



Independence for Scotland Party

A Manifesto for Independence

Scottish local elections, 2022

Independence. Nothing less.





Introduction

Independence for Scotland Party (ISP) was formally recognised by the Electoral Commission in May 2020. The work to create the party in the midst of a global pandemic had been proceeding for many months by that date.

Despite mandates being given at each election in Scotland since 2014 for another referendum to be sought by our parliament in Holyrood, nothing placed the unfairness of the constitutional arrangement of the United Kingdom into such stark relief as the outcome of the UK-wide referendum on continued membership of the EU in June 2016. Two-thirds of Scots voted to maintain our historically strong links with our European neighbours but on January 31st, we formally left the EU.

Continued inaction by the Scottish Government was doing nothing to immediately address issues of poverty and the imminent threat to our economy - and therefore, jobs - and so we founded and built a new party. The 2016 election had demonstrated the absurdity of being asked to give both votes to the SNP which wasted nearly a million pro-independence votes, gifting London-based parties additional representation in Edinburgh and the ability to block any change that would benefit Scotland and her people.

There was clearly a need for a pro-independence party as Option 2 and founding a party to compete in the regional list was the obvious solution. So we made ISP.

As a member-led party, a majority vote required our candidates to stand aside when Alex Salmond became leader of Alba. Members felt that his leadership in getting Scotland toward the referendum in 2014 would be a critical factor with voters and there was no point in there being *two* pro-independence parties on the regional list.

That was then.

As Scotland has fully-one-third of Europe's entire renewable energy potential, a Green New Deal must be at the future of our nation's economic planning. To date, ISP is the only party to fully commit to [Common Weal's 21 for 21](#), so ISP will continue to contest elections. We will continue to develop policies.

At our Spring Conference in March 2022, delegates voted on a motion to ensure that ISP is the first political party in Scotland to commit to changing taxation to an asset-based tax system being the simplest, most efficient way to fund Universal Basic Income and an uplift in state pension.

The 2022 local elections are simply a different beginning.

About Us



Our members

Independence for Scotland Party (ISP) is a member-led, grassroots party. The membership is represented by elected office holders in each of Scotland's eight parliamentary regions.

Candidates and elected representatives of the party do not report to or take direction from a Party Whip or unelected delegates but instead take instruction from the office holders in their regional branch.

Representatives are expected to vote on a basis guided by the party's accepted policies, otherwise with their conscience. Should any branch be dissatisfied by their representative, they can vote to remove them.

We feel this is the most democratic way to govern a party and to ensure implementation of member's ambitions and party aims, and we have an Executive who will all stand for election at autumn conference.

Our Executive

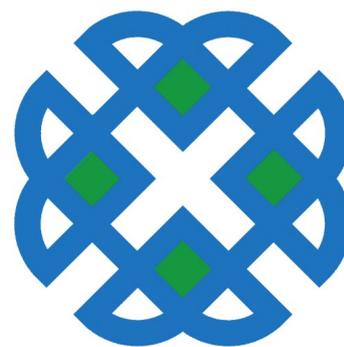
- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Colette Walker | Founder and Party Convener |
| Julie McAnulty | Deputy Convener |
| Joan McDowall | Founder and Ordinary Member |
| Nick Hobson | Party Treasurer |
| Kevin Borthwick | Nominating Officer |
| Andrew Bentley-Steed | Ordinary Member |

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Independence



ISP believes it is not acceptable for one nation to be required to have to ask another for the right to determine its constitution and future.

Plebiscite Commitment

ISP contest Scottish Parliament elections as *plebiscites*. It is the party's stance that if a majority of seats return pro-independence MSPs, this is a binding expression of the Scottish people's desire for independence from the United Kingdom. The Acts of Union were a *bilateral treaty*. In international law, such a treaty is annulled when one or both parties withdraw.

The Scottish Constitution

ISP proposes a written Constitution for Scotland confirming the fundamental democratic institutions and functioning of the State and setting out the rights and liberties of the sovereign Scottish People.

We support an Interim Constitution being adopted before an independence vote and coming into force on Independence Day. The Interim Constitution will form part of the Independence 'offer' to the Scottish people and protect their rights during the change to an Independent Scotland. It will be passed into law as a normal Scottish Parliament Bill.

