

Stamp duty black hole would be 3x worse but for UK Government initiative

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
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28 Sep 2017



The SNP's £55 million shortfall in land and buildings transaction tax would be nearly three times higher were it not for a copied UK Government policy, it has emerged.

It was confirmed this week that the Scottish Government's forecast for stamp duty income was 10 per cent off, bringing in £483 million last year.

Now it's been revealed that £100 million of that figure came from a new surcharge on buy-to-let second homes, an initiative the nationalists lifted from the Conservative government in Westminster.

At First Minister's Questions today, Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson slammed the SNP's LBTT rates, which she pointed out were not only blowing a hole in the country's budget, but making it harder for people to buy "their first proper home".

Housing experts have said, with fewer homes selling at the higher end of the market, it's slowing down movement for everyone else.

Those organisations have blamed the rates of LBTT set by ministers, suggesting they are amended to encourage an upturn in the sector.

Revenue Scotland papers confirm that, in 2016/17, more than £100 million was received in tax receipts thanks to the Additional Dwelling Supplement, which sees an extra tariff placed on those buying second homes.

That accounted for more than 20 per cent of all LBTT revenues.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

"The SNP collected £55 million less than it said it would, blowing a hole in Nicola Sturgeon's budget.

"But this shortfall would have been almost three times worse were it not for a policy it adopted straight from the UK Government.

"It's bad enough that the public purse is suffering from the SNP's botched reform of stamp duty.

“But it’s squeezing Scottish families in some parts of the county out of their first home.

“This was the very first new tax administered by this SNP government, but the First Minister has got it completely wrong.

“She should listen to the property and housing experts and make changes to get the market moving.”