

Ruth: Scotland can benefit from a “post referendum bounce”

17 May 2019



Ruth Davidson has set out Scottish Conservative plans to boost Scotland's economy in a speech in Edinburgh today.

Speaking to the Scottish Entrepreneurs Lunch, Ruth said that – by ending plans for more referendums and the uncertainty they create for business – Scotland could benefit from a “post-referendum bounce”.

She also set out the party's economic strategy, to be adopted if Ruth becomes First Minister in 2021 – to deliver a high-value, high-wage economy focussed on technology, innovation and global exports.

She also criticised the SNP's tax proposals, saying they risk driving away talent and investment from Scotland, at a time when the country needs to attract skilled workers and capital to come here.

In the speech Ruth said:

“I believe that Scotland after 2021 can enjoy a post-referendum bounce.”

“That with the massive uncertainty of further constitutional division set to one side, business confidence and investment will return, enhancing the lives of all our citizens.”

“I want to lead a Government that takes advantage of that new chapter.”

On the SNP's tax plans, Ruth added:

“I agree with the SNP that we need to attract more people to come to Scotland – indeed, I think it will be vital to our future prosperity.

“I just struggle to understand why the SNP thinks that a markedly higher tax regime for Scotland is going to achieve the goal we all want – to ensure the brightest and best make their home here.

“So I would say to Ministers – please be very careful about further tax rises. It risks driving away investment and jobs. And it risks damaging the very objectives you have set yourself.

Brexit Party's green light for indyref2

17 May 2019



The Brexit Party has confirmed it would give the green light to the SNP to hold a second referendum on independence.

Its lead candidate Louis Stedman-Bryce admitted he didn't "feel we would stand in their way" if the SNP government demanded a re-run of the 2014 vote.

The admission means the Scottish Conservatives are the only party in Scottish politics committed to the results of both the independence and Brexit referendums.

Both the SNP and the Greens repeatedly demand a second independence referendum, while Labour and the Liberal Democrats – for all their weakness on Scotland's place in the UK – have also pledged their support to a so-called "people's vote" on the EU.

And now the Brexit Party, despite opposing another EU referendum, are content to plunge Scotland back into another period of division and uncertainty with another separation poll.

Scottish Conservative constitution spokesman Adam Tomkins said:

"This shows while the Brexit Party may care about leaving the EU, it doesn't give two hoots about Scotland's place in the UK.

"It's a completely illogical position, as Nicola Sturgeon has repeatedly said a separate Scotland would immediately reapply to the EU.

"It reinforces once again that the only party serious about Scotland's place in the UK is the Scottish Conservatives.

"And it means we are the only party on the Scottish political scene committed to the results of both referendums."

SNP ministers spent £175k fighting fracking ban case

3 May 2019



The SNP government spent £175,000 fighting the fracking ban which its own lawyers admitted wasn't a ban at all.

A Freedom of Information request by the Scottish Conservatives has revealed the cost to the taxpayer of the judicial review on extraction of unconventional gas.

The case was launched by leading energy firms after SNP ministers, including First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, repeatedly said fracking was banned in Scotland.

However, in the courtroom, SNP government lawyers said that was merely a "gloss", and that there was no ban in place at all.

Now the Scottish Conservatives have blasted the nationalists for not only misleading the public on the issue, but wasting taxpayers' cash in the process.

Scottish Conservative energy spokesman Alexander Burnett said:

"The SNP deliberately misled the people of Scotland by saying there was a fracking ban – something even its own lawyers admitted was a nonsense.

"Now we learn this deceit cost the taxpayer more than £175,000.

"It's not the first time the SNP has blown public money on an entirely avoidable court case.

"It's yet another example of SNP incompetence at government level, and proof that the nationalists are completely unfit for office."

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- Scottish Conservative conference hears call for 'A Fair Deal for the North East'

3 May 2019



Scottish Conservative MPs, MSPs and councillors have today issued a joint call for a 'Fair Deal for the North East' at the party's conference in Aberdeen.

Politicians from across the region argued that north-east is losing out under Nicola Sturgeon's SNP government.

At the opening of the Spring party conference, Gordon MP Colin Clark said local councils in Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Angus and Moray are losing £100,000 a day in funding.

Research by the party has also revealed that the north-east has lost nearly 500 teachers and 18 schools since the SNP came to power.

More than one in ten GP practices in the area have shut since 2007, and under-pressure local police are reporting 79 anti-social behaviour incidents every day.

