

Dugdale: Brexit just as bad as independence

26 Apr 2017



Labour's leader in Scotland has been again criticised for her weakness on Scotland's place in the UK, after saying Brexit was just as bad as independence.

Speaking at the STUC conference in Aviemore, Kezia Dugdale compared the two scenarios, even though Scotland's trade with the rest of the UK is four times greater than with the EU.

She said: "Threatening to walk away from the EU without a deal is no worse than Nicola Sturgeon's threat to walk away from the UK with independence."

It's the latest indication that Labour are prepared to sell-out pro-UK Scots in a post-election deal with the SNP.

Last week, sources within Labour said they wanted a "progressive alliance" with the nationalists to keep the Conservatives out of Downing Street.

And just days ago, it was revealed that two SNP MPs stated they needed such a pact with Labour to act as a "midwife" for independence.

Scottish Conservative candidate for Edinburgh South West Miles Briggs said:

"This shows you exactly where Kezia Dugdale's priorities lie.

"For her to say Brexit – which was backed by more than a million Scots – would be as bad as the SNP's break-up plan is beyond belief.

"Scotland's relationship with the rest of Britain is four times more important than its trading links with Europe.

"Scots want to move on and make the best of Brexit, with Scotland remaining as a key part of the UK.

"Instead, Labour want to continue moaning from the sidelines, revealing they have no interest in standing up for Scotland's place in the UK in the process."

Kezia Dugdale was speaking at the STUC conference in Aviemore today.

Earlier this week, two SNP MPs wrote an alliance with Labour would act as a "midwife" for independence:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/04/snp-says-it-wants-corbyn-alliance-to-act-as-midwife-for-independence/>

Before that, Labour sources agreed they were pursuing a post-election pact with the SNP:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/04/reports-state-labour-will-pursue-election-deal-with-snp/>

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Nicola Sturgeon has a duty to spell out her so-called 'next steps' on independence before people vote on June 8, the Scottish Conservatives have said today.

It comes after the First Minister responded to a slump in support for separation this week by saying she would not publish her proposals before the election.

This is despite promising before the Easter break that she would set these plans out as soon as the Scottish Parliament returned.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

"The First Minister could not have been clearer last month – she told the people of Scotland she would set out her next steps on her unwanted referendum plan after Easter and keep us all informed.

"Yet now that a General Election has been called she has gone back on her word.

"The reason is obvious: as always with the SNP they desperately try to play down independence in an election campaign because they know it's unpopular.

"Her claim earlier this week that her campaign isn't about independence is a joke. But her refusal to set out her position clearly before we vote is deadly serious.

"The Prime Minister and I have set our own position on this matter

very clearly and people can have their say on our judgement on June 8.

“How can it be right that people should vote on June 8 without a clue what the First Minister plans to say on the single biggest issue facing Scotland come June 9.

“Don’t we all have a right to know? Nicola Sturgeon has a duty to set out her position as promised so we can all take a view.

“The position of the Scottish Conservatives is crystal clear.

“A second referendum isn’t needed and it isn’t wanted. We will continue to stand up against the SNP’s plans – which is why more and more people are turning to us at this election.”

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John Lamont, the MSP for Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire, has announced his intention to resign from the Scottish Parliament.

The move will allow him to focus on the campaign to win Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk from the SNP at the forthcoming General Election.

John Lamont notified the Presiding Officer today that he will step down from Holyrood, with effect from May 4.

The Presiding Officer will set the date for the by-election shortly.

John Lamont said:

“It has been a great privilege to serve the people of the Borders in the Scottish Parliament for the last 10 years.

“During that time, I have worked as hard as I could to represent every community, no matter how small.

"I have held over 1000 local advice surgeries and assisted tens of thousands of local residents with problems and cases. I have always put local people before party politics.

"I want to continue that service to the Borders as a Member of Parliament and my approach to this important job will be exactly the same as it has been.

"This is one of the most important General Elections Scotland has ever had.

"In the Borders, it will be straight fight between myself and the SNP.

"I have decided to stand down as an MSP to allow me to focus all of my energy on this important contest and to ensure that the electorate have a clear choice between the two contenders.

"I've taken this decision because I believe that I am best placed to help increase the number of Scottish Conservative and Unionist MPs at Westminster so we can stop the SNP bandwagon in its tracks.

"With this decision, no one can doubt my commitment to representing the Borders to the best of my ability."

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

"During his 10 years in the Scottish Parliament, John has built up a formidable reputation as a dedicated community campaigner for the Borders and someone who will always put his constituents first.

"Voters in the Borders can either pick John Lamont, one of Scotland's hardest working local campaigners, who will put the Borders first and who will oppose Nicola Sturgeon's damaging plans for a second referendum or they can pick another nationalist who will continue to pursue the obsession with taking Scotland out of the United Kingdom."

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Nicola Sturgeon risks becoming a “laughing stock” after she claimed her election campaign has nothing to do with independence, the Scottish Conservatives said today.

The First Minister’s claim was made yesterday as polls today show a further slump in support both for independence and a second referendum.

