



## UK General Election 2015 #VoteSocialEnterprise

### ***Extracts from Scottish political party manifestos relevant to social enterprise***

We've summarised all the main Scottish political party manifestos for you, in terms of their support for social enterprise development. From support for social enterprises and SMEs, to tax, social investment, banking, a living wage, public sector reform and a diverse mix of other issues, the political parties have published a range of policies that are important to all Scottish social enterprises.

While Social Enterprise Scotland is politically neutral we urge supporters to read the manifesto policies in this document to inform their voting choices. Of course, as voters, we take a variety of other factors into account, such as additional policy areas we care about, the track record of (and how much we trust) the party to implement policies, plus knowledge about individual candidates.

Take a look at the policy commitments below (in alphabetical order of political party) and keep informed about what practical policies may be implemented to benefit our social enterprise community.

[Please read and share \*Building a Social Enterprise Nation\* - the manifesto for Scottish social enterprises](#)

***#VoteSocialEnterprise***

---

### **Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party manifesto**

"We will give more people the power and support to run a school, start their own **social enterprise**, and take over their own local parks, landmarks and pubs."

"We will...allow individuals, groups of parents and **charities to set up new schools** with government funding."

"We have supported the growth of **public service mutuals** - organisations that are **owned by their staff** and deliver public services. We want more of them, so we will guarantee a '**right to mutualise**' within the public sector."

“We will make **volunteering** for three days a year a workplace entitlement for people working in large companies and the public sector.”

“We will introduce a new residency requirement for **social housing**, so that EU migrants cannot even be considered for a council house unless they have been living in an area for at least four years.”

“We would introduce a new **Scottish Community Right to Challenge**, which would give **community and voluntary bodies** the right to express interest in taking over a particular council-run service. The local authority in question would be required to respond to this challenge and unless there are reasonable grounds for refusal the council would have to run a **procurement** exercise where the services would be opened up to bids.”

“We will...seek to develop a **social enterprise apprenticeship** framework to support our voluntary sector.”

“We also support the **Living Wage** and we will continue to encourage businesses and other organisations to pay it whenever they can afford it. We will extend the Small Business Bonus Scheme in Scotland further to **cut business rates for small and medium-sized** enterprises that decide to pay their employees a Living Wage, or agree to a phased-in timetable.”

“**Social landlords** today do not have the freedom to shape their **allocations policy** according to the needs of local communities. Central constraints prevent them from taking certain factors into consideration and we believe it should be up to social landlords to decide whether they take income, property ownership, age or local connections into account when deciding on who will get a home.”

“There are **social enterprises** helping people into jobs through the **Work Programme**. We have launched the world’s first **social investment bank**, introduced more **social impact bonds** than the rest of the world combined and highlighted the great work done in communities with the Big Society Awards.”

“We will raise the target for **SMEs’** share of central government **procurement** to one-third, strengthen the Prompt Payment Code and ensure that all major Government suppliers sign up.”

“We will continue to build a stronger, safer and more secure banking system that serves its customers and provides businesses with the **finance** they need to grow and create jobs.”

“...allowing vocational qualifications to be started while still at school, with close cooperation with businesses and the **third sector** to develop skills that Scotland requires.”

## **Scottish Green Party manifesto**

“In too many workplaces we see unacceptable pay inequality, abuse of tax loopholes and poor treatment of employees. In such circumstances we will give employees the **legal right**

to buy out their companies and turn them into workers co-operatives. This right will be subject to limits, consultation and an asset-lock but will help create a revolution in workplace cooperation and direct employee involvement in management, product development and innovation.”

“We will replace the Council tax and business rates with a progressive land tax. We will aim to stabilise house prices and invest in social rented homes across the UK, financed by scrapping buy-to-let mortgage tax breaks and prudent borrowing.”

“We will fight to create a banking system with banks of all types and sizes. That means supporting more cooperatives, credit unions, mutuals and small banks serving the local area, focussed on lending to local businesses.

“We will reform the energy generation market to support low-carbon energy and community ownership.”

“Successful economies and enterprises are based on smart specialisation and direct employee involvement in management, product development and innovation.”

“The Green investment Bank will invest in public and community-owned energy schemes. We will reform the energy generation market to support low-carbon energy and community ownership.”

“UK-wide actions to tackle poverty and inequality - such as the £10 minimum wage, a wealth tax on the richest 1%, affordable housing and a fairer social security system.”

“We will increase the Minimum Wage to the Living Wage, because nobody should be expected to work for a wage that keeps them in poverty. We will raise the minimum wage in steps, with a target of £10 an hour for everyone by 2020.”

## Scottish Labour Party manifesto

“Our charities, mutuals, co-operatives and social enterprises are pioneering new models of production that enhance social value, promote financial inclusion, and give individuals and communities power and control. We will continue to support and help develop the social economy by improving access for co-operative and mutual organisations to growth finance through the new British Investment Bank. And we will consider how to support employee buy-outs when businesses are being sold.”

“Our Freedom of Information laws have shone a light into the darker corners of government and are a crucial check on the power of the Executive. We will extend their scope so that public services run by large private companies are included.”

“Small businesses are the backbone of our economy. Their creativity and dynamism are vital for raising productivity and competing in the global economy. We will address rising costs for small businesses and strengthen rules on late payment.”

“Labour will improve productivity by building a long-term investment culture in the private and public sectors, and **supporting small businesses** to grow into the British success stories of the future.”

“We will develop a banking system that works for every sector and every part of our country. The long-standing problems of our banking system mean that too many **small and medium-sized businesses** cannot get the **finance** they need to invest and grow.”

