

Nicola Sturgeon: the hard Brexiteers have had their chance and failed

This week the Scottish Government will publish a detailed study on the implications of leaving the European Union. Here's what First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has said ahead of the publication.

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Author:

West End history #dundeewestend

Perth Road at Seafield Road :



The Customs Union and the World Trade Organisation

Those who continue to argue that we need to be in the Customs Union of the EU, or need to copy it from outside the Union as we leave, need to answer two very simple questions.

Why do we have a large and persistent trade deficit with the Customs Union, and a trade surplus with the rest of the world trading with them under WTO rules?

Why has our trade been growing faster in recent years with the rest of the world than with the EU Customs Union?

The figures are quite stark. Our trade in goods deficit with the EU widened to £96bn, and our travel deficit to £15bn. Our sales of services were quite unable to offset these large deficits in the way they do for our trade with the rest of the world. Between 2014 and 2016 our exports to the rest of the world grew by 6.7%, whilst our exports to the EU grew by a little over 3%.

The good news is with or without a deal with the EU we will be trading with them under WTO rules, as both the EU and the UK are members of the WTO and accept its rules and its arbitration system for any disputes. The recently enforced Trade Facilitation Agreement that came into effect last spring from the WTO binds us and them to keeping border arrangements friendly to business with smooth procedures for the passage of legal goods.

Germany in 2016 exported £66bn worth of goods to the UK and imported just £33bn back from us. The Netherlands exported £36bn to us, and took just £18.6bn in imports. I will be looking in future postings at what we buy from these large exporters, and what opportunities there are to buy from elsewhere should the EU wish to impose new barriers on their trade with us.

If they want us to go to WTO terms we will be able to find cheaper imports from non EU sources and produce more at home.

Government must intervene to protect Carillion employees, pension holders and taxpayers – Trickett

Jon Trickett MP, Labour's Shadow Minister for the Cabinet Office, responding to talks on the future of Carillion, said:

"It has been clear for months that Carillion has been in difficulty but the Government has continued to hand over contracts to the company even after profits warnings were issued.

"Jobs and public services are now at risk because the Tories were blinded by their commitment to a failing ideological project of introducing the profit motive into taxpayer funded services.

"Labour urges the Government to stand ready to intervene and bring these crucial public sector contracts back in-house in order to protect Carillion's employees, pension holders and British taxpayers."

The Saturday Brexit briefing

When it came to Brexit news, 2018 began much as 2017 ended – with The Tories breaking promises to Scotland on protecting devolution and Labour backing up their extreme Brexit plans.

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Author: