



Co-creating a more open government

Report of public discussion events and engagement

The Scottish Government have been working with the civil society network in Scotland to create a future where the government is more open, transparent and accessible, involves people and helps them to hold government to account. We're currently working to create a new plan for the government to commit to delivering over the next two years. We wanted to hear from people across the country about what improvements they would like to see and their ideas on how the government could be more open and accessible.

Summary

We hosted public discussion events and engagement over the summer to hear people's ideas. This report is a summary of all ideas we heard from the public discussion events and engagement over the summer of 2018.

All of these ideas will feed into the creation of the Scottish Open Government Partnership Action Plan for 2018-20, due to be published Autumn 2018.

Scotland is a member of the global Open Government Partnership - an international movement of governments around the world who are trying to lead the way on being proactive and innovative in opening up governments.



Engagement and public discussion events

In developing the plan we worked closely with the Open Government Civil Society Network 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)
- online crowdsourcing of ideas (57 received) through the ideas.gov.scot website

The outputs from all events, conversations and ideas was 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.

Key themes

The key themes 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. ongoing participatory budgeting.
- **access to information** – data and information 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 and how decision-makers and service providers are accountable; mapping landscape of scrutiny bodies to show accountability, open up meetings for public input.
- **understanding and influencing** – information on systems and processes so people can understand where to lobby or where can be involved, education on more participative processes, encouraging citizen journalism, apps for understanding and engaging in government processes.



The presentation with summary of what we heard can be viewed here: <https://www.slideshare.net/NiamhWebster/planning-the-future-of-openness-in-scotland>

These themes were heard strongly and consistently through all engagement activities. We are currently working to develop specific commitments within these key themes which will form the basis of the action plan.

Next steps

The ideas we heard from people form the basis for the Scottish Government's Action Plan on open government. The ideas in this report have been presented to Scottish Government policy teams, colleagues and partners where applicable, and we are in the process of developing actions and commitments based on these ideas.

The finalised plan will be signed off by the Scottish Cabinet of Ministers. The Scottish Government will then publish the finalised Action Plan, and will commit to delivering these actions over the next two years (2018-20).

We provide regular updates on progress and recent news on our [open government blog](#). You can also [join the Open Government Network](#) run by civil society partners - it's free to join and connects you to interested people and organisations working on improving the future of openness and transparency worldwide.

Thank you for reading the report from the public discussions and engagement, produced by the [Scottish Community Development Centre](#), and published by the Scottish Government Open Government team.

Full record of public discussion events

The following annexes are a record of each public discussion event – all ideas and all contributions from members of the public have been recorded. Please see below for individual events attached as Annex to this summary.

Annex A: Glasgow event, 5th June

Annex B: Stirling event, 20th June

Annex C: Dundee event, 9th August

Annex D: Glasgow event, 13th August

Annex E: Inverness event, 15th August

Annex F: Edinburgh Participatory budgeting network event, 16th August

Annex G: Edinburgh final event, 21st August



Public discussion event – Glasgow

Trades hall, Tues 5th June 2018

Record of discussion

Numbers attending – nine

Event Content

The responses from participants are based on the post it and flipchart material with minimal additional interpretation except to clarify the meaning. Issues were explored in pairs and clustered into themes by the whole group. I have used the questions we asked on the night as a guide although people discussed issues and ideas for solutions interchangeably to some extent. The vast majority of the material involved issues about government readiness for participation and approaches to engagement and there was overlap between these themes.



<p>Clustered issues - Arising from smaller discussions in pairs and then clustered by the group as a whole</p>	<p>What aspects of Scottish Government's role and/or activities need to be more open (in relation to topics identified)?</p>	<p>What kinds of actions will lead to the changes or improvements identified?</p>
<p>Government readiness for an open approach – Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Access to information,</i> • <i>The need for joined up government(aligning, sustainability, wellbeing and human equity).</i> • <i>Access to minister.</i> • <i>The power of the civil society voice.</i> • <i>Transparency of processes.</i> • <i>Knowing more about legislation processes.</i> • <i>Knowing more about participative processes for greater democracy.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need better access to information to make participation possible/easier. • This includes more effective promotion of open government concepts. • Need to be able to communicate potential (policy) options to people. • Requires effective ways to discern community priorities. • Be about really empowering citizens – not consulting on done deals. • Need to build confidence and trust in political processes - and do this quickly • Need to increase the levels of political representation (1;200 was identified as a guide/Target?). • Need trusted sources of information and advice about how to exert influence and lobby. • Persuasive case needed about how citizens initiatives can be elicited, prioritised and funded through well resourced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires plain language and a more accessible SG website. • Engage citizens and civil society early on. • Going to places and process where people are – not just requiring them to come to you. • Needs more accessibility of elected reps. • We need commitment to encourage input and really listen to it. • More deliberative processes. • More places (real world and virtual) where different ideas, priorities and projects can be exposed for public comment and contributions. • Encouraging citizen journalism – help make information more usable for people. • Confidence built when core info is shared and when civil society can meaningfully contribute to decision making and prioritising.

