

5 measures SNP must adopt as Scotland stands on brink of recession

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The Scottish Conservatives have set out five key initiatives to boost the country's economy – with Scotland potentially 24 hours away from recession.

Tomorrow's GDP figures will confirm whether or not Scotland entered a second quarter of economic downturn in the first three months of 2017.

If it did, it will mean Scotland is in a technical recession for the first time since the global economic crash, while the rest of the UK experiences growth.

As a result, shadow economy secretary Dean Lockhart has called on the SNP government to adopt pro-business measures, and set out five areas where ministers could begin.

Proposals include restoring business rates parity with the rest of the UK by cutting the large business supplement; boosting tourism by scrapping APD on long-haul flights; and working more closely with businesses towards a more flexible apprenticeship and skills framework.

Building on a Scottish Conservative plan for local growth, he added that the Scottish Government should empower councils to drive growth locally.

And removing the threat of a second independence referendum altogether would reduce uncertainty for firms north of the border.

Mr Lockhart was also critical of the SNP's moves to make Scotland the highest-taxed part of the UK.

Scottish Conservative shadow economy secretary Dean Lockhart said:

“Scotland stands on the brink of recession, and the nationalists have no-one to blame but themselves.

“They can't point to Brexit, because the rest of the UK is powering ahead – this is all on the SNP's shoulders.

“Even if Scotland does escape technical recession in these GDP figures, it's been far too close for comfort.

“That’s why the Scottish Government has to adopt these ideas to kickstart Scotland’s economy, and at least begin to catch up with other parts of Britain.

“The large business supplement has to be cut to ensure our firms aren’t at a competitive disadvantage with the rest of the UK, and there is much that can be done with APD to encourage more visitors on long-haul flights.

“We also want to see ministers work harder with apprenticeships, and allow local authorities more control to drive growth locally.

“And, of course, the easiest thing of all for the SNP to do to help reduce uncertainty is to take the threat of a second independence referendum off the table.

“The Scottish Government could also use the UK-wide Industrial Strategy as a coherent framework to maximise the potential of Scotland’s sectors and to increase our export base.”

The Scottish Conservatives today set out five initiatives which could steer Scotland clear of recession in future:

In the last set of GDP figures, it was confirmed that Scotland was halfway to recession:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/04/scotland-halfway-towards-recession-under-the-snp/> And last week, the Fraser of Allander Institute said whether or not Scotland officially plunged into recession was “in the balance”:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/06/recession-for-scotland-in-the-balance-say-experts/>