



# Local Government Manifesto 2012

---

Sustainable Cities & Connected City Regions  
#csppmanifesto

A word cloud centered around the word "local". The word "local" is the largest and most prominent. Other words include "power", "intrapreneurial", "localism", "towns", "elected", "demand", "scotland", "change", "mergers", "vision", "regeneration", "cities", "cuts", "decentralisation", "autonomy", "climate", "reform", "broken", "indyref", "government", "democracy", "cspp", "graduates", "quality", "place", "town", "radical", "provosts", "centres", "devolution", "adoptanintern", and "communities".

## Cities

1 in 2 people across the world now live in cities. By 2050 the global urban population is predicted to rise by 84% to 6.3 billion people.<sup>1</sup> Here in Scotland, over 80% of the population already reside in cities/city regions. Our cities are the most significant source of employment (over 60%), wealth creation (half of Scotland's total Gross Value Added), carbon emissions (Glasgow alone emits around 4million tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> per annum<sup>2</sup>) and creativity (R & D expenditure is 80.7% of national expenditure). Cities are not just the beating heart of our economy with our future economic prospects almost wholly dependent on the success of our seven cities and city regions. "The battle to create a sustainable low carbon future will be won or lost in our cities".<sup>3</sup>

Last year was a pivotal moment for Scotland's cities as it saw policymakers heed the long standing campaign by the CSPP for greater emphasis on cities and city regions. The *Shared Vision for Success* saw the Six Cities sign up and pledge action on six key themes,<sup>4</sup> while the newly elected SNP Government wasted no time in promoting the cities agenda with the publication of the first cities strategy in six years.<sup>5</sup> The *Agenda for Cities* sets the foundation for the Scottish Cities Alliance and the Knowledge Centre to support collaborative work around four key themes with £7m funding available for projects.<sup>6</sup> The message from Cities Minister Nicola Sturgeon was clear:

*"it is cities themselves, with their partners, that must be in the driving seat. Scottish Government is clearly one of those partners but cities must determine their own future direction and priorities."*

The Government's strategy has brought much needed focus to Scotland's cities but it lacks detail and clarity across a number of key areas. Crucially, it fails to provide clear implementable guidance on how the Seven Cities balance the challenges of economic development, climate change, public space, mobility and civic engagement?<sup>7</sup> We appreciate the need for the Agenda for Cities to concentrate on "investible opportunities" to plug critical gaps in Scotland's economic infrastructure, but we are concerned that in simply bidding for shovel-ready infrastructure projects our Cities miss the bigger picture. Our solutions are as follows:

### The Case for Mayors

The most fundamental omission in the cities strategy remains the lack of strong leadership at the local level with the ability and power to take decisions on the back of a clear democratic mandate, i.e. elected Provosts. The Government has the right intentions - put the cities in the driving seat - but the strategy's delivery mode (the Cities Alliance) appears unnecessarily bureaucratic, public-sector focused and centrally driven.

The *Agenda* does not contain any measures to devolve powers to enable the cities to truly be in "the driving seat" This is not only in direct contrast to the UK Government's cities strategy<sup>8</sup>, but also against the grain of World opinion which recognises the value and effectiveness of City Mayors. The UK Government's strategy explicitly argues that the success of cities, and therefore the country, necessitates "a fundamental shift in the relationship between national government and cities". The

---

<sup>1</sup> See: "World Urbanization Prospects: The 2009 Revision", 2010, UN.

<sup>2</sup> See: "[Sustainable Glasgow](#)"

<sup>3</sup> See: "[Hotting Up? An Analysis of Low Carbon Plans and Strategies for UK Cities. Volume 1: Main Findings](#)", April 2012, Tim Dixon, Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development (OISD).

<sup>4</sup> See: "[Scotland's Six Cities - A Shared Vision for Scotland's Success](#)", May 2011, SCDI. Note: the document was published when Scotland only had six cities and not the seven it now has after Perth regaining city status.

<sup>5</sup> See: "[Scotland's Cities: Delivering for Scotland](#)", December 2011, Scottish Government.

<sup>6</sup> A briefing on the Scottish Government's strategy will be published shortly.

<sup>7</sup> See: "[Urbanized](#)", 2011, Gary Hustwit

<sup>8</sup> See: "[Unlocking Growth in Cities](#)", December 2011, UK Government.

resulting “city deals” have seen a “genuine transfer of power” with referendums taking place on directly elected mayors and a range of other innovative measures to allow cities shape their own future.<sup>9</sup> In Scotland, we run the risk of our cities slipping back into the role of being local delivery agents of national policy. This need not be so.

Scotland’s cities require at least the same level of autonomy and powers as their English counterparts to grow our economy sustainably. It is time for the growing clamour in favour of elected Provosts to be heard and the ambivalent, outdated attitude to end so our cities can join the world of mayors. Elected Provosts are no panacea but the case is compelling: the most liveable and successful cities in the world have mayors;<sup>10</sup> they encourage more interest in local elections and attract more diverse candidates and higher quality elected representatives; and generate greater economic growth<sup>11</sup>. We call on the Scottish Government to pilot the introduction of elected Provost in our main cities so they have the governance and leadership to deliver the strategy.

It is our belief that an elected Provost must have control of the policy levers that deliver critical items of economic infrastructure (economic development, planning and transportation) and a range of powers to effectively tackle climate change. Scotland’s cities should therefore be given greater power, up to and including the point, where the whole of the public pound currently spent within the city boundary is devolved to the city.

