

2026



Enlighten Manifesto

ENLIGHTEN

Enlighten, a charity registered in Scotland, is a public policy institute which works to promote increased economic prosperity, opportunity for all, and more effective public services. Enlighten is independent of political parties and any other organisations. It is funded by donations from private individuals, charitable trusts and corporate organisations. Its Director is Chris Deerin and Alison Payne is the Research Director. Both work closely with the Trustee Board, chaired by Lord Jack McConnell, which meets regularly to review the research and policy programme and carry out their legal responsibilities.

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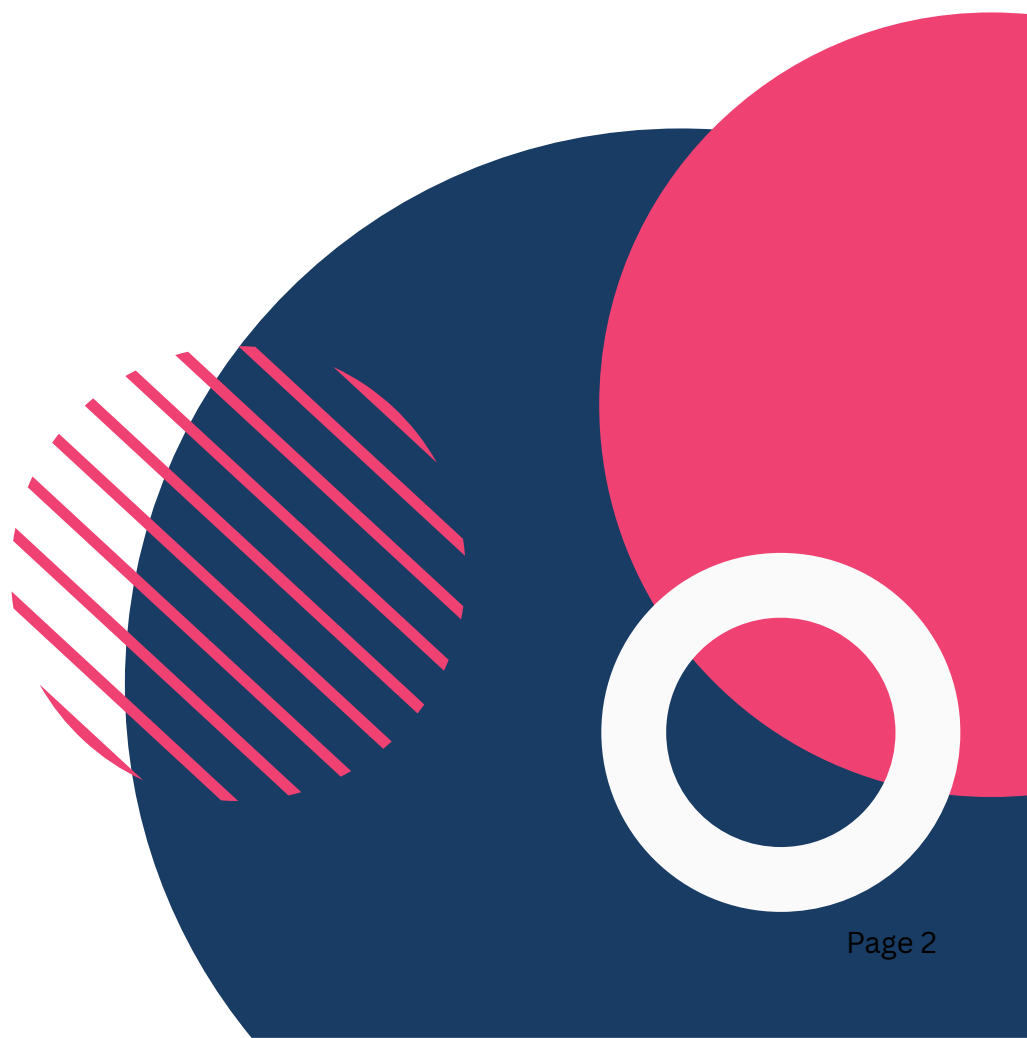
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INTRODUCTION

2026 marks the seventh election to the Scottish Parliament, and 27 years since the creation of devolution in 1999. But rather than growing in stature and maturing, it appears that Holyrood is falling out of favour, with polls suggesting growing public disillusionment.

