

Police chief had £53k tax bill settled from public purse

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A senior police officer had their personal tax bill worth £53,000 settled by the tax payer, an Audit Scotland report has revealed.

The same deputy chief constable – who isn't named – also received £49,000 in relocation expenses.

Neither payment was properly disclosed by the Scottish Police Authority, which has been severely criticised in today's report.

The SPA was also criticised for appointing three temporary senior members of staff at a cost of £344,000.

The report stated that, even if the SPA does eventually achieve financial balance in 2020/21 as it predicts, it "may then move back into a position of annual deficits due to unaddressed recurring cost pressures".

It's the latest crisis to beset policing in Scotland, after a raft of suspensions and resignations of senior staff over the past year.

Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary Liam Kerr said:

"This report could lead some to think the SPA has been behaving like some kind of dodgy offshore tax haven.

"People will be astonished that senior police officers are having their tax liabilities settled by the tax payer.

"And they'll be incredulous that none of this was properly declared.

"One of the driving forces behind setting up a single force was to improve transparency and accountability.

"Instead, things seem murkier than ever.

"At a time when the public's trust in the management of Police Scotland has been so severely tested, this will only make things significantly worse.

"In a debate just this week I demanded that the SNP government gets a handle on this situation but the call was rejected.

"It must act before the relationship is damaged beyond repair."