This would include the capital and revenue allocations of the entire public service family being allocated the Office of the Mayor/Provost which would enable Provosts to pursue balanced growth through the consideration of policies which are otherwise too politically challenging to implement (for example, congestion charging). If Scotland is to achieve its potential and become a low carbon economy it needs the governance structures to deliver. It is that simple.

### **Infrastructure Investment Fund**

The creation of a Scotland-wide Infrastructure Investment Fund<sup>12</sup>, with the ability to borrow and make strategic funding decisions, would bring tangible improvements to Scotland’s infrastructure and embed a more collaborative approach. By bringing Councils together on a cross-party basis and stressing that not every project can benefit from the outset, infrastructure investment would be depoliticised and policy stability would be achieved in the long term over a number of electoral cycles. And by embedding partnership working across and beyond local government structures, our cities would ensure that their real economies, which “do not stop at municipal boundaries”, are more effectively managed.<sup>13</sup>

Clearly, this would not happen overnight. It would be a long and trying process to change the DNA of our competitive cities. Nonetheless, the collective clout of the Seven Cities should not be underestimated nor their willingness to work together under a “Scotland plc” model. The ability to jointly procure, to pool resources and work together on items of infrastructure would have a transformative impact on the Scottish economy.

### **No Place like Home**

The Government insist that our cities will follow a “placemaking approach [and deliver] a more energy efficient, lower cost environment that enhances the quality of life of all who live and work within and around them”. We are concerned that this fine rhetoric will not be followed through

---

<sup>9</sup> See: “[Greater Manchester City Deal](#)”, March 2012.

<sup>10</sup> A quick glance at the most liveable cities as ranked by the [Economist](#) and [Mercer](#) validates this point.

<sup>11</sup> See: “[What can Elected Mayors do for our Cities?](#)”, March 2012, Institute of Government

<sup>12</sup> Australia is an example of how this approach can work. [Read more.](#)

<sup>13</sup> See: “City-Region Economies in Scotland: Re-Stating the Policy Cases”, June 2011, Professor Duncan Maclennan CBE FRSE, Centre for Housing Research, St Andrews University.

given the overt economic focus of the strategy and the prevailing economic conditions. In other words, we will see the Seven Cities narrowly focus on projects of high economic worth and neglect the vital social and environmental factors that make attractive, liveable places.

This is a mistake. The success of a city relies almost entirely on the relationship between the place and its people: that is, its liveability and workability. There is no use having economically successful cities if no one wants to spend time in them. Our cities have to adopt a more holistic, participative and long-term strategic vision that recognises and values the importance of well-designed and multi-functional urban places.<sup>14</sup> After all, the most successful cities in the future will be those who “harmonise the goals of prosperity and quality of life”.<sup>15</sup>

In experimenting with new ideas and innovative ways of working to create a unique sense of place, our cities should accompany a strong focus on economic growth with measures to prevent a damaging and counter-productive growth in carbon emissions and congestion.<sup>16</sup> This means:

1. Introducing congestion charging for a brief trial period followed by a referendum with all money raised being directly invested into public transport infrastructure projects that the public chooses. After a successful pilot in 2006, which was strongly opposed by the public, Stockholm successfully won a referendum.<sup>17</sup>
2. Creating continental-standard active travel infrastructure to make our cities more cyclist and pedestrian friendly.<sup>18</sup>
3. Prioritising imaginative cityscape that future proofs and declutters our urban realms to create a unique sense of place.
4. Supplementing climate change plans with binding carbon reduction targets both in the interim and long-term and introducing carbon budgeting.<sup>19</sup>
5. Guarding against “spatial blindness”<sup>20</sup> by adopting a balanced approach to their city and hinterlands.

### **Last but not least**

Cities are constantly evolving; constantly changing. Increasingly, the most successful cities are those that balance the social, economic and environmental pressures to enable people and infrastructure to support one another.<sup>21</sup> Health, education and culture are just as important as economic growth and innovation. Whether Scotland’s cities can implement the strategy in a balanced and collaborative manner and build on their excellent performance to date remains to be seen<sup>22</sup>.

Ultimately, it is a judgement for all us to decide if our cities have become more liveable in the future. In the absence of a defined route map for success we have provided the following questions so you can decide yourself if the projects that are commissioned by the Scottish Cities Alliance have been effective:

- Why is it being commissioned?
- How will it be funded?

---

<sup>14</sup> The recent example of “[Future Glasgow: City Vision](#)” is a good example of how this would look in Scotland. For an international example see: “[The Freiburg Charter for Sustainable Urbanism](#)”, The Academy of Urbanism.

<sup>15</sup> See: “[Manifesto for a Model Mayor](#)”, March 2012, The Guardian. Also, see: “[Cities of Opportunity](#)”, 2011, PWC.

<sup>16</sup> See: “[Better Buses](#)”, Patrick Harvie MSP

<sup>17</sup> In just six months, Stockholm saw traffic levels reduce by 22% and emissions by 14%. [Read more.](#)

<sup>18</sup> An easy way of doing this would be to spend a minimum of 10% of the transport budget on sustainable transport projects.

<sup>19</sup> For example, Edinburgh has committed to reducing emissions by 40% by 2020 but these are not binding. See: “[Sustainable Edinburgh](#)”

<sup>20</sup> A fantastic phrase from Douglas Scott who is on our towns policy group.

<sup>21</sup> See “[Cities of Opportunity](#)”.

<sup>22</sup> According to new research, three Scottish cities are in the top five most productive cities. [Read more.](#)

- What will it achieve?
- When will it be completed?