Against a backdrop of declining tax revenues, a shrinking working-age population, and growing demand for services, the status quo is no longer an option. In the next parliament, Scotland must shift away from a politics which focuses on spending, inputs and “freebies”, to one centred around outputs, service delivery and value for money. The 2026 Scottish election must represent a break from the continuity of mediocrity, low ambition and even failure that we have become accustomed to.

Our public services are badly in need of reform. We all know it, but are yet to hear a credible plan of delivery from any of the parties. Income taxes may be higher for many Scots than for their counterparts elsewhere in the UK, but there is little sense of value for money, while questions remain about the ongoing impact on the nation’s competitiveness.

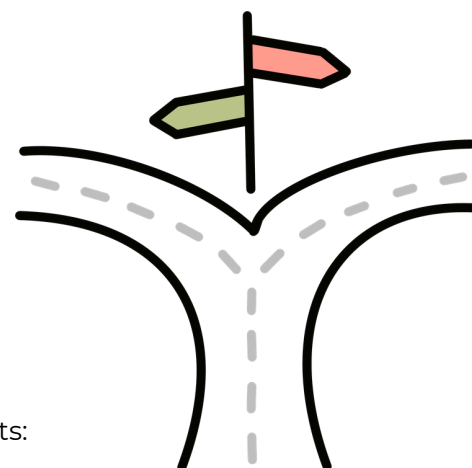
We all know that there needs to be a shift toward prevention across the public sector – it is 15 years since the Christie Report was published – but government has so far failed to deliver that change.

There is no more money – and there are no easy answers.

Difficult decisions and political courage are required. Choices must be made that prioritise long-term sustainability and improvement over short-term political gains.

As a think-tank which does not stand for election, we appreciate that it is easier for us than it is for elected politicians to voice these truths, but if Holyrood is to deliver a better Scotland for all it is necessary to be honest with the public about the scale of the challenge ahead.

SCOTLAND IS RUNNING OUT OF MONEY



In 2023 Professor Mairi Spowage, Director of the Fraser of Allander Institute, warned that then Deputy First Minister Shona Robison would need to identify spending cuts:

*“This large funding gap will mean difficult choices for the Scottish Government on what to prioritise. In a devolved context, this gap cannot be allowed to manifest in practice, so steps will need to be taken to address it. Of course, the DFM [as was then] may choose to use powers over income tax to raise more revenue to plug this gap, but it is unlikely that this would be sufficient in isolation. Significant spending cuts are also likely to be required – the DFM has the unenviable task of choosing where the axe will fall.”*¹

Despite this warning nothing changed. There has been rhetoric about reform, but little by way of implementation and the focus on inputs over outcomes has continued. As a result, the warnings about Scotland’s fiscal position have intensified:

“Based on current trajectories, the Scottish Government expects spending to exceed available funding for both resource and capital... The gaps for both resource and capital are expected to exceed £2 billion by 2029-30, around 4 per cent of planned spending in 2029-30 for resource, and around 23 per cent for capital.” – **Fiscal Commission**²

“Most of the devolved public sector workforce is now covered by agreed pay deals for 2025-26, and most deals agreed also cover 2026-27. The pay deals agreed have all exceeded the Scottish Government’s public sector pay policy.” - **Fiscal Commission**³

“The delivery of NHS services must be reformed for Scotland’s health service to remain affordable and sustainable.” - **Audit Scotland**⁴

“The demand for public services is expected to rise. By the end of the next parliament in 2031, nearly a quarter of people in Scotland will be over 65, one million people will receive disability payments and living standards are expected to increase by less than 1per cent per year.” – **Fiscal Commission**⁵

“It will be hard for the next Scottish Government to continue to provide more generous services and benefits than in England. Funding more generous provision will increasingly need some combination of higher devolved tax revenues – whether through higher economic growth or higher tax rates – and more efficient public service delivery. Without these, cutbacks in service provision or devolved benefits will likely be necessary.” – **Institute for Fiscal Studies**⁶

