



# Open Government in Scotland Action Plan 2018-2020

**Scotland's Second National Action Plan as a  
member of the  
Open Government Partnership**

December 2018

## Summary

Today we are sharing Scotland's Second Action Plan on Open Government. This has been produced in partnership by the [Scottish Government](#) and the [Scottish Open Government Network](#). The Action Plan contains commitments on improvements to openness, transparency, involving people, and accountability of public services.

### **What is an Action Plan?**

An Action Plan is a collection of all the different actions that the Scottish Government and its partners are going to do over the next couple of years. It's a list of all the improvements and changes that Scottish Government wants to make, why these are important, who they will work with to deliver this and when they will do this by.

'Open Government' is the key theme for this Action Plan. When we (Scottish Government and the Open Government Network) talk about opening up government, we mean making governments and decision-makers more accessible, more transparent and involving the people they serve.

### **Where did the ideas come from?**

The ideas in this document [came from the public](#), in what we heard from public discussions and consultation. The ideas have been developed by the organisations and individuals involved in Open Government, members of the Open Government Steering Group, public service regulators, academics, and the policy teams at the Scottish Government. This work has been done in partnership.

This document tells the story of Open Government in Scotland, the ambitions behind it and where it sits in wider contexts of other work and movements relating to open government.

**LET'S MAKE SCOTLAND WORK FOR YOU!**

Open Government Network Scotland

**HELP SHAPE SCOTLAND'S OPEN GOVERNMENT ACTION PLAN**

Browse the ideas that people are discussing or join the conversation to give your opinion and submit your own ideas online

Join us at locations across Scotland for a series of events where you can tell us in person your ideas for change

VISIT [OPENGVERNMENT.ORG.UK/NETWORKS/SCOTLAND/OGP2018](https://opengovernment.org.uk/networks/scotland/ogp2018)

## What is an Open Government?

An Open Government is one which values openness, accountability, transparency and involving people. This Action Plan includes some ambitious commitments that have the potential to make real progress towards these goals.

This Action Plan has been produced in line with the requirements of Scotland's membership of the [Open Government Partnership](#), an international collaboration of 90 governments across the world committed to three key principles of openness, transparency and citizen participation.

In 2016, Scotland was selected as one of 15 countries/regions around the world to join the programme to bring new leadership and innovation at all levels of government. We developed the [first Scottish Open Government Partnership Action Plan](#) in partnership with civil society. This Action Plan set out how we would use the opportunity to improve the lives of people living in Scotland, to learn from others, and to share our experience of Open Government. We delivered our first Action Plan over 2017.

## Joint Foreword

### **A welcome from the Co-chairs of the Open Government Steering Group:**



*Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations, Michael Russell, and; Member of the Open Government Partnership International Steering Committee, Lucy McTernan*

### **Government Chair of the Open Government Steering Group, Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations, Michael Russell**

I believe that opening up government is about strengthening democracy and putting people at the center of our policies to create a Scotland that works for everyone. We should be more responsive, inclusive and accessible to the people we serve.

Openness is a core value of the refreshed National Performance Framework, and I see our involvement in Open Government as one way of achieving transformative change in how we govern. We joined the Open Government Partnership (OGP) in 2016 because we share the values of openness, transparency and accountability with the 90+ governments and their civil society partners around the world who are members of OGP.

I am pleased to publish the second Scottish Open Government Action Plan, co-created in partnership with the Open Government Network and with people across Scotland. I am proud of the innovative and ambitious commitments within this plan. Working in a collaborative way and in the spirit and culture of open government marks a change in how we work.

This Action Plan builds on the foundations of transparency and partnership that we have in Scotland. We are proactively publishing more information than ever before and with our first Action Plan in 2017, we built constructive relationships with an active Open Government civil society Network, and very much welcomed the involvement of local government and COSLA. Our Second Action Plan continues this work with both partners and is the next step in our journey of having truly open government in Scotland. Recognising that Local Authorities are the key sphere of government working directly with communities' so having COSLA as a partner is vital if we are to deliver the plan meaningfully and effectively.

This document sets out our ambitions for creating a culture of open government, it focuses on financial transparency and improving the way people can understand, participate in and influence the governments work. With a key feature being an explicit commitment to ensure people in Scotland are properly informed as the UK negotiates the exit from the EU.

Partnership is a key part of this, we will continue to work collaboratively and openly in the delivery of this Action Plan, working closely with civil society, our partners in the Open Government Network and COSLA. My aim to create a more open government is explicit in this Action Plan and sets out a clear map for achieving transformational change.

**Civil Society Chair of the Open Government Steering Group, and member of the Open Government Partnership International Steering Committee, Lucy McTernan**

On behalf of the civil society Open Government Network I welcome this second Action Plan. Having been involved for many years in Scotland's journey to be an open government, I was pleased to see significant changes in behaviour and approach to producing this Action Plan over the last year and we appreciate the work that's been done to get us to this stage. We know it's hard to disrupt set processes and cultures and it's worth recognising that open government is breaking new ground. This is important and we must continue to try for this work to have a real and tangible impact on people's lives.

We are pleased to be publishing the Action Plan and while it doesn't contain everything we called for, it does have some solid and very practical proposals to make government more open. It encourages civil society organisations and activists to think and act differently too, and we want to continue exploring this over the duration of the Action Plan.

We also welcome local government's involvement and COSLA's representation on the Steering Group as a key partner with civil society at the local level. We have been working for some time to improve the spread of open government approaches, and this follows our ambition of getting closer to people and the decisions that directly affect their lives.

Looking forward, we will welcome increased political and senior drive within government for the kinds of approaches we are championing. We hope this new way of working will lead to more direct engagement of civil society colleagues working with policy leads across the board. We are keen to broaden the Open Government Network and involve more people. We take seriously the role of movement building in the wider community, which involves reaching out and communicating our progress and the opportunities presented by these new ways of working for people to bring about change. We consider that access to data, increased dialogue, open policy making and citizen participation to be real opportunities for progress towards social justice. In the first action plan we consciously linked open government with Scotland's contribution to the sustainable development goals, and see this framing all our work going forward.

