and intent of the framework. As such we are considering whether to change the name of the NPF, to better reflect its purpose. Other countries that have developed similar long-term strategies and frameworks have a range of titles including:

- Wales - Well-being of Future Generations
- New Zealand - Living Standards Framework
- Austria – How's Austria?
- Germany – Wellbeing in Germany

#### **Prompts for discussion and feedback**

- These changes hone our focus on long term wellbeing by basing it on the evidence of what works. Will this proposed approach support better decision making that will improve wellbeing? Will this renewed focus help with long-term thinking? Will having a more focussed wellbeing framework at the apex of decision making, enable the reduction of inequalities in Scotland?
- We believe changing the name of the framework would better reflect its purpose while also making it more accessible to a wide range of audiences.

Possible names could include:

- Scotland's Wellbeing Framework
  - Scotland's Wellbeing Goals
  - Scotland's Wellbeing Vision
- National Progress Framework
- Scotland's Goals
- How's Scotland?
- Scotland's Future

## 2. OUTCOMES

Key components of the National Performance Framework are the National Outcomes, which are required by the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. These are the specific, high-level goals we are working towards to make Scotland the type of country we want it to be.

The evidence suggests that population-level, long-term outcomes should be simple and easy to understand, while also capturing the broad range of things that affect our wellbeing.

Drawing on that evidence and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, we have developed six new national outcomes:

- **Connected** – We participate freely in the civic, cultural and social life of our communities.
- **Healthy** – We live longer, healthier and more fulfilling lives.
- **Prosperous** – We have a successful economy which supports a good standard of living for everyone, with fair work and the opportunity to thrive.
- **Secure** – We live safe lives, free from violence and injustice.
- **Skilled** – We have the knowledge and skills we need throughout our lives to realise our full potential.
- **Sustainable** – We live in a healthy environment, enjoy the natural environment and protect it for future generations.

None of the National Outcomes should be viewed in isolation, nor are any of the outcomes the responsibility of any one person or organisation. Therefore, having fewer outcomes can encourage greater collaboration and more effective systems thinking, whereby we recognise that problems in society are rarely due to only one cause.

### 2.1 Cross-cutting perspectives

In addition to these six outcomes, there are a range of cross-cutting perspectives, or lenses, through which they can be viewed.

Cross-cutting issues should be applied across all six outcomes as the outcomes apply to all population groups. This approach encourages thinking about the cross-cutting issues across all policy areas, and how public policies work together to achieve outcomes (this is sometimes called ‘policy coherence’). Two examples of these perspectives are ‘fairness, equality and human rights’, as well as ‘Scotland’s place in the world’.

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act makes it clear that the national outcomes must have regard to the reduction of inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage. However, fairness, equality and human rights extend beyond income which, along with opportunities to build wealth over time, matters for people’s well-being and both are heavily determined by socio-economic status.

There is growing evidence that inequality is harmful to everyone in society. A better understanding of the effects of individual policies on specific social groups allows policy makers to identify trade-offs and shared benefits.

We are also part of a global society and a global market, and what we do in these spheres matters to people in Scotland and affects the rest of the world. In a world of intersecting challenges, crises and opportunities, the decisions that impact our own wellbeing here and now also have wider effects internationally and in the future. Scotland was one of the first countries in the world to adopt the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the National Performance Framework continues to be the localisation of those goals.

#### **Prompts for discussion and feedback**

- This proposal has a smaller number of higher-level outcomes. Can you see how and where your work would contribute towards these outcomes? Is there something missing that isn't captured by any of the above outcomes?
- This proposal discusses a range of cross-cutting perspectives (or lenses) that are critical to the success of national wellbeing goals. How should we best represent these in the final model?

### 3. UNDERSTANDING OUR PROGRESS

What we measure matters. Progress towards improving wellbeing in Scotland will be measured by a set of outcome indicators, presented on the Scottish Government website, which consider a range of factors that are important to people's lives, such as mental health, sense of belonging, social connection, access to nature, personal safety, and more.

Understanding progress is essential in public policymaking and having disaggregated data helps to understand inequalities across population groups, socio-economic groups and geographies.