1. £1.5bn headache for DFM next week at the Scottish Budget | FAI

2. Fiscal Update: August 2025

3. Fiscal Update: August 2025

4. NHS governance must be strengthened | Audit Scotland

5. 25 February 2026 – Challenging fiscal outlook for the next Scottish Parliament elected in May | Scottish Fiscal Commission

6. Next Scottish Government will face tough choices as funding advantage relative to England falls |

7. Institute for Fiscal Studies

Following the most recent budget⁷ on 13 January 2026, the Scottish Fiscal Commission noted a number of additional warnings, particularly questioning the likelihood of savings being met through efficiencies within health and social care budgets;⁸ the credibility of offering a real-terms pay cut for public sector workers in 2027-28;⁹ and the fact that plans to reduce the public service workforce fly in the face of recent trends.

In other words, there are doubts over whether even the limited proposals on controlling expenditure are achievable.

Scotland is facing a demographic time bomb – its working-age population is shrinking proportionately, deaths are outnumbering births and the number of people aged 75 and over is projected to increase by around a third of a million to mid-2047. This has an impact on the size of the tax base as well as meaning likely increases in demand for services, particularly social care.



LACK OF DEBATE

Given the perilous nature of Scotland's finances, and the fact there is an impending election, it would be natural to assume that there was impassioned debate going on about how the implementation gap can be closed and what choices should be considered. It is a stain on the quality of political discourse that there is not. Indeed it is arguably this lack of honesty with the public and reliance on “easy answers” from all parties that is helping fuel the rise in populism.

It is not enough to simply criticise the government. The point of debate, of politics, should be the exchange and contest of ideas. Sadly, for too long this has been missing, and in its place has been party politicking and focusing on what delivers the best short-term electoral gain and who can “manage” things better.

It is the job of think tanks like Enlighten to amplify, and where necessary, lead that more detailed and nuanced debate, so our manifesto for this election is slightly different to those of previous years. While we still have some topical policy recommendations, based on previous reports, towards the end of this manifesto, we primarily focus on addressing the warnings from the Scottish Fiscal Commission, Audit Scotland and Fraser of Allander.

6. 25 February 2026 – Challenging fiscal outlook for the next Scottish Parliament elected in May | Scottish Fiscal Commission

7. “Of the £1.5 billion savings identified, the majority are to be achieved in the Health and Social Care portfolio where the Scottish Government expects to achieve savings of £384 million in 2026-27, £374 million in 2027-28, and £303 million in 2028-29. These are mostly to be achieved through the existing target for 3 per cent recurring savings against core funding for NHS Boards, which is to be achieved each year. The recent Audit Scotland report on the NHS noted that while progress was made in 2024-25, just two territorial boards and three national boards achieved the 3 per cent recurring savings target.³ Seven NHS boards required additional funding from the Scottish Government in 2024-25, which was in the form of loans and will have to be repaid once boards reach financial balance. Audit Scotland notes that since 2019-20 only one board has repaid any of these loans. The progress towards achieving these targets for recurring savings to date, and the number of health boards not breaking even, suggest that it could be challenging for the Scottish Government to deliver the efficiency savings it has incorporated into the Health and Social Care portfolio spending plans.”

8. “To remain within the limits of that pay policy, there would need to be an average pay award of 1.1 per cent in 2027-28. This would be a real term cut to pay in 2027-28.”

9. “Achieving this reduction in the workforce would require a significant departure from recent trends”

10. Projected Population of Scotland: 2022-based - National Records of Scotland (NRS)

COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF TAX-PAYER FUNDED “FREEBIES”

