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- Brown must clarify whether federal UK plan would require referendum

27 May 2017



Gordon Brown must clarify whether Scottish Labour's plan for a federal UK would require a referendum before it could be introduced, the Scottish Conservatives have said.

The former prime minister, who is expected to campaign in the General Election today (Sat, May 27) is a driving force behind Scottish Labour's proposal to loosen the ties between the four nations of the UK.

The Scottish Conservatives are demanding more detail about the plan after Kezia Dugdale, said federalism could be put forward as an option on the ballot paper in a future referendum on independence.

Adam Tomkins MSP, Scottish Conservative constitution spokesman, said:

"To move to a federal UK would mark a historic and monumental constitutional change.

"As a leading proponent of the idea, Gordon Brown has to spell out how it would be achieved.

"Kezia Dugdale has raised the prospect of presenting it as an option in a second referendum on Scottish independence and, as we see Labour cosyng up ever closer to the SNP, that is bound to set alarm bells ringing.

"Gordon Brown and Scottish Labour need to come clean about exactly what they are planning."

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- In a speech to the IPPR think tank last December, Kezia Dugdale said a constitutional convention, based on the long running convention which led to a referendum on the creation of a Scottish Parliament, should be set up to develop plans for a federal UK.
 - In February she said there was a "legitimate case" for including a "federalist solution" on the ballot paper in a second independence referendum.
 - Gordon Brown said in March the proposals would rest on "popular sovereignty," suggesting a referendum might be required.
 - Also in March, UK Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn said he was "absolutely

fine” with a second independence referendum. He has previously said he would be prepared to work with the SNP in a future Westminster government.

Scottish Labour have struck deals and entered alliances with the SNP in councils across Scotland since the local authority elections on May 4.

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- New figures reveal 500-day waits for range of treatments

26 May 2017



New official statistics have revealed patients were left waiting for more than 500 days for various treatments across Scotland’s NHS last year.

People awaiting procedures for a range of problems – including hip replacements, knee replacements and foot and ankle surgery – were on lists for up to 582 days in 2016.

The Scottish Conservatives said the revelations exposed the crisis at the heart of the NHS, with hospitals struggling to deal with challenges brought by an ageing population.

The ISD Scotland figures – obtained by the party through Freedom of Information – showed the longest waits clocked in 2016 across hip, knee and ankle procedures.

Someone requiring a primary hip replacement had to wait 582 days; a primary knee replacement 520 days; and osteotomy surgery 578 days.

The Scottish Government has been warned for years about the impact an increasing and ageing population would have on the NHS.

Public health spokesman Miles Briggs said these latest statistics proved those warnings had been ignored.

Scottish Conservative public health spokesman Miles Briggs said:

“It’s utterly unacceptable that someone should have to wait more than 500 days for this kind of procedure.

“These are operations which can be life-changing, particularly for older patients, and having to wait the best part of two years is precious time wasted.

“The SNP has been told over the last decade just how pressing an issue an ageing population is for the NHS.

“But these warnings have not been heeded, and it’s vulnerable and elderly patients who are paying the price.

“Health is under the complete control of ministers at Holyrood, and they are the ones who must take full responsibility for these failings.”

To see the full statistics, including a geographical breakdown, visit:
<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/lengthy-waits/>

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- Nurse smear points to ‘something endemic’ in the SNP

22 May 2017



Attempts by the SNP to smear a nurse who tackled Nicola Sturgeon during last night’s TV leaders’ debate reveals “something endemic” within the party.

The audience member criticised the First Minister on the BBC programme last night, saying the Scottish Government had failed to resource nursing sufficiently.

However, instead of heeding the warnings, the SNP’s spin operation immediately swung into action, wrongly accusing her of being married to a Conservative councillor.

These false claims were spread by the SNP’s candidate for Edinburgh South West, Joanna Cherry, who was later forced into a grovelling apology.

The accusations sparked an onslaught of online abuse towards the nurse from nationalist supporters on social media.

It's not the first time the SNP has rounded on a member of the public voicing legitimate concerns.

Before the independence referendum, party officials tried to smear Clare Lally, the mother of a disabled child, who spoke out against independence.

Scottish Conservative MSP Murdo Fraser said:

"It was a disgraceful episode and Nicola Sturgeon and her party should be thoroughly ashamed.

"This smear operation points to something endemic within the SNP.

"Its supporters talk over critics, not listen. And the nationalists will always try to play the man not the ball. This kind of behaviour is utterly unacceptable.

"Ruth Davidson and the Scottish Conservatives will speak up for anyone at this election who wants to fight back against the SNP.

"People have had enough. We can send them a clear message at this campaign, and make them listen for once."

For more on the SNP smears about the nurse from the TV debate, visit:
<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/political-parties/snp/nicola-sturgeon/news/86121/snp-mp-apologises-after-smearing-nurse-who>

The episode was similar to when the SNP was forced to apologise to the mother of a disabled child who spoke out against independence:
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2656038/SNP-spin-doctor-forced-apologise-email-mother-disabled-child-trashed-internet-trolls-opposing-independence.html>

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22 May 2017



Labour's weakness on the union, running from Jeremy Corbyn and Kezia Dugdale downwards, has been exposed in a new dossier.

