

Humza announces fresh start for Scotland

With a delay to the much discussed Deposit Return Scheme and a reversal on the alcohol advertising crackdown, today's announcement was a distancing by the new head of government from the Sturgeon administration.

In spite the arrest of Midlothian North and Musselburgh MSP, Colin Beattie on Tuesday morning taking over the headlines and reminding everyone of the former Leader, Nicola Sturgeon and her legacy, the First Minister forged ahead with his new proposals for his term of office when Holyrood convened today.

This was the First Minister's first big statement after being elected only a matter of weeks ago, and he announced three missions based on equality, opportunity and community which will be central to the government under his leadership. This document does not however replace the Programme for Government 2023-24 which will be set out after the summer recess.

The paper presented on Tuesday is titled "A New Deal for Scottish Business" and will delay the Deposit Return Scheme until next March, send proposals for alcohol advertising back to the drawing board and an examination of ways to use business rates to boost business and support communities. Read it in full below.

The policy prospectus sets out the government's plans for the

next three years in detail for each Cabinet portfolio and confirms the government will work with the Scottish Green Party building on the Bute House Agreement.

Actions to tackle poverty, build a fairer, greener and growing economy, and improve public services by 2026 include:

- a 'New Deal for Scottish Business' with urgent discussion to agree how government can better support businesses and communities using policy levers such as Non-Domestic Rates.
- an extension of the Deposit Return Scheme launch date to March 2024, from August this year.
- an explicit commitment to support economic growth for a purpose – to help business and trade to thrive and maximise the opportunity for a fair, green economy.
- confirmation of a further £1.3 billion investment for the Scottish Child Payment over the next three years
- improved cancer outcomes through better prevention and diagnostics, including expanded Rapid Cancer Diagnostic Services in Lanarkshire and Borders by June 2023
- investment of up to £25 million to convert suitable properties into affordable homes for key workers and others, as part of an action plan to increase housing in remote, rural and island areas
- confirmation of a six-month pilot removing peak-time fares from ScotRail services from October to make rail travel more accessible, available and affordable.
- the delivery of six new vessels to serve Scotland's ferry network and a doubling of the charge point network for electric vehicles to at least 6,000
- reinstating Scotland's participation in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science (TIMSS) and Progress in International Reading Literacy (PIRLS) studies to increase the availability of internationally comparable data on Scotland's education performance
- seeking a new agreement with the Convention of Scottish

Local Authorities (COSLA) to support the delivery of shared priorities, and legislation to give councils powers to apply a Local Visitor Levy on overnight stays in commercially let accommodation as additional means to raise revenue

The First Minister said: "Scotland is a land of opportunity, I'm very proud of that fact, I'm proud to be a product of that.

"My grandparents came to this country in the 1960s, barely speaking English, little money in their pockets. Despite the challenges they faced, and at times hostility they faced, due to their background, they overcame those barriers and provided a life for their children, and for their grandchildren that I will forever be grateful for.

"It is my responsibility to ensure every family in Scotland has that equality of opportunity, regardless of their background or where they live in Scotland.

"I am optimistic we can achieve that equality of opportunity, and the three missions that I have set out today, will determine the priorities of the government that I lead for the rest of this parliamentary session, and help us to achieve that.

"Together, we will be focused on the delivery, we will ensure that we have affordable, ambitious measures in place, which protect our environment, which protect business prosperity, they improve people's well-being, and they reduce poverty.

"They will ensure the actions we take over the next three years, stand Scotland in good stead for the next decade to come. And they will use our present, very significant, strengths to deliver a fresh start for Scotland."



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