We recognise that the achievement is not in publishing the plan alone; important though our new approach has been, the most rewarding and important part will be in seeing the Action Plan being implemented and infecting behaviours and attitudes beyond the specific actions.

## Contents

<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>2</b>
WHAT IS AN ACTION PLAN?	2
WHERE DID THE IDEAS COME FROM?	2
WHAT IS AN OPEN GOVERNMENT?	3
<b>JOINT FOREWORD</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>9</b>
WHAT IS AN OPEN GOVERNMENT?	9
WHAT'S IT GOT TO DO WITH SCOTLAND?	9
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A MEMBER OF THE OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP?	10
WHAT HAVE WE DONE SO FAR?	10
HOW DO OPEN GOVERNMENT ACTION PLANS FIT WITH OTHER GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES?	11
WHY ARE WE ONLY JUST DOING THIS?	13
OPEN GOVERNMENT = FREEDOM OF INFORMATION?	13
WHAT IS THE OPEN GOVERNMENT CIVIL SOCIETY NETWORK?	14
WHO CAN JOIN?	14
WHO RUNS THE NETWORK?	15
<b>2 SUMMARY OF THE COMMITMENTS</b>	<b>16</b>
COMMITMENT 1: FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE TRANSPARENCY	16
COMMITMENT 2: PROVIDING A FRAMEWORK TO SUPPORT SYSTEMIC CHANGE IN SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT TO IMPROVE THE WAY PEOPLE ARE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN OPEN POLICY-MAKING AND SERVICE DELIVERY	17
COMMITMENT 3. IMPROVEMENTS TO THE WAY INFORMATION AND DATA ARE USED	18
COMMITMENT 4:	20
IMPROVING THE ACCOUNTABILITY OF PUBLIC SERVICES – THE CITIZEN'S JOURNEY	20
HOW WILL THAT SOLVE THE PROBLEM?	21
COMMITMENT 5:	22
TRANSPARENCY AND PARTICIPATION IN SCOTLAND AS THE UK EXITS THE EUROPEAN UNION	22
<b>3 OPEN GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO DATE</b>	<b>24</b>
BACKGROUND – SCOTLAND'S OPEN GOVERNMENT JOURNEY	24
WHAT WAS IN THE FIRST PLAN LAST TIME?	24
WHAT HAPPENED FOR EACH COMMITMENT?	24
HAS THE WORK ON THE FIRST ACTION PLAN'S COMMITMENTS STOPPED?	25
WHY ARE THERE ONLY FIVE COMMITMENTS IN SCOTLAND'S ACTION PLANS?	26
WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING RELATED TO OPEN GOVERNMENT?	26
<b>4 ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS</b>	<b>27</b>

<b>HOW DID YOU CREATE THE SECOND ACTION PLAN 2018-20?</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>HOW DID THE STEERING GROUP GET SET UP?</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>WHO IS ON THE STEERING GROUP?</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>WAS ANYONE ELSE INVOLVED?</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>WHAT DID THE NETWORK DO?</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>WHAT DID YOU DO WITH THE IDEAS?</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>HOW DID THESE IDEAS BECOME COMMITMENTS?</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>WHAT NEXT?</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>5 CONCLUSION</b>	<b>34</b>

---

See separate document for Commitments in full detail.



# 1 INTRODUCTION

## What is an Open Government?

An Open Government is one which provides information to people about the decisions it makes; supports people to understand and influence those decisions; and values and encourages accountability. Open Governments also explore how technology can be used to support the way in which they work and serve people.

The [Open Government Partnership](#) is an international collaboration between governments and civil society organisations, working together to become more open. They share learning and develop plans with concrete actions in them to make sure things are moving forward. The Open Government Partnership also has a team (called the [Independent Reporting Mechanism](#) or IRM) that monitors how well the plans are delivered and publishes its findings so everyone can see what's working and what's not.



## What's it got to do with Scotland?

When First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, took office in 2014, she said she wanted to lead a Government that is 'open and accessible'. Open Government is one way in which the Scottish Government is working towards that vision. The Scottish Government joined the Open Government Partnership in 2016. This was the first time the Open Government Partnership had invited local (or subnational) governments to join. It did so because it recognised that governments of all types (devolved, states, principalities, cities etc) are working in different open ways and have things to offer. Before this, Scotland was a member of the Open Government Partnership as part of the UK; Scotland is still able to put an action in the UK Open Government Partnership Action Plan.

The Scottish Government recognises that it's important for people to get the information they need in order to understand how Government works and that people in Scotland have a lot of experience and knowledge that can help government to work better. By working together, we make better decisions and people are able to trust the process and the decisions government makes.

## What does it mean to be a member of the Open Government Partnership?

Governments across the world that are members of the Open Government Partnership must produce each produce their own action plan, where government and civil society work in partnership to develop the plan and deliver commitments that people want to see. Commitments in these plans should contain real actions that can lead to change and, ultimately, improve people's lives.

It also means Scotland is connected to other people across the world, inside governments and across civil society, who are working to change the way governments work, so we can learn from each other and share our experience.

## What have we done so far?

In 2017 we delivered our first [Action Plan](#), working in partnership with the [Scottish Civil Society Network](#) to develop and deliver the five actions set out in that plan, and to help people in Scotland to find out more about Open Government in Scotland. You can read more about what happened in section 2 below. In 2018, we've been working on developing the second Action Plan on Open Government. We've held public consultation discussion events, working with the Open Government Network and a range of partners.

See below Section 3: 'Open government efforts to date' for more information on this.



