

# Scotland Open Government Action Plan 2021-2025

## Independent Monitoring Body: Final Report

March 2026

### Introduction

This report provides a final assessment of the implementation of Scotland's third [Open Government Action Plan \(2021-2025\)](#) under the global Open Government Partnership (OGP) platform. In order to ensure comparability with other OGP members around the world, the assessment draws on the OGP Independent Reporting Mechanism's (IRM) [methodology](#) for assessing action plan results.

The report comes as the co-creation process for Scotland's fourth action plan is underway. As part of that process, civil society representatives and Scottish Government have identified 4 broad themes that will drive forwards the next 5-year action plan, namely: (i) trust and transparency; (ii) anti-corruption and accountability; (iii) ethical use of technology and open information; and (iv) public participation. The government has also committed to a Trust and Transparency Strategy, and to an Anti-Corruption Strategy.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, the results of the Scottish parliamentary elections scheduled for May 2026 are likely to have an important bearing on how this work is taken forward in practice.

Given this context, as well as providing a final appraisal of each of the 5 commitments under the 2021-2025 action plan, this report also discusses future-oriented lessons which can be applied to the next action plan cycle.

*The assessment was carried out by [Andy McDevitt](#) independent reporter, between December 2025 and February 2026, based on a review of documents and interviews with 16 representatives of the Scottish Government and civil society involved in Scotland's OGP process<sup>2</sup>.*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://blogs.gov.scot/open-government-partnership/2025/12/08/what-does-phase-2-of-action-plan-co-creation-mean/>

<sup>2</sup> 12 government representatives and 4 civil society representatives

## Report structure

The report is structured as follows:

**1. A summary of lessons learned from the implementation of Scotland's 2021-2025 Action Plan.** These lessons are intended to be forward looking to help inform the development of the next action plan with a focus on open government processes.

**2. An analysis of each of the 5 commitments in the action plan.** For each commitment, the report provides: (a) an appraisal of the results achieved (worsened/ did not change/marginal/major/outstanding)<sup>3</sup>; (b) lessons learned and challenges encountered in implementation; (c) a discussion of government-civil society collaboration; and (d) future considerations for the respective policy area.

**3. A more detailed annex appraising the degree of completion of each commitment and corresponding milestones** (No evidence available/not started/limited completion/substantial completion/completed/withdrawn).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The assessment of results adopts the scale used in the IRM's End of Commitment Reports for "Did it Open Government" at the local level. See: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/ogp-local-end-of-commitment-assessment-form/>

<sup>4</sup> The assessment of completion adopts the scale used for OGP members at both the national and local levels <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/glossary/completion/>

## 1. Lessons learned from Scotland's 2021-2025 Action Plan

**(A) More so than with previous iterations, Scotland's third action plan embedded more deliberate learning processes in its implementation. This has meant that, although the plan did not meet all its objectives, it has provided a rich seam of lessons to take into future open government initiatives. The focus on learning should remain at the core of Scotland's approach to open government going forward.**

Scotland's third action plan did not achieve the same degree of completion as previous action plans (see further discussion under each commitment). However, perhaps more than previous action plans, the current plan has been more deliberate about learning lessons through implementation. Examples of this include the maturity matrix to assess impact and learning from co-design activities across health and social care (commitment 2), the independent report outlining a more strategic approach to supporting open data in Scotland (Commitment 3) or the upcoming blog on lessons learned from the development of the government's fiscal transparency portal (commitment 1).

With regards to health and social care, for example, stakeholders agreed that being clear about what is and isn't possible in terms of civil society influence on health policy was a critical learning point which helped enable more meaningful participation and build trust. The health and social care commitment was also very deliberate about learning about impact.<sup>5</sup> With regards to the fiscal transparency portal, a key learning - which goes beyond the portal itself - has been the critical importance of back-end systems, interoperability, and the quality of the data required to provide public information in a cost-effective and user-friendly way. The team has also learned of the importance of being clear about target audiences for these kinds of solutions with no single system able to meet the needs of very different use cases.<sup>6</sup> Thus while the portal itself fell short of what had been hoped, the learning gained from the development process will be essential to take into account when developing open data activities under the next action plan. As noted by one stakeholder: "the more we try, the more mistakes we make, the more we learn".<sup>7</sup>

**(B) The longer action plan cycle and iterative approach to commitment implementation have, on balance, proved a success - while serving as an example of good practice to the global OGP community. The next action plan cycle should build on this experience to allow for flexibility in implementation while also being clearer on expected roles and timelines.**

An important area of learning from the current action plan has been the adoption of a longer 4-year action plan cycle (as compared to 1- or 2-year cycles for previous action plans) and, crucially, an iterative approach to milestone development to allow for course correction. On the whole, this approach has proved a success. The mid-term review noted that having the flexibility to adapt and iterate while maintaining a focus on high-level outcomes with regular check-ins to gauge progress and readjust has enabled commitment teams to adapt to changing circumstances or seize emerging

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<sup>5</sup> Interview with the open government team, Scottish Government, 12 December 2025

<sup>6</sup> Minutes of Fiscal Openness and Transparency Commitment Oversight Group, Meeting # 11, 22/9/2025

<sup>7</sup> Interview with two Civil Society Steering group members, 14 January 2025

opportunities.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, Scotland has demonstrated leadership in this area, with a similar approach being taken up by OGP globally, as the partnership considers how to formalize the concept of “rolling action plans” going forward.<sup>9</sup>

Stakeholders agreed that the involvement of the independent reporting mechanism (IRM) in periodically providing oversight and accountability throughout the iterative process was key to “holding the course” and ensuring that overall commitment objectives remained clearly in view. In particular, the mid-term review (MTR) was seen as a helpful check-in point to reset milestones, whilst helping government staff feel like they weren’t necessarily at fault where progress may have stagnated. It also helped reignite the sense of collaboration with civil society.<sup>10</sup>

Crucially, the MTR also offered an important opportunity to take stock and begin collectively planning and strategizing ahead of the co-creation of the next action plan sufficiently early in the process (something which was noted as a challenge with previous action plans). The benefits of this approach are now bearing fruit with the current co-creation process for the next action plan proving more strategic, organized and with more lead in time than had previously been the case.

Whilst it is recommended to maintain the iterative approach for the next action plan, it will also be important to be clearer about timelines, where involvement can happen at different stages, and where stakeholders can drop in and out, so that civil society partners can see clearly where they can add value (see further discussion under F. below). To this extent, the plan to restructure the next action plan around broad strategic themes with shorter task-oriented activities holds promise. It will also be important that the co-creation process itself is conceived as a continuous collaboration rather than something that ends once the action plan is published. This could take the form of periodic, wider check-ins (beyond core commitment teams) to ensure that objectives remain relevant, and that connections with broader civil society are being made and maintained.<sup>11</sup>

**(C) Resourcing open government remains a central challenge for both government and civil society. This is likely to become an even bigger challenge over the next action plan period as public resources become more constrained.**

Challenges around resourcing and staff capacity within government have continued to have a constraining effect on ambition over the action plan period.<sup>12</sup> This has been exacerbated by the reallocation of resources to respond to UK government policy choices around disability benefits and childcare, leading to a Scottish public sector hiring freeze in 2024.<sup>13</sup> At the beginning of 2026, the Finance Secretary confirmed the Scottish Government would cut 11,000 public sector jobs as part of efficiency savings.<sup>14</sup> This is likely to affect resource availability for the next action plan.

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<sup>8</sup> Scotland Open Government Action Plan 2021-2025 - Independent Monitoring Body: Interim Assessment (2024) <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Mid-term-Assessment-%E2%80%93-Action-plan-%E2%80%93-Scotland-UK-%E2%80%93-July-2024.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Interview with two Civil Society Steering group members, 14 January 2025

<sup>10</sup> Interview with two Civil Society Steering group members, 14 January 2025; Interview with Fiscal Transparency team, 20 January 2026

<sup>11</sup> Interview with civil society representative for commitment 2, 10 December 2025

<sup>12</sup> Interview with the open government team, Scottish Government, 12 December 2025

<sup>13</sup> Interview with civil society representative for commitment 5, 16 December 2025;

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/24520174.shona-robison-announces-public-sector-recruitment-freeze/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://news.stv.tv/politics/scottish-government-to-cut-11000-public-sector-jobs-as-part-of-efficiency-savings>

Resourcing civil society's engagement is equally challenging. While there have been discussions over the years about whether to compensate civil society partners for their time, there is a general consensus that providing government funding to civil society organisations whose core mandate includes work related to OGP may not be appropriate. Direct funding also raises the challenge of potential conflicts of interest. Many smaller community organisations, for example, are dependent on government and may therefore be less open to challenging them.<sup>15</sup>

What is critical, however, is some dedicated resource for awareness raising around open government, which is the first step to bringing a broader range of stakeholders into the open government process. Thus, additional resources for communications around OGP and for the co-creation process itself (as has been provided for the co-creation for the next action plan) would be legitimate.

**(D) Notwithstanding the dedication of a small number of government and civil society stakeholders, government-civil society relationships more broadly have deteriorated over the course of the action plan. Rebuilding this partnership should be at the heart of the next action plan.**

The relationship between government and civil society has deteriorated over the course of the action plan, not necessarily within the open government process itself, but more broadly across Scottish society. This is partly a result of the post Covid squeeze on resources but also due to the fact that government has made some reversals on promises around human rights, gender self-identification, the national care service (see commitment 2) etc., which has caused some CSOs to publicly withdraw from government working groups and focus more on supporting their communities of interest. At the same, other formerly very assertive CSO bodies have become more tame.<sup>16</sup> This fractured nature of civil society in Scotland makes it difficult to ensure sustained partnership.<sup>17</sup>

Numerous stakeholders have suggested that rebuilding this relationship will be central to taking open government forward in Scotland. The narrative around trust, cohesion in society, and participation in democracy around which the next action plan will be framed is a useful starting point. However, it is important that concepts of trust and transparency move beyond the abstract, to deliver concrete change. Experience has shown that the idea of open government itself remains poorly understood and articulated in Scotland. If the same were to happen with "trust and transparency", the open government process runs the risk of maintaining a sense of distance from the day-to-day concerns of the public. Clearly anchoring the thematic commitments in the next action plan this broader vision will be key to ensuring that this ambition is grounded in concrete action.

Civil society stakeholders suggested that the next action plan should work specifically on rebuilding the relationship between formal "professional" civil society organisations and government (rather than just "grassroots civic participation"). This could involve putting in place clear principles and processes to guide discussions between government and civil society when difficult decisions need to be made, as well as developing and demonstrating good practice in terms of ways of working in partnership,

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<sup>15</sup> Interview with civil society representative for commitment 5, 16 December 2025

<sup>16</sup> Interview with two Civil Society Steering group members, 14 January 2025

<sup>17</sup> Interview with the open government team, Scottish Government, 12 December 2025

regardless of the policy area. This could also help strengthen the function of civil society within open government.<sup>18</sup> Experience from the current action plan has already demonstrated what can work in this area, in particular the collaborative models adopted under commitments 1 and 2 (see further discussion under F. below). It will be crucial to capitalise on this learning rather than building this practice from scratch.

