



**OFFICIAL REPORT**  
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

# Local Government and Communities Committee

**Wednesday 18 April 2018**

**Session 5**



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**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE**  
**12<sup>th</sup> Meeting 2018, Session 5**

**CONVENER**

\*Bob Doris (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)

**DEPUTY CONVENER**

\*Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Lab)

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

\*Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP)

\*Jenny Gilruth (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)

\*Graham Simpson (Central Scotland) (Con)

\*Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

\*Andy Wightman (Lothian) (Green)

\*attended

**THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:**

Roger Halliday (Scottish Government)

Derek Mackay (Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution)

Carol Tannahill (Scottish Government)

**CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE**

Jane Williams

**LOCATION**

The James Clerk Maxwell Room (CR4)



# Scottish Parliament

## Local Government and Communities Committee

*Wednesday 18 April 2018*

*[The Convener opened the meeting at 10:00]*

### National Outcomes

**The Convener (Bob Doris):** Good morning. Welcome to the 12th meeting of the Local Government and Communities Committee in 2018. I remind everyone present to turn off mobile phones. As meeting papers are provided in digital format, tablets may be used by members during the meeting. No apologies have been received—I am sure that Mr Gibson is on his way, so we will have a full complement of members shortly.

Agenda item 1 is on national outcomes. On 29 March, the Scottish Government laid in Parliament a document detailing the proposed revisions to the national outcomes. The committee has been designated as the lead committee, although a number of committees have been invited to consider them and will publish their responses also. The three proposed revised outcomes that we will consider in more detail are:

“We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe; We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally; “We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we can realise our full potential.”

That sets the context for this morning’s evidence. I welcome Derek Mackay, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution; Roger Halliday, chief statistician in the Scottish Government; and Carol Tannahill, chief social policy adviser to the Scottish Government. I invite the cabinet secretary to make some opening remarks.

**The Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution (Derek Mackay):** It is now more than 10 years since the national performance framework was launched, setting out a vision of national wellbeing and charting progress towards that vision through a range of social, environmental and economic indicators. The framework has transformed how we operate as a Government and how we align the efforts of the public sector. We believe that, by aligning the public sector around a common set of goals, we can deliver lasting collaboration and partnership working.

However, we wish to go further. That is why the purpose of the NPF provides a focus that is wider

than just Government and public services. We have therefore changed the words “the Government’s purpose” to “our purpose”. The purpose is a clear statement that gives prominence to economic, environmental and social progress, focusing on reducing inequalities. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 means that the national performance framework is now embedded in legislation. The 2015 act requires Scottish ministers to consult on, develop and publish a set of national outcomes for Scotland and review them at least every five years. Therefore, this new parliamentary approach is most welcome, and I am open to further improvements.

As part of this enhanced engagement, we have consulted widely with citizens and experts and asked them what sort of Scotland they want to live in, and we have asked children what sort of Scotland they think that children should grow up in. That engagement resulted in 11 national outcomes describing what we want to achieve and the kind of Scotland that we want to see. We have also reviewed the national indicators that enable us to track progress towards the achievement of our national outcomes and ultimately the delivery of the purpose. Discussions were held with stakeholders about what they felt it is important to measure and, as a result, we have included 79 indicators in the new framework. They include a number of new indicators covering important issues such as gender balance in organisations, child wellbeing and happiness, ability to influence local decisions and work-related ill health. Wherever possible, we have selected indicators that come from established data sets and that are consistent with indicators from the United Nations sustainable development goals.

I am satisfied that we have met the requirements of the 2015 act through an extensive consultation process and that we have gone beyond our legislative requirements with regard to developing appropriate indicators. With our delivery partners, Carnegie UK Trust and Oxfam Scotland, we held a series of engagement events involving individuals from a cross-section of Scottish society, expert stakeholders and the Children’s Parliament. That included Oxfam holding street-stall events in communities across Scotland. In order to ensure wide representation from expert policymakers and practitioners, 220 organisations were invited to take part in a variety of consultation activities. We also drew upon extensive contributions to the earlier fairer Scotland and healthier Scotland consultations. Together, they comprised substantial public engagement, involving more than 16,000 participants at public events and reaching more than 400,000 people online.

There has been cross-party engagement in the development of the new NPF, with a round-table group, which I chair, that includes representatives from each party in the Parliament and leaders from the public, private and third sectors. I have also had strong positive engagement from local government. Monitoring of the national indicators and assessment of progress towards achieving the outcomes will continue to be available through our Scotland performs website.

Finally, I am grateful to the committee for taking the lead in this scrutiny process. The committee will be aware that I led oversight of the NPF renewal process, and individual cabinet secretaries have overseen the outcomes and indicators that relate to their portfolios.

I am happy to answer any questions that members may have arising from the consultation process or other aspects of the NPF refresh.

**The Convener:** That was helpful, cabinet secretary. I am sure that members will want, in the course of the evidence session this morning, to talk about the nature of the consultation, how meaningful it was, the length of time for parliamentary scrutiny and so on. We will come to that, but I thought that it might be reasonable to start with a discussion of how certain decisions are made. There is an existing national outcome, which is

“We have strong, resilient, supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others”

and another one that is,

“We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger”.

Those have become a proposed draft outcome, which is

“We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe”.

All three of those statements encapsulate good and desirable things, but how do you move from the first two statements to the third statement? Can you take me through that process and explain what the thinking is behind that?

**Derek Mackay:** I will ask policy officials to say more about that. First, though, I will say that it is important to recognise that we started off this process thinking about what kind of society we want to live in. That involves defining a purpose, and you will therefore see some transformation of purpose. The process then works through the outcomes and the indicators, which clearly all relate to each other. In arriving at the outcomes and in the progress towards the outcomes, we have tried to ensure that there is clarity, that simple language is used, that the outcomes reflect our vision as a Government and as a country and that they respect our values and try to distil them

into clear, purposeful, meaningful outcomes that can be measured, where that is appropriate, and can be delivered. We recognise that the outcomes work across portfolios, but each individual portfolio was led by a cabinet secretary, who ensured that they were comfortable with what our outcomes were and with what could be reasonably measured. I am sure that we will get into more of the detail on that.

