

SCOTTISH CABINET

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD IN ST ANDREW'S HOUSE, EDINBURGH
AT 3.00 PM ON SATURDAY, 19 DECEMBER 2020

Present:	Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon MSP	First Minister
	John Swinney MSP	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (*)
	Aileen Campbell MSP	Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government (*)
	Roseanna Cunningham MSP	Cabinet Secretary for the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform (*)
	Fergus Ewing MSP	Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism (*)
	Kate Forbes MSP	Cabinet Secretary for Finance (*)
	Jeane Freeman MSP	Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport (*)
	Fiona Hyslop MSP	Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Fair Work and Culture (*)
	Michael Matheson MSP	Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity (*)
	Michael Russell MSP	Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, Europe and External Affairs (*)
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
	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
	Graeme Dey MSP	Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (*)
	Dr Gregor Smith	Interim Chief Medical Officer
	Professor Jason Leitch CBE	National Clinical Director
	Liz Ditchburn	Director-General, Economy (*)
	Alyson Stafford CBE	Director-General, Scottish Exchequer (*)
	Ken Thomson	Director-General, Constitution and External Affairs (*)
	Penelope Cooper	Director of Outbreak Management (*)
	Dominic Munro	Director, Exit Strategy (*)
	David Rogers	Director of Constitution and Cabinet (*)
	Gillian Russell	Director of Health Workforce, Leadership, and Service Reform (*)
	Scott Wightman	Director of External Affairs (*)
	John Somers	First Minister's Principal Private Secretary
	James Hynd	Head of Cabinet Secretariat (*)
	Alisdair McIntosh	Strategic Adviser, Outbreak Management (*)
Ross Ingebrigtsen	Special Adviser	
Liz Lloyd	Special Adviser	
Colin McAllister	Special Adviser	

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21. Summing up, the First Minister indicated she would be setting out an outline of the measures to be introduced at an emergency briefing to be broadcast nationally later that afternoon, following preliminary discussion with the leaders of the other political parties represented in the Parliament. She expected to provide a further update to the Parliament on Tuesday, 22 December, but no new levels review would be required that day.

22. Although the measures proposed might appear disproportionate to some in view of the relatively low level of cases in most parts of Scotland, public health principles required that Ministers act ahead of time, and it was likely that the majority of the public would understand this message at a very difficult time for the nation.

23. Subject to final consideration, and taking into account the points made by Cabinet members, it was likely that the measures the First Minister would announce later that afternoon would include a move to Level 4 for all mainland areas, with a lower level of restrictions for island areas only. However, access to the islands would be likely to be limited to those with an address on the island, as during the early 'lockdown' stages of the pandemic. New regulations and revised guidance would need to be put in place rapidly to effect these changes.

24. **Cabinet:**

(a) Agreed to delegate to the First Minister the responsibility for finalising proposals in response to the threat posed by the new variant of the virus and all decisions that might be required in advance of her planned public statement later that afternoon;

(b) Delegated to the First Minister and Mr Swinney the responsibility for any further decisions that might be required to take into account any material changes in circumstances of which they might become aware;

(c) Agreed that all necessary actions should be put in hand to ensure that the necessary changes to regulations, guidance and advice would be in place so that the changes in the content and application of the *Strategic Framework* described above could be announced by the First Minister at her media briefing that afternoon, and publicised, implemented, and enforced from Saturday, 26 December onwards, or as and when required.

(Action: First Minister; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills; DG Constitution and External Affairs; Interim Chief Medical Officer)

Any Other Business

25. None.

Cabinet Secretariat
December 2020