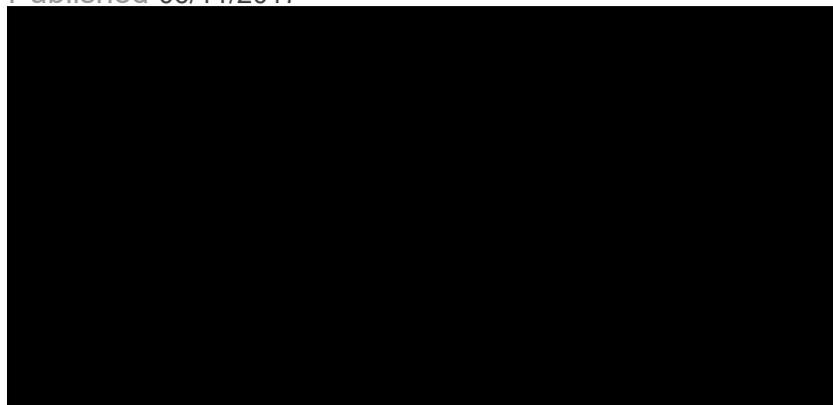


Partnerships and values

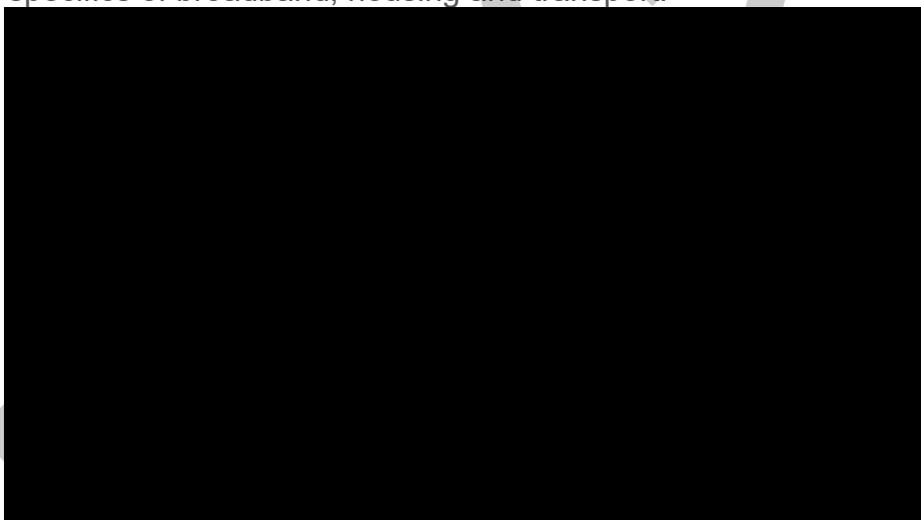
Published 06/11/2017



The Permanent Secretary Leslie Evans looks back on the week

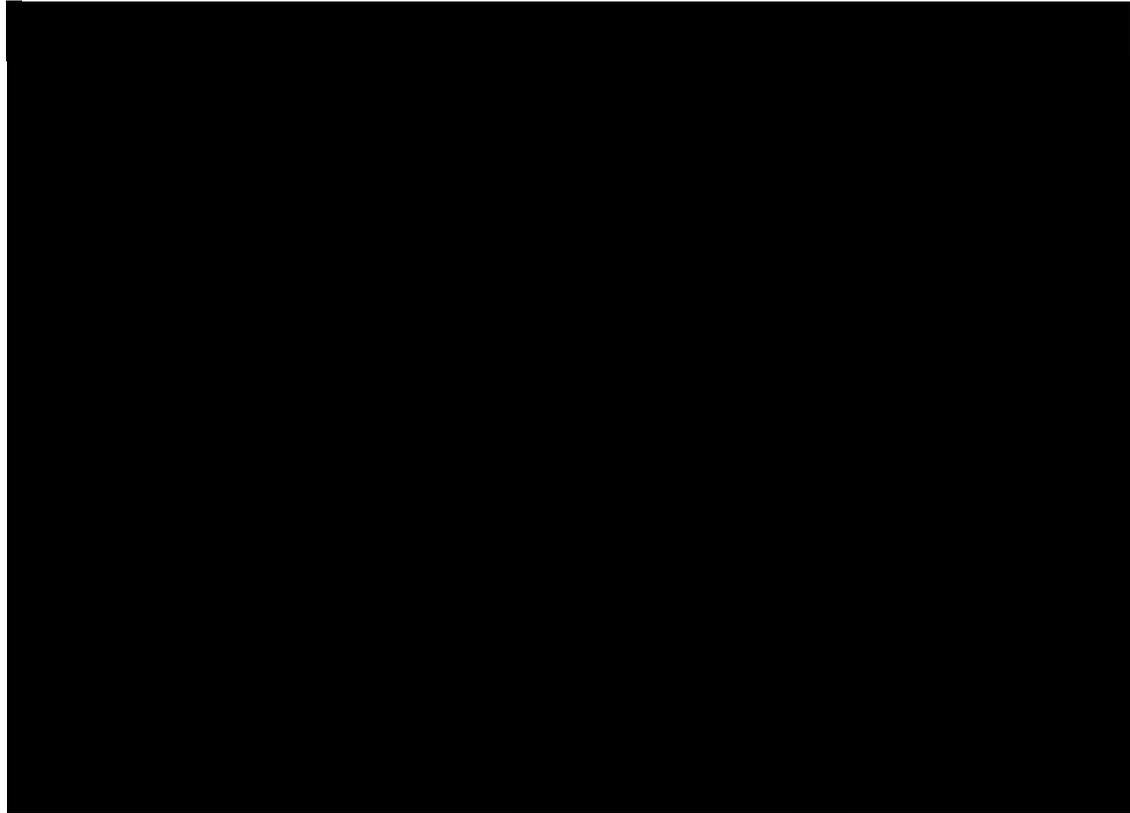
Convention of the Highlands and Islands

It was an early start last Monday as I travelled to Oban for the [Convention of the Highlands and Islands](#) (CoHI). I know from recent visits to Tiree, Lewis, Harris, Skye, Benbecula, and Inverness that the EU, population, inclusive growth and investment in infrastructure are big issues within these communities, including the specifics of broadband, housing and transport.



Having not attended CoHI for a few years I was struck by the strategic alignment of priorities around the table. There are differences of course - but the convention presents a coherent and distinctive voice for the region, and a model of high quality and mature partnership working from which others could learn. Well done to [REDACT], [REDACT], [REDACT] and the team for all their work on a well organised event.

Discussions with staff



The First Minister and I have met around 700 staff over the past two weeks to discuss priorities and hear views on issues including Brexit, SG2020, Programme for Government, prioritisation, mental health, welfare powers and even guising. I know the First Minister values these events and hearing directly from colleagues. We intend to hold them annually and are exploring how colleagues outside the central belt can access them too. The video below gives a flavour.

Sexual harassment

Recent media reports about alleged sexual harassment at Westminster and Holyrood are deeply concerning. My position is clear - there is no place for harassment or discrimination of any kind in the Scottish Government and our commitment to promoting a positive and inclusive workplace is unwavering. We all have the right to go to work and live our lives free of abuse and intimidation.