The reason I want to turn to the officials on this is because I want to stress the point that, although this process is, of course, politically led—because this is about our democracy, our Parliament and our Government shaping what we believe our mission and our outcomes should be—the consultation exercise that we undertook with society, experts and stakeholders has largely been led by officials with regard to the technical issues. That was important because we wanted to ensure that it had that degree of credibility and partnership working, not just with regard to the civil service but well beyond, which is why we specifically commissioned the charities that I have named to take forward very focused pieces of work in arriving at the individual outcomes that we have now come to.

Roger Halliday or Carol Tannahill can give you further information on the particular point about how those two outcomes relate to the third.

**The Convener:** Before we get that answer, I am sensing from that detailed reply, cabinet secretary, that at the heart of the matter is a desire to have a shorter, more focused and more easily understood outcome. I think that that is what was wrapped up within that answer. Is that effectively what is being said? Your officials might want to say more about that.

**Derek Mackay:** Yes, but the reason I am making that point is that it applies to every outcome and the overall purpose. If you look at the detail overall, it is important to make this point at the outset because the same could be asked of any set of indicators. I appreciate the interest on the part of this committee in particular, but we felt that it was important not just to count how many outcomes we had but to ensure that they were meaningful, easy to understand and as deliverable as possible. That is why, overall, we have fewer outcomes than before, but more indicators. That is the sense of why we have arrived at the outcomes that we have.

**The Convener:** I will ask about indicators shortly but it might be helpful if one of your officials could add to that.

**Roger Halliday (Scottish Government):** I do not have an awful lot to add to that. The starting point was that the feedback from consultees was

that we need to make the language and the whole look of the framework simpler, and that the words “inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe”

are really important when it comes to thinking about communities. That is exactly what we have done by trying to make the overall framework simpler and to capture the spirit of the words that we heard from people.

**The Convener:** I want to turn to the national indicators that are wrapped up within the

“We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe”

draft outcome. I will not read out all the indicators, but one is “Loneliness” and one is “Perceptions of local crime rate”. I understand how perceptions of crime rate could be measured, because there is an annual crime survey and we can contrast people’s perceptions of crime and crime levels, but where do we start with regard to loneliness?

**Derek Mackay:** I am happy to turn to Carol Tannahill or Roger Halliday on the details of how that can be measured. However, can I make a point about measurement specifically? It is important for us to set out through the national performance framework what is important to us as a society, recognising that we will not necessarily be able to measure everything. If you approach the issue in that way, you can see that, in relation to the targeted strategies involving specific groups, such as isolation and loneliness among older people, for example, some elements will be easier to measure than others. However, that said, it is important to state what is important to us as a society.

Roger Halliday can cover the issue of how various elements can be measured. He is, of course, the chief statistician, so it would be his responsibility to report on these measurements.

**The Convener:** No pressure, Mr Halliday.

**Roger Halliday:** With regard to loneliness, social capital and places to interact, a new set of modules around social capital is going into the Scottish household survey, information on which is starting to be collected this year. We will not be able to report directly in June on the progress but when the 2018 Scottish household survey results come out we will be able to do so.

There are relatively well established approaches to measuring people’s experiences and their views on things. For example, the indicator on the quality of public services has been in the Scottish household survey since 1999. We are using a lot of our household surveys to measure a number of issues that have come in.

All the existing indicators that we have within the framework are quality assured, independently

scrutinised by the UK Statistics Authority and carry the National Statistics kitemark, which is the badge of quality for official statistics. Therefore, I am confident that they will be particularly helpful measures.

**The Convener:** So the information around that particular indicator will be captured in the household survey.

**Roger Halliday:** Yes, exactly.

**The Convener:** There is, of course, an on-going consultation now in relation to a loneliness strategy, which I think that Jeane Freeman is leading on. Will they interact with each other? Will that question change?

**Carol Tannahill (Scottish Government):** The proposal for the loneliness and social isolation strategy includes a commitment to regularly gathering data on loneliness and social isolation. The approach will be the same; it will exactly match what that strategy is seeking to achieve.

10:15

**The Convener:** Can I pick on another outcome and a related indicator? I want to make a wider point. Let us not go for the outcome “We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally”—there are a lot of indicators there, and you can perhaps see clearly how that could be identified at a national level. The outcome that we are interested in is “We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we can realise our full potential”. One of the indicators that is easy to measure is “Healthy weight”, but one that might be more difficult to measure is “Children have positive relationships”.

I am usually really keen to see clear national criteria and indicators covering the whole of Scotland reliably, but I look at this and wonder whether some of the data for these indicators might be best collected at a local level by local authorities and their measurement matrices. Local authorities know their areas better and may have their own frameworks for collecting some of that really important data. The contrast is between the targets for which you can easily collect the numbers and the softer, sometimes much more important things in a community that it is much harder to collect data on other than in a survey. What role is there for the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities in that? What role is there for local authorities, and what scope is there to have a little bit of flexibility at a local level in how the data is collected and measured qualitatively rather than just quantitatively?

**Derek Mackay:** That is a good question, and there are a number of strands to it. First, I tried to indicate a moment earlier that there are many

things that are important to us as a society that might be quite difficult to measure. Do not underestimate things like kindness, love and all of that. They might be hard to measure, but they have been important in this consultation and it is important that the information is expressed in that fashion. When there was engagement with looked-after children and they were asked about their needs, their number 1 ask was love. How do we measure that?

If we want to respond to people, we must listen to what they are saying, and this NPF refresh has done that. What is important to us as a society cannot always be measured, but we should still be able to express it and, if we can measure it, we should try to do so. There are indicators in that regard, as you have mentioned, which then led to your question about local government.

It is very welcome that local government has responded strongly to the NPF. The local authorities had earlier sight of it through their governance structures, and I think that it has been to the leaders meeting. It has certainly been to the presidential team and the cross-party team of COSLA, with whom I had a meeting. They were of the view that the partnership working here is so strong that it helps to create a new framework for further partnership working. It is a very strong response from local government. Endorsing the NPF in the fashion that they have done suggests that they agree with where we are on the purpose and values as well as the outcomes.

