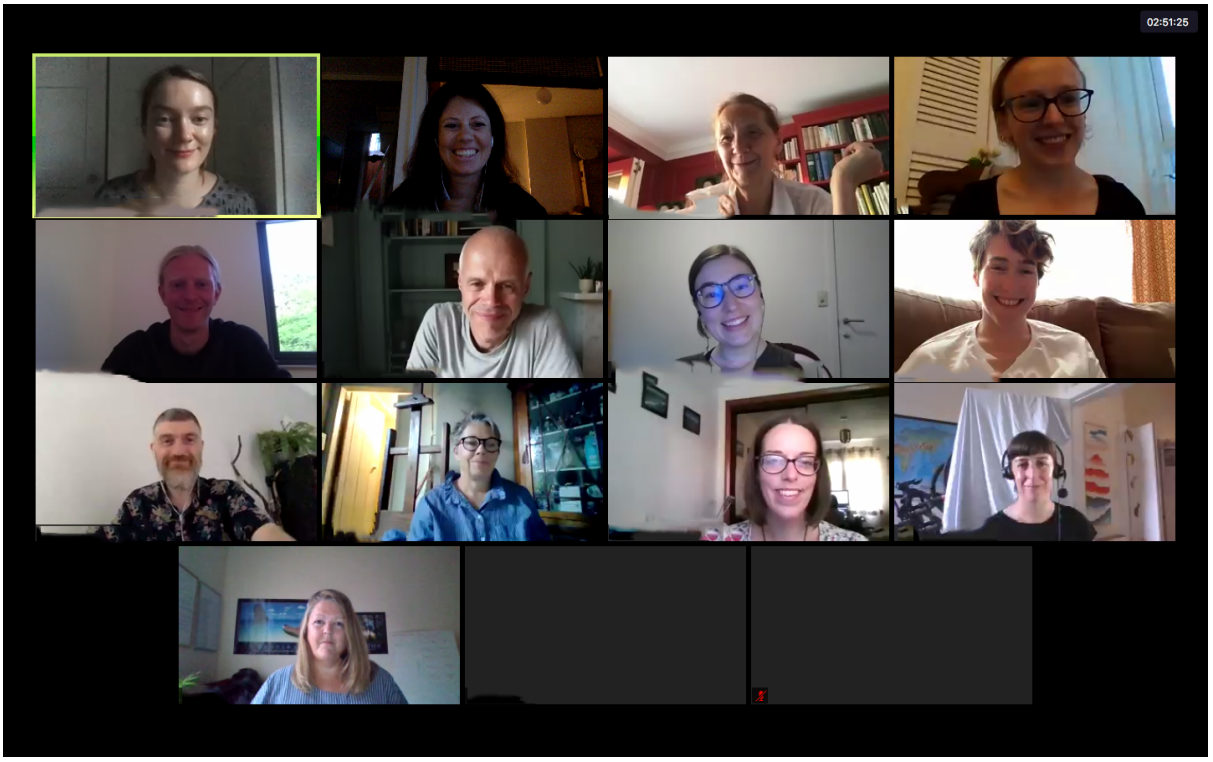
Scotland Open Government National Action Plan - Climate

August 2021



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1. Introduction

1.1 Acknowledgments

We acknowledge the active presence of **12 participants** for bringing their insights, knowledge, experience and contribution for the Scottish Open Government National Action Plan in a fruitful, constructive and open exchange of perceptions, opinions and ideas about climate.

We would like to acknowledge the organizing team, consisting of Doreen Grove, Amy Watson, Maddie Fleming, all working for Scotland Open Government, Anthony Zacharzewski - director of Democratic Society. We would like to acknowledge the support of Annie Cook, Jana Deschepper, Sophie Kiesouw and Ola Ziętek of Democratic Society, as facilitators team that contributed along the organisation, implementation, selection of participants and carrying out of the workshops.

We would like to thank the contribution of senior government official, Helen Rule.

We are thankful for all the help from every individual and organisations that supported us in preparing and reaching out to participants.

We would like to give a special thanks and gratitude to all participants of the workshops, for their time, contribution, ideas and inspiration.

