

MEP claims SNP is wrong on the economy

A senior Scots MEP claims that five years on from the financial crisis, we must not let misguided policies threaten our economic recovery.

Almost exactly five years since the beginning of the financial crisis, senior Scottish Conservative Euro MP Struan Stevenson will today say in a speech to the East Lothian Conservatives that George Osborne's plan for the economy is working and that those insisting for a 'Plan B' – including Labour and the SNP – have been proven decisively wrong.

Scheduled to speak at Duck's Restaurant in Aberlady, the Euro MP will argue that the UK's economic turnaround has benefitted Scotland and that this progress needs to be safeguarded against those who would threaten sustained economic recovery, using the SNP's pursuit of rampant windfarm development as a case in point.

Struan will tell the gathered audience that:-“The crisis that unfolded over the past 5 years was not only a financial catastrophe. There were dire consequences for citizen across Scotland, the UK and the EU. We suffered a double-dip recession. Many SMEs closed their doors. Unemployment soared. The British taxpayers had to bail out our major banks. Labour's legacy was a nightmare for hardworking people and that is the situation we inherited when the people of Britain voted to kick out Gordon Brown and elect David Cameron as our Prime Minister.

“Our efforts to tackle Britain's crippling debts and soaring

public sector costs were met with cries of derision from the left. At every turn, George Osborne was criticised by Ed Milliband and Alex Salmond. They demanded that we abandon our austerity programme, insisting that we should borrow even more money, creating even greater debt. They called this 'Plan B'. But isn't it interesting how the Labour Party and the SNP have suddenly gone quiet on 'Plan B'?

"Thanks to the efforts and sacrifices of the British people, we are turning the corner. New figures show that unemployment has fallen again and the private sector has created more than 1.4 million new jobs over the past three years. That's why we must stick to our current economic plan. That's why 'Plan A' is the right plan and David Cameron and George Osborne are the right people to get Britain back on its feet."

However, recognising that continued British and Scottish economic recovery is fragile, Struan will make the point that the SNP's programme of burdening businesses and industry with wasteful renewable energy policies puts Scotland's economic turnaround in peril:

"Unfortunately, Alex Salmond seems intent on ploughing ahead with the mad-dash for renewables, despite new figures from Audit Scotland showing that although nearly 300 extra windfarm projects have been consented across the country, the Government isn't even close to meeting their ridiculous target of producing 30 per cent of Scotland's total energy consumption from renewables by 2020. In fact Audit Scotland thinks they will need to approve a further 600 windfarms to get anywhere near their target. That would mean thousands more giant turbines scarring our landscape, blighting people's health and property values, mincing up rare birds and driving up energy prices.

“Digging up nature’s natural carbon capture and storage ecosystems like peat bogs and coastal seagrass meadows and kelp forests to install industrial renewable energy systems is simply releasing millions of tonnes of stored carbon into the atmosphere. In the process of realising the foolish dream of green energy, we are driving up the cost of electricity to new, unsustainable heights that are already impacting on jobs and growth and affecting business and industry.”

Commenting before the speech, Struan said:-“The time has come for Scotland to rethink its relationship with wind turbines. We all stand to suffer from the growing scourge of these wind factories and the damage they do to our landscape, economy and national prosperity, all for a negligible return on energy and environmental benefit.

“We must continue to fight against misguided policies that threaten our sustained economic recovery and instead focus on providing the conditions in which business, industry and hardworking Scots can thrive.”