

Midlothian Council

Labour Group

Midlothian Council Tuesday 15 December 2020 Notice of Motion

This Council notes the Scottish Government's recent announcement of "a package of financial flexibilities and extra funding for councils to address the financial pressures caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic over the next two years".

Whilst we welcome the recognition of the financial crises local government is in we remain concerned that this 'financial package' does not solve the problem.

Only £139m of this package was 'new' money (£49m of which had already been announced). The remainder of the package is only be available if local authorities make full use of the complicated set of 'fiscal flexibilities' set out.

But these fiscal flexibilities are no substitute for a fair funding settlement. This council still faces a perfect financial storm of extra demand for services at a time of substantial loss of income which means impossible choices about the funding of services going forward.

This council notes that £2bn of 'efficiencies' have already been taken out of local government over the last decade. We also know that the financial impact of COVID- 19 will not be confined to the next few months and with Brexit looming the effects of both on the wider economy are going to make the crises in Local Government much worse.

This Council therefore pledges its support for UNISON's campaign and calls on the Scottish Government to Plug The Gap in Local Government finance in the 2021/22 budget to:

- **Reward Local Government Workers** - Local Government workers have been the hidden heroes of this pandemic. Their invaluable contribution to the Covid response should be recognised and rewarded.
- **Secure the long term financial stability of Local Government** – Local Government needs long term stability to protect essential jobs and services for the future. The salami slicing of services needs to stop.
- **Shape Local Government Fit for the Post-Pandemic Future** – It is a matter of fact that a number of roles undertaken by local government workers have changed as a result of the pandemic. These need to be recognised and their job evaluation reviewed as a result.
- **Fully Consolidate the Living Wage** – Deliver on the existing commitment to fully consolidating the living wage for all local government workers across Scotland as committed to through our last pay deal.

Moved: Councillor Stephen Curran



Seconded: Councillor Derek Milligan



30 November 2020