

## **Key points**

- The Scottish Parliament commenced Summer Recess on 30 June 2018.
- The Scottish Government's Cabinet reshuffle was announced with the following appointments.
- Key policies of Europe 2020: Scotland's National Reform Programme 2018 and Scotland's Fiscal Outlook Financial strategy were published.
- The Sustainable Growth Commission published 'A Strategy for Inter-Generational Economic Renaissance'.

## **Key publications**

### **Policy**

- Europe 2020: Scotland's National Reform Programme 2018
- Scotland's Fiscal Outlook: The Scottish Government's Five Year Financial Strategy

### **Announcements**

- Economy continues to strengthen
- Scotland's economy grows 0.2% in 2018: Quarter 1
- 'Unprecedented' record of foreign direct investment

### **Reports**

- Scotland's Economic Performance (Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee, 5<sup>th</sup> Report 2018)
- Bank Closures: Impact on Local Businesses, Consumers and the Scottish Economy (Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee, 6<sup>th</sup> Report 2018)
- Scotland's Finances - Key Facts and Figures June 2018
- Provisional Outturn and Budget Estimates 2018
- Barclay Recommendations: Partial BRIA (Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment)
- Local Governance Review – Democracy Matters
- State of the Economy: June 2018
- Equality Impact Assessment – Public Services Reform

### **Research & Statistics**

- Land and Buildings Transaction Tax: Amendment to Group Relief - Analysis of responses and Scottish Government response
- Public Sector Employment in Scotland - Statistics for 1st Quarter 2018
- Graduate outcomes by University and subject (LEO data) 2015/16 - Scotland
- Council Tax Collection Statistics, 2017-18
- The Scottish Government's Five Year Financial Strategy (SPICe)
- Gross Domestic Product: 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2018 (SPICe)
- Labour Market Update: June 2018 (SPICe)
- Scottish Social Attitudes: Attitudes on Government, the Economy and Public Services, 2017

### **Selected Open Consultations (closing date)**

- National Council of Rural Advisors: 'A Rural Conversation: Together We Can, Together We Will' (24 July)

- [A Consultation on Land and Buildings Transaction Tax – Property Investment Funds](#) (2 August)
- [Support for Agriculture and the Rural Economy – Post Brexit Transition](#) (15 August)
- [Increasing the Employment of Disabled People in the Public Sector](#) (15 August)
- [Barclay Implementation: A Consultation on non-domestic rates reform](#) (17 September)

## **In the Chamber**

### **Sustainable Growth Commission**

During a meeting of Parliament, a debate was held in the name of Willie Rennie (Lib Dem), under finance and the constitution, on the Sustainable Growth Commission Report published by the SNP. Mr Rennie noted that the report is a 'significant development and it deserves scrutiny in the Parliament'. He stated that Liberal Democrats oppose independence, and believe that this report strengthens their case against it. Derek MacKay, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution, responded by reflecting on Scotland's current economic performance ([Read more](#))

### **Scottish Crown Estate Bill: Financial Resolution**

During a meeting of Parliament, a motion was brought forward for consideration in the name of Derek Mackay (SNP), on a financial resolution for the Scottish Crown Estate Bill. Two questions were posed during this meeting. The first question, in the name of Roseanna Cunningham, on the Scottish Crown Estate Bill at stage 1, be agreed to; "That the Parliament agrees to the general principles of the Scottish Crown Estate Bill." The second question, in the name of Derek Mackay, on a financial resolution for the Scottish Crown Estate Bill, be agreed to; "That the Parliament, for the purposes of any Act of the Scottish Parliament resulting from the Scottish Crown Estate Bill, agrees to any expenditure of a kind referred to in Rule 9.12.3(b) of the Parliament's Standing Orders arising in consequence of the Act." ([Read more](#))

## **In the Committees**

### **Impact of Bank Closures**

The Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee met to continue their inquiry on the impact of bank closures. The committee was joined by a panel of witnesses, including, Karen Hurst, Policy Officer, ABCUL Scotland; Gordon Buchanan, General Manager, Castle Community Bank; Cathy Greig, Chair, UKCreditUnions and Martin Kearsley, Director of Banking, Post Office. The committee began with a general question on the impact of bank closures. Each witness was asked to comment on the impact of bank closures on businesses, individuals and the wider community economy in areas that they are familiar with. ([Read more](#))

### **Economic and Fiscal Forecasts (May 2018)**

The Finance and Constitution Committee met to consider the Scottish Fiscal Commission's [Economic and Fiscal Forecasts](#), published the week previous to accompany the Scottish Government's medium-term financial strategy. The committee was joined by members of the SFC, Dame Susan Rice, Chair; John Ireland, Chief Executive and David Wilson and Professor Alasdair Smith, Commissioners. The discussion was focused on the publication of the second report, which contains economic and fiscal forecasts for the next five years. ([Read more](#))

## City Deals

During a meeting of the Local Government and Communities Committee, the committee met to hear evidence on the first update on city region deals following the [committee's inquiry](#) last year. The Convener welcomed Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work, Keith Brown MSP, and Morag Watt, Head of City Partnerships Team and Marion McCormack, Head of Better Regulation and Enterprise Sponsorship. The Convener invited Susan Aitken to join the Committee to update on where the city region cabinet is in relation to having inclusive growth permeate the whole package of projects in the city region deal. The Cabinet Secretary also discussed the launch of the Centre of Regional Inclusive Growth ([Read more](#))

## Impact of Bank Closures

The Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee met to continue their inquiry into the impact of bank closures. The committee was joined by two witnesses, Professor Russel Griggs OBE, and Thomas Docherty, Public Affairs Manager, Which?. The witnesses were asked "What has been the impact of bank closures, in your view, on individuals, the local economy and local customers? What are the impacts, both positive and negative?" ([Read more](#))

## European Union Competences (Funding)

The Finance and Constitution Committee met to take evidence on the funding of European Union competences. The committee were joined by Jo Armstrong, Royal Society of Edinburgh; Professor David Bell, University of Stirling; Amanda Burgauer, LEADER; Professor Sir Ian Diamond, University of Aberdeen; Jonathan Hall, NFU Scotland; Diane Milne, Dundee City Council, and David Phillips, Institute for Fiscal Studies. The committee structured the discussion around five themes: Governance Issues around EU funding, structural funds, funding mechanisms, agricultural funding and areas of research funding. ([Read more](#))

## Impact of Bank Closures

The Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee met for an evidence-taking session on their inquiry on the impact of bank closures. The committee was joined by witnesses; Carol Anderson, Scotland Branch and Business Banking Distribution Director, TSB; Gavin Opperman, Group Director of Customer Banking, Clydesdale Bank; Susan Allen, Head of Customer Interactions for Santander UK; Simon Watson Managing Director of Personal Banking, Royal Bank of Scotland and Ulster Bank, Northern Ireland, and Robin Bulloch, Managing Director, Lloyds Bank and Bank of Scotland Retail, for the Lloyds Banking Group. The committee posed the questions 'What co-ordination is there between banks when branch closures are being considered or carried out? What consideration is given to the other banking provision in an area?' ([Read more](#))

## Implications of the United Kingdom's Departure from the European Union (Agriculture and Fisheries)

The Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee met to discuss the implications Brexit on Agriculture and Fisheries. The committee was joined by the Secretary of State for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, Rt Hon Michael Gove MP via videoconference. A question was raised by John Mason (SNP) to Mr Gove on Scotland's average payment per hectare being lower than the EU average and what the UK Government is doing to review Agriculture Policy convergence. ([Read more](#))