**(E) Institutional buy-in and clear internal communication are key to successful action plan implementation. At its core, getting buy-in requires an approach which takes open government to where civil servants are, rather than attempting to bring civil servants into open government. This will be crucial for strengthening the perceived relevance of open government within the civil service going forward.**

As noted in the mid-term review, recognition of the value of open government continues to be a challenge across government, with open government often seen as an add-on to the day-to-day work of public officials, rather than a way of working. It still feels like an abstract concept for many stakeholders the government engages with (both internally and externally).<sup>19</sup> As a result, open government work is easy for government to put on the backburner when budgets are tight. Experience has shown that the most successful commitments have been those which have managed to garner and maintain support from senior leadership.<sup>20</sup>

At the same time, Scotland is still reliant on a very dedicated but small team of civil servants with limited institutional backing. That said, the fact that the open government team has moved to a central, more corporate area of government (Improving Public Engagement Division, located in DG Corporate) means there is more possibility of open government being seeded and seen by key decision-makers.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, the open government team has invested significantly in internal and external communications over the second half of the action plan, with a view to promoting open government as an enabler of democratic resilience. Internally, this has involved mapping internal audiences, key messages, and engagement channels with a focus on how open government can support the work of individuals within the Scottish Government. The team has also begun developing closer ties with other internal communications teams as well as In the Service of Scotland “ITSOS”, an internal network that drives the culture of Scottish government, while also running senior leadership events (e.g. around data).<sup>22</sup>

Critical to the success of future open government work will be the ability to take open government to where people are rather than trying to bring people into open government. This will involve explaining to policy teams how OGP’s partnership model can be useful to their existing work. Open government objectives need to be reflected in the architecture of how policy teams work and how they are accountable so that they become part of the fabric of government rather than peripheral.<sup>23</sup>

**(F) This action plan cycle has witnessed a maturing and strengthening of key open government processes within government. A key consideration for the next action**

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<sup>18</sup> Interview with two Civil Society Steering group members, 14 January 2025

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Health and Social Care team, 9 December 2025

<sup>20</sup> Scotland Open Government Action Plan 2021-2025 - Independent Monitoring Body: Interim Assessment (2024) <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Mid-term-Assessment-%E2%80%93-Action-plan-%E2%80%93-Scotland-UK-%E2%80%93-July-2024.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Interview with the open government team, Scottish Government, 12 December 2025

<sup>22</sup> Interview with the open government team, Scottish Government, 12 December 2025

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Climate Change team, 9 December 2025

**plan will be to ensure that these processes align with civil society’s ways of working while allowing for sufficient independence for external accountability. Striking a careful balance between partnership and accountability is key to meaningful open government action.**

The open government process has continued to mature over the course of this action plan cycle. Commitments 1 and 2, in particular, have developed strong models for government-civil society collaboration. For commitment 1, a joint government-civil society oversight group with strong and consistent senior leadership, formalized reporting, and clear roles for non-governmental partners including in the implementation of concrete activities has allowed for a more collaborative approach than other commitments. For commitment 2, the incorporation of the Health and Social Care Third Sector Collaborative into the process (albeit late in the day) provided an example of how to work with existing networks to apply open government principles and approaches to the relationships they already have with government.<sup>24</sup>

In preparation for the next action plan, the government is also developing a more internally rigorous process (e.g. building guidance on commitment objectives, milestones, holding more structured, regular meetings with commitment leads), as well as a much stronger focus on communications work (further discussion under E. above).<sup>25</sup> The government is also considering introducing stronger processes for monitoring commitment implementation on an ongoing basis, including more systematic annual reviews of milestones with civil society, while working on formalising the process for civil society involvement by introducing procedures for managing conflicts of interest, codes of conduct etc.<sup>26</sup> The government is also considering developing short life working groups for specific activities to run alongside core groups for longer term work as a way of encouraging civil society to get involved in the work where and when it makes most sense, in order to better utilise their expertise.<sup>27</sup>

A key question will be how these internal government processes link up with civil society’s own collaborative processes. Over the course of the action plan, a core group of civil society stakeholders supporting action plan implementation continued to meet independently of government on a regular basis (every 6-8 weeks or so).<sup>28</sup> It will be important to ensure that this degree of independence is maintained going forward to ensure that collaboration among civil society stakeholders is not entirely subsumed under a more robust government-led processes. CSO contributors are alive to this challenge and are actively discussing proposals to refresh and strengthen the CSO network.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Interview with two Civil Society Steering group members, 14 January 2025

<sup>25</sup> Interview with the open government team, Scottish Government, 12 December 2025

<sup>26</sup> Interview with the open government team, Scottish Government, 12 December 2025

<sup>27</sup> Interview with the open government team, Scottish Government, 12 December 2025

<sup>28</sup> Interview with civil society representative for commitment 2, 10 December 2025

<sup>29</sup> Interview with two Civil Society Steering group members, 14 January 2025

## 2. Commitment results and lessons learned

### Commitment 1: Fiscal Transparency

#### 1a. Results: Major

**Despite the fact that the centerpiece of this commitment, a fully operational public-facing fiscal transparency portal, was not ultimately delivered during the action plan, some significant results and learning were nevertheless achieved across multiple strands of work. That said, many of these achievements can reasonably be described as incremental rather than transformational.**

In 2024, the Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC) conducted an assessment of the Scottish Budget (2021-22) against the Open Budget Survey as part of this commitment. The report found steady progress since 2019, with all three scores for transparency, public participation and budget oversight sitting higher than the respective global averages.<sup>30</sup> By the end of the action plan, the government reported that it was beginning to use the results of the report together with initial work reviewing the IMF Fiscal Transparency Code to identify which areas of fiscal transparency to focus on going forward, although no concrete decisions on which areas to prioritise had been made.<sup>31</sup> According to civil society stakeholders, the benchmarking work was genuinely innovative, by drawing on recognized standards from elsewhere in the world. It also represented an example of where direct civil society involvement in implementation was critical to success.<sup>32</sup> Government stakeholders agreed that the fact that the analysis was produced externally gave it additional weight, while changing the dynamic within the commitment oversight group from one of only accountability to collaboration.<sup>33</sup>

With regards to the fiscal transparency portal, an initial Alpha prototype was developed in 2023, using published infrastructure investment data to test a number of assumptions, with a minimum viable product (MVP) Beta solution, using current Scottish Budget data, following in 2024. Both the prototype and the MVP confirmed the value in presenting raw data in dynamic visualisations but also identified significant technical challenges and practicalities with the underlying data supply and system integration needed to service a Portal in a cost-effective way. Given the challenges identified, a decision was made by government to pause further work on the portal until improvements to its underlying data supply and systems could be progressed sufficiently, while committing in the interim to use the insights gained to consider other ways to make financial data more accessible and re-usable.<sup>34</sup>

The government's new Procurement Management Information System (MIPS) was launched in 2024, providing detailed procurement information including SME's and their procurement activity. As of 2025, MIPS continues to be rolled out across Scottish Public sector onboarding new customers and new data feeds.<sup>35</sup> The government acknowledged that while the new platform provided a much better understanding of

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<sup>30</sup> <https://www.scottishhumanrights.com/media/2738/scotlands-open-budget-survey-2023-report.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> Minutes of Fiscal Openness and Transparency Commitment Oversight Group, Meeting # 11, 22/9/2025

<sup>32</sup> Interview with two Civil Society Steering group members, 14 January 2025

<sup>33</sup> Interview with the Fiscal Transparency commitment team, Scottish Government, 20 January 2026

<sup>34</sup> Minutes of Fiscal Openness and Transparency Commitment Oversight Group, Meeting # 11, 22/9/2025

<sup>35</sup> See Annex for more details

where and how money is being spent internally, there was limited benefit externally for civil society and the public (as noted in the action plan inception report<sup>36</sup>).<sup>37</sup>

There was significant progress on budget improvement work across the action plan despite challenges with internal capacity during peak periods of the fiscal year. Key achievements included improvement to the guide to the Budget, ‘Your Scotland, Your Finances’, which is now updated throughout the fiscal cycle, additional visibility and sign-posting of all related budget documents for the 2025/26 Budget, publication of spending according to OECD’s Classification of Functions of Government, publication of more information to better compare/track changes over time, and improvements to the main impact assessment document on the Budget, the Equality and Fairer Scotland Budget Statement. Notwithstanding these achievements, stakeholders agreed that much of this work represents the kind of incremental improvements that the government should be implementing anyway rather than a significant change to existing practice.<sup>38</sup>

Following early engagement with the Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) and the Infrastructure Transparency Initiative (CoST) to understand best practice on engagement with the public around infrastructure investment, the Infrastructure Strategy (a replacement for the Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP)) was delayed beyond the current plan period (now planned for 2027/28). As a result, substantive public engagement on the next IIP, as envisioned in the plan, did not take place. A draft Infrastructure Strategy has now been published for consultation and the government will continue to work with SFT and others stakeholders to develop the Infrastructure Strategy, particularly the Planning Infrastructure and Place Advisory Group (PIPAG) which had been created to help advise on a more integrated place-based approach to infrastructure delivery.<sup>39</sup> On tax transparency, the government has provided more and better-quality information through the Framework for Tax, which sets out principles around tax. Among other things, the government delivered a series of stakeholder events to gather views on the Tax Strategy, published its Tax Literacy Communications Best Practice Guide, and hosted its first Tax Conference to discuss various topical tax issues (see Annex for further details).

## **1b. Lessons and challenges**

All interviewed stakeholders acknowledged that the commitment did not progress as far as had been hoped, especially with regards to the fiscal transparency portal. Nevertheless, the process of developing the portal has yielded some important lessons which will be important to take forward. Specifically, it has become apparent that while a ‘front-end’ of the portal can be delivered relatively easily with a team that knows how, the technical ‘back-end’ requires high quality data to be collected in an efficient way and fed into the portal in an automated way. This was where the challenges were found. Without improvements to underlying data and systems, maintaining up-to-date data on a portal is extremely time-consuming, complex and technically difficult.<sup>40</sup> As noted by civil society representatives: “there is a fundamental challenge with how the government as

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<https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Inception-Report-Action-plan-Scotland-United-Kingdom-2021-2025-extended-version.pdf>

<sup>37</sup> Minutes of Fiscal Openness and Transparency Commitment Oversight Group, Meeting # 11, 22/9/2025

<sup>38</sup> Interview with two Civil Society Steering group members, 14 January 2025; Interview with the Fiscal Transparency commitment team, Scottish Government, 20 January 2026

<sup>39</sup> Minutes of Fiscal Openness and Transparency Commitment Oversight Group, Meeting # 11, 22/9/2025

<sup>40</sup> Interview with two Civil Society Steering group members, 14 January 2025; Interview with the Fiscal Transparency commitment team, Scottish Government, 20 January 2026

a whole manages the interoperability of its financial data. This is a huge challenge which needs to be addressed first.”<sup>41</sup>

The government acknowledged that, in this context, the objective of developing an externally facing fiscal portal service may have been too ambitious to achieve within the action plan period.<sup>42</sup> While having a general awareness of the challenges other countries had faced in developing fiscal portals, it was not until the development process that these could be understood in a Scottish Government context.<sup>43</sup> Thus, the action plan provided an opportunity to learn these lessons in a real world context: “If we hadn’t done this work, the data issue would not have become so clear”<sup>44</sup>.

### **1c. Civil society engagement**

Arguably, one of the main achievements of this commitment was less about what has been delivered and more about the opportunities it has provided for building trust and fostering collaboration, which is a valuable long-term investment. According to the government, this success comes from the fact that the joint government-civil society oversight group was invested from the beginning, having co-created the commitment at the outset, with strong and consistent senior government and civil society leadership, and a formalised approach, including terms of reference, regular scheduled meetings, deep dive discussions, and annual milestone reviews. This allowed the group to become more collaborative and learn together as the commitment was implemented.<sup>45</sup> The sense of collaboration was further strengthened by the fact that civil society provided substantive contributions in the form of both concrete activities and expert advice (SHRC, the Institute of Chartered Accounts Scotland ICAS, CoST).<sup>46</sup>

Meanwhile, at the global level, government and civil society members worked closely together to support OGP’s Nordic+ event on fiscal data transparency in Scotland, which has helped provide inspiration from connecting and sharing between countries.

### **1d. Looking ahead**

The experience from the implementation of the fiscal transparency commitment points to a number of opportunities to move forward with this stream of work. While it is not clear that the next action plan will have a dedicated commitment on fiscal transparency, there is scope to include fiscal data as a key component of a broader focus on open data which is likely to form a key part of the next plan. Indeed, fiscal data should arguably be at the heart of the government’s future work on open data given its central importance to understanding how government raises and allocates resources for the public good.