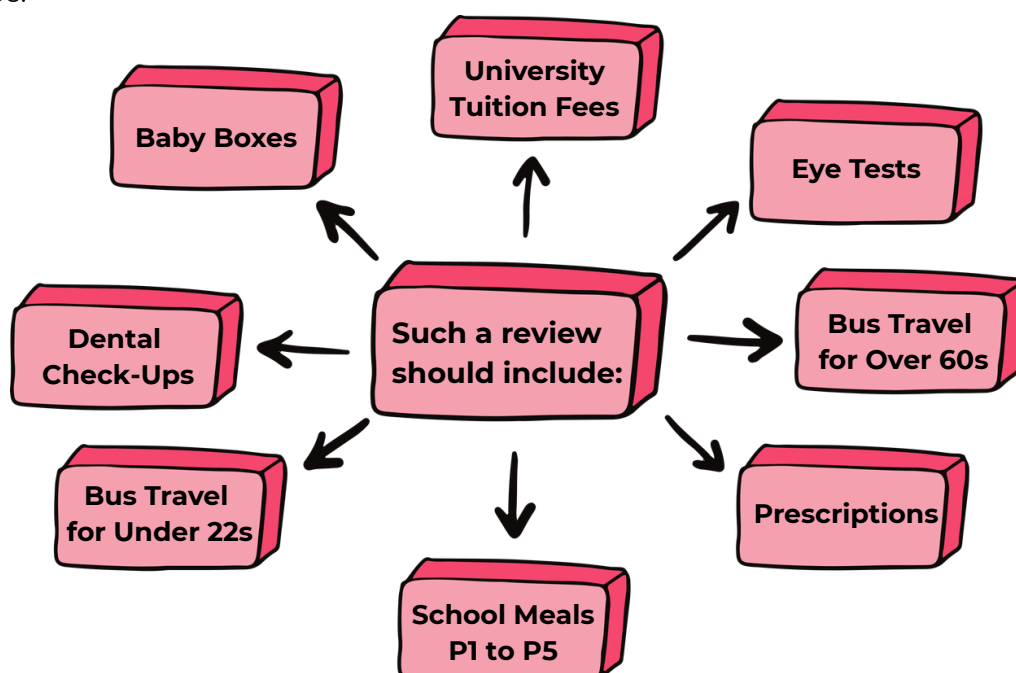
Enlighten believes that there needs to be a review of all universal benefits after the election. While of course many of these policies are worthy and aspirational, that doesn't mean Scotland can afford them. And more importantly, **are they delivering value for money and helping the most vulnerable in society?**

The review would look at each benefit individually, so while there may be a case for maintaining free prescriptions on prevention grounds, it may opt to means-test bus passes, do away with free eye tests or change the payment system for university. Tax-payer funded “freebies” tend to be popular with voters, though that does not mean they are an efficient use of money or delivering the required outcomes.

In September 2024¹¹ First Minister John Swinney confirmed that the SNP's 2021 manifesto pledge of universal free school meals for primary school pupils would not be delivered to P6 and P7s as a result of a more challenging financial situation. The free school meals for those age groups would instead be targeted to those in most need – pupils in households in receipt of the Child Payment.

When the Scottish Government made that decision, it did so realising that when circumstances change, policies need to adapt to meet them. And that while the aim of the 2021 manifesto may have been correct in its view, it could no longer be afforded. Essentially, a policy was changed to ensure those most in need benefited from what little resource there was.

Enlighten agrees with this approach and believes it should be applied across the policy landscape.



11. Meeting of the Parliament: 05/09/2024 | Scottish Parliament Website

The review would also consider the fairness of such provision – for example, free bus travel is a huge benefit if you live somewhere like Edinburgh with a comprehensive and reliable bus service, but too many places in Scotland do not have such coverage.¹² Indeed, some school pupils even in urban areas cannot access bus services to get to school on time.¹³ So it may be more equitable to reduce the provision of free bus passes, but to then invest that money to ensure that there are operational bus services in more disadvantaged areas.¹⁴

Similarly, Scotland boasts of free eye tests when waits for cataract surgery can be more than two years at a number of health boards.

In other words, focus on delivery and helping those in need rather than on headline-friendly inputs.

Inputs & Outcomes

It is important that the review we are calling for has a clear focus on outcomes. We are aware that the National Performance Framework website is currently archived, with reform being carried out, and await the new work with interest.¹⁵ However, we are concerned about the lack of meaningful data upon which to evaluate outcomes. The importance of robust data when it comes to measuring outcomes cannot be overstated.

This is even more important when resource becomes scarce. Ensuring the most vulnerable in society are being helped requires the proper evaluation of data and measurement of outcomes.