1.2 Context & Purpose Scotland Open Government National Action Plan

The Scottish Government is working with civil society to write a new National Action Plan for Open Government. In five 'idea generation workshops' in July 2021, a broadly representative group of volunteers will help shape the new plan with their ideas and ambitions on open government.
The input will lead to making the Scottish Government more open, transparent and accountable to its citizens and communities.

The workshops are happening online via a Zoom video conference call and take about 2.5 hours. Part of the workshops have been organized in the morning, part of them in the evening to ensure people have other commitments during daytime could make it to the evening sessions.

Workshop dates

- Health: 20 July, 9.30 - 12.00, all ages welcome
- Climate: 20 July, 18.30 - 21.00, all ages welcome
- Financial Transparency: 29 July, 9.30 - 12.00, all ages welcome
- Participation: 29 July, 18.30 - 21.00, all ages welcome
- Data: 30 July, 9.30 - 12.00, all ages welcome
- Special event for young people under 18, all 5 themes: 2 August, 18.00-19.30

1.3 Agenda and questions of the workshops

Agenda for the workshop

18:40 Scotland Open Government introduction

18:50 Introduction in break out rooms

19:00 Climate: what has happened & what could we do (Learning)

19:15 Q&A - clarifying questions

19:25 Snack/tea/coffee break

19:40 Idea generation round one (30 min)

20:15 Idea feedback/cross fertilisation (10 min)

20:25 Idea generation second round (25 min)

20.50 Next steps, how to stay involved

Framing questions

1. How can Government decisions around **climate** be done more openly, ethically, transparently, participatively (i.e with people), and be held to account?

2. Considering what you've heard and discussed so far, what would be the most important ideas for you to take forward in Scotland's new Open Government National Action Plan?

2. Outcomes

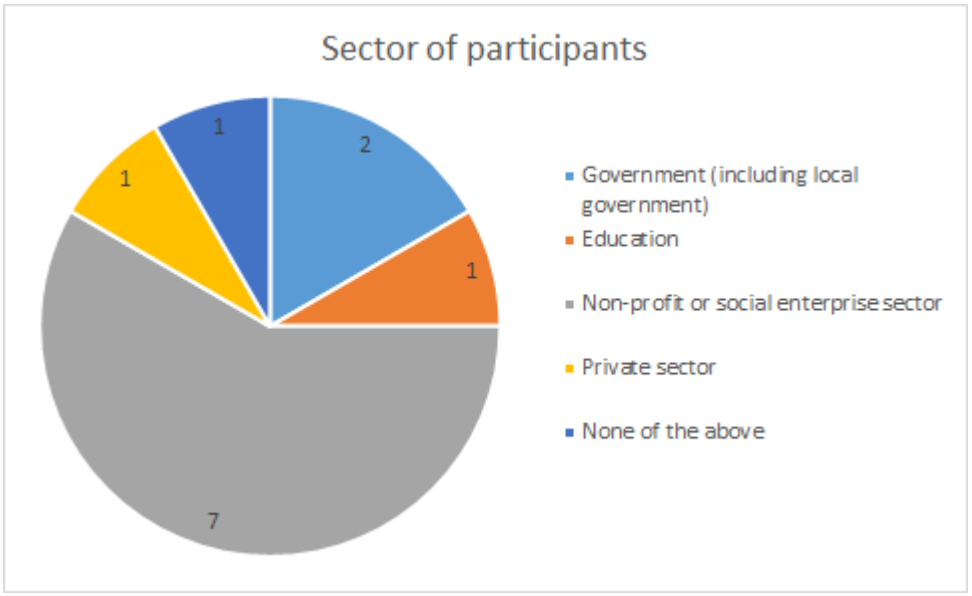
2.1 Description of Participants and Selection criteria

A total number of **37 participants** have registered to the climate workshop, among the total number of participants, **12** participated in the event.

Participants were recruited through promoting the events on social media through Democratic Society's channels, as well as through direct mailing done by Open Government Scotland and Democratic Society.