With regards to the fiscal transparency portal itself, there are no plans to launch a portal in the immediate future. While the government acknowledges that a portal remains a useful solution to meet some transparency needs, it does not see it as the only solution. Other smaller scale solutions explored to meet the differentiated needs of different user groups might include more open data published in machine readable formats, and

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<sup>41</sup> Interview with two Civil Society Steering group members, 14 January 2025

<sup>42</sup> Minutes of Fiscal Openness and Transparency Commitment Oversight Group, Meeting # 11, 22/9/2025

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Fiscal Transparency team, 20 January 2026

<sup>44</sup> Interview with two Civil Society Steering group members, 14 January 2025

<sup>45</sup> Minutes of Fiscal Openness and Transparency Commitment Oversight Group, Meeting # 11, 22/9/2025

<sup>46</sup> Interview with two Civil Society Steering group members, 14 January 2025

clearer citizen's versions of key budget documents (a recommendation from SHRC research).<sup>47</sup> Greater collaboration with civil society on visualising public spending (e.g. the Fraser of Allander Institute and Joseph Rowntree Foundation Scottish Public Spending Dashboard) is another potential area of opportunity. At the same time, the introduction of a new financial management IT system within Scottish Government provides an opportunity to strengthen the quality and accessibility of core financial data, which could in time potentially be integrated with dynamic visualisations such as a portal or dashboard.<sup>48</sup>

Finally, with regard to the collaborative spirit under which the commitment was carried out, the transition of the Equalities and Human Rights Budget Advisory Group (EHRBAG) to the Scottish Exchequer could represent an important opportunity to continue this collaborative work going forward<sup>49</sup> in the form of broader external support to government, including and beyond OGP. This could also help address the challenge of OGP being perceived by some parts of government as somewhat peripheral to their core work.<sup>50</sup>

## **Commitment 2: Health and Social Care**

### **2a. Results: Major**

**Both government and civil society stakeholders agreed that this commitment has achieved substantial results. Specifically, the commitment has made strong progress in developing approaches to person-centered co-design in two areas: (i) the proposed National Care Service (NCS); and (ii) the government's Care and Wellbeing portfolio. However, overall impact was limited by the government's decision to significantly reduce the scope of the NCS.**

By the end of the action plan, the government had engaged with more than 2000 people in co-design activities for the proposed NCS through a range of events including co-design sessions run by organisations with experience in supporting specific groups under-represented in the work to date (enabled by a grant funding programme), co-design group sessions, and local authority service design group sessions.<sup>51</sup> Teams taking part in the "Getting it right for everyone" (GIRFE)<sup>52</sup> pathfinders project completed the co-design process, producing a series of prototypes which were tested with people with lived experience and included in a national toolkit. The co-design process was evaluated to understand how materials, tools, and coaching support could be improved for future iterations.<sup>53</sup> In addition, more than 500 people were registered on the Lived Experience Expert Panel (LEEP) and almost 300 stakeholder organisations registered on the NCS Stakeholder Register, with work underway by the end of the action plan to

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<sup>47</sup> Minutes of Fiscal Openness and Transparency Commitment Oversight Group, Meeting # 11, 22/9/2025

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Fiscal Transparency team, 20 January 2026

<sup>49</sup> Minutes of Fiscal Openness and Transparency Commitment Oversight Group, Meeting # 11, 22/9/2025

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Fiscal Transparency team, 20 January 2026

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<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-2-health-and-social-care/pages/progress-to-september-2024/>

<sup>52</sup> Under GIRFE, place-based frontline practitioners (so-called "pathfinders") engage people with lived experience on a specific health and social care related policy area. According to the commitment team, the pathfinders have expressed the fact that see value in the process and want to contribute. Pathfinder teams have also become better at challenging their government counterparts as they gain more experience.

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<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-2-health-and-social-care/pages/progress-to-june-2025/>

design opportunities for LEEP participants and organisations on the stakeholder register to take part in activities to support the newly formed NCS Advisory Board. Meanwhile, a co-design maturity matrix has been developed to support teams to measure and improve their co-design activities.<sup>54</sup>

According to the government, the work undertaken as part of this commitment has represented an important shift in how co-design is applied - from an initial focus on service delivery to a broader focus on policy-making - with co-design approaches in health and social care now well embedded in government policy teams.<sup>55</sup> Significantly, the design school model adopted under this commitment has brought policy teams, service delivery staff, the workforce, and people with lived experience together, with the explicit aim to collaborate on understanding problems, making sense of data and come up with ideas, which was not happening before. According to government stakeholders, just getting teams working on discrete policy areas to collaborate was, in and of itself, a powerful experience.<sup>56</sup> According to the civil society co-lead for this commitment, there was great value in testing the co-design approach on the NCS development process given the critical importance and complexity of the health and social care sector and a very valuable and ambitious project to engage people with lived experience in the creation of a NCS.<sup>57</sup>

Critical to the success of this commitment has been the degree of clarity and transparency about the limits to co-design. Through implementation, the health and social care team became better at communicating what decisions have been made, where, and what scope there was for influence.<sup>58</sup> Civil society stakeholders agreed that being clear about what is and isn't possible in terms of civil society influence on health policy was critical to enable meaningful participation as well as to building trust.<sup>59</sup> From the government perspective, this also helps the public appreciate how hard the decision-making process is for government.

Another core element of success of the commitment has been the focus on evaluation and learning. The government team responsible for the commitment learned, through iteration, about what worked in terms of, for example, inclusion and accessibility practice. The focus towards the end of the action plan period was to feed that learning back into the materials developed. The requirement to write impact reports to parliament also pushed the team to be more deliberate about demonstrating impact.<sup>60</sup>

## **2b. Lessons and challenges**

Notwithstanding the significant progress that the commitment made in co-design of the NCS, overall impact was limited by the government's decision to significantly reduce the scope of the proposed service. The original proposal for the NCS to take social care provision into a new national agency was dropped. Instead, the focus shifted to the creation of a national care service advisory board on a non-statutory basis, which aims to improve social care support services.<sup>61</sup> In June 2025, the Scottish Government's

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<sup>54</sup> See Annex for further details

<sup>55</sup> Interview with Health and Social Care team, 9 December 2025

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Health and Social Care team, 9 December 2025

<sup>57</sup> Interview with civil society representative for commitment 2, 10 December 2025

<sup>58</sup> Interview with Health and Social Care team, 9 December 2025

<sup>59</sup> Interview with two Civil Society Steering group members, 14 January 2025

<sup>60</sup> Interview with Health and Social Care team, 9 December 2025

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c201x6g6e0o>

scaled-back care reforms was passed unanimously by the Scottish Parliament, with much removed from the original proposals, including the NCS as a service.<sup>62</sup> According to civil society stakeholders, the collapse of the NCS led to deep mistrust from civil society, who had invested a great deal of time and effort in consultation.<sup>63</sup>

At the operational level, the way government is structured can act as a barrier to meaningful co-creation, with siloed teams posing a real challenge to cohesive policy-making. While policy teams are used to running consultations, deeper engagement and joint decision-making across teams is more alien to many. In this context, demonstrating that the design school model and participative approaches work is crucial.

At the same time, as with other commitments, limited resourcing in an increasingly restrictive fiscal environment has translated into pressures in the wider system. In order to address this, the health and social care team had to be conscious about framing co-design efforts as a means of upskilling, capacity building, and enabling teams to work together in order to build efficiencies.<sup>64</sup>

## **2c. Civil society engagement**

The approach to civil society engagement under this commitment evolved significantly over the course of the action plan. Initially, the approach had been somewhat haphazard, with the Health and Social Care team within government selecting organisations based on their engagement in health service provision as stakeholder groups. According to interviewed civil society stakeholders, this did not prove successful as many of the individuals involved struggled to see the relevance of open government in their day-to-day lives.<sup>65</sup> This limited the extent to which civil society was able to act as a critical friend to the co-design process. While the government's attempt to move beyond usual suspects who are part of the system (and hence perhaps not so objective) by engaging those with lived experience was recognized as admirable, it did not work in the context of policy co-design and risked becoming an extractive process.<sup>66</sup>

In recognition of these challenges, the civil society group engaging with the commitment was officially updated in 2024 to the Third Sector Health and Social Care Collaborative (TSC), a group of organisations who support the third sector's contribution to the health and social care integration agenda. Both government and civil society representatives described the TSC as informed and knowledgeable, with close links into grassroots participatory work, and as a useful platform for discussing the general open government approach and for commenting on some of the materials themselves.<sup>67</sup> However, given that this engagement did not come to fruition until the later in the action plan, their contribution to the commitment was ultimately limited.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> <https://healthandcare.scot/stories/4292/national-care-service-scotland-social-care-reform> and <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cp8k5gllly35o>

<sup>63</sup> Interview with two Civil Society Steering group members, 14 January 2025

<sup>64</sup> Interview with Health and Social Care team, 9 December 2025

<sup>65</sup> Interview with civil society representative for commitment 2, 10 December 2025; Interview with two Civil Society Steering group members, 14 January 2025

<sup>66</sup> Interview with civil society representative for commitment 2, 10 December 2025; Interview with two Civil Society Steering group members, 14 January 2025

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Health and Social Care team, 9 December 2025; Interview with two Civil Society Steering group members, 14 January 2025

<sup>68</sup> Interview with civil society representative for commitment 2, 10 December 2025

At the same time, the government team working on this commitment recognized that the action plan has provided another platform and lens to talk about the co-design approach, adding weight to the argument for wider adoption. Moreover the TSC has provided space for more honest conversations with health and social care specialist organizations through the lens of open government more generally than would have been the case with one-to-one conversations in relation to specific policy challenges.<sup>69</sup> Moving forward, the government team responsible for the commitment suggested this forum could also provide the opportunity for more equal two-way conversations, with the government also acting as critical friend to civil society and a shared commitment to working together.<sup>70</sup>

## 2d. Looking ahead

As is the case with commitment 1, while it is not clear that the next action plan will have a dedicated commitment on health and social care, there is a strong argument for including health and social care as a core sector under a broader strategic focus on participation. Regardless of the approach, civil society stakeholders were keen to emphasize the importance of ensuring a strong role for the TSC in the design of any future work in this area to support joint decision-making.<sup>71</sup>

From the government's perspective, taking forward this strand of work is critical to showcasing open government approaches in a real-world setting. Specifically, there is an ambition to spread and scale the co-design approach across the broader health reform agenda in Scotland<sup>72</sup>, engaging with other, related policy areas (e.g. family support, justice sector). To achieve this, it will be critical to build on this model and continue to demonstrate that it works. As noted by the health and social team responsible for this commitment: "If we are going to scale and spread this model we need to be clear about what decisions are up for grabs, where the limits to influence will be. We need to be more open to that conversation."<sup>73</sup>

## Commitment 3: Data and Digital

### 3a. Results: Major

**This commitment has made significant strides as compared to previous iterations under Scotland's earlier open government action plans. Whereas previous plans were focused primarily on publishing more data, the current commitment has shifted the focus to building both the culture and infrastructure required for more meaningful data sharing by embedding open government approaches into ongoing work, strengthening data maturity within public sector organisations, and building the skills among data producers to engage with senior leadership around data. Rather than just publishing more open data, the data team took a step back and thought about the fundamentals needed to achieve change.<sup>74</sup>**

At the heart of this commitment has been the roll out of the government's Data Transformation Framework (DTF) and Programme, with a focus on changing government

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<sup>69</sup> Interview with Health and Social Care team, 9 December 2025

<sup>70</sup> Interview with Health and Social Care team, 9 December 2025

<sup>71</sup> Interview with civil society representative for commitment 2, 10 December 2025

<sup>72</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/health-social-care-service-renewal-framework/documents/>

<sup>73</sup> Interview with Health and Social Care team, 9 December 2025

<sup>74</sup> Interview with the Data and Digital commitment team, 9 December 2025

culture around data. This has proved an important success. Over the course of the action plan, 52 organizations (half of all Scottish local authorities) were trained on the DTF, with participants reporting increased confidence and knowledge to act and more investment in data (with 93% having a data improvement programme in place).<sup>75</sup> The government also conducted an evaluation of the Data Transformation Programme. To help ensure buy-in from senior leadership, the commitment team developed a self-serve product for managers and leaders to help encourage them to commit the necessary investment in data maturity<sup>76</sup>.

