



CITIZENS ASSEMBLY VISION STATEMENT – PAPER FOR WEEKEND 6

Introduction

On weekend 5 the Assembly started the process of preparing the final vision of the Assembly by developing areas of consensus following a discussion of the impact of COVID. On weekend 6 you will now prepare and vote on the final vision. This note has been prepared to help with that work.

What is the vision for?

The Citizens Assembly was established because the Scottish Government wanted to give citizens a platform to decide for themselves what matters to the people in the country; to explore what unites us and to find common ground in what is often highly contested political discussion. Never before has such a broadly representative group been brought together to work together in such a way on behalf of all citizens of Scotland.

The vision will therefore be a unique voice for citizens; an important starting point for the country to move forward together, whilst recognising that there remain many important things that we do not agree about.

The Assembly was established against the backdrop of huge challenges faced by the country – constitutional debates about the direction of the country, including Brexit, and frustration at the way politics happens, concerns about the social and economic challenges we face, the existential threat of the climate crisis, and now COVID – a pandemic which has had a profound impact and where the outlook remains uncertain.

The vision responds to those issues. It comes at a really important moment and in these uncertain times the Assembly is well-placed to be a voice saying who we are and what matters to us. That voice can be powerful and inspiring and a starting point for conversations across the country about the kind of country we seeking to build and what our priorities for action should be.

What will the vision look like?

The vision will be a short document with an introduction and conclusion and a series of short elements which together provide the Assembly's final and definitive response to the remit question 'what kind of country are we seeking to build'.

The elements to be included in the vision will be prepared this weekend. Only those elements which are supported in a consensus vote by the whole Assembly will be included in the final vision. By consensus we mean that 90% of votes cast for or against the element are in favour of including it in the final vision.

The voting process is explained in a separate guidance note by the Design Team.



How will we produce the vision?

For the discussion on weekend 5 the Secretariat brought together the Assembly's previous work under three broad themes of the values that are important to us, the outcomes that follow and considerations on how decisions should be taken in the future. You have reviewed that work and updated it in light of COVID, agreeing areas of consensus as a starting point for this next and final stage of work.

Working in small groups you will now discuss these areas of consensus in detail, discussing why the area is important, agreeing the range of underpinning ideas that need to be covered, and preparing final wording in the form of a short text, most likely in the form of a single sentence, which should be thought of as an element of the overall vision. Some groups will also be asked to work together to prepare an introduction and conclusion to the vision.

In preparing these elements it is important to bear in mind that this stage is about consolidating and drafting final wording on issues which you have had many discussions over the course of the Assembly. It is not about introducing new and different ideas.

Although we can be confident that the areas of consensus are broadly shared across the Assembly, it is also important to remember that you are preparing text that is now to be agreed by consensus in a vote. This will not be easy to achieve and as you prepare your element you will need to discuss whether it is likely to be supported in that vote.

The vision and recommendations

It is important also to remember that the vision is about outcomes you want to see for the country and which are intended as a starting point for action. As part of your discussions you will talk about the action you think might be important in the area, but at this stage this is mainly so you can be sure that your element captures the ideas that you agree are important. This work will also provide a starting point for recommendations, which you will go on to begin to prepare later in the weekend after the vision has been agreed.

Another way of thinking about the difference between vision and recommendations is that -

- the vision is a high level description of what is important about the country and its future – including values, outcomes and how decisions are taken
- recommendations are much more focussed, describing specific action to be taken or things to be achieved in a given timescale - in this case over the lifetime of the next Parliament.

A separate note has been prepared which describes the process of preparing recommendations.

Conclusion



Finally, the layout and style of the vision will be really important if it is to have impact with the wider public. Overall and in each element it should be clear and easily understood and be bold and imaginative, reflecting the rich journey of the Assembly and the excitement and passion generated in our time together.

You will want to come back to those essential points throughout the drafting process. Do the words we have prepared do justice to the powerful discussions of the Assembly? Do they capture the values, outcomes and points how decisions are taken that we have agreed? Will they make sense to and excite our fellow citizens? Are they likely to be agreed by the Assembly as a whole?

Citizens' Assembly Secretariat
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