## HIGHLIGHTS

### SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT NEWS

**Scottish Parliament in Recess:**
Friday 29 March - Monday 15 April.

**Forthcoming Parliamentary Business**
- SP Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee asks how community transport systems can be improved; call for views.
- SP Health and Sport Committee (19 March) taking evidence re Scottish Strategy for Autism.
- SP Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee recommendations on the Scottish Government’s proposed biodiversity strategy.

**The Chamber**
- **Food Policy:** Richard Lochhead, the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment motion regarding food policy in Scotland.
- **SP Motions mentioning University of Aberdeen**

**Scottish Parliament Committees**
- SP European & External Relations Committee has launched enquiry examining how Scotland is performing against the targets of the Scottish Government’s Country Plan for China and International Framework; seeking views of organisations working with China.

**Scottish Parliament Publications**
- **SB 13-13 Curriculum for Excellence** - Overview of the new curriculum and qualifications and outlines some of the debate surrounding these changes.

### SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT NEWS

- **McCluskey Report:** The expert group led by former Solicitor General Lord McCluskey considering how the recommendations made by Lord Justice Leveson into press practices could be applied in Scotland has published its report.
- **Diet and Nutrition Survey of Infants and Young Children in Scotland 2011**

Scotland’s Chief Statistician announced the publication of the Diet and Nutrition Survey of Infants and Young Children in Scotland, 2011 on 13 March 2013.

### UK PARLIAMENT NEWS

**Forthcoming Parliamentary Business**
- **Budget 2013**
- **Lords Debate on HE STEM:** debate on 21 March on the Science and Technology Committee’s inquiry into higher education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

**House of Commons**
- **Written Answers - Overseas Students: Post-Study Work Requirements**
- **Written Answers - Overseas Students: Visa Application Waiting Times**

**House of Lords**
- **Lords EU Committee Inquiry on Research and Innovation**

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GENERAL ROUND-UP

**Higher Education**
- Universities Scotland & Korean Council for University Education Memorandum of Understanding

**Learned & Professional Bodies**
- IET Annual Political Engagement Review

**Culture**
- Public invited to open sessions to help inform the future of Creative Scotland

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT NEWS

**Forthcoming Parliamentary Business**

- **SP Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee asks how community transport systems can be improved**: The Committee has launched an enquiry on how people are travelling in their communities outside of commercial public transport systems. The inquiry will examine whether community transport services are able to better meet the needs of the people they serve. The call for views will be open until 19 April. [Access further information here](#)

- **Referendum Bill Committee calls for evidence from young people on the Franchise Bill**: The committee charged with scrutinising the legislation to hold a referendum has issued a call for evidence on the Scottish Independence Referendum (Franchise) Bill, which will enable 16 and 17 year olds to vote in next year’s referendum. The committee particularly wants to hear from young people on how best to reach 16 and 17 year olds who are not already politically engaged. [Read the call for evidence here](#)

- **Malawi Visit**: As part of the Scottish Parliament’s on-going links with Malawi, Sarah Boyack MSP and former Presiding Officer, Rt Hon Alex Fergusson MSP, are undertaking a five day programme to Malawi from Friday 15 March. During the visit, they will deliver a workshop at the National Assembly on budget scrutiny based on the Scottish Parliament’s model. The MSPs will also visit the constituencies of their ‘Parliamentary Pairs’, discuss with MPs the role of parliamentarians in scrutinising policies to address climate change, and they will participate in David Livingstone bicentenary events in Lilongwe and Nkhata Bay.

- **New Justice Sub-Committee on Policing**: A sub-committee of the Justice Committee has been established to oversee the operation of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 as it relates to policing. Their first meeting will take place on Thursday 21 March.

- **SP Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee asks how community transport systems can be improved**: The Committee has launched an enquiry on how people are travelling in their communities outside of commercial public transport systems. The inquiry will examine whether community transport services are able to better meet the needs of the people they serve. The call for views will be open until 19 April. [Access further information here](#)

- **Debating Chamber**: highlights of the Week ahead: (19 March) Scottish Government Debate - 10 Years on from the Invasion of Iraq; (20 March) Portfolio Questions - Health and Wellbeing; Scottish Government Debate – Trident; Members’ Business – S4M-05522 Jackie Baillie - Dementia Carers’ Voices; (21 March) First Minister’s Questions; Scottish Government Debate - Scotland’s Financial Strength.

