

Sturgeon should reveal tax-hike views of her own economic group

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Nicola Sturgeon should reveal the views of her own Council of Economic Advisers in relation to planned tax hikes, the Scottish Conservatives have said.

The nationalists are understood to be planning an increase in income tax as part of this week's budget, forcing tens of thousands to pay more than they would if they were living elsewhere in the UK.

At the weekend, a range of high-profile organisations – including FSB Scotland and Reform Scotland – said the move would be a huge mistake, adding to host of other who have already made their feelings clear.

Even the pro-independence Business for Scotland said it was against whacking up tax.

Now shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser has demanded the Scottish Government reveals what its own Council of Economic Advisers thinks of the planned changes.

The council had been asked previously by the SNP to investigate the behavioural impact of increasing the upper rate of income tax.

Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said:

“Presumably Nicola Sturgeon has consulted her Council of Economic Advisers on one of the biggest financial decisions of the SNP's time in government.

“If so, she should set out exactly what this group has said before Thursday's budget.

“Almost every business group in Scotland – even the pro-SNP ones – have said they oppose income tax rises.

“They say it would be bad for business and bad for the economy.

“The SNP is increasingly isolated on this matter, which is why the views of the Council of Economic Advisers are so critical.

“If it wasn't created for decisions like this, people will wonder why it was

established at all.”