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- SNP's economy chaos to cost Scotland £1.7bn

31 May 2018



Scotland's public services are set to suffer to the tune of £1.7 billion over the next five years, official figures confirmed today.

The gaping hole was revealed as it was confirmed the SNP is on course to collect significantly less in tax revenues than it had anticipated.

The Scottish Fiscal Commission forecast also showed there is an immediate £220 million gap to plug in this year's budget in comparison to the projections set out in February.

And GDP figures have also been revised down. Scotland's economic growth is now not expected to exceed one per cent until 2024 at the earliest.

The plummeting performance of Scotland's economy could mean even more tax rises, increased borrowing and further cuts to public services to fill the gap.

Shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said the devastating statistics were the latest indictment of the SNP's economic negligence.

The new figures include revised projections on income tax, business rates, LBTT, landfill tax and the new Air Passenger Duty.

Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said:

"This is the most damning evidence yet that the SNP is unfit to run Scotland's economy.

"The consequences of tax hikes, poor growth and low productivity look set to cost public finances hundreds of millions of pounds.

"Not only is this bleak news for the future, it also leaves an immediate hole in Scotland's budget of more than £200 million.

"Unless the SNP government sorts this out, the consequences could be even deeper cuts to public services.

"That means schools, hospitals and infrastructure could all take a serious hit.

“The SNP has obsessed with the constitution for years now, and we can see the impact of its neglect on areas like the economy in these figures.”

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31 May 2018



Nicola Sturgeon is more interested in appeasing independence diehards annoyed at her separation blueprint than dealing with key devolved issues, the Scottish Conservatives have said.

At today's First Minister's Questions, Ruth Davidson asked why the SNP government was ignoring matters like health, education and justice in favour of defending last week's widely-criticised Growth Commission.

The Scottish Conservative leader pointed out that, just yesterday, Ms Sturgeon issued seven tweets on the document after a series of high profile independence-backers slammed its content.

But she ignored figures this week showing some of the worst waiting times ever in Scotland's NHS, a lower rate of people from deprived areas getting places at university, and rising levels of violent crime and anti-social behaviour.

Today, former NFUS head Jim Walker lambasted the First Minister for her government's failure to pay farmers CAP money on time.

He described the ongoing fiasco as “a national scandal of epic proportions” and “the biggest funding scandal in modern Scottish history”.

And it has emerged that the state of Scotland's fire engines is so poor, Audit Scotland warned there will be an increase in vehicle breakdowns unless the SNP government takes action.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

“In a week where we've seen rising waiting lists in hospitals, fewer poor young people getting to university and violent crime on the increase, Nicola Sturgeon made her priorities perfectly clear.

“Instead of addressing the concerns of patients, students and victims of crime, she chose to spend her time appeasing the diehards of her independence movement.

“These are the important issues that people across Scotland really care about.

“But the only people getting attention from the First Minister are Yes campaigners angry at the independence blueprint who she is desperate to get back onside.

“Scotland’s public services have already suffered at the hands of the SNP government’s independence obsession – that can’t be allowed to happen again.”

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Scottish Conservative analysis of Police Scotland crime statistics shows that anti-social behaviour rose by 5 per cent over the last year.

The figures show that there have been 343,570 anti-social behaviour incidents in Scotland during 2017-18, a rise of 17,794.

In addition, the figures demonstrate that there have been almost 1,000 anti-social behaviour incidents per day across Scotland.

Aberdeen City Council reported the highest increase at 41 per cent, followed by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar at 35 per cent and Aberdeenshire at 34 per cent.

The highest number of incidents took place in Glasgow at 56,337 incidents, representing a staggering 154 incidents per day.

Commenting on these figures, Liam Kerr, Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary said:

“Anti-social behaviour has an extremely negative impact on our communities and can severely affect people’s quality of life, especially the elderly and vulnerable.

“These rising levels of anti-social behaviour clearly indicate that the SNP’s soft touch approach to crime is failing communities.

“It is no coincidence that under the SNP police numbers are falling, police morale is at an all-time low and that police officers are increasingly filling in paperwork rather than patrolling our streets

“There must be no question of abandoning victims of anti-social behaviour or implicitly signalling to the perpetrators that they will be tolerated.

“The SNP must ensure we have enough police officers on our streets to detect and deter anyone undertaking anti-social behaviour, and reassure the public that they will be protected.”

