

### Key points

- Parliament entered Easter Recess between 1 to 16 April and Summer Recess from 1 July.
- The Scotland CAN DO Innovation Action Plan was published, outlining the steps the Government will take with partners to improve Scotland's innovation offer and drive up business innovation.
- A series of reports were published on Phase 2 of the Enterprise and Skills Review.
- The Parliament debated the report on the economic impact on Scotland on leaving the European Union.

### Key publications

#### Policy

- [Realising Scotland's full potential in a digital world: A Digital Strategy for Scotland](#)
- [Europe 2020: Scottish National Reform Programme 2017](#)
- [Building a Sustainable Social Enterprise Sector in Scotland: 2017-20](#)
- [Budget Bill Supporting Document 2017-2018](#)
- [Scotland CAN DO: An Innovation Action Plan for Scotland](#)

#### Reports

- [Independent Advisor on Poverty and Inequality, The Life Chances of Young People in Scotland](#)
- [Revaluation 2017 in Scotland](#)
- [Places, People and Planning: Position Statement](#)
- [2016-17 Provisional Outturn and 2017-18 Budget Estimates](#)
- [Enterprise and Skills Review: Report on Phase 2](#)
- [Enterprise and Skills Review Report on Phase 2: 15-24 Learner Journey](#)
- [Enterprise and Skills Review Report on Phase 2: Data, Evaluation and Performance Management](#)
- [Enterprise and Skills Review Report on Phase 2: Enterprise and Business Support](#)
- [Enterprise and Skills Review Report on Phase 2: Innovation](#)
- [Enterprise and Skills Review Report on Phase 2: International](#)
- [Enterprise and Skills Review Report on Phase 2: Regional Partnerships](#)
- [Enterprise and Skills Review Report on Phase 2: Skills Alignment](#)
- [Enterprise and Skills Review Report on Phase 2: South of Scotland Enterprise Agency](#)
- [Infrastructure Investment Plan 2015 - Progress Report for 2016](#)

#### Research & Statistics

- [2nd Report on the Economic Impact on Leaving the European Union](#)
- [Scottish Local Government Finance Statistics 2015-2016](#)
- [Labour Market Update: July 2017 \[SPICe\]](#)
- [How is the Scottish Economy performing? First Quarter 2017 \[SPICe\]](#)
- [Local Government Finance: Facts and Figures 2010-11 to 2017-18 \[SPICe\]](#)
- [The White Paper on the Great Repeal Bill: Impact on Scotland \[SPICe\]](#)
- [SB 17-19 City Region Deals \[SPICe\]](#)
- [SB 17-18 Labour Market Update: March 2017 \[SPICe\]](#)

- [SB 17-14 Scotland's Exports](#) [SPICe]
- [SB 17-08 Labour Market Update: February 2017](#) [SPICe]
- [SB 17-06 The Gender Pay Gap - Facts and figure 2016](#) [SPICe]
- [SB 17-05 Air Departure Tax \(Scotland\) Bill](#) [SPICe]
- [SB 17-02 Labour Market Update: January 2017](#) [SPICe]
- [SB 17-20 Non-domestic Rates and the 2017 Revaluation](#) [SPICe]

### Selected Open Consultations (closing date)

- [Consultation on the Socio-Economic Duty](#) (12 September 2017)
- [Community Empowerment and Common Good Property: Consultation on Draft Guidance](#) (29 September 2017)

### In the Chamber

#### Rural Development (Funding)

During a Meeting of the Parliament, a debate was introduced by Fergus Ewing (Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Connectivity) regarding the future of funding for rural development. This debate was in the context of powers devolved to the Scottish Parliament and access to billions of pounds of EU membership funding, and the intention to leave the European Union. Mr Ewing pledged to support earlier Labour and Liberal Democrat amendments. The commitment was welcomed by Rhoda Grant (Lab) in the continuation of funding rural development along current lines until 2020. Emma Harper (SNP) raised concern over the Westminster Government not committing to replacing funding for the LEADER programme and associated jobs.

