



THE SNP'S "DEFINING MISSION"

DELAYED

JOHN SWINNEY: A SAFE PAIR OF HANDS?



John Swinney was brought in as Education Secretary as a safe pair of hands, to implement the SNP's 'defining mission' to improve Scotland's education system.

Investing in education is the best economic policy a government can pursue. However, after a decade of SNP government, the Scottish education system is failing our young people on many levels.

International reports, Audit Scotland, trade unions and the Scottish Government's own surveys all agree, standards in Scottish education are falling. The system is crying out for investment.

The Sutton Trust, PISA and UCAS have all shown that the attainment gap in Scotland is widening. The government's own statistics show that class sizes are increasing, teacher numbers are down and spending per pupil has dropped.

But years of cuts implemented by John Swinney as Finance Secretary have resulted in £1.5billion less being spent on local services, which has resulted in:

- Over 4,000 fewer teachers
- Over 1,000 fewer support staff
- Class sizes bigger than when the SNP came to power
- School spending per pupil dropping across all ages since 2010
- Attainment in Maths, Science, literacy and numeracy all falling.
- Pupils from a poorer background entering primary one 14 months behind pupils from better off backgrounds

THE DEFINING MISSION: DELAYED

DELAYED - Consultation on the funding formula for schools

A consultation to decide who funds schools was meant to be launched this month. John Swinney wants to set the budgets of all schools centrally across Scotland, rather than allow decisions to be made locally by those who work in the local communities.

Delayed until: UNKNOWN

DELAYED - Governance Review

A consultation to decide to decide who should run Scotland's schools – closed on January 6 and received over 1,000 responses. This consultation, widely criticised as being impenetrable to those outside education, posed a number of questions on local authority and parental involvement in schools.

The responses were overwhelmingly negative, and the clear message is one of condemnation, accusing the government of missing the point and pursuing reforms which are misguided and unwanted.

Delayed until: UNKNOWN

DELAYED – National Testing

The introduction of national testing is one of the SNP's flagship education policies and it is now six months behind schedule due to a delay in pilot schemes. Last month not one of Scotland's councils had started pilots of the new standardised tests in literacy and numeracy.

Delayed until: UNKNOWN

DELAYED - SNP Education Bill

The government has repeatedly said that education is its 'defining mission' and promised that it would publish its Education Bill early in 2017.

Delayed until: LATE IN 2017

RESPONSES TO THE SNP'S GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Councillors from the SNP-controlled Dundee City Council said: "The real barriers have been imposed on councils over recent years following a series of past and present reductions to the budget."

The SNP Group on East Dunbartonshire Council said "The financial constraints, due to the reduction in public sector spending, are having an impact on education and schools. East Dunbartonshire has adopted a strategy to protect front line services as much as possible but the cumulative effect of the reduction in the budget year on year and the need to continue to make savings from a reduced budget are having an impact on the flexibility of schools to use their budget to meet the needs of the school community."

The EIS said: "The greatest barrier is and has been the imposition of austerity driven budgets and the underfunding of the Scottish Education system over the past period"

Aberdeen Parent Council Forum said: "Local council budgets have been reduced year on year for a considerable number of years. Teacher shortages impact the ability to deliver excellence and equity for all, HTs and DHTs have to spend time covering gaps instead of leading."

The Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) Scotland said: "We believe that we can only achieve the outcomes we all desire by addressing the causes of inequity and recognising the power of partnerships. We need approaches that empower not only teachers and headteachers, but also parents and whole communities. We believe that local authorities are uniquely placed to facilitate and provide the strong middle that this coordinated, cooperative and collaborative approach requires."

Scottish Parent Teacher Council said: "It is ironic that a document which has as one of its stated aims that parents should be more empowered, in fact excluded very many parents from participation.

The consultation presumed high levels of knowledge about the existing governance model in Scottish education, and used language which would be familiar only to those working in the sector. It is tantamount to expecting a patient with a broken leg to understand the inner workings and operational structures of the various NHS services they might encounter"

CONSULTATIONS AND REVIEWS

Since last May's election, the SNP has launched at least 120 consultations and reviews.

