

SNP call for Air Passenger Duty to be decided in Scotland

SNP URGE FOR APD DEVOLUTION AS HIKE HITS SCOTLAND

On the day that an eight per cent hike in Air Passenger Duty is to be introduced, the SNP has reiterated calls for Scotland to be treated on par with Northern Ireland to encourage investment for the aviation sector.

Despite APD powers already being devolved to Northern Ireland which, last November, benefitted from a cut by the Treasury, the UK Government refused similar demands set out in the Scotland Bill.

✘ SNP MSP for Edinburgh Western Colin Keir said:

“We must do everything we can to promote investment in Scotland and encourage more direct flights to European and worldwide destinations.

“This air raid by the chancellor is hitting Scotland hard – an eight per cent rise is a real kick in the teeth for Scottish passengers and businesses.

“Our call in the Scotland Bill for this power to be devolved has fallen on deaf ears. We need parity with Northern Ireland and, as it was recommended from the Calman Commission, it should also be devolved to Holyrood.

“As this rise comes into force, it simply highlights why this power should be devolved. The Tory-Lib Dem coalition continues to take the wrong decisions for Scotland.

“While APD rates in the UK are now amongst the highest in the world, many Governments across Europe have reduced or removed

APD completely.

“And Ryanair’s decision to pull routes highlights the repercussions of setting high APD rates.”

SNP Westminster Transport spokesperson Angus MacNeil MP said:

“It is unacceptable that the Treasury has ignored warnings from airport operators and decided to go ahead with this hike that will hit passengers and services.

“The Chancellor ignored evidence that soaring APD levels are having a damaging impact on the sector and wider economy.

“But it is not too late for Westminster to devolve APD, as it has to Northern Ireland. It is time for the Prime Minister to spell out what he meant when he said more powers for Scotland beyond the current Scotland Bill were ‘on the table’.

“Devolution of APD was one of the Calman Commission’s recommendations so people will be asking why it cannot be devolved now?

“Scotland needs the powers to take decisions that will best serve our interests. This does not extend to hiking APD.

“We would use this power to incentivise airlines to provide new direct international routes, providing Scotland’s passengers with enhanced options as they go about their business more freely and more effectively.

“It would also provide a substantial boost to the Scottish economy and create jobs.

“This increase will seriously harm our aviation sector, which is why we need action on this now – the longer the delay, the harder the impact on Scotland.”