The final Constitution of Scotland will be developed and ratified after Independence in a process and timescale set out in the Interim Constitution. We suggest that five years would be appropriate. Both Interim and Final Constitutions will be amendable by a two thirds majority of MSPs, followed by a simple majority in a national referendum to distinguish these from ordinary domestic law.

Civil Service

ISP believes that an impartial, non-political civil service is a fundamental building block of a democratic state. We consider that the Civil Service Code setting out standards of integrity, honesty, objectivity and political impartiality should have legal force in regard of senior civil servants in Scotland.

An independent Scottish State will require a range of additional departments which the devolved Government currently lacks. In order to build the capacity to take on the full powers of independence it will be necessary to identify existing staff capacity, the probable TUPE of UK-employed staff to the Scottish State and additional recruitment requirements. 'The Big Four' financial service companies will be barred from all layers of government: it's time to end the revolving door of current lobbying practices.

If elected, ISP will seek to establish a formal scoping exercise to identify staffing requirements for at least the following:

- * Home Office
- * Foreign Office
- * Defence Department
- * Customs and Borders Agency
- * Pensions Authority
- * Central Bank
- * Expansion of Revenue Scotland to collect all taxes
- * Expansion of Social Security Scotland to administer all benefits

Once complete, draft implementation Bills will be prepared.

Monarchy and an Elected Head of State

ISP does not support the appointment of a new monarch without consultation of the Scottish electorate nor should MSPs and other elected officials renew their oath without consulting constituents. The independence of Scottish laws, courts and officers is guaranteed by the Act of Union and there is no equivalent in Scotland of England's 'divine right' of kings: we, the people of Scotland, remain sovereign.

More than independence, we believe that the issue of real democracy, and who is elected to serve as Head of State, unites the majority of Scots in common cause.

Economics of an independent Scotland

ISP believes that an independent Scottish Currency issued through a Scotland-housed Central Bank is the best way to maximise the economic potential of Scotland's resources and create prosperity for the Scottish people. This currency is proposed to be issued by a Scottish Central Bank, and be the tender for purchases, exports and debts attached to Scotland.

ISP believes that a Scottish Public Bank will allow Scotland to utilise the capital of the Scottish people to best effect with a remit of improving infrastructure, re-industrialisation, agricultural development and supporting technological progress.

The Public Bank would take on national projects of strategic use and for the public good, invest in projects considered sustainable and profitable, provide low interest loans, and return profits made on loans to the Scottish Government for its spending.

ISP supports the establishment of a Sovereign Wealth Fund. This Fund would be seeded by the Scottish Government and would look to make sustainable, ethical and environmentally responsible investments in Scotland in partnership with the Scottish Public Bank, government, other bodies and businesses with a view to long-term returns. The Fund will be owned by, and therefore accountable to, the Scottish people.

This approach to how economics in an independent Scotland will function is based on human-centred capitalism which decrees that human well-being is more important than economic metrics, and that free markets exist to serve our common goals and values.

Tax: transitioning to a fairer, asset-based system

ISP is the first political party to commit to replacing income-based taxes with an asset-based tax system. The technology to make this transition now without any need for new investment already exists: it is in fact being used by governments and corporations globally. Crucially for Scotland, the institutions and laws that allow us to make this change *before independence* also exist.

Little understood is that in the wake of the 2014 referendum, the Scottish Government was given *fully-devolved control over local taxation*. ISP could cut tax you currently pay as community charge to under £300 and still increase local authority revenue.

By making the transition to a fairer system, closing the loopholes that allows the wealthiest and most able the means to avoid paying, ISP is arguing that we can close the gap between the small amount you should be paying and the massive amount you are currently paying now.

The idea is simple: you may be able to move money to secrecy regimes but you can't move land. Money is easy to lose, steal and devalue but in an age of climate harm, good land is only ever going to increase in value which is why the wealthy individuals and 'shell companies' registered in their name need property portfolios.

ISP is arguing that if you wish to own a part of Scotland, you pay the taxes due. Failure to register the ultimate beneficial owner as liable for tax in Scotland will ensure that the property is nationalised for public good. From oil and gas to mineral deposits, to agricultural land, forestry, shooting estates, our city streets, and our massive potential in renewable energy, Scotland has what the world wants, and crucially, *needs*.