	Participatory budgeting processes with good outcome reporting.	
<p>Participation and engagement – Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can people participate in government as individuals and groups? • Who are the members of the OGP network? • How does this relate to different levels of government nationally and locally? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More participation is needed. • Needs more education and knowledge about how to influence change. • Requiring understanding about who has influence and how this can be accessed/shared. • Better relationships between politicians, and the public - individually and collectively in groups. • Need to improve democratic process with more dialogue and working together. • More transparency about who lobbies government, and why, is needed. • Results of change processes need to be available and in accessible formats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to look at where people get information now and improve opportunities – points of access and better formats. • More visual presentation of information. • Plain language. • Being creative about where and how information is shared. • Could involve more/better use of data but in more accessible ways eg info graphics and explanatory notes.
<p>Financial Transparency – Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is money used and accounted for? • How can citizens influence priorities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can citizens contribute their perspectives and priorities to spending priorities and proposals? • Can the very considerable info gathered already eg Spikewell observatory – be usefully shared to help citizens understand how public funds are spent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People supportive of the role of participatory budgeting to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Encourage innovation. – Respond to grassroots priorities. – Empower citizens. • Help to interpret complex financial information via:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This should apply in national and local government and in other public agencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education and awareness raising. - Open publishing of budgets and spending. - Building on useful budget preparation that some Councils already do.
<p>Reserved matters Concern was raised about openness related to reserved matters but time did not allow this to be explored in any depth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was pointed out that Scottish Citizens could have a say in the UK OGP and a commitment to explain how was given • It was agreed to be aware of this issues as the regional and national dialogues continue 	



Public discussion event - Stirling

Stirling University, 20th June 2018

Record of discussion

Numbers attending – Six, Staff in attendance - Emma Harvey and Niamh Webster (Scottish Government Open Government Team), Paul Bradley (SCVO Open Government Network Coordinator) & Mick Doyle (facilitator, SCDC).

General Comments on the event – Although numbers were small, people enjoyed the process and were insightful about the issues. Participants understood its importance and wanted to stay involved if suitable opportunities arise. Other observations on the process are:

- The majority were not aware of the OGAP process prior to the consultation. This may suggest that the marketing approach was reaching a slightly wider audience but that general awareness raising about the OGAP needed to be strengthened
- Most were not members of the OGP network, but were interested in joining. They included an academic, a politics student, a businessman, and organisational development consultant and a local government employee working with bid data issues.
- Most of those attending were there in an individual capacity rather than representing any particular groups
- Participants commented that the event was “very-inclusive” and liked how structured discussions helped achieve this but also that “conversations were allowed to flow” when necessary. They felt that there had been “lots of good discussions” and

that it was “ very useful to meet new people and hear their views on the OGP”. Some suggestions to improve the process were made:

- *Provide more information about the interactive nature of the process in advance - as a selling point and to clarify expectations.*
- *Having a bit more time available for the clustering aspect of the process. I will look at the timings to improve this.*



Event Content

The responses from participants from post it and flipchart have minimal additional interpretation, except to clarify the meaning.

<p><i>When asked to identify what Open Government meant to them in paired groups participants identified the following</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Transparency about tax and spending ● Transparency in political and bureaucratic processes ● Accountability of government ● Approachability of government ● Encouraging people to ask questions ● Stimulating awareness of issues and rights ● Facilitating two way communication- government and citizens ● Encouraging innovation through openness ● Corruption and what steps are being taken to reduce these ● Grounding government through ongoing direct contact with the people
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- At personal and wider civil society levels
- Mixing roles for government and citizens

Participants clustered the issues for discussion in two small groups arising from the question

What open government issues do you want to talk to others about?

Two groups then explored the following issues.

	What aspects of Scottish Government's role and/or activities need to be more open (in relation to topics identified)?	What kinds of actions will lead to the changes or improvements identified?
Group One – Freedom of information & data Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>There is a need for more transparency on procurement processes for contracts.</i> • <i>With greater appreciation of impact on the supply chain and maximising opportunities for small to medium sized businesses.</i> • <i>There needs to be more awareness built of the Planning process and practical steps for citizen intervention in it.</i> • <i>Should be openness about why decisions on procurement and planning are made and about who benefits and who may not benefit from these.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Data should be made available in ways accessible to the person in the street.</i> • <i>A “toolkit” should be devised and promoted on how citizens use data.</i> • <i>The Open Government License – Is useful but people don't have full equality of access due to issues such as levels of digital literacy – should be made more accessible to all in civil society</i> • <i>Some method of bespoke data analysis should be developed where the public can tailor info requests to their “own life”.</i> • <i>A game or app should be developed for use in schools and other learning contexts to increase access in an enjoyable way.</i> • <i>High level understanding of data and its implications for open government is the goal.</i>
Group two –	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>More and clearer information needed about the functions of Government at</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Increased political/civic education to raise awareness and support involvement.</i>

<p>Community Involvement in decision making (including Outreach to involve communities, greater academic participation and research based policy making).</p>	<p><i>Westminster, Scottish and Local Authority levels.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs to be able to be understood by everyone. • Call for clarity about the functions and methods of our democracy in terms of political processes, role of various institutions and interest groups and of political parties. • There is a need to challenge the demonization of public services in current political and media narratives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More encouragement and funding to help people get involved in shaping how government works. • More information and learning opportunities for citizens to understand how government/public services are shaped and delivered. • Media and other campaigns to help people understand what politicians actually do.
<p>The low number of participants meant some topics were identified but could not be discussed in groups these are listed opposite for wider reference.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local government Reform. • STEAM – (Open data for science, technology, agriculture and maths). • Looking beyond “urban concentricity” at how decisions affect rural areas. 	
<p>The summing up session from the Open Government partnership and Scottish Government Reps surfaced some additional useful ideas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To seek to actively combat apathy by positively promoting democratic functions roles and citizen access points. • To promote a widespread debate about the function and value of public services. • Promoting information and opportunities to stand for public office. • Build on good underlying data through well contextualised but accessible tools such as Infographics. • To develop a more open culture and practice about outsourcing and related contracts. 	



Public discussion event – Dundee

The Circle, 9th August 2018

Record of discussion

Numbers attending – 12

Staff in attendance – Niamh Webster (Scottish Government Open Government Team), & Mick Doyle (facilitator, SCDC).

General Comments – Improving numbers at this event deepened the discussion on a wider range of potential areas of interest. The number of these addressed more fully was limited by the viable size of the discussion groups. Participants included staff from public services concerned with open data and third sector organisations such as TSIs, community organisation representatives from tenants organisations and private sector consultants with an interest in the issues. The majority were not members of the OGP network.

