

Item 1:

Introductory discussion with Mr Hepburn 30.3.23 – file note

Attendees: Jamie Hepburn MSP, David Rogers, Brian Dornan, [Redacted]

After introductions, officials set out the progress to date on the independence prospectus programme of work, [Redacted] Options for next steps were discussed at a high level [Redacted]

Actions:

[Redacted]

- CFD to arrange a meeting between Mr Hepburn and the wider team, for after recess;
- CFD to propose a cycle of regular catch ups.

Constitutional Futures Division, 30 March 2023

Item 2:

Constitutional Futures Division: introductory all staff session with Mr Hepburn 19.4.23– file note

Attendees: Jamie Hepburn MPS, [Redacted], members of Constitutional Futures Division, Constitution and UK Relations Division, Strategic Communications, International Futures and Central Analysis Division, David Rogers, Director for Constitution.

The Minister and his private secretary introduced themselves to officials. Each unit in CFD provided a brief outline of their key activities, covering Programme and Briefing; Constitution and Transition and Prospectus and Engagement. Teams from analysis, communications, international futures and constitution and UK relations also set out their priority areas and how this feeds into the constitutional futures work.

Actions:

- Schedule further whole team catch ups with Mr Hepburn through the year;

[Redacted]

Constitutional Futures Division, 25 April 2023

Item 3:

CFD Stakeholder Engagement Team introductory discussion with Mr Hepburn 25/4/3023 – file note

Attendees: Jamie Hepburn MSP, Brian Dornan, [Redacted]

The team presented work underway on engagement. Mr Hepburn noted:

[Redacted]

- His intention to discuss next steps on the BANS series with the First Minister at a forthcoming meeting.

[Redacted]

Constitutional Futures Division, 25 April 2023

Item 4:

Minister for Independence: Introduction to Building a New Scotland publications 25.04.23 – file note

Attendees: Jamie Hepburn MSP, Brian Dornan, [Redacted], Jeanette Campbell (introductions only)

After introductions, officials set out the structure, arguments and key propositions in the second published paper in the Building a New Scotland series, *Renewing Democracy through Independence*, [Redacted]

[Redacted]

- CFD to provide Mr Hepburn with a note of the academics we have engaged with on the draft paper;
- CFD to share a further draft of the paper with Mr Hepburn.

Constitutional Futures Division, 25 April 2023

Item 5:

Minutes of briefing on Public Attitudes to the UK's Democratic System Report - Professor Alan Renwick, UCL 27 April 2023

Attendees

- Angus Robertson MSP, George Adam MSP, Jamie Hepburn MSP
- Professor Alan Renwick, University College London
- Officials: David Rogers, [Redacted], Audrey MacDougall, [Redacted] Brian Dornan, [Redacted]

Background

Professor Renwick had offered Ministers and officials a briefing on the findings of UCL's recent report on public attitudes to the UK's democratic system. This was accepted and arranged as a hybrid seminar in SAH.

The work of the UCL Constitution Unit

After introductions, Professor Renwick first outlined the wider work of the UCL Constitution Unit, including: Robert Hazell's work on the monarchy, the prerogative and regulators as well as his contribution to the 2002 Jo E. Murkens book, *Scottish*

Independence: A Practical Guide; Meg Russell's work on the role of parliament, scrutiny, the House of Lords and bicameralism; and his own work on:

- Electoral systems (how reform happens, merits of different systems, Senedd: votes at 16, boundary reviews)
- Referendums (role and conduct, including informed choice, misinformation and disinformation, unification referendums in Northern Ireland)
- Reform processes (what role the public can play in constitutional reform, how the public can best be involved, citizens' assemblies – need for them not to be one off processes, and to carefully consider a manageable remit)
- Public opinion on democracy (see below)

Public Attitudes to Democracy in the UK

Professor Renwick outlined the findings from two surveys and a citizens' assembly on democracy undertaken as part of this project. Their findings included that, while most people in the UK did not have much knowledge of or interest in specific institutions, they were interested in the overall health of democracy and in particular wanted to see more honesty in political discourse (both from politicians and in media reporting). They found that, amidst low levels of trust in politicians, there was support for: the role of judges and the courts in protecting rights, for stronger mechanisms to uphold integrity among politicians, including more powerful independent regulators; for parliament to have a stronger role in scrutinising ministers' proposals and setting its agenda (rather than government), and for a wide range of people to be involved in decision-making.

The presentation was followed by Q&A facilitated by David Rogers.

Professor Renwick indicated that he would be happy to continue the conversations begun on various themes during the briefing.

