



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba



Scotland's Futures Forum
Fòram Alba air Thoiseach

Central and Local Government: Building for the Future

Tuesday 9 May 2023, 9.30am to 1.30pm, at the Royal Society of Edinburgh
Light refreshments available from 9.00am

Agenda

09:30 Welcome:

- **Esther Robertson**, Scotland's Futures Forum (Event Chair) and
- **Ariane Burgess MSP**, Convener of the [Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee](#)

Keynote introductions:

- **Joe FitzPatrick MSP**, Minister for Local Government Empowerment and Planning
- **Councillor Steven Heddle**, Vice-President of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities

Presentations:

- **Professor James Mitchell**, Professor of Public Policy, the University of Edinburgh
- **Dr Jonathan Carr-West**, Chief Executive, Local Government Information Unit

10:45 Break

11:00 Workshop groups, covering:

- Building the future: options and implications of change
- Tensions and barriers
- Ways forward and next steps

12:30 Working lunch, including workshop feedback.

13:30 Event closes.

Background

Today's event brings together MSPs and a range of stakeholders from central and local government, academia, and the public, private and third sectors to explore what is required to improve the relationship between local and central government.

The event forms part of the work of the Scottish Parliament's Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee on the local governance review.

Practicalities

The Q&As and workshop discussions will be held under the [Chatham House rule](#), with an anonymised report produced and published by the Futures Forum.

A photographer from the Scottish Parliament will take some photos of the event for the event report. If you do not want your image or name to appear in the report, please let us know.

For more information about how the Futures Forum processes your data, please view our [Privacy Notice](#) on our website.

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Speaker Biographies

Esther Robertson (Scotland's Futures Forum)

Esther is an expert in civic, corporate and constitutional governance and a passionate advocate for a new route map to Scotland's future.

She has spent a lifetime in public service, most recently as Chair of NHS Lothian and before that Chair of NHS24 and a Non-Executive Director of the Scottish Government. In 2017, Esther was asked to chair the Independent Review of Legal Services Regulation for the Scottish Government and was a Press Complaints Commissioner from 2007 to 2014.

In the 1990s, Esther was Coordinator of the Scottish Constitutional Convention, whose 1995 publication 'Scotland's Parliament, Scotland's Right' provided the blueprint for devolution. Esther is currently one of the non-executive directors of Scotland's Futures Forum and Chair of Fife Cultural Trust.



Ariane Burgess MSP (Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee)

Ariane grew up in Scotland but lived for 20 years in New York City. After returning to Scotland, she became involved in the independence movement, joining the Scottish Green Party in Moray. She authored "Life Design for Women: Conscious Living as a Force for Positive Change" and previously worked in sustainable community development. She is the Scottish Green Party spokesperson for Communities, Land Reform, Housing and Rural Affairs and MSP for the Highlands & Islands.

As Convener of the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee, she helped to steer the new National Planning Framework through Parliament and she also sits as an ordinary member of the Rural Affairs, Islands and Natural Environment Committee. In January 2023 she launched her Regenerative Scotland podcast which explores the action needed to ensure a thriving future in the face of our climate and nature emergency through a series of in-depth conversations about aspects of her parliamentary work.



Joe FitzPatrick MSP (Minister for Local Government Empowerment and Planning)

Born in Dundee in 1967, Joe FitzPatrick was educated at Whitfield High School. He studied forestry at Inverness College and worked for the Forestry Commission before gaining a first-class honours degree in science from Abertay University.

A former assistant to Shona Robison MSP and Stewart Hosie MP and, from 1999, a Dundee City Councillor, Mr FitzPatrick was elected in May 2007 to the Scottish Parliament, where he represents the Dundee West (now Dundee City West) constituency.

Joe has served as Minister for Parliamentary Business, then Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing. He was appointed as Minister for Local Government Empowerment and Planning in March 2023.



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Councillor Steven Heddle, Vice President, COSLA

Steven first joined the COSLA team as the Environment and Economy spokesperson in 2017. He is currently the Vice President, where he has a number of roles, from supporting the COSLA President and the other spokespersons to engaging with the Scottish Government at Cabinet level, as well as providing political leadership.

Steven has represented the Kirkwall East ward of Orkney Islands Council, as an independent Councillor, since 2007 – he was the leader of the Council from 2012 to 2017.



Professor James Mitchell, University of Edinburgh

James is currently Professor of Public Policy in the School of Social and Political Science at the University of Edinburgh, having joined the School in April 2013. His interests are primarily in territorial politics, public policy and government, and political behaviour. James previously held the Chair in Public Policy in the University of Sheffield (1998-2000) and Chair in Politics in the University of Strathclyde (2000-2013).

James completed his undergraduate degree at Aberdeen University and his doctoral thesis at Nuffield College, Oxford University.



Dr Jonathan Carr-West, Local Government Information Unit

Jonathan has been Chief Executive of Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) since February 2013 where he leads on all aspects of the think tank's policy, membership and influencing work. Prior to being appointed as Chief Executive, Jonathan was Director of Policy at the LGIU where he led on research and consultancy, policy development and piloting, best practice dissemination, learning and development.

With over 15 years' experience, Jonathan is a leading national expert on local government transformation, local democracy and public services. Some of his particular interests are in participative democracy, the evolving nature of public services and devolution.





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Central and Local Government: Building for the Future

Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee

The Committee was established in June 2021. Its work focuses on local government (including councils), the planning system in Scotland, housing and housing strategy, and building standards.

Its membership, which reflects the balance of political parties in the Scottish Parliament, is:

- Ariane Burgess MSP (Highlands & Islands) (Green) - (Convener)
- Willie Coffey MSP (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP) - (Deputy Convener)
- Miles Briggs MSP (Lothian) (Conservative)
- Mark Griffin MSP (Central Scotland) (Labour)
- Ivan McKee MSP (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
- Marie McNair MSP (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
- Annie Wells MSP (Glasgow) (Conservative)

The Committee meets regularly on a Tuesday morning. To keep up to date with its work, you can follow it on Twitter [@SP_LocalGov](https://twitter.com/SP_LocalGov).

Scotland's Futures Forum

Scotland's Futures Forum is the Scottish Parliament's futures think-tank. It works on a non-party basis to promote research and to stimulate debate on the long-term challenges and opportunities that Scotland faces. We aim to inform MSPs and those who work with them, enabling them to consider the effects of decisions taken today on Scotland's long-term future.

Looking beyond the five-year electoral cycle and away from party politics, the Futures Forum seeks to bring fresh perspectives, ideas and creativity on how we might prepare now, for the future. We host discussions and seminars and present ideas to engage Scotland's parliamentarians and challenge their thinking.

Find out more about our work at the [Futures Forum website](https://www.futuresforum.scot.nhs.uk/).

Lobbying

Please note that, under the Lobbying (Scotland) Act, face-to-face oral communication with an MSP may count as "regulated lobbying". This requires the individual or organisation doing the lobbying (not the MSP or official) to record it in the publicly accessible [Lobbying Register](https://www.parliament.scot/lobbying-register), which is maintained by the Scottish Parliament.

Although it is for each individual to consider whether they engage in regulated lobbying, communication during the structured parts of Futures Forum events (Q&As, workshops etc) is likely to fall under the category of "Communication made on request" and is therefore exempt from registration as regulated lobbying.

Informal communications that take place at the edges of the event – in a lunch or coffee break, for example – may count as regulated lobbying and should be registered as such.