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27 Aug 2019



The Scottish Conservatives have stated that the publication of the Citizens' Assembly remit cannot disguise its real purpose as a 'talking shop for independence'.

The assembly remit focuses narrowly on Scotland's constitutional arrangements.

The Citizens' Assembly was announced by the First Minister in April, at the same time as cross-party constitutional talks and referendum legislation, all designed to play a role in furthering the case for independence.

In addition, the impartiality of the Citizens' Assembly has already been compromised as an SNP MP referred to it as 'the perfect way' towards independence, and the pollster in charge of picking Assembly members is Mark Diffley who also co-chairs Progress Scotland which aims to 'help prepare the case for Scotland to progress towards independence'.

Adam Tomkins, Scottish Conservative constitution spokesman said:

"The SNP's Citizens' Assembly will never be viewed as impartial – it is simply a talking shop for independence.

"As we've just seen with the GERS figures, the SNP will contort anything to try and support their separatist agenda.

"The SNP believes the constitution is the most important priority but the majority of Scots simply want the Scottish Government to tackle our worsening education system, worst ever hospital waiting lists, crumbling

roads and faulty children's hospital.

"If this assembly is considering options to improve Scotland's future why aren't they considering health, education or climate change?

"The simple fact is that the SNP's destruction of our economy and public

services are the biggest threats to the successful future of Scotland.”