Arguments from political commentators, indeed policies of other parties, argue for a Land Value Tax but this puts the positive case at risk from arguments about how much a plot of land is worth and who calculates the value. It is much simpler, especially when trying to deal with industries that continue to pollute our planet and contribute to climate harm, to tax the use of the land itself.

To find out more, go to:

https://www.isp.scot/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Leaflet_TheTronTax.pdf

Universal Basic Income (UBI)

A Universal Basic Income (UBI) is defined as an unconditional income for every individual as a right of citizenship. Poverty in Scotland, the COVID-19 pandemic and labour-displacing technological changes mean that action to alleviate economic insecurity and inequality is more pressing than ever.

ISP supports a Universal Basic Income, paid to all permanent legal residents of Scotland. This income is to be funded in a socially just and equitable manner and implemented based on the best available national and international evidence.

This income is to be streamlined and integrated with other necessary income support mechanisms, including pensions, student living costs and disability support.

ISP also notes that the UK state pension is one of the lowest in the world and supporting an increase in Scottish pensions following independence, it should be noted that by moving all pensioners to a UBI, the state pension would be immediately increased by 7% in a single year* to £7,706 p.a.

(* Reference: *Widerquist & Arndt, 'The Cost of Basic Income in the United Kingdom: A Microsimulation Analysis', 2020*)

The Green New Deal

Employment

Our nation – and our world – faces a “perfect storm” of economic and environmental crises that threaten not only the global economy, but life on Earth as we know it. The dire, existential threats of climate change, and a stagnating and unfair economic system require a new approach for supporting a more resilient, climate friendly economy that can provide meaningful and rewarding employment for its citizens.

The **Green New Deal** goes beyond environmental policy with a series of coordinated actions to promote well-being and sustainable economic growth through a new blueprint for employment in Scotland.

ISP proposes to:

- Introduce a living wage for all employees, prohibit exploitative zero-hour contracts and take other measures to curtail abuse in the gig economy.
- Work towards a legal obligation on companies with more than 20 staff to offer the opportunity of a 4-day working week.
- Initiate a review of all local and central government functions and structures to create opportunities for decentralisation of work and promote working from home.
- Introduce grants for people wishing to attend college or other institutes of Higher Education to retrain for green sustainable employment. Larger companies will be required to contribute financially to training.
- Double investment in environmentally friendly technologies that support highly skilled jobs in Scotland.
- Work towards companies allowing office staff to work from home for up to 3 days a week.
- Invest in sustainable businesses including cooperatives and non-profits by providing grants and loans with an emphasis on small, locally based companies.
- Aim to move to 100% clean energy by 2030.
- Invest in existing clean energy technologies and redirect funds from fossil fuels toward research in wind, solar, tidal, and geothermal energy.
- Create jobs through research in sustainable, non-toxic materials and closed-loop cycles that eliminate waste and pollution, as well as organic agriculture, permaculture, and sustainable forestry.

Energy

Acknowledging the reality of a climate emergency and the failure of COP26 Glasgow, it is important for Scotland to have an awareness and vision of what energy policy should be with regards to what exists and what is required. As oil and gas used in energy production and vehicles declines, there will still be a transition period with products derived from hydrocarbons (namely plastics).

ISP calls for the set-up of a state-owned and operated Scottish energy company

which would manage the careful transition from oil and gas. This company, with responsibility for managing assets in the oil and gas sector, would also therefore be responsible for phasing out supply from foreign countries, which often have a far worse environmental and human rights record.

This transition would allow for financial proceeds to directly benefit the people of Scotland, with an expansion of research and development of more environmentally sound energy solutions. These measures will work to alleviate the fears of workers in the North East, which are currently having harmful effects on the wider Scottish economy.

ISP is firmly against all new nuclear installations, both fission *and* fusion, in Scotland.

Environment

ISP acknowledges that the environment and climate change is the greatest threat to human life as we know it and that urgent action on this issue is essential in this next parliamentary term.

ISP does not feel that the Scottish Government's environmental commitments are ambitious enough to ensure that Scotland leads the way on meeting internationally mandated targets, particularly after the failure of COP26 in November.