Session Content

The responses from participants are based on the post-it and flipchart material with minimal additional interpretation except to clarify the meaning where possible. Issues were explored in pairs and clustered into themes by the whole group and then explored in more depth in small groups according to interests of participants. In this event live interpretation of the issues was provided by SG staff for inclusion on the open government action plan website to highlight this route for comment. This commentary has been taken into account when producing this note

1. How participants viewed open government

An opening discussion on what open government meant to participants to get people thinking about the issues highlighted the following:

- There was a question about whether the idea of Open Government was an “oxymoron” and uncertainty about to what extent government could be /was really open.
- There was felt to be a need for respectful two way conversation between government and the governed.
- This should be based on equal rights for all - although this was not defined it was linked to the idea of a level playing field.
- Sharing why decisions were made was viewed as key to understanding and influencing them.
- Access to unmediated raw data used by government was viewed as important.
- With information available in one accessible place- including data, strategy, plans and priorities.
- There was a view from some participants that Scottish Government was centralising power in relation to some functions with a feeling that this ran contrary to OGP ideas and was greater than in some other parts of the UK.
- Others viewed progress in power sharing via community empowerment as positive - if variable geographically.
- Some saw the actions of some Councils as an impediment to Open Government – although again this was variable
- Support for community empowerment was widespread and citizen participation was viewed as important to grow and sustain it.
- Understanding how our money was being spent was an important part of open government requiring knowledge about how services are planned and what they costs to establish and maintain.

These overarching points illustrate the general view of participants on some of the key issues.



2. Topics Discussed in More Depth

When asked to agree what they would like to discuss further with others, the paired discussions generated the themes based on those above which were clustered for discussion in the small groups. Generally these reflected themes from the other regional discussions relating to **what information was available and how**, the **way that government behaves towards those it governs** and the **support needed by the governed to maximise their knowledge and influence**. The clusters, key themes and ideas for practical action are summarised in the table below

	What aspects of Scottish Government's role and/or activities need to be more open (in relation to topics identified)?	What kinds of actions will lead to the changes or improvements identified?
Openness of data and information	<p>The main issues were the need for open data to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build trust in Government • Do so in formats that people could access and use for a variety of reasons rather than those which suited those making it available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing data and the methods used for doing so, should be mindful of the context of who requires it and why. This should enable maximum access relative to the purpose or purposes that users may have. Inaccessible password protected excel files should not be the norm - as seemed to have been some peoples experience.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was accepted that raw, independently analysable data in various file formats, was required for some people wishing to understand in depth and/or influence government actions and processes. • Accessible information in the form of info graphics and other visual means were equally desirable to reach a wider group of people in meaningful ways and that the wrong kind of presentation of the right information did not serve an open government approach. • A single portal for information in Scotland was suggested. This included not only “data” but clear information on how it was collected and why. This would require thought to ensure its design and navigation worked for a wide range of people. • Requests that information was “crystal clear” and potentially explained by “non-experts” rather than having “the accountants try and explain the numbers”. • Raising awareness of information and how to use it in schools was also suggested. • The notion of an associated online citizen community using a “crowd swarming” approach to share the interpretation of knowledge was suggested. • Citizen education for democracy generally was seen as a useful approach • Information on the voting records of MSPs, Councillors etc should be made easier to access.
<p>Oversight and prevailing culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants expressed concern about the role of professional “snobbery” and the role of elites in holding and mitigating the effective sharing of information. • Limited understanding of the principles of co-design by 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants wanted SG to “walk the walk as well as talk the talk” of open government, and by extension being open to power sharing with devolution of power to lowest level possible including to communities. • This would require both Scottish and Local Government to balance streamlining decision making processes with maximising openness – although it was recognised that this would be difficult to achieve.

	<p>many more powerful stakeholders makes co-operation on sharing info with a purpose more difficult.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The culture of “us and them” is still evident amongst many who are in receipt of public funds and notions of wider accountability not fully embedded. • Current climate (resources, austerity) makes communication, & partnerships built on good relationships challenging. • Concerns were also raised about the roles of officials due to a perceived increase in delegation of authority away from elected reps to officers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would also require treating the governed with parity of esteem and as those with significant expertise themselves about local needs and possible solutions. • This may involve openness to considering who is best placed to deliver a service from whichever sector they come from (Public, private, voluntary or community). • Still a need for more accessible access to information like minutes and records of meetings as where to access these is often not understood. • General information on roles and functions of government and elected members is needed – including making the role of political parties clearer and the system of whipping decisions explicit.
<p>How the Operation of Government affects openness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Party concerns were still felt to trump those of constituents in many cases. • A loss of trust in politics and politicians was evident. • SG often provide Councils with “advice” about key types of action re open government. How can this be enforced? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Though there should be greater community representation – this should strive to be more representative than it sometimes is at present. • Openness & participation should emphasis partnership rather than competition and conflict for resources. • To be effective clear plain English is very important to make things understandable. • Clarity on roles and functions of various levels of government is really important to help people know what and how to influence. • Openness needs equity of influence - which does not exist locally at present for communities. This is a key principle.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community planning was felt by some to be unconvincingly democratic despite its stated intent. • There was a lack of clear principles for fair and open government evident locally. • The planning system was felt to be particularly hard to influence. • What can or can't be done at local level was often unclear and probably contested. • Despite this some thought people were "drowning in consultations". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More openness about frameworks for measuring success, and what assumptions and ideas underpin these, is needed to enable people to be meaningfully involved in this process. • Decisions based on data and insights from participation should be the norm to encourage engagement. This should be based on a political interpretation and/ or openness about political ideas framing them. • Specific effort should be made to engage young people now - and as an investment for ongoing civic participation. • Approaches which seek to remove barriers to involving smaller less powerful interest groups are needed to make access more equal. • Open dialogue needs to "own up to screw ups" and be able to reflect on success - and failure - in order to learn real lessons for the future.
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3. Other issues raised but not addressed in the small groups

We gave a commitment to report other issues identified in the early part of the discussion, but not supported for further exploration in the cluster groups - despite being viewed as very important by those raising them. These were:

- That drugs issues in Dundee were at such a crisis point that an open discussion about them was urgently needed. This raised issues about how very difficult acute issues can be debated in an open government context. The importance of the issues was recognised but the relevance to the OGP didn't allow for more in depth debate.
- A view that the public sector should not deliver public services except in cases of clear market failure.





