

UKH Scotland launches local elections manifesto

3 years ago



UKHospitality Scotland has issued key recommendations for local government ahead of elections in early May, stating the sector's crucial value as an agent for positive change for post-Covid communities across Scotland.

UKHospitality Scotland's *Manifesto 2022: Revitalising Local Communities* lays out 10 ways in which local authorities, councillors and council officers can help the sector get communities back on their feet, while simultaneously demonstrating that hospitality is best placed to lead the country's economic recovery.

The leading trade body has outlined 10 policies, spanning three crucial areas ahead of polling on Thursday 5 May: People, Promotion of Place, and Partnership.

Key among them are ways to promote the sector's ongoing work to tackle its crippling 40,000 UK-wide jobs shortage; licensing extensions and faster planning processes to encourage business; spotlighting the innovative work the industry is doing to support the Scottish Government's 2045 Net Zero target; and calls for plans for levies that will delay recovery – including a tourist tax – to be shelved.

The elections come as thousands of hospitality businesses devastated by Covid begin to recoup some of their losses of the past two years. UKHospitality Scotland's manifesto seeks to inform local authority leaders, elected representatives and local and regional authority officers about how best they can support those businesses, and in turn drive recovery, employment and investment across Scotland.

Despite facing several hurdles on their way to recovery – huge accumulated debt, VAT back to 20%, and huge energy price increases – hospitality businesses play an essential role as local community hubs, particularly supporting people's wellbeing following 24-months of lockdowns and restrictions.

UKHospitality Scotland Executive Director, Leon Thompson said: “Pre-Covid, our sector created £6 billion of new economic activity each year, added a further £3 billion to the local supply chain and employed 285,000 people. We’re confident that, with the right support measures in place, hospitality businesses will bounce back stronger, and deliver growth and investment across Scotland once more.”

UKHospitality Scotland’s manifesto provides local authority leaders, elected representatives and officers of local and regional authorities with ideas to nurture regeneration, growth and vibrancy on urban, suburban and rural high streets alike, supporting local communities recover.

It outlines 10 key measures to support hospitality’s contribution to local economies and communities:

People

- actively promote hospitality jobs and skills through local authority channels, including careers advice and information campaigns
- direct employers and jobseekers to [Springboard](#) for schools, colleges, and employer networks and promote local Developing Young Workforce activity

Promotion of Place

- take a permissive approach to planning applications to support business growth with a rapid, streamlined response
- include a commitment to support hospitality businesses within local licensing and planning policies, such as a permanent extension of pavement and takeaway licensing
- deliver a more efficient, low-cost public transport system that supports business and resident needs
- provide discretionary business rates relief to businesses struggling post-pandemic
- establish high street business fora at local level to input into local development plans

Partnership

- support the roll out of Electric Vehicle charging points at hospitality businesses
- provide support for businesses on the food waste collection system by streamlining and simplifying the process
- work collaboratively with business and key stakeholders to avoid imposing excessive regulations such a tourist tax and night-time levies on taxis

Photo credit: Unsplash