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Nicola Sturgeon must focus on delivering her day job, not threatening a second referendum, the Scottish Conservatives have said today.

Following the First Minister's fresh threat to hold another vote in a speech in California last night, the Scottish Conservatives are highlighting the potential cost of such a plan.

The 2014 referendum cost £17 million to stage.

Meanwhile, a potential legal challenge on the powers to hold a referendum – raised by the First Minister last night – would also run into hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Combined, the cost of this unnecessary constitutional plan would be enough to put 750 teachers through their probation – helping to tackle Scotland's crippling recruitment crisis in the classroom.

Scottish Conservative constitution spokesman Adam Tomkins said:

“There is a price to pay for Nicola Sturgeon's constitutional tunnel vision.

“If the First Minister decides to go to the courts, or ram through her own referendum, millions of pounds of taxpayers' money which could be spent on hiring teachers will instead go on her independence vanity project.

“The wider cost is a government in charge of the NHS, education and public services which isn't focused on improving our quality of life, but is instead campaigning for separation.

“It is a lose-lose situation for the Scottish public. Nicola Sturgeon has dug herself into a hole on the constitution.

“It is time to stop digging and get back to the day job she was elected to do.”

Notes to editors:

- It cost £15.8 million to run the first independence referendum. This was £2.1 million more than had originally been estimated by the SNP (Scottish Parliament, *Question S4W-27304*, 4 September 2015, [link](#)).
- It cost £1.2 million to print and distribute copies of the white paper (Scottish Parliament, *Question S4W-20080*, 11 March 2014, [link](#); Ibid, *Question S4W-20080*, 17 December 2014, [link](#)).
- Teacher probation salary in 2016/17: £22,416 (*The Educational Institute of Scotland*, [link](#))
- The cost of a legal challenge is unclear – however, the Scottish Government spent £136,000 purely to intervene in the Article 50 case at the Supreme Court before Christmas.