Public discussion event – Glasgow

The Albany, 13th August 2018

Record of discussion

Numbers attending – 22

Staff in attendance – Niamh Webster (Scottish Government Open Government Team), Paul Bradley (SCVO Open Government Network Coordinator) & David Allen (facilitator, SCDC).

General Comments – There was a good diverse attendance at this event which helped to deepen discussion around a wide range of topics/areas of interest. The number of these addressed more fully was slightly limited by the viable size of the discussion groups but we were able to focus on 4 areas in a fair amount of detail. Participants included staff from public services, community organisation representatives (community projects and community organisations) and individuals with an interest in the issues. The majority were not members of the OGP network.

Session Content

The responses from participants are based on the post-it and flipchart material with minimal additional interpretation except to clarify the meaning where possible. Issues were explored in pairs and clustered into themes. They were then explored in more depth in small groups according to interests of participants. In this event live interpretation of the issues was provided by SG staff for inclusion on the open government action plan website to highlight this route for comment.

Initial questions

After the initial presentation from Niamh and Paul there were several questions/comments from the floor. The key areas raised were:

- There is a need for greater clarity of response from Government and greater transparency in the way Government deals with individuals and communities
- There was a question about the lack of openness by arms-length external organisations (eg Transport Scotland) and whether this was a barrier to open government
- There was felt to be a general lack of knowledge/awareness across the general public of the political and decision-making systems that we currently have. This has a strong bearing on accountability of government
- It was felt that the party political system can have a negative impact on open government as decision-making processes are dictated by party politics rather than community/public concerns
- Communication issues need to be addressed – need to remember that not everyone is comfortable with/or equipped to contribute their views online. A range of communication options need to be provided.



4. Pairs exercise - what does Open Government mean to me? what would I like to talk to others about?

Due to the longer than anticipated question and answer session participants were asked in pairs to consider both questions but concentrate on the 2nd question for feedback. These were then grouped as follows:

Accountability/Transparency

- Need clear line management structures/strategy particularly in HSCP work with NHS and Local Government.
- Where's the transparency?
- Is OG open to all local government/public bodies? i.e. what about accountability of bodies like Health & Social Care Partnerships?
- More transparency is needed regarding public purse/financial contribution - I want to talk about local government and procurement
- How do we make decisions made by government (and other organisations and quangos such as NHS, Health Boards) fully accountable?
- How to redress if you have an issue with government/health board discussions? At the moment, only redress is through judicial review which is costly and inaccessible to most
- Visibility of decision-making is important
- We hate that things are done for votes, not for the common good!

Information/Communication

- Knowing who to contact (MSP?) and what is/who is the best person to talk to
- Can we nail down how the Scottish Government works? i.e. decision-making, division of labour, recruitment, relations with local authorities (COSLA), etc.
- Accessibility to information is important
- Better communication is needed
- Need more information in advance of meetings like this, or for community councils for example. Agenda received but no paperwork to support
- People being inspired, putting inspiration before information

Joining it up – who is Open Government for?

- Values → policies → legislation and this links → impact
- Where is the link between: Democracy Matters/Local Governance Review, the Community Empowerment Act, Open Government, etc.
- Public really need to feel that their voice will actually be heard and action is taken about issues
- Government needs to listen to smaller organisations who can see better and cheaper ways of doing things but they're too rigid. Often there are better ways of delivering services
- There is still an organisational culture, (local government) vs public

Inclusion/Involvement

- Need to see more involvement of and roles for disabled people
- Inclusive communication
- Where's the participation i.e. real people!
- We need to make sure government isn't just the prerogative of people of privilege
- Increase participation for all regardless of circumstances
- Is OG flexible, adaptable and willing to learn?
- Accessibility: need to have easy to read documents, less jargon, other formats to increase participation
- Training is needed to empower local groups to make changes/lobby for local needs
- How do we empower people to want to be involved and to influence government especially disadvantaged and disengaged groups?
- How do we encourage more people to stand for office eg MSP/MP/councillor, community council?
- How do we find people without the parliamentary machine eg independents or smaller parties – we need broader representation.



The paired discussions generated the themes above which were clustered for discussion in the small groups. Generally these reflected themes from the other regional discussions relating to **what information was available and how**, the **way that government behaves towards those it governs** and the **support needed by the governed to maximise their knowledge and influence**. The clusters, key themes and ideas for practical action are summarised in the table below.

	What aspects of Scottish Government's role and/or activities need to be more open (in relation to topics identified)?	What kinds of actions will lead to the changes or improvements identified?
Joining it Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share clear information on civil servants' roles and responsibilities widely • SG to be more flexible, adaptable and willing to learn • More clear, accountable staff allocated to specific work i.e. direct contact person • Scottish Parliament is already open, but SG needs to be more open. Scotland is more open in Parliament than Westminster. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information on civil servants' roles and responsibilities i.e. direct contact. • Increase specialised staff in appropriate roles. • Improve communications/collaboration between civil servants. • Enable wider participation. • Improve staff structure and clarify responsibilities. •

