

Report

Proposer: Lorna Slater MSP (decided on: 06/28/2023)

Title: MSP

Report

Update from Lorna Slater, your Green MSP for the Lothian Region

In March I was delighted to be re-appointed as the Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity under the new First Minister, Humza Yousaf. This reappointment follows a party Council meeting where members agreed unanimously to continue with the Bute House Agreement (BHA).

We worked with Council to convene a meeting on the day of the SNP leadership announcement so that members could give a clear steer on how they wanted the party to react to the SNP leadership election.

Patrick and I are very excited to build on the successes of the BHA thus far and deliver even more for the people of Scotland and our environment. Humza Yousaf has made clear that he will continue the vital work that we are doing to deliver for people and planet.

It hasn't always been easy. You might have seen recently that the Tories in Holyrood tabled a 'vote of no confidence' in an effort to remove me. This was simply a political game and a stunt. This was unsuccessful but we know it was never designed to work - it was designed to intimidate me, and it didn't succeed in doing that either.

The latest polling has the Scottish Greens winning a record number of MSPs in the next Holyrood election - some even say we could win three MSPs in Lothian! We are only growing stronger. As a branch I'm really looking forward to

developing an election strategy and a system for selecting and supporting our candidates and delivering a larger MSP group.

I'd also welcome feedback on other formats or communication styles for the month updates to branches or if there is anything else I can do to ensure I'm available to members for questions or discussions.

Ministerial Update

We're making progress towards a new national park, the Circular Economy Bill has been laid before Parliament and the Natural Environment Bill will go out for consultation over the Summer. We've also secured another round of the Nature Restoration Fund and the Recycling Improvement Fund which will be game-changing for Scotland.

Work that everyone will have been watching unfold is that of Scotland's **Deposit Return Scheme**, which was due to launch this August. Unfortunately this was rendered inoperable on time after Tories in Westminster refused to grant permission to the scheme under the 'Internal Market Act'.

The Tories using powers that they awarded themselves after Brexit to sabotage a policy that they don't like. In doing so they have hugely and irreversibly undermined devolution while costing millions of pounds worth of investment and hundreds of jobs.

The decision to effectively block the scheme will also have a terrible environmental impact at a time when we need to be reducing emissions and taking climate action. It would have been a game changer and would have represented a massive step forward for our relationship with recycling and waste.

A wonderful - and very newsworthy! - visit I want to share is my **recent trip to the Isle of Rum**. I had a great time visiting islanders and hearing their views on the future of the state-owned Edwardian palace Kinloch Castle.

At COP15, the UN's Biodiversity Conference I spoke for Scotland on behalf of sub-national governments around the world, pushing for ambitious outcomes, power and resources from all in order to tackle our nature and climate crises.

Co-leader and MSP Update

Our office helps hundreds of people every month with a variety of issues. We

53 have helped constituents fight for over £6,000 of social security benefits from
54 the DWP, helped house homeless families across the Lothians, supported Ukrainian
55 refugees access the support they need, push against vital bus services being
56 cut, and helped over one hundred people with accessing the healthcare they
57 needed coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

58 I could not do what I do without the hard work, support and initiative of my MSP
59 office staff. Kayleigh, who you may also know as Cllr. O'Neill, manages my
60 office ensuring all day-to-day activity runs smoothly. We also have Zayneb, our
61 Campaigns & Comms officer, and our Casework officers Kelly & Nariese.

62 This month we also said goodbye to Cami who was my Parliament assistant and
63 first ever member of staff. He won't be going far however as he will now be
64 working full time with our central team and party to do Digital Comms.

65 As co-leader I had the great privilege of **speaking on Calton Hill at the Our**
66 **Republic Rally**. I spoke about the chance to replace them with an elected head of
67 state who can speak up for the powerless.

68 This year we have started ramping up our local engagement and campaigns thanks
69 to our new Campaigns and Communications Officer. With the help of local
70 councillors we are looking to open up our **Holyrood Park** work again which will
71 look at old legislation around the city's historic green space.

72 In West Lothian we have begun work to help the biodiversity, safety and save the
73 beauty of **Linlithgow Loch**. Our team have held a number of stakeholder meetings
74 and will be formally engaging with the community very soon. We are also
75 supporting campaigns around **bus infrastructure** and the work to **save Howden Park**
76 **Centre** which is a community theater that hosts local shows and youth groups.