As to local variance, as was the case before, on the single outcome agreements, unless the committee says otherwise, I think it would be hard to disagree with the proposition that we are putting forward, although I would not want to prejudice the committee's view considering the amount of cross-party work that has gone on. Local government should use the NPF as a very good foundation, as should other parts of the public sector, but they may want to add to it and they will attach appropriate weighting to what is appropriate in their areas.

In the previous iteration of single outcome agreements, local authorities could choose from a menu of indicators what was most important for their areas. We were all agreed on the outcomes and the purpose, but they could determine what was more important to them. Community planning partnerships could then bolt on or enhance data or a particular purpose. They are perfectly at liberty to do all of that again.

Your point, that there may be more local intelligence or knowledge than we have in the national picture, is an important one. All the community planning partnerships, of which local authorities are key partners, can collect that in the fashion that you have described, recognising that,

in some areas, they might want to go further or have more data.

The other point to make about how we report on the outcomes is that there has been an improvement in monitoring and reporting on our website. Of course, we can still produce paper reports, and we will do that. We will continue to report through the score card, the committees and the budget process, but online reporting is really powerful because we can get the most up-to-date dashboard of performance and see the relationships between the indicators.

I identify that because we are going to try to make the reporting as local as we can. We are going to make reporting on equality groups clearer, too, so that it shows not just the overall progress that we are making on the outcomes but how they affect particular groups and—where it can do so—how they affect particular areas. That will help to drive the discussion about how local authorities and other key local partners can respond to the national framework.

**The Convener:** Will there be a set of reporting frameworks for local authorities, or will there be specific single outcome agreements by which local authorities play their part in achieving the outcomes?

**Derek Mackay:** In essence, what were called the single outcome agreements before will be the local improvement plans going forward. That is the language that is used in the 2015 act. The reporting that was undertaken on single outcome agreements and the local community planning partnership outcomes, indicators and monitoring will continue, albeit by a different name.

**The Convener:** Are local improvement plans going to be signed off by you and the leader of each local authority? Do the local authorities themselves decide, or is that a co-produced document?

**Derek Mackay:** I think that you need to be careful with the language here, convener, recognising the full extent of all stakeholders involved in community planning partnerships. Local authorities may well be the lead partner in some CPPs or absolutely fundamental stakeholders, but other CPPs might be led by someone who is not a local authority figure. You are correct in saying that a partnership approach between all community planning partners and all agencies should be involved, with the Government signing off the document in partnership, and that continues.

**The Convener:** That is helpful. I take on board the point that you make about community planning partnerships—that it is not just about local authorities within communities. That is helpful.



**Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Lab):** Let us stick with local government. There was some positive information from the cabinet secretary in that we got a number of responses during the recess. People had a week in which to give their views, and we got some responses, for which we are grateful. Some of the views from councils are quite mixed. Cabinet secretary, what is your response to some of the concerns that have been raised by local government partners?

**Derek Mackay:** You have probably seen more of the evidence that has been submitted to the committee than I have. I am not sure what criticism there has been. I can happily engage, but the leadership of COSLA, which is the presidential team, and all the political parties represented at COSLA have engaged very positively with me. “Endorsement” is a strong word, but they felt that this was a positive piece of work and the conclusion at that point was that they felt it was a very sound basis for further partnership working.

Of course, they stressed the point that I made earlier about the need to attach appropriate weight to local circumstances. Local flexibility is important, but the leadership was signed up to this document and, as I understand it, it has gone to the leaders meeting. Having come from local government, as I have, Monica Lennon knows that the leaders meeting is a meeting of the 32 council leaders. If they have an objection, they will say so.

The engagement that I have had with local authorities collectively has been positive, partly because I have engaged with them from the start, and they are also represented on the round table. I am happy to address any specific concern that has been raised, but that has been my interaction with local government.

**Monica Lennon:** Overall, I find that reassuring. The councils that responded were all of different political hues, but Falkirk Council was a little bit gloomy about evaluation and being able to evidence outcomes. It said that more thought needs to be given to the interdependencies between the outcomes. Is that something that you recognise from your conversations?

**Derek Mackay:** Absolutely. That is a fair point, and it is what I have tried to express. I have the lead role for this within Government—well, the First Minister ultimately has, but it is the Cabinet’s collective responsibility and cabinet secretaries have led in their individual portfolios.

We have had to recognise, right across the Cabinet, that there are interrelationships and interdependencies, as Monica Lennon has described them, between all the outcomes and all the indicators to the purpose. Some of the indicators relate to different outcomes, and it was difficult to structure a monitoring report in paper

form. That is why I say that reporting is better done online. How all of society then works together to achieve the outcome—the key point is that the purpose is wider than just public services—of course requires a range of actions. Having a clear plan and clear outcomes will allow that collaborative working whereby at least we are all working towards the same purpose and goals.

On the difficulty of measuring and evaluating certain aspects, I return to what I said earlier. We know that some things are difficult to measure, but the fact that they are difficult to measure does not mean we do not want to achieve them.

**Monica Lennon:** That is helpful. On the point that you made in response to the convener about other partners beyond local government taking the lead, I note that Audit Scotland had some concerns that not all public bodies are embedding the national outcomes when they are reporting. For example, in Scottish Enterprise’s latest annual report there appears to be no explicit reference to the national performance framework. Are you mindful of that? Do public bodies have to do better and make sure that they are embedding the NPF into all their work?

**Derek Mackay:** Every part of the public sector—especially those who are responsible to ministers—is charged with its mission and objectives depending on the nature of the public service organisation.

Taking that point on board, when we have the agreement, we publish the outcomes and it has Cabinet sign-off. As we launch it, it is important that we stress the importance of it to all parts of the public sector—and beyond, in the public-private sub-sector—emphasising that there should be a clear linkage between the mission and objectives of all parts of the public service and the NPF. We are refreshing it, renewing it and aligning it with a range of Government strategies, and there is a wonderful opportunity to show the importance of it and express that. I will do that through a high-profile launch event as well as by writing to all chief executives, stressing its importance.

