

South Scotland Manifesto 2021

A vote for the SNP is a vote for serious and experienced leadership, a programme to kick-start the recovery and, once the COVID crisis is over, a choice over Scotland's future. Here's what we'll do for South Scotland.

INVEST IN OUR HEALTH SERVICE

- We will increase frontline NHS spending by **at least 20%** to support and renew our NHS as it recovers from Covid-19. This will increase funding of frontline services by **over £2.5 billion**.
- We will ensure that **half of the total budget for frontline NHS services will be invested in community and primary care** so that more people can be cared for more conveniently and quickly.
- We will **ensure every GP practice in the country has access to a dedicated mental wellbeing link worker**.
- We will implement an **NHS recovery plan** to restore paused services, ensure urgent care is delivered swiftly, catch up on treatments that have had to be delayed, and bring waiting times back within targets.
- We will roll out **more mobile health services** for direct delivery of care, particularly in rural areas. This will include additional screening services, stroke units and mental health services.
- To help renew our NHS we aim to **invest £10 billion over the next decade** to replace and refurbish health facilities across Scotland. This will include:
 - Renewing or upgrading primary and community facilities, for example **the Cottage Hospital** in Castle Douglas and **Biggart's Hospital** in Prestwick
 - Planning and enabling the refurbishment of hospitals, including the **Borders General in Melrose**.
- We will establish a **fast track cancer diagnostic centre in every health board area** to help better support patients with non-specific symptoms suspicious of cancer. **NHS Dumfries and Galloway will be one of the first three and will be up and running by the end of May**.
- We will create a **new centre of excellence for rural and remote medicine and social care** to provide expertise and advice on the delivery of care in different rural, island, and remote settings in Scotland.

BOOST OUR ECONOMY AND CREATE JOBS

- We will invest **over £33 billion over the next five years** in our National Infrastructure Mission, supporting an estimated **45,000 jobs** and providing benefits across Scottish supply chains. In the South Scotland, we will invest:
 - **£300 million in the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal** which will deliver inclusive economic growth across the region through investment in housing, innovation, transport, skills and culture;
 - **£85 million in the Borderlands Growth Deal** which will build strategically on the region's natural assets, resources and entrepreneurial spirit to drive sustainable economic growth
 - up to **£6 million for the redevelopment of the Stranraer waterfront**;
 - **£3.6 million** to South of Scotland Enterprise to deliver the **Green Jobs Fund**
 - **£20 million** to further increase tree nursery capacity, investing in new and redeveloped facilities at **Newton Don Nursery, near Kelso**.
- We will create opportunities for new businesses to grow and flourish in every part of Scotland. To breathe new life into the economies of rural Scotland we will **create a new, £20 million Rural Entrepreneur Fund – this will provide grants of up to £10,000 to support the creation of 2,000 new businesses**.
- The SNP will invest **£275 million** to support community-led regeneration and town centre revitalisation with **funding available across the South Scotland region**.
- We will assess options for **direct links to international markets from Scotland's ports and airports** – reducing dependency on the 'short straits' and airports in the South East of England – to provide cost effective options for Scottish exporters.

SUPPORT OUR RURAL ECONOMY

- We will transform support for farming and food production so that **by 2025 half of all funding for farmers and crofters comes with "green strings"**.

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- We will create a new **£15 million fund to support food processing and manufacture to develop local supply chains and transition to low or zero carbon operations.**
- We will **maintain our doubled investment in the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund at £6.2 million**, and invest **£10 million** in wider initiatives including **rural hotel infrastructure, and the deployment of Seasonal Rangers** to encourage responsible tourism in rural hot-spots.

INVEST IN EDUCATION AND SUPPORT OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

- Over the next parliament we will invest £2 billion – in partnership with local government – in a Learning Estate Investment Programme including:
 - Maybole Community Campus
 - Dumfries High School
 - Doon Valley Community Campus
 - St Sophia's Primary School
 - Galashiels Academy
 - Peebles High School
 - Replacement for Beeslack Community High School
 - Penicuik High School
- In the last year alone, the SNP has provided a free school meal to **over 13,500 pupils in the South Scotland region**. We will go even further and make sure no child is hungry in the classroom by **providing free school breakfasts and lunches to every primary school pupil, all year round.**

BUILD A FAIRER SOCIETY

- Child poverty is in every part of Scotland. We want to lift children out of poverty in the South Scotland – that's why we will **double the Scottish Child Payment to £20 per child by the end of parliament and nearly double the planned investment in the Parental Employability Support Fund.**
- **We will build a wraparound childcare system** providing care before and after school, all year round, where the least well-off families will pay nothing.

INVEST IN HOUSING AND SUPPORT COMMUNITIES

- Since taking office, we have **delivered 96,750 affordable homes**, nearly 67,000 of which were for social rent – including **over 24,500 in the South Scotland region**. We will deliver a **further 100,000 affordable homes by 2032**, backed by investment of £3.5 billion over the parliament – supporting 14,000 jobs a year.

- We will work with regional transport partnerships to **reinstate or develop new railway branch lines across rural Scotland and commuter lines in urban areas**, delivering enormous benefits to communities and the regional economy, in terms of sustainable tourism and to meet our green travel objective.
 - We will **improve links to Carlisle** and undertake the necessary feasibility work to **allow the Borders railway to be extended for the benefit of local communities and the wider economy.**
- We will continue work to improve connectivity in South West Scotland, as part of STPR2, including enhancing public transport and exploring options to reduce journey times to Stranraer and Cairnryan, such as:
 - The potential merits of new stations and services to **improve connections to Glasgow on the South Western line**
 - The **reopening of the rail link between Stranraer and Dumfries and a new line from Stranraer to Cairnryan**
 - A continuous programme of improvements for the **A77 and A75**, and the development of **better freight facilities**, especially to support the timber industry in the area.
- We will work with local authorities to develop a **Rural Visa Pilot** as a rural and remote migration initiative.
- Our **£579 million** investment in the expansion of superfast broadband means **every home and business in the South Scotland region will have access by 2023.**

WORK TOWARDS NET ZERO

- We will ensure that every Local Authority area will have a **Nature Network of new, locally driven projects which aim to improve ecological connectivity across Scotland.**
- Over five years we will provide an **additional £100 million** to Scottish Forestry to increase new planting, **£30 million** to Forestry and Land Scotland to expand Scotland's national forests and land, and a **further £20 million** will go to increase nursery stocks.

PROMOTE CULTURE AND CREATIVITY

- We will protect free access to our National Museums, including **the National Museum of Flight in East Lothian** and continue to fund non-national museums and galleries through support for Museums & Galleries Scotland.
- Taking **Wigtown, Scotland's National Book Town, as a model**, we will extend the reach of the arts by launching an open competition for further National Towns of Culture for example, **Scotland's National Live Music Town, Folk and Trad Town, or Visual Art Town.**