[Redacted], Central Analysis Division, 28 April 2023

Item 6:

**Minister for Independence: Building a New Scotland publications [Redacted]
27 April 2023 – file note**

Attendees: Jamie Hepburn MSP, [Redacted], Joni Smith, Brian Dornan, [Redacted], Ewan Crawford

After introductions, officials set out the vision, structure and key proposals [Redacted]

International Futures Division (IFD), 27 April 2023

Item 7:

Minister for Independence: Building a New Scotland publications [Redacted] 2 May 2023 – file note

Attendees: Jamie Hepburn MSP, [Redacted], Brian Dornan, [Redacted] Claire McPherson [Redacted]

After introductions, officials set out the vision, structure and key proposals [Redacted]

[Redacted]

Constitution Futures Division (CFD), 2 May 2023

Item 8:

Discussion with Mr Hepburn on [Redacted] 3.5.23 – file note

Attendees: Jamie Hepburn MSP, Brian Dornan, [Redacted] Ewan Crawford

After introductions, officials set out progress to date on [Redacted] material. Areas for further development were identified around a [Redacted]

[Redacted]

Constitutional Futures Division, 5 May 2023

Item 9:

Discussion with Mr Hepburn on diary cases and correspondence 04.05.23 – file note

Attendees: Jamie Hepburn MSP, [Redacted]

After introductions, officials provided an overview of the current volume of correspondence and diary cases. Officials then outlined proposed process for handling correspondence and diary cases and providing appropriate civil service support on these. [Redacted]

[Redacted]

Constitutional Futures Division, 4 May 2023

Item 10:

Minister for Independence: Introduction to Building a New Scotland: [Redacted] 04.05.23 – file note

Attendees: Jamie Hepburn MSP, Brian Dornan, [Redacted] Ewan Crawford (for the first part of the meeting only)

After introductions, officials set out arguments and key propositions [Redacted]. The Minister noted the summary.

Discussion covered the scope of the propositions and interdependencies with other themes in the independence prospectus; timing of publication of the propositions and various technical issues.

ACTIONS:

[Redacted]

- CFD to provide Mr Hepburn with lines on the [Redacted]
- CFD to arrange further briefings [Redacted]

Constitutional Futures Division, 5 May 2023

Item 11:

9th May 2023

Attendees:

Jamie Hepburn, Minister for Independence
Ross Greer MSP
Ewan Crawford, Special Advisor
Harry Huyton, Special Advisor
[Redacted]

The Minister for Independence met with Ross Greer MSP to discuss the Building a New Scotland Series.

Collectively agreed to change to fortnightly meetings rather than monthly.

Item 12:

Meeting between Minister for Independence and Constitutional Futures Division Senior Management Team – 11 May 2023 – file note

Attendees: Jamie Hepburn MSP, [Redacted], Brian Dornan, [Redacted], David Rogers

Officials set out options relating to a timetable for publishing the Building a New Scotland series. [Redacted] Mr Hepburn proposed that this advice should be put to the First Minister.

Officials advised Mr Hepburn **[Redacted]**

Actions:

- Officials to provide Mr Hepburn with a note for First Minister setting out advice in relation to publishing future papers in the Building a New Scotland series.

Constitutional Futures Division, 22 May 2023

Item 13:

Discussion with Mr Hepburn on Economy 11.5.23 – file note

Attendees: Jamie Hepburn MSP, Brian Dornan, Gary Gillespie, Matthew Elsby, **[Redacted]** Ewan Crawford

Officials provided a high level summary on the currency and fiscal policy aspects of the Economy Paper. There was discussion around how to present the key propositions in the paper to a range of different audiences.

Actions:

- A further briefing session to be arranged to continue the discussion.

Constitutional Futures Division, 11 May 2023

Item 14:

Independence Prospectus Discussion

In attendance: First Minister; Deputy First Minister; Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Fair Work and Energy; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture; Minister for Independence; Ewan Crawford; Principal Private Secretary to the First Minister

The ministers discussed a proposal to resume publication of the independence prospectus papers. **[Redacted]**

[Redacted]

EC asked if the First Minister would wish to meet officials ahead of the first paper's publication to discuss its contents. The FM agreed to a meeting. **ACTION** – FMPO to schedule meeting with prospectus team.

Meeting concluded.

Item 15:

Discussion with Mr Hepburn on Economy 16.5.23 – file note

Attendees: Jamie Hepburn MSP, Brian Dornan, **[Redacted]**, Ewan Crawford

Officials provided a high level summary of the final chapter of the A Stronger Economy with Independence' prospectus paper. **[Redacted]**

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Constitutional Futures Division, 18 May 2023