



# Scotland's Digital Participation Charter

## PURPOSE

**This charter commits the signatories to bringing together their collective skills and resources over the lifetime of this Parliament to increase digital participation levels in Scotland and delivering the associated economic, social and environmental benefits. Success will be measured by the contribution that the signatories to this Charter make to delivering Scotland's Digital Ambition.**

## BACKGROUND CONTEXT

In October 2010 the Scottish Government set out a clear Digital Ambition for Scotland. The ambition is: that next generation broadband will be available to all by 2020, and significant progress will be made by 2015; that the rate of broadband uptake in Scotland should be at or above the UK average by 2013, and should be highest among the UK nations by 2015.

Scotland's Digital Future: A Strategy for Scotland published in March 2011 set out in more detail how Scottish Government intended to achieve such digital ambitions. In doing so, it proposed a co-ordinated and comprehensive approach to ensuring that Scotland is well positioned to take full advantage of all of the economic and social opportunities offered by the digital age and highlighted the need to focus on four key areas of public service delivery; the digital economy; digital participation and broadband connectivity.

*Scotland's Digital Future* recognised that achieving Scotland's digital ambition could not just be for the Scottish Government but would require co-ordinated action and support from partners across Scotland. This Charter seeks to focus co-ordinated action around digital participation.

It is expected that this Charter, and the positive working relationships it will help to foster, will bring significant benefits for all the signatories as well as the people of Scotland:

Benefits:

- Working together and aligning our technology, skills, expertise and resources will enable us to deliver better outcomes and provide strong, visible leadership across all sectors to inspire everyone to do more to increase digital participation;
- Building on *Scotland's Digital Future*, the signatories will advise on, and aim to make early progress towards, achievement of the digital participation target - identifying relevant action and opportunities, and collaborating to bring benefits to the Scottish economy;
- The Charter will help drive innovation through partnerships and synergies between members. Signatories will work collaboratively across sectors sharing information, insight and expertise and contributing their ideas to the development and implementation of policy through the creation of a

Digital Participation Action Group that will work closely with the proposed Digital Participation Programme Board.

## **PARTNERSHIP VALUES**

The relationship between Charter signatories will be based on:

- Mutual respect and trust;
- Openness and transparency in communications;
- Commitment to being positive and constructive;
- Commitment to work with and learn from others;
- A continuing dialogue on policy and priorities;
- Ensuring high quality outcomes;
- Making the best use of resources.

## **OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY**

This Charter provides the purpose and outcomes, defines the responsibilities of each party to the agreement, provides the scope and authority of the agreement, clarifies terms and outlines governance, scope change and compliance issues.

This Charter sets out the commitment of the signatories to work collaboratively and innovatively over the lifetime of this Scottish Parliament. The private sector businesses, third sector organisations and leading academic institutions who have taken the lead in developing the Charter, and are the founder signatories alongside Scottish Government, welcome other signatories who wish to commit themselves similarly.

The Charter reflects a commitment to achieving shared outcomes in digital participation by identifying where the group can best target its resources and expertise to accelerate the development, investment and action required across the following areas:

- Jobs and Skills
- Education
- Health
- Low Carbon Economy
- Public Service Delivery

The signatories are committed to widening cross sector digital participation in each of the five policy areas. This Charter considers that a national, Scotland wide approach to delivering Scotland's digital future, blended with maintaining local ownership and responsibility for outcomes, will maximise opportunities for the benefit of citizens, improve our quality of life, improve productivity, improve public service delivery and grow the economy. We will have to be creative at a time when there are barriers to participation in confidence and inclination among some people.

Together we can overcome these barriers on behalf of citizens and communities who might be at risk of exclusion. Open innovation, knowledge transfer, and linked open data publishing, together with applications built on these foundations, are all emerging methods to enable digital participation and to increase citizen engagement with public services, connecting individuals to the digital world around them.

The focus of this Charter is on improving digital participation. However all signatories recognise the need for collaborative action across the digital agenda, and the importance of aligning all appropriate resources.

