

SNP must publish secret report which blasts CAP payment chaos

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- SNP must publish secret report which blasts CAP payment chaos

10 May 2017



Ministers have been urged to make public a “highly critical” report into the recent CAP cash crisis, which delayed payments worth hundreds of millions of pounds to Scottish farmers.

Members of Holyrood’s rural economy and connectivity committee were today given sight of a report commissioned by the Scottish Government in the wake of the fiasco.

However, the MSPs have been ordered to keep the paper private amid claims publishing it would breach commercial sensitivity.

The Scottish Government adds that the report – carried out by firm Fujitsu – contains details of live contracts which could be jeopardised by its release.

It was triggered after the Scottish Government’s IT system processing CAP payments failed to get the money through to farmers, causing massive delays and pushing many to the brink of going out of business.

Various MSPs who were given an executive summary said it was “damning” and “highly critical”, while convener Edward Mountain said it was “unacceptable” the full report had not been published.

At today’s meeting, Scottish Government civil servants confirmed the report highlighted the need for “remedial action” and that there were “system defects”.

In contrast to the SNP’s secrecy in the issue, the Scottish Conservatives last year pledged in their rural manifesto to hold an official probe into the CAP payments crisis.

Scottish Conservative shadow rural affairs secretary Peter Chapman said:

“This was a scandal which starved Scotland’s rural communities of hundreds of millions of pounds.

“Yet now the SNP appears to want to keep secret a damning report on the issue.

“How is the Scottish Government supposed to improve these systems in future

if it's not willing to be transparent?

"Farmers across the country will be furious at this attempt to bury a report which clearly contains very severe criticism for the SNP and its ability to help Scotland's rural communities."

The Scottish Conservatives have been repeatedly critical of the SNP on CAP payments:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/04/farmer-income-plummeted-as-snp-bounced-cap-payments/>

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2016/03/probe-into-cap-payments-fiasco-will-be-at-heart-of-rural-plan/>

[Trainees expose the gaps in Scotland's teacher training programme](#)

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- Trainees expose the gaps in Scotland's teacher training programme

10 May 2017



Evidence given to Holyrood's education committee today has thrown more doubt over the effectiveness of Scotland's teacher training programme.

Several teacher trainees spoke to the committee about their experiences of teacher training, and highlighted problems with training for additional support needs (ASN), behaviour management, and most worryingly, literacy.

It comes after figures yesterday revealed that the percentage of S2 pupils who are not meeting the required level of writing increased from 7% to 16% in the last four years.

One trainee said that they received a "single week on literacy – that would be it".

Others said that they received "'next to nothing on classroom behaviour management", and that there was "absolutely nothing on ASN" in their course.

Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary Liz Smith MSP said:

"The evidence heard this morning has once again laid bare the SNP's terrible

record on education.

“With literacy rates plummeting under this SNP Government we now discover that trainee teachers are receiving the bare minimum in training when it comes to improving reading and writing skills.

“This morning’s committee evidence made plain the extent of the concerns about some aspects of the teacher training programme.

“Trainees told us that there was virtually no training on additional support needs despite the fact that nearly a quarter of Scottish pupils are requiring that support, and that there has been no support to help children stay safe online.

“There were also concerns over how school placements were organised, something which clearly has had a detrimental effect on the experience of some trainee teachers.

“These are major issues which have a huge impact on our children. Today’s evidence sends yet another very blunt message to John Swinney that there are serious issues in Scotland’s schools.”

[Ruth: Sturgeon’s ‘grubby spin operation’ on fishing exposed](#)

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- Ruth: Sturgeon’s ‘grubby spin operation’ on fishing exposed

10 May 2017



The Scottish Conservatives have condemned the SNP after its “grubby” attempt to spread misinformation about Scotland’s fishing industry backfired today.

Nicola Sturgeon took to social media last night to claim a private letter from the UK Government to the Scottish Fishermen’s Federation showed that ministers were preparing to “sell out” fishing communities.

However, in a statement today, the SFF dismissed her allegations, insisting that “any reading of this letter in full makes it clear that the UK Government is committed to ensuring we exit the CFP”.

It added that UK Government ministers had made clear to them that the government “shares the determination of the entire industry to seize this

opportunity to re-generate our coastal communities”.

Ruth is today demanding that the First Minister retracts her claims – and explains why the SNP chose to put private correspondence between the SFF and the UK Government into the public domain.

Speaking after she met fishing leaders in Peterhead, Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

“Nicola Sturgeon’s grubby spin operation has been found out – and the SNP’s scaremongering has been exposed for the trash it is.

