

# STRONGER HOLYROOD



# FOREWORD

This is the second in a series of papers that demonstrate how Scottish Labour believe our institutions need to change to deliver a stronger Scotland in a changing and modernising UK.

Labour has always been a party that believes in transformative change, not for its own sake, but to deliver more opportunities for the people of Scotland.

For too many years now, a dangerous form of Scottish exceptionalism has dominated our constitutional debate. It pretends that only democratic institutions elsewhere in the UK are broken and in need of change, and that there is no change necessary here in Scotland.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

To meet the challenges of building a better nation in the 21st century, every layer of our government – Westminster, Holyrood and local authorities – needs to be transformed.

The Scottish Parliament and its Government were supposed to be examples of transparency to build public trust in politics.

But in the decades since its foundation, that has unfortunately failed to be the case. While more powers have accrued in the hands of

Scottish Ministers, the power of our parliament and the tools available to the public to scrutinise them have fallen behind.

The events of the last few years have only served to show that sweeping reform of the parliament's processes, functions and structure is needed.

Nicola Sturgeon cannot escape from the fact that her Government and the SNP operate a culture of secrecy and cover-up.

Cover-ups when it comes to allegations against Ministers. Cover-ups when it comes to the awarding of government ferry contracts. Shamefully, cover-ups when it comes to the deaths of children in hospital. And a culture that has contempt for journalists and anyone who dares ask a difficult question.

It is one standard for them and a different standard for everyone else. This was not how devolution was supposed to work. The role of the Scottish Parliament is to be the expression of the democratic will of the people of Scotland.

The day-to-day role of Holyrood should be focused on improving the lives of Scottish people – their primary tool to do this is through the tools of accountability provided for by the Scottish Parliament.

However, when you have a government which actively seeks to avoid scrutiny and backbenchers who suspend their responsibilities in the name of party interest – then the system needs to be reformed.

Committees have been ignored, processes run roughshod over and the responsibility to be truly accountable to parliament, the press and the public have been ignored by SNP Ministers.

All the while a spectre of sleaze has cast its shadow over Holyrood's dealings.

Ministers have been found to have acted inappropriately, financial dealings have been questioned and matters of grave misconduct have arisen.

The SNP's approach has been to brush it under the carpet and use the powers of the executive to frustrate attempts by the opposition, media and the public to expose their failings.

This was not how the Scottish Parliament was intended to work when conceived. The Scottish people deserve so much better than this.

That is why Scottish Labour is committed to reforming Holyrood so that it truly works for the people of Scotland and lives up to its potential as our national parliament.

Labour's plans will enhance our democracy, reform the structure of our parliament and combat the culture of secrecy and cover-up that has defined the SNP's 15 years in power.

We will deliver the reform that our parliament badly needs and deliver a Scottish Parliament fit for a democratised and re-vitalised United Kingdom. **So we can build a better future, together.**



**ANAS SARWAR MSP,**  
SCOTTISH LABOUR LEADER



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# INTRODUCTION

The introduction of devolution to Scotland in 1999 was one of the most significant changes to the way our country is run. Since then, the Scottish Parliament has been repeatedly strengthened and now counts among the most powerful devolved legislatures in the world.

A whole generation of Scots have grown up with a Parliament in Edinburgh that makes decisions over the issues that affect our day to day lives in Scotland. Yet, aspects of the Scottish Parliament's day to day work can feel distant from what happens in the rest of the country. When it was established, there was an intention that the Scottish Parliament would enable a different type of politics. Yet, despite intentional differences in the design of its arrangements and operation, it has not been immune from the types of scandals and controversies that have occurred at Westminster and elsewhere in the UK.

Over twenty years on from devolution it is time to look seriously at the extent to which the Scottish Parliament is delivering on its original aims, and what reforms are required to ensure it represents the Scottish people and their interests, to ensure it can effectively hold the government to account, and can bring about better outcomes for people across the country.

In 1998, the Consultative Steering Group of the Scottish Parliament, set up by the Labour government, established a set of principles by which the Parliament should operate:

- The Scottish Parliament should embody and reflect the sharing of power between the people of Scotland, the legislators and the Scottish Executive.
- The Scottish Executive should be accountable to the Scottish Parliament and the Parliament and Executive should be accountable to the people of Scotland.
- The Scottish Parliament should be accessible, open, responsive, and develop procedures which make possible a participative approach to the development, consideration and scrutiny of policy and legislation.
- The Scottish Parliament in its operation and its appointments should recognise the need to promote equal opportunities for all.



