

Conservatives say Scottish Government must deliver on the right priorities

As The Scottish Government gets ready to announce its programme for government later today the Conservatives call upon them not to be distracted by “self-serving” constitutional wrangling.

Leader Douglas Ross believes both governments must work together in Scotland to help people navigate the cost-of-living crisis in the months ahead, and insisted the nationalist coalition’s bid to hold a referendum next year is ‘the wrong priority at the worst possible time’.

Instead, Mr Ross wants the Programme for Government to focus on the following five areas:

- **An extensive support package to help Scots deal with soaring prices**, including reallocating the £20m earmarked for Indyref2 to those receiving the Scottish Child Payment.
- **Growing the Scottish economy** by measures such as reinstating business rates relief, freezing the rates poundage for the current financial year and pausing introduction of the workplace parking levy.
- **Rebuilding public services**, including measures to tackle NHS treatment delays and court backlogs, and dropping plans to set up a £1.3billion National Care Service and

using the money to improve local social care provision.

- **Empowering our communities to recover** by giving greater funding and powers to councils, improving transport links and introducing initiatives to help those in rural areas and the islands.
- **Building for the next generation** with a focus on improving education – including establishing a national tutoring programme and replacing Curriculum for Excellence – and a raft of environmental measures.



Scottish Conservative leader Douglas Ross on a walkabout in Davidson's Mains with local candidate James Hill ahead of the 2022 local government election PHOTO ©2022 The Edinburgh

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Mr Ross said: “No one should be under any illusions about how tough the coming winter will be for people across the country, primarily because of soaring global energy costs.

“It’s essential that both the UK and Scottish Governments work together to help ease the unprecedented burden on household budgets.

“I know it will be the top priority of the new Prime Minister to add to the £37 billion in support already provided by the UK Government. But the Scottish Government must do its bit to help too and have a laser-like focus on the cost-of-living crisis.

“The last thing Scotland needs right now is for the SNP-Green government to waste time and money on a self-serving push for another divisive independence referendum next year. It is entirely the wrong priority at the worst possible time.

“Nicola Sturgeon should drop this reckless plan and reallocate the £20million earmarked for it in the form of an extra £200 payment to families receiving for the Scottish Child Payment. That’s just one of several measures I’d like to see her government introduce to help vulnerable families and individuals.

“Businesses will also suffer from the financial squeeze, so Nicola Sturgeon should be reinstating business rates relief and freezing the rates poundage to provide pandemic-level assistance.

“Scotland’s public services are toiling too, so it’s time to rewrite Humza Yousaf’s flimsy Covid Recovery Plan and drop plans for a costly, centralising National Care Service and redirect that £1.3 billion to improve local social care.

“If the Scottish Conservatives were delivering this Programme for Government, we would also empower local communities, by

properly funding councils, and help the next generation by reversing the decline in education standards and protecting the environment.

“At this enormously challenging time, the Scottish Parliament must focus on the right priorities – not the nationalists’ skewed ones.”



The Conservatives used this slogan when launching their local government election campaign in March 2022. A while after the photo call began the typo was noticed and the placard was put aside. PHOTO ©2022 The Edinburgh Reporter