“And we will support employers to pay more by using government **procurement** to promote the **Living Wage**, alongside wider social impact considerations. Our Make Work Pay contracts will give tax rebates to businesses that sign up to paying the Living Wage in the first year of a Labour Government. We will establish a Living Wage Unit in the Scottish Government to promote the Living Wage and will work with employers and trade unions to extend the uptake of the Living Wage, particularly in the private sector. Publicly listed companies will be required to **report on whether or not they pay the Living Wage.**”

“We will develop a banking system that works for businesses in every region and every sector in Britain. The long-standing problems of our banking system mean that too many **small and medium-sized businesses** cannot get the finance they need to invest and grow.”

“Labour will establish a British Investment Bank with the mission to help businesses grow and to create wealth and jobs. It will have the resources to improve **access to finance** for small and medium-sized businesses, and will support a network of regional banks.”

“An **inclusive wealth-creating economy** works when there is a shared sense of responsibility, so we will be a government that is both pro-business and pro-worker. We value all our businesses as organisations of innovation and wealth production, and we will work strategically with them to create wealth.”

## **Scottish Liberal Democrat manifesto**

“Support **social investment**, ensuring charities and **social enterprises** can access the support and finance they need to develop and deliver innovative, sustainable solutions to challenges in their communities.”

“Taking forward the recently commissioned study by the British Business Bank into the sustainability of **Community Development Finance Institutions.**”

“Encouraging the growth of **crowdfunding** and **alternative finance** models.”

“Promoting a new **community banking** sector to support small and medium-sized enterprises and **social enterprises.**”

“Continue and expand the What Works Network to promote evidence based policy making, establish an incubator for **social enterprises** developing innovative solutions to policy

problems and expand the use of public competitions to encourage **innovation in public services.**”

“Encourage employers to promote **employee participation** and **employee ownership**, aiming to increase further the proportion of GDP in employee-owned businesses. We will change company law to permit a German-style **two-tier board structure** to include employees.”

“Strengthen **worker participation** in decision-making, including staff representation on remuneration committees, and the right for employees who collectively own 5% of a company to be represented on the board.”

“Spread **mutual structures** and **employee participation** through the public sector.”

“Liberal Democrats will spread democracy in everyday life by encouraging **mutuals, cooperatives**, and **employee participation** and by increasing the opportunities for people to take **democratic control** over the services on which they rely.”

“Use central government public **procurement** policy as a tool of local growth and **community development**, for example by purchasing from diverse sources and using local labour, goods and services, and encourage local government to do the same.”

“Continue our work to open up public **procurement** to small and medium-sized companies and to the voluntary sector.”

“Help people form new **energy cooperatives** so they can benefit from group discounts and cut their bills.”

“...by 2020, extend transparency requirements to include publishing the number of people paid less than the **Living Wage** and the **ratio between top and median pay.**”

“Establish an independent review to consult on how to set a fair **Living Wage** across all sectors. We will pay this Living Wage in all central government departments and their agencies from April 2016, and encourage the Scottish Government and other public sector employers to do likewise.”

## **Scottish National Party (SNP) manifesto**

“Our aim is to grow and **strengthen local economies**, both urban and rural. By increasing the minimum wage and supporting a **fair wage economy** we can increase the disposable income of low and middle income households, which will provide a direct boost to local businesses, enabling them to grow. We are keen to see spending increase, and profits remain, within local communities so that **more money is being circulated locally**, generating jobs and opportunities for the benefit to fall. That is why we remain fully committed to the Small Business Bonus and why we are expanding the **Social Entrepreneurs Fund**, to encourage and support community social enterprises.”

“We are also committed to using public contracts to deliver clear **community benefits**, including **local employment** and training opportunities and support for community initiatives.”

“SNP MPs will seek ways of extending the **community asset transfer** provisions of the [Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill] legislation to include property in Scotland owned by UK government departments.”

“With more meaningful tax powers, we could provide more incentives and support for businesses to invest in Scotland and enter new markets overseas, encouraging inward investment and boosting our international exports. We could also use targeted changes in business tax allowances to encourage higher levels of investment in capital or Research & Development, and **encourage the growth of SMEs**.”

“We will support an increase in the **Employment Allowance** from £2,000 per business per year to £6,000 per business per year, reducing the cost of creating and maintaining jobs. We will support this change being phased in over the four-year period to 2019-20.”

“For local job creators we will continue the **Small Business Bonus** and back **reduced Employers’ NI contributions** to support job creation.”

“We want to make it much easier for growing businesses across Scotland to **access finance** and will look for an expansion of lending options, including **peer-to-peer lending** and making it easier for new entrants to the market, in particular to help with short term financing we will support businesses, the **third sector** and public sector organisations working to boost productivity by using energy, materials and water more efficiently, so we can build a more **resource efficient** Scotland.”

“[We will] further promote the **living wage** across the private sector. SNP MPs will work with Scottish ministers to help ensure 500 organisations are signed up to the Living Wage Accreditation Scheme within the next year, by becoming local living wage champions in their constituency. And through guidance on **procurement**, the SNP will work to ensure all suppliers to the Scottish Government also pay the living wage.”

“We will back investment in an annual house building target across the UK of 100,000 **affordable homes** a year.”

“By establishing a **Fair Work** Convention we aim to draw on and promote best practice, while making it easier to work effectively with our partners across the business community, **third sector** and trade unions.”

“The Scottish Government has ambitious targets to support **community energy** generation and we will press the UK government to make it simpler for communities to establish local energy companies and easier for community schemes to access the grid.”



[www.socialenterprisescotland.org.uk](http://www.socialenterprisescotland.org.uk)

Social Enterprise Scotland 2015 is a Company Limited by Guarantee: SC294227