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RESTRICTED HANDLING

SC(20)4th Conclusions

SCOTTISH CABINET

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD IN BUTE HOUSE, EDINBURGH
AT 9.30 AM ON TUESDAY, 28 JANUARY 2020

Present:	Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon MSP	First Minister
	John Swinney MSP	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
	Roseanna Cunningham MSP	Cabinet Secretary for the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform
	Fergus Ewing MSP	Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy
	Jeane Freeman MSP	Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport
	Fiona Hyslop MSP	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs
	Derek Mackay MSP	Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work
	Michael Matheson MSP	Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity
	Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP	Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People
	Humza Yousaf MSP	Cabinet Secretary for Justice
In Attendance:	Leslie Evans	Permanent Secretary
	LPP	LPP
	Graeme Dey MSP	Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (<i>part of meeting only</i>)
	Kevin Stewart MSP	Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning
	Lesley Fraser	Director-General, Organisational Development and Operations
	David Rogers	Director of Constitution and Cabinet
	James Hynd	Head of Cabinet Secretariat
	Andrew Bruce	Permanent Secretary's Principal Private Secretary
	Douglas McLaren	Deputy Director, Public Spending
	Ross Ingebrigtsen	Special Adviser
	Liz Lloyd	Special Adviser
	Callum McCaig	Special Adviser
	Stuart Nicolson	Special Adviser
	Aileen Easton	First Minister's Official Spokesperson
	Chris Birt	First Minister's Policy and Delivery Unit
	Tabitha Stringer	PS/First Minister
	NR	Head of Connected Communities Unit
	NR	Environmental Quality and Circular Economy Division
		Cabinet Secretariat
		Cabinet Secretariat

SC(20)4th Conclusions

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11. In relation to the item in paper SC(20)14 concerning publication of the South West Scotland Transport Study, which had been prepared by Transport Scotland, it was noted in discussion that the eventual case for dualling the A75 and A77 might be stronger than the impression given in the report, given local geographical factors.

National Transport Strategy (NTS2)

12. In relation to the item in paper SC(20)14 concerning publication of a new National Transport Strategy (NTS2), Mr Matheson indicated that the final document had been updated to strengthen its emphasis on tackling climate change, reducing inequalities and helping deliver inclusive economic growth. The first annual delivery plan was due to be prepared over the summer.

National Rail Passenger Survey

13. Mr Matheson updated Cabinet on the results of the latest National Rail Passenger Survey conducted by Transport Focus (a UK public body), which had been published that morning. The statistics showed that overall satisfaction with ScotRail services during autumn 2019 was 89 per cent, seven per cent above the average for the rest of Great Britain (GB) and ten per cent above the level for autumn 2018. Of the 41 station and on-board attributes measured by the survey, ScotRail had scored more highly than the GB average for 37 of them. Overall, ScotRail was in sixth position out of 25 train operating companies, which suggested that the Remedial Plan that had been put in place were beginning to bear fruit.

UK Telecoms Supply Chain Review

14. The First Minister noted that, later that day, the UK Government was due to announce what restrictions, if any, would be placed on the use of so-called 'high-risk' vendors in the UK's 5G and Gigabit-capable networks, at the conclusion of its Telecoms Supply Chain Review. This would affect the involvement of the Chinese technology company, Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd.

15. It was noted in discussion that it seemed likely that the UK Government would permit the involvement of high-risk vendors such as Huawei, at least on a restricted basis. This seemed likely to present significant security risks, which would need very careful monitoring and management, and it would be important for Ministers to make public the Scottish Government's principled concerns about such a development.

Coronavirus Outbreak

16. In relation to the item in paper SC(20)14 concerning the outbreak of a novel coronavirus emanating from Wuhan City in the People's Republic of China, Ms Freeman said that this was a fast-moving and continually evolving situation. There were still no confirmed cases of the virus in the UK: the results of all tests had been negative, including the seven tests carried out in Scotland. A further four cases were still under investigation in Scotland, and there was concern for a patient who had, that morning, been transferred to the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital in Glasgow in a serious, but not critical, condition.

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17. In discussion the following points were made:

(a) The rate at which the virus was spreading in China was alarming, as was the suggestion from Chinese officials that the virus might be infectious in its incubation period, before symptoms began to show. If confirmed, this would make controlling the virus much more challenging. It would be important for Scottish Government messaging to be consistent with the latest evidence concerning how the virus spread;

(b) It was likely that, in time, the virus would reach the UK. The Scottish Government was putting in place appropriate measures, in all parts of the country, to minimise the risk of contracting the virus and to control the spread of any outbreak;

(c) It would be necessary to consider how resilient NHSScotland would be in the face of a large-scale outbreak, including assessing how such an outbreak would impact existing healthcare provision and whether any additional medical facilities (such as isolation centres) were required. Work on this was already under way, and Ms Freeman undertook to update the First Minister as soon as possible;

(d) Thus far, the UK Government did not seem to have reacted quickly or effectively enough regarding the repatriation of UK nationals currently in China. There were estimated to be around 100 UK citizens in Hubei Province who were looking to return to the UK, and it would be vital to know how many of them would be travelling on to Scotland, not least to allow appropriate infection control measures to be put in place;

(e) While there had been good collaborative working between the UK's Chief Medical Officers, the UK Government had not been sufficiently responsive to requests from Scottish Government for information (including about UK nationals currently in China) and had not fulfilled a number of the commitments it had made at the Cabinet Office Briefing Room meeting held on 24 January. This point would need to be raised urgently at senior official level.

(Action: Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport; Population Health Directorate)

UK Government Drugs Summit

18. Ms Freeman said that, on 24 January, the UK Government had announced publicly its intention to hold a UK Drugs Summit in Glasgow on 27 February. It was a matter of great regret that the Scottish Government had not received any advance notification of the announcement. This was particularly disappointing given the lengths to which the Scottish Government had gone in trying to organise a joint drugs summit with the UK Government and the other devolved administrations, and in light of the fact that – in the absence of a response from the UK Government about a joint summit – the Scottish Government had made its own plans for a summit in Glasgow, on 12 March, which were well advanced.