

## National Performance Framework – Inquiry into proposed National Outcomes

### Purpose

1. The Committee is invited to take evidence from the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Gaelic, Kate Forbes, and the following Scottish Government officials as part of the joint Committee National Performance Framework: Inquiry into proposed National Outcomes:
  - Keith McDonald, Unit Head, Strategy Division
  - Katie Allison, Analytical Unit Head, Central Analysis Division
2. This evidence session follows on from evidence provided:
  - at the Committee meeting on 1 October<sup>1</sup> when evidence was provided by the Scottish Women’s Budget Group, Volunteer Scotland, Health and Social Care Alliance (The ALLIANCE), Stirling Council, and Obesity Action Scotland.
  - at the Committee [meeting on 17 September 2024](#) when evidence was provided by Carnegie UK, Dr Max French from Northumbria University, Scottish Human Rights Commission and Wellbeing Economy Alliance Scotland.

### Background

3. The Scottish Government is required, under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 (‘the Act’) to consult on the National Outcomes, which set out the aims of the National Performance Framework (NPF), every 5 years. Alongside the proposed National Outcomes, the Scottish Government is required to publish a document setting out further details of the review, including information on its consultation and the responses received, as well as how the proposed National Outcomes have taken account of the views gathered.
4. The Scottish Government undertook a review of the National Outcomes in 2023, and, on 1 May 2024, laid its [proposed National Outcomes](#) in Parliament for formal consideration in a document entitled *Consultation with Parliament in connection with the Review of National Outcomes* (hereafter referred to as the “Review Document”). Those National Outcomes are set out in **Annexe A**.

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<sup>1</sup> The [Official Report of this meeting](#) is expected to be published by 6 pm on Friday 4 October.

5. The changes proposed to the National Outcomes in the Review Document are as follows:
  - **New Outcomes:** Care, Climate Action, Housing.
  - **Amended Outcomes:** Children and Young People, Communities, Wellbeing Economy and Fair Work, Education and Learning, Environment, Equality and Human Rights, Health, International, Reduce Poverty.
  - **Unchanged Outcome:** Culture.
  - **Amended extended definitions** (see Annexe 4 of the Review document): All the National Outcomes have proposed changes to their extended definitions, informed by the consultation evidence. The extended definitions provide greater detail of what is covered by each National Outcome.
6. On 19 June 2024, the Scottish Government published its impact assessments on how the proposed National Outcomes will impact on [equalities](#), [island communities](#), [child rights](#) and [fairer Scotland](#).
7. As confirmed by the then Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Gaelic's [letter of 17 May 2024](#), a longer period for statutory consultation of Parliament is proposed (than the 40 days in the Act). As such that consultation should be concluded by 29 November 2024 with the Parliamentary debate scheduled for the week beginning 25 November 2024.
8. In its Review document, the Scottish Government are proposing changes to the purpose of NPF and most of the National Outcomes. It explains that these changes are a “necessary course correction rather than another complete overhaul” as was seen following the last statutory review in 2018. The 2018 Review saw a “significant repositioning” of the NPF including making it a framework for the whole of Scotland and adding the values section and simplifying the overall format and language.
9. The Review Document explains that within the wider context of the Verity House agreement<sup>2</sup> “changes to the NPF have only been recommended where there is strong evidence that this is necessary to ensure the NPF remains ambitious and forward looking for the coming five years, as it did in 2018.”
10. The Scottish Government explains that National Indicators, which are used to measure progress towards the National Outcomes, will be revised to reflect the final agreed National Outcomes. An Implementation Plan, which will be informed by the review, is expected to be published by the Scottish Government alongside its final agreed National Outcomes. The timetable for publishing the agreed National Outcomes (following Parliamentary consultation), the associated Implementation Plan and the National Indicators has yet to be confirmed.

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<sup>2</sup> In June 2023 the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and the Scottish Government agreed a new Partnership Agreement setting out a collective vision for a more collaborative approach to delivering on shared priorities – it is referred to as the Verity House agreement.