- **Education and Culture Committee (19 March)**:
Education and Culture Committee (19 March): Post-16 Education (Scotland) Bill (in private): The Committee will consider a revised draft Stage 1 report.

Justice Committee (19 March): Ctte will decide whether to consider a draft report on its inquiry into purposeful activity in prisons; Inquiry into the effectiveness of the provisions in the Title Conditions (Scotland) Act 2003 - Committee will take evidence from Professor Kenneth Reid (Edinburgh), Professor Robert Rennie (Glasgow), Lionel Most (Property Law Cttee, Law Society).

Health and Sport Committee (19 March): Subordinate legislation includes SSI 2013/83: Food (Miscellaneous Amendment and Revocation) (Scotland) Regulations 2013; SSI 2013/84: Food Safety (Sampling and Qualifications) (Scotland) Regulations 2013. Scottish Strategy for Autism: Committee will take evidence from Richard Ibbotson, National Director Scotland, Autism Initiatives, Alan Somerville, Chief Executive, Scottish Autism, Dr Robert Moffat, National Director - Scotland, National Autistic Society (Scotland).

Welfare Reform Committee (19 March): Committee will take evidence on the draft Welfare Reform (Consequential Amendments) (Scotland) (No. 2) Regulations 2013 and the Education (Free School Lunches) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2013 (SSI 2013/64).


Finance Committee (20 March): Scottish Independence Referendum (Franchise) Bill: The Committee will take evidence on the Financial Memorandum from Steve Sadler, Head of Elections Team, and Heather Wells, Policy Officer, Scottish Government; Committee will also consider the evidence from the Bill team and consider its submission to the lead committee on the Financial Memorandum.

Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee (20 March): Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Bill - Committee will consider the Bill at Stage 2; Review of the Agricultural Rent Review Procedures in Scotland; Low Carbon Scotland: Meeting our Emissions Reduction Targets 2013-2027 - The Draft Second Report on Proposals and Policies. The Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee have made recommendations on the Scottish Government’s proposed biodiversity strategy. Access further details here.


Local Government and Regeneration Committee (20 March): Public services reform and local government: strand 3 - developing new ways of delivering services: The Committee will take evidence from - Ronnie Hinds, Past Chair, Society of Local Authority Chief Executives; Colin Mair, Chief Executive, and Mark McAteer, Director of Governance and Performance Management, Improvement Service; Ian Crichton, Chief Executive, NHS National Services Scotland; Dorothy Cowie, Director, and Hugh Carr, Head of Strategic Procurement, Scotland Excel.

Equal Opportunities Committee (21 March): Draft Budget 2013-14 Scrutiny; Where Gypsy/Travellers live (in private)- Committee will consider a draft report.

European and External Relations Committee (21 March): The Committee will continue to take evidence in relation to its Foreign Language Learning in Primary Schools inquiry. It will also consider the Brussels Bulletin and EU Priorities.
Referendum (Scotland) Bill Committee (21 March): The Committee will take evidence in relation to the Scottish Independence Referendum (Franchise) Bill from, among others, the Electoral Commission and the Electoral Management Board.

The Chamber

Food Policy: On 12 March Richard Lochhead, the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, submitted a motion regarding food policy in Scotland; a number of North-east MSPs contributed including Alex Johnstone 17569, Maureen Watt 17579, Nigel Don 17589, and Stewart Stevenson 17596. The report of the debate can be accessed here.

The Motion agreed to:
That the Parliament welcomes the significant achievements of the national food and drink policy and looks to build on this progress through increasing the number of consumers at home and abroad who enjoy and celebrate Scotland’s famous larder, especially in the run-up to the Commonwealth Games, Ryder Cup and Homecoming in 2014; notes the growing interest in food and drink reflected in the many initiatives underway throughout the country that recognise the different ways that the sector impacts on society, and believes that there remains much untapped potential to promote the high standards of sourcing and provenance in Scotland’s £12.4 billion industry that makes an enormous contribution to Scotland. [motion S4M-05892]

Portfolio Question Time, 6 March - Finance, Employment & Sustainable Growth: Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (Funding) [Local MSP - Richard Baker Question re funding arrangements for the Aberdeen western peripheral route] 17313; Offshore Wind [Local MSPs - Lewis Macdonald Question - what contribution Scotland’s offshore wind resources will make to meeting European Union renewable energy Targets; Stewart Stevenson also participated] 17337; Oil and Gas Reserves: Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what recent assessment it has made of the reserves of oil and gas remaining in Scottish waters. (S4O-01869) 17339

Portfolio Question Time, 6 March - National Health Service Waiting Times: Contributions to debate from local MSPs - Nanette Milne 17371, Mark McDonald 17378, Kevin Stewart 17383.