These principles remain key to a Scottish Parliament that is focused on the best outcomes for people living in Scotland. It must represent the people of Scotland, acting on their behalf to set a meaningful and impactful agenda and hold the Scottish Government to account in an accessible and transparent way. Over time recommendations have been made in this area but they have never been fully implemented. Experts commissioned by the former Scottish Parliament Presiding Officer Ken MacIntosh called for strengthened Scottish Parliament committees and increased scrutiny of the Scottish Government. Nevertheless, while the powers of the Scottish Government and Parliament have changed dramatically, reform of Holyrood has been minor and piecemeal. As a result, the Scottish Parliament has drifted from its original principles.

Scottish Labour believe it is time for a review and extensive reform of the operation of Holyrood to restore proper accountability of the Scottish Government to Parliament and to renew the relationship between the citizen and state. Our democratic institutions should live up to the original promise of devolution, rather than moving further from them. That is why we are calling for a series of reforms to strengthen Parliamentary scrutiny, improve Scottish Government transparency and make the Scottish Parliament more relevant and accountable to the people it was created to serve.

**As with all our work on Scotland's constitution and reform of the UK, our approach to Scottish Parliamentary reform is rooted in six key principles:**

1. The Scottish people are sovereign and have the right to determine the best form of government suited to our needs.
2. The UK should be a union of equal nations.
3. Power should lie with the people; the best forms of government empower local communities and do not hoard power in our parliaments and governments.
4. The UK is a redistributive union where wealth and opportunities are shared, and our nations and regions should work together to realise its benefits.
5. The primary function of the Scottish Parliament is to represent the Scottish people, hold the Scottish Government to account, and scrutinise the operation of our public services.
6. The Scottish Government and Scottish Ministers' priority should be taking decisions in the best interests of the people of Scotland. They should manage our public services effectively and work cooperatively and transparently with other UK governments and local government.

**In this paper we make recommendations on enhancing scrutiny and strengthening committees, improvements to parliamentary business, increasing transparency through the introduction of parliamentary privilege and stronger Freedom of Information laws. We also propose that individual members of the Scottish Parliament are made more accountable through the introduction of a right of recall, meaningful consequences for those who break the Ministerial Code and stricter rules on lobbying and second jobs.**



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# THE CASE FOR A STRONGER SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

The Scottish Parliament should be focused on better outcomes for people in Scotland. MSPs across the Parliament work hard to achieve this everyday but they do not always have the tools and capacity to do so. This is particularly the case in the face of a government that actively seeks to avoid scrutiny, and is supported in doing so by backbench MSPs that are willing to let chamber proceedings be choreographed with pre-agreed questions and committees be directed by political party interests.

The Scottish Parliament has been responsible for some of the most significant political moments in recent times: exposing the scandal of women being treated wrongly with vaginal mesh; highlighting the damage caused by government inaction on the drug deaths crisis; uncovering the scale of the infection scandal at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, and pressuring the government into reversing the decision to unfairly root pupils' grades in their household income during the Covid-19 pandemic. There have also been notable legislative achievements, not least through Member's Bills.

In recent years, despite initial opposition from the Scottish Government, Scottish Labour MSPs have successfully pursued legislation through the Parliament to create a right to free period products, provide financial support to reflect the additional costs faced by parents of premature babies, end the injustice of tied pubs, and provide additional rights for shop workers.

Nevertheless, events in recent years have also revealed the limitations of the Scottish Parliament's current ability to fulfil its role of acting on the public's behalf to hold the Scottish Government to account. The content of government statements or policy announcements have been increasingly made available to the press or media in advance of Parliament, curtailing the opportunity for questioning by elected representatives before policy is in the public domain. This practice was exacerbated over the pandemic with instances of Ministers delaying their attendance at Parliament to answer emergency questions from MSPs so they could hold press conferences and answer questions in that forum first instead. Although there are opportunities, both in the Chamber and in a written format, for MSPs to put questions to Ministers, there is little recourse where the content of responses is inadequate or avoids directly addressing the questions raised. Similarly, events in recent years have revealed how constrained Committee's powers are to probe government policy failure when the government is unwilling to share documentation or has an interest in being uncooperative.