## Committee Scrutiny approach

11. The Finance and Public Administration (FPA) Committee is the lead committee for the Scottish Parliament's scrutiny of the proposed National Outcomes. As the National Outcomes fall within the remits of a number of committees, Committee Conveners agreed a joint approach to scrutiny at the Conveners Group meeting on 26 April 2023.
12. The FPA Committee wrote to all Conveners on [6 March 2024](#) and again on [3 May 2024](#) setting out the scrutiny approach to be undertaken by Committees. As set out in the letters, following the proposed National Outcomes being laid, the FPA Committee co-ordinated a joint call for views and news release. The joint call for views on the proposed National Outcomes ran from 13 May 2024 to 28 June 2024. The consultation received 72 submissions which are available to view on [Citizen Space](#). The call for views questions are attached at **Annexe B** and SPICe has provided [an analysis of the responses received](#).
13. Whilst it will be for each Committee<sup>3</sup> to consider their approach to scrutiny of issues raised in submissions that relate to their remit, the Finance and Public Administration Committee has agreed that it will focus more on the cross-cutting elements of the proposed National Outcomes and the review.
14. This approach also builds on themes arising from the Committee's previous inquiry entitled: [National Performance Framework: Ambitions into Action](#), with the Committee publishing its [report on 3 October 2022](#) (hereafter referred to as the "2022 NPF report"). Where particularly relevant, the findings from that inquiry and [the subsequent response](#) to the Committee's report from then Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery, John Swinney MSP, (hereafter referred to as the 'then DFM') are referenced in this paper.
15. In its Programme for Government for 2021/22 the Scottish Government confirmed that it would further develop the use of the NPF through the then upcoming review of National Outcomes and through consultation on a Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Bill. In response to the Committee's 2022 NPF report the then DFM explained that "The proposed Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Bill will be informed by the findings of this report as well as the findings of the upcoming Review of National Outcomes." The Bill is not identified in the First Minister's [year four priorities for the legislative programme 2025-26](#) published on 4 September 2024. In December 2022, Sarah Boyack MSP lodged a [proposal for a Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Bill](#) which following consultation has now secured the right to be introduced as a Bill. As part of that consultation the potential for the proposed bill to improve the efficacy of the NPF as the distinct overarching framework for achieving National Outcomes was recognised by respondents.

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<sup>3</sup> On 17 September the [Education Children and Young People Committee wrote](#) setting out its approach and views.

16. In addition, as the SPICe [briefing on the Programme for Government \(PfG\) 2025-26](#) notes “The PfG makes no reference to the National Performance Framework (NPF) or how the measures set out under each of the four priorities will contribute to the National Outcomes which underpin the NPF.”

## The National Performance Framework (NPF) and its purpose

17. The Review document explains that the NPF is Scotland’s Wellbeing Framework “setting out a vision of societal wellbeing through the National Outcomes and charting progress towards this through a range of social environmental and economic indicators.”

18. In its 2022 NPF Report the Committee reflected upon the evidence it heard about the title of ‘the NPF’ and whether it adequately reflected the way in which it is intended to operate. The Committee welcomed the then DFM’s commitment to reflect on the terminology within the NPF and its title, particularly if, as a consequence of that review the NPF moves further away from being a ‘Performance Framework.’

19. In its Review document, the Scottish Government reports that amongst the main themes arising from the consultation responses it received were “change the purpose wording” and “change the name of the NPF”. Evidence it received proposed changing the name of the NPF to ‘Scotland’s Wellbeing Framework’ in order to improve clarity about the role and purpose of the framework. There was, however, also concern that changing the name of the NPF could impact on the “framework’s brand” as built up since 2007. Another concern was whether removing ‘performance’ could be perceived as altering the focus of the framework. The Review document confirms that the Scottish Government does not propose to change of title of ‘the NPF’.

20. The Scottish Government does, however, propose to change the purpose of the NPF (set out below) based on the consultation and engagement it undertook.

**Current Purpose:** To focus on creating a more successful country with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish through increased wellbeing, and sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

**Proposed Purpose:** To improve the wellbeing of people living in Scotland now and in the future.

21. The joint Committee consultation invited comments on the changed purpose of the NPF and, whilst the extensive coverage of the NPF on key areas impacting wellbeing was largely appreciated, there were concerns regarding the omission of explicit references to economic growth. Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce state that they “believe removing the reference to a ‘successful country’ removes an

element of the ambition that the original purpose contained.” Removing the reference to the economy risks, they suggest, “losing the focus on something that is a critical enabler of people’s wellbeing.” Others also suggested that the scope of the NPF should extend beyond Scotland to reflect a global outlook.

