



Scottish Labour Policy Commitments

Scottish Labour's Policy-Rich Agenda For 2007

The first two terms of the Scottish Parliament were about meeting the people's priorities, the third term must be about unlocking people's potential.

It should be a period of ambition and opportunity for Scotland. Our country needs a third Labour-led government, with the ideas to ensure that Scotland is a fairer and more competitive place.

These are just our initial commitments that we believe will make Scotland a better place to live. We will be publishing our full manifesto in the coming weeks with our full range of commitments to keep building Scotland.

Education

Sunrise Agenda for 3 to 11 year olds

1. Improve formal and informal play. There will be more investment in parks, safe green space and opportunities for children and parents to access structured activities.
2. Invest in the training and qualifications of those working in nurseries.
3. Expand the number of subsidised places in breakfast and after school clubs - not just as a safe place for children to be looked after, but as places to learn new skills, keep fit and get help with homework.
4. Extend nursery provision to vulnerable 2 yr olds and review the Scottish Surestart scheme with a view to extending it.

Languages & Basic Science programme in primary schools

5. A deliberate shift in the subjects that are taught from an early age – and specifically in languages and science.
6. The earlier a child learns a new language, the easier it is. Labour has already introduced foreign languages into primary six and seven. But we will go much further, introducing languages to the youngest children in primary school.
7. Specialist teachers to back-up classroom teachers in the primary school, particularly in science.

Improve school buildings and reduce class sizes

8. Reduce class sizes year on year.
9. Labour rebuilt 300 schools in 8 years. We now commit to finishing the job. Step by step every school in the country that needs rebuilt will be rebuilt. A third-term Labour government will accelerate the school building programme and rebuild or refurbish 250 schools in the next parliament.

Secondary schools

10. 100 Skills Academies will be created in every part of Scotland offering young people from the age of 14 the chance to pursue challenging vocational subjects. Ensure that young people leaving Skills Academies receive appropriate accreditation for the skills levels they have achieved. That credit will allow younger people to gain access to latter years of a Modern Apprenticeship creating a powerful incentive for young people to work hard in their teenage years.
11. Create six regional Science Academies, specialist upper schools in local comprehensives. Young people from surrounding areas who wish to pursue an advanced level of science will be entitled to attend.
12. Re-introduce the benefits we had from the arithmetic 'O' grade and create a similar test for literacy.
13. Work with universities to open up their laboratories to secondary school students.
14. Ask Scottish scientists to sign up to a national science outreach programme, to be advocates and ambassadors and inspire a whole new generation of young Scots in science.
15. Create the best education system in the world by 2020.

Opportunities for young people

16. Widen access into higher education by strengthening the links between schools in poorer areas with each of our universities, and easing the financial pressure on the students from the poorest families.
17. Make leaving school at the ages of 16 and 17 conditional on a young person being in education, employment, training or full time volunteering by 2012.
18. Create an army of retired tradesmen to help teach our youngsters new and valuable skills.
19. Expand Project Scotland, allowing more young people to make a contribution to their communities through volunteering while creating opportunities for themselves.
20. Create a National Citizenship Award for school pupils – a challenging national award to encourage the best personal attributes like volunteering, leadership, teamwork and proficiency in life skills.
21. Encourage every school in Scotland to be an eco school.

22. More competitive sports in Scotland's schools.
23. Ensure that looked-after children do not see diminished care and support once they reach 16.
24. Create a duty on public bodies to share information to protect the welfare of vulnerable children and adults – legislating within 12 months to compel public bodies to share information to help protect young people from harm.

Jobs and Skills

25. Labour will create a full employment agency and task it with getting a further 100,000 Scots into work within eight years - a dedicated agency to help those Scots still without a job to get one. Labour will task the agency with reducing the proportion of 16-19 year olds who are not in employment, education or training, reduce the number of adults on incapacity benefit and increase economic activity and employment rates.
26. We aim for at least 50 per cent to have reached level 4 (degree level) by 2020
27. We aim for 90 per cent of the Scottish population to be level 2 (the equivalent of 5 or more GCSE or Standard Grades) or above by 2020.
28. Increase the number of Modern Apprenticeships to 50,000 a year by the end of the next parliamentary term.
29. Merge the Skill Seekers programme into the Modern Apprenticeship programme and raise standards and quality throughout the system.
30. Create an 'Advanced Modern Apprenticeship award to recognise the high level of skills required to achieve level 4 or 5 MAs and also to encouraged, and also to encourage more MA's at this higher level.
31. Create clear articulation and credit transfer arrangement so trainees are properly for their hard work, but apply strict quality control so employers can trust the Modern Apprenticeship system
32. Make Modern Apprenticeships more flexible to meet the needs of small and medium sized companies.
33. Create a specific scheme to harness the experience of retired, highly skilled craftsmen and women to motivate and inspire a generation of young Scots – with the possibility if individual relationships akin to the apprentice/craftsmen relationship of the past.
34. Rule out top-up fees in Universities for a third term
35. Investing in all Scots, not just a few, we will take steps to widen access to higher education to young Scots from poorer backgrounds.

Business and Productivity

36. Separate the 'enterprise' function in Scottish Enterprise from the skills and learning agenda (which will become the Full Employment Agency), so that Scottish Enterprise can focus solely on growing private sector firms.

