

SNP kept rail scheme delay secret ahead of General Election

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14 Jun 2017



The SNP knew its flagship rail project between Glasgow and Edinburgh would be delayed last month, but chose not to make the information public before the General Election.

It emerged at the weekend that the electrification of the line between the two cities would not be up-and-running until the autumn, almost a year behind schedule.

Now transport minister Humza Yousaf has admitted he was informed of the delay on May 25, a fortnight before the country went to the polls.

He told Scottish Conservative transport spokesman Liam Kerr that he received the letter from Network Rail chief executive Mark Carne more than two weeks ago, and will now come under pressure to publish the correspondence.

It is the latest disruption to hit Scotland's railway services in recent years.

And while Mr Yousaf has tried to shift the blame onto Network Rail, he previously took credit for the project, telling Holyrood: "We are in the midst of one of the most significant transformations of our railway infrastructure in recent memory."

Today's rural economy and connectivity committee is expected to hear more about the delay to the scheme, which is part of a £795 million improvement programme.

Despite being reluctant to reveal details of the delays ahead of the General Election, the Scottish Government made several separate funding announcements during that period, prompting accusations of breaching rules on purdah.

Scottish Conservative transport spokesman Liam Kerr said:

"There are serious questions to be asked about why the Scottish Government kept this important information to itself for so long.

"The transport minister admitted he was informed on May 25, yet we had to wait until Sunday until those key details emerged.

“Many will suspect the impending General Election may have influenced the SNP’s decision to keep this bad news under wraps.

“That’s irresponsible government, especially during a period where the SNP was more than happy to make contentious funding announcements during a period of purdah.

“Now the minister has confirmed he has this letter, he should make it public immediately.”

Scottish Conservative MSP Jamie Greene, a member of the rural economy and connectivity committee, said:

“It is extremely concerning to hear the electrification of the line is yet again delayed, bringing us nearly a year over the Scottish Government’s original deadline.

“Passengers who have already had to put up with major disruptions to the line will be dismayed to learn that electric trains will not be operating until October.

“This is one of Scotland’s flagship lines connecting two of our most important cities – it needs to be fit for the 21st century.”

Delays to the scheme were confirmed at the weekend:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/transport/delays-hit-electric-train-plans-for-edinburgh-glasgow-line-1-4472211>

Transport minister Humza Yousaf admitted yesterday he knew about the delay as early as May 25:

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And he previously boasted to parliament about how his Scottish Government was delivering on the scheme:

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Despite being reluctant to reveal details of the delay, the SNP was more than happy to make a series of funding announcements in the run up to the General Election:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/06/officials-admit-they-did-break-purdah-rules-over-snp-glasgow-funding-deal/>

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- New MPs demand Sturgeon faces up to indyref2 reality

13 Jun 2017



The new group of Scottish Conservative MPs have today issued a joint statement urging Nicola Sturgeon to face reality on a second independence referendum.

The 13 MPs told her to admit the bid to break up Britain had failed, and instead focus on the day job of running the country.

The joint statement from Scottish Conservative MPs stated:

“Since June last year, Nicola Sturgeon has focused solely on independence and how she can force a second referendum on Scotland.

“During that time, we have seen the damage it has caused. It has created uncertainty, damaged prospects for Scottish business and held our economy back.

“It has been the first and only priority for her government – with a high price paid by people across our country.

“Because of the SNP obsession on independence, our school system is letting down a generation of children, and our NHS is struggling.

“Most recently, she chose to put independence ‘at the heart’ of the general election.

“The prospect of a second referendum alarmed the majority of Scots who do not want to face another painful period of upheaval and division.

“She asked them to vote on it – and the SNP lost 21 seats and half a million votes. It was a damning verdict.

“Unless we present a united front to the EU, Nicola Sturgeon will disrupt our negotiations. And unless she gets back to the day job, Scotland will continue to pay a high price.

“So she needs to end her denial, listen to what the people of Scotland have said and face up to the reality.

“She needs to look the Scottish people in the eye and tell them she has given

up on a second independence referendum.

“Unless and until she does, she is putting her party ahead of her country – and we will not stand for it.”

Ruth meets Prime Minister at Downing Street

12 Jun 2017



Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson met Prime Minister Theresa May in London today.

They discussed a range of issues at Downing Street, including priorities for Scotland and the UK as the Brexit process continues.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

“I had a useful and positive discussion with the Prime Minister this afternoon.

“We talked at length about Brexit and agreed it’s vital to get on with negotiations so we can deliver certainty for firms across the UK.

“I made it clear that as we leave the European Union we must leave the Common Fisheries Policy and ensure a good deal for our fishing communities.

“The Prime Minister is focused on getting the right deal with Brexit and I give her my full support.

“The key issue is to ensure we put our country’s economic future first and foremost in our minds as we go ahead with Brexit.

“It is clear to me that this Conservative government at Westminster is determined to deliver that.”

Ruth: Scottish Conservative MPs will

aim to “deliver, not divide”

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- Ruth: Scottish Conservative MPs will aim to “deliver, not divide”

10 Jun 2017



Scotland’s new Conservative MPs will aim “to deliver, not divide”, party leader Ruth Davidson said today.

At a photo-call for the 13 Conservative MPs, Ruth also said the new group would stand up for Scotland – by showing our best interests are met as part of the United Kingdom.

The party is also publishing analysis today which shows that the SNP was just 635 votes away from losing a majority of seats last week – underlining how much worse the result could have been for them.

Ruth said:

“I am delighted that we are going to be able to send 13 Scottish Conservative MPs to Westminster. They come from a host of different backgrounds and will bring real experience, enthusiasm and a passion for their local communities to the job.

“This team will aim to stand up for Scotland’s interests – and to show that those interests are best served by being part of the UK.

“We will aim to deliver, not divide – and to show how the Union can work for all of us.”

On the SNP, she added:

“The SNP had a terrible election – and were spared even more humiliation by the skin of their teeth.

“Quite simply, people in Scotland have had enough of their constant talk of division, and let their views be known through the ballot box.

“Nicola Sturgeon must now do more that reflect: she must take her threat of a second independence referendum off the table, and focus on her priorities in government.”