22. The need for consistency across the National Outcomes was frequently highlighted in responses to the joint Committee consultation and, in particular, how effectively the National Outcomes recognise the interconnected nature of various sectors and Outcomes. The calls for better integration of the cultural sector into National Outcomes, is one such example, where respondents highlighted its contribution to wellbeing, community development and participation and economic transformation. As Aberdeen City Council noted “joined-up policy making requires an understanding of the interlinkages and co-dependencies between the Outcomes and there is a need for a holistic view.”

23. At the meeting on 17 September the Committee heard that:

- a. The NPF has evolved to be more in line with international comparators of what is called a wellbeing framework;
- b. The title of the NPF is misleading and that, if wellbeing is the focus, then it should be in the title rather than the focus on performance measurement.
- c. The name is important but it is also key that it is used and implemented;
- d. The NPF had more prominence when the NPF was first established in 2007 and that its prominence had recently disappeared. The NPF has not been taken seriously as a fundamental principle and the National Outcomes are not paid due attention. It has a lack of prominence across Government and public services where accountability is focussed on expenditure and not on delivery of the cross-cutting Outcomes as well;
- e. The 13 Outcomes could be too many (compared with, for example: seven wellbeing goals in Wales). This risks each Government department focussing on those 1-2 most relevant to them rather than collaboration across the Outcomes.

24. At the meeting on 1 October the Committee heard:

- a. That too many Outcomes can dilute the focus on each Outcome whilst others disagreed, suggesting that having more Outcomes provides greater clarity over what specifically needs to be addressed;
- b. There was some support for removal of economic growth from the purpose since:
  - i. economic growth doesn’t necessarily translate to equitable income distribution and reducing poverty,
  - ii. how economic growth is achieved can potentially have a negative impact elsewhere such as on the environment and
  - iii. in calculating growth, unpaid work is not taken into account;

- c. There is a potential mismatch between the move towards a 'wellbeing economy' in the NPF when compared with other areas of Government where there appears to have been a move towards a more traditional approach to 'economic growth', such as the recent changes in the focus of Ministerial portfolios. It was argued that both the Government's priorities and the NPF should have the same focus.
- d. Wellbeing should be the focus for all policies – but there could be a greater emphasis on collective responsibility for a shared vision for Scotland;
- e. If this is the Government's framework, then it should at least be linked to within strategy documents– the NPF and National Outcomes do not necessarily need to be extensively detailed in discussions, but the Government does need to clearly demonstrate its consideration of them;
- f. Wellbeing can be used as a prism to assess what impact policies (and spend) have on the National Outcomes. There are also costs to adopting policies that unintentionally act against wellbeing.

## Cross-cutting issues

25. Responses to the joint call for views identified some cross-cutting themes that needed to be better integrated across all proposed National Outcomes. Those themes included Equalities and Human Rights. It was considered that addressing these issues not only requires a comprehensive and integrated approach to policy design and implementation but that incorporating them across the proposed National Outcomes could result in more effectively achieving the NPF goals of promoting inclusive growth and reducing inequalities.
26. In its Equality Impact Assessment, the Scottish Government noted the evidence it received calling for a more gendered NPF. In response they propose to mainstream gender more effectively across the National Outcomes. They also respond to concerns regarding the lack of disaggregated data, commenting that due to how the NPF data is collected and presented "it is currently not possible to take an intersectional approach." Work is however underway to "pursue a route to providing intersectional information on the National Indicators."
27. At the meeting on 17 September the Committee heard that human rights and equality need to be both included within the National Outcomes and as a standalone National Outcome. This was because understanding of human rights and equality is not yet sufficient for them to be fully mainstreamed into the Outcomes.
28. At the meeting on 1 October, the Equality and Human Rights Outcome was welcomed, however, some witnesses questioned whether it is embedded within the proposed National Outcomes sufficiently. Without knowing what the indicators are that will measure progress against this Outcome, it was suggested that it is too early to know if it will have more 'teeth' and include wider rights such as social

or cultural rights (compared with the narrow focus of the current indicators on political rights).

