

How the major parties line up on key issues facing local shops ahead of the Scottish elections in May 2026.



CRIME

<p>Give every neighbourhood a named community and crime prevention officer.</p> <p>Prosecute shoplifting by expanding the remit of the Retail Crime Taskforce beyond the central belt</p>	<p>£10 million over three years for Police Scotland's Retail Crime Taskforce to tackle retail crime.</p> <p>Record £1.7 billion investment in Police Scotland.</p>	<p>Increase investment in the Retail Crime Taskforce to underpin responsive community policing.</p> <p>Tighten regulations on the sale of knives to prevent them being stolen from shops.</p>	<p>End the current practice of dealing with the majority of serial shoplifters through fines; a shoplifter convicted of three separate offences will go to prison unless exceptional circumstances apply.</p>	<p>Police will prioritise the "shop-lifting epidemic"</p>	<p>Ensure police resources are effective at tackling both serious organised crime and cybercrime.</p>
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EMPLOYMENT

<p>No income tax rate rises for five years.</p> <p>Legislate to protect workers from assault.</p>	<p>Continue to call for full devolution of employment law to Scotland.</p> <p>Increase apprenticeships to 150,000 over the Parliament.</p>	<p>Lift tax thresholds in line with inflation and begin to close the tax differential with England.</p> <p>Back UK Lib Dem proposals to scrap the hike to employers National Insurance.</p>	<p>Raise the point at which you start paying income tax in Scotland in line with inflation in every year of the next Scottish Parliament.</p>	<p>Immediately scrap Scotland's six income tax bands and mirror the UK's bands, set at 1p below each UK band</p>	<p>Disqualify companies from receiving tax reliefs if they are found to be in breach of minimum wage laws, or fined for environmental offences.</p>
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HIGH STREETS AND BUSINESS RATES

<p>Replace business rates with a new local business levy</p> <p>Support vibrant high streets and town centres by ensuring online retailers and large distribution warehouses pay their fair share.</p>	<p>Maintain the Small Business Bonus Scheme for Business Rates.</p> <p>New Last Provider Fund to keep open shops and pubs that are the last remaining providers in rural and island communities.</p>	<p>Work towards a new system of business rates with a land value element.</p> <p>Review the safety of vape shops on high streets and the risk they could pose to their neighbours.</p>	<p>Guarantee that all businesses with a current rateable value of less than £20,000 would pay no business rates.</p> <p>Set out in advance a cap on the maximum possible increase a company could face in its business rates bill.</p>	<p>Reverse the business rates revaluation scheduled to take effect from April 2026.</p> <p>Reform Non-Domestic Rates to make them consistent, fair and proportionate.</p>	<p>Introduce a licensing system for premises selling vaping products.</p> <p>Disqualify socially harmful businesses from the Small Business Bonus Scheme.</p>
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ENVIRONMENT/DRS

<p>Roll out the deposit return scheme, tackling littering and waste from drinks' containers</p> <p>Introduce a small charge for single-use takeaway cups.</p>	<p>Planning reforms to make it easier to install public EV chargers.</p>	<p>Bring in the ban on the sale and supply of wet wipes containing plastic</p> <p>Introduce a charge on single-use coffee cups.</p>	<p>Support the ban on disposable vapes and ensure action is taken against those who flout these laws.</p>	<p>Scrap all SNP Net Zero related targets, subsidies and quangos.</p>	<p>Require some product manufacturers to take back used products at the end of their life, and extend the scope of Extended Producer Responsibility Schemes.</p>
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PUBLIC HEALTH

<p>Prevent the promotion of vaping to non-smokers and young people.</p> <p>Work with supermarkets to promote healthy food promotions and reduce sales of food with no nutritional value.</p>	<p>Introduce a Vape Display Ban treating vapes the same as tobacco.</p> <p>Introduce statutory price ceilings on a basket of 20-50 essential food items (e.g. bread, milk, eggs) at large supermarkets only</p>	<p>Back restrictions on the marketing of vapes.</p> <p>Support Liberal Democrat proposals for a new UK-wide levy on tobacco company profits.</p>	<p>Scrap Minimum Unit Pricing on alcohol and instead increase support for alcohol addiction services.</p> <p>Oppose any restrictions on alcohol advertising, marketing and sponsorship in Scotland.</p>	<p>No relevant policy pledges</p>	<p>Ban energy drinks for under-16s.</p> <p>Review the licensing system to ensure over-provision and online sales are taken into account when granting new alcohol licenses.</p>
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