[Read more.](#)

#### Business and the Economy (Support)

During a Meeting of the Parliament, Derek MacKay (Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Constitution) made a statement of the support the Government is providing to business and the economy, regarding the impact on businesses facing the new revaluation of business rates. He stated his committed to the Small Business Rates scheme, with 100% rates relief for businesses up to £15,000 with seven out of 10 premises will be better or no worse off. Mr Mackay recognised that the Government must find a balance to support the economy and invest in public services and employment.

[Read more.](#)

#### Scottish Growth Scheme

During General Question Time, Keith Brown (Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work) was asked by Dean Lockhart (Con) to report on the progress on the Scottish Growth Scheme. The Cabinet Secretary made a brief update that the Government is working with partners on the development and delivery of a £500 million provision over three years of investment guarantees and some loans. The Cabinet Secretary set out that the scheme is demand led. Mr Brown added that the Scottish growth scheme is designed to increase job opportunities and allow companies that are currently struggling for finance to grow, to provide more employment and add growth in the Scottish economy.

[Read more.](#)

### **Economic Impact of Leaving the European Union**

During a Meeting of the Parliament, Gordon Lindhurst (Con), on behalf of the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee, raised a motion to debate the committee's report on the economic impact of leaving the European Union. The reminder was that 50 companies generate 50% of Scotland's exports, and Scotland must strive for a more international mentality. The committee recommends the Government review its economic strategy to revisit overseas trading partners. Mr Russell (Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe) thanked the committee for producing a constructive and timely report.

[Read more.](#)

### **Community Jobs Scotland**

During a Meeting of the Parliament, a debate was introduced by Adam Tomkins MSP to recognise and celebrate the work of Community Jobs Scotland. CJS, ran by the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) provides paid jobs for young people in the third sector. Phases 1 to 5 of the programme have created 7,049 jobs with an average of 52% being retained for their employer. Clare Haughey (SNP) and Kenneth Gibson (SNP) thanked Mr Tomkins for raising Community Jobs Scotland to the Parliament and expressed approval of cross-party agreement to help marginalised and disadvantaged groups to enter the workplace.

[Read more.](#)

### **Local Government Finance (Scotland) Order 2017 [Draft]**

During a Meeting of the Parliament, Derek Mackay (Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Constitution) raised a motion to speak to the Local Government Finance (Scotland) Order 2017 [Draft] to seek parliament approval of the guaranteed allocation of revenue funding and additional funding to individual local authorities for 2017-18. Murdo Fraser (Con) asks on the implications of the additional £144 million in Barnett consequences announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Kevin Stewart (Minister for Local Government and Housing) noted that there would be an extra £283 million available to support local services.

[Read more.](#)

### **Enterprise and Skills Review**

During a Meeting of Parliament, Keith Brown (Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work) provided a statement on the Enterprise and Skills Review. Mr Brown notes the vision of a more productive and inclusive economy and noted that the Scottish economy continues to perform, with a longstanding reputation for innovation and international brand. Jackie Baillie (Lab) and James Dornan (SNP) led the debate, and Mr Brown confirmed support for the dedicated Highlands and Islands Enterprise service.

[Read more.](#)

### **Scotland's Economy**

During a Meeting of the Parliament, a motion was introduced by Murdo Fraser (Con) on Scotland's Economy. He noted the Conservative's concern regarding Scotland's economic performance and high tax agenda. Tom Arthur (SNP) added that the concerns were only marked against the decision to leave the

European Union. Murdo Fraser added that the UK economy was projected by the IMF to raise by 0.5%. Keith Brown (Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work) noted that the unemployment was lower in Scotland compared to the UK average.

[Read more.](#)

### **Ayrshire Growth Deal**

During General questions, Brian Whittle (Con) asked Keith Brown (Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work) to provide an update on the proposed Ayrshire Growth Deal. Mr Brown noted that he met the three Ayrshire council leaders and made clear the support for the regional economies to thrive. The Ayrshire areas and Scottish Futures Trust are continuing to refine their growth deal proposals.

