

First Minister freezes council tax next year

The First Minister, Humza Yousaf, has frozen council tax in Scotland next year.

He said at the SNP annual conference in Aberdeen: "Council tax bills in Scotland are already hundreds of pounds a year lower than they are in England.

"We're committed to fundamentally reforming local taxation and we will re-energise our work to do that. We have consulted on what level the council tax should be next year. And conference, we have reached our decision. I can announce to the people of Scotland that, next year, your council tax will be frozen. That's the SNP delivering for people when they need it the most."

The City of Edinburgh Council leader, Cllr Cammy Day issued this statement on Twitter:

@Humzayousaff Freezing council tax is clearly the easy option at a time when Councils are under immense pressure to deliver services. I'd ask you meet with me and other council leaders asap to discuss the best way forward. (Verity house agreement ??) [@COSLA](#) [@Edinburgh_CC](#)

– Cammy Day (@cllrcammyday) [October 17, 2023](#)

Cllr Day also told The Edinburgh Reporter: "I am surprised that the SNP are consulting on increasing council tax and allowing different rates on higher bands, and then without the

knowledge of their Green government partners announce a council tax freeze. This must have nothing to do with the failings of the SNP/Green government and impending general election.

“What councils across Scotland need is to be fairly funded and to abide the terms of the Verity House Agreement – none of which have happened. I understand an emergency meeting with COSLA leaders will take place tomorrow prior to meeting Scottish Government ministers. It flies in the face of the Verity House Agreement to work together and comes out of the blue. The government continue to meddle in local government decision making having previously frozen and capped council tax powers, continuing to centralise and remove local accountability from councils across Scotland.

The Scottish Government consultation was announced in July 2023 [and the details are here](#).

The details of the Verity House Agreement [can be found here](#).

A COSLA Spokesperson said: “We have just heard the announcement made at the SNP Conference in relation to freezing council tax. We were unaware of it in advance. This has longer term implications for all councils right across the country, at a time when we know there are acute financial pressures, and where we are jointly looking at all local revenue raising options.

“We will need to consider the implications for COSLA and Local Government with our members when we get more of the detail. This will also need to be examined against the principles of the recently signed Verity House Agreement.”

Liberal Democrat Scottish Affairs spokesperson Christine Jardine said: “All conference long the SNP could not make it any clearer. They care more about independence than they do your job, your family’s health or your children’s education.

“Where was the action on the cost-of-living crisis? Where was hope for patients with long Covid? Where was action to tackle thousands of sewage spills in Scottish rivers? This was a missed opportunity to set out an agenda that the whole country could get behind.

“Scottish Liberal Democrats will continue to press for action to tackle the cost-of-living crisis, long NHS waits and the state of our natural environment”

Economy spokesperson Willie Rennie MSP added: “People trust Humza Yousaf’s SNP on tax as much as they trust Liz Truss.

“One day the SNP are the evangelists for tax hikes, the next the stout defenders of a real terms tax cut.

“Just like Liz Truss this is an unfunded tax cut. There is no explanation as to how already broken public services will be funded.

“The government is split too with the Greens opposing the measures.

“This government is divided, volatile and incompetent just like Liz Truss’ was.”

Shadow Scottish Secretary Ian Murray said: “The SNP’s lack of direction is laid bare in this jumble of screeching u-turns and tired old pitches for independence.

“Fresh out of ideas for 2023, Humza Yousaf seems to have reached for the SNP’s 2007 manifesto for inspiration – but after 16 years of broken promises Scots aren’t buying it anymore.

“Humza Yousaf has told his party to focus on the ‘why’ rather than the ‘how’ of independence, but the truth is he’s not got a real plan for either.

“This chaotic and divided SNP government cannot deliver for

Scotland, but change is possible with Labour.

“Labour will deliver a New Deal for Working People, a publicly-owned GB Energy company based here in Scotland, and an end to the division and decline of the SNP and the Tories.”

Scottish Conservative leader Douglas Ross said: “This speech to a slimmed-down nationalist faithful confirms that Humza Yousaf’s number one priority will always be independence above all else.

“Other announcements, such as on the NHS backlog and council tax, aimed at attempting to clean up the SNP’s previous mistakes were all sidelined by Humza Yousaf’s nationalist obsession. It is clear that no other issue will get a look in during the SNP’s campaign at the next year’s General Election.

“Humza Yousaf is all too happy to waste more taxpayers’ money on promoting independence despite Scots struggling with a global cost-of-living crisis. It is completely the wrong priority for Scotland at this time.

“Our country cannot afford the nationalists spending five more years talking about their constitutional obsession at every turn, but that is what Humza Yousaf’s speech confirmed they are hellbent on doing.

“In seats from the South of Scotland to the North East, it is only the Scottish Conservatives who can beat the SNP, stop Humza Yousaf obsessing about independence and ensure the focus gets back onto the issues that really matter”

EDINBURGH

In Edinburgh the council tax rates were increased in February 2023 to these levels when the council tax was increased by 5%:

• Council Tax Bands

▪ A	£965.13
▪ B	£1,125.98
▪ C	£1,286.84
▪ D	£1,447.69
▪ E	£1,902.10
▪ F	£2,352.50
▪ G	£2,835.06
▪ H	£3,546.84