If we have to look further at how we evaluate and monitor the performance of public agencies to ensure that the NPF is being embedded, I will certainly give that further thought. Up to this point, I have been satisfied that we have the buy-in of the public sector, but we have an opportunity to reset that and make sure that the NPF is embedded. Before the 2015 act was passed, the NPF was not embedded in legislation. It was the Government’s mission, but it was not embedded in legislation. Now that it has that statutory footing, there is an even stronger basis on which to charge our public sector agencies with that duty.

**Monica Lennon:** That is encouraging. Clearly, there is an opportunity but nothing should come as a surprise to leadership teams across the public sector, as it should be already embedded. I feel slightly uneasy that it is going to take that kind of high-level event for people to get the message. I do not know whether your official wants to come in.

**Derek Mackay:** I believe that it is embedded, but there is a wonderful opportunity, because of the renewal, the refresh and the extent of buy-in that I believe there is, to make sure that we are all aligned to it, especially because of the positive shift whereby we are now more inclusive in our purpose, focusing on wellbeing as well. I am satisfied that there has been buy-in, but I sense a great opportunity for us to do even better in that regard.

I think that Carol Tannahill wants to add something.

**Carol Tannahill:** To reassure the committee, I can say that we are aware of the challenge of getting the NPF embedded in the way that everybody does their business in Scotland. I think that we have a real opportunity. We have already trailed it through the Scottish leaders forum, which is the forum in which the senior leaders across the public sector get together. We have already talked with them about it and will continue to keep it a live issue in that forum.

As well as engaging with the very senior leadership that the cabinet secretary is referencing, we have a communications plan that will involve our being present at and engaging with all sorts of different forums that will take place throughout the coming year to keep the matter very high on the agendas of different organisations and to talk to them about what the NPF means for them. It is going to mean different things for different parts of the system, and people often want to engage with us on how they can operationalise the outcomes in their own settings.

It is about both raising awareness and having that sort of engagement, and we plan to do those things over the coming year.

10:30

**Monica Lennon:** I am sure that our colleagues on the Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee will explore further the information that Audit Scotland has put forward. It has expressed concerns that the outcomes do not measure the contribution of policy initiatives to delivering those outcomes. I think the Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee will pick that up, but I thank the cabinet secretary for his comments so far.

I will pick up on a couple of submissions that came in during the recess. The Child Poverty Action Group, for example, has told us that tackling poverty is not an outcome but is a process for achieving the goal of eradicating poverty for good. It has said in its submission to the committee that the outcome should be changed to: "We end poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally." Is that a fair comment from CPAG, cabinet secretary?

**Derek Mackay:** I do not dispute its comment or its view, but the national outcome that we have is: "We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally." That is the wording that we arrived at for that particular outcome.

We can use different words to ultimately mean the same thing, but words are very important in this document and I have tried to get as much consensus as possible. It is very hard to micromanage elements of the NPF, considering the consultation that it has gone through and the round-table Cabinet process. Nevertheless, if there is a strong view, the parliamentary process is such that a committee can take a view. I understand that this committee will lead the debate in the chamber. The Government will consider the matter within the parliamentary process and we will publish our final position and the outcomes.

I do not see a strong case for changing the wording that I have, but your question is whether I am open minded to changing it. Yes, I am open minded to considering a change of wording if there is a good case so to do, but I am satisfied with what we have at the moment. Each cabinet secretary has an opportunity to do so. For example, the Cabinet Secretary for Communities, Social Security and Equality would have had a lead role in the outcome and the indicators in her brief. I would have to engage if there were suggestions for changing the wording that we have, but I would want a strong case for why we should change the wording when arguably what you have said and what I have said arrive at the same outcome of trying to tackle poverty. Nevertheless, I get the point about process and outcome.

**Monica Lennon:** I appreciate that you may not have seen all the responses that have been sent to us, cabinet secretary, but a couple of stakeholders have highlighted instances in which the means appear to be confused with the ends. The Carnegie UK Trust has pointed out that the single purpose includes both the ends and the means. If you look at the responses from CPAG, the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations and the Carnegie UK Trust, you will see a pattern. I do not know whether they highlighted the matter

in the earlier sessions, but I think that it is worth looking at.

**Derek Mackay:** Let us not underestimate the consensus and breadth of support that there is for the purpose, the outcomes and the indicators or the engagement that we have gone through. There is far more around inclusiveness, wellbeing and sustainability because Government policy has moved on—our understanding of what people aspire to the country being has moved on—because of the nature of our engagement. Although we have tried to make it feel as outcomes-focused as possible, a bit of process will sometimes creep in. It is the nature of the beast when we are using words and narrative. However, I do not think that there is any suggestion that tackling poverty is not seen as a priority because of the way in which we have described it.

**Monica Lennon:** I have a final question on one of the indicators that will go, which is “Access to suitable housing”. The committee has a big interest in housing. “Percentage of homeless households that are entitled to settled accommodation” will be replaced as an indicator with “Satisfaction with housing”, which will measure the percentage of people who are satisfied with their home. I see from the explanatory notes that, because of the new indicator, it is felt that the previous indicator is no longer relevant, but they measure different things.

I would like to dig into that. “Access to suitable housing” covers a lot of ground, from people’s physical needs, the size of their family and so on to being in a place that is safe. Why drop that indicator, cabinet secretary?

**Derek Mackay:** I will ask Roger Halliday to deal with the specifics, but before he does that, I want to make a general point. In a number of these areas, we have tried to make the indicators about outcomes and what can be measured, as I pointed out earlier. There will be some things—this is a good example—that we will not measure for the purpose of the national performance framework because it might not be appropriate, but which will still be measured and reported and will still form part of other accountability exercises.