Robust Parliamentary inquiry is also important for ensuring that government policy is delivering value for money for Scottish taxpayers. While the Parliament has been involved in exposing poor use of taxpayers money, such as the £150 million lost through failures in the ferry contract or the more than £145 million required to fix errors at the Edinburgh Sick Kids and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Glasgow, it has often depended on the work of other independent institutions such as Audit Scotland to do so.

Finally, a strong Parliament is also required to match the growth in the responsibilities of the Scottish Government, which has inevitably resulted from the devolution of more powers to Scotland. Comparisons between the growth of the Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament need to be treated carefully because of their differences in size, scale and activities. However, overall budgets and staff numbers provide an illustration of the stark disparity in growth and capacity between the two institutions. Just as devolution arrangements have changed over the years, it is time for the Scottish Parliament to do the same.



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# CREATING A STRONGER SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

## IMPROVING SCRUTINY

The ability of the Scottish Parliament to perform meaningful accountability has diminished due to the significant growth of the Scottish Government. Between 2016-17 and 2022-23 the Scottish Government's operating budget increased by £301 million, or 81.6 per cent. Such a large increase in resourcing was to some extent to be expected given the major changes from the Scotland Act 2016, particularly from the transfer of social security and taxation powers. Naturally, the Scottish Parliament also gained significant powers and the responsibility to scrutinise the Scottish Government's new powers over the same period. Yet, its budget only increased by £12.3 million, or 27.8 per cent.

From the end of March 2013 to the end of March 2021, there was a 52.3 per cent increase in the number of full-time equivalent, directly-employed staff working for the Scottish Government. As a result of a review to enhance scrutiny, in 2022-23 the Scottish Parliament staffing baseline will increase to 581 full-time equivalent staff but this still only equates to a 24 per cent increase over the period 2013-14 to 2022-23 (all cash terms figures provided by SPICe). Such discrepancies raise serious questions about whether the Scottish Parliament has the capacity required to scrutinise the Scottish Government.

Scrutiny and representation are further limited by shortcomings in the parliamentary questions and chamber processes. As it stands, opposition spokespersons do not have a guaranteed slot to question Scottish Government Ministers in their portfolio, limiting focused and topical scrutiny of Ministers in the chamber. There is no recourse if answers to written and oral questions fail to provide the requested information and opportunities to alter the Chamber agenda or ask topical questions, based on the issues of the day, are limited. Debate in the parliament does not always reflect what is happening in people's everyday lives.

## PROPOSAL - ADAPTING PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS

Scottish Labour supports a full review of parliamentary business processes to ensure that they enable robust scrutiny and business reflects the issues facing people's everyday lives. We believe this review should include an assessment of speaking times, the setting of parliamentary business days and the adaptability of business to respond to changing events. The Covid-19 pandemic led to the introduction of more flexible ways of working and any review should also take account of these changes and how they can aid the agility of Parliament.

To enhance the effectiveness of portfolio questions as a mechanism for holding Ministers to account, Scottish Labour believe that opposition spokespersons should have an automatic right to a question. Similar to the arrangements for opposition party leaders during First Minister's Questions, each spokesperson would have one question set aside for them during the relevant Portfolio Question business, with no need for it to be published beforehand.

There should also be a route for MSPs to raise concerns or appeal to the Presiding Officer about any answers to written or oral questions that they do not consider to meet the expectations of being accurate or truthful, or where the response is inadequate. Where the Presiding Officer is persuaded of the case, they should be empowered to compel the accurate information from the government on behalf of the Parliament. Such a mechanism could prevent the need for repeated MSP interventions to Chamber business on this same theme and support the Presiding Officer in reducing the number of similar or unnecessary requests from MSPs.

The new arrangements introduced during the pandemic have the potential to make Parliament more accessible for individuals and groups who are under-represented within its elected members. It is worrying that a significant number of people stepped down from their MSP roles at the end of the last parliament in part because of the difficulty in balancing parliamentary duties with being a parent. Debate and scrutiny are always stronger and more effective when a wide range of views are represented and so Scottish Labour supports the strengthening of flexible working arrangements and processes, with the explicit aim of making the Scottish Parliament's members and workforce more diverse. We also support the current gender audit being undertaken by the Scottish Parliament.

