



## GROUP 14 – EXPLANATORY NOTE AND JAMBOARDS

### 1. Explanatory note on Group 14's topic

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTE FOR GROUP 14**

##### **What topic will we discuss?**

This group will be invited to consider the topic below, which relates to a drafted vision element which was supported by a majority of Assembly members in weekend 6, but not adopted as part of the consensus vision statement:

##### **Enabling Scotland to have more powers to make its own decisions and manage its own affairs, and engaging co-operatively with the other regions of the UK and internationally**

The topic covers general constitutional issues, which have been discussed throughout the Assembly. It is for members to decide what issues to cover although it should be noted that constitutional matters may be covered by groups considering specific policy issues. Group 1 will consider aspects of this vision element that relate to Government working honestly and transparently for the benefit of Scotland and all its people.

##### **What is the task and process we will go through?**

Notes 1 and 2 explain how recommendations will be prepared and provide a worked example. You will review the summary of evidence in the explanatory note and the weekend 6 jam boards and identify the 2-3 areas you want to focus on to develop recommendations. You will then prepare the text of draft recommendations and accompanying information to be included in the final report.

Recommendations should be about either:

- Remit Q 2: how we overcome the challenges facing Scotland and the world
- Remit Q 3: what further information citizens need to take informed decisions

And they should also be supported by evidence: And they should also be supported by evidence:

- Given by or discussed with experts
- From the Assembly process and the experience of participation
- From 'lived experience' of members, shared and discussed over the course of the Assembly

##### **Summary of the Assembly evidence on the issue**

Constitutional issues are part of the remit and have been discussed throughout the Assembly:

1. In weekend 1 you heard from Prof Nicola McEwen on Scotland's current constitutional arrangements, such as the powers devolved to Scotland. You



heard about how arrangements might change in the future, including as a result of leaving the EU. You also heard about the broad constitutional options and issues.

2. In weekend 2 Dr Elke Heins introduced you to the concept of values and how these underpin and shape institutions, governments and individuals' outlook on life. Constitutional issues were frequently raised in your early discussions on vision, and also featured in some individual statements about the country we are seeking to build.
3. In Weekend 3, Dr Chris McCorkingdale gave an update on constitutional issues following the General Election, including the next steps on Brexit and the positions of the main parties on an independence referendum in Scotland. You also heard from a politicians' panel and discussed key issues for the future of the country and how political debate is conducted. The highlighted the need for more constructive, respectful and collaborative working across parties in Parliament.
4. In exploring sustainability in weekend 3, you also heard about constitutional aspects of building a sustainable Scotland, including where power lies in relation to your ideas around a greener Scotland, fairer work and fairer taxation. Members then developed a range of priority areas for action.
5. In weekend 4, you explored these constitutional issues in more detail with regards to Scotland's finances and taxation. You learned about government revenues and expenditure in Scotland and some of the issues that come up in discussions of constitutional change such borrowing and deficits. You heard about the tax powers of the UK Government and of the Scottish Governments both at central and local government levels. Members then developed a range of findings on tax and finances, including a review and simplification of the tax system. A review which included taxes reserved to the UK Government would involve UK wide action, or a change of powers.
6. And finally, in weekend 5 you considered evidence on the impact of COVID. Evidence noted how government relations during the pandemic have highlighted the importance of cooperation between governments. In ideas to respond to COVID, Fraser McKinley touched on the calls for further devolution of some borrowing powers to allow the Scottish Government to take more responsibility for the response to COVID. You also heard about ideas to allow decision making powers to be devolved to a local level, through the involvement of citizens and local communities.

### **Constitutional implications**

Changes to the powers of the Scottish Government would require UK wide action. Changes to powers within Scotland, such as at local authority level, would be a devolved issue.

The Scottish Government and Parliament could take action in this area where any proposed arrangements applied to devolved matters. Should any recommendations cover



reserved matters you may wish to consider whether the evidence supports any constitutional change. For further detail on reserved and devolved matters, please see Professor Nicola McEwen's factsheet [here](#)

**Action in hand**

The Programme for Government 2020-21 states that:

- the Scottish Government is seeking the widest possible range of views on how Scotland's devolved taxes and the Fiscal Framework can be used to help our economic recovery from COVID-19. This will be used to inform the Budget for 2021-22.
- a range of considerations in relation to Brexit, including the Internal Market Bill currently before the UK Parliament and which makes provision relevant to the current devolution settlement.
- a draft bill for an independence referendum to be published setting out the question to be asked and the timescale in which the Scottish Government considers a referendum should be held

**2. Jamboard from Weekend 6 on topic being considered by Group 14**

(K) A Scotland that has more powers to make its own decisions and manage its own affairs, that engages cooperatively with the other regions of the UK and internationally, and that works honestly and transparently for the benefit of Scotland and all its people (from area of consensus: Devolution of powers)



What is at the heart of it? What are you really trying to say to Scotland your vision for the country is?

Covid-19 has emphasised just how important it is that the people of Scotland have the power to make decisions for themselves because they know best what is needed to protect themselves and the country

We've been happy and impressed with how Scotland has handled the Covid-19 crisis and glad that we've had some flexibility and freedom to make some of our own decisions

We feel that an open, pragmatic and common-sense approach will ensure that Scotland works effectively with others for mutual benefit

Powers should be devolved to local authorities and to communities, which are often much better placed to know what to do

We also need to work cooperatively and effectively with other countries in UK and beyond

It's important that Scotland doesn't feel like it has its hands tied and is restricted in what it can do

We want more of our own powers and we should use the powers we already have better

It's not about isolating Scotland or cutting ourselves off from others

Transparency is important

Q: Who should be accountable?

It's important that we can do both, i.e. make our own decisions and manage our own affairs and cooperate with others in UK and internationally