The commitment has also continued to make progress in improving the accessibility of data. The government delivered a new [data discovery search engine](#), developed through a CivTech process, improving the discoverability of existing data. In 2024, the government also ran a discovery project to review Scotland's [official statistics open data platform](#), publishing a full report on the programme of user research for both discovery and alpha phases.<sup>77</sup> The government started the procurement for a new service in 2025. By the end of the action plan, the government was about to award the contract for the development of a new platform which will bring different strands of government data together (to be called data.gov.scot).<sup>78</sup> Meanwhile, the government also launched the [Scottish AI Register](#), with work underway to identify use cases from across the public sector by the end of the action plan.

The degree to which this commitment was able to support the opening of data under other commitments was limited by the fact that those commitments were unable to make as much progress as had been hoped (see e.g. commitment 1 on fiscal transparency). On the other hand, the government was able to make substantial progress in supporting other areas of work, such as piloting an 'Open Data City' app<sup>79</sup>, publishing data on awards made via the Scottish Government's Ecosystem Fund via the [360Giving GrantNav tool](#) or leading a [CivTech Challenge 10.7](#) exploring how technology can support scalable public participation in decision-making (see commitment 5).

Alongside the data development work, the government also commissioned in 2024 an independent report on open data, drawing on experience from the global open data movement. The recommendations called for moving beyond the provision of technical guidance towards "a vision for open data in Scotland, which positions open data as a key tool for advancing policy priorities, rather than as a tick box exercise. Crucially, this approach requires collaboration among stakeholders: from data publishers, to the public and private sector, and civil society".<sup>80</sup> The data team implemented a series of activities to begin testing out thinking from the recommendations from the report. The team learned that it's not enough to run these programmes without giving people support to talk to their leads so they launched the draft vision for public sector data to set a clear direction for change and improvement.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Interview with the Data and Digital commitment team, 9 December 2025

<sup>76</sup> Interview with the Data and Digital commitment team, 30 April 2024

<sup>77</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/statistics-gov-scot-improvement-project-report-discovery-user-research/> and <https://www.gov.scot/publications/statistics-gov-scot-improvement-project-alpha-user-research-report/>

<sup>78</sup> Interview with the Data and Digital commitment team, 9 December 2025

<sup>79</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-3-data-and-digital-commitment/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>

<sup>80</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-data-scotland-blueprint-unlocking-innovation-collaboration-impact/>

<sup>81</sup> <https://blogs.gov.scot/digital/2025/08/26/making-it-happen-scotlands-vision-for-public-sector-data/>

### **3b. Lessons and challenges**

Much like commitment 1, this commitment has benefitted from the fact that it builds on work carried out under previous action plans. As noted in the mid-term report, the commitment team has developed a stronger understanding of the challenges associated with data provision and use as they relate to the external environment (leadership, commitment, purpose etc.).<sup>82</sup> This has continued into the second half of the action plan, with further roll out of the Data Transformation Programme and initial efforts to incorporate external recommendations on open data into ongoing work.

Notwithstanding these positive steps, the commitment has still remained largely internally facing. Civil society members noted that to build on progress, this stream of work needs to be owned at a more strategic level of government to avoid the risk that it remains centered on a dedicated but small data team. In a similar vein, they noted how the next big challenge (as evidenced from lessons learned on commitment 1) is to ensure much better interoperability of different datasets (particularly financial data, tax data spending data etc.)<sup>83</sup>

The data team responsible for this commitment agreed that interoperability of data has been and remains a key challenge. This challenge is exacerbated by the fact that the government only has ownership of central government data and can't make decisions on other public sector data. The scope of influence in such cases is therefore limited to working on foundational support.<sup>84</sup> This was an important lesson from commitment 1, namely that maturity levels were not advanced enough, and that different people holding different data was a much bigger challenge than had been anticipated.<sup>85</sup>

### **3c. Civil society engagement**

As noted in the mid-term review, formal collaboration with civil society on this commitment has been limited to interaction with the civil society representative for the commitment on the development of the initial milestones. That said, there has been interaction with external stakeholders through other channels such as the [Find.Data.Gov.Scot](#) advisory group, made up of public and private sector organisations alongside Open Data Scotland. Furthermore, there has been a good deal of engagement through communities of practice, which has encouraged public sector organizations to share their challenges among themselves and with external contributors. During the course of the current plan, the data team established and grew the Better Data Community of Practice – with a regular programme of events open to all – including civil society (advertised on Ticket Tailor) regularly attracting 100-200 participants, fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing. The government has also done a lot of work on developing persona types and engaging with data users (both public sector users and beyond) to better understand use cases and accessibility issues. The government has also made increasing efforts at building up networks externally and

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<sup>82</sup> Scotland Open Government Action Plan 2021-2025 - Independent Monitoring Body: Interim Assessment (2024) <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Mid-term-Assessment-%E2%80%93-Action-plan-%E2%80%93-Scotland-UK-%E2%80%93-July-2024.pdf>

<sup>83</sup> Interview with two Civil Society Steering group members, 14 January 2025

<sup>84</sup> Interview with the Data and Digital commitment team, 9 December 2025

<sup>85</sup> Interview with the Data and Digital commitment team, 9 December 2025

reaching out to community groups, through for example the Dundee Data Meetup and UK Open Data Camp.<sup>86</sup>

### 3d. Looking ahead

Ethical use of data and technology is likely to form an important strand of the next action plan.<sup>87</sup> Lessons from the current action plan suggest that the new draft vision for open data should form the basis of future work in this area, with open data considered within the bigger context of data sharing.<sup>88</sup>

A second area of focus could be on working towards better interoperability of data. The planned new data.gov.scot platform will be an important element of this work. Ensuring greater interoperability is critical to ensuring that external stakeholders can build up a fuller and more meaningful picture of government activity. Interviewed civil society stakeholders suggested that a more strategic approach to open data should underpin the next action plan, by focusing on a few key areas in which data access can be particularly useful. Considering the lessons from the current plan, it would seem that fiscal and financial data could be one such area to focus on, to enable the public to “follow the money” as a core ambition<sup>89</sup>. In the longer term, a greater focus on external engagement will be important to build resilience and sustainability for the future and ensure the commitment achieves its full potential.

## Commitment 4: Climate Change

### 4a. Results: Marginal

**Commitment 4 was successful in completing many of the activities set out in the original plan, most notably in the setting up and running of the Climate Policy Engagement Network (CPEN). However, broader impact was limited by the limited depth of engagement in practice.**

CPEN aims to support participation and engagement across key areas of the government’s climate change policy, by widening the existing pool of stakeholders regularly engaged, complementing and streamlining consultative processes, and improving public engagement and participation on key climate change policy milestones, such as the Climate Change Plan, Just Transition Plans, and Adaptation Programme.<sup>90</sup> Prior to CPEN, consultation had been less coordinated. The purpose of CPEN was to lead on some of the more representative engagement with the third sector through a network. CPEN complemented a wider portfolio of climate public engagement under the Climate Change Public Engagement Strategy (PES) which included a participative engagement programme.<sup>91</sup>

CPEN was launched in January 2023 with members from a range of backgrounds. The first biannual members’ network meeting was held in February 2024, with a second meeting in December 2024. No specific meetings were held in 2025 to allow for internal

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<sup>86</sup> Interview with the Data and Digital commitment team, 9 December 2025; Interview with the open government team, Scottish Government, 12 December 2025

<sup>87</sup> <https://blogs.gov.scot/open-government-partnership/2025/12/08/what-does-phase-2-of-action-plan-co-creation-mean/>

<sup>88</sup> Interview with the Data and Digital commitment team, 9 December 2025

<sup>89</sup> Interview with two Civil Society Steering group members, 14 January 2025

<sup>90</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/policies/climate-change/public-engagement/>

<sup>91</sup> Interview with Climate Change team, 9 December 2025

discussions on the future of CPEN beyond the current action plan, however feedback was provided by CPEN members during and after the sessions run in 2025.<sup>92</sup>

CPEN has had some success in influencing the policy development process, including with regard to consultation design (e.g. on the Transport Just Transition Plan and the draft Climate Change Plan). Of the different policy areas, CPEN has been most used to advise on Just Transition Plans, with 6 opportunities for CPEN members to advise on JTPs through engagement on JTP Discussion Papers. More than 10 stakeholders advised on each opportunity, although it has not been determined how many other network members advised in each case.<sup>93</sup> Although there was an ambition for peer learning and knowledge sharing on the forum, this did not take place, with little content driven by membership or civil society. The government team shared some news items or resources to stimulate discussion, but these posts had limited traction.<sup>94</sup>

#### **4b. Lessons and challenges**

The commitment suffered from the fact that it was developed somewhat in isolation from, rather than in step with, the statutory public engagement strategy for climate change, through which the main delivery of Scottish Government's climate public engagement is delivered. Initial ambitions to include a young people focused element to CPEN did not proceed as it was decided that this would be too resource intensive, and may also imply safeguarding issues. Engagement with Children and Young People was delivered through the PES portfolio through other methods, including the participation programme and the Climate Action Schools programme. Another barrier to using CPEN is that it was not built into workstream planning across Scottish Government policy structures and processes. As such, when resources are tight and priorities are many CPEN will tend to not be used.<sup>95</sup>

The commitment was also affected by changes in policy priorities within the climate change sector. In April 2024, the Climate Change Committee advised the Scottish Government that the interim net zero target to reduce emissions by 75% by 2030 (versus 1990 levels) was no longer credible. The Scottish Parliament passed new legislation to shift to a new system of carbon budgets, whilst maintaining its the existing commitment to reach net zero by 2045<sup>96</sup> As a result the government's next Climate Change Plan (initially a key focus of the engagement work under this commitment) was significantly delayed, with consultation on the draft plan not launched until November 2025.<sup>97</sup> For this reason, the focus during the action plan period prioritised the JTP process to support the engagement and ambitions on co-design. The CPEN has now been involved in the draft Climate Change Plan consultation. An event was held in October 2025 for CPEN members for feedback on Draft Climate Change Plan consultation questions. Another event was held for CPEN members and Climate Action

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<sup>92</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-4-climate-change/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>

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<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-4-climate-change/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>

<sup>94</sup> Interview with Climate Change team, 9 December 2025

<sup>95</sup> Interview with Climate Change team, 9 December 2025

<sup>96</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-68847434>

<sup>97</sup> <https://consult.gov.scot/energy-and-climate-change-directorate/draft-climate-change-plan/>

Hubs to provide more information and guidance on how to engage with their networks.<sup>98</sup>

#### **4c. Civil society engagement**

The government held some initial meetings with civil society to support with co-creation of the commitment at the outset of the plan. However, engagement was minimal during implementation, with the government reporting little drive from civil society to get involved in the running of the network.<sup>99</sup>

That said, there are some specialized civil society groups involved as members of the network and the engagement team interacts with civil society groups more broadly beyond CPEN through other engagement processes.<sup>100</sup> For example, the community climate action team oversees a network of regional hubs which are run by local partners connected to community groups and cross-sector organisations, such as councils, health boards, and education providers. The hubs focus on innovation, resilience, and inclusivity in addressing climate challenges, supporting communities in making meaningful contributions to Scotland's net-zero goals.<sup>101</sup>

#### **4d. Looking ahead**

While the next action plan is unlikely to contain a dedicated commitment on climate change, there is scope for this and other streams of work under this action plan to continue under other themes, e.g. public participation theme.<sup>102</sup> According to the government, no decisions have been made regarding the future of CPEN itself and if/how its remit and role in the public engagement process might change once the Climate Change Plan has been finalised. Regardless of the approach adopted, both government and civil society agreed that any potential future iteration of this work would need to see better alignment between OGP and the next iteration of the statutory climate change public engagement strategy. Public participation on Climate Change policy remains a priority as part of the Climate Change Public Engagement Strategy.