Chamber Report for 6 March can be accessed here

Scotlandhour, 7 March: motion re promoting tourism - {Local MSP contribution - Alex Johnstone 17473}.

Adult Health And Social Care (Integration), 7 March: {Local MSPs contribution Nanette Milne 17492; Mark McDonald 17517}.

Chamber Report for 7 March can be accessed here

SP Motions mentioning University of Aberdeen:
Motion S4M-05889: Kevin Stewart (SNP, Aberdeen Central) Lodged 11/03/13: Congratulations to Aberdeen UOTC - That the Parliament congratulates Aberdeen Universities Officers’ Training Corps (UOTC) on winning Exercise Northern Lights; notes that Northern Lights is an annual sports and piping competition between UOTCs from Scotland and Northern Ireland and was hosted in 2013 by the City of Edinburgh UOTC at Redford Barracks, and understands that, despite being the smallest UOTC on the UK mainland, Aberdeen UOTC continues going from strength to strength due to what it considers the tremendous efforts of staff and officer cadets alike.

Motion S4M-05932: Kevin Stewart (SNP, Aberdeen Central) Lodged 3/03/13: Granite City Challenge - That the Parliament notes the 16th Granite City Challenge, which takes place on 13 March 2013; understands that this annual competition between the sports teams of the University of Aberdeen and the Robert Gordon University consists of 30 events across the city; hopes that the day will promote good sportsmanship, friendly competition and enthusiasm for sport, and wishes the best of luck to all competitors.

Scottish Parliament Committees /
Scottish Parliament Committees


The Scottish Parliament’s European & External Relations Committee has launched an enquiry to look at how Scotland is performing against the targets of the Scottish Government’s Country Plan for China and International Framework. In particular, it will examine the role of the China Plan in driving economic growth, inward investment and international trade between Scotland and China.

Businesses and organisations involved in trade are encouraged to contact the Committee with their views. The Committee is also particularly keen to hear from businesses working with China, including those in: Oil & Gas; Finance; Education; and Tourism. The Committee is also keen to look at the challenges and opportunities for Scottish industries in the Food and Drink, Renewables and Textiles sectors.

Further details of inquiry remit, call for evidence, and timetable can be viewed here.

- Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee [6 March 2013, 8th Meeting, 2013]

Report on proposals and policies 2: Cttee took evidence from Fergus Ewing, Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism, David Wilson, Director of Energy et al.

Subordinate legislation: Cttee took evidence on the Renewables Obligation (Scotland) Amendment Order 2013 [draft].

Budget Strategy Phase: Cttee agreed its response to the Finance Cttee on the Budget Strategy Phase.

Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill (UK Parliament legislation): Cttee considered legislative consent memorandum lodged by Minister for Energy, Enterprise & Tourism (LCM(S4)14.3); recommend Parliament approve the motion on the Enterprise & Regulatory Reform Bill.


Access Cttee Minutes here

- Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee [6 March 2013, 9th Meeting, 2013]

Subordinate legislation: Cttee considered the following negative instruments - Water Environment (Drinking Water Protected Areas) (Scotland) Order 2013 SSI 2013/29; Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (Variation of Schedules A1 and 1A) (Scotland) Order 2013 SSI 2013/31. Cttee made no recommendations in relation to these instruments.


Scottish Government’s 2020 Challenge for Scotland’s Biodiversity: Cttee considered its letter to the Scottish Government on biodiversity; agreed to consider a revised draft at next meeting.

Access Cttee Minutes here

Scottish Parliament Publications & Briefings

- Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) Briefings

Two new briefings available:

SB 13-13 Curriculum for Excellence - Curriculum for Excellence, covers ages 3 to 18. Officially implemented from August 2010, new qualifications will be introduced in 2013/14. Paper provides an overview of the new curriculum and qualifications and outlines some of the debate surrounding these changes. Access Briefing here

SB 13-12 Economic Indicators - Briefing provides the latest data for a selection of indicators, identifying trends within Scottish economy. Access Briefing here

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT NEWS /
SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT NEWS

- **McCluskey Report**: The expert group led by former Solicitor General Lord McCluskey considering how the recommendations made by Lord Justice Leveson into press practices could be applied in Scotland has published its report. Appointed by the First Minister in December, the group has made a series of recommendations on how a system of self-regulation of the press could be established and recognised in Scotland in a report distributed to all parties this morning. The Scottish Government has stated that it is committed to cross-party talks on implementing the Leveson recommendations and that it will continue to work toward a consensus on the way forward in Scotland. The report of the Expert Group on the Leveson Report in Scotland can be accessed here.