The coronavirus pandemic has taught us that action in the immediate term prevents greater damage in the longer-term, and a plan for this is necessary to protect our environment, economy and society.

ISP proposes to define a Green New Deal to be legislated for before and implemented in the immediate aftermath of an independent Scotland. This Green New Deal, accepting the outline of Common Weal's Common Home Plan, aims to radically transform Scotland's economy to tackle the environmental crisis and additional social problems faced by the Scottish population.

Multi-Level Marketing

ISP believes that predatory practices of Multi-Level Marketing companies should be curtailed in an extension to existing laws on pyramid schemes. This is to protect vulnerable people from an unsustainable income model and false advertising of this, particularly in the economic aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic.

Land Reform

The issue of land reform should be a central focus of any parliamentary term to support Scotland's effort in the climate and biodiversity crises, and to ensure that the ownership of Scotland's land always works for the public good.

ISP proposes modernisation of Scotland's land laws to broaden and diversify ownership. These reforms will operate transparently in responsibly stimulating Scotland's economy, particularly in rural and agricultural settings.

Agriculture

Scottish agriculture produces some of the highest quality food in the world, based on generations of know-how, a clean environment and a positive engagement with issues of animal welfare and nature conservation. But Scottish farming is facing unprecedented challenges due to Brexit and intensive price-driven competition from out-with Europe.

ISP proposes to adopt a twin track agricultural policy supporting Scotland's place as a world leading producer of quality food with the highest standards of animal welfare and environmental protection.

The first track involves agriculture close to markets and contains the following proposals:

- Increasing investment in research and development over the next decade.
- Actively support online systems for marketing and sale of farm produce globally continue.
- Commit to the highest standards of animal welfare and biodiversity conservation in the world.

The second track concerns remote rural farming, which faces significant challenges of global market conditions and an ageing farming population:

- Add value and generate employment in the farming sector by increasing processing capacity, particularly in the Highlands and Islands.
- Offer of a grant of £10,000 per family who demonstrate their ability to launch a sustainable farm business to take on a farm of crofting lease and a further £100,000 no-interest loan to invest in the farm business.

Forestry

Trees and forests make an important contribution to the wellbeing and economy of Scotland. However, the current monocultural approach does not provide sufficient benefits to local communities especially in remoter parts of Scotland.

We want Scotland's forests to be fully compatible with the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) including 'access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all', 'sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth', and 'full and productive employment and decent work for all'.

ISP's priorities in this area are:

- Doubling forest area in Scotland by 2053 through increasing the annual target for new forest creation to 30,000 hectares per year, of which at least 15,000 will be achieved through natural regeneration and planting of native species.
- Promoting small-scale local processing industries to provide full-time and highly skilled local jobs in remoter areas. Funding for this will come from a New Zealand-style 2% forest levy on all timber harvested in Scotland.
- Introducing land reform measures that will encourage greater diversity in forest ownership with a minimum of 20% of all forests in Community ownership and management by 2030.
- Establishing local forestry strategy plans to ensure that all forestry activity supports local economy and communities.



Equalities

ISP is committed to the vision of an independent Scotland free from all forms of bigotry and discrimination. Scotland has been subject to gross inequalities as a part of the UK through the hostile environment immigration approach, religious intolerance and the impacts of austerity hitting women the hardest.

It is imperative that action is taken in order to achieve a vision of ensuring every Scottish citizen can access their human rights. ISP supports the entry into the Council of Europe and the **adoption of the European Convention of Human Rights in full** following independence.

ISP supports more action to be taken on misogyny and crimes of rape, sexual assault and harassment towards women which does not place additional burdens on the victim. ISP encourages mandatory training for employers on harassment in the workplace and the addition of consent in the secondary school Personal and Social Education curriculum.

ISP supports the **Equality Act (2010)** and the **Gender Recognition Act (2004)**.

ISP plans to accelerate the setting up of the **Scottish Social Security Agency**. ISP will work towards replacing the UK's humiliating and degrading approach to administering benefits with a medically led assessment which will not require anyone with an evident physical or mental diagnosis to appear before a panel.