<p>Information/Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve information/communication for all • Accessibility of information is needed (eg easy-read, other formats). • Communication – need to be aware that over-reliance on social media for information means that messages don't get to people who don't use IT/computers especially elderly and disabled. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve two-way communications. • Share meetings/reports/papers for information. • Public information can be improved by working with specific Third Sector organisations. • Provide information that is suitable for different audiences.
<p>Accountability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are current issues in making FOI requests – can't always afford to pursue access to information. • Wasting money and not spending it effectively. • Not enough scrutiny. • Need independent assessors • Consultations – how you would word it to get the desired outcome. • Is SG accountable to Scottish Parliament or vice versa? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for independent arbitrators – need sanctions • More reporting of progress, measure outcomes and impacts. Outcomes based approach – measure the outcomes not the impact. • Need to have clear and consistent methods for people to have their say and make an input to decision-making processes. • No redress – at moment there is only judicial review which is expensive. There needs to be another process of appeal that does not involve huge legal costs. • Need constant scrutiny – not just consultation at the end of a process. • How does long-term commitment look – needs 10-year plan minimum rather than conforming to political cycles.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear structure of accountability between SG and Scottish Parliament.
Inclusion/Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding and ease of being involved in issues – this is an issue for the whole community and not just those who are already engaged. • Education and understanding about how government works and decision-making processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide meaningful opportunities for marginalised/vulnerable people to become involved in government. • Undertake robust engagement • Provide follow-on information • Practice what you preach • Put all ideas in the pot



Public discussion event - Inverness

The Spectrum Centre, 15th August 2018

Record of discussion

Numbers attending – 12

Staff in attendance – Emma Harvey (Scottish Government Open Government Team), Paul Bradley (SCVO Open Government Network Coordinator) & Mick Doyle (facilitator, SCDC).

General Comments – The balance of attendees at this session differed slightly from the others with a mix of reps from community health and disability based organisations, community councillors, interested individuals and a smaller number of staff from public sector agencies and TSIs. The most distinct theme was a sense of democratic deficit regarding a process of service centralization affecting the highlands, particularly in terms of healthcare and its effects on individuals and communities. This was in addition to other themes regarding openness, democracy and equalities and specific issues relation to health and social care. In general participants were very positive that the consultative process had come to Inverness to offer a chance to feed into the dialogue about Open Government.

Session Content

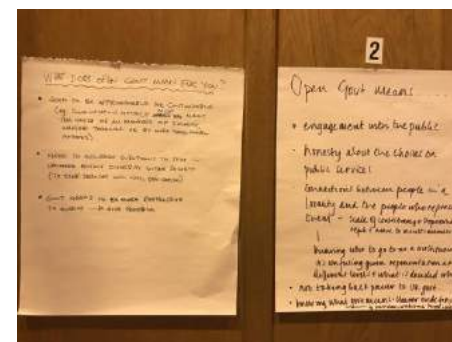
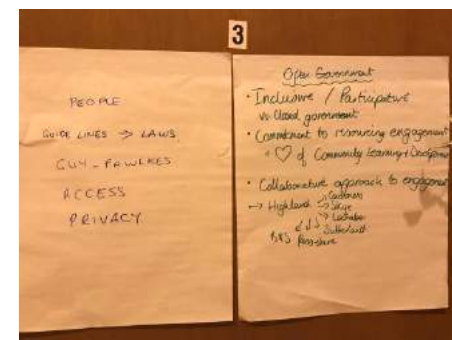
The responses from participants are based on the post-it and flipchart material with minimal additional interpretation except to clarify the meaning where possible. Issues were initially explored in pairs, clustered into themes by the whole group and then explored in more depth in small groups according to interests of participants. In this event live interpretation of the issues was provided by SG staff for inclusion on the [open government action plan website](#) to highlight this route for comment. This commentary has been taken into account when producing this note

5. How participants viewed open government

An opening discussion on what open government meant to participants to get people thinking about the issues highlighted a range of issues including the following:

- Need to be able to promote openness about decisions affecting EU migrants whose work/ settlement is essential to the highland economy and key to supporting diversity and sustainability of key public services
- People want to see inclusive participative government as opposed to that which feels quite closed
- There is a need to see a commitment to resourcing engagement with people and re emphasis on the importance of community learning & development support
- People hoped that this discussion would enhance engagement in the highlands across Caithness, Skye, Lochaber, Sutherland and Badenoch and Ross-shire
- There was also concern about issues associated with data access and privacy and how to ensure that the media acts responsibly in relation to these.

These overarching points illustrate the general view of participants on some of the key issues.



6. Topics Discussed in More Depth

When asked to agree what they would like to discuss further with others, the paired discussions generated themes for discussion in the small groups. The clusters, key themes and ideas for practical action are summarised in the table below

	What aspects of Scottish Government's role and/or activities need to be more open (in relation to topics identified)?	What kinds of actions will lead to the changes or improvements identified?
<p>How government supports participation & engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More honesty about the nature of choices related to public services is needed. • Improving connections between the people and those representing them is needed, particularly since in this area constituencies were very large. • The issue of geographical inequality needs to be more centrally recognised as a democratic issue in terms of access to services and impact on communities. • People need more help and information on how to influence decisions relating to public services eg centralisation of fire, police and health services • Open Govt needs to address confusion from citizens about 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government needs to be approachable and easy to contact for a broad group of people requiring both online, and other technical means, but also more traditional face to face methods. • Open Government requires education about where politicians, institutions and citizens fit into the democratic process. • Government needs to be more responsive to queries from local people. • The legislative framework for government should be clearer • We should be working toward greater diversity of representation on councils, boards and other institutions. • We should rotate key roles in institutions to spread power and influence eg chairpeople of key structures. • Clearer statutory duties are needed to make community engagement aspirations and standards effective these effective. • Training for government and its workforce on how to deliver engagement is needed – this should be seen as an investment in better democracy. • We should promote the notion that good dialogue is ultimately cost effective in improving outcomes. • Their needs to be a dialogue and more action to develop scrutiny and accountability of democratic processes and services.