## PROPOSAL – ENHANCING PARLIAMENTARY CAPACITY

In light of the expansion to the Scottish Government's responsibilities and capacity, an open and transparent review of parliamentary capacity is required. Its goal must be to assess the extent to which the Scottish Parliament has the capacity to fully scrutinise the Scottish Government and how this capacity can best be enhanced. Such a review should include further assessment of capacity within the Parliament's workforce, including within the Scottish Parliament Information Centre, clerking teams and the Non-Government Bills Unit. It should also consider access to legal advice for opposition parties and the need for sub-committees or one-off legislation committees.

Furthermore, in order to protect the number of backbenchers available to scrutinise the government, a limit should be placed on the number of ministerial and government posts. An analysis by Scottish Labour earlier this year revealed that the cost of ministerial offices has almost doubled since 2007. In the same period, the number of Cabinet Secretaries has doubled from 4 to 8, and the number of Ministers increased from 10 to 17.

When the Scottish Parliament was first established it was modelled on best practice. Nevertheless, despite these good intentions, some parts of the institution have failed to live up to their original purpose, most notably the committee system.

Committees were intended to be apolitical in nature, focused on building up subject expertise, carrying out robust legislative scrutiny, and holding the government to account. It is essential that in a parliament with only one chamber, committees can fulfil these functions effectively. However, experience over the 20 years of the Scottish Parliament has shown that in practice, committee chairs and members are led by party affiliations. In 2017, a report on Scottish Parliament reform commissioned by previous Scottish Parliament Presiding Officer Ken McIntosh found that committees had been less effective than anticipated for several reasons:

- Party discipline, used to coordinate votes on legislation, has been enforced during inquiries on non-legislative issues; some suggest this has hindered a committee's ability to develop cross-party consensus;
- Some committees have seen so much legislation they have been unable to develop their own agenda with fewer opportunities to hold inquiries or focus on long-term or cross-cutting issues;
- Committees have undertaken little pre- or post-legislative scrutiny;
- Turnover of membership has been too high and prevented the realisation of the CSG's ambition that members would develop an expertise in their subject area over the course of a parliamentary session.

Holyrood committees do useful and important work, but they have not been the driving force in Scottish Politics they were intended to be.

## PROPOSAL – ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CONVENERS

Scottish Labour believe that the direct election of conveners by MSPs would be a first step in bringing about greater independence for committees. As well as providing conveners with a stronger mandate to scrutinise the government it could also provide an alternative to serving in government as a way for MSPs to gain influence and progress. Similar reforms have been successfully implemented in parliaments elsewhere, with positive results for scrutiny and government accountability. Consideration of combining election with an additional payment for conveners would also boost their profile and accountability, in addition to reinforcing the significance of the role.



With regards to the process of elections, we support the following suggestion laid out in the 2017 report on Scottish Parliamentary reform:

“Once the party of the convener is agreed by Parliament a nomination period should be available for candidates to put themselves forward for election. There would then be a limited period of time for the candidates to campaign before the election was held in the chamber by secret ballot. Following the election, the committee membership could then be agreed. The fact that nominees for convener would likely be required to secure cross party support to be elected would encourage competing candidates to share their views and vision about the committee’s future work in order to persuade others to vote for them. In contrast to the current practice, election by Parliament would also provide the opportunity for more than one nominee from a party to put themselves forward, thus empowering individual MSPs especially where they may otherwise only have one representative on a committee.”

It is possible that given the number of MSPs in the Scottish Parliament, the immediate outcomes of the elections would not differ greatly from under the current system. It would also still be possible for political parties to ‘engineer’ the success of the candidates of their choice. However, we believe these changes could be the start of a long-term shift in how committees operate. These issues could also be tempered by removing the vote from Ministers, who arguably should not have a say in the members leading scrutiny of the government.

## **PROPOSAL - STRENGTHENING COMMITTEE’S ABILITY TO COMPEL WITNESSES TO APPEAR**

While committees currently have the powers to compel witnesses to appear and demand documents are provided, the limitations of this power have been demonstrated in practice. Despite the general power of committees, individual members of the corporate body are legally liable for any decision made to compel witnesses and the sharing of evidence. Experiences in recent years have shown that this creates too great a barrier to committees using their powers, hindering Committee’s access to evidence, and must be changed.

