

SNP being 'dishonest' about policing figures

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The SNP government has been accused of dishonesty, after claiming it was still funding an additional 1000 officers.

Official figures released today showed there were 17,259 police men and women in Scotland, which ministers said was 1025 more than in 2007, meeting the officer-number pledge.

However, it has now emerged that 400 of those officers are in place to deal with Brexit, and not funded by the SNP government.

And a further 300 officers are directly funded by organisations like councils and airports – again not financed by central government.

Shadow justice secretary Liam Kerr urged the Scottish Government to start being honest about the figures, and admit were it not for external support, it simply wouldn't be meeting the 1000-extra officer commitment.

He also said the SNP government should set out how it intends to spend Barnett Consequential cash from justice spending on extra officers in the rest of the UK.

The UK Government has confirmed it will hire an extra 20,000 officers, meaning Scotland should get funding for roughly an additional 2000.

Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary Liam Kerr said:

"It's time the SNP stopped taking the people of Scotland – and police officers themselves – for mugs.

"It can't boast about retaining an extra 1000 officers when it patently isn't stumping up the cash.

"In fact, were it not for the UK Government, councils and other organisations, the nationalists would be miles away from keeping this pledge.

"In contrast, we have a UK Government committed to bringing in thousands of new police officers to make our streets safer and bring criminals to account.

"And when that money comes north in the form of Barnett Consequentials, it will allow the Scottish Government to secure around 2000 extra police men and women.

"That would improve our justice system and ease the strain on overworked officers.

"It's time for the SNP to stop the spin, and commit to beefing up our police force."