

Swinson must rule out joining SNP-Labour pact

7 Dec 2019



The Scottish Conservatives are today calling on Liberal Democrat leader Jo Swinson to categorically rule out offering her support for a SNP-Labour pact – which could lead to another independence referendum.

Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw said Ms Swinson needed to make clear that, in a straight choice, she would put the UK Union first, before a second EU vote.

The SNP has said it wants to enter into a pact with Labour after next week's election – with Nicola Sturgeon demanding a second independence referendum as the price of her support.

But there are key questions over how LibDem MPs would act if a Labour and the SNP agreed to implement two referendums next year.

After Scottish LibDem leader Willie Rennie said that stopping independence was the most important issue in Scotland, the Scottish Conservatives are now calling on the Liberal Democrats to make clear they would do whatever necessary to block a Labour government that kept an independence referendum on the table.

Campaigning in Moray and Stirling, Mr Carlaw said today:

“I am calling on Jo Swinson to clarify her party's position before we go to the polls on Thursday.”

“We need to hear clearly from the Liberal Democrats that they will never prop up a Labour – SNP alliance that is preparing to offer up a second independence referendum.”

“This is a key point of principle for Jo Swinson. The suspicion is growing that she is so obsessed with revoking Article 50 or having a second EU vote that she would allow a second independence referendum as a price worth paying.”

“She must make it clear. Will she block any Labour-SNP arrangement that would leave a second independence referendum on the table – or not?”

Scotland's rapid decline in education standards revealed

5 Dec 2019



Scotland's alarming descent down world education league tables has been revealed.

Earlier this week the Pisa report – which evaluates education systems in countries across the world – exposed the SNP's dire performance in key areas.

Today at First Minister's Questions, Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw revealed the extent to which standards have slipped since the nationalists came to power compared with other OECD countries.

In science, performance dipped by 25 points, the second highest in the world, with only Finland performing worse.

And in maths, the demise in results since 2006 has only been eclipsed by Finland, Australia, New Zealand and South Korea.

However, instead of taking responsibility for the performance, Nicola Sturgeon denied there were problems in Scotland's schools system.

Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw said:

“These figures show disastrous drops in performance in key subjects like science and maths.

“Yet the SNP's response to this has almost been as alarming as the results themselves.

“Nicola Sturgeon admitted previously that performance wasn't good enough yet, now that things have got even worse, she's in complete denial about it.

“And all the while, our young people are deprived of the kind of education children in other countries are receiving.

“That will restrict their opportunities, and harm our economy in future.

“The SNP promised to have an 'unwavering focus' on improving standards in schools.

“But instead, Nicola Sturgeon's only unwavering performance has been on trying to force through another unwanted and divisive referendum.”

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27 Nov 2019



SNP Ochil and South Perthshire candidate John Nicolson has been branded a “laughing stock” after he told a hustings last night to vote for him in East Dunbartonshire.

Mr Nicolson, who puts ‘East Dunbartonshire’ as his address in his nomination papers, represented the constituency between 2015 and 2017.

He was then parachuted in to the Ochil and South Perthshire seat for this year’s election.

In a video of a hustings meeting in Alloa town hall last night Mr Nicolson is heard saying: “Only the Scottish National party can beat the Tories here in East Dunbartonshire”.

Scottish Conservative MSP for mid-Scotland and Fife, Murdo Fraser said:

“John Nicolson is now a laughing stock.”

“It’s well known he was parachuted in to Ochil and South Perthshire last month by Nicola Sturgeon. You’d think by now that he would have worked out where he was.”

“People have had enough of SNP placemen thinking they can walk in with a God-given right to a seat. In two weeks’ time, voters in Ochil and South Perthshire can tell Mr Nicolson to go home and think again – assuming he can find his way there.”

Scottish Conservative manifesto launch

26 Nov 2019



AN Oil and Gas sector deal to support the North-East economy is backed in today's Scottish Conservative manifesto.

Launched by Prime Minister Boris Johnson in Fife, the manifesto includes commitments to support and nurture Scotland's key industries – including a review of whisky duty, a guarantee on farm support, and a firm plan to become an independent coastal state to support Scotland's fishing sector.

The Oil and Gas Sector deal – which will help protect the more than 100,000 jobs in Scotland that rely on oil and gas – has been a key Scottish Conservative priority since last year.

The manifesto also sets out a clear and unambiguous commitment to oppose a second independence referendum.

It guarantees:

- More than £3.1 billion for Scottish public services as a result of the Barnett Consequentials from Conservative commitments in England.
- A review of alcohol duty to back Scottish whisky and gin producers.
- A clear commitment to leave the Common Fisheries Policy in December 2020 and to take back control of our fishing waters as an independent coastal state.
- Quadrupling the number of seasonal agricultural workers to 10,000 – a scheme campaigned for by Scottish Conservative MPs.
- Permanent tax mitigation from having to pay the Scottish rate of income tax for armed forces personnel based in or resident in Scotland.

Introducing the Prime Minister at today's launch, Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw said:

"This election is a chance to insist on change. To insist that for once Nicola Sturgeon listens. To insist on something better."

"We did it before remember: two years ago, 13 Scottish Conservative MPs were elected. Within days, the SNP's referendum plans beat a hasty retreat."

"This December, we get the chance to tell Nicola Sturgeon again. Tell her again: no to a second referendum. Tell her again: get on with the job we pay you to do. Tell her again: let's get Scotland moving."

On the plans for a new oil and gas sector deal, Mr Carlaw added:

"Jeremy Corbyn's disastrous Aberdeen tax puts 100,000 Scottish jobs in

danger. And incredibly, Nicola Sturgeon has still refused to rule out giving it her support.”

“The contrast with the Scottish Conservatives could not be greater.”

“We will oppose Labour’s Aberdeen tax. And we will introduce a new Oil and Gas Sector deal to support jobs in the north-east. There is still a great future for the North Sea and we must not let Corbyn kill it.”

[Labour buckle to the SNP over indyref2](#)

25 Nov 2019



Scottish Labour leader Richard Leonard has admitted on national radio that he would grant the SNP a second referendum on independence.

Speaking on a BBC Radio Scotland phone-in, he said a Jeremy Corbyn-led government in Westminster would not stand in the way of another separation vote.

It confirms the party’s position that, should it get into Number 10 at this General Election, a referendum re-run could be held before the end of its first term.

He said today: “If the SNP or other parties put in their manifesto that they wanted to hold a second independence referendum and they got a mandate for that, either in 2021 or at some future point, then of course what we are saying is that would not be blocked by a UK Labour Westminster government.”

His concession follows the deletion of opposition to an independence referendum in Labour’s Scottish manifesto, and repeated statements from Jeremy Corbyn suggesting he’s open to a deal with the SNP.

Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw said:

“This confirms Richard Leonard has fallen into line with Jeremy Corbyn in opening the door for a second independence referendum.

“Voters can now be left in no doubt that a vote for Labour is a vote for a return to the bitterness and division of a campaign to break up Britain.

“People in Scotland want to move on from referendums, but now both Labour and the SNP are fighting to keep that misery going.

“Only the Scottish Conservatives will get Scotland moving forward so we can focus on things that really matter like schools, hospitals and the economy.”