



Radical Options for Scotland and Europe

For public ownership and democratic control

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Scotland's essential services: staffing cuts and shortfalls

Fire and Rescue

Reduction in uniformed staff: 2016 - 6,879; 2023 - 6,043 – a 12.2 percent decline; the FBU warns of significant further cuts of up to £25m over the next two years

Police Scotland

Official figures 2017 17,256 fte June 2023 16,599 fte [Police Federation cites a 1,000 cut since 2013; plans to recruit an additional 200 staff were suspended in September]

NHS

While notional staff numbers have increased over the past decade, there are very high vacancy rates that cancel any increases: : Nursing and Midwifery 9 percent; 8.5 percent medical and dental; allied professions 8 percent.

2023 Labour Policy Forum Document - as relevant to devolution and progressive federalism

This document was finalised at a Policy Forum meeting in Nottingham in July for discussion at the Labour Party's October conference. The original document was published in full on the LabourList website during conference. Its 'Reform Westminster and Devolve Power' section reflects, to a considerable degree, the proposals in Gordon Brown's Commission on the UK's Future. Pauline Bryan published an appraisal in the Morning Star on 7 October.

The document proposes significant levels of formal devolution but, like the rest of the document, makes any devolution of economic powers largely in the context of partnership with business. There are very few, if any commitments, to public ownership – largely limited to rails and lifting the ban on the municipal ownership of buses - and, although it makes some pledges to remove sanctions against trade unions, it does not make organised labour, or working people organised locally, the motive force for change. The 'Green Wealth Fund' will 'invest alongside the private sector'. Equally the 'Plan for Green Steel' – or for Green Public Transport. For water it simply sets out plans to better regulate existing private water companies. On industrial regeneration it talks of building the capacity of the state to be 'a more active, capable and reliable partner [of business]'. Equally with Royal Mail: to protect the Universal Service Obligation but through Royal Mail as a commercial company. Industrial Strategy will be dependent on 'supporting firms'.

In the section 'Expand economic devolution' it proposes a 'Take Back Control Act' but it remains unclear how far this will differ from the plans already developed by the Tories for Mayors to form cabinets including local businesses in developing 'long term local growth plans'.

The section 'Reform Westminster and devolve power' talks of 'putting power' directly into the 'hands of the people of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland ... long-term, integrated funding settlements'. It proposes to restore the decision-making role for the Welsh government

on structural funds and extend this to Scotland. It proposes to abolish the House of Lords and 'establish a second chamber that is smaller ... and is reflective of the regions and nations'.

On housing it sees the future in terms of private home ownership – a 'rate of 70 percent' - and 'new development corporations'. On 'national security' it pledges to ensure 'commitments to NATO are met in full'. On the EU it proposes to 'Build EU ties' while maintaining ... new role outside the single market and customs union'.

EU statistics: economy stalled; inflation continues

	Inflation	growth	unemployment	House prices
EU	5.9	0.0	5.9	-1.1
Germany	6.4	0.0	3.0	-9.9
Czech	10.1	0.0	2.5	-2.9
Ireland	4.9	0.5	4.1	5.1
France	5.7	0.5	7.3	0.7
Italy	5.1	-0.4	7.3	0.7
Spain	2.4	0.5	11.5	3.5

Pressure for EU to progress towards fully federal structures

Prior to October 2023 EU summit in Grenada three former EU leaders including Juncker, von Rompuy and Romano Prodi called for a 'gradual pragmatic move to federalism' with the completion of the Markets and Banking Union; fiscal integration to achieve a Capital Markets Union and a Fiscal Union. They warned of an 'uncoordinated subsidy race in face of China and the US undermining the Single Market'.

5 October 2023 Grenada summit ends in discord

Convened by the Spanish prime minister, the summit was scheduled to create conditions for the resolution of the current disputes over Nagorno-Karabash and also between Serbia and Kosovo. It was also intended to secure a new approach to stemming migration into the EU (with Sunak attending for this item), to initiate new collective energy arrangements involving Norway and Ukraine and to confirm timetables for the accession of new states including Ukraine. Little progress was made on any of these issues. Sunak withdrew from discussions on migration and no mention was made of the issue in the closing statement.