

It really is time that the SNP committed to a Scottish ...

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I was asked by The National newspaper in Scotland to bring forward my column this week. They wanted me to cover the row about Scottish deficits, and the fact that the Institute for Fiscal Studies has attacked the SNP and other parties for their fiscal plans.

I admit I ignored the detail of the immediate post-May plans. There was good reason for that. Scotland has so little control over its own budget at present that arguing over this is a touch meaningless. Given that any post-May government in Scotland will have to balance its budget the fact is that the room for manoeuvre that any party really has is not that big. I instead concentrated on the claim that Sturgeon has made that a deficit would be good for Scotland after independence.

This I had to caveat. Her claim is conditional. [As I noted](#):

To use this argument Nicola Sturgeon has to do something that she has refused to do to date. She has to abandon her commitment to using Sterling after independence. Unless she does that, she's planning on using other people's money to fund a Scottish deficit. London's money, to be precise. And that would make Scotland a microeconomic economy — and as out of control in a crisis as a household without work and with a mortgage is. This is the basis of the microeconomic criticism from the Institute for Fiscal Studies and BBC, and their sense that Nicola Sturgeon's claims do not stack is, to this extent, true. She cannot make the claims she does on deficits and stick to Sterling, and they know it.

It really is time for Sturgeon to get off the fence on this issue. She cannot claim she would manage deficits like any other government and at the same time say she will not have her own currency when having one is the condition for managing deficits, and even for being independent.

The SNP cannot fudge this for much longer.