



**SNP**

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LOCAL  
SERVICES.**

**EVERY  
VOTE  
COUNTS**

# FOREWORD

The SNP enters the campaign for the local government elections with a strong record, a powerful vision for a fairer Scotland, and a determination to make life better for the people and communities we serve.

On May 4, you will have the opportunity to choose who is best placed to take the decisions about the future of your local area. Here we set out our national policy priorities. Local manifestos will set out in more detail the vision for individual council areas, as set out by the local SNP council group.

The council elections matter. In these tough economic times local councils have a key role in driving our economy, building and protecting our communities and providing services that put people first.

Local councils play a crucial part in delivering the services that hold the fabric of our society together – from educating our children, to channelling the support our older citizens need to stay safe and healthy at home; from keeping the streets lit and the roads maintained, to managing our waste and recycling and safeguarding our environment – and from working to breathe new life into our high streets and town centres, to helping our young people get the training and skills necessary to play a fulfilling part in building a better Scotland.

Last year we sought and received your support to continue as Scotland's government. We are working hard to repay the trust placed in us, by putting into effect a range of policies designed to make Scotland a fairer, wealthier, safer, greener and smarter nation; a country ready to face the challenges – and seize the opportunities – of this twenty-first century.

This year, on May 4, you can elect a strong team of effective SNP local councillors and SNP councils that will work to build recovery, support families and improve and protect your local services.

Despite unprecedented Westminster cuts in public spending, the SNP government has protected council budgets and that means we can take forward key priorities:

- More free childcare and new nurseries, transforming early learning.
- £120 million extra for classrooms, directly funding local schools and head teachers.
- More affordable housing, increasing supply and accessibility.
- Cash for communities, devolving council budgets to local projects.
- Backing for small business, boosting jobs and helping keep people in work.

SNP councils will work together with you and with the Scottish Government, to make your community stronger, safer and fairer. We ask you to join us, to show your support on May 4, so together we can make Scotland's communities fairer, more prosperous and more successful places to live.



**Nicola Sturgeon**

# KEY PLEDGES

## **A transformation in early learning and childcare.**

SNP councils will work with the Scottish Government to transform nursery provision. By 2020, we will have almost doubled how much free early learning and childcare families receive to 1,140 hours – around 30 hours per week.

This provision will extend to all three and four year olds and eligible two year olds. It will be flexible and delivered in a way which best suits parents and families' needs, with parents able to choose how to access hours. Funding will follow the child to maximise choice.

## **Investing in our schools to give every child in Scotland the best start in life.**

We're prioritising closing the attainment gap and raising the bar for all. We are giving more power and resources directly to schools, to allow teachers, parents and communities to make the best decisions for their schools.

## **An increase in affordable housing.**

In the last Parliament we built 30,000 affordable homes, now we'll go further. SNP councils will work with the Scottish Government and housing associations to deliver 50,000 affordable homes by 2021, of which at least 35,000 will be for social rent.

## **More money for local communities to deliver local priorities.**

SNP councils will work with citizens and communities to take the best actions for the local area and put people at the centre of our decisions. We will devolve at least one per cent of each council's budget directly to communities, giving citizens the ability to choose where this money is spent locally on their priorities, based on their needs.

## **Support for small businesses.**

We're supporting small businesses by extending the Small Business Bonus Scheme to lift 100,000 small and medium sized business properties out of Business Rates altogether.

Local authorities also now have the power to offer targeted rate reductions – to attract new investment, help specific areas or sectors, or to alleviate the impact of business rate revaluations.

# NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

## Early Years and Childcare

- ✘ We will work with the Scottish Government to transform the provision of early learning and childcare, for all families with 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2 year olds, so that by 2020 they are entitled to receive 1,140 free hours of childcare each year.
- ✘ This provision will be high quality to deliver the best possible outcomes for children, and will include an additional teacher or childcare graduate in over 400 nurseries in the most deprived areas.
- ✘ All existing and additional childcare staff delivering the 1,140 hours will be paid at least the Living Wage.
- ✘ Childcare provision will be flexible and delivered in a way which best suits parents and families' needs, with parents able to choose how to access their additional hours.
- ✘ As part of this childcare expansion, all 2, 3 and 4 year olds in nursery will receive a free lunch, whether provided by the local authority or a partner provider.
- ✘ We will also ensure that children in early learning and childcare receive two hours a week of physical activity, including at least one hour a week outside.

