

# Nicola Sturgeon's gracious announcement of her r...

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There have been many [reports](#), unsurprisingly mostly in Scotland, about the sacking of Joanna Cherry MP as SNP Home Affairs spokesperson in Westminster yesterday.

I am aware that Joanna Cherry is a controversial person in the SNP, most especially on the subject of trans rights that have dominated much of the internal politics of the SNP and even the Greens in Scotland of late. I am not entering that debate, but I note the contribution Cherry has to make to it as a lesbian woman.

What I do instead note are four things.

The first is that Cherry is by a long way the most able potential successor to Nicola Sturgeon.

The second is that her popularity was more than confirmed by SNP internal elections last year, where she easily topped the poll.

Third, the SNP leadership have done their utmost to keep Joanna Cherry out of Holyrood by denying her the chance to run for a seat there whilst holding one in Westminster.

And fourth, it is very likely that the SNP is going to need a new leader by the end of March as the storm of the Salmond enquiry most likely engulfs Nicola Sturgeon, with the likelihood that she will be voted out as First Minister by the Scottish Parliament now looking to be very high according to all the sources I speak to.

In that case Sturgeon might have just made a massive political error. It is quite likely she will want her successor to look favourably on her, and be her heir. By pushing Cherry out Sturgeon has made her claim to leadership much stronger. And she is, I acknowledge, no friend of Sturgeon.

There is an old maxim in politics that you should keep your enemies close. Sturgeon forgot that in the case of Alex Salmond. Now she has done it again. If there was evidence that her grip on power might be fading, rapidly, this is it.

If she was wise Sturgeon's own, gracious, announcement of retirement after a gruelling period in office would be appropriate now. I don't see that happening though.

Scottish politics may not be as foregone as many think.

Alternatively, they might get much more radical as yet.

This is to be watched over the next couple of months.