

British Transport Police officer terms and conditions will not be in place by integration date

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
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23 Jan 2018



Deputy chief constable Iain Livingstone has told MSPs on the Justice Committee that “significant issues” with the BTP merger “will not be resolved by 1 April 2019”.

The issues identified by Mr Livingstone included officer terms and conditions, pensions, IT and pre-existing third party contracts.

He said work would continue after integration to resolve them, but when asked by shadow justice secretary Liam Kerr when the issues would be resolved, Mr Livingstone said: “I can’t answer that specifically.”

In response to questioning from Scottish Conservative MSP Maurice Corry, Mr Livingstone added: “This is not a merger of like with like. I can’t give you comfort we have resolved the issue.”

The new chair of the Scottish Police Authority Board, Susan Deacon, also confirmed they were not seeking to appoint a member to the board with experience of the railway industry, as was recommended in a recent report by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland.

Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary Liam Kerr said:

“Iain Livingstone has confirmed today what we all know – which is that the SNP’s reckless plan to merge British Transport Police with Police Scotland by next year won’t work and will cause further turmoil if it goes ahead.

“Tomorrow the Scottish Conservatives will put this issue to a vote, so the full parliament can have its say.

“It is time the merger was put on hold before any more damage is done.

“Police Scotland can’t be expected to manage this major overhaul when it is already in the middle of a leadership crisis.

“Nicola Sturgeon and Michael Matheson must listen for once.”

[SNP can't be trusted on children's health services](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- SNP can't be trusted on children's health services

23 Jan 2018



Pledges the SNP made on NHS paediatric facilities “simply can't be trusted”, after health secretary Shona Robison attempted to defend the closure of children's ward in Paisley.

The SNP government repeatedly promised not to close Ward 15 at the Royal Alexandra Hospital.

However, she confirmed to Holyrood today that those services will now move to the Sick Kids hospital in Glasgow, describing it as being in the “best interests” of children.

In May 2016, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said: “There are no proposals to close that particular ward. I believe in local services with access for local people.”

Shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said it was more evidence of the SNP neglecting paediatric care across the country.

He pointed to similar closures at St John's Hospital in Livingston in recent months.

And in Edinburgh, the building of a replacement Sick Kids hospital is now more than five years late.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said:

“It seems Nicola Sturgeon and the SNP government forgot the promises made to the public just before the 2016 election.

“There are now questions as to whether the public was misled just before that vote on a key election pledge.

“It's more evidence that the SNP simply can't be trusted when it comes to maintaining children's hospital facilities.

“As well as the closure of the ward at the Royal Alexandra, there are ongoing issues with the paediatric inpatient ward at St John's, and ridiculous delays

to the new Sick Kids in Edinburgh.

“Patients cannot trust a word this SNP government says on the NHS.”

[Matheson's police cover-up evidence of 'SNP's secret Scotland'](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Matheson's police cover-up evidence of 'SNP's secret Scotland'

18 Jan 2018



The row over Scotland's justice secretary intervening to stop the country's top policeman returning to work is evidence of the SNP's "secret Scotland", Ruth Davidson has said.

Michael Matheson is under pressure over a meeting he held with the Scottish Police Authority about the future of chief constable Phil Gormley.

Following that meeting, the SPA opted not to reinstate Mr Gormley, and the justice secretary said he would make the minutes of the meeting available to show the public how that sudden decision had been reached.

The SNP government then claimed no minutes were ever taken.

Today, the Scottish Conservative leader raised the issue at First Minister's Questions, adding that a change in the law was required to ensure there was more transparency surrounding the appointment of top police chiefs.

However, Nicola Sturgeon defended Mr Matheson's conduct, saying he'd "acted entirely appropriately".

The Scottish Conservatives have also published a dossier setting out the timeline of the SNP's police leadership crisis.

The document asks whether or not the justice secretary has acted lawfully over the Phil Gormley fiasco, and 20 questions he must now answer on the issue.

It also exposes eight times he claimed he couldn't intervene in disciplinary matters, even though he did exactly that in the case of the chief constable.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

“This fiasco exposes the SNP’s secret Scotland, and it stinks.

“The justice secretary has taken a massive decision to intervene in order to stop the head of Scotland’s police force returning to work.