Today, the Scottish Conservatives are publishing quotes from the SNP in recent elections where – as the First Minister did yesterday – the party has tried to argue that its campaign was not about its unpopular plan for independence.

Yet, after each result, the SNP has then gone on to use any gains made to push the case for separation – culminating in Nicola Sturgeon’s demand for a second divisive referendum in March.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

“The First Minister risks turning herself into a laughing stock here.

“For the last few months, everyone in Scotland has seen her do nothing else but campaign for an unwanted second independence referendum.

“Yet now there’s an election on, she suddenly tells people independence isn’t the issue for her and orders her troops – don’t mention the ‘i’ word.

“After the last few months of talking about nothing else, who does she think she’s kidding?□

“We’ve heard it all before. At every election, the SNP says the vote has nothing to do with independence. Afterwards, it claims that separation is ever closer.

“More and more people in Scotland have wised up to these nationalist games.

“And more and more of them know that only the Scottish Conservatives have what it takes to stop the SNP in its tracks and say no to its plans to split our country in two.

“This time round, she won’t get away with it.”

The SNP *always* says elections aren’t about independence...

· 2016 EU referendum, Nicola Sturgeon: ‘I support an independent Scotland...However, this vote is not about independence’ (Herald Scotland, 12 June 2016, [link](#)).

· 2016 Holyrood election, Nicola Sturgeon: ‘To propose another referendum in the next parliament without strong evidence that a significant number of those who voted No have changed their minds would be wrong and we

won't do it. It would not be respecting the decision that people made' (Nicola Sturgeon Speech to SNP Conference 2015, 15 October 2015, [link](#)).

- 2016 Holyrood Election, Nicola Sturgeon: 'If I, the SNP, those who believe in independence, can't shift opinion from September 2014, we won't earn the right to ask the question again' (*STV Face to Face*, 29 April 2016, [link](#)).
- 2015 General election, Nicola Sturgeon: 'As I have made very clear, this election is not about independence or about another referendum' (*The Scotsman*, 29 April 2015, [link](#)).
- 2015 General election, Nicola Sturgeon writing for The National: 'As I have made very clear, this election is not about independence or another referendum, no matter how many SNP MPs may be elected today' (*The National*, 7 May 2015).
- 2015 General Election, Nicola Sturgeon writing for The Scotsman: This election is not about independence or another referendum (*The Scotsman*, 2 May 2015, [link](#)).
- 2015 General Election, Alex Salmond: "This election is not about independence or a referendum on independence" (*Daily Telegraph*, 7 May 2015)
- 2012 council elections, Nicola Sturgeon: "The SNP believe in independence... but the election here is not about independence (*Daily Record*, 13 April 2012).
- 2011 Holyrood elections, Alex Salmond "I think the people who vote SNP may or may not be supporters of independence...In an election people will have all sorts of reasons for voting for you or against you but we wouldn't decide a constitutional issue on the basis of an election victory" (*Daily Telegraph*, 2 May 2011, [link](#)).□

[SNP's own experts blast ministers over stamp duty replacement](#)

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Experts appointed by the Scottish Government have blasted its stamp duty

replacement scheme, describing the modelling as “ill-suited” and “poor”.

The review of Land and Buildings Transaction Tax says the SNP’s methodology isn’t good enough to make proper predictions for how much revenue will be raised.

Since its introduction, ministers have consistently got it wrong when estimating how much their increases to LBTT would generate.

Earlier this year, it was revealed the scheme – which replaced stamp duty after the power was devolved to Holyrood – would generate £800 million less than originally thought.

Now, the study entitled ‘A Review of Tax Revenue Forecasting Models for the Scottish Housing Market’, has been critical of the Scottish Government.

It describes the methodology used by ministers as “ill-suited for scenario analysis and fiscal impact costing”.

It also ranked the model used for LBTT as “poor” for both policy application purposes and for its ability to explain underlying trends in the housing market.

When the new legislation was being debated, the Scottish Conservatives warned that the SNP was being overly-optimistic in its revenue forecasts.

Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said:

“The SNP has woefully misjudged how much it is going to receive from the LBTT changes.

“To have got this wrong to the tune of more than £800 million is nothing short of incompetent.

“Now the experts appointed by the Scottish Government to evaluate this are exposing further embarrassment.

“It’s no wonder the SNP got its sums so badly wrong when the proper modelling wasn’t even in place for making these forecasts.

“It’s just another example of the Scottish Government completely messing up a crucial area of devolved policy.”

To see the full report, visit:

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00516712.pdf>

On p19, the experts write:

Application (policy): poor. All three methods of univariate forecasting are ill-suited for scenario analysis and fiscal impact costing, as they are not

specified with explanatory variables to assess the impact of different economic assumptions and risk scenarios on the housing market.¹⁸ ARIMA and GARCH models may have some limited use in risk assessments: ARIMA models can assess how exogenous shocks in one period are transmitted to future house prices and transactions in the future, and GARCH models may be able to improve upon estimates of annual revenue at risk.

The SNP is already badly out with its LBT estimates:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2016/12/budget-reveals-homes-tax-will-raise-800m-less-than-planned/>