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## PUBLICATION OF A RETAIL STRATEGY FOR SCOTLAND

I am writing to inform the Committee that the Scottish Government has today published its '[Retail Strategy for Scotland - Getting the right change](#)'.

As I said in my statement to Parliament, the strategy sets out actions to create a strong, prosperous and vibrant retail sector - in line with the vision of the recently published National Strategy for Economic Transformation - and was co-developed with industry bodies, academia, trades unions and retail businesses.

The retail sector is not just important to Scotland's economy, it is important to our high streets in our towns, cities and local communities, and with nearly 10% of Scotland's overall workforce working in retail, it offers many people successful and flexible careers.

A key aim of the retail strategy is to strengthen the vital contribution that retailers make to the economic and social success of our local communities. It recognises that different locations have bespoke needs and that our retail sector has a pivotal role in helping to create and maintain successful places. As such, the strategy contains actions to support retailers to think local, work collaboratively in their communities, and to maximise support to local businesses and supply chains where possible.

In addition Fair work and Skills development are cornerstones of the strategy. The Strategy shows how good quality secure employment and giving employees an effective voice can deliver success for both businesses and their workers. The Strategy also highlights the benefits of retail workers having the right skills to have rewarding and secure careers, and to grow businesses. From strong customer service skills which drive sales and business

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profitability to new digital skills to deliver the evolving retail technology systems – skill development is vital for the future success of the sector and the workforce.

The strategy has a strong delivery focus which requires a collaborative approach, with retailers and trade unions, building on the strong partnership working involved in developing the strategy. I will establish and co-chair a new Industry Leadership Group which will oversee the development and delivery of a number of strategic priorities. These include:

- actions in the National Strategy for Economic Transformation that will directly support the retail sector;
- a Fair Work Agreement for the retail sector that retailers can sign up to, to improve fair work conditions across the sector and contribute to the reduction of in-work poverty;
- a Just Transition Plan for Retail, to protect jobs and contribute to net zero emissions by 2045 through developing local supply chains, reuse of materials and sustainable travel choices by staff and customers; and
- working with Skills Development Scotland and other partners on a Skills Audit and Action Plan, to support reskilling or upskilling as jobs change for example due to technology like self-scan checkouts and online ordering systems.

I will be happy to discuss the strategy in more detail with the Committee when I appear before the Economy and Fair Work Committee's inquiry into town centres and retail.

I hope this update is useful to the Committee.



**TOM ARTHUR**

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