### **Commitment 5: Participation**

#### **5a. Results: Marginal**

**The participation commitment was amongst the widest ranging and most ambitious under Scotland's third action plan. However, despite progress in some areas, it was ultimately unable to meet that ambition during the action plan period.**

At the heart of the initial ambition of the commitment was the work of the Institutionalising Participation and Deliberative Democracy (IPDD) working group which proposed a set of recommendations that would begin to make participation in government routine and effective. However, while the government accepted most of the recommendations in principle<sup>103</sup>, in practice, much of the work that needs doing to

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<sup>98</sup> Interview with Climate Change team, 9 December 2025

<sup>99</sup> Interview with Climate Change team, 9 December 2025

<sup>100</sup> Interview with Climate Change team, 9 December 2025

<sup>101</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/policies/climate-change/community-led-climate-action/>

<sup>102</sup> Interview with two Civil Society Steering group members, 14 January 2025

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<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-government-response-institutionalising-participatory-deliberative-democracy-working-group/>

deliver these remains unfunded and as a result has not progressed. Future activities associated with this work were still undefined by the end of the action plan.

As noted in the mid-term review, limited progress on taking forward the recommendations of the IPDD report has had a cascading effect on many of the other milestones as the IPDD recommendations would have provided a solid foundation and political backing to support the implementation of a range of participatory processes envisaged in the commitment.<sup>104</sup> Civil society stakeholders noted their disappointment with this outcome, with expectations for more investment in building participation infrastructure unmet.<sup>105</sup>

Given this context, the open government team responsible for this commitment pivoted to other priorities, in particular the development of a procurement framework for participation, using resources which might have been used to work on a broader participation strategy. The government revised its initial approach on the proposed use of a framework agreement for participation, instead introducing a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS), with the Invitation to Tender (ITT) for the DPS expected to be launched in early 2026.<sup>106</sup> While the open government team believes the DPS will make a notable difference to how participation work is coordinated within the government, they also recognize that it represents a moderation of its initial ambition.<sup>107</sup> The introduction of the DPS has also meant that the proposed training on the Participation Handbook was not delivered as planned. Although a new iteration of the Participation Handbook was published in March 2024, work on aligning participation and human rights approaches more broadly did not take place. Instead, the government plans to design training around the DPS once in place.<sup>108</sup> In the meantime, the government worked on developing an internal network of trained staff across different teams who will be trusted signposters on participation, providing guidance to colleagues. This will be plugged into the procurement framework.<sup>109</sup> Civil society stakeholders valued the way the team opened up the process of developing the DPS to feedback and input but remained cautious about how the quality of participation would be ensured.<sup>110</sup>

There was also limited progress in other areas. The government was not able to significantly strengthen or diversify the open government network, focusing instead on external communications and promotion work, including the launch of a '[Trust and transparency in Scotland](#)' community bulletin aimed at a wide range of leaders, academics, practitioners, and officials. A review of Participation in Public Decision Making in the Community Empowerment Act and in the National Performance Framework (NPF) suffered delays and has not been completed. Citizens' Assemblies were also postponed, while work to embed participation as a core skill in a centre of expertise has been delayed indefinitely. Support to the National Participatory Budgeting Strategic Group (NPBSG) was also paused.

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<sup>104</sup> Scotland Open Government Action Plan 2021-2025 - Independent Monitoring Body: Interim Assessment (2024) <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Mid-term-Assessment-%E2%80%93-Action-plan-%E2%80%93-Scotland-UK-%E2%80%93-July-2024.pdf>

<sup>105</sup> Interview with civil society representative for commitment 5, 16 December 2025

<sup>106</sup> Email communication Scottish Government Open Government team.

<sup>107</sup> Interview with the open government team, Scottish Government, 12 December 2025

<sup>108</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-4-climate-change/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>

<sup>109</sup> Interview with the open government team, Scottish Government, 12 December 2025

<sup>110</sup> Interview with civil society representative for commitment 5, 16 December 2025

On the other hand, areas with stronger results included achieving (and indeed surpassing) the 1% local government participatory budgeting target for two consecutive years, and support to the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 and the implementation of the Children and Young Persons participation framework. There was good also progress on updating internal consultation guidance, while the government launched a [CivTech Challenge](#) to explore the development of a new digital engagement tool for government. However, with regard to the latter, civil society stakeholders expressed concern that the process of developing the platform took participation out of the hands of participation practitioners and into the space of open data and collective intelligence, with little thought for how the two are working together.<sup>111</sup>

## **5b. Lessons and challenges**

According to one civil society stakeholder, while the government acknowledges that Scotland is facing serious democratic challenges, there is limited support to address this in practice.<sup>112</sup> The open government team within government is continuing to work very hard, but without the requisite strategic support. Open government, and particularly participation, remains easy for government to put on the backburner when budgets are tight.<sup>113</sup> The core message that up-front investment in participation infrastructure reduces the cost of failure later on has been a consistent message from civil society over the years, but, according to one civil society stakeholder, that argument doesn't seem to have ever really landed.<sup>114</sup>

While acknowledging that pushing for an ambitious commitment on participation without the dedicated resources to act was a risk, the open government team had hoped that the IPPD report would demonstrate the expectation on the part of stakeholders to advance a more ambitious participation agenda and that senior government decision makers would be more responsive to this pressure. In the event, this strategy did not prove fruitful. For this reason, the open government team is now working to shift the conversation through communications by focusing on open government as an enabler of democratic resilience going forward.<sup>115</sup>

## **5c. Civil society engagement**

The mid-term review noted that while the commitment had good representation from a small pool of civil society participation experts in Scotland, the fact that the deliverables remained largely internally focused meant that the commitment struggled to make a compelling offer to civil society that aligned with their interests and existing priorities.<sup>116</sup> This remains a core lesson at the end point of the action plan. The government acknowledges that the absence of a specific offer to civil society and clarity about what was expected of them caused frustration.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Interview with civil society representative for commitment 5, 16 December 2025

<sup>112</sup> Interview with civil society representative for commitment 5, 16 December 2025

<sup>113</sup> Interview with the open government team, Scottish Government, 12 December 2025

<sup>114</sup> Interview with civil society representative for commitment 5, 16 December 2025

<sup>115</sup> Interview with civil society representative for commitment 5, 16 December 2025

<sup>116</sup> Scotland Open Government Action Plan 2021-2025 - Independent Monitoring Body: Interim Assessment (2024) <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Mid-term-Assessment-%E2%80%93-Action-plan-%E2%80%93-Scotland-UK-%E2%80%93-July-2024.pdf>

<sup>117</sup> Interview with the open government team, Scottish Government, 12 December 2025

At the same time, there has also been a degree of dispersal of the participation community on the civil society side. Many organizations and individuals who were previously engaged are less present in large part due to the increasingly restricted funding landscape.<sup>118</sup> The capacity to run or support deliberative processes exists in a very small number of organisations. According to one civil society representative, this needs to be scaled up to bring this community level expertise and perspectives into the open government process. To this extent, it is not so much about organisational funding but about investing in the broader infrastructure for participation.<sup>119</sup>

#### **5d. Looking ahead**

As noted in the mid-term review, the team responsible for this commitment could consider how to adopt a more strategic approach to its participation work as part of a broader open government strategy. This has been taken up as an intention for the next action plan. This approach could include, for example, prioritising those areas where open government principles can most effectively be taken on by other parts of government (e.g. Fiscal Transparency) and applying the Participation Handbook and training to those priority areas under a collaborative project with other government departments.<sup>120</sup>

Additional work could also be considered to better understand the current barriers to civil society involvement in OGP and to scope the range of existing participatory practice to ensure better alignment between government and civil society interests in this area. This could include a stock-take of the latest thinking in participation (as this is a rapidly evolving area) as well as a more specific review of how the government's Participation Handbook has been used to date and what impact it has had.<sup>121</sup>

Beyond that, stakeholders were in agreement that this strand of work requires greater investment on the civil society side and a clearer role for civil society partners in the next action plan.<sup>122</sup> It was suggested, for example, that more investment in skills and capacities outside of government (in the form of e.g. a summer school, or participation academy) could be a useful long term investment, with start-up funding potentially coming from government, but with a view to eventually becoming independent.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Interview with civil society representative for commitment 5, 16 December 2025

<sup>119</sup> Interview with civil society representative for commitment 5, 16 December 2025

<sup>120</sup> Scotland Open Government Action Plan 2021-2025 - Independent Monitoring Body: Interim Assessment (2024) <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Mid-term-Assessment-%E2%80%93-Action-plan-%E2%80%93-Scotland-UK-%E2%80%93-July-2024.pdf>

<sup>121</sup> Interview with civil society representative for commitment 5, 16 December 2025

<sup>122</sup> Interview with the open government team, Scottish Government, 12 December 2025; Interview with two Civil Society Steering group members, 14 January 2025

<sup>123</sup> Interview with civil society representative for commitment 5, 16 December 2025

### 3. Annex: Detailed summary of commitment completion

#### Commitment 1: Fiscal Transparency

Actions/ objectives	Key milestones/activities 2024-2025	Final status	Summary of final status
<b>Establish an approach to assess progress of fiscal openness and transparency, moving towards international best practices of transparency and data standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refine the IMF Fiscal Transparency Code (FTC) benchmarked assessment, building on the SHRC's Open Budget Survey assessment in consultation with experts (2024).</li> <li>Review progress and practical application of benchmarking to design effective future approach (2025).</li> </ul>	Substantial completion	<p>The SHRC published <a href="#">Scotland's Open Budget Survey (OBS) Results</a> in May 2024. According to the report, Scotland achieved a transparency score of 60 in the OBS 2023, which represents a noted improvement on its score of 41 in 2019.</p> <p>The government considered the initial analysis of its internal benchmarking using the IMF's FTC and the SHRC's recommendations in March 2025. However, due to resource pressures, no further work was undertaken to apply the benchmarking to assess Scotland's fiscal openness in practice. The government has stated its intention to continue to use the benchmarking insights to inform future Budgets and other fiscal publications.<sup>124</sup></p>
<b>Implement the Fiscal Transparency Discovery Report recommendations to improve the quality, coverage, presentation and standards of current fiscal data</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject to resource, by summer 2024 begin development of a live service, including a public facing fiscal portal (2024).</li> <li>By autumn 2024 begin user testing and design engagement with the public and external stakeholders (2024).</li> <li>Subject to resource, by the end of Q1, launch live service and public portal (2025).</li> </ul>	Limited completion	<p>Despite progress in developing an initial prototype and internal Minimum Viable Product Beta version of the fiscal transparency portal from 2022-2024, further development of the portal was paused in early 2025, largely due to limited technical capacities and challenges with the quality, consistency and interoperability of the underlying systems and data<sup>125</sup>. By the end of the Action Plan, there were no plans to launch the portal in the immediate future.</p>
<b>Deliver a procurement management information platform (MIPS) to improve data standards and demonstrate the</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed Beta phase of the MIPS (2024).</li> <li>Roll out the MIPS across the public sector (2024/2025).</li> <li>Identify new data sources to enrich public</li> </ul>	Completed	<p>The MIPS was launched in 2024, providing a wide range of procurement information including SME's and their procurement activity.<sup>126</sup> The platform continued to be rolled out across the Scottish Public Sector in 2025, with a range of dashboards set up to demonstrate</p>

<sup>124</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-1-fiscal-openness-and-transparency/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>

<sup>125</sup> Interview with two Civil Society Steering group members, 14 January 2025

<sup>126</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-1-fiscal-openness-and-transparency/pages/progress-to-september-2024/>