37. Create new opportunities for young Scottish business talent to become GlobalScot Interns – the International Advisory Board Internship Programme would respond to concerns about the sales and marketing capability of Scotland's high growth/potential high growth companies to compete in the global marketplace
38. An Oil & Gas Academy based in Aberdeen in order to support training and skills conversion.

Communities

39. Scotland's cities remain our powerhouse, but in addition Labour will invigorate Scotland's town centres by creating new partnerships between public agencies and the small businesses at the heart of our town centres, and with powers and resources to act.
40. Labour's shared equity scheme has helped nearly 5000 families onto the property ladder. We will expand Homestake to give more families the first home that they aspire to.
41. Lift 120,000 more children from poverty by 2010, on the way to ending child poverty within a generation
42. Create an anti-poverty unit in the centre of the Scottish civil service

Transport

43. Plan and prepare for a replacement Forth Road Crossing.
44. Building on the air discount scheme, offer a 40% reduction in the cost of ferry travel for foot passengers, with other discount arrangements introduced for cars and freight. The scheme would be open to residents who live on an island that has ferry links to the Scottish mainland.

Crime

45. We will double the number of community wardens nationwide and expand the numbers of their younger cousins – Junior Wardens
46. Establish three new Youth Courts, in Kilmarnock, Dundee and Paisley.
47. Introduce tough new community justice programmes schemes, and have a top to bottom reform of civil justice including a modernisation of our civil courts and new measures on arbitration and alternative dispute resolution.
48. Introduce new disclosure arrangements for predatory sex offenders. We believe that the new Risk of Sexual Harm Orders provide a mechanism for the courts to say that the whereabouts of the most dangerous should be made public, particularly to vulnerable groups. Because they will be limited to the smaller number of the most dangerous offenders, it will allow the police to concentrate on them.

49. Retain the DNA and fingerprint samples of all crime suspects, regardless of whether they are eventually convicted. Earlier this year, proposals to move the scheme in Scotland onto the same footing as the scheme in England and Wales were thwarted by other parties in the Parliament, despite clear support for it from Scotland's police forces.
50. Introduce a Serious and Organised Crime Bill to give the courts and the police vital new powers to protect families and businesses in Scotland from serious and organised crime. Measures include:
- new Violent Offender Orders with extra powers for courts to place restrictions on where violent offenders can live and preventing them from associating with particular individuals or organisations.
 - new Serious Crime Prevention Orders targeted at organized criminals and the market they operate in.
 - allowing various public bodies to share information with anti-fraud organisations to help spot activity and individuals linked to suspected fraud
 - making it easier to seize the assets from low-level, but high volume crime
 - new Investigation Powers so that a surveillance operation that begins in England can continue if its suspects move to Scotland and to make it easier for surveillance operations to be authorised where the crimes spread across a number of police force areas.
51. Shops who sell cigarettes or alcohol to under-age children will have their licences suspended and be named and shamed in local newspapers.
52. We will put an end to the way loan sharks ruthlessly intimidate and extort their victims. If re-elected in May, we will ensure that the Police, Trading Standards Officers and the Scottish Crime and Drugs Enforcement Agency have the powers and resources they need to tackle the problem at its roots. Labour will introduce Serious Crime Prevention Orders (already dubbed Super ASBOs) to exclude loan sharks from the communities upon which they prey and provide increased protection to witnesses who can help put them in prison where they belong

Health

53. We will create new walk in health treatment centres in the main commuter hubs of Scotland such as train stations to make the delivery of health care more convenient.
54. Because Scottish men are far too reluctant to visit their GP, we will introduce health checks for men as well as building on the existing system for women. Men will be invited to take the check when they reach forty. The checks will last for around 30 minutes and will involve at least blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes tests. They will also review a man's general medical history, general physical condition and lifestyle, producing a personal plan to minimise poor health in later life.

55. Everyone in Scotland who is likely to be at particular risk of preventable serious ill-health will be invited to their local health centre for a specialist check through the unique, nationwide Keep Well service.

Culture, Tourism and Sport

56. Legislate for cultural entitlements so that everyone can benefit from Scotland's cultural renaissance. Local authorities will be required to develop entitlements, innovatively ensuring that all can experience and participate in cultural life.

57. To make participation easier for all, visitors and Scots alike, a single online Box Office will be developed for as many of Scotland's cultural events as possible.

58. Create a University for Sport.

59. One of our biggest successes in Melbourne was swimming. We will learn from the professional coaching structure in this sport, extending it where we can.

60. We will also use swimming as the base for extending participation for all, by investigating giving every child in Scotland swimming lessons.

61. Designate 2014 – the year we host the Ryder Cup and hope to host the Commonwealth Games – as Scotland's year of sport.

Environment and Rural Affairs

62. Set tough new targets for developing renewable energy.

63. Ensure that all new houses are built to higher energy efficiency standards and incorporate micro-generation technologies as standard. Make it easier for people to upgrade their homes by removing the requirement to have to go through the planning system for small-scale micro-renewables.

64. Encourage local authorities to set up local energy companies which aim to provide access to decentralised energy networks.

65. Create a green link between the Clyde and Forth. The Forestry Commission, Scottish Natural Heritage, historic Scotland and enterprise companies would work with local councils to create a green corridor.

Local Government

66. Every Labour Council Leader in Scotland will today rule out introducing council tax rises above inflation for the next four years.

These policy proposals show a party brimming with ideas, passionate about taking Scotland forward, and ready to seek the people's trust again. They are only a taste of what is to come. Together we can build Scotland.