

Speed camera income hits 3-year peak

19 Jun 2017



Speed cameras across Scotland raked in more than £5 million last year, the highest since 2014.

The devices across the country – which issue motorists who break the speed limit with automatic fines – resulted in £5,095,100 being paid to courts.

That's £200,000 more than the previous year, and compares to just £4.6 million two years ago.

The statistics were revealed following a Freedom of Information request by the Scottish Conservatives.

Cameras in Tayside, Central and Fife produced the most money – raking in £1.3 million – followed by Grampian and the Highlands and Islands, which generated £1.2 million.

Across Scotland there are more than 200 fixed speed cameras.

Today's statistics show they bring in £14,000 a day.

The Scottish Conservatives said while speed cameras had a role to play in improving safety, it was important they weren't merely seen as cash cows.

Scottish Conservative transport spokesman Liam Kerr said:

"Motorists completely accept speed cameras have a place on Scotland's roads to ensure safe driving.

"But there is a widespread suspicion that these are set up not to reduce speed, but to generate money from those edging over the various speed limits they police.

"The fact that an ever-increasing amount of money is being generated from motorists for whom driving is becoming ever more expensive, will only reinforce this view that they are first and foremost simply being used as revenue-generators.

"Speed cameras should be situated where their presence has a demonstrable positive impact on road safety and accident prevention.

"Too many seem to be placed in areas such as the first clear straight on an A-road, ensuring that those carrying out an appropriate, safety conscious, overtaking manoeuvre but exceeding the speed limit are caught out."

To see the table revealing speed camera income, visit:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Speedcams.pdf>

[Swinney owes parents an apology over school autonomy](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Swinney owes parents an apology over school autonomy

15 Jun 2017



John Swinney should apologise to parents at schools who want to come out of local authority control, following his statement in Holyrood today.

For years, the SNP has hinted it would allow parents, such as those at St Joseph's Primary in East Dunbartonshire, to take control.

However, the education secretary said such a move would not be part of Scottish Government school reforms today, which instead focused on more minor measures.

The Scottish Conservatives have repeatedly called on ministers to give parents the power to take schools out of local authority control if it was in the best interests of teachers and pupils.

The campaign group linked to St Joseph's has also met with First Minister Nicola Sturgeon as part of its drive to make changes to Scottish Government policy.

Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary Liz Smith said:

"We want to see a school system that encompasses more choice and diversity, giving real devolution to headteachers.

"That's because we believe it's the existing system, not our teachers, which is responsible for delivering weaker standards in so many areas of our schools.

"So while we welcome the general principles behind the reforms, we don't think the reforms go nearly far enough.

"They are half-baked and only pay lip-service to real devolution.

"These reforms are not enough to deal with the root cause of the problems faced."

Scottish Conservative West of Scotland MSP Maurice Golden said:

"John Swinney owes the parents of St Joseph's a full apology.

"For two-and-a-half years, the parents of St Joseph's have been strung along by the Scottish Government.

"They've been led to believe that their plans would be given a fair hearing. It turns out those assurances counted for nothing.

"This whole episode has shown up a Scottish Government which doesn't listen.

"The SNP should be ashamed of the way it's handled this from start to finish."

The Scottish Conservatives have repeatedly called for parents to be able to take schools out of local authority control:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2015/02/first-ministers-warm-words-consus-ring-hollow/>

[Sturgeon maintains her indyref2 threat despite poll blow](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Sturgeon maintains her indyref2 threat despite poll blow

15 Jun 2017



Nicola Sturgeon has refused again to remove her threat of a second independence referendum – despite a poll showing 60 per cent of Scots want her to do so.

At First Minister's Questions today, she was urged to formally drop the idea of returning Scotland to another divisive vote.

This morning, it was reported that six in 10 Scottish voters – including a large chunk of Yes supporters – do not want a referendum rerun.

That follows the SNP losing 21 MPs at last week's General Election.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said the First Minister was "in complete denial" on independence, particularly after putting it "at the heart" of her Westminster campaign.

Instead, Ms Sturgeon said she'd "reflect" on the result, but fell short of ruling out another vote altogether.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

"The decisive majority of people in Scotland have no wish for a second independence referendum, and that includes many who voted Yes.

"The First Minister needs to take this off the table – or show herself to be in complete denial.

"The SNP's message on its referendum plan so far appears to be hunker down, attack anyone who asks for a bit of clarity, then hope none of us notice it pressing ahead regardless.

"Within hours of the Brexit vote Nicola Sturgeon pounced to threaten another referendum.

"Yet now, with independence under threat, she's saying it would be wrong to make such a knee-jerk decision.

"That's double standards of the highest order."

