

Seven Priorities for the New Scottish Parliament



A Wellbeing Economy Agenda for
Scotland in
2026 and beyond



WELLBEING
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Introduction

The 2026 Scottish Parliament election has produced a new political landscape and a renewed opportunity to shape Scotland's future.

This parliamentary term begins at a time when many people are still feeling the strain of rising costs, stretched public services, insecure work and widening inequality. Communities are looking for practical action and long-term solutions, not simply short-term promises. At the same time, Scotland continues to face the urgent realities of the climate and nature emergencies, alongside growing demands for a more democratic and locally rooted economy.

While parties may differ on constitutional questions and political priorities, there is increasing recognition across Scottish civic life that the current economic model is not delivering security, wellbeing or resilience for enough people. The challenge for this Parliament is not only how to respond to immediate pressures, but how to build an economy that serves people and planet over the long term.

This can only be delivered through a Wellbeing Economy, one where success is measured by whether people can live good lives, in thriving communities, within environmental limits.

Scotland already has strong foundations for this approach through the National Performance Framework, progressive anti-poverty measures, a fairer tax settlement than elsewhere in the UK, and growing interest in community wealth building and preventative public services.

The central challenge remains implementation: turning ambitions into the organising principles of government.

The election result has created both political complexity and political opportunity. In a more plural Parliament, progress will depend not only on leadership from government, but on cooperation across parties, local government, civil society, businesses and communities.

This paper sets out seven priorities for the new Scottish Parliament to build a Wellbeing Economy. WEAll Scotland looks forward to collaborating with all parties to help deliver this vision.



1

Put Wellbeing at the Heart of Government

Scotland already has one of the most advanced wellbeing frameworks in the world through the National Performance Framework. Yet too often it has sat alongside decision-making rather than driving it.

This Parliament should make wellbeing outcomes the core test for budgets, legislation and public policy, complementing existing commitments to improve delivery, modernise government and focus resources on what matters most. Refreshing the Framework early in the new Parliamentary term provides an opportunity to strengthen its application and its role in decision making.

That means:

- Aligning spending decisions with national wellbeing goals
- Requiring public bodies to demonstrate contribution to outcomes
- Strengthening parliamentary scrutiny of progress
- Embedding prevention and long-term thinking across government

The next phase of Scottish governance should be about making wellbeing measurable, accountable and real.

2

Ensure Everyone Has Enough to Live With Dignity

Many of the immediate pressures facing households are well understood: rising food costs, housing insecurity, childcare costs and low incomes. Measures proposed during the campaign to reduce everyday costs and protect family budgets reflect that challenge.

Beyond short-term relief, Scotland needs a long-term route to income security. A Minimum Income Guarantee offers that pathway, ensuring everyone can meet life's essentials through fair work, strong public services and effective social security.

Priority steps should include:

- Strengthening family income support
- Expanding access to devolved benefits and advice services
- Supporting the Real Living Wage and secure work standards
- Reducing essential household costs through transport, housing and childcare reform
- Testing Minimum Income Guarantee models in practice

A prosperous country should guarantee that nobody is left without the means to live decently.

3

Make Community Wealth Building a National Success Story

Scotland has the chance to lead in creating a more democratic economy where wealth is generated locally, retained locally and shared fairly.

The Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Act can be a landmark reform if backed by serious implementation and national ambition. Alongside wider commitments to economic development and investment, it offers a practical route to ensure prosperity is rooted in communities rather than extracted from them.

This Parliament should ensure it delivers:

- Public procurement that supports local businesses and fair work
- Greater support for co-operatives, employee ownership and social enterprise
- Stronger local supply chains
- Community ownership of assets, land and energy
- Regional strategies with clear accountability
- Pathways to harness local financial resources for local development

Done well, community wealth building can help reshape local economies, reduce extraction and restore confidence that economic development benefits ordinary people.

4

Create a New Economic Strategy for the Future

Scotland needs an economic strategy that reflects the realities of today: climate risk, fragile supply chains, inequality, demographic change and pressure on public services.

A focus on investment, productivity and growth can play a role, but headline growth alone cannot answer these challenges.

This Parliament should develop a new economic strategy centred on:

- Economic security
- Fair work and decent incomes
- Strong local economies
- Investment in care, housing and essentials
- Innovation that serves social and environmental goals
- Long-term resilience

The outline of this strategy should be decided by a Citizen's Assembly, ensuring Scotland's economic future is informed by the people who live it every day.

5

Deliver Climate Action and Nature Recovery at Scale

Scotland has strong ambitions on climate and clean energy, reinforced during the election campaign through commitments on renewables, infrastructure and the transition to a lower-carbon economy. The priority now is delivery at the pace required.

A Wellbeing Economy recognises our interconnection with nature. Climate and nature policy should therefore be seen as economic policy too.

This Parliament should prioritise:

- Large-scale home energy efficiency and retrofit programmes
- Faster renewable deployment with guaranteed community benefit
- Public transport and low-carbon connectivity
- Just Transition planning for workers and communities
- A human right to a healthy natural environment with strong accountability

Scotland can still lead, but leadership now depends on implementation rather than targets alone.

6

Use Tax and Public Finance to Build the Scotland We Need

If Scotland wants strong services, reduced inequality and investment in the future, then public finance must be aligned with those goals. That means moving beyond outdated systems and using devolved powers more effectively, while building on Scotland's more progressive approach to budgets and taxation strategies.

There is growing momentum across Scottish civic society for a fairer approach to wealth and taxation. Tax Justice Scotland has highlighted the importance of ensuring that wealth and economic power are taxed more fairly, particularly at a time of widening inequality and pressure on public services.

Our [Sharing Our Wealth](#) report showed strong public backing for taxing wealth more fairly, with 85% of people saying taxes on the wealthy should increase rather than decrease.

Priorities should include:

- Fair reform of property taxation
- Stronger taxation of unearned wealth where possible
- Polluter-pays approaches to environmental harm
- Multi-year budgeting linked to wellbeing outcomes
- Encourage business to act positively for people and planet

Budgets are statements of political values. This Parliament should ensure they reflect fairness, prevention and long-term prosperity.

Renew Democracy and Shift Power Closer to People

Too many people feel decisions are distant and politics happens elsewhere. Rebuilding trust requires more than communication, it requires sharing power.

Rebuilding trust and moving towards a Wellbeing Economy requires:

- Strengthening local government powers and resources
- Expanding participatory budgeting
- Investing in community hubs and civic spaces
- Supporting community-led local development
- Using citizens' assemblies for long-term national challenges

Alongside national commitments to renewal and reform, a deeper transfer of power to communities would strengthen both democracy and delivery.

A Wellbeing Economy depends on people having a genuine say in the decisions that shape their lives.

Conclusion

The 2026 election has opened a new chapter for Scotland's Parliament and created an opportunity to rethink the country's economic direction.

Scotland already has many of the building blocks of a Wellbeing Economy: progressive social policy, a strong outcomes framework, climate ambition, growing interest in community wealth building and widespread public support for fairness, security and sustainability.

What has often been missing is coherence, pace and delivery.

This Parliament now faces a clear choice.

It can continue to treat poverty, inequality, environmental breakdown and democratic disengagement as separate challenges to be managed individually. Or it can recognise that these issues are deeply connected, and require a different economic approach in response.

A Wellbeing Economy offers that approach.

In a Parliament where cooperation and consensus-building may matter more than ever, wellbeing can provide common ground: a shared focus on improving people's lives, strengthening communities and protecting the environment on which prosperity depends.

The opportunity now is not simply to manage the next five years, but to help shape a fairer, greener and more resilient Scotland for the long term.