“The First Minister’s hands are all over this – she took to social media to whip up unfounded claims about the UK Government’s approach to our fishing industry.

“Scotland’s fishing leaders have directly contradicted her to make it clear they are satisfied with the UK Government’s approach.

“If Nicola Sturgeon has even a shred of decency, she will retract her absurd claims.

“She also needs to explain why the SNP chose to put this private correspondence between the SFF and the UK Government into the public domain.

“The only lesson we can draw from this is that the nationalists are panicking and are now resorting to amateur leaking and baseless spin in an attempt to cling onto seats all over Scotland.

“Scots everywhere are increasingly seeing through the SNP.

“The Scottish Conservatives will lead Scotland’s fightback against the SNP – and stand up to their unwanted plan for a second referendum.”

[European Commission confirms SNP plans would place fishing industry back under CFP](#)

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- European Commission confirms SNP plans would place fishing industry back under CFP

10 May 2017



SNP plans to rejoin the EU would place Scotland's fishing industry back under the control of the Common Fisheries Policy, the European Commission has confirmed.

In a letter to Scottish Conservative MEP Dr Ian Duncan, fisheries commissioner Karmenu Vella said a new country joining the EU would not be able to opt out from the CFP, as one of the bloc's 'exclusive competence areas'.

Commissioner Vella's statement places the SNP under fresh pressure to clarify its approach to Scotland's vital fishing industry.

Nicola Sturgeon demanded a second independence referendum on the back of the UK's vote to leave the EU and her party's policy is for Scotland to join the EU as an independent state.

However, in a gesture incompatible with the policy, SNP MPs have signed a fishing pledge rejecting any move which would return the industry to CFP control.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson, who will visit Peterhead today, said:

"Nicola Sturgeon is treating Scotland's fishing communities with utter contempt.

"Her policy is to return to the despised Common Fisheries Policy – but she wants to pretend otherwise.

"The SNP cannot have it both ways. Scotland's fishing communities will not be fooled by them.

"Fishermen see great opportunities after Brexit so the most important thing for their industry is to secure the best deal for Scotland and the whole of the UK when we leave the EU.

"A vote for the Scottish Conservatives is a vote to leave the CFP for good."

Ian Duncan, who is also the Scottish Conservatives' General Election candidate in Perth and North Perthshire, said:

"We have confirmation once again from the EU's fisheries commissioner that no state can join the EU without joining the Common Fisheries Project.

"No ifs, no buts, no negotiation.

"If you are not in the CFP, you are not in the EU.

He added: "The SNP's claims that Scotland could somehow negotiate its way out of the CFP are worthless, as Spain for one would veto the country's membership in the first place."

Ends

Notes to editors

Commissioner Vella's letter ([link](#)) confirms the CFP is a non-negotiable cornerstone of EU membership.

Despite their party's plan to rejoin the EU, a group of SNP MPs have signed the Scottish Fishermen's Federation's 'Brexit, Sea of Opportunity' pledge, which opposes 'any policy, practice or treaty which would return the UK to the Common Fisheries Policy.

Ruth Davidson will visit Peterhead fish market today (Wednesday, May 10) to meet fishermen and industry leaders.

[Now Greens surrender to SNP right across the country](#)

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9 May 2017



The Greens are to field less than 10 candidates across Scotland in the upcoming General Election, it has been reported.

The move came after the SNP urged the party to stand aside in various seats in order to create a "Yes alliance".

Now the Greens have bowed to that pressure, meaning they won't feature on the ballot paper in seats like Moray and Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross.

Two years ago, the Greens fielded 32 candidates for the General Election.

But after pressure from colleagues in the SNP, party bosses have opted hardly to feature at all this time around.

Scottish Conservative MSP Murdo Fraser said:

"This is the Green party reaffirming themselves as a pointless presence in Scottish politics.

"The propping up of the SNP is embarrassing and a complete disservice to their voters.

“Quite simply, they might as well not exist.

“If they are so determined to become the SNP, they should disband and merge with the nationalists.

“It’s utterly regrettable that a party previously committed to issues like the environment have become nothing but a support mechanism for the SNP.”

Earlier, it was confirmed the Greens wouldn’t stand in Angus Robertson’s Moray seat:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/05/evidence-of-desperate-yes-alliance-in-moray-after-pointless-greens-sit-out-election/>

Now it’s been reported the party will field less than 10 candidates at the General Election in Scotland:

<https://stv.tv/news/politics/1388040-scottish-greens-to-field-fewer-than-ten-candidates/>