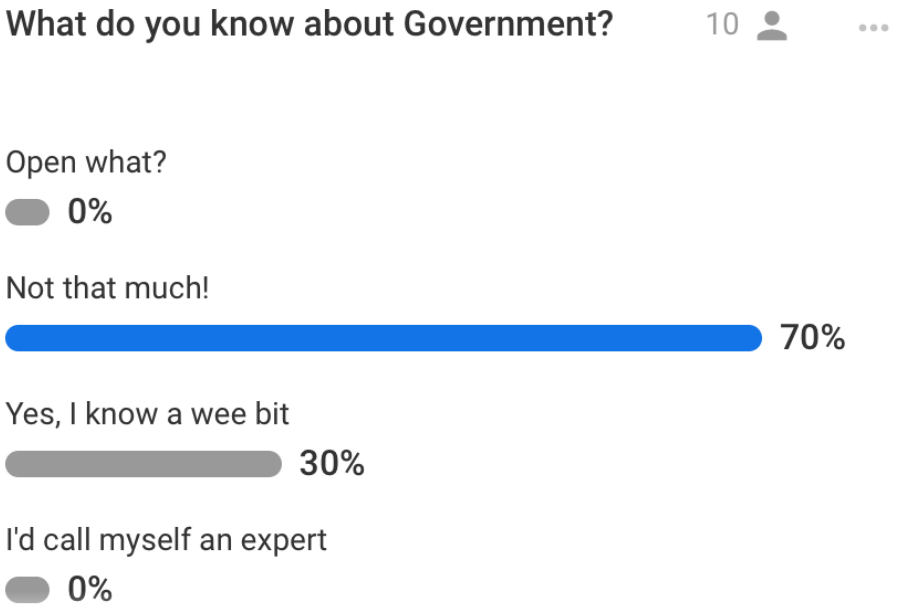
Participants were located in, amongst others, the following areas: Glasgow (2 participants), Edinburgh (3 participants), Renfrewshire, Huntly Aberdeenshire, Orkney, Scottish Borders, Dalgety Bay.

All participants to this workshop were white, with the majority (8) being aged between 46 - 65 years old while the other participants (4) were aged between 25 and 45 years old. In terms of gender split, 58% of participants were women, 25% men while the remaining 17% of participants did not declare their gender. The majority of participants work in the non-profit or social enterprise sector (see diagram below).



What do citizen participation participants know about Open Government?

We asked participants at the beginning of the workshop "*What do you know about Open Government?*" of **12** participants, **10** completed the sli-do activity with the majority saying they don't "*know that much".*



2.2 Outcomes and notes

Climate Summary Overview

Participants had a variety of interesting questions and discussions. The next paragraphs will summarize these discussions, while the raw data of the break-out room discussions can be found on the jamboards (screenshots included below).

Overall, participants felt the most important ideas to take forward in Scotland's Open Government National Action Plan around **climate** were that there should be more experiments to enable methods for direct democracy and local communities to make decisions that suit their urban or rural contexts. There is currently a lack of trust in government because of the lack of transparency and silos (*silo means avoid sharing information*), improving this can be done through creating awareness of how policy and decision-making works at different levels, providing effective, accurate and inclusive local data that is easy to find which can give local communities the tools to take action and awareness on climate and actions people can take. Skills training and capacity building in communities was also important in skills training for the transitions of jobs, education in schools around democracy and political literacy, education and awareness through open and clear communication for all about how climate is being tackled and how people can contribute to change.

Enabling people by opening up safe spaces and creating the right infrastructure for people to collaborate with each other and join forces in order to take action can help ensure people feel ownership at a more local level. Wellbeing was also important to include as a topic in discussions, with the aim to reduce climate anxiety. Open Government can support this by putting in methods for this infrastructure, investing in enabling people to collaborate and supporting cultural change inside Government. Participants felt Government should be going out to different people and groups, there was a recognition that co-design and co-production can be expensive to run and deliver, however, developing a holistic joined-up-working approach is essential so that more people can be heard, engaged and take action on the climate crisis which will ultimately be a positive payback.

