

Scotland can be the “engine room of UK growth”

The Secretary of State for Scotland, the Rt Hon Ian Murray, told an audience at the University of Edinburgh’s Informatics Forum on Friday morning that Scotland can be “the engine room of UK growth”.

But, he also repeated his recent claim that the Scottish economy could have been £10 billion larger if economic growth during the last ten years had matched that in the rest of the UK – and said the barrier to that had been political posturing between the two governments in Scotland.

In response Mr Murray has announced a shake up at The Scotland Office which will now have four priorities – economic growth, green energy, Brand Scotland and tackling poverty rather than constitutional division.

He said: “This new Scotland Office is the UK Government’s delivery arm for Scotland and Scotland’s window to Whitehall. We will deliver economic growth. But growth with a purpose: to reduce and one day eradicate the poverty which scars our communities.

“Taking advantage of our enormous green energy potential and our world class brand to get there.”

He also outlined to Reform Scotland that there is potential for greater local devolution similar to that enjoyed by Greater Manchester – and that the City Region Deal partners in

Edinburgh and the leader of Glasgow City Council have called for it.

He said the Manchester economy grew by almost 50% between 2014 and 2022 and there is no reason why that cannot happen in Scotland.

Mr Murray said the decade of division between Scotland's two governments was a lost opportunity – and warned that the country cannot allow the same to happen again.

As one of Labour's priorities, Mr Murray confirmed that the relationship with The Scottish Government has been reset. He mentioned the Commonwealth Games which will come to Glasgow as one example of the new joint working between Westminster and Holyrood. But he said this is just the start – and no-one should think the reset is over at the first sign of political disagreement.

Mr Murray said: "These are different governments led by different political parties with different priorities and policies. But just because we don't agree on everything doesn't mean we can't agree on anything."

He continued: "Scotland can be the engine room of UK growth. We have so much potential. Potential that for too long has gone untapped, World class universities, advanced manufacturing, food and drink, life sciences, financial and professional services.

"And this government will leave no stone unturned to unleash that potential.

"Tearing up red tape, harnessing the power of Artificial Intelligence to boost productivity, and delivering a proper industrial strategy, developed in partnership with businesses and trade unions.

"But delivering economic growth for Scotland is not something

either of Scotland's governments can do alone. It requires partnership and co-operation. Because the alternative costs us dearly."

The UK Government will plough £240 million into its Get Britain Working plan to overhaul JobCentres to allow them to focus on skills and careers. Along with this the UK Government will direct its attention to the NHS waiting times which are "one of the biggest blocks to growing our economy". Around 700,000 people in Scotland are on an NHS waiting list and cutting that timescale will help the economy.

Mr Murray and the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, Kirsty McNeill MP, visited the Bayes Centre before the speech where they saw for themselves the progress on humanoid robotics – and one which looked and acted like a dog.

The ministers were introduced to the humanoid robot, Talos, by Professor Ram Ramamoorthy who holds the chair of Robot Learning and Autonomy, and to the dog – which does not yet have a name.

[The full speech is published here.](#)