## UN Sustainable Development Goals

29. The Review document explains that the NPF is a framework “to localise the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Progress towards the National Outcomes is a proxy for progress towards the SDGs given the close alignment between the two.”
30. In its Review document the Scottish Government report that they had heard from stakeholders that alignment with the United Nations (UN) SDGs could be improved. The Scottish Government then sets out the ways it has addressed this including a new Climate Actions Outcome that mirrors the wording of SDG13 and more effective representation of equalities in some National Outcomes. In addition, consideration will also be given “during the development of National Indicators to the consultation evidence received that suggested how better to align the Indicators with the SDG indicator set.”<sup>4</sup>
31. Submissions to the joint Committee call for views commended the effort to incorporate SDG principles into the NPF but also called for improvements. SHRC consider that the proposed National Outcomes could align well with the UN SDGs but called for more explicit linking between each outcome and relevant SDG goal within that Outcome’s narrative (along with suitable targets and indicators) to enhance coherence and accountability.
32. At its meeting on 1 October the issues raised included:
- a. The UN SDGs are different to National Outcomes in some instances but some of these differences may be due to specific needs in Scotland (such as the need for more housing). A specific outcome of Gender inequality was called for by one witness to provide greater focus on this issue.
  - b. In some cases, the National Outcomes appeared less ambitious than the UN SDGs, for example, the UN SGD that aims to achieve ‘no poverty’ was compared with the National Outcome which seeks to ‘reduce poverty’. It was unclear whether this was because, as Scotland’s NPF, the National Outcomes were more realistic about what could be achieved within a devolved setting? – could it undermine the National Outcomes if they sought to ‘eradicate poverty’ when this would also require action by the UK Government?
  - c. It was suggested that the indicators used to measure progress with the National Outcomes are almost more important than aligning the Outcomes with the UN SDGs and, in that regard, there should be wider consultation

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<sup>4</sup> Paragraph 77, Review document

with stakeholders about what meaningful indicators should be used to measure and report progress.

## **Scottish Government's consultation on the proposed National Outcomes**

33. The Act sets out that the Scottish Government, as part of its review of National Outcomes, must lay in Parliament a report describing the consultation it has carried out, the representations it received and how they have been taken account of.
34. For this review the Scottish Government's consultation aimed to build on the 2018 review, primarily considering the National Outcomes, but also considering the purpose, vision, name and presentation of the NPF and its implementation and data. The consultation and engagement phase of the Scottish Government's Review consisted of four strands:
- a. Desk-based research (34 sources including from existing citizen engagement exercises, community action plans and undertaking the discovery phase for the Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Bill – focussing on the implementation gap).
  - b. Online consultation, (87 responses)
  - c. Call for evidence (125 responses) and
  - d. Expert Stakeholder workshops (to focus on specific areas e.g. homelessness, care and the implementation gap with 110 stakeholders attending 11 meetings).
35. The Scottish Government held an online consultation and call for evidence on the National Outcomes between 14 March to 12 June 2023. Further details, including the results, can be found in the thematic analysis [summary report](#) in Annexe 3 of the Review document.
36. Respondents to the joint Committee call for views had mixed views on the approach taken by the Scottish Government to its consultation process. Some respondents stated that the consultation process was thorough and inclusive, that a broad range of perspectives were considered, and that the proposed National Outcomes demonstrate that feedback from the consultation process has been considered and absorbed. Others highlighted concerns around the scope and meaningfulness of the Scottish Government's consultation process.
37. Whilst the Scottish Government's thematic gender review and its commissioned report from the Children's Parliament<sup>5</sup> are both welcomed, a number of respondents raised concerns surrounding the data available from the consultation exercise. The submission from the Children and Young People's Commissioner

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<sup>5</sup> This report reviewed the work of the Children's Parliament from 2018 to 2023 in the context of the NPF.

Scotland, however, states that this commissioned report is not “a substitute for direct participation of children in developing the National Outcomes”. She went on to suggest that given the importance of the Outcomes to policy making “children’s views should have been actively considered in the development of all Outcomes, not just those solely referring to them.” A number of respondents also highlighted the missed opportunity to connect the NPF and National Outcomes to a range of Scottish Government policies and plans, as well as local plans.

38. Several respondents, such as Engender, note the lack of disaggregation of the responses received to the Scottish Government’s consultation in the consultation document. They also query when the Scottish Government’s thematic gender review will be published.