The NPF alone will not track short-term or organisational-level progress or contributions to national outcomes. We recognise that our current system of accountability does not enable the ways of working we want to see and we must fundamentally rethink how we hold organisations and leaders to account. To fully realise and embed the intent of the NPF, the Public Services Reform Strategy committed to re-design our approach to accountability across Scotland's public sector. It will, of course, be important for our approaches to accountability to measure organisational contributions to pursuit of the national outcomes, bridging the gap between outcomes measures and operational delivery.

The reformed NPF is being designed to be high-level and concise to ensure that it is accessible and meaningful to as many people as possible. It will complement existing frameworks by providing an overarching national view of how our country and society is doing. The streamlined NPF indicator set will be a subset of priority indicators reported in existing reporting frameworks and mechanisms, providing coherence across the reporting system.

Work is ongoing to developing the initial indicator set prior to further engagement. The indicator set will be finalised in earnest when the outcomes are agreed. Any changes to the outcomes and proposals via this feedback will be considered when developing the national indicator set.

To be included, indicators need to meet a set of requirements. These are relevance, coherence, balance, technical quality and international alignment. Developing good well-being indicators is difficult. Countries often face similar challenges, such as the definition of the dimensions of the well-being framework, the selection of indicators, availability of data, different approaches to measuring inequalities, the use of people's own views and experiences (subjective indicators) as well as deciding on the use of composite scores or indexes.

Development of the indicator set for the reformed NPF will be informed by technical workshops. The NPF Technical Advisory Group, whose membership is senior analysts within Scottish Government, will provide a peer review role. Once peer reviewed, the Chief Statistician will make a recommendation as to the final set of indicators, maintaining the statistical independence of the national indicators.

**Prompts for discussion and feedback**

While we are not inviting technical feedback on the national indicator set at this stage, we would welcome views on how we use them to better tell the story and to influence change in policy.

## 4. WAYS OF WORKING

The National Performance Framework (NPF) is intended to set out the kind of Scotland we all want to see, bringing together our shared aspirations for collective wellbeing. To really make a difference, the NPF should influence decision making, policy design, and budgeting. If decision making is viewed through the NPF, we can take strong, coordinated steps towards delivering that future.

Recent Parliamentary inquiries have suggested the NPF has had an ‘implementation gap’ which has limited its full potential. Accountability and compliance with legislation<sup>10</sup> is essential, however, it is also important to promote a culture across the public sector which is focussed on delivering effective outcomes that make a real difference to peoples’ lives.

Learning from international good practice, the Scottish Government will lead on ensuring we are all working towards a consistent set of ways of working and embed this within the new framework.

### 4.1 A Framework for All of Scotland

An overarching principle for the NPF is that it represents Scotland’s vision and a set of shared outcomes. We want to gather as much feedback as possible to establish relevant, coherent and accessible ways of working. We can then develop overarching guidance to support the embedding of the national outcomes in all organisations’ local contexts.

We think the following should be considered for inclusion in some way:

- **Long-term and strategic:** positioning the reformed NPF at the apex of decision and budget making to help us focus on, and be accountable for, improving people’s lives and public services now and in the future.
- **Collaborative:** viewing the national outcomes as a set or a whole, we will wish to encourage collaboration within and across organisations where there is potential to work together to achieve shared goals.
- **Inclusive:** we monitor and evaluate how our approaches to delivering the national outcomes are achieving positive outcomes for all the people of Scotland.

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<sup>10</sup> For example the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

Putting the ways of working into practice will require us all to plan and improve implementation in our respective organisations<sup>11</sup>. This could include, where relevant and appropriate, the following themes:

- **Strategy:** ensuring the NPF is embedded in whatever process/methodology the organisation is using to set its strategy. Working with partner organisations to ensure consistency in areas of joint strategy.
- **Operational/procedural:** internal policies, processes and procedures such as templates should, provide clear guidance on the national outcomes and ensure they have a proper role in decision criteria.
- **Governance:** our governance structures all the way up to board level could be transparently guided by the national outcomes
- **Leadership and ownership:** leadership at all levels should embody, including within job/role descriptions, the national outcomes and build effective teams around them.

We would welcome ideas and suggestions for what our ways of working for the reformed NPF should look like, how they could be put into practice/implemented and accountability for this. The following two examples, highlighted during phase two of the project, are provided as prompts to guide thinking and discussion.

