



## **PREPARING ASSEMBLY RECOMMENDATIONS GUIDANCE NOTE PREPARED BY THE SECRETARIAT**

### **Introduction**

This note sets out background information and guidance for members to help prepare the final recommendations of the Assembly.

Weekend 7 will begin with an introductory briefing. This note summarises the key points, including a reminder of the Assembly remit and the Assembly learning journey together with information about the process for preparing recommendations.

The recommendations will describe action that the Assembly agrees is most important for Scotland to take within the next Parliament i.e. to be completed no later than 2026.

Preparing recommendations will not be easy. But members should go into this final stage with confidence. Weekend 7 will be fully devoted to the work and the process and instructions to facilitators have been carefully designed to provide as much time and give as much support as is possible.

Voting on final recommendations will take place in weekend 8.

### **The Assembly remit**

The remit set the following questions to be considered by the Assembly -

- what kind of country we are seeking to build,
- how best we can overcome the challenges Scotland and the world face in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, including those arising from Brexit, and
- what further work should be carried out to give us the information we need to make informed choices about the future of the country.

The remit asked the Assembly to identify challenges and to examine the current constitutional arrangements for dealing with those, options for constitutional reform, and what further work would be required to provide the information that would allow the people of Scotland to make an informed choice about the future of the country.

The Assembly was asked to prepare a report with recommendations to the Scottish Government and Parliament. The recommendations should be based on evidence heard by the Assembly and to be capable of being put into practice.

The report will be laid before the Scottish Parliament and the Government will seek an early opportunity for a debate in the recommendations. Within 3 months the Government will publish a plan responding explaining how recommendations agreed by Parliament will be taken forward.

## **The Assembly learning journey**

Members have undertaken a substantial learning journey over the course of weekends 1-6 which equips you well for preparing final recommendations. This was summarised in the interim report and summary papers published over the summer. Notes 3 and 4 provide a visual overview and list of the Assembly evidence.

In summary the learning journey has covered –

- general evidence about the country, including the constitutional position.
- more detailed evidence on the challenges of building a sustainable country and relating to the public finances and tax, including some of the key constitutional aspects of those challenges. In weekends 3 and 4 you developed initial ideas where action might be taken on these challenges.
- different approaches to the economy and what makes for happiness, and how values influence decision-making.
- Different sources of evidence and how to interpret these.

Throughout the Assembly process you have engaged with experts and developed new skills in deliberation. You have learned from the 'lived experience' of fellow citizens in the Assembly. You heard from a politicians' panel about their priorities for action and about how decisions are taken in and for Scotland.

All of these are kinds of evidence and are part of the Assembly learning journey. You can draw from all of this in making your final recommendations.

## **Recommendations and the Assembly vision**

In weekend 6 you prepared a final vision statement and voted on it to identify those areas where there was a very high level of agreement, or consensus, and the levels of support for other issues that have been discussed. All of this material will be included in your final report and is the Assembly response to the first remit question on *the kind of country we are seeking to build*.

Your recommendations will be the actions that you agree are most important to help achieve this vision in practice. But there may also be other recommendations that you agree are important to make but which do not directly relate to the vision. Such additional recommendations could, for example, cover other matters that you discussed when you looked at sustainability or finances and tax in weekends 3 and 4, or from your wider discussion on constitutional matters.

## **What will recommendations look like?**

Recommendations should respond either to remit question 2 or remit question 3. The following points will help you to decide -

### ***Remit question 2 – how we overcome challenges***

These recommendations are most likely where members agree –



- a) a specific action to achieve a defined outcome or output, and
- b) the action is supported by evidence considered in the Assembly i.e. it will have the effect that is envisaged.

Recommendations should be practicable. In other words members should agree that recommendations of this type could be expected to be taken forward within the next 5 years. For very substantial issues, it might be necessary to break this down a bit and describe the initial action you want to see as part of a longer journey of change.

Recommendations which meet these requirements should be recorded in the following form:

The Citizens' Assembly recommends that in order to overcome the challenges of –

**briefly describe the purpose of the recommendation – this will be the outcome or output you want to be achieved**

the Scottish Government/Parliament should –

**set out the action to be taken: this should be in the form of no more than 1 or 2 short sentences which clearly describe the action to be taken. It is strongly suggested that you do not include a lengthy series of separate or subsidiary points since that will make it much more difficult to secure agreement across the Assembly and is less likely to be practicable. Where the action is part of a more substantial change it would be appropriate to refer briefly to that.**

***Remit question 3 recommendations – further work to enable informed decisions***

These recommendations are most likely where members agree –

either -

- a) further investigation of an area is required, or
- b) specific action to achieve defined outcomes or outputs is thought to be appropriate, but is not sufficiently supported by the evidence considered by the Assembly.

This type of recommendation could also cover areas where members are not confident that a proposed action is practicable and therefore further investigation or more information is required to establish this.

Recommendations which meet these requirements should be recorded in the following form:

The Assembly recommends that in order that citizens can make informed decisions in relation to –

**briefly describe the purpose of the recommendation – this will be the defined outcome or output to be achieved.**



the Scottish Government/Parliament should -

**set out the action required: the action to be taken should be described clearly and in no more than 1 or 2 sentences. The action is likely to be in the form of undertaking a review, investigation, or provision of specific information to enable decision-making**

### **How many recommendations will there be?**

The remit does not set any limit to the number of recommendations. It is important to though to focus on producing high quality recommendations and given the time available it is unlikely that each group will be able to prepare more than 2 or 3 recommendations. Deciding on the scope of recommendations will therefore be an important early task.

### **The process for making recommendations**

Members will work in small groups to prepare recommendations on different elements of the vision statement. Note 1 provides a visual summary and worked example of a recommendation and note 6 provides a short explanatory note covering the Assembly evidence relevant to the topic you will be considering and jam boards summarising the relevant discussion in weekend 5. This work is of course only a starting point and it is entirely for the group to decide upon the recommendations to develop in this area.

Your facilitator will take you through these notes at the beginning of your discussion and will read out key points. You will have time to decide the areas you want to focus on. As you move on to prepare recommendations your facilitator will help you to record why the recommendation is important and what evidence supports it. This additional material will be important to include in the final report to explain the recommendations to the Government and Parliament

### **Reviewing draft recommendations**

Once each group has prepared draft recommendations there will be an opportunity to see the full list of recommendations and then to do a final check or review of your group's work, including to consider whether to make changes because of an overlap or duplication of work in another group. If at this stage your group finishes work early you could prepare further recommendations if you think there are important points to consider and have not been covered by another group.

### **Final decisions**

The Assembly as a whole will vote on the final recommendations in weekend 8. A proposal on how to take these votes will be presented to the Assembly for decision during weekend 7.