39. At the meeting on 17 September witnesses highlighted:

- a. The Scottish Government’s consultation was disappointing and should have been more ambitious and in line with international best practice, rather than a repeat of the approach taken to the 2018 consultation. It was suggested that the legitimacy of the framework and, ultimately, the political power that it commands, is due in large part to the quality of the consultation.
- b. It appears that awareness of the NPF has diminished due in part to the lack of ambition in the consultation. One of the important principles of a wellbeing economy is the participatory element so that decisions are inclusive. Adopting that approach could have resulted in fewer, more inclusive, higher level National Outcomes achieved through discussion and participation. The digital divide means not everyone could have accessed the online consultation.
- c. Whilst the Scottish Government NPF team did the best they could with the consultation and the data they had, given their resources, “If the NPF is to be our vision for Scotland, everybody’s views have to be part of it.”
- d. If the consultation process is weak then essentially it is the Government setting the goals, and the National Outcomes will be seen as the Government’s priorities rather than everyone’s.

40. At its meeting on 1 October the Committee heard that if the NPF is a collective endeavour for the whole country then everyone needs to be involved in different ways (such as engagement with different sectors and communities) – and there did not appear to have been that investment with this review.

## **Joined Up Decision-making**

41. As the Review document states, the NPF has several functions including that “it provides a framework for collaboration and planning of policy and services across the whole spectrum of Scotland’s civic society, including public and private sectors, voluntary organisations, businesses and communities.” It explains that

decision-making is supported by reporting “systematically and objectively across a range of economic, social and environmental indicators.” This helps to understand publicly and transparently the progress being made towards realising the NPF vision and the data provided helps “us to understand the challenges in achieving our outcomes and helps us focus polices, services and resources on tackling those challenges”.

42. In its 2022 NPF Report the Committee reported its concern that a number of National Indicators still have no data, almost five years after the last review which “hampers the ability to fully track and scrutinise progress in those areas. We therefore recommend that the next iteration of the NPF includes a set of indicators...agreed, between Scottish Government, local government and relevant sector representatives, to best track progress in delivering the outcomes. We consider that these should not be left for development.”
43. As well as considering how the next iteration of National Indicators can better align with the indicators for UN SDGs, the Review document sets out<sup>6</sup> how the indicators will be developed as well as the quality and assurance analysis they will have to undergo. In addition, feedback will be sought from the NPF related Policy Advisory Group (PAG) and Expert Advisory Group (EAG), and the Scottish Government’s Executive team.
44. How the National Outcomes influence decision-making was a key focus of the Committee’s 2022 NPF report. As the Scottish Government acknowledged, its approach has been “more carrot than stick” when it comes to the use of the NPF to influence policy making and delivery. The Committee found that the NPF is not seen as explicitly or transparently driving financial decisions by the Government nor for holding organisations to account organisations for spending funding effectively. A core part of the Committee’s report recommendations was that there should be a ‘golden thread’ from the NPF through all other frameworks, strategies, and plans to delivery on the ground. The Committee added that “the current approach whereby the NPF is sometimes seen as “implicit” in policy development and delivery does not reflect the status or importance the Scottish Government, COSLA and others consider it should have.”
45. Responding, the Scottish Government recognised the challenges and committed to publish a set of resources alongside the next iteration of the NPF that will better explain and showcase how it can be used in policy development and delivery.
46. Many of the concerns in the Committee’s 2022 NPF report are also echoed in the submissions to the joint Committee call for views. Some, such as Audit Scotland, highlighted that “Currently, it is not clear how budgeted spending which is working towards shared wellbeing outcomes fits together”.

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<sup>6</sup> see paragraphs 79-81.

47. At the meeting on 17 September, the Committee heard how the drivers of decision making are too weak so “we can extrapolate from the fact that we are not seeing the national performance framework really driving alignment and activity in Scottish public bodies that the duty that exists at the moment to have regard to the national outcomes is not really worth the paper that it is written on.” The much stronger duty in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and its specified ways of working are seen to drive decision-making in relation to their well-being Outcomes.