Committee’s also have limited power to call on UK Government Ministers to give evidence. While this may be understandable given UK Ministers are accountable to the UK Parliament, in areas of policy interdependence between UK and Scottish Governments there is a strong case for Scottish Parliament committees to have the right to seek evidence from UK Ministers in order to further their inquiries.

Finally, it is essential that committees resume their work of community outreach and travelling across Scotland to hear views on a range of issues. Not only does this improve accessibility of the Scottish Parliament, it is crucial for committees to strengthen their collective identity and shared duty of scrutiny over party affiliations. While this was understandably interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic it is important that such outreach is resumed as a matter of priority.





# PROTECTING TRANSPARENCY

The Scottish Parliament was designed to be closer to the people and more transparent, and research has shown it is more trusted as an institution. But for many communities Holyrood can feel just as distant as Westminster. Creating a parliament that is closer to people in Scotland has not necessarily resulted in more transparency, accessibility or openness.

The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, initiated by Scottish Labour, was a significant innovation for transparency and scrutiny, opening up information held by the state to the public, journalists and campaigners. Since its inception, Freedom of Information has led to significant discoveries and has enhanced governance. However, in recent years the excessive application of exemptions from Freedom of Information requirements, and the increased use of personal email accounts for government business, have reduced opportunities for scrutiny. Journalists have repeatedly raised concerns about the way the current Scottish Government responds to the law on Freedom of Information. The government has also been repeatedly criticised by the Scottish Information Commissioner (SIC) for its handling of requests and application of exemptions. Most recently the SIC overruled the SNP's decision not to publish its legal advice on a second independence referendum.

Attempts to circumvent transparency are not limited to evading Freedom of Information requests. One online investigative journalism platform demonstrated that hundreds of Scottish Ministers' meetings have been left off the lobbying register because of legal loopholes. The Scottish Government has additionally faced criticism for its records management: Frequent requests had to be made of the government for evidence and documents in the committee inquiry into the Scottish Government's handling of harassment complaints; key documents relating to the disastrous Ferguson Marine contract have gone missing and then conveniently been recovered; and it has been repeatedly noted that the government failed to keep a track of how all additional Covid-19 money was spent. Finally, the SNP government has recently used data protection rules to avoid disclosing the outcome of investigations into bullying complaints against Ministers, and has refused to confirm how many complaints have been made about Ministers despite the fact that this was information previously published by the government.

## **PROPOSAL - ESTABLISHING PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE & GIVING MSPs THE ABILITY TO OFFER WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION**

Legislatures around the world have forms of privilege in order to properly fulfil their functions and to allow members to undertake their work with no impediment. At the establishment of the Scottish Parliament, it was decided that this principle should not extend to MSPs but Scottish Labour believe it is time for this decision to be reversed. Parliamentary privilege grants certain legal immunities for MPs to allow them to perform their duties without interference. It is our view that there should be no barrier to what an MSP should be able to raise in the Chamber or in committees when it is within the public interest, and they should be free to raise issues without fear of prosecution. In recent years, we have seen examples of how scrutiny has been restricted due to the lack of Parliamentary Privilege and it is not conceivable that this should happen again.

Similarly, the public interest disclosure law protects whistleblowers that disclose information to Members of Parliament, so long as they meet certain conditions. This is not true for MSPs, who are currently denied this powerful tool to expose wrongdoing.

Parliaments that have their origins in the British parliamentary system have taken different routes to dealing with the issue of parliamentary privilege and public interest disclosure. As recently as 2014, the New Zealand Parliament introduced a Parliamentary Privilege Act to clarify the rights of Members of the New Zealand Parliament. We believe that the Scottish Parliament should follow the example of New Zealand and provide for parliamentary privilege in all parliamentary business and for disclosures made to them in the public interest. This could be achieved through an Act of the Scottish Parliament and would serve to strengthen the role of MSPs and the Parliament as a whole. This could be achieved through an Act of the Scottish Parliament and would serve to strengthen the independence of MSPs and of the Parliament as a whole.



## PROPOSAL- IMPROVING FREEDOM OF INFORMATION LEGISLATION

Freedom of Information legislation should be strengthened to increase transparency in government. Following the recommendations of the Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee in 2020, Labour believe that Freedom of Information requirements should be extended to all bodies that provide public services.