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28 May 2018



Scotland’s First Minister has again talked down the importance of the UK market, hinting that she valued custom with other EU countries more.

In an interview in Brussels, Nicola Sturgeon claimed the European single market was “eight times the size of the UK market”.

This is despite official statistics showing businesses here trade four times as much with other parts of the UK than Europe.

She told the audience as part of her Belgian trip: “It is important for Scotland to trade freely across the UK. It’s vital for the rest of the UK to trade freely with Scotland. But it’s really important for Scotland also to continue to be able to trade freely within the single market. The single market is eight times the size of the UK market, so we shouldn’t have to be in a position where we are having to choose one or the other.”

In the same interview, Ms Sturgeon claimed the Scottish independence referendum was a more pleasant experience than the Brexit vote, something the Scottish Conservatives dismissed as “fantasy analysis”.

And she admitted to keeping in touch with predecessor Alex Salmond, who’s

come under severe criticism for continuing to work for Kremlin-backed TV station Russia Today.

She said: “The last time I spoke to him was probably a couple of weeks ago, but what I last said to him I can’t remember.”

Addressing last week’s independence blueprint, she described points around currency as “recommendations” rather than SNP policy, distancing herself from some of the findings.

Scottish Conservative MSP Annie Wells said:

“It’s plainly misleading to talk of the European single market in this way.

“The SNP government’s own figures prove that the importance of the UK single market – the very one the nationalists want to destroy – is four times more important than the EU.

“For Nicola Sturgeon to make out like the independence referendum was a joyous occasion in comparison to Brexit is also fantasy analysis.

“The behaviour throughout that campaign, and since, from some of her most fervent supporters was appalling, and the SNP would do well to confront that.

“After the car crash of the independence blueprint last week, it’s also no surprise to see Nicola Sturgeon distance herself from some of the findings.

“The SNP was too afraid to talk up the report when it came out, and now it’s begun the lengthy process of backing away altogether.”

[SNP “dragging Scotland back to the arguments of the past”](#)

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25 May 2018



Ruth Davidson has today reacted to the publication of the SNP’s independence blueprint, saying it is time for the Nationalists to move on from the “arguments of the past”.

The SNP’s latest independence plan, published today, has revealed that multi-billion cuts would be required after independence – something the pro-UK

parties warned about prior to the 2014 independence vote, but which the SNP refused to accept.

The Scottish Conservatives are today calling on the SNP to “focus on the day job”, rather than constantly re-heat the independence debate.

The paper also confirms that the SNP would no longer support a monetary union with the rest of the UK after independence – in another u-turn from 2014.

Ruth said today:

“More than four years ago, the SNP delivered an independence blueprint which they claimed was the final word. Today, they are telling us to ignore the old version and have instead produced an entirely new manual which we’re expected to believe is credible.”

“One thing hasn’t changed: none of it adds up.”

“People in Scotland have had enough of Nicola Sturgeon grand-standing on independence. They want all politicians to focus on the here and now – improving school standards, ensuring fair funding for our NHS and building a Scottish economy that works for us all.”

“This is just the latest in a long line of attempted re-starts of an independence debate Nicola Sturgeon promised would be settled for a generation.”

“More and more Scots are waking up to the fact that, for the First Minister, it is independence first and everything else a long way behind.”

“The people of Scotland deserve a government at Holyrood that is focussed on the day job, not a First Minister constantly grandstanding in an attempt to drag Scotland back to the arguments of the past.”

Today’s paper claims that an independent Scotland would start life with a deficit of 5.9% – and proposes reducing this to 2.6% within ten years.

Even using these figures – which the Scottish Conservatives do not accept are accurate – this would require savings equivalent of £27.1 billion over ten years to Scottish public services.

On the cost of the new independence plan, Scottish Conservative shadow Finance Secretary Murdo Fraser added:

“This is the price that the SNP is prepared to pay in order to break up Britain.”

“It would be cost felt in every ward, in every classroom and on every street in Scotland. It is austerity on stilts.”

“Nicola Sturgeon has ducked and dived on this report. She must now spell out whether she’s happy to inflict this cost on Scotland purely so she can have a shot at history.”

“We will do all we can to fight against a second independence referendum in order to save our NHS and our schools from the SNP’s ideological obsession.”