48. On 1 October, witnesses highlighted that:

- a. Better alignment between the Scottish Budget and Outcomes is needed and when finances are constrained there is a greater need for better analysis of the Budget’s impact on Outcomes;
- b. Given the Programme for Government did not mention the NPF or National Outcomes, then this calls into question whether they are being used to meaningfully inform the decisions Government is taking; there can be great policies but if they do not connect to the National Outcomes it is unknown whether the Outcomes have influenced those policies;
- c. There is a role for elected representatives to hold Government to account for its use of National Outcomes in decision-making. The example was given of how the Volunteer Outcomes Framework (mapped to the National Outcomes) informed the Volunteering Action Plan which then led to organisational delivery and implementation. This shows how all public activity goes back to the National Outcomes and can provide a framework for scrutiny, accountability and implementation.
- d. Budgets underpin the delivery of Outcomes – there is a need therefore for strong indicators that relate to budgets to measure progress. The National Outcomes need to be better reflected in policy objectives and to also show how budgets are backing up those policies. Government should be able to show how spending decisions align with National Outcomes. It is also important to scrutinise after spending has happened, i.e., what has been the return on that investment?
- e. There is no hierarchy of National Outcomes so it was questioned whether they can be used to identify areas where spend can be reduced. Some suggested that the focus should be on prioritising spend that will deliver on National Outcomes. This has not always been obvious when looking at Government spending decisions. This is also why it is important to have an implementation plan tied to the National Outcomes to support prioritisation.
- f. The links between what Outcomes aim to achieve and the indicators used is essential in order to measure meaningful progress; some of the current indicators are opaque which makes it difficult to understand the challenges. There was a concern about lack of transparency over the development of indicators and the proposal that this was to be undertaken by the Scottish Government’s Chief Statistician. It was questioned whether this approach would risk the Government not only ‘marking its own

homework’ but also ‘setting the questions’, particularly if the indicators chosen reflect areas where the Government knows that good progress is being made. There was support for more robust consultation, including with sectoral interests, on what indicators would provide effective measures of progress towards achieving the National Outcomes.

## Implementation

49. In its 2022 NPF report the Committee made a number of recommendations aimed at making more sustained progress towards achieving the NPF vision and to ensure its ambitions are translated into action. Those recommendations included a more systematic approach to the implementation of the next iteration of the NPF, including consulting on that plan as part of the next review of the National Outcomes.
50. The then DFM agreed and, as part of its review of the National Outcomes, the Scottish Government sought views on how to improve implementation of the NPF. It received 874 consultation comments related to the ‘Implementation Gap’ which were focussed around five key themes of Policy, Delivery, Funding, Legislation and Accountability. The Review document set out that “analysis of the implementation gap of the National Outcomes noted several common barriers including policy coherence, a complex reporting landscape, difficulties embedding the NPF in practice as a driver of change, and dissatisfaction with current funding models.”
51. The Review document explains that in terms of developing the implementation plan, the Scottish Government is committed to working with a wide range of stakeholders throughout its development and that the plan will be published alongside the final agreed NPF (which follows on from the completion of Parliamentary consultation). It sets out<sup>7</sup> how the plan will be informed by evidence and developed in order to set out “a route for change”. The evidence received by the Scottish Government will feed into the plan and has been passed to the legislation team to continue work on the Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Bill.
52. Responses to the joint Committee call for views also highlighted the need for a robust implementation plan and accountability to ensure there are tangible improvements. This includes detailed action plans specifying the steps needed to achieve each outcome as well as metrics to monitor progress and evaluate success.

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<sup>7</sup> See paragraphs 82-84

53. At its meeting on 17 September, the Committee heard that:

- a. There has been no implementation strategy for the NPF in Scotland even though there are plenty of practical examples of how that can be achieved such as in Wales and Northern Ireland. There is also a role for stronger legislation to specify ways of working with the NPF to build capacity as well as a duty to use it;
- b. The NPF is needed in order to provide a shared long term national ambition, to tackle long term issues such as climate change, poverty and inequality and to ensure a focus on long-term Outcomes when resources are tight;
- c. There is a disconnect between the Budget, the NPF and the Programme for Government - those documents “need to talk to each other” to support effective investment in public services. Wellbeing budgeting is challenging to do but there is an opportunity to link all of those documents together and to regalanise a consistent approach to public service reform, with the NPF “as the headlining act”.
- d. Linking accountability to the NPF is a key part that is missing in its implementation. Previously the responsibility to deliver the National Outcomes was widened from the Scottish Government to include local authorities, public bodies, businesses and civil society. and this could have led to a dilution about who is responsible for delivery and is therefore accountable;
- e. One approach could be to have accountability for contributions towards delivery of cross cutting National Outcomes – this starts with the government setting out what is to be achieved, how and with what resources.
- f. The Outcomes and Indicators are two separate processes, “but they should really be part of the same discussion, because how you measure what is important is to measure what you treasure.”