*People taking part in a public discussion event, developing actions to create the Open Government Action Plan*

## How do Open Government Action Plans fit with other government strategies?

Every year, the First Minister sets out her priorities for the Scottish Government. This is called the [Programme for Government](#). Being an Open Government that is connected to the people, is one of those priorities specifically highlighted in Programme for Government, so this work fits closely with other work happening across Scottish Government.

In 2007 the Scottish Government launched its first [National Performance Framework](#) (NPF). This provided a way to measure progress through a range of economic, health, social and environmental indicators. Importantly, the NPF changed the way public services are delivered in Scotland by focusing on what happens in people's lives as a result of the decisions made.

Ten years later in 2017, Scottish Government and many partners carried out a review of the National Outcomes for Scotland. National Outcomes are the aims that public services and organisations all over Scotland are trying to work towards achieving. In developing the National Outcomes, the public, practitioners and experts were all involved in thinking about what kind of Scotland they would like to live in. This helped them come up with a shared vision. It doesn't just sit with Scottish Government, but instead is driven by the public sector, the private sector, individuals and organisations.

The refreshed Framework is important to Open Government because the [Purpose, Values and National Outcomes](#) puts openness at the very heart of what we do.



*The purpose, values and national outcomes of the refreshed National Performance Framework*

As part of our first Open Government Action Plan, the revised National Performance Framework was matched up to the [United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals](#), because those are aimed at improving wellbeing across the world. This means we can see how we compare to others and how the decisions we make in Scotland affect people in other countries.

We also made sure that everything in our Action Plans' fit with other Scottish Government strategies so we can connect and build on good work.

An important one to mention is [Scotland's Economic Strategy](#) which sets out an overarching framework for how we aim to achieve a more productive, cohesive and fairer Scotland. Open Government supports the Economic Strategy by making more information available, so people

can understand how a wellbeing economy works for them. By making information that the government holds freely available people can also use that information to build or support their businesses.

### **Why are we only just doing this?**

The commitments in the plan aren't the only way the Scottish Government are committed to being an open government, but they build on work which has been happening for a long time.

- Being an open and transparent government is a priority set out in our current [Programme for Government](#).
- We have strong [Freedom of Information Laws](#) which help people get the information they need from public bodies.
- We also publish information about who our [Ministers are meeting](#), and who is lobbying (seeking to influence) MSPs in the Scottish Parliament. This information is published on the new website [lobbying.scot](#).
- The Scottish Government has updated its [website](#) and how it works so it is easier to find information.

### **Open Government = Freedom of Information?**

Open Government isn't just about Freedom of Information (FoI). An open government is one which provides information to people about the decisions it makes; supports people to understand and influence those decisions, and encourages and enables people to hold the government to account.

The purpose of opening up government is to rebuild trust with the people it serves, and to meaningfully involve people in the decisions that shape the world around them.

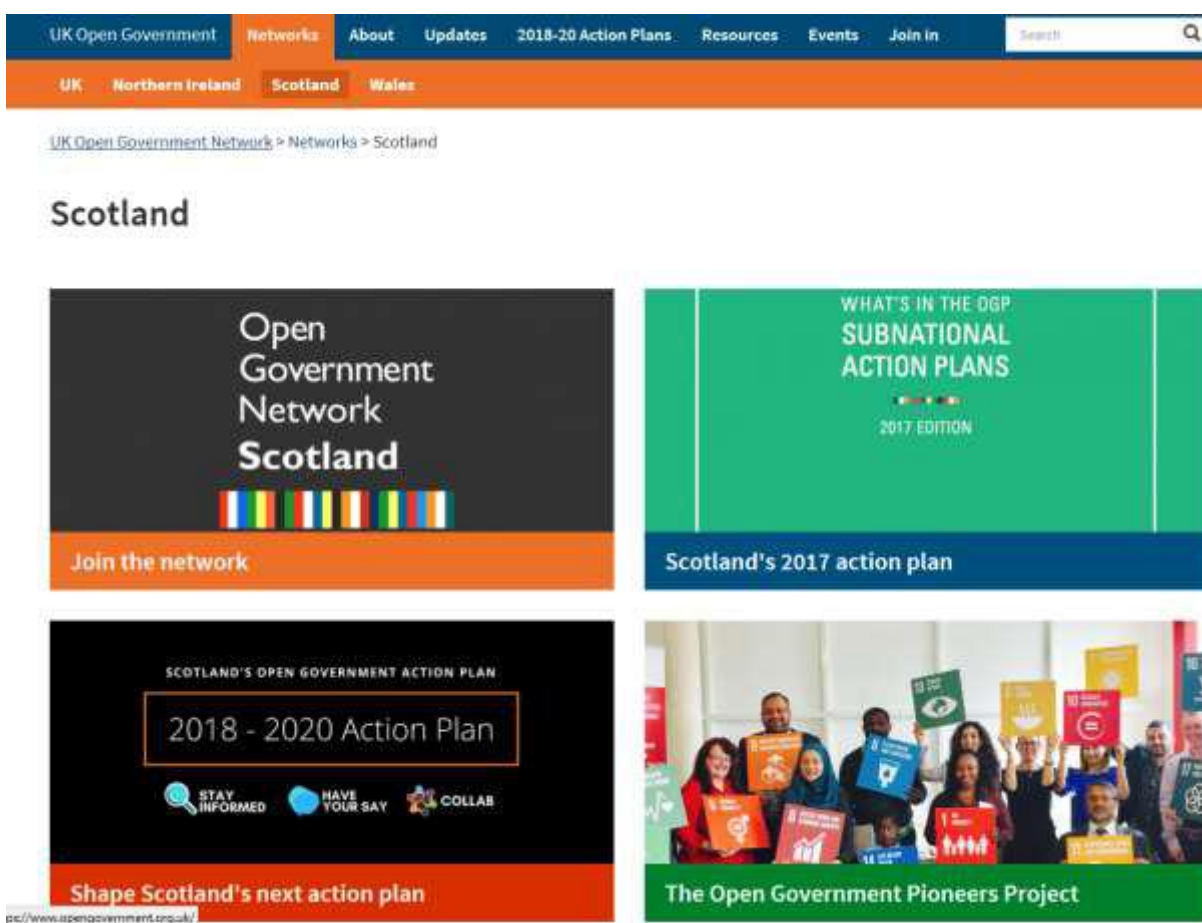
Freedom of Information is a key part of being open and accessible. To become a member of the Open Government Partnership, countries need to have legislation in place that protects this important right to information.