- **Diet and Nutrition Survey of Infants and Young Children in Scotland 2011**
  Scotland’s Chief Statistician announced the publication of the Diet and Nutrition Survey of Infants and Young Children in Scotland, 2011 on 13 March 2013. The survey was designed to provide detailed information on food consumption, nutrient intake and nutritional status of around 600 children between the ages of 4 and 18 months. The Scottish Government and the Food Standards Agency in Scotland funded a boost to the Department of health and Food Standards Agency commissioned Diet and Nutrition Survey of Infants and Young Children (DNSIYC) in 2011. Access Report here.

- **Skills Development Scotland**
  Angela Constance, Minister for Youth Employment, announced the appointment of four non-executive directors to Skills Development Scotland (SDS) on 13 March 2013. Robin Crawford, Maggie Morrison, Caroline Stuart and Graeme Waddell join the Board of SDS, a Non Departmental Public Body with private limited company status, which is tasked with the delivery of the Scottish Government’s Economic and Skills Strategies.
  Appointees: Robin Crawford, a former partner in KPMG, is a member of the Scottish Funding Council and a member of Court of Strathclyde University; Maggie Morrison, a graduate of the University of Aberdeen, is the Account General Manager of Hewlett Packard Scotland and was formerly Senior Director of Cisco Systems in Amsterdam, North Carolina and California; Caroline Stuart is Scotland Director for software company Oracle Corporation Ltd; Graeme Waddell is Chairman of Energen Biogas, a renewable energy company. Access full announcement here.

UK PARLIAMENT NEWS

**Forthcoming Parliamentary Business**

- **Budget 2013**: Chancellor will deliver his Budget Statement at 12.30pm on Wednesday, 20 March; House of Commons will debate the Budget on Wednesday 20, Thursday 21, Friday 22 and Monday 25; House of Lords will debate the budget and the UK economy on Thursday 21.

- **BIS Committee Hearing on the Office for Fair Access**: The Commons Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee will hold an evidence session on 19 March on the work of the Office for Fair Access. Evidence will be taken from Mary Curnock-Cook, Chief Executive of UCAS, and from Les Ebdon, Director for the Office of Fair Access.

- **Lords Debate on HE STEM**: The Lords will hold a debate on 21 March on the Science and Technology Committee’s inquiry into higher education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The report, and the Government’s response, can be accessed here.
Andrew Selous: My very excellent Friend the Member for Mid Worcestershire (Peter Luff) has quite properly highlighted the scandal that this country produces only 19,000 graduate engineers a year when we need 41,000 graduate engineers. Unless children take maths and ideally physics at AS-level we are not going to bridge that gap, so will the Minister make it clear to schools that when children make these vital choices, they are told that graduate engineers are being snapped up, the country needs them, and a graduate engineer creates 12 extra jobs in the economy?

Matthew Hancock: I can think of few better people to make that argument than my hon. Friend or my hon. Friend the Member for Mid Worcestershire (Peter Luff), with whom I am meeting Professor Perkins, the chief scientific adviser, later today. This is a huge and important area. The lack of engineering skills in this economy is a serious problem, the product in part of 13 years of failure to address the problem. We are working four-square towards that, and we will not rest until it is sorted out.

Yasmin Qureshi: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills what assessment he has made of the benefit to the economy of a relaxation of the rule requiring international students to secure a graduate job paying at least £20,000 before being allowed to stay in the UK.

Mr Willetts: No assessment has been made by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) on any economic impact that would result from a relaxation of the Tier 2 regulations. The Migration Advisory Committee published their report on the review of the Tier 2 Codes of Practice in December 2012 and recommended that salaries for experienced and less experienced Tier 2 migrants be set at the 25th and 10th percentile of earnings respectively. Changes to the Codes of Practice will come into force on 6 April 2013.

Chris Bryant: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many people who have applied for a student visa in the UK have been waiting more than four weeks for a decision on their application; (2) what the average waiting time for student visa applications made inside the UK was in (a) 2010, (b) 2011 and (c) 2012; and how many such applicants waited more than four weeks for a decision on their application.