“But, despite saying he’d be happy to share the details of this, it turns out no written record was ever taken.

“That is a shocking way to run government yet, at First Ministers’ questions, Nicola Sturgeon said it was ‘entirely appropriate’.

“Michael Matheson has repeatedly said he can’t intervene in various disciplinary matters, including some high-profile cases at the end of last year.

“But in this case, an intervention most definitely did take place, but mysteriously the Scottish Government wants to keep its details secret.

“The SNP’s single police force was meant to be the most transparent and accountable public body set up in Scotland.

“These revelations show precisely the opposite has happened.”

To see a copy of the dossier and timeline of events, visit:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/the-snps-police-leadership-crisis/>

SNP’s economic incompetence will cost Scotland £16.5 billion

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- SNP’s economic incompetence will cost Scotland £16.5 billion

17 Jan 2018



Figures published today show that Scottish economic growth is only half that of the UK economy.

Scottish GDP grew by just 0.2 per cent compared to 0.4 per cent across the UK between July and September 2017.

Analysis has also showed that failure to match the performance of the UK economy as a whole between 2007, when the SNP came to power, and 2022 will

amount to a growth gap for Scotland of £16.5 billion in cash terms.

That's based on Scottish Fiscal Commission forecasts that Scotland's economy will grow at less than one per cent for each of the next four years, a fraction of the growth expected for the rest of the UK.

Shadow economy secretary Dean Lockhart said repeated poorer growth for Scotland would result in less cash for school, hospitals and other public services.

Compared to the same quarter in the previous year (representing annual growth) the Scottish economy grew at only one-third of the rate of the UK. Scottish GDP grew 0.6 per cent compared to 1.7 per cent for the UK in that time frame.

Scottish Conservative shadow cabinet secretary for the economy Dean Lockhart said:

“Scotland's economy has under-performed the rest of the UK for the entire decade that the SNP has been in power, at a cost of £16.5 billion.

“According to the Fraser of Allander Institute such low trends in economic growth for Scotland have not been witnessed in 60 years.

“This is Nicola Sturgeon's mess; but her only answer is to blame Brexit and raise taxes.

“Sturgeon's policy of making Scotland the highest-taxed part of the UK will only make matters worse.

“Simply put, the SNP failure to grow our economy is directly responsible for less money for schools, hospitals and public services.”

[Revealed: The 25% of Scotland's stations where trains are more likely to be late than on time](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Revealed: The 25% of Scotland's stations where trains are more likely to be late than on time

16 Jan 2018



The monthly ScotRail Performance Update has shown that in 19 terminal stations across Scotland, the trains are more likely to be late than on time.

This means that 25% of the 77 terminal stations on the ScotRail network trains are late more than half of the time.

The worst performing station is Milngavie with only 27.5 percent of trains arriving on time, followed closely by Largs at 31.2 percent and Ardrossan Harbour at 35.8 percent

The revelations follow the publication of a consumer report showing that ScotRail was awarded an overall satisfaction rating of only 51 percent, the lowest among all train companies operating in Scotland.

Commenting on the findings, Jamie Greene, Scottish Conservative transport spokesman said:

“This is another depressing performance from ScotRail.

“We all know the state of Scotland’s rail service is simply not good enough, and ultimate responsibility lies with the SNP.

“Commuters who rely on ScotRail’s services are already aware of this terrible record but passengers from these stations will be particularly angry.

“People need to get to work on time and Scotland’s economy needs a transport system that’s fit for purpose.

“The SNP has failed to keep ScotRail on track and provide an efficient service for the travelling public.”

ScotRail Performance update –

<https://www.scotrail.co.uk/performance-and-reliability>

The table shows the percentage of ScotRail services that arrive at their location on time, within 1 minute of the timetabled time.

	Dec-Jan 2018 % of all trains that stopped at this station on time
Arbroath	39.9
Ardrossan Harbour	35.8
Aviemore	41.1
Balloch	48.6
Bathgate	48
Carnoustie	39.5
Dalmuir	46
Edinburgh Waverley	49.4
Elgin	48.3

Girvan	38.4
Helensburgh Central	47.3
Inverurie	47.3
Lanark	45.1
Largs	31.2
Markinch	42.1
Milngavie	27.5
Patrick	48.4
Paisley Canal	43
Whifflet	49.1