<b>impact of public sector procurement</b>	sector management information (2025). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to report on Scope 3 emissions (2025).</li> </ul>		procurement spend (e.g. Scottish SME Spend, spend by location, Innovation) <sup>127</sup> . By the end of the Action Plan, the government was looking to automate the collection of data, and to provide more granular spend data to support local spend analysis.
<b>Improve the transparency around the Scottish Budget, reviewing the accessibility and usability of existing and future information and guidance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a programme for improvement in the budget process and Budget 2025 to 2026 and over the medium term (2024).</li> <li>Deliver an improved Budget process based on lessons learned and stakeholder input (2025).</li> </ul>	Completed	The government published twenty-seven related Budget publications as part of the new Budget. through a new <a href="#">Annex D</a> in December 2024. Meanwhile, <a href="#">Your Scotland, Your Finances (YSYF)</a> was produced alongside the new draft Budget and is updated when Parliament agrees Budget revisions in year. <sup>128</sup> By the end of the Action Plan, work was underway for the 2026-27 Scottish Budget, to identify whether there is scope to potentially baseline any further budgets which are regularly transferred in-year <sup>129</sup> .
<b>Build on previous engagement and best practice to develop a multi-stakeholder approach to the next Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP).</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support engagement events to showcase the infrastructure transparency already in place in Scotland (2024).</li> <li>Develop a public and stakeholder engagement strategy, in conjunction with Scottish Futures Trust (2024)</li> <li>Work with Scottish Futures Trust to test various engagement options ahead of development of the next Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP) (2025)</li> </ul>	Limited completion	The government presented its work on infrastructure data transparency at the OGP's Nordic+ event on fiscal openness in April 2024 and through ongoing engagement with the Infrastructure Transparency Initiative (CoST). <sup>130</sup> The government undertook an evaluation of the content and use of its current IIP and its approach to the next plan. This included external feedback from industry experts and scrutiny bodies such as Audit Scotland and the Scottish Parliament Information Centre. Findings were presented to the wider Planning Infrastructure and Place Advisory Group (PIPAG). These were due to be published alongside a draft of the Infrastructure Investment Plan in late 2025, or early 2026. <sup>131</sup> However, the publication of the Infrastructure

<sup>127</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-1-fiscal-openness-and-transparency/pages/progress-to-march-2025/>

<sup>128</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-1-fiscal-openness-and-transparency/pages/progress-to-june-2025/>

<sup>129</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-1-fiscal-openness-and-transparency/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>

<sup>130</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-1-fiscal-openness-and-transparency/pages/progress-to-september-2024/>

<sup>131</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-1-fiscal-openness-and-transparency/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>

			Strategy (replacing the IIP) was extended by a year to 2027/2028. As a result, formal engagement on the next IIP/strategy had still to take place. <sup>132</sup>
<b>Build on previous engagement, striving for a best practice approach to engagement, ensuring that we use our tax powers in a transparent policy making process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By end May 2024, engage with the Tax Advisory Group (TAG) and wider stakeholders to develop a draft tax strategy (2024).</li> <li>Launched a public consultation on the tax strategy (2024).</li> <li>Publish the Tax Strategy.</li> <li>By September 2025 engage with citizens and stakeholders before the budget process begins (2025).</li> </ul>	Completed	The government delivered a series of stakeholder events to gather views on the Tax Strategy. <sup>133</sup> It published the <a href="#">Tax Strategy</a> alongside the Budget in December 2024 alongside a <a href="#">summary of public attitudes to tax research</a> . In February 2025, the Scottish Government and COSLA published a joint programme of engagement around long-term reform of Council Tax <sup>134</sup> . In late 2025 the government published its <a href="#">Tax Literacy Communications Best Practice Guide</a> , and hosted its first Tax Conference to discuss various topical tax issues, including council tax reform and wealth taxation. Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament presented their views on tax and spending priorities to delegates. <sup>135</sup>

## Commitment 2: Health and Social Care

Actions/ objectives	Key milestones/activities 2024-2025	Final status	Summary of final status
<b>Identify the necessary skills and experience required by a person-centered design team to drive forward our action plan.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No new milestones (activities complete)</li> </ul>	Completed	All posts for the design team were recruited in 2023
<b>Invite civil society to work with us through the stages of the action plan's implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To engage with the Third Sector Health and Social Care Collaborative to develop guidance, tools and materials to support</li> </ul>	Limited completion	In 2024, the civil society group engaging with this commitment was officially updated to the Third Sector Health and Social Care Collaborative (TSC), a group of organisations who

<sup>132</sup> OGP Action Plan 2021-25: Fiscal Openness and Transparency Commitment Oversight Group Meeting # 11 Minutes of Fiscal Openness and Transparency Commitment Oversight Group, Meeting # 11, 22/9/2025

<sup>133</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-1-fiscal-openness-and-transparency/pages/progress-to-september-2024/>

<sup>134</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-1-fiscal-openness-and-transparency/pages/progress-to-june-2025/>

<sup>135</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-1-fiscal-openness-and-transparency/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>

	<p>the spread and scale of co-design approaches and evaluate impact.</p>		<p>support third sector’s contribution to the health and social care integration agenda.</p> <p>Prior to this, the approach to engaging civil society had been somewhat haphazard, with the Health and Social Care team within government selecting organisations based on their engagement in health service provision as stakeholder groups, which did not prove successful as some individuals struggled to see the relevance of open government in their day-to-day lives.<sup>136</sup></p> <p>To address this gap, the commitment team secured a formal arrangement for the TSC to act as the civil society co-lead to the commitment. Both government and civil society representatives described the TSC as informed and knowledgeable, with close links into grassroots participatory work, and as a useful platform for discussing the general open government approach and for commenting on some of the materials themselves.<sup>137</sup> However, given that this engagement did not come to fruition until the later in the action plan, their contribution to the commitment was ultimately limited.<sup>138</sup></p>
<p><b>Develop a programme of work that systematically embeds good practice and the principles of co-design across the re-design of services and work in health and social care</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-design delivery within key health and social care areas, namely National Care Service (NCS) and the Getting It Right For Everyone (GIRFE) pathfinders.</li> </ul>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>As of February 2025, the NCS had engaged with 2097 people in co-design activities, including sessions with seldom heard voices groups and co-design events for the NCS Workforce Charter in spring 2024.<sup>139</sup> A range of co-design events took place including 39 Seldom Heard Voice co-design sessions, 16 co-design group sessions, and 4 local authority service design group sessions.<sup>140</sup> Reports from co-design</p>

<sup>136</sup> Interview with civil society representative for commitment 2, 10 December 2025; Interview with two Civil Society Steering group members, 14 January 2025

<sup>137</sup> Interview with Health and Social Care team, 9 December 2025; Interview with two Civil Society Steering group members, 14 January 2025

<sup>138</sup> Interview with civil society representative for commitment 2, 10 December 2025

<sup>139</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-2-health-and-social-care/pages/progress-to-march-2025/>

<sup>140</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-2-health-and-social-care/pages/progress-to-september-2024/>

			<p>activities for the NCS are published on <a href="#">National Care Service website</a>.<sup>141</sup></p> <p>The teams taking part in the GIRFE pathfinders project completed the co-design process, having produced a series of prototypes for the priority focus area, the ‘team around the person’. These were tested with people with lived experience and included in the <a href="#">national toolkit</a>. Alongside the GIRFE toolkit, the outputs from the co-design process were shared with partnership teams to support future engagement with people with lived experience.<sup>142</sup> The co-design process was evaluated to understand how the process, materials and tools, as well as coaching support, can be improved for a future iteration.<sup>143</sup></p>
<p><b>Draw out learnings both in health and social care and across wider Scottish Government to ensure future work can be progressed more widely</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consolidate learning for co-design and participative approaches. Prioritise guidance, materials, tools and methods to be published.</li> <li>• Develop and agree an approach to assessing impact and learning from co-design activities across health and social care.</li> <li>• Engage the Lived Experience Expert Panel (LEEP) and a range of civic society groups to support and scrutinise co-design approaches.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Substantial completion</b></p>	<p>By the end of the action plan, a co-design maturity matrix was being developed to support teams to consider what good looks like for co-design. This is to form the basis of the evaluation frameworks to support teams to measure and improve their co-design activities. The matrix was updated with feedback from stakeholders across the public sector. The materials being developed to support the self-assessment process include a series of prompts and examples of evidence to demonstrate good practice. The proposed participation approach for the National Care Service Advisory Board includes a support offer to evaluate the impact of involving people in the activities of the board, as well as the experience of taking part.<sup>144</sup></p> <p>As of June 2025, there were 561 people registered on LEEP and 294 stakeholder organisations registered on the NCS Stakeholder Register</p>

<sup>141</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-2-health-and-social-care/pages/progress-to-june-2025/>

<sup>142</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-2-health-and-social-care/pages/progress-to-march-2025/>

<sup>143</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-2-health-and-social-care/pages/progress-to-june-2025/>

<sup>144</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-2-health-and-social-care/pages/progress-to-june-2025/>

			<p>including service providers, care professionals, advocacy groups, and other organisations.</p> <p>A design and participation team is in place to support participation in the co-design process. The team also runs a helpline for anyone wanting to enquire about the NCS co-design activity. As of June 2025, work was underway to design opportunities for LEEP participants and organisations on the stakeholder register to take part in activities to support the newly NCS Advisory Board. Initial plans included activities around scrutiny, calls for evidence and evaluation. A project to improve the LEEP application process was also being scoped with Deaf Blind Scotland's Right to Dream Ambassadors.<sup>145</sup></p>
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### Commitment 3: Data and Digital

Actions/ objectives	Key milestones/activities 2024-2025	Final status	Summary of final status
<p><b>Open up data relevant to different open government themes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to support the Fiscal Transparency Programme, climate change policy and other areas relevant to the to encourage open data reuse and share best practice on data standards, FAIR and open data principles.</li> <li>Improve our understanding of the technological solutions for deliberation, to support the Scottish Government Participation Framework and to inform potential future applications to expand participation around public good uses of public data and AI.</li> </ul>	<p>Substantial completion</p>	<p>The degree to which this commitment was able to support the opening of data under other commitments was limited by the fact that those commitments were unable to make as much progress as had been hoped. For example, the fiscal transparency commitment was not yet at the stage of maturity required to implement the full fiscal transparency portal as planned, with interoperability of data a key challenge (see commitment 1). Nevertheless, the process has provided some useful learning.<sup>146</sup></p> <p>On the other hand, the government was able to make substantial progress in other areas. The data team worked with a group from the University of Edinburgh to explore innovative ways to demonstrate the value of open data, including a pilot 'Open Data City' app<sup>147</sup>, <a href="#">publishing a</a></p>

<sup>145</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-2-health-and-social-care/pages/progress-to-june-2025/>

<sup>146</sup> Interview with the Data and Digital team, 9 December 2025

<sup>147</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-3-data-and-digital-commitment/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>

			<p><a href="#">blog</a> and <a href="#">shared a video</a>. The group delivered a detailed report outlining a framework for purpose-driven case studies illustrated with the Climate Action Platform.<sup>148</sup> The data team also collaborated with the <a href="#">360Giving data standard</a> experts to publish data on awards made via the Scottish Government's Ecosystem Fund, now available on <a href="#">statistics.gov.scot</a> and discoverable using the <a href="#">360Giving GrantNav tool</a>. The 360 platform has also proved a useful learning opportunity for the fiscal transparency work.<sup>149</sup></p> <p>The government led a <a href="#">CivTech Challenge 10.7</a> exploring how technology can support high-quality, scalable public participation in decision-making, entering into its Pre-Commercial Agreement phase at the end of July 2025. The CivTech company <a href="#">CrownShy</a> is expanding the functionalities of the public engagement platform <a href="#">Comhairle</a><sup>150</sup>. The Sponsor team is working together with CrownShy on identifying pilot use cases for public engagement activities on Comhairle.<sup>151</sup> (The Comhairle MVP has been used to support Scottish AI Alliance public engagement panel deliberation, and scale it beyond their usual audiences.<sup>152</sup>)</p>
<p><b>Run a CivTech challenge</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a considered approach to dataset sourcing and management for Find.Data.Gov.Scot to improve the discoverability of identified datasets, and by November 2025, add</li> </ul>	<p>Substantial completion</p>	<p>The <a href="https://find.data.gov.scot/">https://find.data.gov.scot/</a> data discovery search engine, developed through the CivTech process, has been delivered. Between December 2023 and June 2024, the number of datasets identified by Find.Data.Gov.Scot increased from approximately 7,500 to almost 19,000 datasets from over 700</p>