These crucial changes would update and strengthen the public's ability to access information. With the advent of digital technology, it is important that no sources of government information are out of reach. Instead of a system of request, there should be a presumption in favour of proactive publication of public information, subject to only limited exceptions. Such a system of proactive publication could be implemented using digital technology already in use by the Scottish Government and would ensure that activity undertaken by government – paid for and on behalf of the public – is open to full scrutiny by the public.



## ACCOUNTABILITY OF REPRESENTATIVES

MSPs are ultimately accountable to the public at the ballot box, but this opportunity only presents itself every five years.

In some cases, where an MSP has been convicted of a crime that attracts a sentence of more than a year, or is declared bankrupt, the individual can lose their seat.

However, in the case of many other crimes, or breaches of parliamentary standards, there is no opportunity for constituents to recall their MSP.

- Similarly, the public has long expressed its displeasure with elected politicians profiting from second jobs, especially ones which can directly influence their role as law makers. However, in the absence of proper restrictions, this is currently functionally unregulated and difficult to justify when MSPs are paid well to represent their constituents full time.

In addition, breaches of the ministerial code are not meaningfully enforced and the consequences do not seem to represent a meaningful deterrent to future misbehaviour. The system is in need of serious reform.



## PROPOSAL – INTRODUCING A RIGHT OF RECALL FOR MSPs

Many countries have recall processes or expulsion processes for members of their legislature. In 2015, Westminster introduced a right to recall under three limited circumstances:

- Conviction in the UK of any offence and sentenced or ordered to be imprisoned or detained, after all appeals have been exhausted;
- Suspension from the House following report and recommended sanction from the Committee on Standards for a specified period (at least 10 sitting days, or at least 14 days if sitting days are not specified);
- Convicted of an offence under section 10 of the Parliamentary Standards Act 2009 (making false or misleading Parliamentary allowances claims). Note – the sentence does not have to be custodial for this condition.

When these conditions are met, a recall petition can be launched and – if signed by 10% of electors – a by-election is triggered. It is our view that a similar system should be introduced at Holyrood to allow voters the opportunity to remove MSPs who have fallen short of the high standards the public expect of them. List MSPs would be replaced in line with existing procedures.

## PROPOSAL – PROHIBIT SECOND JOBS & STRENGTHEN PROTECTIONS ON LOBBYING

No MSP should be allowed to take on additional employment without clear justification that it is in the public interest. We would also extend the ban on former Ministers from lobbying from two to five years, along with the period during which Ministers are required to seek advice from the independent Advisory Committee on Business Appointments about any appointments or employment they wish to take up after two years of leaving office.

## PROPOSAL – ESTABLISHING CONSEQUENCES FOR BREAKING THE MINISTERIAL CODE

The current broken system must be replaced. A review must be commissioned on the operation of the code, it should consider if it is appropriate for the First Minister to be an arbitrator of the code. Investigators must be truly independent in their conduct and appointments. There should be binding sanctions when the First Minister or Ministers are found to have breached the Ministerial Code. It can no longer be acceptable for the First Minister to choose to avoid formal consequences when they or colleagues break the rules.

# CONCLUSION

The Labour Party is the party of devolution. Our approach has always been driven by asking where powers should lie to best improve people's lives.

We are determined to build a stronger Scotland in a changing and modernising UK.

The establishment of the Scottish Parliament was undeniably about responding to demands from the Scottish public and reflecting Scotland's distinct identity within the union.

In these aspects, the Scottish Parliament has been largely successful – but in recent years too many in Scottish politics have projected exceptionalism that suggests the UK's other democratic institutions are broken while ignoring the need for change in Scotland.

Transforming Holyrood into an open and accountable institution after 23 years of devolution will be instrumental in building a better, fairer and more equal Scotland.

At its core, the creation of the Scottish Parliament was about how best to achieve social and economic justice for people living in Scotland.

This aim can only be achieved through a Scottish Parliament that represents the people of Scotland, gives people across the country a stake in our politics and effectively scrutinises the Scottish Government.

**Our proposals do not represent an exhaustive list of what action is needed to realise this. However, we believe they will bring us significantly closer and begin an honest conversation about what is required to create a Scottish Parliament that better reflects and improves the lives of those it was set up to serve.**