The Scottish Information Commissioner recently issued a [report on the Scottish Government's FOI practices](#) (June 2018) with recommended improvements. The Scottish Government is working on an action plan to take forward the recommendations in this report. This action plan has recently been agreed with the Scottish Information Commissioner and the Scottish Government will now take forward implementation. This work is ongoing, so Freedom of Information is not expressly addressed through this Open Government Action Plan.



## What is the Open Government Civil Society Network?

Scotland's Civil Society Open Government Network is a coalition of active citizens and organisations. They are committed to making government at all levels work better for people in Scotland through increased transparency, accountability and participation. Scotland has had a small network of individuals and organisations interested in Open Government for several years. The Network has been supported by a coordinator from the [Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations \(SCVO\)](#), on the back of Scotland joining the Open Government Partnership in 2016. The Network serves as an engine for new ideas and as a collective voice to collaborate with and challenge government.



*Scotland Open Government Network – webpage with resources*

## Who can join?

Anyone with an interest can join the network. [Visit here](#) to become a member. It's free and you can be involved as much or as little as you like.

## Who runs the network?

The network is supported by the [SCVO](#) through the Big Lottery funded [Open Government Pioneers Project](#), but it is steered by its members. Some members are elected to sit on the [Scottish Open Government Partnership Steering Group](#), which helps set the direction for Open Government in Scotland.

## 2 SUMMARY OF THE COMMITMENTS

This section outlines the activity for each of the five Scottish Open Government commitments in our Action Plan. We have used this section to give a short, easily read, version of the commitments so you can see quickly what we're doing.

We've included the detailed commitment templates in a separate document attached.

The five Open Government Action Plan for 2018-2020 commitments are:

1. Financial and performance transparency
2. Providing a framework to support systemic change in Scottish Government to improve the way people are able to participate in open policy-making and service delivery
3. Improvements to the way information and data are used
4. Improving the accountability of public services – the citizen's journey
5. Transparency and participation in Scotland as the UK exits the European Union

### Commitment 1: Financial and performance transparency

#### **What problem are we trying to solve?**

How the Government uses public money was one of the things people were most interested in finding out more about in our public discussions. People wanted to understand why and how decisions are made and how those decisions help make Scotland a good place to live.

Scotland got new powers through the 2012 and 2016 Scotland Acts, giving additional tax, spending and borrowing responsibilities to the Scottish Government. There will be a new Scottish Exchequer, and a Scottish Investment Bank will be established.

There's an opportunity to set these new institutions up in the spirit of open government from the very beginning and to try to help people understand what the new powers mean for them.

#### **What are we going to do?**

We will learn from other countries to make sure the Scottish Exchequer and the Scottish National Investment Bank are developed openly and transparently, listening to the views of the public about how to make Scotland's public finances more transparent and accessible. This is to



promote public understanding, discussion, debate and participation in financial and policy decision making.

We will work to develop understandable financial information for young people, starting with workshops to understand the questions they have about finances.

### **How will that solve the problem?**

By working with partners and experts to find and understand good practice on transparency, accountability and citizen engagement, and by holding round table events to share learning and understanding. We will begin to understand from others – initially, from young people – the questions they have about public finances and will use that understanding to improve the information publicly available and answer those questions.

## **Commitment 2: Providing a framework to support systemic change in Scottish Government to improve the way people are able to participate in open policy-making and service delivery**

### **What problem are we trying to solve?**

The Scottish Government is committed to working with people in Scotland to deliver policies and services that are designed to meet their needs. Improving participation was the highest priority to emerge from the public engagement on open government. People had concerns about the processes of engagement and consultation used by Scottish Government, and wider public services. The result of this is a growing mistrust of both the processes and the outcomes.

We heard concerns about:

- inconsistency of approach and a lack of feedback; leaving people unsure what is done with their input.
- too much reliance on a small number of stakeholders, rather than seeking to involve the wider public (and causing consultation fatigue in a few)
- too great a reliance on formal consultation mechanisms, and too often at a point where the options have been narrowed or all-but fixed
- consultation documents being often complex and long, making them unsuitable for respondents unfamiliar with the arguments, the type of language or the actions, so excluding many
- not enough use of technology, because many people now choose to communicate using phones, tablets and computers
- not enough support being available to make sure a wide range of people can participate fully and people's time is properly valued.

## **What are we going to do?**

In brief, we commit to developing a 'Participation Framework' that guides good practice across government. We will:

- illustrate and test examples of approaches in a number of key policy areas, including the Local Governance Review; Participatory Budgeting, Collective Leadership in the 'Health and Social Care in Prisons Programme'
- review practice on consultation
- develop training, guidance and case studies to explain different types of participation and how they can be used.

This commitment will be delivered with expertise from both public service and civil society, but is deliberately focused on support for people working in government and other public bodies.

## **How will that solve the problem?**

This support will address three key elements:

- improve understanding of the benefits of involving people early in a process
- raise awareness of the skills needed to either carry out or commission effective, proportionate and inclusive participation processes
- help to equip people to use the right methods for the right reasons at the right time.