Politicians must have the courage to try different approaches, recognise that not every plan will work, that diversity of provision is to be encouraged, and learn from what they do. In the midst of a cost-of-living crisis there are undoubtedly difficult decisions ahead, but Scotland cannot afford to keep ignoring them. A Scottish Statistics Authority can provide the data and analysis required to evaluate the necessary reforms.

Scrutiny

Enlighten believes more needs to be done to scrutinise delivery. This requires data, analysis, evaluation, and crucially a willingness to accept that not all policies will be effective and that when the information changes, it is important that policy changes too.

There are a number of portfolio areas in Scotland which are badly in need of reform. It will take courage and humility to try out different approaches. Some will work, some won't. Scotland badly needs this willingness to innovate and take risks.

Of course, scrutiny doesn't just require good data and a willingness to challenge orthodoxies. It also requires an effective Parliament holding ministers to account.

There have now been several proposals from different parties, and others, including Enlighten, on how to improve the operation of the Scottish Parliament. One of the easiest to implement is directly electing committee conveners in order to enhance the status of the role and help separate the committees from the political parties. We welcome that this proposal, which was highlighted nearly 10 years ago by the Commission on Parliamentary Reform, is finally now set to be implemented in the next Parliament. This is an important step towards parliament being in a stronger position to hold government to account. Further reform of Holyrood's structures and practices is needed.

12. Last bus home to Glentworth leaves five minutes after first one arrives - BBC News

13. 'Kids in danger' on 60mph road after school bus scrapped as parents launch petition - Daily Record;

14. NHS: Thousands of Scots going private for eye surgery as waiting lists soar to over three years

15. [National Performance Framework - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/national-performance-framework)

OTHER POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Economy

Scotland desperately needs to grow its economy, a fact that is constantly acknowledged by nearly all of its political parties and politicians. But good intentions do not deliver change. It should be accepted that neither the Scottish Government nor the Scottish Parliament creates wealth – rather, they can ensure the right conditions to encourage investment, entrepreneurial activity, and help businesses succeed.

This includes consistently producing a thriving, educated and healthy workforce. Achieving this requires a competitive and transformative education system; a training and skills system which ensures companies can sustain their workforce and offers people the ability to re-train and adapt to changing jobs markets; a health service which looks after us when we need it, but also a society that looks to prevent ill health in the first place.

It means having strong infrastructure and public transport so that goods, services and people are able to move around the country, reaching employment and markets. The growth in digital technology means that there is an opportunity to encourage business development in more rural areas, but for that to succeed good broadband provision is a must.

It means having a competitive tax regime to attract businesses to start up, grow and remain in Scotland.

And there should be a recognition that the economic priorities in Dundee will not be the same as in Dumfries. Glasgow won't be the same as Galloway nor Moray the same as Midlothian. Councils and communities must be equipped to directly address the barriers to growth in their areas and empowered to work in partnership with the UK and Scottish Governments, as opposed to being simply a delivery arm.

Confronting the Cultural Challenge

Equally, there should be greater understanding of the value of entrepreneurship to the Scottish economy – job creation, wealth creation, talent development, and the cutting edge of innovation, with AI becoming more important than ever. This would be good for Scotland not just economically, but psychologically, impacting how we feel about ourselves – entrepreneurship is vibrant, forward-looking, inspiring and confident. Confronting this cultural challenge should be a priority, and the Scottish Government should lead the way, celebrating entrepreneurship of all kinds.

The policy proposals we set out in the following portfolio sections all have the potential to contribute to a more thriving economy. In addition we would also recommend the following:

Devolve on-shore Corporation Tax to Holyrood/create a competitive tax environment: The current financial settlement has left Holyrood hugely reliant on a single income stream, with NSND income tax accounting for around two thirds of all devolved revenue. At the same time Scotland needs to attract more taxpayers and, in particular, more high earners. This requires a thriving, competitive and incentivised economic climate that encourages entrepreneurs and the creation of new businesses. Corporation Tax was devolved to Northern Ireland and we

believe on-shore Corporation Tax should also be devolved to Scotland. The opportunity should then be taken to design a regime that can attract more entrepreneurs, encourage new businesses and, ultimately, create and draw more top-rate taxpayers to Scotland. One scheme that could be considered is to offer a zero rate of corporation tax for new businesses setting up in Scotland for a set period after they begin to earn profits.