In regard to matters of equality, ISP supports in full, the following **policy manifestos and pledges** of the following organisations:

- Alliance's Equally Valued: A Manifesto for Forward-Thinking, Far-Reaching Action in Health and Social Care.
- Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights' Manifesto for Race Equality in Scotland.
- Inclusion Scotland's Rights and Renewal: A Fresh Start for Disabled People.
- RNIB Scotland's A Vision for the 2020s: Focus on Sight Loss.
- SAMH's Standing up for Scotland's Mental Health.
- Sight Scotland's Time to Focus on Sight Loss.
- The Manifesto for Indy.
- The UBI Lab Network's Holyrood Pledge for Universal Basic Income trials.
- Women Speak Scotland's Manifesto for Women's Rights in Scotland.

Education

ISP aims for a modernised education system that empowers pupils, parents and teachers whilst increasing standards at all levels. A radical review, incorporating the best of international experience, of the structure and performance of education in Scotland is required.

ISP proposes that:

- School should start later for pupils than it currently does with no child starting school until at least six years old.
- There should be a gradual and planned increase in entry standards to the profession, as has successfully operated in Finland.
- Teachers' pay should be commensurate with an up-skilled profession.
- As resources allow, aim to move towards a four-day teaching week, with one day per week for marking, and professional development. It is unproductive and exhausting for teachers to spend 'free' time on schoolwork.
- The tax position of state and private schools should be equal and public funds should be directed to level up opportunity.
- Each school should have a fully trained psychological counsellor.
- Pupils with challenging behaviour should have intensive support and, at times, options other than formal lessons.
- The primary role of schools is not to provide 'free childcare' and to achieve our policy objectives we recognise that funding for childcare will also need to increase.
- Languages should be given a greater priority within the teaching curriculum.
- Free music tuition within schools is restored without costs falling on pupils as part of a greater emphasis on creative arts.
- A greater encouragement of sports through enhanced funding for facilities and programmes streamlined with wider health and well-being outcomes.

Europe

Scotland has a long history of association with Europe, predating the Union by centuries. ISP aims to renew those connections with Europe by requesting to join the **European Free Trade Association (EFTA)**.

We would then seek to join Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway in the **European Economic Area (EEA)**, as this would regain the 'Four Freedoms' (free movement of goods, persons, services and capital). EFTA/EEA is the fastest and most practical way to recover the rights of the Scottish people to live, work and trade in all 30 EEA states.

Scotland would also seek to be a member of the **Council of Europe**.

ISP does not rule out an independent Scotland seeking to become a member of the European Union in the future but recognises that a closer relationship with Europe and more time for independence to evolve would allow us to apply from a position of strength.

Defence

ISP supports the establishment of a conventional, non-nuclear, Scottish Defence Force immediately after independence.

This will require the establishment of a Scottish Defence Department and potentially an Intelligence and Security Agency. Independent reports suggest that this force could be operated for between £1.8bn and £2.7bn per year, in comparison to our current contribution of £3.45bn as part of the UK.

ISP suggests that a multi-party Defence Committee, with input from military experts, should be established to identify base and manning requirements, and ascertain assets which could be obtained during independence negotiations.

ISP further supports the re-establishment of historic Scottish Regiments within the SDF (though reformed in NATO-compatible mobile and armoured infantry formations).

Scotland's neighbours, Norway, Denmark, and Iceland are NATO members, while Ireland, Finland and Sweden are not. The invasion of Ukraine, a sovereign European nation, by Russia has clearly changed the importance of membership for all democratic nations in Europe but ISP considers that the decision on joining NATO should be a question for the Scottish people post-independence.

It should be remembered that only one nation has ever invaded Scotland - and it wasn't Russia. We expect that England will continue as a NATO member.

Health

Health Infrastructure

The coronavirus pandemic forced Scotland into the most restrictive measures ever demanded of citizens in peacetime. Access to basic healthcare should never again be restricted.