The overall objective is to respond to the clear message from the public that there is a need for better participation. The bigger vision of this commitment is that people's views, expertise and lived experience is feeding in to the right places in government, at the right times in the development of policy and services. This will contribute to changing the relationship between citizen and state to one of collaboration and partnership.

The expected result is to create guidance and identify training and process needs which can support public servants to make the meaningful involvement of people routine, effective and proportionate. It will support high quality participation tests that take into account who is participating and their contribution, as well as those who are not or cannot participate, in how this is used to improve development, design and delivery of policy, services and decision-making.

## **Commitment 3. Improvements to the way information and data are used**

### **What problem are we trying to solve?**

The public sector holds much information on Scotland, its institutions and communities. The website [statistics.gov.scot](https://statistics.gov.scot) was launched in 2016 to provide free and open access to Scotland's official statistics data. It currently holds over 200 datasets covering a wide range of topics and organisations. However, much more data remains to be made easily and consistently accessible.

We also heard from Open Government Network members that they thought it would be important that open government makes some change in social policy areas, such as health.

There is also an issue of access to information, and a vision people of Scotland having access to their information to help maintain and improve their health and wellbeing, and that frontline staff and carers can also access the information they need to deliver high quality care and support. There is also a need to build and maintain trust with greater transparency over how and why such information is used for wider public or societal benefit.

### **What are we going to do?**

To make more of our rich data public sector data open for social and economic good, and to help people understand how our country is changing, we will:

- expand the range of data available hosted on [statistics.gov.scot](https://statistics.gov.scot). The Scottish Government will continue to work in partnership across the public sector to do this.
- develop the platform further to host more types of data, including public sector management information such as financial data. By 2020, it will include all data underpinning our National Performance Framework and be the “open as standard” mechanism for publishing all of Scotland's official statistics data, where appropriate.
- develop innovative ways to make Scotland's data relevant and accessible to a wide range of users, including infographics and interactive apps.

To better understand Scotland's communities and support development of skills, we will:

- increase the number of datasets that provide information at a local level. We will promote the use of this information in local area profiles to aid local decision making. We will ensure open data is accompanied by the appropriate metadata and explanations to help people understand and reuse it.
- consider how we can help people develop their skills to make full use of open data, through improved data literacy, and make a plan for how to do this.

Additionally, in line with the [Digital Health & Care Strategy](#), we will develop an approach with the people of Scotland to ensure their health & care information is accessed and shared in an open and transparent manner in the pursuit of excellent care at the point of contact, further building trust in health & care services.

### **How will that solve the problem?**

The actions described in this commitment will:

- Increase the amount of Scotland's official statistics published as open data

- Increase the amount of data published at a geographic level that describes communities
- Make data more easily findable, understandable, and reusable
- Communicate the insights from this data to a non-technical audience
- Plan potential future work on data literacy

## Commitment 4:

### Improving the accountability of public services – the citizen’s journey

#### What problem are we trying to solve?

How public services are held to account in Scotland is complex. It can be challenging for people to know how to navigate this landscape whether to share their views, resolve a problem or hold public services to account at an individual, organisational, sectoral or national level.

From the public consultation, we heard that people wanted to know:

- how to make their voices heard;
- how they can have a say in, and contribute to, public sector improvement and accountability; and
- who makes decisions about public service design and delivery, how and under what authority.

A lack of understanding and certainty around how public services are held to account can make individuals feel powerless, frustrated or disengaged.

There was a specific idea that [we heard](#) from the public around mapping and explaining how accountability worked for citizens.

#### What are we going to do?

This commitment is split into two distinct parts; Part 1 is led by a collaboration of scrutiny bodies and regulators, and Part 2 is led by the Scottish Government.

##### Part 1. Understanding accountability and improving citizens’ access

We commit to work collaboratively within the current regulatory framework to improve the citizen’s understanding of and access to accountability mechanisms. We will work together to examine what accountability means to different groups of people. This will include:

- mapping the current landscape of public service scrutiny and regulatory bodies, identifying what sorts of decisions they take, what and how they scrutinise and regulate, how they drive improvement and how citizens can access this
- holding conversations between citizens, regulators, scrutiny bodies and government to identify how citizens would like to exercise their rights to complain, appeal or seek scrutiny of public bodies, and what the barriers are
- identifying ways to improve access to and strengthen citizens' ability to hold public services to account within the current landscape, to amplify the impact of the scrutiny bodies and their distinct duties.

## Part 2 – A citizen-focused approach to public services

Accountability isn't just about reacting when things go wrong. It must be embedded throughout public service design, starting with policy and decision makers hearing people's views and experiences, learning from past experience when designing new services, and tackling the issues that matter to people in a way that works for them.

The Scottish Government is committed to working collaboratively to put these principles into practice. This will be done by progressing a transformational approach which puts people at the heart of policy making. The Scottish Government will continue its work with a range of partners (taking account of the work of Part 1 of this commitment) to:

- develop an approach to consider the impacts of public policy and decision-making on people in a systematic and coherent way, and to recognise the importance of citizens in driving high-quality public services;
- review the provision of and access to advice services in ways that adopt the spirit and principles of the Open Government Partnership to uphold the rights of people in accessing advice
- develop and implement a statutory consumer body for Scotland - Consumer Scotland - in a way that adopts the spirit and principles of the Open Government Partnership

## **How will that solve the problem?**

The commitment will improve the citizen's journey around public services accountability. It will empower and enable citizens' participation and ability to hold public services to account. We envisage this commitment will deliver the following outcomes:

- amplify the work of scrutiny bodies and regulators to hold public services to account and make it more visible to people
- people know how they can hold public services to account and are supported to do this
- scrutiny bodies, regulators, civil society and government work effectively together and share good practice.

In delivering this commitment we will:

- enable greater transparency by increasing the accessibility, usability and quality of information on public service accountability for people
- enhance and strengthen the citizen voice and citizens' ability to inform public services by helping people navigate the scrutiny and regulatory landscape

- promote people-focused scrutiny mechanisms that strengthen citizens' ability to challenge how public services are delivered, including through complaints and appeals processes.