This morning, the Daily Record reported 60 per cent don't want another referendum:

<http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/majority-scots-want-want-second-10624842>

Earlier this week, all Scottish Conservative MPs issued a statement telling Nicola Sturgeon to take independence off the table:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/06/new-mps-demand-sturgeon-faces-up-to-indyref2-reality/>

[Now SNP must publish its own damning CAP report](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Now SNP must publish its own damning CAP report

15 Jun 2017



The SNP has been urged to change its mind about keeping secret a damning report into the farmer payments fiasco.

Earlier today, Audit Scotland revealed it would be 2018 “at the earliest” before the Common Agricultural Payments crisis was sorted, and warned of further problems for farmers across the country.

However, the Scottish Government also has its own report into what went wrong, and has again confirmed its intention not to publish it.

Answering a question from Scottish Conservative MSP Finlay Carson, rural affairs secretary Fergus Ewing merely said “publishing such detail could compromise the security of the CAP payments IT platform”.

He added that “improvements identified in the report are already underway” and that his officials were working with the company behind the failed IT system.

MSPs on the rural economy and connectivity committee saw parts of the report – carried out by firm Fujitsu – and described it as “highly critical” and “damning”.

Despite that, and the fact Audit Scotland’s own report was made public this morning, the SNP still wants to keep the findings secret.

Scottish Conservative Galloway and West Dumfries MSP Finlay Carson said:

“Quite frankly, this stinks of a cover-up, particularly when Audit Scotland feels able to make public its own report into this fiasco.

“The SNP has presided over a CAP crisis which has seen Scotland’s rural communities starved of hundreds of millions of pounds.

“Now, in another blow to farmers, the SNP has ruled out publishing a report that might help us all get to the bottom of these many issues.

“That is an insult to everyone in Scotland who cares about our rural communities.

“It’s clear the Scottish Government is more concerned with saving face and playing politics than getting down to the job of serving our vital rural communities.”

Below is a parliamentary question from Scottish Conservative MSP Finlay Carson, and the answer from rural affairs secretary Fergus Ewing:

Finlay Carson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): “To ask the Scottish Government when it will publish the

report by Fujitsu regarding the IT system used to process CAP payments.”

S50-01046

Fergus Ewing:

“The report from Fujitsu contains sensitive commercial information as well as technical detail which has implications for cyber-security – publishing such detail could compromise the security of the CAP payments IT platform and, at this critical juncture in the payments schedule, I’m sure the member would agree that would not be a desirable outcome.

I can reassure the member that improvements identified in the Report are already underway and that my officials are working with CGI, the main IT supplier, and Fujitsu on an incremental improvement programme to provide longer term sustainability, scalability and flexibility to the CAP payment system.”

Audit Scotland blasted the Scottish Government’s failed CAP payments in a hard-hitting report published this morning:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-40274009>

When the Fujitsu report was first shown to MSPs, the Scottish Conservatives urged the SNP to publish it in full:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/05/snp-must-publish-secret-report-wich-blasts-cap-payment-chaos/>

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- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Sturgeon secretly plans to put indyref2 back on the table

14 Jun 2017



The SNP is secretly planning to relaunch a drive for a second independence referendum, despite voters rejecting plans at the General Election last week.

It was reported this morning that First Minister Nicola Sturgeon met with key advisers to discuss the best way of putting separation back on the table.

The Scottish Conservatives have criticised the move, saying it’s time the Scottish Government focused on the day job.

Yesterday, all 13 Scottish Conservative MPs issued a joint statement urging Nicola Sturgeon to “face reality” on a referendum re-run.

Scottish Conservative MSP Murdo Fraser said:

“Nicola Sturgeon has lost the plot.

“Fewer than 40 per cent of voters last week supported the SNP’s reckless plan for a second referendum.

“Yet now we learn she is secretly planning to put it back on the table.

“The First Minister only wants to listen to those in her own party on this issue, and she’s turning a tin ear to everyone outside the SNP who just want a break from her political games.

“Her panicked attempt to refute these plans will fool no-one.

“The truth is that this is a First Minister who has given up representing Scotland and is now focused solely on her discredited and unwanted plan to drag us back to a second referendum.

“Whatever challenges are thrown up by Brexit, none are solved by tearing our own union in two.

“Nicola Sturgeon must focus on schools and our NHS and take her threat of a second referendum off the table now.

“A failure to do so will see what little credibility she has left draining away entirely.”

To see the original Sun story, visit:

<https://www.thescottishsun.co.uk/news/scottish-news/1144651/nicola-sturgeon-top-lieutenants-plotting-indyref2-dream-alive/>

Yesterday, Scottish Conservative MPs issued a joint statement urging Nicola Sturgeon to “face reality” on indyref2:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/06/new-mps-demand-sturgeon-faces-up-to-indyref2-reality/>