Skills, lifelong learning and the apprenticeship levy: Lifelong learning and careers guidance is in need of investment and renewal and updating for the 21st Century. There is also some disquiet about whether revenue from the apprenticeship levy is being used to best effect in Scotland which needs to be reviewed in partnership with industry.

Transport

Creation of a Scottish road and rail Infrastructure Commission: A forward-looking Scottish transport Infrastructure Commission should be set up to examine which transformational changes could improve connectivity and grow the economy. Such a commission should look at rail links to city regions, local networks and rural and scenic areas as well as potential road improvements. Should it really be the situation that it can take less time to travel from Edinburgh to London by rail than to travel to Inverness? A report from the UK National Infrastructure Commission about the north of England highlighted problems with connectivity and looked to find innovative solutions to them. Similar ambition and long-term thinking is required for Scotland.

Feasibility study looking at a pay-as-you-drive road pricing scheme: The way drivers are currently charged is bad for the environment, promotes congestion and is unfair on low-mileage motorists and those in more remote areas or with poor access to public transport. Enlighten believes existing road taxes should be replaced with pay-as-you-drive road pricing, which would allow all drivers to be charged fairly for the choices they make, for their impact on the road network and the wider environment. This would ensure revenue is still raised from motoring despite changes to the types of cars being driven. Although these taxes are reserved, both governments are committed to phasing out the sale of new petrol and diesel cars. Doing so will require a change to the tax regime and there is therefore an opportunity for the Scottish and UK governments to work together on feasibility study.



Local Government

Devolution was never supposed to stop at Holyrood. Throughout the period of devolution there have repeated calls for greater decentralisation, local government renewal and local empowerment, including in cross-party parliamentary reports.¹⁶

Politicians continually talk about the need for greater early intervention and prevention programmes to improve long-term outcomes – actions which by their very nature are best delivered at a local level, responding to differing circumstances and priorities.



But nothing has changed. Instead we are surprised that centrally directed one-size-fits-all approaches fail.

It is of course near impossible for councils to do both what is required for the long term while at the same time addressing short-term crises and facing real-terms budget cuts. A different outcome requires the parameters to change. That means radical and meaningful reform of local government in Scotland.

It is nearly three decades since local government reorganisation and despite the creation of the Scottish parliament and subsequent devolution of additional powers to it, there has been no review of the capabilities or structures of councils by the Scottish Government. There needs to be a discussion about what the role of the centre is, how the relationship between our tiers of government in Scotland should operate and how to empower our cities and communities.

The following are some of the issues we believe should be considered.

Directly-elected mayors

One of the problems with local government is that often the electorate doesn't know who is in charge. Since the advent of the STV voting system for council elections, most authorities are now run by coalitions and there isn't always a great deal of voter recognition of council leaders. Occasionally an issue may result in a leader becoming more prominent - for example, former Edinburgh Council leader Adam McVey gained publicity during his public debate about tourism tax with the Scottish Government. However, even then a council leader is often viewed as a lower-level politician than a backbench MSP, despite occupying a prestigious role running a city. Backbench MSPs have higher salaries than the council leaders who run Scotland's councils, including Edinburgh and Glasgow.¹⁷

The advantage of having a directly-elected leader is that it provides a clear figurehead and so can create dynamism and strengthen accountability and debate. As seen in mayoral elections in England in areas such as London, the West Midlands and Greater Manchester, as well as giving those areas a greater voice mayors can also stimulate the electorate's interest in and awareness of local government.

Mayors can provide strong and effective leadership. In terms of cities they can be a powerful force in driving economic development and progress, while in suburban or more rural areas

16. Local Government Committee Report (parliament.uk); 8th Report, 2014 (Session 4): Flexibility and Autonomy in Local Government - Parliamentary Business : Scottish Parliament

17. An MSP's basic salary is £74,507 as at 1 April 2025 MSP salaries | Scottish Parliament Website. The salary of the leaders of Glasgow and Edinburgh as at April 2025 was £71,519: Councillors' roles, conduct and pay - Local government - gov.scot

they can ensure their community is not overlooked. It isn't just our cities that could benefit, but places such as the Highlands – an area nearly the size of Belgium, and covering remote, rural and urban areas, and too often overlooked when the Central Belt dominates politics.