The party will launch their Scottish manifesto today claiming to oppose a second independence referendum.

However, a number of current General Election candidates have backed separation, while numerous former senior party figures also endorse the SNP's bid to break up Britain.

Now a document produced by the Scottish Conservatives reveals the division at the heart of Labour on the constitution.

It includes quotes from Scottish leader Kezia Dugdale previously saying she might consider voting Yes in future referendums, as well as remarks from UK leader Jeremy Corbyn stating he's "absolutely fine" with another divisive vote.

Deputy leader Alex Rowley – fresh from his weekend threat to ban councillors who go into coalition with the Scottish Conservatives – has also expressed his sympathy for another referendum.

A number of Labour candidates standing next month are backers of the Yes campaign, the dossier shows.

Douglas Beattie, candidate for Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale, campaigned for independence in 2014 and revealed himself to be "gutted" when No won.

In Moray, Labour's candidate Jo Kirby shared numerous articles on social media promoting the SNP.

And Sally Prentice, the candidate for the Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire by-election at Holyrood, openly urged SNP voters to back Labour – as that was the best way to secure independence.

Labour figures who back a separation vote include ex-leader Henry McLeish and former MP Eric Joyce.

Scottish Conservative candidate for Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk, John Lamont, said:

"Kezia Dugdale and Jeremy Corbyn cannot be trusted on the union – the record speaks for itself.

"Labour may pretend that it opposes a second referendum on independence.

"But not only do a series of candidates for next month say the complete opposite, Corbyn himself has said he's 'absolutely fine' with it.

"We know exactly where Labour's constitutional priorities lie – they want to prop up the SNP in councils across the country, and suspend any councillors who choose instead to work with the Scottish Conservatives.

“This dossier exposes the weakness and division at the heart of Labour on this matter.

“And it proves the only party serious about taking on the SNP and keeping Scotland a key part of the UK are the Scottish Conservatives.”

For more on Labour’s weakness on the union, visit:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/2017-04-22-Weak-and-Divided-Scottish-Labour-on-the-union.pdf>

[A manifesto that delivers for Scotland](#)

18 May 2017



Secretary of state for Scotland David Mundell has hailed today’s UK Conservative manifesto as a plan “that delivers for Scotland”.

The manifesto provides backing for Scotland’s vital energy sector – including plans to create a world-leading decommissioning industry in the North Sea and a commitment to remote island wind development.

Key announcements include a new Borderlands Growth deal to boost prosperity in the south of Scotland.

And, for Scotland’s capital city, the manifesto commits a future Conservative government to mark the 70th anniversary of the Edinburgh Festival by developing a new Edinburgh Concert Hall.

A re-elected Conservative Government will also ensure that one of the offices of the new British Business Bank will be located in Edinburgh.

In addition, the manifesto provides a key pledge for Scottish farmers – with a commitment to ensure the same cash total in funds for farm support until the end of the parliament.

Secretary of state for Scotland David Mundell said:

“From the Borders to the North Sea, this manifesto delivers for Scotland.

“It shows that a re-elected Conservative government will continue to ensure that Scotland benefits from its membership of the United Kingdom.

“The more Scottish Conservative MPs we elect on Thursday, the more MPs we will have at the heart of Westminster able to deliver even more for Scotland.

“All this is underpinned by the key commitment in today’s manifesto – and that is to say no to the SNP’s reckless plan for a second referendum so Scotland can move on, together.”

Scotland in the UK manifesto

Borderlands Growth Deal (pg. 33)

- “Building on the City and Growth deals we have signed across Scotland, we will bring forward a Borderlands Growth Deal, including all councils on both sides of the border, to help secure prosperity in southern Scotland.”

Support for remote island wind (pg. 22)

- We will “support the development of wind projects in the remote islands of Scotland, where they will directly benefit local communities.”

Protecting farming incomes (pg. 26)

- “We will continue to commit the same cash total in funds for farm support until the end of the parliament.”

North Sea industry support (pg. 21-22)

- “We will ensure that the sector continues to play a critical role in our economy and domestic energy supply, supporting further investment in the UK’s natural resources. We will continue to support the industry and build on the unprecedented support already provided to the oil and gas sector.”

Scotland at the heart of the industrial strategy (pg. 22)

- “While there are very significant reserves still in the North Sea, it is expected to be the first major oil and gas basin in the world to decommission fully, and we will take advantage of that to support the development of a world-leading decommissioning industry.”

Supporting a new arts venue in Edinburgh (pg. 25)

- “In this 70th Anniversary Year of the Edinburgh Festival we will support the development of the new Edinburgh Concert Hall, reaffirming Edinburgh as the UK’s leading festival city and a cultural beacon around the globe.”

A new British Business Bank branch in Edinburgh (pg. 78)

- We will “open new offices of the British Business Bank in Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Manchester and Newport, specialising in the local sector.”