

Edinburgh Western MSP welcomes publication of Scotland's Future

COLIN KEIR MSP WELCOMES PUBLICATION OF GUIDE TO AN INDEPENDENT SCOTLAND and URGES ALL EDINBURGH WESTERN RESIDENTS TO READ MOST DETAILED INDEPENDENCE BLUEPRINT EVER PRODUCED

SNP MSP Colin Keir is urging all Edinburgh Western residents to get involved in the referendum debate by reading the Scottish Government's flagship guide to independence, which was published today (Tuesday).

The 670-page document – the most comprehensive blueprint for independence ever produced by any country ahead of an independence vote – was launched to an audience of hundreds of journalists from across the globe.

The document *Scotland's Future: Your Guide to An Independent Scotland* contains a comprehensive Question and Answer section, running to more than 200 pages, providing answers to 650 questions on independence.

The answers – along with downloadable copies of “Scotland's Future: Your Guide to An Independent Scotland” – are available at www.scotreferendum.com as a fully searchable resource so that residents of Edinburgh Western can easily find the answers they are looking for ahead of the referendum.

The guide shows how Scotland will move from a Yes vote on September 18th next year, toward its independence on March 24th 2016 – ahead of the first elections in an independent Scotland. It also describes the huge financial savings that can be made – including half a billion pounds on defence spending, and savings from no longer contributing to the funding of the Westminster Parliament.

Besides addressing the various questions asked about what independence offers, *Scotland's Future* also outlines the Scottish Government's ambitious plans to use the powers to make Scotland a fairer, more prosperous country – should the SNP win the first elections of an independent Scotland in 2016.

At the heart of this is a transformational increase in childcare provision that would help more people into work – particularly women – and provide up to 35,000 jobs in the process. This only becomes possible with the powers offered by independence, because only an independent Scotland would have the resources to make it happen. Currently all the increased tax revenues that would help make the policy affordable would go to the Westminster Treasury, rather than staying in Scotland.

As well as guarantees on the minimum wage and a 'triple lock' on pension increases to ensure that they rise at least in line with the cost of living, the Scottish Government also proposes new measures to permanently reduce energy bills by 5% and ensure basic rate tax allowances and credits to rise in line

at least with inflation.

✘ Commenting, MSP Colin Keir said:-“This landmark document takes the referendum debate into a new phase. No country in history is as well-equipped as Scotland is to move toward independence, and even the staunchest opponents of Yes now accept that Scotland has got what it takes to be an independent country.

“The guide and the answers it provides will show clearly and simply the difference that we can make in Scotland if decisions on Scotland’s future are taken by those who care most about Scotland, that is the people who live and work here.

“The referendum on 18th September next year is a vote unlike any other – it is the biggest opportunity we have had as a country in 300 years. That’s why I’m calling on everyone in Edinburgh Western – regardless of what their current views are on independence – to read this guide, to compare it with any alternative future for Scotland and make up your own mind.”