Q&A

- Taking into account local circumstances. Example of 20 min principle doesn't work in rural areas
- There's a lot of energy in communities to do things, but difficult to harness
- Consultations where beforehand decisions have clearly already been made, pose a clear issue
- Questions around how COP26 energy will be harnessed

Discussion in Break-outs

Lack of trust in governments caused by lack of transparency

- Increase accountability
- Trusted messengers: this might not always be the government. Work out who might be trusted messengers and bring them into process in more formal way

Paying attention to the local context:

- Differences between rural and urban context. Paying attention to local communities and enabling them
- Learning from place-based work

Data and information:

- Lack of local data. Existing data often fragmented
- Difficult for communities to find the right information to take action, the often need to start from scratch. This creates a hostile environment for communities to set things up

Education:

- Taking action in school, teaching democracy in schools
- Learning from each other
- Skills training for the transition, especially take the chance to look at skills training for young or unemployed people
- Skilling up of consumers to ensure that people understand what their role is
- Building capacity in local communities
- Increase awareness how people can contribute, that's not just about buying an electric car

Siloed approach:

- Joined up approach in terms of participation essential
- Siloed approach resulting from 'project' funding, not a holistic approach
- All voices need to be heard, individuals need to be more engaged
- Open and clear communication about how climate is being tackled
- Invest in enabling people to collaborate. Dividends in the long terms
- Understanding barriers to communication and practice what you preach: internal collaboration

Lack of resources: amongst others when petition is made by individuals

Democracy and power:

- Use different methods of democracy - mechanisms for direct democracy: experimental & local
- Create awareness of power and policy at multiple levels

Taking COP26 as an opportunity

Collaboration and ownership:

- open the space for people to take action, ensure ownership by people, less by government
- Enable small organizations to join forces, enable collaboration
- Enable communities and individuals to take action, including ensuring that the right infrastructure is available.

Open Government:

- Put mechanisms in place to enable OG
- Self reflection and cultural change inside government

Create space for wellbeing in the discussion of climate. Climate anxiety.

Holistic view:

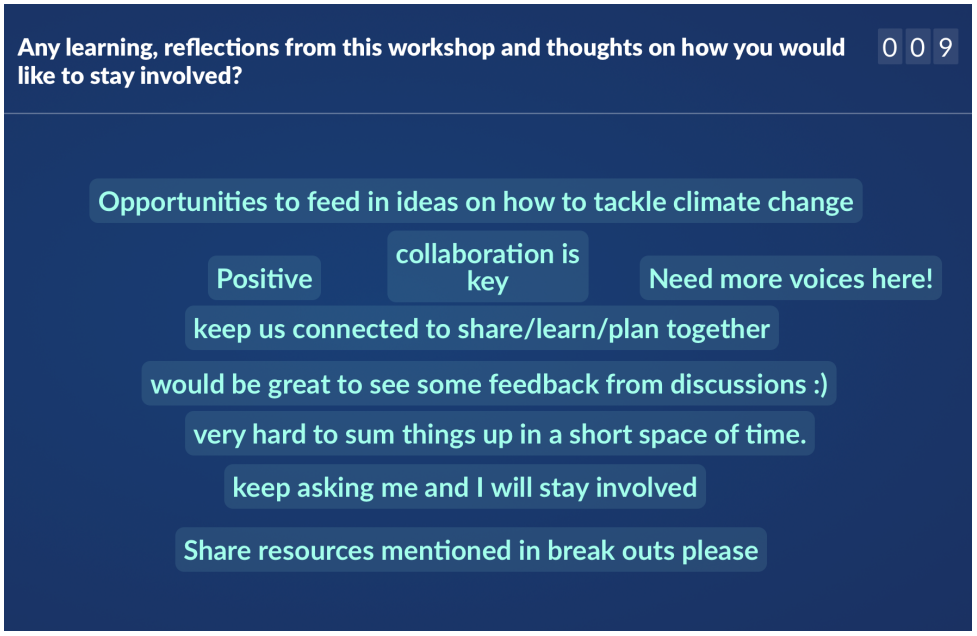
- Understand places AND people

- Look at the effect of measures on people in different circumstances

3. Feedback by participants

To conclude the workshop we asked participants through sli-do *"Any learning or reflections from this workshop and thoughts on how you would like to stay involved?"*
9 participants completed the Sli-do whilst a few left some feedback in the chat.