#### **Example A - Welsh Government – Wellbeing of Future Generations**

In addition to their wellbeing goals, the Welsh Government have five 'ways of working' which are the principles that public bodies must demonstrate in their decision making in order to show that they are taking into account the impact that they could have on people living their lives in Wales in the future as well as in the present<sup>12</sup>.

The five ways of working are:

- Thinking for the long-term
- Prevention
- Integration
- Collaboration
- Involvement

<sup>11</sup> The [Scottish Leaders Forum \(2022\) guide](#) is a useful prompt as it still contains relevant themes.

<sup>12</sup> [The-Ways-of-Working-of-The-Well-being-of-Future-Generations-Wales-Act-2015.pdf](#)

## Example B - Christie principles

It has been suggested that the Christie principles<sup>13</sup> and the Scottish Approach to Government<sup>14</sup> already provide a firm basis from which to develop shared ways of working around the reformed NPF.

The Christie Pillars are:

- Prevention
- Place
- Partnership
- People
- Performance

### 4.2 Resources and guidance

#### 4.3

The previous version of the NPF included downloadable resources such as tailorable presentations<sup>15</sup> and the guide to outcomes focused policy<sup>16</sup>. We will populate the NPF website with updated resources. There is an opportunity through collaboration to develop these in innovative and engaging ways, using the knowledge and expertise across our partners to ensure we produce materials that are accessible, relevant and useful.

#### 4.4

Current guidance such as that for public bodies<sup>17</sup> and the informal budgeting for outcomes guide<sup>18</sup> exists. However, we have learned that this is not easily accessible to all and improving the website to bring the relevant links together in one place would be a major improvement.

Responders to this document will have views, from experience, on what overarching guidance from the Scottish Government should cover. The recent parliament inquiry, for example, considered better guidance was needed to help organisations navigate the interlinkages and co-dependences between the national outcomes, particularly for those considering the potential trade-offs when using them to shape policy and spending decisions<sup>19</sup>.

### 4.5 What could improved implementation look like for the Scottish Government?

The Scottish Government should be a role model for how to use the NPF as a tool to drive better decision making.

The following table sets out at a high-level, current thinking within the Scottish Government on where we will be seeking to maintain, improve and/or introduce new

<sup>13</sup> [Christie Commission on the future delivery of public services - gov.scot](#) and [figure three in PSR](#).

<sup>14</sup> [THE SCOTTISH APPROACH TO GOVERNMENT - On Board - A guide for Board Members of Public Bodies in Scotland \(April 2015\) - gov.scot](#)

<sup>15</sup> See archived website - [link](#)

<sup>16</sup> See archived website - [link](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Public bodies - gov.scot](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Improving People's Wellbeing - 6 key questions to ask when making budget decisions](#)

<sup>19</sup> [Scottish Parliament FPAC recommendations](#)

practice to embed the national outcomes in all that we do<sup>20</sup>. This is set out on the parliamentary timescale to show this working through the short to medium-term.

We are encouraging organisations to think about how they might similarly plan in their local contexts and to feedback on any innovations, opportunities and challenges.

#### **Prompts for discussion and feedback**

- Is this level of ambition enough or could we go further?
- What would you want to see included in ways of working?
- What opportunities do you see for improved implementation within your organisation and what might be important barriers?
- Thinking about the Public Services Reform strategy, how could the reformed NPF help strengthen accountability and transparency and guide culture and behaviours?
- Should Scotland introduce something similar to the Welsh Government's five ways of working? If so, this would be linked to the Public Services Reform Strategy so as not to duplicate work and over-burden public bodies.
- What would you like to see included in overarching guidance, materials and resources? Is there scope for collaboration to develop these?

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<sup>20</sup> Please note that this would all be subject to the views of the new government.

