

Earn 24k – pay more under the SNP

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The Scottish Conservatives have hit out at SNP proposals to increase taxes on those earning over £24,000.

At First Minister's Questions, party leader Ruth Davidson also challenged Nicola Sturgeon to do more to support economic growth – amid further evidence that the SNP is failing to meet its own commitments.

Today's tax discussion paper issued by the Scottish Government proposes higher rates of income tax for basic rate taxpayers – breaking a central SNP manifesto pledge not to do so.

And while the SNP is now backing higher taxes, it has failed to follow through on two key economic commitments.

New freedom of information questions show that its £500 million Growth Fund is still to issue a single penny to Scottish firms, a year on from its inception.

The SNP has also missed a deadline to announce its new Strategic Board for Enterprise and Skills by the end of October.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson MSP said:

"We support a competitive tax regime because we believe that will develop Scotland's economy – boosting the tax income we need for our schools and hospitals.

"We don't think it's right that every Scot earning over £24,000 should have to pay more.

"The SNP has its priorities all wrong. Just this week we learn that its £500 million Growth Scheme – announced a year ago – is still to distribute a single penny.

"Furthermore, it has failed to meet a pledge to set up a new Strategic Board to take forward its plans on Enterprise and Skills by the deadline.

"The First Minister wants to start a debate about raising taxes. She would be better off focusing on her own plans to boost the economy."

Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser added:

"The SNP is trying to face both ways and simply risks satisfying nobody.

"None of the tax raising plans they've announced today will increase public spending by a huge amount – but they will all add to the growing perception

that Scotland is a high tax country.

“Just as she did with her ill-judged plans for a second referendum, Nicola Sturgeon has rushed ahead with this plan without taking account of the evidence or the facts.

“The Scottish Conservatives will take a measured approach on tax, with sustainable economic growth at its heart.”