The Scottish Government undertakes to provide open access to data required to enable the Digital Participation Action Group and Digital Participation Programme Board to meet their responsibilities, and to provide appropriate access to Ministers and civil servants. It will also continue to work with CoSLA and other partner bodies on agreeing principles for the opening up of public data wherever that is possible, including the creation of an information architecture and governance that supports the reuse of open data. In return the private and third sector signatories undertake to collaborate with other signatories, to share their technology, expertise, connections, ICT skills and competencies to take account of Scottish Government policy objectives when allocating resources and to respond positively to the inclusion of Community Benefit clauses in all procurement activities.

## **COMMITMENTS**

The signatories are committed to publishing a supplement to the Charter by April 2012 which includes:

- 1 Details of a Digital Participation brokerage that will maximise the impact of collaboration and available resources from Government, public agencies, the private sector and third sector.
  - 2 An Action Plan detailing the key actions to be taken by the Digital Participation Action Group and relationship to the Digital Participation Programme Board to meet the stated purpose of the Charter.
  - 3 A baseline position of current Scottish digital participation commitments and funding streams across all sectors including UK government schemes and a high level assessment of the extent to which current activity will support the delivery of the stated purpose of the Charter.
  - 4 A plan to obtain and publish open data sets in order to encourage re-use of public sector information and to enable the development of new applications.
  - 5 A commitment to explore opportunities to use Community Benefit clauses to improve digital participation and to undertake collaboration where appropriate.
- The Digital Participation Action Group will meet quarterly to review progress, and plan actions to achieve its purpose and outcomes
  - The Digital Participation Action Group will provide a biannual report to the Digital Strategy Portfolio Board and to the Digital Participation Programme Board
  - An Annual Report on the broad outcomes achieved will be presented to the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Digital Strategy.
  - The Scottish Parliament will be invited to scrutinise the Annual Report, and provide challenge as appropriate.

## **GOVERNANCE**

Governance will be provided by the founder signatories to the Charter, as founder partners in the Digital Participation Action Group. The signatories to the Charter will establish by January 2012 a Digital Participation Action Group to be supported by the Digital Participation Programme Board. Membership of the Digital Participation Action Group is open to all Charter signatories. The Digital Participation Action Group will have appropriate cross sector representation, to take forward the Charter, to establish the more detailed objectives across the key themes, and the Digital Participation Programme Board will ensure that appropriate Government support, expertise and resources are made available to the Digital Participation Action Group.

The Scottish Government member of the Digital Participation Action Group will be the primary point of contact, and will ensure appropriate connections are made across the Scottish Government, including the links between the Digital Participation Action Group, Digital Participation Programme Board, Digital Strategy Portfolio Board, Public Sector Reform Board, other appropriately constituted Boards and reference groups and the Cabinet Sub Committee on Digital Strategy.

This Charter is not a contract and is not legally binding. It does not create rights and obligations governed by Scottish law. This Charter does not confer any competitive advantage on the signatories in any public sector procurement and nothing in the Charter prevents any participant from collaborating or sharing information with any other person.

These governance arrangements will enable all Charter signatories to influence policy development across government, where improved digital participation has an opportunity to improve outcomes.

## **CONCLUSION**

By signing this Charter, the founding participants are communicating clearly to all sectors of Scottish society that there is a collective commitment and responsibility to increase the levels of digital participation amongst our citizens and to realise the economic, social and environmental benefits this can bring.

This Charter is designed to enable mutual working relationships among parties based on shared outcomes and agreed ways of working together. This Charter will strengthen relationships across the public, private, third sector and academia and foster trust and reciprocity. It will enable open data and knowledge transfer and open innovation to flow, thus enabling progress towards Scotland's digital future.

The Scottish Government wishes to build on these existing links, see outcomes from the participants being achieved, and encourages all other organisations to consider and commit to the Digital Participation Charter. Signatories to the Charter understand that digital participation is a collective responsibility. The signatories commend this Charter and its purpose, and look forward to organisations across Scotland and beyond seeking to join the founder signatories to demonstrate their support.



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