For an outcomes-based mission, some indicators are more appropriate to include than others. There are other examples of that to do with what we measure, for example, in the health service. There are some things that we were measuring that were about system performance rather than outcomes. Those things will still be measured and reported, and the Government will still be accountable for them through the health boards. All of that will continue, but some measurements were not appropriate in an outcomes-based exercise that is focused on whether people are getting healthier and whether

we are tackling inequalities and so on. I make the general point that there are many things that we will continue to measure, but which it is not appropriate to include in the indicators.

I invite Roger Halliday to talk about the specific example of housing.

**Roger Halliday:** We consulted quite widely with people on the indicators that we are bringing into the framework. We had hundreds of ideas, so we had to have a way of narrowing those down and focusing them. The principles that we used for doing that were that the indicators should enable us to measure progress against each outcome; that they would be able to describe progress not just for Scotland but for different equality groups and for area-based inequalities; that they were consistent with the UN sustainable development goals; and that, where new data was required, it would be feasible and affordable to get that data.

On the fifth and final criterion, the data on which an indicator is based needs to be good from a technical point of view, such that if the number goes up, that means that there has been an improvement or a worsening, and if the number goes down, that means the opposite. In relation to the housing measure that you asked about, the fact that 96 per cent of people said that they were getting access to suitable housing options meant that there was not much scope for that to move around. That indicator has not moved around very much, whereas the measure of satisfaction with housing, which involves a similar kind of concept, will be a much stronger indicator that will tell us whether things are improving or worsening.

**Monica Lennon:** You do not think that there is room to have both indicators.

**Roger Halliday:** I needed to be relatively ruthless with the number of indicators. Most other countries that have a similar framework have fewer than 50 indicators. Earlier this week, I spoke to people from New Zealand, England, Wales and Northern Ireland, each of which has fewer than 50. If you have too many indicators, it becomes difficult to see what is going on. I think that 79 is on the upper bounds of that. I was conscious that I did not want to have indicators on similar things within the framework and that we needed to pick the strongest indicator for a particular concept and go with that.

**Monica Lennon:** I understand the need to manage the number of indicators, but in their submission, the Cyrenians noted that 11 of the outcomes are less age and family specific and are much more universally applicable. Their concern is that there will be less emphasis on the experience of the most vulnerable groups. Was that taken into account as a risk factor?

**Roger Halliday:** We did this in such a way as to mitigate that risk. At the moment, when we report publicly on progress, we report on progress for Scotland overall. In future, we will be reporting on not only Scotland's progress overall but progress for each of the equality groups within Scotland and progress on area-based inequalities in the index of multiple deprivation. There are potentially a few indicators in relation to which we might report on progress at local levels as well when they are about the distribution of things across Scotland. The fact that we will be able to see progress in a much broader context should mitigate those concerns.

**Derek Mackay:** I would like to provide reassurance on that point, because it is a very substantial point. The whole mission here is about a whole-population approach. Tackling inequality is an aspect of every one of the outcomes. That is why, when we disaggregate the data, we will, we hope, be able to drill into that and say how we are doing on gender inequality and age inequality.

My point is that we are taking a whole-population approach. In the past, we might have had an outcome that showed what we were doing for older people in a particular category or what we were doing on gender. Equality is embedded right through the new framework and, where we can, we will measure on that basis right across the outcomes rather than by trying to separate it out. I make the very important point that that is how we achieve equality, rather than by separating it out and having specific targets for specific groups. We are saying that we aspire to equality right across the range of outcomes. The only exception is that we draw attention to children, because the range of interventions is such that a separate element is required for growing up. It is clear that, for every other part of society, we are taking a whole-population approach.

I go back to Monica Lennon's earlier point, because I want to be helpful. It relates to my point about things that we are measuring now that have a high satisfaction level. I am sure that, if satisfaction went in the other direction, the committee would want to know about that. If there are individual indicators on which the committee wants the reassurance of knowing that performance is being reported elsewhere—because, as I said, there are many things that we will no longer measure as part of the national performance framework but which will still be measured and reported elsewhere—we can pick those up individually. I have explained what we are doing for the purposes of the new framework, but if you want reassurance on any particular indicators, perhaps even ones that we are proposing not to continue with—a comprehensive report on why that is the case has been submitted as part of the consultation—I am happy to look at

that. An indicator might not be appropriate for the NPF, but I would want Parliament to be content that we will still be reporting on things that are important to Parliament. I am very open to that.

**Monica Lennon:** Thank you. That is very helpful.

**The Convener:** That was a really interesting line of questioning. The "Satisfaction with housing" indicator is particularly interesting. The deputy convener is spot on in her analysis of some of this. In relation to satisfaction and suitability, my constituents would say to me, "I might be suitably housed because I need three bedrooms, but I am not satisfactorily housed, because I am in a tenement flat on the second floor and I want a garden for my weans to play about in." I am interested to know how you will define what it means to be satisfactorily housed, because I have a lot of constituents who are suitably housed as far as the housing legislation is concerned, but who are certainly not satisfactorily housed.

Ironically, I hope that the 96 per cent rating falls, because that will capture some of the very reasonable housing aspiration that should be a reality for more people. I would be interested to hear your comments on that and on how the new indicator links to other indicators such as "Children's material deprivation" and "Access to green and blue space". There is a link there, because some people do not have a garden or green space for their kids to play in.

I want to give you an opportunity to say what you mean by "Satisfaction with housing" and to say how you might tie some of the indicators together to get a much more nuanced, individualised view of what it means to the families that we all represent.

**Derek Mackay:** Again, I will ask Roger Halliday to talk about the specifics of the "Satisfaction with housing" indicator.

Your point about a range of indicators is informative, because although someone might say that they are satisfied with their housing, there might be other indicators that suggest that there is work for us to do as a society and that there are other elements of their overall environment that must be improved. The "Satisfaction with housing" indicator is not seen as a catch-all for satisfaction with every aspect of someone's life.

Roger Halliday can speak to the detail of that indicator, but the important point to make is that the indicators are absolutely interdependent, as we have discussed. It is also fair to make the point that we must analyse data, but it must be credible data. That is why officials have made an extra effort to ensure that the data is credible. There are Administrations in some parts of the world that do not like the views of experts and do not listen to

the evidence that is put before them, but we have tried to take an evidence-based approach.

