

# Holyrood wants Westminster to cut back on spending cuts



Nothing very new in this headline is there? Anyone who followed the various messages from the SNP during the recent General Election campaign will have heard this before. Now it is being put direct to the new Conservative Government in a meeting between Deputy First Minister John Swinney and the Chancellor George Osborne later today.

John Swinney will tell George Osborne today that the UK Government could ease the scale and speed of its spending cuts, invest in public services and still achieve its debt and borrowing targets.

New analysis to be published by the Scottish Government today highlights the flexibility the UK Government has to increase spending on public services above its current plans – by £8 billion in 2016-17 then up to £36 billion in 2019-20 – and still meet its Charter for Budget Responsibility targets.

That would allow a total of £93 billion of additional UK investment over the next four years as a whole when compared to current UK Government plans, providing up to £7 billion in additional investment for devolved public spending in Scotland.

John Swinney said before the meeting: “Our limited tax powers make it impossible for the Scottish Government to fill the gap being created by the Chancellor without taxing those who are already taking the brunt of the cuts.

“The threat of further cuts hanging over Scotland underlines the need for more powers to be devolved through the Scotland Bill including employment policy, the minimum wage, welfare,

business taxes, national insurance and equality policy – the powers we need to create jobs, grow revenues and lift people out of poverty.”