## Commitment 5: Transparency and participation in Scotland as the UK exits the European Union

### **What problem are we trying to solve?**

Since the UK wide vote to leave the European Union in 2016, the UK, as the member state negotiating with the EU, has not provided objective information on the process, outcomes and potential implications of leaving the European Union.

From discussions with stakeholders in Scotland, there is a perception that the public are confused and do not trust information surrounding Brexit, with a wide range of conflicting information regarding the possible terms of the UK's future relationship with the EU, and what this means for individuals and businesses in Scotland and the EU, and other EU nationals living in Scotland.

### **What are we going to do?**

The Scottish Government is committed to proactively publishing information on the potential impacts of Brexit and actual impacts as these are realised. Where research and analysis is commissioned, we will seek to publish results where possible. To support and encourage involvement of people and communities so we can hear their views and they can understand the information, implications and impacts of the decisions taken by the UK Government. The Scottish Government will make public its preferred approach to leaving the European Union, and the supporting evidence for that approach. We will engage with stakeholders, including the Scottish Parliament, to provide our ongoing assessment of EU exit negotiations, the implications of the outcomes for Scotland and we will listen to views to inform the Scottish Government's response. This will help to raise understanding by policy makers about the implications and to help protect what matters to the people of Scotland as the UK leaves the EU.

The Scottish Government has already published several papers. All our publications relating to Brexit are [collated here](#).

### **How will that solve the problem?**

Publishing a clear position, based on evidence and analysis, at an early stage helped ensure that people were informed as negotiations began.

By continuing to talk with communities we will improve understanding of all of the issues people are facing in regard to the impacts of Brexit; increase understanding of and influence the Scottish Government's policy with regards to negotiations with the UK Government and help build consensus in Scotland for mitigation of the impacts of Brexit on people's lives and wellbeing.

**Please note:** At the time of developing the 2018-2020 Scottish National Action Plan the shape of the Brexit agreement and therefore the potential impacts on Scotland are not known. We are therefore keen to build on flexibility to this commitment to enable us to respond appropriately to this fast moving environment which is largely outwith the control of the Scottish Government.

If you would like more information on these, you can read the full detail of all the commitments in the attached document.

### 3 OPEN GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO DATE

#### **Background – Scotland’s Open Government journey**

Let’s recap on how Scotland got to this stage. This is our Second Action Plan, so what has been happening before now? Scotland joined the Open Government Partnership in 2016 as a pioneer member, along with several others around the world. We created and delivered a 1-year Action plan over 2017.

#### **What was in the first plan last time?**

This Action Plan builds on the work that progressed in Open Government so far. Last year, we had Scotland’s first [Open Government Action Plan for 2017](#). It included five commitments:

1. Financial Transparency: to clearly explain how public finances work, so people can understand how money flows into and out of the Scottish Government, to support public spending in Scotland
2. Measure Scotland’s progress: by making understandable information available through the National Performance Framework, which will be reviewed to reflect our commitments to Human Rights and the Sustainable Development Goals
3. Deliver a Fairer Scotland: through implementation of the Actions developed with civil society in the Fairer Scotland action plan
4. Participatory budgeting: to empower communities through direct action ensuring they have influence over setting budget priorities
5. Increasing participation: improving citizen participation in local democracy and developing skills to make sure public services are designed with input from users and with user needs at the centre of this.

Now, in our Second Action Plan, we are building on this work to improve and continue these commitments. Some of the key themes are the same, such as financial transparency and participation, which we know are clear priorities from our public discussions.

#### **What happened for each commitment?**

Each of the commitments contained a number of milestones and actions. Most were delivered during 2017, but some needed longer.

As mentioned above, the Open Government Partnership also has a team (called the [Independent Reporting Mechanism](#) or IRM) that monitors how well the plans are delivered and publish their findings so everyone can see what’s working and what’s not. The IRM’s report summarizes the



results of the implementation of Scotland's action plan from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017. You can [read the report here](#). In summary, it said;

*“Scotland showed strong institutional participation during co creation and implementation of the OGP action plan. The commitments focused on improving citizens’ ability to monitor the government’s performance in key policy areas and participate in government policy and spending decisions.*

*Moving forward, the Scottish Government could establish an inclusive OGP governance forum to improve CSO engagement, deepen its commitment to financial transparency and build a stronger focus on accountability.”*

We've taken on this recommendation and greatly improved governance this year. Together with civil society, we jointly set up a Steering Group which is made up of equal numbers of government and civil society representatives. They help shape the overall strategic direction of open government in Scotland.

### **Has the work on the first Action Plan's commitments stopped?**

No. A lot of the work from the last plan is still continuing, Some of the commitments, such as financial transparency, have also carried over into this plan because people felt the work was very important for Open Government.

We will provide updates on how the work from the last plan is progressing on our [Open Government blog](#).



## Why are there only five commitments in Scotland's Action Plans?

Scotland joined Open Government Partnership as a sub-national Pioneer members, so our Action Plan can only include a maximum of five commitments. When we developed the last Action Plan there were a lot more ideas, so we tried to 'bracket' them together to cover as many of them as we could, but that still meant there some things we couldn't do. It also meant there were some really interesting things happening that we couldn't include. One of the big messages [we heard](#) from the public was around a need for civic education, and several ideas calling for curriculum changes to include education on democratic opportunities. We are unable to include this in the Action Plan this time. This doesn't mean the conversation ends here: we can continue to think about how these ideas might work and develop these to be included in the next Action Plan.

## What else is happening related to Open Government?

There are lots of ways in which the government is doing things differently and working with people in an open way that aren't included in this or the first Action Plan. Some of them are things that were happening anyway, and others are where people have deliberately changed the way they work to be more in line with Open Government.

