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Police Scotland has admitted that it cannot even give an estimate of when the SNP’s botched merger of British Transport Police might take place, new documents reveal.

The official Police Scotland submission to this week’s Scottish Police Authority meeting concludes that it is “not currently in a position to recommend any revised ‘go-live’ date to either the Joint Police Board or the Scottish Police Authority.”

The release of Police Scotland’s submission on BTP coincided with Justice Secretary Humza Yousaf’s u-turn last night when he admitted he would now explore “further options” on the devolution of the transport police service.

The Police Scotland submission states: “It has been agreed in consultation with the Chief Constable and Deputies that there is insufficiently detailed evidence at this point on which to reach a conclusion on a revised ‘go live’ date.”

It adds: “We are not currently satisfied that the substantive matters raised by SPA members or associated issues of concern to Police Scotland have been adequately resolved or that there is sufficient clarity around the future timeline or process to address these issues.”

Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary Liam Kerr said:

“This damning submission by Police Scotland exposes the SNP’s reckless approach to policing in Scotland.

“For months, the SNP refused to listen when they were told this merger would lead to chaos.

“It has taken Police Scotland to warn they can’t even provide an estimate for when the merger might go live for the Minister finally to wake up to the facts.

“There are fair and reasonable plans on the table to devolve British Transport Police, in line with the recommendations of the Smith Commission.

“The Scottish Conservatives stand ready to ensure that can be done while making sure we meet the first test of protecting the public.

“It’s time for the SNP to end the political games and act in the interests of Scottish policing and public safety.”