**Table 1 - indicative and high-level Scottish Government approach**

<b>&lt;&lt;&lt; Parliamentary session (five years) &gt;&gt;&gt;</b>			
<b>Strategy (medium-term)</b>	<b>&lt;&lt;&lt; Parliamentary Year &gt;&gt;&gt;</b>		
	<b>Short-term priorities</b>	<b>Reporting and communicating progress</b>	<b>Scrutiny, accountability and governance</b>
<p><b>Strategic and corporate plans</b>, aligned with the National Outcomes and trends/horizons<sup>21</sup>, for the parliamentary session, helps guide annual programmes for Scottish Government and public bodies.</p> <p><b>Longer-term (10+ years) policy strategies</b> aligned with the National Outcomes and trends.</p>	<p>Government leads on overarching guidance and <b>ways of working</b> principles to support public bodies and others to embed National Outcomes.</p>	<p>A streamlined <b>National Indicators set</b>, made up of outcome-based indicators, which are reported on the Government's website, clearly showing a picture of national progress.</p> <p>Indicator data will be disaggregated where possible to better understand inequalities across population groups, socio-economic groups and geographies.</p>	<p><b>Published consolidated accounts (annual)</b>: the performance report section will provide data to show national progress with the outcomes and to performance level data.</p>
<p><b>Government priorities</b> provide clear line of sight from specific policies through government priorities to the National Outcomes.</p>	<p>National Outcomes are embedded in the <b>relevant policy formulation and budget decision processes</b> and governance etc. surrounding the programme for government.</p>	<p><b>Thematic reports</b> will be published regularly that bring together national indicator data as well as qualitative data.</p> <p>Impact and good practice is communicated through qualitative evidence (e.g. case studies on collaboration).</p>	<p>National Outcomes provide the overarching objectives to guide <b>Public Services Reform</b>, particularly 'accountability and incentives' (foundation two).</p>

<sup>21</sup> [Future Trends for Scotland: findings from the 2024-2025 horizon scanning project - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/publications/future-trends-scotland-findings-2024-2025-horizon-scanning-project/)

Table 1 continued

<<< Parliamentary session (five years) >>>			
Strategy (medium-term)	<<< Parliamentary Year >>>		
	Short-term priorities	Reporting and communicating progress	Scrutiny, accountability and governance
National Outcomes embedded in <b>structural, governance and operational arrangements</b> .	Annual <b>Ministerial letters of guidance</b> or equivalent sponsor arrangements require NDPBs/Public bodies to transparently align priorities with the National Outcomes.	<b>Budget tagging</b> <sup>22</sup> the national outcomes support scrutiny and evaluation of distribution/highlights tensions, trade-offs etc.	Government (and/or Parliament)-led formal groups/structures to provide <b>objective advice and steer</b> on progress and to drive continuous improvement, including learning from international good practice.
Government leads on overarching guidance and <b>ways of working</b> resources to support and train organisations to embed the National Outcomes.	<b>Any recipient of Government funding</b> (including procurement process) must demonstrate alignment with the National Outcomes (criteria).	National Outcomes provide the top layer for any Government and public sector <b>performance frameworks</b> .	NPF is <b>owned</b> by Permanent Secretary at the Executive Team level, and by Cabinet Secretaries at the Cabinet level.

<sup>22</sup> See budget tagging pilot work – [strategic integrated impact assessment](#)

## 1. INDICATIVE NEXT STEPS

Following this phase of wider engagement, the Scottish Government will analyse all feedback and responses to this paper, alongside the outputs of any other events run by partner organisations.

Officials will then provide a revised model to the new government following the May election.

We would expect a Scottish Government motion for debate to be made following summer recess, subject to parliamentary business.

We would also propose that implementation plans or statements of intent are published on respective websites by end-2026.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

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## 2. SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

This section includes more background information on the National Performance Framework.

### **NPF history**

The National Performance Framework was launched in 2007 as a 10-year vision for Scotland and to be an outcomes-based performance model which focused on results achieved, rather than inputs and outputs. This was designed to allow the government and wider public sector to focus on making sustainable improvements to public services and the quality of life for the people of Scotland.

The NPF was refreshed in 2011 to reflect lessons learned since 2007. The update included adding one new National Outcome and a range of new National Indicators to better track progress against the outcomes. Further changes to the National Indicators were made in 2016.

### Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

To make the need for National Outcomes a firmer policy, underpinned by law, this Act places a duty on Scottish Ministers to consult on, develop and publish a set of national outcomes for Scotland. The NPF is the way that the Scottish Government meets this a legal requirement.

### Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations has set a series of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These are 'global goals' and targets that are part of an internationally agreed performance framework. All countries are aiming to achieve these goals by 2030.

