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13 Mar 2017



Nicola Sturgeon's decision to hold another independence referendum has been branded "utterly irresponsible" by Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson.

Earlier today the First Minister announced she wanted to hold a second independence referendum next year.

This is despite previously saying she would only do so if the majority of Scots wanted another vote, and that it was a "once in a generation" decision.

Repeated polling has shown not only opposition to independence, but widespread objection to another referendum.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

"Nicola Sturgeon has today given up acting as First Minister for all of Scotland.

"People have said time and again they do not want to go back to the division of a second referendum.

"Nicola Sturgeon promised the 2014 referendum would be 'once in a generation'.

"Today she has ignored the majority in Scotland who do not want a referendum and has decided instead to double down on division and uncertainty.

"The First Minister's proposal offers Scotland the worst of all worlds. Her timetable would force people to vote blind on the biggest political decision a country could face.

"This is utterly irresponsible and has been taken by the First Minister purely for partisan political reasons.

"Both No and Yes voters have been urging her to put this to one side – but because of her own rash decision to use Brexit in a bid to lever support for independence, she has ignored them completely.

"Quite simply, today the First Minister has failed in her job to act in the

interests of all of us.”

[News story: Advice on coming to court](#)

You can use our [Court & Tribunal Finder service](#) to find local court or tribunal contact details, facilities provided, parking information, and opening hours.

You should also be aware of [our security advice](#) on items that are not allowed in our buildings.

If you have any concerns about coming to a court or tribunal and what to expect please speak to a member of staff. If you are interested in visiting the court before your hearing, staff may be able to arrange that for you. Staff can advise you on procedures, give you the forms you need. They cannot give you legal advice. If you need legal advice you may be able to get it free from a law centre, Citizens Advice or a consumer advice centre or you can contact [Community Legal Advice](#) (tel 0845 345 4345).

Who are the people in court

We know that coming to court as a witness or to give evidence can be a daunting experience. To help put you at ease we have created these short videos to introduce you to the people you will see in the courtroom.

[The magistrates' court](#)

[The Crown Court](#)

[The County Court](#)

[Citizens Advice Witness Service](#) provide free and independent support for both prosecution and defence witnesses in criminal courts in England and Wales. Victims and witnesses are entitled to visit the court before the trial date to familiarise themselves with the building, the court room, and to try any special measures that have been agreed. You can arrange these visits via the [Witness Service](#).

Most courts and tribunals have separate waiting areas for victims, witnesses and jurors if applicable.

As you may be at court for a while on the day of the trial, you may like to bring some things to help you pass the time, like a book, newspaper or magazine.

Help available for customers with a disability

If you have a disability and would like help to access our information and services, please contact a member of staff at the court or tribunal you are visiting to discuss what help you need. If you are a textphone user you should dial 18001 before the relevant court or tribunal telephone number:

Code of practice and Witness Charter

There is a [code of practice](#) governing services to be provided in England and Wales to victims of criminal conduct which occurred in England and Wales.

The [Witness Charter](#) sets out how you can expect to be treated by the police if you are a witness to a crime or incident, and if you are asked to give evidence in a criminal court.

Juror advice and help

For information on when to arrive on the first day, please see your confirmation letter. For the days that follow, you will be told when to arrive at court. The court normally sits from 10am to 4:30pm each day. Sometimes the judge may ask you to sit more or less hours, depending on the way the trial progresses. Court staff will tell you about times for lunch.

Court staff might ask you to provide a contact name and number of a family member or friend in case they need to speak to someone in the unlikely event of an emergency.

Find out more about [jury service](#).

[BCC launches Chamber Business Awards at London Stock Exchange](#)

The British Chambers today launches the Chamber Business Awards at the London Stock Exchange.

13 March 2017

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) has today launched its flagship Chamber Business Awards at London Stock Exchange. Scientifica, last year's winner of the 'Business of the Year' award based in Sussex, had the honour of opening trading at London Stock Exchange, accompanied by Nus Ghani, Conservative MP for Wealden, and Ana Christie, Chief Executive of Sussex Chambers of Commerce.