	<p>who to seek representation from given lack of knowledge about roles - and what is decided at which levels. This included how PR should work in multi member wards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Standards for Community Engagement standards are guidance only and are not effectively enforced. • Understanding of government itself and its workforce on how to deliver engagement is lacking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This should include influencing policy, strategy and proposed targets for services. • These issues were viewed as important in implementing the existing Community Empowerment Act. • A specific suggestion was to use the Screenmachine as a mobile venue for democratic dialogue in more remote communities on an ongoing basis .
<p>Equalities & access</p>	<p>Equalities orientated open government needs to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that vulnerable people are involved and heard, especially those harmed or let down by institutions, as this is a key aspect of the role of democracy. • This must involve listening, acting and feeding back in appropriate ways. • Engaging with those affecting with welfare reform is a key open government issue which impacts very negatively on individual rights and experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to highlight successful influence rising from engagement in order to encourage more engagement with government and services. • Communication and dialogue needs to operate at a more personal less threatening level to involve the more marginalised in society. • This needs to be a process of sensitive & responsive dialogue. • Proposed changes to services should be costed to allow people to understand what things cost and to inform options they might chose to support for policy and service development. • There should be less money spent on using consultants to gather evidence already available from people themselves. • The operation of Personal Independence Payments was a key openness and democracy issue affecting both day to day lives and the ability to participate. In particular:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WR also links to homelessness or mental health issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Claimants should have access to medical evidence used in their case as a matter of course and not have to apply for access to this. – Medical judgements/evidence should only come from properly qualified sources – Decisions about applications should be made by independent decision makers rather than those thought to be hitting unpublished budget driven targets for outcomes of claims. • Discussions about democracy, access and their role in tackling inequality must, by definition strive, to be fully accessible and barrier free. • There should be a co-produced specific discussion on how to develop an appropriate dialogue to explore open government and equalities issues involving those with protected characteristics or subject to other exclusionary experiences.
Health & Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was felt that there was insufficient open information about health and social care issues and service planning generally • It was felt that consultation sometimes concealed centralised and centralising decision making processes. • Local people did not feel they had adequate power in these processes. • Lack of clarity about how service targets are set, or can be changed, illustrate this 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressive campaigns such as See Me or Safe talk need more appropriate rollout and calibration to highland conditions where suicide is a major issue. • An open debate about isolation and loneliness is required for the highlands. • The issues raised about participation generally also apply to the need for dialogue about H & SC .

	problem. Improvements can happen but process unclear.	
Data access & security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The issue of security and access to personal data was raised. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The FIDO and FIDO two security key hardware was proposed as a potential solution to personal data security problems. It was felt that this could also link to open government by linking individuals with relevant streams of open data via Passport UK U2F technology. It should be noted that this was a view predominantly expressed by one individuals with specific knowledge and experience which was not shared by others.

7. Other issues raised but not addressed in the small groups

We gave a commitment to report other issues identified in the early part of the discussion, but not supported for further exploration in the cluster groups - despite being viewed as very important by those raising them. These were:

- A potential cluster on media behaviour and accountability was identified but not pursued by the group.

**Participatory Budgeting Network hosted event
COSLA, Edinburgh Thursday 16th August 2018**

Record of discussion

This event was hosted by the Participatory Budgeting Network, and held at COSLA, Verity House, Edinburgh.

Participants: 35, **Staff in attendance:** Niamh Webster, Emma Harvey (Scottish Government Open Government Team), Paul Bradley (SCVO Open Government Network Coordinator), Fiona Garven (facilitator, SCDC) and Simon Cameron (COSLA Participatory Budgeting development officer)



Trust & Accountability	Finance/Transparency	Equality and Accessibility	Comms & Engagement/ Participation	Participatory Budgeting
Trust	More visibility of budgets and transparency re budgets	Corrupt' Systems	More proactive reach into communities during consultation	Need to build capacity in the community - led organisations

Clearer mechanisms/pathways to hold people accountable	DG: please work to align policies and programmes? Not just economic	More diversity in SG workforce would mean more empathy with citizens	More accessible and open consultation (read: not just the same people)	How to get people to trust Gov't? that their feedback really means something
How to align and cohere all the change initiatives with transparency	Inefficiency	Political structure awareness - right wing, left wing, more education	Better internal (SG) communication (read: if they can't talk to each other how can they talk outside)	Involve schools / health / community / youth / adult services to reach families that need it more
Emphasising overall community/collective benefit when voting	Real cost of services	How to reach people that wouldn't normally vote/volunteer	Better communication between SG and communities	How to increase turnout/participation?
Transparency of all gov mechanisms who does what?		People need to be aware of local stats/situations. Even if they don't agree, in order that they change it.	Effective Comms	Support required to vote for several projects not just own project
More small steps to give citizens confidence and trust in co-production			Local media	If people are angry at their situation they want to change it, where PB comes in!
Enabling all choice			More awareness about open government - still not widely known	PB processes
Voting trust			easily understandable and accessible information/language	Continuation & mainstreaming of PB
Lobbying - what level of openness? What's the line?			Tell us what happened after a consultation!	Knowledge of PB - plain language

Clearer presence of SG in communities			Community planning stats not matching up with local needs	Ways to make PB not popularity / size / reach - fair approach system
Statutory services vs Community engagement			Calling out fake news	Early parts o decision making where? How? Who?
Different functions in different places, how do people engage??			Feedback loop	
Mechanisms within gov....			Honest media channels not "fake news" transparency	
How money is actually decided on....			Newspaper linked to political parties	
What roles national gov, local gov??				



Final Feedback and Prioritisation Event

Hanover Conference Centre, Edinburgh, 21st August 2018

Note of discussion and potential actions

- 1. Introduction:** The event was attended by approximately 21 people from a mixture of third sector organisations, community councils and campaigning groups there were also two participants from statutory organisations and several individuals. Two of those participating were also members of the OGP Steering Group. One attendee had also attended one of the regional events. Staff in attendance were Doreen Grove, Niamh Webster, Emma Harvey (Scottish Government Open Government Team), Paul Bradley (SCVO Open Government Network Coordinator), Paul Nellis and Mick Doyle (facilitators, SCDC).
- 2. Aims:** The event sought to:
 - Share the purpose of the OGP process for those who haven't engaged so far
 - Provide an overview of the findings in a clear and engaging way
 - Invite dialogue on priority commitments
 - Leave people with a clear idea of follow up and how ideas will be used.

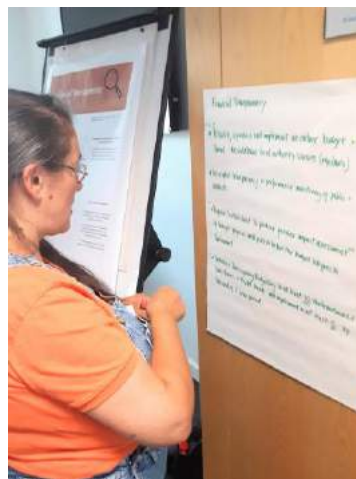
Participants were asked to bear in mind that this event sought to help prioritise the outputs of the consultative as whole. To achieve this it had three distinct phases, these were:

- **Sharing the findings** from the other consultation opportunities
- **Inviting people to turn these into commitments** for Scottish Government and its partners
- Take part in **indicative voting** to explore what were the emerging priorities.

It was explained to participants that the event organisers would use the output, together with the other materials gathered to date, and discuss these with the Scottish Government in order to create feasible commitments for the action plan based on the emerging priorities. This would form the basis of recommendations to the cabinet for the final plan.

It was further agreed that participants would be able to access copies of:

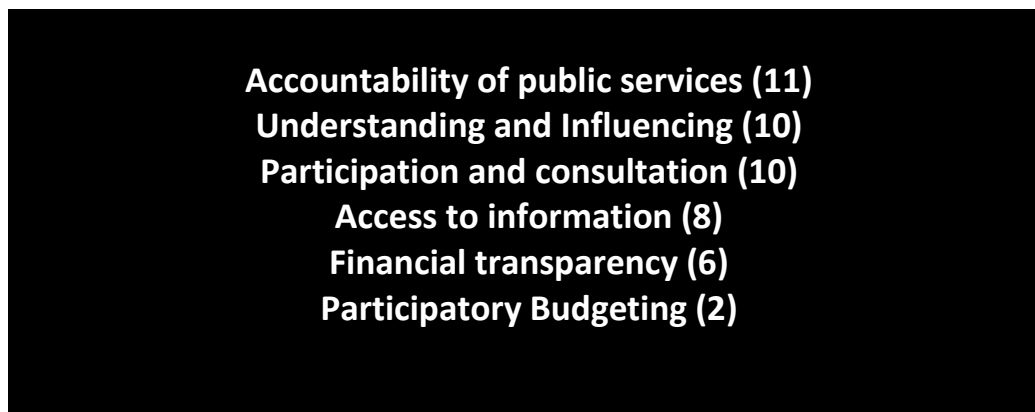
- The presentation of the findings delivered at the event
- A report on the output of this particular event
- The final report on the process as whole.



3. Results from the event: A presentation summarised the results of the consultation so far and people were asked if themes identified in it resonated for them.

The full presentation with summary of what we heard can be viewed here: <https://www.slideshare.net/NiamhWebster/planning-the-future-of-openness-in-scotland>

Participants were given an opportunity to add additional themes but did not feel that this was required. They were invited to prioritise the themes in terms of which they thought mattered most in terms of delivering open government these were as follows:



Accountability of public services (11)
Understanding and Influencing (10)
Participation and consultation (10)
Access to information (8)
Financial transparency (6)
Participatory Budgeting (2)

Additional details on the cumulative discussions of each theme from the other sessions were also available to the discussion groups which attendees elected to join. The invitation was to discuss and refine the key commitments they most wanted to see for each of the themes. Below are the results of these discussions.

Following on from this each participant was invited to view proposed commitments for the themes as whole and given seven votes each to express their preferences for the most important. The votes from the participants on the individual commitments are also shown beside each one.

Key themes and ideas for commitments below.

Accountability of Public Services

Proposed Commitments

- A map of accountability should be produced, covering who holds who to account and who the regulatory bodies are. This could help people collect, collate and share metadata across systems eg health & Local Govt (8)
- NHS complaints should be dealt with by a separate body (8)
- Role of community councils and funding powers (6) – *increase understanding of the purpose and role of community councils, funding to support, and influence on funding decisions*
- FOI- More accessible information on how FOI can be used is needed eg role of Commissioner, shorter response times - particularly for deadline sensitive decisions, are needed (3)
- Understanding public funding decisions - honesty about why/position, apportion of blame (2) – *call for more honesty about drivers of funding decisions, rather than political point scoring eg – blaming decisions as result of UKG austerity policy when is decision by SG*
- More clarity on planning process – particularly on discretionary powers of officials eg changes to plans. Stronger powers for Community Councils to access information were also requested (0)

Understanding and Influencing

Proposed commitments

- **Improving Participation of people by mapping and publishing information on existing processes and organisations aiming to improve participation. They should do so by developing with citizens, a transparent framework to support active participation from early years to the end of life. We should require organisations and public services to develop concrete plans for participation (8)**
- **Encouraging citizen journalism: Develop, with people, a strategy for targeted training to use information and data actively – mapping services & identifying the skills & resources available to train & mentor citizen journalists (9).**

Participation and consultation

Proposed commitments

- **Open Government and democracy should be more prominent in school curriculum with opportunities for students to participate more widely eg in Participatory Budgeting. Democratic duties should be embedded in schools, to stimulate the democratic process for people moving/living in Scotland (6)**
- **Public and civic communications must be accessible in plain English, BSL and easy-read formats. Consultation should aim to maximise understanding and reach people beyond online platforms in a broad range of consultation opportunities (4)**
- **SG should create awareness & opportunities for minorities to engage, with promotion of participation and guidance on where and how to engage (4)**
- **SG should evidence consultation of those with protected characteristics, as part of broader reporting of all participation opportunities (2)**
- **Publishing improved equalities & impact assessments is required (1).**
- **A change in approach to dialogue from elected leadership is required to promote a culture of participation (1)**
- **Processes of participation should be made clear and transparent in decision- making/policy-making process using tools like participation ladders (1)**
- **The idea of time off work to participate in democracy should be pursued (1)**
- **Clarity about purpose of participation – the process and how it will be used and fed-back is important (1).**
- **There should be immediate availability of expense for participating – not just reimbursement retrospectively(0).**