54. At its meeting on 1 October, it was highlighted that—

- a. The current statutory requirement to ‘have regard to’ the National Outcomes needs to be strengthened to ensure that they are used in decision making;
- b. The NPF lacks a delivery mechanism, however, one option to achieve this could be through building Outcomes based accountability where there is a direct connection between the activity undertaken and the embedded strategic approach. Outcomes based accountability enables the identification of what actions can be used to deliver Outcomes and then what the cost is of those Outcomes;
- c. The NPF should reflect the local levers that Local Authorities can use to contribute towards wellbeing;
- d. One area for improvement with National Outcomes relates to the UN SDG regarding strengthening the means of implementation and co-operation,

which, in turn, helps when conflicts of interest arise. For example, tensions can arise in implementing National Outcomes and this is particularly accentuated at a local level. National Outcomes need to recognise that tension in their implementation.

- e. Whilst the National Outcomes are long term goals, an implementation plan with more focussed, clearer milestones could enable greater understanding for organisations and individuals. There is also a need for shorter term goals alongside the longer term National Outcomes in order to show where progress is being made.

Committee Clerking Team

October 2024

## The proposed new National Outcomes

<b>CARE</b>	We are cared for as we need throughout our lives and value all those providing care
<b>CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE</b>	We grow up loved, safe and respected and every single one of us can realise our full potential
<b>CLIMATE ACTION</b>	We live sustainably, achieve a just transition to net zero and build Scotland's resilience to climate change
<b>COMMUNITIES</b>	We live in communities that are connected, inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe
<b>CULTURE</b>	We are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely
<b>WELLBEING ECONOMY AND FAIR WORK</b>	We have a competitive, entrepreneurial economy that is fair, green and growing, with thriving businesses and industry and fair work for everyone
<b>EDUCATION AND LEARNING</b>	We are well educated, have access to high quality learning throughout our lives and are able to contribute to society
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>	We actively protect, restore, enhance and enjoy our natural environment
<b>EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS</b>	We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination
<b>HEALTH</b>	We are mentally and physically healthy and active
<b>HOUSING</b>	We live in safe, high-quality and affordable homes that meet our needs
<b>INTERNATIONAL</b>	We are connected, open, show leadership and make a positive contribution globally.
<b>REDUCE POVERTY</b>	We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally

## Joint Committee Call for views questions

*At present, the NPF purpose is “To focus on creating a more successful country with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish through increased wellbeing and sustainable and inclusive economic growth”. The Scottish Government proposes to update the NPF’s purpose to “To improve the wellbeing of people living in Scotland now and in the future”*

1. What are your views of this updated purpose for the National Performance Framework?
2. In your view, do the proposed National Outcomes match the purpose of the National Performance Framework (please explain your answer)?
3. What do you think of the changes being proposed?
4. Are there any policy priorities that should be reflected in the proposed National Outcomes but which, you consider, are not?
5. What are your views on the Scottish Government’s consultation on the proposed National Outcomes?

*In deciding on its proposed National Outcomes the Scottish Government must consider how the outcomes will reduce inequalities.*

6. How do you think the proposed National Outcomes will impact on inequality? *The United Nations (UN) has set a series of [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) that are part of an internationally agreed performance framework to be achieved by 2030. The Scottish Government says that the National Performance Framework is Scotland’s way to reflect the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals.*
7. Do you think the proposed National Outcomes align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (please explain your answer)?

*The Scottish Government says that through the National Outcomes, the NPF provides a framework for working together and planning of policy and services across the whole range of Scotland’s civic society, including public and private sectors, voluntary organisations, businesses, and communities.*

8. To what extent do the proposed National Outcomes support joined-up policy making in Scotland?

*The Scottish Government has committed work with wide range of others during the development of an implementation plan to ensure the success of the NPF across the Scottish Government, the wider public sector and beyond.*

9. What should the implementation plan contain to make sure that the National Outcomes are used in decision-making?