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Dear Andy Milne

As the convener of the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland, I am writing to make you aware that the Assembly has now completed its work and published its final report [*Doing Politics Differently: The Report of the Citizen's Assembly of Scotland*](#).

As described in the attached summary paper, the Assembly was established by the Scottish Government in October 2019 to bring together 100 Scottish citizens to work together independent of Government to consider and report on key questions about the future of Scotland. The report includes a vision statement and 60 accompanying recommendations. These conclusions were prepared entirely by Assembly members and overwhelmingly agreed by them in voting following consideration of a wide range of evidence and discussion with experts. They are ambitious and broad-ranging and provide a unique insight into the issues that matter most to Scotland's citizens and the consensus that can be achieved through an Assembly process.

The Assembly report provides background information on the establishment of the Assembly and how it operated, including the evidence considered and the deliberative processes that were involved. The report also includes individual diaries from many of the members sharing their personal reflections on the experience.

The vision and recommendations can also be viewed in a summary report found [here](#) and the Assembly [website](#) also provides a web version of the report and links to wider materials, which may prove useful.

This has been Scotland's first ever Citizens Assembly. Over 10,500 people were approached on a random basis in order to find 100 participants broadly representative of the wider population in terms of socio-economic characteristics, geography and political attitudes. Supported by independent facilitators and considering a wide-range of evidence from respected experts, the Assembly met in 8 formal sessions over the course of October 2019 to December 2020.

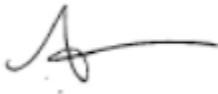
The Assembly has been a truly remarkable process, where people from all walks of life across the country have come together to chart a course for our future. Members have shown what can be achieved when citizens are trusted to work together in a spirit of co-operation to tackle tough political questions. They have worked incredibly hard and with great determination to

see the process through to completion, despite the pandemic and the need to work together online which this precipitated. Many Assembly members felt in the past that their voice would not be heard, but in this report it shines through clearly and urgently.

The Assembly report has now been submitted to the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament. The Assembly looks forward to the Parliamentary debate and the action plan from the Scottish Government that are to follow.

It has been a privilege to be the Convener of the Assembly. This truly has been politics been done differently and I would strongly encourage everyone with an interest in the future of our country to consider the report carefully and add their voice to that of the Assembly, including sharing with colleagues and stakeholders via policy networks and social media channels. We are sharing our reporting on Twitter @CitAssemblyScot, Facebook @CitizensAssemblyOfScotland and Instagram @CitAssemblyScot. All retweets, shares and engagements with our content will amplify the Assembly's work and is greatly appreciated.

Yours faithfully



Kate Wimpres



Briefing Note: The Citizens' Assembly of Scotland

January 2021

Introduction

The Citizens' Assembly of Scotland is a group of 100 Scottish citizens, broadly representative of the diversity of Scotland across age, gender, class, ethnicity, education, different regions and political attitudes, who over the course of October 2019 – December 2020 came together to agree a vision and set of recommendations on the future of Scotland through the process of deliberative democracy.

The Citizens' Assembly of Scotland was announced in Parliament by the First Minister on 24 April 2019. It operates independently of the Scottish Government. The Assembly was asked to consider the following three questions:

- What kind of country are we seeking to build?
- How can we best overcome the challenges facing Scotland and the world, including those arising from Brexit?
- What further work should be carried out to give people the detail they need to make informed choices about the future of the country?

In responding to this remit, the Assembly's report, published in January 2021, sets out the members' agreed vision for the future of Scotland and 60 recommendations to help achieve this in practice. The final report *Doing Politics Differently: The Report of the Citizen's Assembly of Scotland* was submitted to the Scottish Government and Parliament at the end of December 2020. The report will be debated in Parliament and the Scottish Government will prepare an action plan.

The Assembly considered a wide range of evidence from recognised experts, covering: Scotland's social and economic realities; the constitutional position and how decisions are made; what makes for happiness and how values impact on decision making; the challenges to making a sustainable country; and our public finances and taxation. It heard from politicians and discussed with them how we can renew politics together.

The Assembly has been resilient and responsive to the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic, as a result of which its work was paused and restarted online. Through this it retained its membership and brought a renewed drive to consider the impact of the pandemic in developing the Assembly's final conclusions.



The full report sets out the Assembly vision and recommendations in members' own words. A brief summary of the key themes is outlined below.

A vision for Scotland

The Assembly's vision for the country we are seeking to build is a set of ten statements that both individually and collectively, achieved consensus amongst Assembly members. The vision describes a country that is confident and innovative, which supports our most vulnerable and is built around the needs of the people who live here. A country where government and citizens build a mutual respect together and where citizens are more actively involvement in decision making. It highlights the importance of attending to health and social care provision, jobs and wages, tackling poverty, improving education and training, providing support young people, and reforming the tax system.

Assembly recommendations

The Assembly's 60 recommendations, all supported by a significant majority of Assembly members, set out certain actions that could help make this vision a reality. Of these, 58 recommendations were 'strongly supported' (by over 75% of members) and the other 2 were 'supported by a majority' (by over 50% of members), with some recommendations securing near unanimous support.

The recommendations capture the range of ideas and issues that have been important to members throughout the Assembly. The breadth of the recommendations and the levels of support for them send a clear message to the Government and Parliament about the action the Assembly believes is needed to achieve its vision for Scotland. In summary, these fall into the following thematic groups:

How decisions are taken

The Assembly recommends that citizens are more involved from now on through more active democratic participation, nationally and in our communities, and at our Scottish Parliament. Recommendations include improving citizen participation such as through further use of citizens' assemblies, the provision of accessible information and increased accountability of the Scottish Government and Parliament.

Income and poverty

The Assembly recommends a range of proposals to improve incomes and wages and to both prevent and tackle poverty, including a legal requirement of the living wage and the abolition of zero hours contracts.

Tax and economy

The Assembly recommends a range of ways to use the tax system to achieve an innovative and sustainable country through fairer taxation, use of tax incentives for business and for revenue and public spending to be communicated to citizens in a way the public can understand. To support employment opportunities in the wake of Covid-19, members also supported investment in small and medium businesses in Scotland and in scientific and technological innovation.



Young people

The Assembly's recommendations have a strong focus on supporting young people to realise their potential, from greater mental health support, to access to housing such as through rent caps, to improved training and education initiatives.

Sustainability

The Assembly recommends building a sustainable country through public education on the environmental crisis and what all of us can do about it, maximising our renewable energy potential, and incentivising sustainable behaviour across the board.

Health and Wellbeing

The Assembly recommends a range of ideas to make sure we value and improve our public health care system, such as increasing wages for healthcare staff, prioritising mental health, improving health promotion, increasing the transparency of NHS governance and a focus on community health.

Further powers for Scotland

The Assembly recommends a range of actions that related to further powers, such as the devolution of further tax powers, to negotiate our own trade agreements and control immigration law, as well as other recommendations that do not explicitly reference constitutional change but which have constitutional implications, for example, around green tax breaks, reducing the pension age and around employment laws.

Mixed group

The Assembly also agreed a range of additional recommendations, including that internet access should be considered a basic need which is free to all, as well as education and vocational opportunities for all, and a review of the criminal justice system.

For more information please see:

- Assembly [full report](#)
- [Summary report](#) – vision and recommendations
- Full detail of the Assembly, including evidence from weekend, supporting papers and recordings of the plenary sessions can be found here www.citizensassembly.scot

Social media links: ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)).