The prestigious competition is one of the showpiece events in the business calendar, recognising and promoting the best of British business through a series of regional heats, culminating in a Gala Awards Dinner, which will take place at the Brewery, London on 30 November.

Entries open today and will run until Friday 30 June. Next year's winners of the Business of the Year award will have the same chance to open the market at London Stock Exchange as a prize, a rare opportunity for a private business.

Companies can enter nine categories, covering exports, small business, people development, technology, high-growth, customer service, partnerships with the education sector, social media, and health and wellbeing.

Francis Martin, President of the British Chambers of Commerce said:

"Businesses are the driving force of the UK economy, creating jobs, growth and prosperity, and helping Britain to maintain its reputation internationally. This is exactly why it is important for us to recognise and celebrate the contribution they make to their local communities and the wider economy."

"The broad spread of categories in the Chamber Business Awards reflects both the diversity of industries and skills of British firms, and the range of achievements and projects that they have been involved with."

"Each time I visit Chamber member businesses, it is inspiring to see so many companies finding innovative ways to grow their business in every corner of the UK. The Awards acknowledge the relentless efforts of these businesses and their talented employees."

Adrian Corbin of Scientifica, Winner of the 'Business of the Year' award last year, said:

"Everyone at Scientifica is incredibly proud that the company won the British Chambers of Commerce Business of the Year. It is an enormous achievement and a fitting testimony to all the hard work that has gone into creating such a great company."

"We are at the forefront of high-tech British manufacturing, exporting our products to more than forty countries worldwide. We employ a highly-educated and international workforce who are all committed to producing innovative products to help further neuroscience research, and the winning of this award will undoubtedly help us expand into even more markets around the world."

Umerah Akram, Head of ELITE UK, said:

"Ensuring the best of Britain's innovative, imaginative and inspiring businesses can flourish in the UK is a priority for London Stock Exchange Group which is why we are proud to support the BCC Chamber Business Awards. Through ELITE, our unique business support and capital raising programme, we are creating a dynamic financial and entrepreneurial ecosystem, promoting the right type of funding for ambitious businesses at every stage of their growth."

journey.”

Ends

Notes to editors:

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) sits at the heart of a powerful network of 52 Accredited Chambers of Commerce across the UK, representing thousands of businesses of all sizes and within all sectors. Our Global Business Network connects exporters with nearly 40 markets around the world. For more information, visit: www.britishchambers.org.uk

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[Press release: Event to mark Perry Barr & Witton flood scheme milestone](#)

On Friday 10 March 2017, the Environment Agency held a public event to mark the end of the first phase of works to help reduce the risk of flooding in Perry Barr and Witton.

This is a key milestone in the £28 million, 2 phased flood risk management scheme that has been developed in partnership with Birmingham City Council and Sandwell Metropolitan Council. Once complete, the scheme will help protect approximately 1,400 properties from flooding from the River Tame.

The completed first phase involved rebuilding existing flood walls along Brookvale Road and constructing new walls alongside Atlas Industrial Estate and Tame Road. Channel improvements have also been carried out to help the river flow more quickly through the area.

Ian Jones, Environment Agency Flood Risk Manager said:

We're delighted for the residents and businesses that the work on the first phase has been completed. Today's event is a great opportunity for partners and the community to come together and

mark this important occasion.

The next phase of the scheme involves increasing the existing flood storage area at Sandwell Valley Park. The site at Forge Mill Lake will see the construction of a new embankment to help control flows down the river during periods of high flow. A planning application is scheduled to be submitted in May this year with construction planned for early 2018.

More information on the scheme is available on the Perry Barr and Wittion flood scheme [GOV.UK page](#)

Correspondence: Industrial Strategy: important questions to address

In this letter to the Prime Minister, CST considers the questions that the industrial strategy should address.

The letter makes the case for putting all sciences, engineering, technology and design at the heart of the UK economy and industrial strategy.

It uses four lenses to explain how the industrial strategy can drive productivity and growth, and address important societal challenges. It identifies seven technology areas that the UK could focus on.

The paper that accompanies this letter provides further information on CST's views and is structured around the same four lenses.