Access to Information

Proposed Commitments

- **Promote activities of the open data office to increase involvement of data experts and public (6)**
- **Focusing communications and engagement to reach new groups and improve awareness of and participation in decision making (5)**
- **National directory of those sitting on local/national information projects and groups (3).**
- **Exploiting Scottish Government internal staff skills – participants felt there was a need for Scottish Government to have a clearer idea of the skills set available to them that could support new and improved ways of delivering information to the public**
- **Insights team: The Scottish Government should set up an insights team that can analyse the way different audiences consume information to ensure that what is put out in the public domain is done so in a variety of appropriate formats**
- **Website – Scottish Government website as a whole. The BETA version uses extremely outdated technology and does not provide a tailored service based on location etc.**
- **Trial a guide for decision makers on how to make more open decisions (0).**

Financial transparency

Proposed Commitments

- **Research, co-produce and implement an online budget Portal. This could have local authority subsets of both processed information and raw data (8)**
- **Introduce PB to at least 10 Non-Departmental Public Bodies or Health Boards and implement in at least 5 by the end of the 2-year period. (5)**
- **Require SG to produce gender impact assessment of budget proposals and publish before the budget bill goes to Parliament (4)**
- **Increased transparency in performance monitoring of public contracts (1).**

Participatory Budgeting

Proposed commitments

- **Training & facilitation to equip local people in setting budget for their 1% of public expenditure (5)**
- **Funding the process is separate from the 1% developed budget (1).**

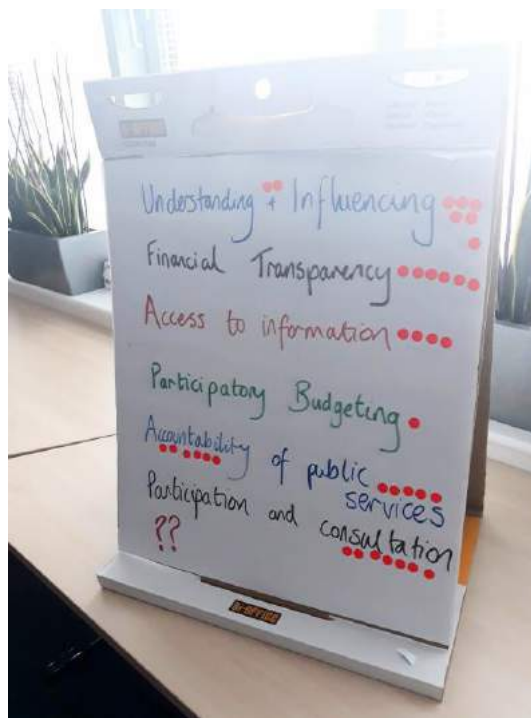
4. Conclusions and lessons learnt

The issues under consideration on the OGP process are complex, nuanced and interrelated and the number of people participating quite limited at this point. They are varied in their experience of and perspectives on the issues. But people were very willing to engage thoughtfully and constructively with the issues with most exhibiting positive views about the opportunity to influence the plan. The nature of the responses suggest that the process helped a wide variety of people to think about the issues and make sense of them. However, the time available for discussion - and its impact on the process - made very specific commitments more difficult to pin down. However priorities did emerge with most focussing on how to reform processes to make them more responsive, accountable and therefore “open” in a more effective citizen facing democracy. The top priorities from the event are repeated below in order.

- 1. Encouraging citizen journalism: Develop, with people, a strategy for targeted training to use information and data actively – mapping services & identifying the skills & resources available to train & mentor citizen journalists (9).**
- 2. A map of accountability should be produced – of who holds who to account and who the regulatory bodies are. This could help people collect, collate and share metadata across systems eg health & Local Govt (8)**
- 3. NHS complaints should be dealt with by a separate body (8)**
- 4. Research, co-produce and implement an online budget Portal. This could have local authority subsets of both processed information and raw data (8).**
- 5. Open Government and democracy should be more prominent in school curriculum with opportunities for students to participate more widely eg in participatory budgeting. Democratic duties should be embedded in schools, to stimulate the democratic process for people moving/living in Scotland (6).**
- 6. Role of community councils and funding powers (6) – increase understanding of the purpose and role of community councils, funding to support, and influence on funding decisions.**
- 7. Promote activities of the open data office to increase involvement of data experts and public (6).**

NB – the numbers of votes cast do not allow a clear top five to emerge as some commitments share the same numbers of votes

The consultation process and prioritisation event methodology were also being tested with lessons already being learnt for future Open Government planning processes. These will be explored in a fuller learning report on the process for the Open Government partnership Steering Group and will be able to be viewed alongside the detailed outputs of the other sessions and the online consultation.



Key themes: the most important themes according to participants votes

Conclusion

Thank you for reading the report from the public discussions and engagement, produced by the [Scottish Community Development Centre](#), and published by the Scottish Government Open Government team.

The ideas we heard from people form the basis for the Scottish Government's Action Plan on open government. The ideas in this report have been presented to Scottish Government policy teams, colleagues and partners where applicable, and we are in the process of developing actions and commitments based on these ideas.

The finalised plan will be signed off by the Scottish Cabinet of Ministers. The Scottish Government will then publish the finalised Action Plan, and will commit to delivering these actions over the next two years (2018-20).

Keep up to date and join in

We provide regular updates on progress and recent news on our [open government blog](#). You can also [join the Open Government Network](#) run by civil society partners - it's free to join and connects you to interested people and organisations working on improving the future of openness and transparency worldwide.

Find out more on Twitter and join the conversation #OpenGovScot

