

## Queen's Speech and Scotland

June 2017

The Queen's speech sets out the UK government's legislative programme for the coming session, which unusually, will stretch to two years. It is a light programme recognising that this is a minority government after the general election. This is also reflected in the number of measures that impact on Scotland.

The focus of the programme is Brexit and the Great Repeal Bill. Secondary legislation will be used to amend domestic legislation and we will need to be particularly vigilant over provisions covering employment rights, health and safety, equalities and regulations our members enforce, particularly over the environment.

A number of the powers coming back from the EU are devolved to Scotland. The PM conceded yesterday that these would require a vote in the Scottish Parliament, although it is still debatable if this constitutes a veto. There will be separate fisheries and agriculture bills to address these issues.

The Trade Bill that will govern future trade treaties could also have devolved consequences, as we have seen in CETA and TTIP. The Customs Bill will create domestic rules for border trade could also matter to Scotland as the income from VAT is now part of the fiscal framework that determines the Scottish budget.

There are also opportunities to address reserved matters in a different way. There is a strong argument, highlighted in a recent Scottish Parliament External Relations Committee [report](#), that Scotland should have a different immigration policy to reflect our labour market requirements.

There are a number of energy bills that impact on the joint competencies over energy policy - not least nuclear safety, smart meters and renewables. However, measures to protect consumers from energy price increases have been watered down even further.

The Space Industry Bill may sound a little Trekkie, but Scotland has a number of sites that could benefit from this investment.

The Data Protection Bill will cover Scotland as this aspect of information law is reserved. It appears that the government wants to retain new EU framework (GDPR) post-Brexit and add in new powers in relation to social media.

A National Insurance Bill will implement the changes announced in the last budget. Elements of the proposed Single Financial Guidance Body, a merger of pensions and other advice services, will apply to Scotland.

On austerity, the government will '*reflect on the message voters sent at the General Election*' and members will be please to hear they '*value the important work that public sector workers.*' We will need to await the autumn budget (assuming the government lasts that long) to see if this converts into investment in public services and pay. Action on issues like zero-hours contracts will depend on the Taylor Report.

There is more detail on all these measures in the background briefing notes [here](#).

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