The total number will be even higher. There is a website listing all consultations, however no such website exists for reviews. As a result it is very difficult to know exactly how many have been announced.

1. Consultation on Raising Planning Fees
2. Transport Scotland's Rail Infrastructure Strategy from 2019
3. Extending Coverage of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 to Registered Social Landlords
4. Digital Transformation: Next Steps
5. Consultation on Wild Seaweed Harvesting
6. Review of HPB Cancer Quality Performance Indicators Consultation
7. Draft Proposals for Requirements for Static Gear Deployed Within 12 Nautical Miles of Scottish Baselines
8. Delivering Scotland's River Basin Management Plans: The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 Proposed Amendments
9. A STEM Education and Training Strategy for Scotland
10. Consultation on the New National Health and Social Care Standards
11. Review of Upper GI Cancer Quality Performance Indicators Consultation
12. Consultation on Draft of The Continuing Care (Scotland) Amendment Order 2017
13. Consultation on regulations to modify Part 1 of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 to deal with arrests which do not relate to criminal offences and arrests under warrant
14. Consultation on a Draft Referendum Bill
15. A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland
16. Building Warrant Fees
17. Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve excellence and equity in education: A Governance Review
18. Consultation on New Controls in the Queen Scallop Fishery in ICES Divisions VIa and VIIa
19. Consultation on proposals for regulations and policy supporting the Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016.
20. Consultation on Sections 9(2)(b)(i) of Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015
21. A Digital Strategy for Scotland – 2017 and beyond
22. Lung Cancer Quality Performance Indicator
23. Scotland's Oral Health Plan. A Scottish Government Consultation Exercise on the Future of Oral Health Services
24. Consultation on a Human Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy for Scotland
25. Improving transparency in land ownership in Scotland: a consultation on controlling interests in land
26. Tribunals (Scotland) Act 2014 - Consultation on Draft Regulations

regarding:(1) the Transfer of Functions and Members of the Scottish Tax Tribunals to the Scottish Tribunals, (2) the rules of procedure for the First-tier Tax Chamber, and, (3) the Composition of the First-tier and Upper Tribunals for Scotland

27. A consultation on the Draft Scottish Fiscal Commission (Modification of Functions) Regulations 2016
28. Statutory Guidance: Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000
29. The Future of Forestry in Scotland
30. Review of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement Act) 2006: A Call for Evidence
31. British Sign Language National Plan Consultation
32. Consultation on the Relaxation of Planning Controls for Digital Communications Infrastructure
33. Consultation on Transposition of Environmental Impact Assessment Directive EU2014/52
34. Consultation on Social Security in Scotland
35. Arbitration (Scotland) Act 2010: Ceasing the effect of transitional provision under section 36(3)
36. Consultation on the Scottish Health Survey questionnaire content
37. A consultation for implementation of certain sections of the Mental Health Act (Scotland) 2015 and associated regulations (Part 2)
38. Consultation on amending the Fetlar to Haroldswick MPA Designation Order 2016
39. Consultation on amending the Small Isles MPA Designation Order 2016
40. Small Isles Marine Protected Area (MPA) Marine Conservation Order consultation 2016
41. 2017 Non-domestic rating revaluation - consultation on possible transitional arrangements
42. Court Fees
43. Barclay Review of Business Rates
44. Modernising the Water Industry's use of rateable value to charge non-households for water and sewerage services
45. Consultation on the implementation of revised EU rules on Equine Identification in Scotland
46. Consultation about electrofishing for razor clams in Scotland
47. Consultation on a Child Poverty Bill for Scotland
48. Application for Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) Negligible Risk Status for Scotland
49. Mental Health in Scotland – a 10 year vision
50. Proposed Amendment to the Prohibited Procedures on Protected Animals (Exemptions) (Scotland) Regulations 2010
51. Review of Renal Cancer Quality Performance Indicators Consultation
52. Consultation on the Scottish Government Response to the introduction of the UK Apprenticeship Levy
53. A Consultation on proposals to establish the interim body to manage The Crown Estate assets in Scotland post-devolution
54. Review of the Scottish Social Housing Charter - A Consultation
55. The Integration of the British Transport Police in Scotland into Police Scotland

56. A consultation on an application to register the name "Forfar Bridie" as a Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) under the EU Protected Food Name (PFN) Scheme
57. Draft Strategic Police Priorities for Scotland
58. Enterprise and Skills Review – Call for Evidence
59. Consultation on an application to register the name "Ayrshire Early New Potatoes / Ayrshire Earlies" as a protected geographical indication (PGI) under the EU protected food name (PFN) scheme
60. Review of Prostate Cancer Quality Performance Indicators Consultation
61. Review of Breast Cancer Quality Performance Indicators Consultation.

62. Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Existing Non-Residential Premises Consultation
63. Consultation on Implementation of the Medium Combustion Plant Directive in Scotland
64. Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement: A Consultation
65. Consultation on Universal Credit (Claims and Payments) (Scotland) Regulations 2017
66. Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation - a consultation on increasing numbers of successful donations
67. A Scottish Government Consultation on the Draft Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Bill
68. Councillor Code of Conduct Amendment
69. Draft Head Teachers Education and Training Standards (Scotland) Regulations
70. Discussion Document - National Health and Social Care Workforce Plan
71. Crown Estate: A Consultation on the Long Term Management of the Crown Estate in Scotland
72. A Consultation on Procedure of the First Tier Tribunal Housing and Property Chamber
73. A consultation on the future of the Scottish Planning System
74. Fees for Monitoring Surface Coal Mines
75. Consultation on Proposals for an Integrated Authorisation Framework
76. Consultation on Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies, and Regulation of District Heating
77. Consultation on Guidance on Healthcare Needs in Schools
78. Improving educational outcomes for children and young people from travelling cultures
79. Consultation on a Scottish Energy Strategy: The future of energy in Scotland
80. Consultation on Scotland's Energy Efficiency Programme
81. Consultation on a Draft Onshore Wind Policy Statement
82. Consultation on Supporting Children and Young People with Healthcare Needs in Schools

83. Talking "Fracking": A Consultation on Unconventional Oil and Gas
84. Fatal Accident Inquiries: review
85. Review of Autism Network Scotland
86. Planning system review: organisational chart

87. Review of Business Improvement Districts Scotland
88. Warmer Homes Scotland - first annual review
89. Independent review of Scottish aquaculture consenting
90. Reaching 100% broadband programme - open market review
91. Review of Access to New Medicines
92. NHSScotland confidential alert line: six month review
93. Excellence and equity in education: governance review
94. Empowering planning to deliver great places: independent review report
95. Review of Lung Cancer Quality Performance Indicators: consultation
96. External Review of the National Carer Organisations (NCOs)
97. Drugs Research in Scotland, Scoping Review: July 2016
98. Hepatobiliary and pancreatic cancer quality performance indicators: consultation review
99. Planning Review working groups: summary of workshops: September 2016
100. Review of Upper GI Cancer Quality Performance Indicators Consultation
101. Annual Review Planning and Environmental Appeals Division 15/16
102. Review of the NHS Complaints Procedure: Health Inequalities Impact Assessment
103. Enterprise and Skills Review: Report on Phase 1
104. Climate change: evidence review in Agriculture, Forestry, Land Use, Waste
105. Enterprise and Skills Review Call for Evidence
106. Independent Review of Underground Coal Gasification - Report
107. Climate change: evidence review of mitigation options in the Transport sector
108. Planning consultation participation statement
109. Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform: Year 1: Annex 1: Evidence Review
110. Climate change: evidence review of mitigation options in the Built Environment sector
111. Report of the Review of the Protection of Wild Mammals (Scotland) Act 2002
112. Evidence assessment of the impacts of the criminalisation of the purchase of sex: a review
113. Out-of-Hospital Cardiac Arrest - A Strategy for Scotland Review 2015 – 16.
114. Financial review of early learning and childcare in Scotland: the current landscape
115. Protecting vulnerable groups (PVG) scheme review
116. Review of the Scottish Social Housing Charter – Formal Consultation
117. Enterprise and skills review
118. Review of the age cap for student maintenance loan eligibility
119. NHSScotland assets and facilities 2015: annual report
120. Strategic Police Priorities for Scotland - Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment
121. Further and higher education student support review