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A leading economic think tank has queried the Holyrood budget process after it emerged the Scottish Government identified an extra £220million not included in December's draft budget plans.

In a blog published on its website, the Fraser of Allander Institute said that the sources of the additional funds – found just weeks after the original budget was published – are “as yet unclear”.

The Scottish Conservatives have said that the findings raise questions about the SNP's decision to strike a high tax deal with the Greens.

**Murdo Fraser, Scottish Conservative Finance spokesman, said:**

“This analysis from the respected Fraser of Allander Institute destroys any claim by the SNP that they have to charge people more tax than in the rest of the UK.

“Far from suffering from so-called cutbacks, it turns out the SNP Government had tens of millions of pounds of taxpayers' money squirreled away in their accounts. Instead of returning this to working families in their pay cheques, as they could have, they instead used it to buy off the Greens.

“The SNP could have worked with us to ensure Scotland does not become the highest taxed part of the UK. Instead they chose to do a deal with a Green party which, like the SNP, wants to take Scotland back to an unwanted referendum on independence.

“The SNP did not need to tax people in Scotland more, but it did so nonetheless. This will be bad for the economy and bad for growth.”

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Link to Fraser of Allander report:

<https://fraserofallander.org/2017/02/03/boosting-the-scottish-governments-budget/>

The story is carried in the Sunday Times today:

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/scotland/scots-think-tank-queries-holyrood-budget-boost-t082k3lph>