Mr Clark was joined by Aberdeen South MP Ross Thomson, Angus MP Kirstene Hair, north-east region MSP Peter Chapman, Aberdeen City Council co-leader Douglas Lumsden and Aberdeenshire Council leader Jim Gifford to make the case for 'a fair deal'.

Local businessman Charles Skene, who founded the Skene House apartments in the city, spoke out the "economic tsunami" brought about by business rates hikes and the oil downturn, while hotelier Callum Milne, general manager of the Marcliffe Hotel, bemoaned the SNP's failure to deliver on a 2016 manifesto commitment to halve and eventually scrap Air Passenger Duty.

Colin Clark, Scottish Conservative MP for Gordon, said:

"In 2017, people in the north-east elected Scottish Conservative MPs to six of the seven constituencies in the north-east, but we are still losing out under Nicola Sturgeon and the SNP.

"Our councils are among the lowest funded in the country, losing a combined £40m this year, our health board receives the worst settlement per head of population this year and our police service is overstretched and under-resourced.

"Under the SNP, the number of teachers in our classrooms has dropped by 500, while one in ten GP practices have shut their doors.

"Meanwhile, business rates are up, council tax is up and income tax is up – meaning people pay more but get less.

"It is not good enough, and it is time for a change.

"A fresh government at Holyrood, led by Ruth Davidson, would ensure that the north-east gets a fair deal.

"That's why we have launched this campaign – to fight the corner of the north-east and stand up to the Central Belt and independence-obsessed SNP."

Time for a Scottish Tiger

3 May 2019



The Scottish Conservative conference will hear fresh plans to create a new “Scottish Tiger economy”, as the party sets out fresh plans to deliver for Scotland.

Writing in Conservative Home yesterday and as the party meets in Aberdeen, Scottish Conservative shadow economy secretary Dean Lockhart reveals that within its first 100 days, a Scottish Conservative government would convene a major international conference in Scotland to kick-start a 10-year economic strategy to deliver real, sustainable growth in Scotland.

The Scottish Conservative plan will be based on a new ‘TIGER’ economic model – focusing on Technology, Innovation, Global Trade, Employment and Regional Growth across Scotland.

Further details have been published today in the first report of the party’s Scottish Future Growth Council – bringing together more than 18 months’ worth of work examining how best to deliver real, sustainable economic growth in Scotland.

It forms part of the key message at the Scottish Conservative conference this week – that we want to move Scotland on from a decade of constitutional division, using the extensive powers of the Scottish Parliament to focus on what matters.

The choice at the Scottish election in 2021 will be between a SNP Government that will put more constitutional division first, and a Scottish Conservative government led by Ruth Davidson that wants to get on and deliver for Scotland – now.

Scottish Conservative shadow economy secretary, Dean Lockhart says:

“By opposing any more referendums on constitutional change, all that energy currently expended by the nationalist government intent on breaking up Britain can be redirected into prioritising Scotland’s economic potential. The Scottish Government already has all the powers available to deliver higher growth, it just needs to use them properly. We will commit to get on with creating a new Scottish TIGER economy from day one.

“The SNP likes to blame its lack of progress on the fact it lost the referendum and Scotland is still a part of the UK. The truth is that all the policy levers we need are already at the Scottish Government’s disposal.

“The choice is clear.

“The SNP will always put constitutional division before economic growth, and it will spend years doing so. That’s not scaremongering on my part – their own Growth Commission Report argues that the chaos and pain of independence is required to give Scotland a chance to prosper in the future.

“The Scottish Conservatives see things differently. We believe Scotland can thrive now, can achieve the sort of impressive growth rates that were all too familiar before the nationalists took office. We believe Scotland, as part of the UK, is already a great nation ready to take on the world.

“Come the 2021 elections, the SNP will have been in power for 14 years. For the vast majority of this period they will have caused deep uncertainty by campaigning for Independence – raising questions about the future direction of Scotland’s economy and even what currency we will use in the future.

“We believe that Scotland’s economy post-2021 will enjoy a post-Nationalist bounce. With the right economic vision – and with the massive uncertainty of Independence put to one side – business confidence and investment will return, enhancing the lives of all our citizens. But it will take a ‘whole of government’ approach to achieve this, something the nationalists have been unable to deliver. Our plans to create a TIGER economy will restore Scotland’s long-term economic growth levels.

“At this conference, and with two years to go until the next election, we want to show people we are thinking about how to turn that vision into a reality. We are taking the first steps to delivering a Scottish tiger economy which can roar again.”