

'Rudderless' Scottish Enterprise could be without chief for a year

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Scotland's main enterprise body could be without a chief executive for a full year, it has been revealed.

Former boss of Scottish Enterprise Lena Wilson confirmed her departure in July last year.

However, in a statement to Holyrood, economy secretary Keith Brown confirmed the deadline for applications for her replacement was on January 5, with the recruitment process expected to take another six months to conclude.

The delay has been criticised by shadow economy secretary Dean Lockhart, who said the "dragging of heels" by the SNP was more proof of its anti-business approach.

And in his response to the parliamentary question from Mr Lockhart, the minister added it could be even longer than six months "subject to the successful candidate's notice period".

Earlier this year, the Scottish Conservatives revealed how Scottish Enterprise has spent £100 million in the last decade on firms which went bust shortly after.

Ms Wilson's tenure has also been attacked after it emerged she was supplementing her £210,000-a-year job with other board member roles.

Scottish Conservative shadow economy secretary Dean Lockhart said:

"At a time when Scotland's economy is struggling, it's completely unacceptable that Scotland's enterprise agency could be rudderless for up to a year.

"It's more proof that this SNP government is not serious about business or the economy.

"The role of the Scottish Enterprise chief is critically important.

"For the SNP government to be dragging its heels in this way is damaging for the economy, and for the many start-ups who rely on the organisation.

“Yet again we have further evidence of why, under the SNP, Scotland’s economy is facing its longest period of weak growth for more than 60 years.”