<sup>148</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-3-data-and-digital-commitment/pages/progress-to-june-2025/>

<sup>149</sup> Interview with the Data and Digital team, 9 December 2025

<sup>150</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-3-data-and-digital-commitment/pages/progress-to-june-2025/>

<sup>151</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-3-data-and-digital-commitment/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>

<sup>152</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-3-data-and-digital-commitment/pages/progress-to-june-2025/>

	<p>10 more data sources to Find.Data.Gov.Scot.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver an improved user feedback channel and run workshops with data producers and consumers to identify missing areas, address data quality issues and promote use.</li> <li>• Investigate whether Find.Data.Gov.Scot can be linked to the UK Data Marketplace Government Data Catalogue.</li> </ul>		<p>owners and 55 hosts.<sup>153</sup> By the end of the action plan, the platform identified more than 25,000 datasets.<sup>154</sup> The first meeting of dataset owners was held in April focused on metadata quality, findability and usability.<sup>155</sup></p> <p>With the platform development complete, a contract is in place focusing on automatically detecting and extracting metadata from additional sources to extend its coverage, resolving issues with duplicate data sources, and improving the quality and relevance of search results.<sup>156</sup></p> <p>Find.Data.Gov.Scot now includes built-in feedback mechanisms including a dataset-level user feedback section and data provider or topic insight sections providing an aggregated assessment of data quality across collections.</p> <p>The government began early discussions with the UK Government to understand the relationship between Find.Data.Gov.Scot, the UK Government's Data Marketplace and plans for a National Data Library.<sup>157</sup> These discussions are ongoing.<sup>158</sup></p>
<p><b>Set up the Data Transformation Framework (DTF)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch the data maturity network for cohort alumni on KHub, to provide post-project support and networking, (complete and test by summer 2024).</li> <li>• Start to develop resources for data ethics, innovation and architecture and provide</li> </ul>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>52 organizations (half of local authorities) were trained on the Data Transformation Framework. Participants reported increased confidence and knowledge to act and more investment in data (with 93% having a data improvement programme in place).<sup>159</sup></p> <p>The Data Maturity Network (which was launched for alumni of the data</p>

<sup>153</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-3-data-and-digital-commitment/pages/progress-to-june-2024/>

<sup>154</sup> Email communication with Data and Digital team, 22 January 2026

<sup>155</sup>

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/WhctKLbvMPRqQmrlQmNvcTpgMSKmdzhfLGSxdPsSJRxMmRkVjpJsqZIRZrVCBD CNHWbmncQ>

<sup>156</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-3-data-and-digital-commitment/pages/progress-to-june-2025/>

<sup>157</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-3-data-and-digital-commitment/pages/progress-to-december-2024/>

<sup>158</sup> Email communication with Data and Digital team, 22 January 2026

<sup>159</sup> Interview with the Data and Digital team, 9 December 2025

	<p>strategic guidance on the four foundations to data improvement that align to these pathways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and launch self-supporting data maturity guidance.</li> <li>• Complete cohorts 3 and 4 of the Data Maturity Programme by June 2024, launch cohort 5 in September 2024.</li> </ul>		<p>maturity programme) continues to provide peer support and a space for ongoing data improvement conversations. Topics are selected by the group with data culture covered in sessions with guest blogs.<sup>160</sup></p> <p>Guidance is developed across the eight pillars of the data ecosystem on an ongoing basis, with updates reflecting changing knowledge of needs and technological advancements.<sup>161</sup> An <a href="#">interactive programme summary for managers</a> was added to the information session details to raise awareness of the benefits of the programme.<sup>162</sup></p> <p>The government conducted an evaluation of the Data Maturity Programme. including an in-depth review of cohorts 3 and 4, using a combination of an evaluation questionnaire and structured conversations with participants.<sup>163</sup></p>
<p><b>Review the front end of our official statistics open data publishing platform</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiate and run a discovery to gain a better understanding of the current service.</li> <li>• Finish / complete discovery and produce a report which advises on options for next steps.</li> <li>• Based on evidence and recommendations from the discovery, either move to next steps in improving the service in an alpha phase; or make small / limited changes to the service.</li> </ul>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>In 2024, the government ran a discovery project to review Scotland’s Official Statistics open data platform, <a href="#">statistics.gov.scot</a>, publishing a <a href="#">full report on the programme of user research</a>.<sup>164</sup> The data team built four data portal prototypes and data publishing tools and conducted research on these prototypes, involving two rounds of one-on-one usability testing sessions. The <a href="#">findings and recommendations</a> on the prototypes were published in December 2025.</p> <p>The government started the procurement for the new service in 2025. The updated service is</p>

<sup>160</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-3-data-and-digital-commitment/pages/progress-to-june-2025/>

<sup>161</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-3-data-and-digital-commitment/pages/progress-to-june-2025/>

<sup>162</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-3-data-and-digital-commitment/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>

<sup>163</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-3-data-and-digital-commitment/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>

<sup>164</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-3-data-and-digital-commitment/pages/progress-to-march-2025/>

			<p>expected be a refresh of stats.gov.scot, while also bringing in spatialdata.gov.scot and remotesensinfdata.gov.scot. This will involve 3 phases: (1) refresh of stats.gov.scot, (2) merging in the other two sites and (3) creating more insights on the refreshed consolidated open data portal.<sup>165</sup></p>
<p><b>Increase the amount of Scottish public sector open data being published</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish the independent report outlining a more strategic approach to supporting open data in Scotland.</li> <li>• Initiate a project plan and a clear vision for purpose-driven impactful open government data in Scotland.</li> <li>• Set up an open data external reference group to provide accountability to the open government data commitment and to foster a long-term collaborative approach to open data.</li> <li>• Build on the series of open data events held with the Better Data Community of Practice in March 2024 with a series on data standards in May 2024 and encourage knowledge sharing about common challenges.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Substantial completion</b></p>	<p>An <a href="#">independent report</a> on open data was published in August 2024. The government developed a slide pack, titled “Scotland’s Open Data Policy: what we’re doing and what’s next. The data team implemented a series of activities to test out thinking from the recommendations of the report in the context of the <a href="#">draft vision for public sector data</a>.<sup>166</sup></p> <p>The government worked with NatureScot to develop a valuation methodology for open datasets and reached out to the Better Data Community to identify candidate datasets across Scotland’s public sector. Throughout 2025, the Better Data Community delivered a programme of themed events to strengthen Scotland’s data capability (including 7 events under the theme of Responsible and Inclusive Data Practices).<sup>167</sup> The Better Data Community Conference was held in November 2025 as part of the Scotland’s Digital Academy’s Think Data and AI Month.<sup>168</sup> The government also participated in the <a href="#">UK’s Open Data Camp</a>, which was held in Scotland for the first time since 2018. By the end of the action plan, follow-up activity was underway on a shared vision for open data and plans to appoint a civil society representative to help lead and shape this group.<sup>169</sup></p>

<sup>165</sup> Interview with the Data and Digital team, 9 December 2025

<sup>166</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-3-data-and-digital-commitment/pages/progress-to-december-2024/>

<sup>167</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-3-data-and-digital-commitment/pages/progress-to-june-2025/>

<sup>168</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-3-data-and-digital-commitment/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>

<sup>169</sup> Email communication with Data and Digital team, 22 January 2026

<b>Develop a public register of AI algorithms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin a phased approach to the public sector wide roll out of the Scottish AI Register.</li> <li>• Initial stage to produce SG specific guidance and support materials for the creation of AI.</li> <li>• Identify existing use cases and new SG AI projects to be added.</li> <li>• Ensure the adequate recording of all corporate AI use.</li> <li>• Work with procurement colleagues to build guidance into purchasing processes.</li> <li>• Continue promotion of the product through the Scottish AI taskforce to help future roll out.</li> </ul>	<b>Substantial completion</b>	<p>The <a href="#">Scottish AI Register</a> was launched and work was underway to identify use cases from across the public sector by the end of the action plan. Delivery work was focused on developing the supporting governance policy and risk management tool, to ensure staff have the strong guidance and support when delivering AI solutions. This was expected to facilitate the roll out of the Register across more areas of the public sector beyond the current action plan.<sup>170</sup></p>
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#### Commitment 4: Climate Change

Actions/ objectives	Key milestones/activities 2024-2025	Final status	Summary of final status
<b>Core group development and activity from autumn 2021 to spring 2022</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No new milestones</li> </ul>	<b>Completed</b>	<p>All activities were completed by 2023</p>
<b>Running and management of network spring 2022 to autumn 2025</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop opportunities for CPEN members to contribute to the government's wider climate change policy development</li> <li>• Develop opportunities for CPEN members to contribute to Just Transition Plans</li> <li>• Develop opportunities for CPEN members to</li> </ul>	<b>Substantial completion</b>	<p>Policy teams within government engaged with CPEN members on impact assessments. A post was put on CPEN to give feedback on how member contributions are used.<sup>171</sup></p> <p>The Circular Economy team used the network to consult members of the Disposable Cups Levy.<sup>172</sup></p> <p>There were 6 opportunities for CPEN members to advise on JTPs through engagement on JTP Discussion Papers. An engagement session was</p>

<sup>170</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-3-data-and-digital-commitment/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>

<sup>171</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-4-climate-change/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>

<sup>172</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-4-climate-change/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>

	contribute to the Climate Change Plan (CCP).		<p>held with members on 24 September 2024. Members offered feedback on Just Transition Unit engagement plans, including consultation questions. An information session for CPEN members was held on the Land Use and Agriculture JTP and Fourth Land Use Strategy consultations. There was also a Transport Just Transition Plan engagement session. More than 10 stakeholders advised on each opportunity, although it has not been determined how many other network members advised on each opportunity.<sup>173</sup></p> <p>The government announced a delay to the draft CCP publication in November 2023. The government is expected to resume stakeholder engagement on the CCP in due course.<sup>174</sup></p>
<b>Overall management and co-ordination of the network</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver six monthly network meetings (with Participation from at least 50% of the network membership)</li> <li>• Ensure a robust network (representativeness and positive satisfaction).</li> </ul>	Limited completion	<p>Two network meetings were delivered in February and December 2024. The purpose of the first members meeting was to re-affirm Scottish Government commitment to CPEN and discuss how members can make the best use of CPEN. No meetings were held in 2025 to allow for internal discussions on the future of CPEN beyond the current Opemn Government Action Plan.<sup>175</sup></p> <p>Current membership has a wide reach, covering both climate and non-climate organisations, and different geographies and demographics of Scotland. 27 members attended the members meeting. A members' survey was also circulated after the meeting, however there was no engagement with this.<sup>176</sup></p>

<sup>173</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-4-climate-change/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>

<sup>174</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-4-climate-change/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>

<sup>175</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-4-climate-change/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>

<sup>176</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-4-climate-change/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>

## Commitment 5: Participation

Actions/ objectives	Key milestones/activities 2024-2025	Final status	Summary of final status
<p><b>Participation Handbook - developing knowledge and skills across SG</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of participation handbook training sessions across Scottish Government</li> <li>• Delivery of in-depth participation training to Scottish Government social researchers (2024-2025)</li> <li>• Monitoring and evaluation of participation work</li> <li>• Development of a Scottish Government-wide procurement framework for participation work</li> </ul>	<p>Limited completion</p>	<p>The government revised its approach on the proposed use of a Framework Agreement for participation, instead introducing a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS).<sup>177</sup> An Equality Impact Assessment for the DPS was <a href="#">published on 22 August 2025</a>. The Invitation to Tender (ITT) for the DPS is expected to be launched in early 2026.<sup>178</sup> The introduction of the DPS has meant that the proposed training on the participation handbook was not delivered as planned. Instead, the government plans to design training around the DPS once in place.<sup>179</sup></p> <p>Work on addressing intersectional analysis as part of a general training offer did not take place due to limited staff capacity.<sup>180</sup> Two engagement events took place in August and September to start this process of gathering feedback on the draft curriculum and learning materials developed.<sup>181</sup></p> <p>The Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) delivered an initial participation training session with Social Researchers in spring 2024. In early 2025, further in-depth training on co-production and Community-Led Action Research was delivered.<sup>182</sup></p> <p>There was limited progress on the evaluation of participation work. A review of existing approaches to evaluating the impact of participation work took place via a Scottish</p>

<sup>177</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-participation-commitment-milestone-progress/pages/milestones-2024-to-2025/>

<sup>178</sup> Email communication Scottish Government Open Government team, 16 December 2025

<sup>179</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-commitment-4-climate-change/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>

<sup>180</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-participation-commitment-milestone-progress/pages/milestones-2024-to-2025/>

<sup>181</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-participation-commitment-milestone-progress/pages/milestones-2024-to-2025/>

<sup>182</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-participation-commitment-milestone-progress/pages/milestones-2024-to-2025/>

			Graduate School of Social Science PhD internship, the results of which were <a href="#">published in February 2025</a> . A subsequent research intern also began an analysis of evidence on levels of trust in government in anticipation of the next action plan. <sup>183</sup>
<b>Participation Handbook: embedding equalities and an inclusive approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embedding equalities and an inclusive approach</li> <li>• Guidance for paying participant expenses and compensating for participant time (now under “Developing knowledge and skills”)</li> </ul>	Limited completion	<p>A new iteration of the <a href="#">Participation Handbook</a> was published in March 2024, better reflecting practical guidance around equalities and inclusive approaches. Updates were drawn from a final report issued by <a href="#">Deciding Matters</a> and following input and editing by SCDC.<sup>184</sup> However, work on aligning participation and human rights approaches more broadly did not take place due to limited staff capacity. The government proposes that key aspects of this work are integrated into the Public Participation DPS (see previous milestone).<sup>185</sup></p> <p>The participant expenses guidance was developed and <a href="#">published on the Scottish Government website</a>.</p>
<b>Institutionalising Participation and Deliberative Democracy (IPDD) working group - reporting and beginning processes of change to make participation routine and effective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beginning processes of change to make participation routine and effective</li> </ul>	Limited completion	<p>The <a href="#">IPDD working group report</a> was published in March 2022 and a response was issued by Scottish Government the same month. While Scottish Government agreed in principle to most of the recommendations, in practice, much of the work to deliver these remains unfunded and as a result has not progressed<sup>186</sup>. The implementation of IPDD recommendations was delayed by budget challenges, specifically around the recruitment of staff for a Participation Unit which would be responsible for delivering this work.<sup>187</sup> Plans for future activities associated</p>

<sup>183</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-participation-commitment/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>

<sup>184</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-participation-commitment/pages/progress-to-june-2024/>

<sup>185</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-participation-commitment-milestone-progress/pages/developing-a-participation-handbook/>

<sup>186</sup> Interview with the open government team, Scottish Government, 8 May 2024; Interview with two Civil Society Steering group members, 14 January 2025

<sup>187</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-participation-commitment-milestone-progress/pages/participative-democracy/>

			with this work were still undefined at the end of the action plan.
<b>Embedding Open Government principles in the planning, conduct and outputs of annual Citizens' Assemblies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No new milestones</li> </ul>	<b>Not started</b>	Due to ongoing budget constraints, Citizens' Assemblies were postponed. The government has stated it remains committed to this ambition with the focus to be on progressing foundational actions recommended by the IPDD working group. <sup>188</sup>
<b>Developing an active and inclusive Open Government Network for Participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diversify and increase capacity of the Open Government Civil Society Network</li> </ul>	<b>Limited completion</b>	<p>There was limited progress on this milestone due to capacity gaps in both government and civil society.</p> <p>External communications and engagement with civil focused on research, review, and reach in order to build a resilient civil society network. Open Government and Civil Society representatives met monthly with a call out for any notes of interest for further civil society actors wanting to participate. The government also launched its '<a href="#">Trust and transparency in Scotland</a>' community bulletin aimed at a wide range of leaders, academics, practitioners, and officials.<sup>189</sup></p>
<b>Review of consultations - spend, approach, monitoring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update internal guidance (Saltire)</li> <li>Launch a new digital engagement service offer</li> <li>Analysis of evaluation data</li> <li>Launch a new digital engagement hub</li> </ul>	<b>Substantial completion</b>	<p>Internal consultation guidance was reviewed iteratively over the action plan period. Digital engagement guidance materials were updated for officials needing consultation support without one-to-one support. A new place-based consultation format was launched in 2024.<sup>190</sup></p> <p>The government launched a <a href="#">CivTech Challenge</a> to explore the development of a new digital engagement tool for government. (See Commitment 2 for further details)</p> <p>Analysis of evaluation data was completed in late summer 2023. Publication and promotion of the report were put on hold due to changes in staffing. The report is</p>

<sup>188</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-participation-commitment-milestone-progress/pages/participative-democracy/>

<sup>189</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-participation-commitment/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>

<sup>190</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-participation-commitment-milestone-progress/pages/consultations-review/>

			<p>expected to be published in 2026.<sup>191</sup> Nevertheless, an improvement action plan was developed based on 15 recommendations identified during the evaluation process.<sup>192</sup></p> <p>The development of a digital engagement hub was delayed due to challenges identified in the discovery phase, requiring longer term work on website development and organisational culture.<sup>193</sup> Nevertheless, improvements to the Scottish Government website were launched allowing users to see when a consultation is closing and to more easily access the online consultation hub.<sup>194</sup></p>
<p><b>Monitoring the completion of local authorities delivery of 1% of budgets through participatory budgeting (PB)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring the completion of local authorities delivery of 1% of budgets through participatory budgeting (PB) and supporting local authorities to develop new ways to measure the success of PB.</li> </ul>	Completed	<p>In July 2023 the government announced that local authorities had reached the milestone of the 1% mainstream PB target for the first time in the financial year 2021 to 2022. During the most recent reporting year (2023/24) local authorities once again met the 1% target with 1.5% of local authority budgets spent on participatory processes.<sup>195</sup> The government also worked with COSLA to further develop the 1% target to take into account other forms of success in PB, such as best practice.<sup>196</sup></p>
<p><b>Implementation of the National Participatory Budgeting Strategic Group's framework for the future of participatory budgeting and embedding open</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the National Participatory Budgeting Strategic Group (NPBSG) as they provide the strategic direction for participatory budgeting (PB) across Scotland.</li> </ul>	Limited completion	<p>In 2023, the government held a discussion into the possible expansion of the remit of the NPBSG to have oversight of the wider participatory democracy agenda in Scotland, including PB. A workshop was held on the 14 June 2024 to discuss what the newly formed group's remit and reporting instructions would include. However,</p>

<sup>191</sup> Email communication Scottish Government Open Government team, 16 December 2025

<sup>192</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-participation-commitment-milestone-progress/pages/consultations-review/>

<sup>193</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-participation-commitment-milestone-progress/pages/consultations-review/>

<sup>194</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-participation-commitment/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>

<sup>195</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-participation-commitment/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>

<sup>196</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-participation-commitment/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>

government principles			the work was paused due to resource and capacity constraints. <sup>197</sup> The group's <a href="#">annual report</a> was published on 17 June 2024. At the end of the action plan, there were no further meetings scheduled for the group. <sup>198</sup>
Embedding Open Government principles in Just Transition participatory budgets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embed Open Government principles in Green Participatory Budgeting</li> </ul>	Completed	As part of the Just Transition fund, the government engaged with young people in the Northeast of Scotland following COP 26 (2021), setting aside funds for local youth PB projects. <sup>199</sup> In 2024/25 over 18,000 people voted to distribute £1 million capital funding to 47 successful projects. A further £1 million capital and £207,436 resource was secured for year 4, which launched in August 2025. <sup>200</sup>
Embedding Open Government principles in the Community Empowerment Act parliamentary review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of Section 10 of the Community Empowerment Act</li> </ul>	Limited completion	A review of parts of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 resulted in three reports, published in March 2025. An update on all the other parts of the Act, including Section 10, are included in the <a href="#">Findings Report</a> which notes that: <i>"Part 10 Participation in Public Decision Making has not been implemented in its entirety. [...] Any future focus on Part 10 will take account of the IPDD work and the Local Governance Review's Democracy Matters approach to supporting greater community decision making."</i>
Embedding Open Government principles in the National Performance Framework (NPF) refresh / Using best practice approaches to support high quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of the National Performance Framework and National Outcomes</li> </ul>	Limited completion	Following a Parliamentary inquiry into the statutory review of the National Outcomes, the government <a href="#">wrote to the Finance and Public Affairs Committee</a> to advise that it would begin reform the National Performance Framework (NPF) in 2025 through a collaborative and participative approach. The NPF Reform Advisory Group (RAG) was reconvened in 2025 to support this

<sup>197</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-participation-commitment-milestone-progress/pages/participatory-budgeting/>

<sup>198</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-participation-commitment/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>

<sup>199</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-participation-commitment-milestone-progress/pages/participatory-budgeting/>

<sup>200</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-participation-commitment/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>

engagement and participation, while undertaking work to review the National Outcomes			reform and met in February and July 2025. <sup>201</sup> The National Outcomes and Indicators will not be updated until the reform project has concluded, beyond the timeframe of this action plan. <sup>202</sup>
Embedding participation as a core skill in a centre of expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embedding participation as a core skill in a centre of expertise.</li> </ul>	Not started	Work to embed participation as a core skill in a centre of expertise has been delayed indefinitely due to resource constraints <sup>203</sup> .
Improving children and young people's participation in decision-making and policy design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the implementation of the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024</li> <li>Children and Young Persons participation framework</li> <li>Young persons participation toolkit</li> <li>Support the Children and Young Peoples annual meetings with the Cabinet and the Executive Team</li> </ul>	Completed	<p>Support for the implementation of the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 took the form of revised Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments (CRWIA). The government also supported public authorities to understand and fulfil their UNCRC duties in the design and delivery of services.<sup>204</sup></p> <p>The Children and Young Persons participation framework was made available to Scottish Government staff in January 2024. The government developed a training page on its internal professional learning platform, Pathways, with over 100 officials attending the training and information sessions.<sup>205</sup></p> <p>The Scottish Youth Parliament delivered their <a href="#">Right Way</a> (toolkit) training to all Director General's as part of the 2023 Executive Team (ET) Takeover. At each phase of this model, feedback loops are built in to ensure that children and young people are aware of how their voice is being listened to and acted upon. Children and young people met with the ET in June 2024 and the Cabinet in November 2024. The 2025 <a href="#">ET Takeover</a> was held on 10th June. The annual Cabinet meeting</p>

<sup>201</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-participation-commitment/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>

<sup>202</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-participation-commitment-milestone-progress/pages/national-performance-framework/>

<sup>203</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-participation-commitment/pages/progress-to-december-2023/>

<sup>204</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-participation-commitment-milestone-progress/pages/children-and-young-people/>

<sup>205</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-participation-commitment/pages/progress-to-june-2024/>

			with children and young people was held on 18th November 2025. <sup>206</sup>
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<sup>206</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025-participation-commitment/pages/progress-to-september-2025/>