- Very hard to sum things up in a short space of time.
- Great community feeling. People want to find avenues of change
- More information
- Opportunities to be more involved
- Build collaborative relationships, keen to explore and share insight I have on this. Email follow up, timeline, manage expectations on participation opportunities
- Need more voices here!
- Keep us Connected
- Keep in touch. I will get involved if i can
- Would be great to see some feedback from discussions :)
- Opportunities to feed in ideas on how to tackle climate change
- Share resources mentioned in break outs please
- Feedback from what has happened with our information. We said you did
- Great energy to the event, BIG topic but very interesting discussions
- Keep us connected to share/learn/plan together
- Keep asking me and I will stay involved
- Collaboration is key
- More events, maybe updates on the action plan and opportunities to support this



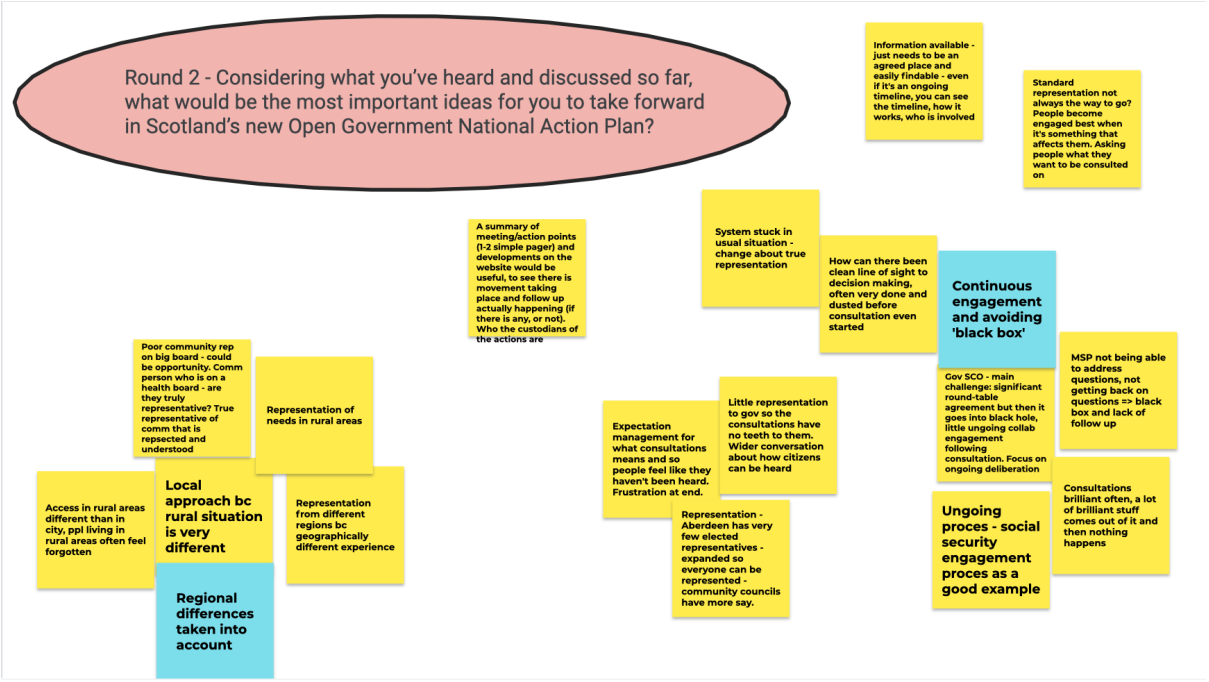
Overall, feedback to the event was positive. During the event itself, participants mentioned appreciating the opportunity to explore these big issues, that the session was informative and that they appreciated the discussions. Multiple participants agreed that more people need to be involved this way.

Participants gave further feedback through a feedback questionnaire. They enjoyed the structure of the workshop, including the discussions in break-out groups, the chance to hear about strategic decisions made around climate and remarked that there seems to be an appetite to create a more transparent and accountable government.

When asked about points of improvement, one participant remarked that the focus should be on the topic as a whole and not on individual issues. They also mentioned that they would enjoy receiving an agenda in advance. Furthermore, some questions remained around the next steps in the process. Specifically a request to have the opportunity to feed in ideas around climate change and a request for clarification of the next steps as a whole. All respondents indicated either wanting to become more actively involved or wanting to receive further information.

4. Appendix

Group A Jamboards



Group B Jamboards