ISP prioritises the following with regards to **recovering from the COVID 19 pandemic**:

- An epidemiological research taskforce established to study the pandemic contingencies of Asian countries and the response of Asian and Oceanic countries to COVID-19.
- An assessment of contingency plans for any future pandemic event with coordination of national and regional plans.
- Action the recommendations of the Scottish Government's Independent Review of Adult Social Care in full.
- Adequate supplies of PPE ensured for healthcare workers and workplaces including care homes.
- Scottish-based supply chains for all PPE items to be identified in the event of a sudden increase in demand.
- Increase step-down and rehabilitation beds to support those not requiring urgent hospital treatment which should be separated from acute hospitals.
- More funding for ICU capacity in the NHS Highland, Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland areas.

Regarding **care homes and health for older people**, ISP proposes the following:

- Upgrade of care homes through measures such as safe visiting areas, the setting of minimum staffing levels and increased wages to attract more staff into the field.
- A review of care home performance during the pandemic with recommendations for improvement to be implemented in full.
- The establishment of a Commissioner for Older People to advocate for older people's rights.
- A more targeted approach to vulnerable adults in supported accommodation with appreciation that not everyone who is in care is elderly.

On matters concerning **general NHS and health infrastructure**, ISP's proposals are as follows:

- Investigate the potential for track and trace to be expanded to support NHS communications.
- Country-wide roll-out of at-home HPV smear tests.
- Urgent re-examination of PFI contracts across Scotland and pressure put on consortia to pass profits made from refinancing loans back to health boards.
- Aim for a minimum nurse staffing level for hospitals by reviewing bank nursing and salary levels to encourage nurses to stay and others to join.
- Adopt a community-led approach to public health through community workers as opposed to communications coming from government.
- Streamline existing networks with healthcare infrastructure.

Drug Addiction

The mishandling of drug addiction has led Scotland to be the highest European country for drug-related deaths for six years in a row, more than trebling the next country's rate. It is unacceptable that those suffering from addiction are treated as criminals and left in squalor without support.

ISP's priorities to tackle this issue are:

- Support multi-agency pilots for safe injecting facilities and streamline these with harm reduction services.
- Decriminalisation of cannabis for personal use and extend access and research for health-related treatments.
- Introduce a 'flag' system on methadone prescription which offers rehab services after a certain period of time.
- Consider drug addiction as a public health issue as opposed to criminal.

Mental Health

ISP have outlined several manifesto commitments such as Universal Basic Income, a more secure working environment and actions to tackle homelessness. It is expected that these will go some way in reducing personal and familial anxieties regarding financial and social situations.

In the recovery from coronavirus, mental health provision must be a national priority.

ISP calls for:

- An urgent **mental health review**, involving relevant third sector services, to be conducted and recommendations implemented.
- **Accurate and clear data** from the Scottish Government on all aspects of mental health to be published regularly for mental health responses to be more accountable and better streamlined by services.
- An increase in the **access to talking therapies**, with the potential for free services for all citizens to be explored.
- Further bolstering of both **formal and informal systems of support**, particularly for men and young people.

Housing

There is a chronic shortage of housing in Scotland and ISP considers that it is a fundamental duty of Government to ensure that all Scots have access to good quality housing. Homelessness is unacceptable in a wealthy nation.

ISP's housing priorities are:

- Fund new affordable rented housing by Registered Social Landlords.
- Encourage the conversion of offices, no longer needed due to increased homeworking, to good quality affordable rented housing, to create sustainable city centre living.
- Support the internationally proven 'Housing First' model to end homelessness.
- Introduce national minimum space standards for all new housing.
- Provide funding which is appropriate for rural and remote areas, in particular self-build homes, in addition to small scale housing projects for rent.
- ISP supports improved fire safety, but considers that the timescale for the new legal requirement to fit interlinked fire detectors in all homes needs to be amended to be practical, workable and affordable for householders.

Justice

ISP supports Scotland being a safe and resilient country with a justice system that works towards fair and equal treatment of every citizen.

ISP considers it a priority to **depoliticise the Crown Counsel** by removing the Lord Advocate and Solicitor General from the Scottish Cabinet and implement a more transparent communications system between Counsel and Police Scotland. We also believe that a **register of interests** should be created for judges to ensure public confidence in these positions of authority.

ISP considers that **greater provision for sheriff courts and sheriffs**, and **more trained staff and funding for the Crown Prosecution Service** is a requirement to ease the backlog of cases due to coronavirus. This provision will allow a gradual phase out of Justices of the Peace and a renewed adherence to the 180-day limit for prisoners on remand.

