

March 16 at 5:01pm

Dear all

It seems all of us are navigating important work at the moment, whether assuring Ministerial agreement to the second set of recommendations from our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group, publishing the latest housing statistics, making new announcements on the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund, or the progress we're making on sanitary products provision. And what a lot of preparation has gone into next week's Cabinet Paper on the Child Poverty Delivery Plan, and the following week's papers on the Warm Homes Bill and fuel poverty strategy and the SEEP route map and consultation. A real volume of work. But from everything I've seen and read, what's really stood out for me is the quality of what you're doing. It's really good stuff, and I know others outside the directorate are commenting on that. Well done all.

I've been out and about at a lot of meetings this week – on Monday I met the SFHA's [REDACTED] and later [REDACTED] of the Scottish Futures Trust. We do a great deal of work with both organisations. With [REDACTED], the focus was rent affordability and thinking about how living costs affect child poverty. With [REDACTED] we spent an afternoon discussing all the areas of housing, energy efficiency, regeneration and finance where we work with SFT. Yesterday I had a day trip to the Blavatnik School of Government, in Oxford with [REDACTED] and the Director of Children and Families, [REDACTED]. The Blavatnik School have offered the Scottish Government access to their academic expertise as we refresh the National Performance Frameworks. A fascinating day – happy to discuss if you are interested to hear more.

FOIs

As you know we've been set a challenging target of answering 90% of FOI requests and review on time in 2018. Our directorate's performance is already good (94% of cases issuing on time last year), but we've put in place changes to help us improve further. We now circulate a list of live FOIs to DDs and Ministers in our Top Issues document. [REDACTED] is keenly interested in our performance and has asked for more information about several of our cases.

We face this target just as we're receiving an unprecedented number of cases. We've already received 18 FOI requests in 2018 (compared to fewer than 50 during the whole of 2017). So far we've replied to all on time. I know how time-consuming some requests have been so I want to thank everyone who's contributed. It really shows us in a good light.

Recruitment

We've put links to new guidance on recruitment on our Saltire pages and you might have seen elsewhere on Saltire work to recruit more Band B staff. Do have a read.

Learning and Development

Look out for posters, prepared by [NAME REDACTED] and [NAME REDACTED], highlighting upcoming learning and development opportunities, including my leadership seminar next month (bookable soon!) and one on disability in the workplace later this month.

Have a good weekend, all



<http://saltire/news/Pages/Building-our-workforce-for-the-future.aspx>

<https://beta.gov.scot/news/action-to-end-rough-sleeping/>

<https://t.co/fUD7vyktsh>

<http://s1431a/Systems/EventsOnline/Web/Event.aspx?eid=13476>

January 8 at 12:14pm

Happy new year everyone!

I won't lie, returning to work after a two week Christmas break felt like a struggle this morning. Slothful living has its charms. But I've had a restorative break – really hope you managed to get some rest too. Special thanks to everyone who worked over the Christmas and new year period.

If you're feeling sluggish (and who doesn't when it's this cold?), I hope you'll consider setting yourself a couple of professional challenges for 2018. Things to get involved with or obstacles to overcome at work. I'm also thinking about my personal challenges for the year ahead – more below. 2018 promises to be another busy year for us, but I'll start with a quick look back to December's launch of the final Scottish Energy Strategy (<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0052/00529523.pdf>). It's a brilliant piece of work, which sets up a substantial programme on energy for the Scottish Government. My thanks to everyone in the directorate who helped [NAME REDACTED] and her team bring it together. I know how many of you contributed to it – please read it and help to keep it a meaningful thing for you and the people that you work with outside of Government.

Next is a plug for the Directorate Business Plan. In 2018, we have major delivery and strategic challenges in every area of the directorate – and for the first time we have a meaningful plan for the year ahead. It's you who'll deliver this business plan, so I want this to be something that we refer to regularly, especially when it comes to setting our work objectives this year. The plan is attached in the below. I'm going to ask my Senior Management Team colleagues to review the 17/18 plan over January and issue our 18/19 plan in time for the end of the financial year. We are also looking to establish a better Directorate intranet presence, which will host the business plan (and these updates too I hope).

Some of the personal commitments for 2018.

Last year, I committed to doing three things – you can make up your own mind whether I was successful:

1) Listen more and be more responsive to what I hear; 2) Become more accessible and visible; and 3) Evolve the directorate's programme of work, rather than resetting all of the fundamentals. These remain important objectives I think. But I'll add three more for 2018:

Support the Year of Young People

2018 is the year of Young People and I think we have something important to contribute, through our climate change work particularly. So I want to make a personal commitment to draw in younger people into the discussion and harness some of the enthusiasm they always bring to good use.

Get serious on our Brexit response.

Towards the end of 2017, the extent of the Brexit task really became obvious. More and more, Brexit will influence our future plans. It feels like the right time to sharpen our focus. I want to get a strong hold of the Brexit impacts and try to bring some renewed energy to our response.

Rename and reform our Directorate

As foretold at last autumn's away day, in 2018 we will need a new name and probably some changes in form to accommodate the growing portfolio of topics that sit in the Directorate. Current lead candidate for a name is: Carbon, Consumers and Utilities Directorate – "CCU", but I'm always open to suggestions.

I want 2018 to be a brilliant year for us. Let's get cracking.



██████████
March 9 at 9:10am

Top notch lecture last night from ██████████, UK Judge of the General Court of the Court of Justice. Great to see lots of GLSS colleagues there. There was a bit of wine afterwards to help us get over the many anxieties that ██████████ highlighted. The main point being the challenge of domesticating and trying to freeze in time a whole system of law with all of its existing complexities and uncertainties (the tangled mass of blue and yellow wires into a tangled mass of red, white and blue wires).

That's a challenge that we are grappling with in the UK Withdrawal Bill and now our own Continuity Bill.

On that, here is this week's Committee screen shot from a challenging DPLRC session

<https://pbs.twimg.com/media/DXnEq5TWAAAUnkB.jpg>

Many more Committee sessions next week



██████████
March 9 at 12:24pm

And we appear in Holyrood funnies:

“By this point it was becoming quite confusing. Everyone was talking incessantly about how much they wanted to scrutinise the bill, but none of them could do so because everyone was too busy talking about scrutiny. It was like watching a group of cartoon characters so desperate to get through a doorway that they rushed in together and got stuck.”

<https://www.holyrood.com/articles/comment/parliamentary-sketch-brexit-under-microscope>

[NAME REDACTED] –

March 13 at 7:37am

The text ██████████ lecture is now available for those who could not make it on Thursday:

http://www.advocates.org.uk/media/2724/forrester_macfadyen_lecture.pdf?utm_source=Scottish+Legal+News&utm_campaign=485dab3942-SLN_30_01_17&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_07336e1dbf-485dab3942-66831873