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The Scottish Conservatives have called on the SNP to meet the cost of their policy priorities from their existing resources, rather than the pockets of taxpayers.

This week Nicola Sturgeon revealed proposals to increase taxes on those earning over £24,000 in order to pay for public services.

However independent research has shown that public spending in devolved areas is 25% higher in Scotland than in England.

And new analysis from the Scottish Conservatives has shown that the extra cash the Scottish Government gets to spend compared to south of the border is nearly four times as much as the combined cost of policies such as free prescriptions and free tuition.

The research shows that the SNP Government have £4.4billion more to spend on public services than England, yet these freebies cost just £1.2billion.

It has led to calls for the SNP to ensure that Scots get more 'bang from their buck', rather than raiding the pockets of basic rate taxpayers.

Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser MSP said:

"This analysis completely destroys the SNP's argument for hiking taxes.

"The Scottish Government already receives billions of pounds more to spend on public services than equivalent funders south of the Border.

"This should be more than enough to cover the cost of the SNP's freebies, such as free prescriptions and free tuition.

"Yet this SNP Government has been so inefficient in delivering services that we are spending far more than we need to.

"They need to ensure that Scots get far more bang from their buck when it comes to public spending, rather than raiding the pockets of taxpayers.

“There is no reason why hardworking Scots should have to pay for the SNP’s total inability to deliver public services efficiently.”