

Scottish Government must cut the waste not raise taxes

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More than £100 million of taxpayers' money has been "chucked in the bin" under the SNP Government, the Scottish Conservatives can reveal today.

It comes as the party begins a new campaign today to "cut the waste" ahead of this week's Scottish Budget.

Nicola Sturgeon is preparing to use that budget to increase taxes on hard working Scots, claiming she needs the money to pay for the SNP's spending plans.

The Scottish Conservatives will instead argue this week that Ministers should avoid tax increases by promoting greater efficiency in the public sector and getting better value for money.

Analysis of the Scottish Government's accounts over the last decade reveals evidence of endemic waste and inefficiency.

Losses totalling £112m were found in the Scottish Government Consolidated Accounts for each of the last ten years as well as Freedom of Information Requests. Individual losses over £250,000 have to be detailed individually.

Some individual examples of these losses include:

- £32,000 lost over the last 3 years by civil servants losing mobile phones and computers
- £2.4m lost after the Scottish Government gave a grant to a firm that promptly went bust
- £440,000 lost in the Prison Service after an IT system was dumped due to 'technical difficulties'

Scottish Conservative shadow cabinet secretary for finance Murdo Fraser said:

"Instead of raising our taxes, the SNP needs to get its own house in order.

"These figures show that, under the SNP, more than £100 million of taxpayers' money has been simply been chucked in the bin.

"The Nationalists have the money to keep taxes down, but thanks to mismanagement and waste, they now want taxpayers to cough up.

“Ultimately, driving up taxes will damage Scotland’s economy, cutting the funds that pay for schools and hospitals.

“There is still time for Derek MacKay to see sense. The SNP promised not to increase the basic rate of income tax. He must honour that pledge this week, or risk losing all credibility.

“Scotland should not be the highest taxed part of the UK. Instead, the SNP should cut the waste and deliver better value for taxpayers.”