10:45

**The Convener:** Mr Halliday, believe it or not, other members want to come in. Because the deputy convener and I have taken up quite a lot of airtime, could you drop us a note after the meeting with some more information on that issue? That will allow others to pursue their lines of questioning. I thought that it was important to follow up on the deputy convener's point to bring to life what the indicator would mean in reality. It would be very helpful if you could do that.

**Roger Halliday:** Sure.

**Jenny Gilruth (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP):** I want to go back to your opening statement, cabinet secretary. You spoke about children, incorporating their views into the process, and asking them about what kind of Scotland they wanted to grow up in. Obviously, 2018 is the year of young people. I am interested in hearing about how that engagement was carried out. I do not know whether you can speak to that in a bit more detail. I note that the Children's Parliament spoke to 102 children. Will you tell us a wee bit more about that process?

**Derek Mackay:** Yes. I hope that the committee has the reports on the consultations that Oxfam Scotland and Carnegie UK Trust undertook for us. People can be approached randomly and, in all consultations, people can be self-selecting. That is why we went out to particular groups. We wanted to hear the views of young people, and the Children's Parliament was one place to do that.

On what has been slightly different about the level of engagement, public organisations are sometimes accused of generating consultation fatigue by constantly consulting on ideas, propositions, policies or whatever. As well as trying to learn from the bespoke consultation exercise that engaged young people, we tried to learn from all the other quite comprehensive consultations that the Government had undertaken, principally on a healthier Scotland and a fairer Scotland. Young people would have been part of them, but we specifically approached them through the commissions that we gave to the charities involved to listen to young people in order to help to shape the outcomes and the mission so that we were fully informed on what young people wanted in designing the mission of Government, public services and wider services.

Will Roger Halliday say a bit more about that? If members require further details that are not in the consultation reports that we have given to them, we can supplement that information.

**Roger Halliday:** The Children's Parliament ran a series of events with children aged from seven to 12 to help to understand what was important to them in their lives at the moment and what would be important to them in the future in the country. That was just one element that fed into the wider conversation, and that was particularly important not just for the outcome on children, but for our broader set of outcomes. As the cabinet secretary said, we published quite a detailed report from the Children's Parliament as part of the documentation. That is a pretty good place to go to, as there is a lot of detail in there.

**Jenny Gilruth:** On wider stakeholder engagement, one of the issues that we currently face as a committee with regard to the Planning (Scotland) Bill and local place plans is that communities that do not have well-established community councils are perhaps disadvantaged, as they do not have community capacity to engage in the process. How did you reach out to not the usual suspects? I note that 161 of the 220 organisations that you asked to engage in the process did so. Was it the usual suspects that you engaged with? How did you tackle that challenge? I am thinking about poorer communities in particular. The overarching aspiration that you spoke about at the start was to reduce inequalities. How do you get the voices of disadvantaged communities involved in the process?

**Derek Mackay:** First of all, you have to go to areas of multiple deprivation; you do not just wait in a hall for someone to approach and hope that they will fully represent the nature of society. You have to go to people individually. That has included looked-after children.

The Cabinet has been requested to listen to people—and it has been actively involved in doing that—in coming to the propositions. The First Minister recently held a full session of Cabinet in which young people of mixed ages and backgrounds represented what is important to them. Of course I listened doing my finance secretary job, but I also thought about what that meant for the national performance framework, as every other cabinet secretary would have done. There were representatives from the Children's Parliament and the Scottish Youth Parliament, and some of the young people who were in attendance had care experience.

That showed that we did not just wait for people to approach us with what was important to them. We went out specifically to ensure that more vulnerable groups and sections of society were listened to and heard. That was as well as a random public engagement approach. There was a specific request to go to areas of multiple deprivation, and that was done.

Can Carol Tannahill add anything to that?

**Carol Tannahill:** Part of the commission was to ensure that people from a range of different backgrounds and communities were engaged. To add to what the cabinet secretary said, the fairer Scotland and healthier Scotland conversations absolutely had that engagement at their heart. The fairer Scotland work engaged with thousands of people from different backgrounds and in different parts of the country. It is extremely challenging to do that comprehensively, but the process has had a very wide reach and has reached a really good mix of people. Not only the formal consultation but everybody's day-to-day interactions and awareness of what people are saying have informed what we have. It has been a good, wide-ranging process.

**Andy Wightman (Lothian) (Green):** My questions are on the purpose and the sustainable development goals. The Government's stated purpose talks about

"a ... successful country with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish through increased wellbeing, and sustainable and inclusive economic growth."

As you will be well aware, sustainable and inclusive economic growth is a contested term. In the proposed outcome on the economy, you talk about

"a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy."

Would it not be better just to have "a sustainable economy" in the purpose rather than what is quite a mechanistic and contested metric about growth?

**Derek Mackay:** I understand Mr Wightman's point but I am content with the purpose because it shows the continuity of the Government's purpose.

I also understand some of the environmental views about including growth but the Government's view of growth is absolutely conditioned by its views on inclusive and sustainable growth, and its purpose takes those environmental concerns into account.

Sustainability runs right through the outcomes and the indicators, and it adopts the UN's sustainable development goals. It is absolutely embedded in our purpose and I think that we are the first Government that has embedded it in that fashion. I am content that our purpose is refreshed, renewed, revitalised, and improved, not just because I have done it but because we have listened to people to make sure that the purpose captures what we want to achieve, and the improvements make sure that it carries appropriate weight.

The term "growth" is not exclusive; it is conditioned by those clear commitments on sustainability and we are trying to achieve

inclusive growth. That should not be a surprise to anyone because inclusive growth has been the Government's mission for some time. I suppose that inclusivity has been better defined and better understood in recent years.

I understand the sensitivity around these questions but I hope that I am expressing how, in continuing with the growth element, we are not undermining the environment, because we are very clear it is about sustainable economic growth.

**Andy Wightman:** If you are wedded to sustainable and inclusive economic growth—and I do not want to have an argument about the term—it would be better as an outcome.