I have agreed with the First Minister that we shall review our policies and processes to check that they are effective and well understood. The review will be done carefully but quickly, through an acceleration of work already underway as part of the People Plan.

This is about culture and behaviour as much as policies and process. We all have a part to play in creating a positive culture by making sure that we treat others with respect and dignity and by calling it out when that doesn't happen. What you permit you promote – so it includes each of us challenging unacceptable behaviour, reporting incidents and supporting colleagues, regardless of whether the perceived harassment, victimisation, discrimination or bullying is intentional or unintentional.

I wrote to all staff on this issue last week and I again want to offer reassurance that if you raise an issue, you will be supported and the matter will be properly investigated. There are processes and [support in place](#) for reporting any concerns or misconduct. It is important that we talk sensibly and responsibly about this as an organisation – please talk to me or any other member of the senior leadership team directly.

People Survey – thank you

The People Survey 2017 closed last Tuesday and I'm delighted that our response rate is the highest it's been since 2014. 78% (5,058) of Scottish Government core staff members completed the survey – a 5% increase on last year's response rate.

I realise that this may mean the survey results are more critical, but I want to hear everyone's experience – good and bad – of working here. A high completion rate is vital if we are to make genuine, meaningful and consistent improvement. And views expressed in the survey also inform how we create a positive, inclusive culture and a responsive, open and capable organisation. The team will now undertake detailed analysis but I want to thank those of you who took time to complete the survey - your views will shape the future of the organisation.