Here are just a few examples of work that is going on in Scottish Government:

### The Scottish Approach to Service Design

The mission is to collectively define a common approach to designing public services in Scotland. The goal is for Scotland to have unified public service journeys that are designed around user's needs. You can find out [more here](#).

An example of how this has worked in Scotland is the recent establishment of the Social Security Agency's [experience panels](#).

### Online Identity Assurance

This team in Scottish Government is working to develop a common approach to online identity assurance for access to public services. This is the process where a person seeking to access a public service online can sign in and prove who they are in a safe, secure way. As well as having a Programme Board overseeing the governance for this work, the team has opened the process up by publishing all the meeting papers in advance; blogging about the work; having open invitations to meetings of a National Stakeholder Group, that anyone can come along to; holding 'show and tell' events to inform people about the work; and filming and streaming their meetings. You can find out more about their [work here](#).

### Democracy Matters

This is a [conversation with](#) and in communities about the kind of changes they want to see happen to take control of decisions in local areas. This is in recognition that it is often better for decisions about the issues that affect different communities in Scotland to be taken with more active involvement of those communities. Whether that is communities in different places organising at a very local level, or communities with a shared interest organising at a more regional level, to help public services to work in ways which meet local circumstances and reflect the priorities of different communities.

## 4 ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

### Tell us more about [this](#) Action Plan for 2018-20.

This section tells you how we developed our Second Action Plan and details how Scottish Government collaborated with civil society, COSLA, people across Scotland and the wider network to create this document.

### How did you create the Second Action Plan 2018-20?

The Scottish Government worked in close partnership with the [Civil Society Network](#) to agree an approach to the development of the National Action Plan. One of the key starting points was the learning from the [Independent Reporting Mechanism](#) report. This was a report from a researcher, appointed by the Open Government Partnership to be external to Scottish Government, to give an independent report of our progress. The [report](#) recognised that the Scottish Government had met the requirements for consultation on the Open Government Partnership Action Plan, in terms of involving civil society in the development of commitments and milestones, but recommended this could go further. The report also made recommendations around the role and make-up of the Open Government Partnership steering group, which we took on board.

### How did you collaborate?

Using an [online wiki site](#) (which means all members can edit and add to the content collectively produced), the Open Government Civil Society network published all the draft project plans that had been developed together with government. The network also published the collaboratively drafted guidance for how everyone was going to approach the work, and asked members to review and provide comments. This made sure there were clear timelines for what was happening when and invited network members and people to help where they could.

We carried out [public engagement and consultation over the summer of 2018](#) – more detail below. These ideas from the public broadly fitted under 5 key themes from which we've developed the commitments.

### How did the Steering Group get set up?

A [subcommittee](#) of the Civil Society Open Government Network worked with the Scottish Government to develop [Articles of Governance](#) for a refreshed Scottish Open Government Partnership Steering Group based on the Open Government Partnership [guidance for multistakeholder](#) forum. This clearly sets out who sits on the group, how it works, and how decisions are made.

The draft Articles of Governance were shared with the wider network, so they could make comments on it, and some changes were made about how the group should work in public where it can. The Articles of Governance were agreed by the then Minister for Parliamentary Business

and the Civil Society Network, and now form the basis of how Open Government Partnership works in Scotland.

### **Who is on the Steering Group?**

The refreshed Steering Group is co-chaired by the Scottish Government Minister with responsibility for Open Government Partnership (currently the Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations) and the Civil Society Chair of the Open Government Steering Group (currently Lucy McTernan). [Civil society membership](#) is selected by the network through an [open election process](#), while Government membership is dependent on the nature of the commitments within this Action Plan, to ensure that people who are able to make decisions and influence inside Government, are in the group. The group was established in May 2018, and has since met twice, in June and October 2018.



The membership of the Steering Group, as of December 2018, is;

#### Co-chairs

- Michael Russell – Cabinet Secretary Government Business and Constitutional Relations
- Lucy McTernan – Chair of the Civil Society Steering Group, and member of the International Open Government Partnership Steering Committee.

#### Civil society

- Alex Stobart – MyDex CIC
- Benjamin McElwee – See Me Scotland
- Catherine Gee – Keep Scotland Beautiful
- Eddy Borges-Rey – The University of Stirling
- Elric Honore – Fife Centre for Equalities
- Kaela Scott – Involve
- Shaben Begum – Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance

#### Government

- Audrey MacDougall – Deputy Director: Communities Analysis Division and Chief Social Researcher

- Barbara Allison – Director Communications, Ministerial Support & Facilities
- Claire McPherson – Deputy Director Public Service Reform Division
- Colin Cook – Director Digital
- Doreen Grove – Head of Open Government
- Roger Halliday – Chief Statistician and Head of Performance
- Scott Bell – Head of Procurement Development and Construction Review Division
- Stephen Gallagher – Director Communities and Local Government

#### Local Government

- Councillor Elena Whitham, COSLA's Community Wellbeing Spokesperson
- Councillor Graham Houston, COSLA's Vice President

You can find out more about the Steering Group, including all the papers and notes of the discussions, on the [Scottish Government website](#).

#### **Was anyone else involved?**

Yes! We worked closely with the Open Government Civil Society Network and an independent facilitator to invite the public and third sector organisations to share their ideas to support our ambitions for open and participative government. We heard from people across Scotland throughout the engagement process which included:

- a programme of 7 public discussion events across the country (Dundee, Stirling, Inverness, Glasgow x2, Edinburgh x2)
- attending existing events (e.g. Inclusion Scotland's Highland Disability conference)
- hosting informal events (Conversation Café, Firestarter Festival).