The main job of the council would be to hold the mayor to account and to provide scrutiny. Agreement would be needed to pass the budget with the mayor and council working together. This balance should improve accountability and transparency.

Public forum where First Minister meets local leaders

We believe that a quarterly public meeting should be held between the First Minister and Scotland's mayors (or council leaders in the absence of a mayor). This would be an opportunity for the voices and experiences of Scotland's local areas to be heard nationally.

Although MSPs represent different parts of Scotland and have an important role to play in holding the Scottish Government to account, it is councils that are often delivering and implementing policy, which is why they need a forum where such issues can be addressed directly, and in public. Too often the electorate hears Holyrood blame local government or vice versa for a problem. By providing a forum where the mayors and the First Minister have regular public meetings, there is an opportunity to listen more, improve policy, learn from good practice and increase accountability.

Devolve local taxation

Enlighten believes that councils need far greater ability to rely on their own revenue-raising streams, not just their block grant allocation, to deliver services.

Council Tax is currently a local tax in name only, with the operation, bands, reliefs etc all set centrally. Too often the debate around reform of the council tax is focused on replacing one centrally controlled tax with another centrally controlled tax. In contrast, Enlighten believes that local authorities should be able to devise their own local tax system, with full control over bands, rates, exemptions and the base to reflect their particular circumstances and priorities. This could mean differing forms of tax used in different areas, but they would be true local taxes and accountable to local politicians.

Non-domestic rates should also be devolved to local authorities in full. This would allow them to vary how and to whom the tax applies based on their own circumstances. An increase in local financial autonomy and accountability can also encourage councils to design business taxation policies and broader local economic development strategies to support the growth of local businesses, encourage start-ups and attract businesses to invest. Passing control of business rates to local authorities would also mean giving them control over business rates relief schemes.

Devolving Scotland forum

As part of our work looking to enhance localism in Scotland, we developed our Devolving Scotland Forum,¹⁸ which showcases a range of ideas and policy. Issues covered include taxation, planning, structural reform and Regional Economic Partnerships.

18. <https://www.enlighten.scot/devolving-scotland/>

Education

It is deeply worrying that education does not seem to be further up the political agenda. A strong education system is the closest thing there is to a policy “silver bullet”. It ensures we have the doctors and nurses to treat us. That we develop technology and other innovations to solve problems. That we can build the homes we badly need. That we have a high-skilled and high-earning workforce, whose tax revenues can then fund public services – something that is even more critical in the face of Scotland’s projected demographic challenges.

Basically, without an education system firing on all cylinders the many other problems facing Scotland cannot be fixed. But our education system isn’t currently working. Scotland is falling down the PISA rankings; our colleges are over-stretched and undervalued; our universities are in crisis; and skills and training are in a mess.

Introduce a Graduate fee:

Taxpayer-funded university tuition is a noble ambition. Society as a whole benefits from having a well-educated workforce and policies which help achieve that aim should not be readily dismissed. However, even with tax-payer funded tuition, there are huge problems - for example, the cap on the number of Scottish students able to attend our universities and institutions facing financial crises. By acting sooner rather than later, we can avoid having to introduce upfront fees and it could be possible to maintain tuition “free-at-the-point-of-use”. Enlighten believes that there needs to be a better balance between the individual graduate and Scottish taxpayers when contributing towards the cost of Higher Education, which is why we want to see the introduction of a graduate fee. We would suggest this is incurred on graduation, payment begins once a graduate earns more than the Scottish average salary and that no interest is applied. We also support the development of schemes which cut or scrap payments for graduates who work in specific geographic areas or sectors of Scotland for set periods of time. How to maintain university tuition free-at-the-point-of-use.¹⁹

Commission on School Reform

The Commission on School Reform is the education arm of Enlighten and is chaired by Keir Bloomer. The Commission has published its own manifesto²⁰ outlining a number of key concerns and policy recommendations covering the curriculum; assessment; pastoral care; ASN; behaviour; early years; governance; and data.

