

Scottish Conservative conference hears call for 'A Fair Deal for the North East'

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Scottish Conservative MPs, MSPs and councillors have today issued a joint call for a 'Fair Deal for the North East' at the party's conference in Aberdeen.

Politicians from across the region argued that north-east is losing out under Nicola Sturgeon's SNP government.

At the opening of the Spring party conference, Gordon MP Colin Clark said local councils in Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Angus and Moray are losing £100,000 a day in funding.

Research by the party has also revealed that the north-east has lost nearly 500 teachers and 18 schools since the SNP came to power.

More than one in ten GP practices in the area have shut since 2007, and under-pressure local police are reporting 79 anti-social behaviour incidents every day.

Mr Clark was joined by Aberdeen South MP Ross Thomson, Angus MP Kirstene Hair, north-east region MSP Peter Chapman, Aberdeen City Council co-leader Douglas Lumsden and Aberdeenshire Council leader Jim Gifford to make the case for 'a fair deal'.

Local businessman Charles Skene, who founded the Skene House apartments in the city, spoke out the "economic tsunami" brought about by business rates hikes and the oil downturn, while hotelier Callum Milne, general manager of the Marcliffe Hotel, bemoaned the SNP's failure to deliver on a 2016 manifesto commitment to halve and eventually scrap Air Passenger Duty.

Colin Clark, Scottish Conservative MP for Gordon, said:

"In 2017, people in the north-east elected Scottish Conservative MPs to six of the seven constituencies in the north-east, but we are still losing out under Nicola Sturgeon and the SNP.

"Our councils are among the lowest funded in the country, losing a combined £40m this year, our health board receives the worst settlement per head of population this year and our police service is overstretched and under-resourced.

"Under the SNP, the number of teachers in our classrooms has dropped by 500, while one in ten GP practices have shut their doors.

"Meanwhile, business rates are up, council tax is up and income tax is up – meaning people pay more but get less.

"It is not good enough, and it is time for a change.

"A fresh government at Holyrood, led by Ruth Davidson, would ensure that the north-east gets a fair deal.

"That's why we have launched this campaign – to fight the corner of the north-east and stand up to the Central Belt and independence-obsessed SNP."