

Scottish Democratic Alliance

The People of Scotland

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Scotland's greatest resource is our people. Since the devolution settlement we have a renewed sense of self-worth and pride of nationhood. We are Scots and proud of it.

We have a blend of cultures which merged to create the Scottish nation. We have earned a reputation for being loyal, hard working, well educated, resourceful, inventive, courageous and disciplined. We are known for possessing well developed initiative, innovative and organisation skills and abilities. Across the world we have demonstrated these qualities to the benefit of every country to which we have migrated.

Following the creation of a devolved Scottish we are again realising our potential, our self-worth and the quality of our culture. The gradual increase in our population is just one indicator of our growing confidence in our own nation. Now is the time for us to start thinking of Scottish state interests first and foremost.

A key step in a process to improve Community Planning or interactive community services management, which is supported by the Scottish government, is the granting of additional authority to voluntary community councils. These focused and dedicated voluntary councils perform a vital part in maintaining the identity, the cohesion and pride in the local community. They identify both problems and potential solutions on issues of direct local interest.

The estimated population of Scotland was recently some 5,168,000 residents distributed across a land mass area of 78,782 square kilometres with some 70 % of the country's

population living in the central midlands. The downward population trend previous to 2002 has now been reversed and the population is currently rising at a rate of some 0.4 % per year. Overall Scotland's estimated population has risen by some 68,000 residents over the past 58 years.

The 0.4 % per year net inward migration trend comprises some 11,500 persons from the rest of the UK and 7,700 persons from overseas mainly from the new EC accession states of Poland, Czech Republic, Lithuania and Latvia.

Population growth varies significantly across the country with Aberdeenshire, Edinburgh and the Highlands experiencing the largest increases in population.

Emigration

The gross outward migration from Scotland was estimated as some 71,618 persons, with migration to the rest of the UK being 41,818 persons and to overseas 30,800 persons. Armed forces personnel movements are not included and account for discrepancies in the overall figures quoted. It is believed that more Scots service personnel marry and settle in England and Germany than in Scotland (no statistics available).

Due to the lack of opportunity there is still significant migration of the younger generations from Scotland to the rest of the UK. This lack of jobs stems partly from EC and UK policies. Scotland is currently not seen by the international business community as a business friendly area in which to invest.

This outward migration trend is slowing under the devolved Scottish Parliament due to the opportunities being created within the innovative Scottish private sector and the energy industry in particular. The self-confidence bolstered by being a self-

governing state following Independence, coupled to a lean, less bureaucratic Scottish government administration as advocated by the **SDA**, will provide significant potential for further economic growth. It will create additional career opportunities for retaining our younger generations at home here in Scotland.

Immigration

The gross inward migration to Scotland was estimated as 91,827 persons with 53,327 from the rest of the UK and 38,500 persons from overseas.

We have a well established and well integrated range of ethnic peoples. Immigration should be encouraged only where necessary to maintain a healthy balance of generations and skills. In pursuing that policy, priority should be given to encouraging expatriate Scots and their descendants to return home. Independent Scotland would manage immigration effectively to meet our own economic, social and demographic priorities and needs.

Actively encouraging immigration has its dangers. Jobs filled by immigrants become unavailable to Scots, who are then more likely to move abroad, or if staying at home, to live on welfare.

In view of the inadequate infrastructure and public services the **SDA** advocates that limits are placed upon immigrants into Scotland. We need to adopt policies based on a realistic balance of available resources to Scotland's needs and grant entry only to those immigrants who possess skills and abilities which are not in oversupply in Scotland. The **SDA** will require that all immigrants must be able to demonstrate that they have the funds to support themselves until they obtain employment; they must have a demonstrable working knowledge of at least one of Scotland's official languages; an acceptable level of health care

insurance provision or come from a state with a reciprocal health care for Scottish citizens agreement; and an affidavit that they will abide by Scotland's laws or they will be deported.

Social cohesion

The Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 combined with a range of new anti-discrimination laws constitute a minefield for businesses which employ immigrants. The **SDA** advocates that an Independent Scotland should review and simplify all citizenship, immigration and anti-discrimination laws.

Our key public services such as the NHS, Education, Social Care and Police are struggling to cope with the stresses imposed by the current levels of population and immigration. This situation is aggravated by the short term, reactive thinking of the current political parties coupled to overstuffed, under-performing administration systems, preventing Scotland's highly competent frontline professionals from being able to perform at optimum effectiveness.

The birth rate in Scotland is rising: in 2008 births exceeded deaths by 4,000. The proportion of the population aged over 65 is rising. These factors are generating higher workloads and costs for the nation's Health and Care services.

Our under-resourced infrastructure – trunk and regional roads, railways, ports and airports – is not adequate to effectively process the growing volume of traffic required to meet the current demands for transporting people, food and general freight required to service the nation's needs.

Scotland, like all other nations, has a duty under international law to provide haven for those genuinely fleeing from active oppression. One of the basic tenets of granting asylum under the

international rules is that the country at which the person first arrives is the one with the obligation to provide asylum. However, too often we see so-called asylum seekers being allowed to “cherry pick” their preferred destinations, which is a clear abuse of the principle of asylum and has more to do with economic migration.

A large number of claims for asylum prove to be from economic migrants, but they must all be investigated, and applicants given temporary residence in the meantime. While controlling immigration, Scotland should treat asylum seekers with dignity and justice. Above all, claims must be promptly verified and non-entitled immigrants promptly deported.

For generations the family, kin and clan bonds formed the social core of our communities in Scotland. Now society as a whole is changing and the traditional bonds which bind us are also changing. Families are now smaller and no longer live close to each other. They often rely on electronic communications to remain in contact when, as is so often the case, widely separated due to working away from home and country. A more affluent society is often accompanied by increased levels of crime. This can cause a sense of vulnerability for our children and elderly, which often results in segregation of parts of our society.

A growing problem within our society, created by overzealous but often ineffective efforts to protect our children, is the failure to arrive at a meaningful answer to the loss of discipline of underage children who do not abide by society’s laws. The **SDA** propose that consideration be given to returning to parents, teachers and police acceptable forms of defined disciplinary action to enable these underage law breakers to understand that there are limits to which they must abide or face penalties.

These issues are aggravated when immigrants from different cultures arrive amongst us. On both sides ignorance of language and culture can create misunderstanding and mistrust.

Whereas modest number of immigrants have been welcomed into and successfully integrated into many Scottish communities, a policy encouraging large numbers of immigrants must be resisted. Such a policy brings the risk of locally swamping the indigenous culture, overloading the public resources, destroying community cohesion and creating ethnic ghettos. These effects can cause hostility towards incomers arriving in large numbers as they are perceived as a threat.

Borders and passport

Our Independent Scotland would co-operate with the other nations on these islands and in Europe to manage border controls and national security. Scotland would issue its own passports based on the EU model.

Note: Unless otherwise indicated population statistics are derived from The Registrar General for Scotland's tables: figures quoted are for year 2007 – 2008 or from the 2008 Census.

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