**Derek Mackay:** I think the outcome is clear.

**Andy Wightman:** The outcome is "a sustainable economy". That is a much more general term and my point is that that would arguably be more appropriate as an overarching purpose. If you want to persist with economic growth, that should be one of the outcomes that helps to deliver the purpose.

**Derek Mackay:** There is a popular view of our purpose being economic growth. If we were to diminish that in terms of sustainability, adding inclusivity and wellbeing strengthens the purpose. You could argue that we should change one or the other or both but we are content, as a Government, that our purpose is expressed in a meaningful way and the outcome is succinct about what we are trying to achieve. We have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy. That is the outcome. Encapsulating all that, our purpose as Government is:

"To focus on creating a more successful country with opportunities for all to flourish through increased wellbeing and sustainable and inclusive economic growth."

I think they are in harmony. I know that some environmental perspectives would like to remove the word "growth", but there is a consensus that that should be included while we are focused on wellbeing, equality and sustainability as we achieve that growth. The Government's view on that has not shifted since it came into office but our purpose is now refined and better defined.

It is true to say that the outcome itself is slightly more succinct and shorter but that is in the nature of all the outcomes. They are a bit more succinct and shorter because the purpose encapsulates it all.

**Andy Wightman:** Okay. Moving on to sustainable development goals, they were agreed by the UN and all members of the UN signed up to them. The United Kingdom and the Scottish Government signed up to them.

You have incorporated those goals into the national performance framework in what I suggest is a fairly crude way. You have taken the 17 goals and identified which outcomes they fit into. There are 17 sustainable development goals, there are 169 targets and 232 indicators. The indicators are really quite specific. For example, goal 5 is on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, and it includes:

“Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments and local governments.”

“Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex.”

There are 232 very specific indicators that are part of the UN sustainable development goals. Why have none of the targets or indicators been built into the national performance framework?

**Derek Mackay:** I will let Roger Halliday answer that as the chief statistician, but actually they have.

**Roger Halliday:** As I said earlier, we cannot have 232 indicators for Scotland. That is not manageable if we are to give a picture of what is going on here. In the indicator review and consultation, and in getting to the point where we have this proposal of 79 indicators, one of the criteria was alignment with the UN sustainable development goals. We looked at the ideas that came forward and, when there is an opportunity to align with the list of indicators, we have taken that. For example, we had a proposal for renewable electricity as a proportion of all electricity used and the UN goal was looking at that as a proportion of all energy used. We have just changed that and aligned it exactly with the UN goal. That is one example.

**Andy Wightman:** You say 232 indicators is too many but you publish hundreds, if not thousands, of statistics. I can understand the argument for focusing on 50 or 60—you have 79 here—in a national performance framework to measure how society is progressing. However, given that we have agreed and adopted very detailed indicators, will the Scottish Government be reporting on all of them whether in the national performance framework or outside it? I have heard language to the effect that sustainable development goals have been incorporated into the national performance framework. That is not strictly true if all the indicators are not being measured.

**Derek Mackay:** To be absolutely clear, the sustainable development goals have been incorporated into the national performance framework. That is just a matter of fact; they have. The vision—the goals—is driving the kind of society that we want to deliver.

11:00

There is a separate question is about of the indicators. When it comes to Scotland and an equivalent performance framework for our outcomes, we are at the upper end of any list of comparable nations for the number of indicators that we are using to judge success and progress towards our outcomes and purpose. This is for the focus of the national performance framework. I would argue that we have taken on board the goals because the First Minister has publicly signed up to them and we are supportive of them.

The national performance framework is not the place to measure every UN sustainable goal indicator but we have signed up to the goals within the NPF. The question about how we can measure all of that in relation to the UN sustainable goals is a fair one, but this is not in itself just the measurement of delivery of the UN sustainable development goals. It is the delivery of the Government's purpose in our national performance framework. I get that there is a subtle point in what we are measuring. Here we are measuring progress using the national performance framework in which we have certainly encompassed the UN sustainable development goals.

**Andy Wightman:** I do not deny that the sustainable development goals are incorporated in the national planning framework. There are 17 of them and they are there. The goals do not however sit in isolation; they have targets and indicators associated with them so that the UN can monitor the extent to which the goals are being realised. Where will the 169 targets and 232 indicators, which are intrinsic to the agreement, be reported on? How will we measure the extent to which Scotland is meeting the sustainable development goals?

**Roger Halliday:** We already measure quite a number of those things but, as the cabinet secretary has said, they are not necessarily appropriate for the national performance framework. For example, a number of crime types are indicators in the UN sustainable development goals, whereas we have an overall measure of crime victimisation, but we are still measuring and reporting on those things in the wide range of statistics that we produce across Scotland.

**Andy Wightman:** Within the next two or three years, will we see a publication listing the 169 targets and 232 indicators and the measurements that the Scottish Government—

**The Convener:** Before you answer that, cabinet secretary—we are going to move on to a question from Alexander Stewart in a second—if you have any additional information to give, could you write to the committee? We are going to close this

evidence session shortly. I think we have had quite a good exchange about the national performance framework and the UN sustainable development goals, but if you could answer that question, cabinet secretary, we will move on after that.

**Derek Mackay:** I would answer in the same way as I did earlier. I very much appreciate Andy Wightman agreeing that the UN sustainable development goals are absolutely part of the NPF. There is then a valid question about whether there is one place in which we comprehensively report on all of the UN indicators. That relates to my earlier comment about what the committee might be interested in. Monica Lennon gave the example of the housing indicator. I do not know if any others are in one, go-to place in relation to the UN sustainable development goals. If the committee wants me to take that view, I will respond.

What I am describing today is what we are proposing to measure for the purpose of the national performance framework. If I am required to give further thought to where other things are reported and measured, I am more than happy to do that and I am particularly happy to do it for the UN sustainable development goals. The important point here is that the committee is agreeing that the goals themselves are embedded in the NPF and we are trying to work towards them.

**Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** As you have indicated, cabinet secretary, the purpose of the review is to have a refresh and to extend the whole process. I think that that has been achieved in the consultation that you have done. Some may say that 79 indicators are too many, but time will tell as we progress. Communication is really important, and you have touched on the communication plan that will ensure that that becomes the reality. The cross-sector and cross-cutting portfolios that you have touched on are necessary, but this is about engaging with communities.

Can you expand on how you plan to make the communication plan work? How will you reach the communities, and the sectors within them, that are difficult to reach?

**Derek Mackay:** That is a fair question. As I expressed earlier, the communications plan will be the high-profile event. There will be communication with public sector organisations, the third sector and local government, so all partners will receive the plan. I am quite reassured by the degree of cross-party buy-in: business organisations are on the round table as much as charities, environmental organisations and human rights representatives. I hope that that degree of buy-in and collaborative working will cascade out very positively what we can sign up to ultimately following parliamentary scrutiny: the degree of

buy-in and communication with that high-profile event, cascading the purpose, the outcomes and the reasons and then trying to make it all real. What people should be doing to deliver on that is really important, and that will run right through the Government's mission. Of course, when we come to things like formulating the budget and examining performance, people will be aligned to that monitoring, evaluation and mission.

As I said, if we can agree on this we have a wonderful opportunity, and I sense a lot of agreement. It goes beyond just the party of government and beyond just the Government; it is about our society. This is the first time that we have tried to define our mission and our purpose beyond just what the Government wants to achieve; we have tried to define our purpose as a society as well, which takes us into our values. Frankly, if I can get agreement around the table between people such as Murdo Fraser and Patrick Harvie, I suggest that I am not doing too badly. The process has been quite engaging, and when we reach agreement I hope that there will be a momentum in projecting the outcomes and the mission.

**The Convener:** I have a couple of mopping-up questions, which you might want to respond to in writing as well. Making the outcomes and indicators a reality is not just the Scottish Government's responsibility. There is a responsibility across the public sector. The outcomes and the indicators are set, and the public sector gets on to delivering them in partnership; in five years' time, we will see how we have all done. What monitoring will be done every year or every two years to see how things are going? How will things be corrected if they are not necessarily going the way that you would like them to go? Some information on that would be helpful.

**Derek Mackay:** In principle, we will continue to do the monitoring through the Scotland performs website, which will always be updated and improved. That runs through to the local improvement plan, and you made an important point earlier about how local areas will be affected. We will continue to look at the equalities issue, so there is a whole-population approach but we are looking at individual parts of society.

In addition, the Scotland performs report card is given to parliamentary committees as part of the budget process, and that will continue. I am sure that the audit agencies will continue to hold us to account. You are right to say that this is not about publishing a document and then leaving it for five years. It will remain under review. The legislative requirement will be to refresh the outcomes every five years, but I can assure the committee that we will also have a mid-term refresh or look again at the indicators to make sure that they are working



in the fashion that we would expect. If you require any more information than that, convener, I would be happy to supply it.

**The Convener:** That is helpful. This committee and others may want to have a scrutiny role on that when we get to that point.

Finally, all the committees knew that this was coming down the line from the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015; we knew that this would happen and then suddenly it happened. The process feels a bit rushed—not from the point of view of Government, but from the point of view of parliamentary scrutiny. However, the process is set out in the legislative requirements, which the Government has met. On reflection, do you think that in the future there might be the opportunity to have a bit more time for parliamentary scrutiny and the committees' direct engagement with stakeholders? We have mentioned some of the responses that we have received from stakeholders. Clearly, there is a lot of interest out there and, with a little bit more time, we could have tapped into a lot more of that. We are meeting the obligations under the 2015 act, but might there be a little bit more time for parliamentary scrutiny next time?

**Derek Mackay:** In fairness, I think that, by law, I was required only to renew, refresh, give you the outcomes and the consultation report, and that was it. I have given you the consultation report, matched with the findings. You had a call for evidence and I have given you the indicators as well. I think that I have gone beyond the legislative requirements, and that that was the right thing to do. If I had not given you the indicators, you would just have asked, "How will you measure your outcomes?"

You asked whether there is room for legislative improvement, and I am open to that if it is about further collaboration, engagement and scrutiny. The national performance framework could well be enhanced by that. However, to be fair to the Government, as you have been, I would say that we consulted early and comprehensively. We have used wide and on-going Government consultations such as the healthier Scotland consultation and the fairer Scotland consultation to inform the process so that we are not constantly going back to people but are learning from what they have told us matters to them. The cross-party and cross-sector stakeholder group has been very involved; it has had early sight of the direction of travel, the plan, the strategy and the engagement process. The process has been comprehensive, and so it should be.

To boil it down to your question about the 40 days for parliamentary scrutiny, if Parliament thinks that it needs more time for that bit of the process, I am open to that. However, that does not

in any way diminish the very extensive consultation that we have had. I think that the scrutiny adds to that, and that is why I said at the outset that I welcome this parliamentary point of engagement.

Roger Halliday has told me that it is not actually 40 days; it is more than that.

**Roger Halliday:** It is 55.

**Derek Mackay:** It is 55 days—I have a statistician to my right who has gone through the actual number of days.

As I said, I am open to that, convener, or to any other suggestion that the committee—I see that your clerks are now disagreeing to your left. I am open to further improvements to the parliamentary part of the process, but in fairness to the Government, I have gone beyond what was defined in law. The parliamentary part of the process is how Parliament wants to conduct the exercise, and I commend the committee for taking the interest that it has.

**The Convener:** Our interest will be on-going, cabinet secretary. Thank you for putting on record the legislative requirements and what the Scottish Government has done. I will not get into a debate about Easter recesses, bank holidays and all those things—that is for another day and another place. The committee has an on-going interest and we look forward to engaging further with the Scottish Government, producing our report and of course taking part in the forthcoming parliamentary debate. I thank the cabinet secretary and his team for coming along today.

Our discussion under agenda item 2, which is also on the national outcomes, will be in private session

11:12

*Meeting continued in private until 11:25.*



This is the final edition of the *Official Report* of this meeting. It is part of the Scottish Parliament *Official Report* archive and has been sent for legal deposit.

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