The National Performance Framework (NPF) and the SDG's share the same aims. The National Performance Framework is Scotland's way to localise the SDGs. The NPF has a focus on tackling inequalities so that no one in Scotland is left behind as we work together to achieve the Goals.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

## Current National Performance Framework

The NPF currently has 11 National Outcomes and 81 National Indicators and was introduced in 2018.

The current 11 outcomes are (in alphabetical order):

- **Children** – We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential.
- **Communities** – We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe.
- **Culture** – We are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely.
- **Economy** - We have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy.
- **Education** – we are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society.
- **Environment** – we value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment.
- **Fair Work and Business** – we have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work for everyone.
- **Health** – we are healthy and active.
- **Human Rights** – we respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination.
- **International** – we are open, connected and make a positive contribution internationally.
- **Poverty** – we tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally.

The 81 National Indicators track Scotland's progress in meeting its National Outcomes. The indicators use data to understand how well Scotland is doing and help focus policies and resources to meet challenges. The NPF combines measurement of how well Scotland is doing in economic terms with a broader range of wellbeing measures, moving us beyond a focus on economic growth.

For more information on the current NPF, including the full list of national indicators, please access the archived website: [\[ARCHIVED CONTENT\] National Performance Framework | National Performance Framework](#).

Please note that the data on the website has not been actively updated since spring 2025. All NPF indicator data is drawn from existing sources and therefore may still be available at source.

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## 2023 National Outcomes Review

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 requires Scottish Ministers to review the National Outcomes every five years. In line with that duty, the Scottish Government launched a consultation and call for evidence in March 2023<sup>23</sup>, before publishing a proposal for a new set of national outcomes for consideration by the Scottish Parliament. The new proposal was to add three new outcomes (Care, Climate Action, and Housing), taking the total number of outcomes to 13 (with the previous *Economy* and *Fair Work and Business* outcomes combined into a single outcome).

The Finance and Public Administration Committee led on the scrutiny of the proposals and gathered a range of evidence and submissions in summer 2024, publishing their formal report on 15 November 2024<sup>24</sup>.

Following careful consideration of the Parliament's report and the evidence that was submitted and published during that time, including Carnegie UK's report on how to embed the NPF across decision making<sup>25</sup>, it became clear that making changes to the existing national outcomes was not enough and that more fundamental change was needed. Scottish Ministers therefore decided to pause the implementation of the proposed national outcomes in favour of a more substantial reform programme.

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<sup>23</sup> [National Outcomes review 2023: consultation information pack - gov.scot](#)

<sup>24</sup> [National Performance Framework: Inquiry into proposed National Outcomes | Scottish Parliament Website](#)

<sup>25</sup> [How a strengthened National Performance Framework can drive effective government in Scotland - Carnegie UK](#)

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## NPF Reform Project Timeline

<b>Phase one (Jan – June 2025)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project set-up, resourcing, project management and governance arrangements.</li> <li>Phase-one workstreams – analysis of evidence, international good practice analysis.</li> <li>Initial engagement: internal advisory group, Senior Civil Service workshops, establish Reform Advisory Group (external).</li> <li>Development of the draft outline and conceptual approach.</li> </ul>
<b>Phase two (July 2025 – Jan 2026)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phase two work streams - development of proposed model with input from internal teams across government, a second round of Senior Civil Service workshops, working with the Reform Advisory Group, and cross-party engagement with MSPs including from the lead committee (Finance and Public Administration Committee).</li> <li>Alignment with Public Services Reform</li> <li>SG Corporate Board approval of proposed refreshed NPF as basis for consultation (Jan).</li> </ul>
<b>Phase three (Feb – Apr 2026)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministerial approval to proceed (Feb)</li> <li>Wider stakeholder engagement (building on 2023 review) of proposed refreshed NPF – focussing on both the refreshed outcomes and indicators, and proposed implementation plan themes.</li> <li>Preparation for sign-off post-election.</li> </ul>

During this wider engagement phase, we will be disseminating this document to the below, non-exhaustive list, or using this document as the basis for conversations.

- All Scottish Public Bodies
- COSLA and Local Authorities
- Rural networks
- The Scottish Parliament
- Network and membership organisations such Prosper or SCVO
- Bespoke workshops with: young people (through the Scottish Youth Parliament); representative groups via the Scottish Government People's Panel, University of Edinburgh students.

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