Schools should enjoy increased autonomy within clear national guidance to implement a knowledge-based curriculum. In order to properly address issues such as attendance, behaviour and the growth in ASN, pastoral capacity should be reviewed across both primary and secondary sectors. Work is also required to improve the quality of assessments and qualifications.

Crucially, we need better data, including a regular longitudinal survey following pupils through school and beyond to gather evidence of progress. There should be an Independent Office for Scottish Education Data to oversee and manage the data, which should be accountable to parliament, not government.

19. <https://www.enlighten.scot/publication/briefing-note-how-to-maintain-university-tuition-free-at-the-point-of-use/>

20. <https://www.enlighten.scot/publication/commission-on-school-reform-manifesto-2026/>

Health and Social Care

A mature, constructive debate is essential to identify and build consensus around specific measures that will help health and care services in both the short and long term. If a taxpayer-funded, free-at-the-point-of-need system is to be maintained up to the NHS's centenary in 2048, reform is required in order to make the best use of the resources available.



Social care is not always tax-payer funded nor free at the point of need. Staff can be low paid – despite it being such an important job – and can often earn more working in supermarkets, which is both demoralising and an indication that as a society we are undervaluing the role, despite it being one increasingly in demand.

A more sustainable long-term system for funding social care in Scotland must be found. Increasing income tax could maintain the current pay-as-you-go model of funding social care, whereby today's taxation pays today's expenditures. But that is not sustainable in the long term with an aging population with increasing demands, alongside a proportionately smaller workforce from which to generate revenue. A new model for paying for social care should be developed, spreading and sharing risk across the widest group of people. This could be in the way of a salary sacrifice scheme, similar to childcare vouchers, or another method. The Scottish Government should establish a cross-party body to develop and agree this long-term solution.

NHS2048

Over the past two years Enlighten, through our NHS2048 platform, has been bringing together different ideas and views on how health reform can be delivered. This collection of essays from clinicians, politicians, the third sector and patients represents a wide range of thinking, both at a granular level and more structurally. We have presented these ideas as a menu of options which we hope politicians will consider. Topics include workforce, prevention, social care, the patient, governance, poverty, continuity of care, and place.

The wealth of ideas highlights how it is possible to reform and improve our health and care services while maintaining treatment free at the point of need. As part of this work Enlighten was delighted to host The Future Health of Scotland discussion on 27th October in Edinburgh, in partnership with Chest, Heart & Stroke Scotland and the Royal College of Physicians Edinburgh. The discussion highlighted the danger that discussion around health can spiral into silos and competing interests – primary vs secondary; NHS vs social care; state vs third sector; specialist vs generalist. The conference was an opportunity for different groups to come together and find common ground. It also led to near unanimity that politicians do the same. Though the reaction of the politicians at the final panel of the day suggested an unwillingness to put party politics aside, we hope that after the election this will change.

21. <https://www.enlighten.scot/nhs-2048/>

Justice

Reinjecting localism back into Police Scotland: There are two ways that localism, with clearer lines of local accountability, can be re-injected into policing in Scotland – through funding and governance. He who pays the piper calls the tune, and on that principle we believe that local authorities should again be responsible for funding 50% of policing, with the Scottish Government continuing to fund the other 50%. Each local authority should be able to nominate a member of the Scottish Police Authority to ensure that local priorities are adequately represented. This is an issue that could fall under the remit of directly-elected mayors.

Ban short prison sentences: Prisons are not just there to punish and protect the public. They also rehabilitate, work with prisoners to prevent reoffending and offer training to help prisoners find employment once released. People make mistakes and we need to help ensure that such mistakes are not repeated. Not just because of the emotional and financial cost of crime to victims, families and society, but because of the loss of human potential. There are very limited opportunities for rehabilitation and training for those individuals serving sentences of less than six months. Furthermore, the disruption of a short sentence, including loss of income and employment, and problems with childcare and family relationships, often makes the sentences disproportionate to the crime. Enlighten believes a presumption against short sentences does not go far enough and only an outright ban on their use will lead to a change.



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