Mr Harper: As of 24 February 2013 a total of 16,391 tier 4 student applications had been waiting more than four weeks for a decision. The average waiting and processing times for tier 4 in-country student applications can be accessed here
Malcolm Harbour MEP; research and innovation academics and design experts.
- The Committee questioned Mr Willetts on issues raised throughout the inquiry, including:
  - Whether stakeholders at all levels are properly consulted when the EU is developing research and innovation proposal;
  - If the EU is getting the balance right between regulation and stimulating research and innovation;
  - How – if at all – the country’s Open Access policy will affect the policies of other EU Member States;
  - If the Government do enough to support businesses who want to participate in EU programmes; and
  - What the Government are doing to ensure the budget for research and innovation is as much as possible during the negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework.

GENERAL ROUND-UP

Higher Education

● **Universities Scotland & Korean Council for University Education Memorandum of Understanding (6 March):** Universities Scotland and the Korean Council for University Education have signed a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at nurturing closer academic ties between Scotland and South Korea. The formal agreement was signed by Professor Pete Downes, Convener of Universities Scotland and Dr In Suk Hamm, Chairman of KCUE at an event hosted by Universities Scotland at the University of Edinburgh. The signing of the MoU concluded a positive and constructive Scotland-Korea Universities Forum which focussed on expanding educational and research collaborative links between both countries, and which also built on the success of past visits to Scotland in the last two years. [Universities Scotland media release can be accessed here](http://www.departments.gate.ac.uk/)

● **NUS Scotland presidency:** Gordon Maloney, Aberdeen University Students’ Association Welfare & Equal Opportunities President has been elected as NUS Scotland president for 2013/14.

Learned & Professional Bodies

● **British Academy says implementing open access must be done well, not quickly**
The British Academy has welcomed today’s request from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) for advice on the role of open access publishing in research assessment.

● **Enlightening the Constitutional Debate: National societies launch major programme of events**
The Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) and the British Academy (BA) have launched a series of ten events to Enlighten the Constitutional Debate in advance of the forthcoming referendum on Scotland’s future relationship with the rest of the United Kingdom. [http://www.britac.ac.uk/news/news.cfm/newsid/882](http://www.britac.ac.uk/news/news.cfm/newsid/882)

● **British Academy calls on European Parliament to support vital EU research funding**
As the second European Union 2014-2020 Budget Summit commences later this week – the British Academy today calls for continued commitment to a properly funded EU research budget. [http://www.britac.ac.uk/news/news.cfm/newsid/870](http://www.britac.ac.uk/news/news.cfm/newsid/870)

● **IET**
IET Annual Political Engagement Review
[http://www.theiet.org/factfiles/annual-review-page.cfm](http://www.theiet.org/factfiles/annual-review-page.cfm)

● **IoP**
Higgs Prize to recognise outstanding young physicists in Scotland
An annual prize, named after Professor Peter Higgs, is being launched by Scotland’s First Minister to offer outstanding young physicists the chance to win a trip to CERN.

Law Society comment on today’s UK Government Paper on Independence

Royal Academy of Engineering - to run competition for 500 Master’s degrees in aerospace engineering
The Royal Academy of Engineering is offering 500 ambitious employees and new graduates financial assistance to study Master’s (MSc) level degrees in aerospace engineering.

Royal Society announces new round of esteemed Wolfson Research Merit Awards
The Royal Society, the UK’s national academy of science, has announced the appointment of 24 new Royal Society Wolfson Research Merit Award holders.

Royal Society of Chemistry welcomes House of Lords call for clarity on open access
The recommendations in the Science and Technology Committee’s report respond directly to the concerns raised by the research community and publishers.

Culture
Public invited to open sessions to help inform the future of Creative Scotland
The general public are today invited to attend a series of Open Sessions to help inform the future operational and policy direction of Creative Scotland. Taking place across the country throughout March and April, the sessions are being held as part of the organisation’s programme of change, the key themes of which were announced in the Board statement of 7 December 2012.

Creative Scotland
Fourteen Projects to Receive Support Through the Year of Natural Scotland Open Fund
Fourteen projects offering opportunities to engage with natural surroundings in innovative and exciting ways, are to receive a share of more than £500,000, as part of the Year of Natural Scotland 2013. Includes funding for a collaborative project involving University of Aberdeen as one of the partners.

ENDS