

Local Government and Communities Committee Debate: Consultation on the draft National Outcomes

Briefing to MSPs
24 May 2018 2.30pm

Motion: That the Parliament notes the findings and recommendations in the Local Government and Communities Committee's 7th report, 2018 (Session 5), Report on the Consultation on the Scottish Government's Draft National Outcomes (SP Paper 317), and the other committees' responses contained in the annex to the report.

Background

The Carnegie UK Trust works to improve the wellbeing of the people of the UK and Ireland. Since the establishment of the Carnegie Roundtable on Measuring what Matters in Scotland in 2010 we have actively been involved in advocating for wellbeing frameworks for public policy, in the UK and beyond.

We are members of the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework Roundtable to monitor and refresh the National Performance Framework; and alongside Oxfam Scotland, undertook engagement with the public – "What Sort of Scotland Do You Want to Live In?"

The role of the National Performance Framework

The Scottish Government broke new ground in 2007 when it sought to work towards, measure, and report on a holistic definition of social progress and introduced the National Performance Framework. Since then, the National Performance Framework has been widely seen as a global pioneer, for example by the OECD (Professor Stiglitz in his address to the OECD World, in 2012).

This status has been reinforced by the legislative status of the National Outcomes through The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, and the requirement for public and parliamentary consultation on the National Outcomes.

We welcome the draft National Performance Framework which now includes 11 new national outcomes on human rights; fair work; poverty; and culture; and a re-focusing of an outcome for children, with more emphasis on the children's own voice and perspective.

The inclusion of the values statement that we 'treat all our people with kindness, dignity and compassion', reflects what we heard from communities during our public engagement work about their desire to live in a fair, open and kind community and society. We think that including these values and the word 'wellbeing' within the purpose statement are important milestones. Together with outcomes being realigned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, they bring the National Performance Framework closer to a wellbeing framework for the people of Scotland.

Implementation

From our ongoing interest and engagement in the operationalisation of the National Performance Framework, we know there are opportunities for it to develop further. Here we note four key opportunities.

The NPF should be used more directly by the Scottish Parliament, and in particular during the budget setting process. The Report on the Consultation, and the Finance and Constitution Committee have highlighted that the new budgetary scrutiny process provides an opportunity for this. The Budgetary Review Group recommended that scrutiny of outcomes should be an integral part of the budgetary review process. We endorse this action, because experience from other countries and regions highlights that wellbeing frameworks situated with budgetary process have more influence.

The NPF should be used more widely across public services. As the National Performance Framework matures and develops it increasingly needs to reach the range of service providers in Scotland, in the public and third sector. The Report on the Consultation again has highlighted this and we encourage it to remain an ongoing priority action for the Cabinet Secretary and the Government in the continued development of the National Performance Framework.

The NPF should develop its connection to the work of Community Planning Partnerships. Local Authorities are increasingly being asked to think about, and report on, the difference they make, or the outcomes they achieve through the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan. The NPF provides an overarching framework for this development. However, as consultation responses highlighted, there is still work to be done to link local outcomes and initiatives to delivering the (NPF) outcomes. The NPF needs to be actively communicated to the public and to civil society organisations. This is to raise awareness, legitimacy and use of the

framework. It is potentially a tool for an ongoing conversation with the public about how we are doing, as a country as well as to hold government to account.

Many organisations, people and communities with an interest in tackling disadvantage and improving the wellbeing of Scotland's citizens are likely to have a role in developing and embedding the National Performance Framework.

The Carnegie UK Trust looks forward to continuing to support the evolution of the National Performance Framework as it states and shapes the sort of Scotland we want to live in.

The Carnegie UK Trust works to improve the lives of people throughout the UK and Ireland, by changing minds through influencing policy, and by changing lives through innovative practice and partnership work. The Carnegie UK Trust was established by Scots-American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie in 1913.

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