We also used an online site ([ideas.gov.scot](https://ideas.gov.scot)) to crowdsource ideas. This acted as a repository, so that everyone could see what ideas were being proposed, and join in a discussion of the ideas by leaving a comment. We promoted this site through the Scottish Government and Civil Society networks social media channels and other sources, like newsletters and leaflets. We received 57 ideas through this site, both from online and offline idea events. We were able to take forward most of these ideas to develop the Open Government Action Plan, and these key themes form the basis of the commitments.



We received some ideas from the public that were outwith the scope of Open Government and this piece of work, so we passed these along to other colleagues in the relevant departments of Scottish Government to consider.

### **What did the network do?**

The Civil Society Network was involved in all the work above and the Coordinator of the Network worked closely with Scottish Government in the planning and delivery. Over the course of the year, the Network also engaged with a number of equalities groups, including young people, black and minority ethnic and disabled peoples' organisations. Input at these sessions and many others held by the Network during 2017 was fed into the [online idea crowdsourcing](https://ideas.gov.scot/open-government) site.

### **What did you do with the ideas?**

The outputs from all events, conversations and ideas were brought to a final event in Edinburgh on 21st August as the culmination of the engagement process. The purpose of the event was to refine the broad ideas into more specific commitments and prioritise the key themes to take into final discussions with Scottish Government policy teams for agreement and inclusion in the Action Plan.





*We spent lots of time working with the civil society coordinator and the Open Government Network to understand the comments from the public and identify the key themes*

The key themes emerging from all events were:

financial transparency

understanding the flow of money, transparency around procurement processes; accessible and understandable explanation of budgets and expenditure, citizen participation, i.e. on-going participatory budgeting.

access to information

data and information available in variety of accessible formats to help people understand government processes and decisions, and make participation easier.

participation and consultation

more participative and deliberative processes, improved engagement practice, improving feedback and government consultations, education on democratic processes

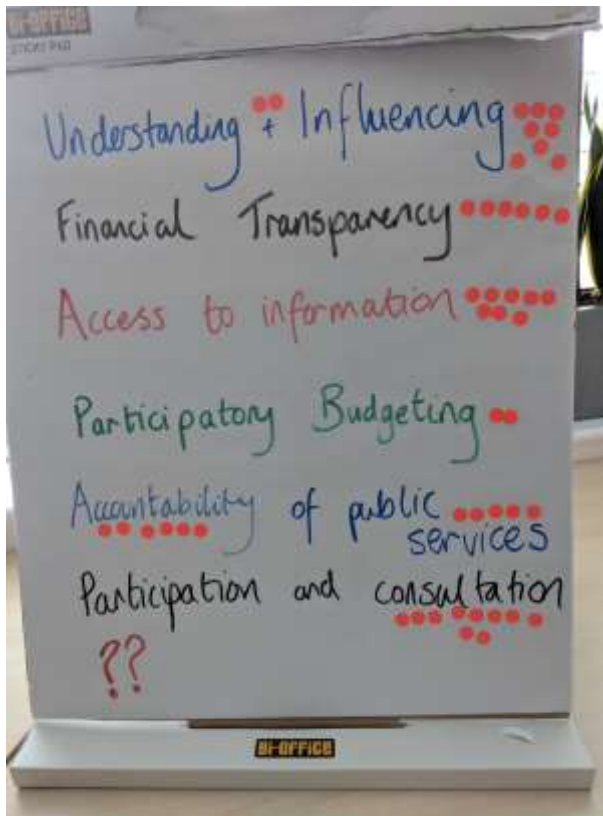
accountability of public services

helping people understand who decision-makers and service providers are, and how they are accountable; mapping landscape of scrutiny bodies to show accountability and open up meetings for public input

understanding and influencing

information on systems and processes so people can understand where to lobby or where they can be involved, education on more participative processes, encouraging citizen journalism, apps for understanding and engaging in government processes.

A full report of the engagement process on [‘What we heard’](#) can be found on our Open Government blog. This includes a summary of the report.



*Participants vote on the themes that are most important to them at the final public discussion event (Edinburgh, 21<sup>st</sup> August 2018)*

### **How did these ideas become commitments?**

The Open Government team in the Scottish Government took your ideas and spoke to colleagues in government and civil society to work out what might be possible to do under each theme.

They then took these to the Steering Group which discussed the draft commitments and agreed to do some more on them to refine the rough ideas into commitments. Each theme had named government officials working together with civil society representatives to refine them into commitments. You can read more about that process [here](#).





The final commitments were then agreed in line with the process set out in the Articles of Governance which we had developed earlier in the year.

The final plan, including all the commitments was agreed by the Scottish Ministers and the Steering Group Members in December 2018.

### **What next?**

Over the next two years the Steering Group will oversee the delivery of each of the commitments. There will be government officials and civil society representatives working together to make sure that they are delivered in an open transparent way, and that people are involved in how they are delivered.

Together with the Steering Group members, we will provide a way to make it easy to track progress of the commitments.

If you want to get involved you can also become a member of the [Open Government Network](#). It's free and open to anyone to be involved whether you know a little or a lot. [Visit here](#) to become a member.

## 5 CONCLUSION

Thank you for reading Scotland's Second Action Plan on Open Government.

This Action Plan will be delivered over 2018-20, and we will provide a way to make it possible to track progress of the commitments which will be publicly available and updated regularly.

We will officially launch this Action Plan in January 2019, and explore publishing this in other more accessible formats.

We will be working closely with the Open Government Network to deliver the commitments outlined over the next two years so there are plenty of opportunities to get involved. Anyone with an interest can join the Open Government Network. [Visit here](#) to become a member. It's free and you can be involved as much or as little as you like. We welcome involvement with interested individuals and civil society organisations throughout the course of delivering this Action Plan.

We will also be reflecting on the process of developing this Action Plan over the last year with those who have been involved. We will publish a report of our learning with the aim of improving the process for the next time.

This document has been produced by the Scottish Government and the Open Government Network.