## Education

- ✘ SNP Councils will prioritise closing the attainment gap and raising the bar for all in our schools, to give every child in Scotland the best start in life.
- ✘ We will use additional funding from the Scottish Government to lead the way in giving more power and resources directly to schools, to raise attainment and allow teachers, parents and communities to make the best decisions for their schools. We will make sure this funding is additional to core education budgets.
- ✘ We will maintain teacher numbers and pupil teacher ratios to ensure children and young people get the best learning experience.
- ✘ We will continue to promote the uptake of the First Minister's Reading Challenge in schools across Scotland, encouraging children to read for pleasure and develop a lifelong love of books.
- ✘ We will ensure there are sufficient library services in schools and communities to champion a love of reading.
- ✘ We will work to roll out the Daily Mile in local authority nurseries and schools, to improve the physical, emotional and social health and wellbeing of our children.
- ✘ SNP Councils will work with stakeholders to ensure that communities have places and green spaces where children can play safely outside.
- ✘ We will encourage parents of all children in P1-3 to take up the offer of a free healthy, nutritious school meal every day, improving children's concentration in the classroom and helping them to achieve better results.
- ✘ A review of school food and drink nutritional standards is underway, to ensure nutritional standards in school meals are the best they can be and for food to be sourced as locally as possible. We will work to take forward its recommendations.
- ✘ SNP Councils will focus on improving outcomes for looked after children and young people and work in close partnership with the Scottish Government on its national review of the care system.

- ✘ We will work with the Scottish Government to deliver relevant aspects of the national STEM strategy, particularly to ensure that young people can access qualifications, knowledge and training in key economic sectors with known skills gaps like engineering, digital technology, science, life sciences and construction.
- ✘ We will work with the Scottish Government and the TIE Campaign to promote an inclusive approach to sex and relationships education.

## **Affordable Housing**

- ✘ SNP Councils will build their share of 50,000 new affordable houses across Scotland, and work with housing associations to ensure at least 35,000 of these will be houses for social rent.
- ✘ Increasing housing supply will also help our aim of reducing the time people spend in temporary accommodation while they are waiting for appropriate, sustainable permanent accommodation.
- ✘ SNP Councils will also consider the proximity of temporary accommodation to health and education services.

## **Community Empowerment**

- ✘ SNP councils will work with citizens and communities to take the best actions for their local area. We will put local people at the centre of our decisions and listen and act on their priorities.
- ✘ We will devolve a minimum of one per cent of each council's budget directly to communities, giving citizens the ability to choose where this money is spent locally and allow for innovative ways to deliver on their priorities.
- ✘ SNP Councillors will support communities looking to use new legislation that makes it easier for communities in Scotland to take over land or buildings that are currently in public ownership for the benefit of the local community.

## **Inclusive Growth**

- ✘ Small businesses will continue to benefit from the Scottish Government's extended Small Business Bonus Scheme, which will lift 100,000 small and medium sized business properties out of Business Rates altogether.
- ✘ We will offer a new national relief that caps revaluation increases for hotels, pubs, cafes and restaurants at 12.5 per cent in real terms. This will benefit around 8,500 properties and provides, proportionately, around double the support to the food and accommodation sector than is available in the rest of the UK.
- ✘ Local authorities also have the power to offer rate reductions – to attract new investment, target specific locations or sectors or to alleviate the impact of business rate revaluations.
- ✘ SNP Councils will revise current procurement strategies to ensure greater access for local small and medium sized businesses to help local firms thrive.
- ✘ We will take all possible steps to ensure that our public procurement processes support progressive workplace practices and that companies engaging in unacceptable practices like blacklisting, exploitative zero hours' contracts or tax evasion, do not benefit from public procurement.
- ✘ We will take further steps to streamline the planning process to support economic development while safeguarding the voice of communities.

# NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

## Finance

- ✘ The Scottish Government is working to make local taxation fairer and more progressive, capping rises to no more than 3 per cent per year to protect household budgets.
- ✘ We will work with the Scottish Government to secure a share of Income Tax for councils.

## Health & Social Care

- ✘ SNP Councils will use funding from the Scottish Government to invest in social care, making sure that people receive the care they need in the best place for them, be it in their homes or a homely setting.
- ✘ We will pay all adult care workers the Living Wage.
- ✘ SNP Councils will work with the Scottish Government and the third sector to fully implement the Scottish Mental Health Strategy 2017-2027.

## Infrastructure

- ✘ SNP Councils will continue to support the SNP Government's investment in infrastructure and the public realm.
- ✘ SNP Councils will continue to contribute to and enable delivery of digital connectivity in their areas, including supporting delivery of the commitment to provide 100 per cent superfast broadband to all business and premises by 2021.

## Regeneration

- ✘ SNP Councils will invest in improving the physical condition of our communities – maintaining pavements and roads, replacing inadequate street-lighting and refurbishing school playgrounds and play areas.
- ✘ We will work with the Scottish Government and partners to bring empty homes into use for rent or purchase through the Empty Homes Partnership, Empty Homes Fund and Town Centre Empty Homes Fund.
- ✘ We will ensure that our local development plans take into account the different housing needs of older people and those with disabilities.
- ✘ SNP Councils will support thriving town centres and high streets through the Town Centre First principle, and ensure that the impact on the town centre be considered as a starting point before all investment decisions.

## Equality

- ✘ SNP Councils will champion inclusivity and equality across all policy areas.
- ✘ SNP Councils will look to settle any outstanding equal pay claims as soon as possible, and ensure all local authorities deliver equal pay.
- ✘ With funding from the Scottish Government, we will protect the Scottish Welfare Fund.
- ✘ SNP Councils will continue to fully mitigate the Bedroom Tax.
- ✘ SNP Councils will recognise the positive contribution of asylum-seekers and refugees to our cities, and commit to welcoming and including them in our communities.

## Environment

- ✗ SNP Councils will ensure we can all take pride in our villages, towns, cities and countryside by working to reduce litter, improve recycling rates and reduce the amount of waste being sent to landfill.
- ✗ We will work with the Scottish Government during its appraisal of a Deposit Return Scheme, which has the potential to reduce the amount of bottles and other packaging discarded on our streets and roadsides.
- ✗ SNP Councils will work with the Scottish Government to improve air quality in our towns and cities, and ensure the country's first Low Emission Zone is in place by the end of 2018.
- ✗ Where appropriate land is available, SNP Councils will support the planting of woodland which can help prevent flooding and assist in water basin management. We will also explore how our pension funds can invest in Scotland's forestry.

## Climate Change

- ✗ SNP Councils will play their part in meeting Scotland's climate change ambitions, while ensuring our transition to a low carbon economy delivers opportunities for local people by improving environmental standards and creating jobs.
- ✗ We will use funding available from the Scottish Energy Efficiency programme (SEEP) to pilot new and innovative approaches to make homes, public buildings and businesses more efficient, driving down bills and emissions.

## Land Reform

- ✗ SNP Councils will revitalise communities by helping local groups take ownership of neglected land and property, with financial backing from the £10 million Scottish Land Fund.

## Culture

- ✗ 2017 is Scotland's Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology, and SNP Councils will support efforts to restore, enhance and conserve the environment and built heritage across Scotland's communities.

## Transport

- ✗ Scotland's older people and people with disabilities will continue to be able to travel for free on local or Scottish long distance buses.
- ✗ The SNP is committed to supporting bus services and will continue to work with and support local government and bus operators to tackle decreasing passenger numbers.
- ✗ The SNP Government will bring forward a Transport Bill which will allow for local solutions to improve bus services to be implemented, including the option for publicly-run bus services, giving a voice to local bus users.
- ✗ The Bill will give local authorities the power to consider how bus networks need to develop to be able to meet future needs, such as creating jobs, reducing pollution and improving access to essential services. It will also make it easier for local services to work together.
- ✗ SNP Councils will support active travel and encourage people to switch to cycling as a viable and enjoyable means of commuting.



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