ISP **does not support the Hate Crimes Bill** and will vote in favour of efforts to repeal this. *We will work with other parties to review and improve existing legislation.*

The current state of legal aid means that those seeking justice cannot get it. ISP supports the prioritisation of greater **legal aid funding** so that natural law is not governed by income, and reviews into how these inequalities can be better addressed.

ISP will pursue the **VAT repayment of £76.5m from HMRC** paid by Police Scotland to fund better equipment and resources for officers. We further support gradual measures which support more localised policing, and particularly consider the **reinstatement of area control rooms and call centres** in the Highlands and Islands and North East a priority in this regard.

Local Government

Local government in Scotland ranks amongst the poorest in Europe for governmental autonomy and representation. 'Local' authorities in Scotland are too large and remote, while Community Councils are too small and effectively powerless.

The full powers of independence provide an additional incentive to move authority from the Scottish Parliament which does not have the capacity to micromanage local decision making.

ISP proposes that the current local government framework be reviewed on a cross-party basis, with the overarching aim of enhancing local democracy and bringing Scotland more in line with European practice.

The current model of 32 local authorities will be enhanced with an **additional lower tier of municipal or Burgh councils**, bringing local democracy closer to the people. Both levels of local government will have set, autonomous and constitutionally entrenched powers. This will require **devolution of powers from Holyrood to local government**.

Scottish Governance

ISP believes that legislation around Freedom of Information and lobbying must be strengthened. The Scottish Government before, during and after independence has a duty to the people to represent them openly and honestly.

ISP propose the following reforms to these areas:

- Extend Freedom of Information legislation to cover third sector organisations receiving over £200,000 per annum in remuneration from the Scottish Government.
- Curtail unnecessary reasons for exemptions from Freedom of Information requests.
- Move Freedom of Information appeal requests to a body independent of the original authority.
- Extend lobbying legislation to include written and oral meetings, including those with unpaid lobbyists.
- Require that minutes be taken and a declaration of spending on lobbying as part of all lobbying information returns.

ISP additionally support a reform to the Scottish Parliament which would **allow for the recall of MSPs by their constituents.**

Transport

ISP believes that an integrated transport system informed by a clear strategic vision is a fundamental requirement for a connected and prosperous nation.

The effects, and after-effects, of the Covid-19 pandemic are unknown but may be substantial in terms of travel patterns and the financial viability of some public transport services.

ISP considers that:

- A revised National Transport Strategy, including a clear priority list of strategic and local projects, is a pressing requirement.
- International travel connections are a strategic necessity.
- Road, rail, airports, ferry ports must be integrated wherever possible.
- Fixed links offer long term savings and better reliability than ferries.
- Nationalisation of ScotRail was announced in March 2022 but the rail network, the infrastructure by which trains move between stations, remains outside Scottish Government control: this must change if true reductions in costs and better management are to be implemented as part of a nationalised service.
- CO2 emissions from transport must be reduced.
- Single ticket and public transport timetabling are required.
- In the longer term, free public transport for all should be explored.

Information and further reading

Producing a manifesto, let alone condensing the effort of thousands of hours of research, analysis and passionate debate into a document like this, which attempts to distil our shared vision for a modern, progressive Scotland, would simply not be possible without the dedication of unpaid volunteers. Not everyone who has contributed is a party member, we would like to thank you now for your patience and your time – some of you have asked to remain anonymous but you know, and we know, who you are and you're awesome. You are all the Scotland we strive to be.

For readers inclined to read a little more widely, we recommend having a look at what the organisations below are up to.

ISP supports, in full, the policy manifestos and pledges of the following organisations:

Common Weal	commonweal.scot/
Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland	www.alliance-scotland.org.uk/
Coalition for Racial Equality & Rights Scotland	www.crer.scot/
Inclusion Scotland	inclusionscotland.org/
RNIB	www.rnib.org.uk/
SAMH	www.samh.org.uk/
Scottish Environment LINK	www.scotlink.org/
Sight Scotland	sightscotland.org.uk/
Women Speak Scotland	womenspeakscotland.com/
UBI Lab Network – Holyrood Pledge	www.ubilabnetwork.org/holyrood-pledge/