[Read more.](#)

### **Impact of Leaving the European Union (Third Sector Funding)**

During General questions, Mary Fee (Lab) asked Michael Russell (Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe) on the impact on third sector funding in the West Scotland region on leaving the European Union. Mr Russell stated that the benefits on the third sector across Scotland is benefited by EU funding. Although Scotland has been assured that funding contracts for structural fund projects will be paid in full, there are no guarantees on European funding streams when the UK leave the EU.

[Read more.](#)

### **Proposed South of Scotland Enterprise Agency**

During General Questions, Oliver Mundell (Con) asked Keith Brown (Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work) to provide an update on the progress on the establishment of a south of Scotland enterprise agency. Mr Brown added that the second phase of the Enterprise and Skills Review has been exploring options for a new south of Scotland vehicle and will be set out in the Phase 2 report.

[Read more.](#)

### **Economic Growth (South of Scotland)**

During General Questions, Finlay Carson (Con) asked Keith Brown (Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work) to provide an update on what the Scottish Government is doing to promote economic growth in the south of Scotland. Mr Brown updated that the Government has made substantial investment in "infrastructure, regeneration and business support" to help "deliver inclusive growth and economic resilience by creating and retaining job in communities across the area".

[Read more.](#)

### **Scotland's Economy (Opportunities for Growth)**

During a Meeting of the Parliament, a motion was introduced by Keith Brown (Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work) on Scotland's Economy and opportunity for growth. Mr Brown noted the uniquely challenging economic period. Since 2007, the number of registered businesses in Scotland grew by 15%, business research and development expenditure increased by 40%, international exports increased 41%, productivity by 7.5% and 80,000 more people are in employment. Dean Lockhart (Con) added concerns on the significant rise in the number of people dropping out of the labour market in general.

[Read more.](#)

### **In the Committees**

#### **International Development**

The Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations committee invited Dr Alasdair Allan (Minister of International Development) to outline the Scottish Government's "Global Citizenship: Scotland's International Development Strategy". Dr Allan outlined the the increased international development fund and aid, but the proposed 'beyond-aid' agenda for behavioural change - an open, welcoming, diverse and fair Scotland in the future in global citizenship.

[Read more.](#)

#### **Brexit**

The Finance and Constitution Committee invited Michael Russell (Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe) to take evidence on Article 50, devolved competences and Scotland's place in the Great Repeal Bill in subsequent negotiations.

[Read more.](#)

#### **Gender Pay Gap**

As part of a series of meetings on the Gender Pay Gap, The Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee conducted invited witnesses to discuss the Gender Pay Gap: Carroll Buxton (Regional Development: Highlands and Islands Enterprise), Lynne Cadenhead (Women's Enterprise Scotland), Linda Murray (Scottish Enterprise) and Elma Murray (North Ayrshire Council and Scottish Local Authority Economic Development group). Cadenhead notes the difference in approach to female entrepreneurs to business. Evidence included the promotion of transparency and importance of diversity in both the public and private sectors.

[Read more.](#)

#### **Non-Domestic Rates [26 April]**

The Local Government and Communities Committee took evidence with key stakeholders and a discussion with Ken Barclay on the Rating Revaluation 2017. COSLA stated: "Full localisation of business rates would ultimately re-establish and maintain local democratic accountability for the use of local government funding much closer to the local business communities". Ken Barclay of the Barclay Review on rates discussed his report sought to review rates to better support business growth in a changing economic environment while maintaining revenue to local authorities. So far he has received 156 written submissions and 40 pieces of oral evidence.

[Read more.](#)

#### **Draft Budget Review 2017-18**

The Finance and Constitution Committee invited Derek MacKay (Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution) to outline the Scottish Government's provisional thoughts and actions on spending and

investment in the next financial year. Mr Mackay outlined the spending plans to focus on economy community, public services, and inclusive economic growth in the wider implications of the withdrawal from the European Union. The Cabinet Secretary announced a £500 million Scottish growth scheme, investment to higher and further education, funding for city deals and a range of interventions to support innovation, internationalisation and entrepreneurship, such as funding innovation and investment hubs.

[Read more.](#)