

Local Councillors

Dear Helen,

Many thanks for getting in touch.

I completely agree that these cuts would do lasting damage to the life chances of young people right across the City.

The SNP group will not be supporting them and have today announced a costed plan to reverse nearly £8.5m of these proposals.

This means we'll reverse the full £5.6m planned cut to classroom budgets, restore speech and language therapy services, retain student welfare officers and cancelled the £1.5m cut to inclusive and supportive education to make sure the Council can always provide the best supportive environment for young people with additional needs.

While there's no doubt this budget is challenging, there is no need for these cuts to balance the budget and by announcing our plans now we very much hope that all other parties follow and these services remain intact.

Kind regards,

Adam

Adam McVey
SNP Councillor for Leith

Helen,

Thank you for your letter.

I see that Adam McVey has responded to you - as he states, the SNP Councillor Group share your views on this and in our proposed budget have protected the education budget against those proposed cuts in the Administration's (Labour's) proposed budget.

However, I suspect it will require another group, to also object to these cuts to have any chance of preventing them

Regards and thanks

Stuart

Stuart Dobbin
SNP Councillor for FORTH

Dear Helen,

Many thanks for your email and I would like to start by thanking you for all that you do in terms of representing parents.

We in the Lib Dem Group are fighting as hard as we can to do what we always do which is protect Education. We did this every year for 5 years under the previous SNP/Labour Administration when the SNP happily went about massacring the devolved school budgets and plundering the rest to pay for "free" ipads. Children and schools more then ever need investment and sadly facing £76m+ worth of cuts we are unable to do that but we can and will do what we can to protect the limited resources left. This is a pitiful situation and is the result of years of under funding for local government by the SNP and that needs to change. Council need to be fairly funded so that we are not yearly put into a situation of having to pit residents against each other as decisions have to be made as to where the cuts are going to fall.

Thank you again for taking the time to write to me I really appreciate it.

Kind regards

Cllr Hal Osler / Liberal Democrat / Inverleith Ward

Dear Helen and colleagues,

As my colleague Cllr Hal Osler says, we are absolutely convinced of the need to protect our young people's education and will be doing our very best to protect funding for schools as we vote to adopt the Council budget tomorrow. Wish us luck!

Sanne

Cllr Sanne Dijkstra-Downie
Liberal Democrat councillor, Forth Ward

Thank you for this.

It is a great support for those of us who are pushing back against cuts. I will make sure that my Labour group colleagues are aware of your views as expressed in the document. I will make a decision on how I will vote on Thursday once I have seen the final proposals coming to the meeting but I can assure you that I will be standing up for not only education but for every vital service which the city of Edinburgh provides.

Best wishes and solidarity
Katrina

Katrina Faccenda
Labour Councillor for Leith Ward

MSPs

Dear Trinity Primary School Parent Council,

Many thanks for your email. I assist Ben in his constituency team, and he has asked me to respond to you, on his behalf.

Ben is grateful to you for sharing your views with him on the important matter of our city's education services. As your local MSP, Ben shares the Scottish Government's vision for an education system that delivers excellence and equity for all, raises attainment, and works towards the substantial elimination of the poverty-related attainment gap.

This is why the Scottish Government – on a national level – took the necessary steps to ensure that all the additional £145 million of funding provided to local authorities to increase teacher and pupil support staff numbers is spent on its intended purpose, helping to maintain and grow the record numbers of teaching staff already working in our schools. In recognition of the difficult financial context for local councils, the Scottish Government have also provided a total uplift of £793 million for local government in the 2023/24 Budget passed this week.

On a local level, Ben wishes to make clear that both he – as your local MSP – and his SNP councillor colleagues stood firmly against the Labour administration's proposed cuts of over £6.6m to our city's education services. The SNP councillor group recognises the detrimental impact that cutting transition teachers, welfare officers and the vital speech and language therapy service will have on our children and young people. Following the disruption to education caused by the pandemic, ensuring stability and support for our pupils is more important than ever. This is why the joint SNP/Green budget proposal put forward at yesterday's council meeting would have reversed these cuts in their entirety, including the cancellation of the:

- £5.6 million cut to school budgets, protecting funding for our classrooms and encouraging further support to help meet additional needs.
- £400,000 cut to education welfare officers, retaining capacity to support young people in need.
- £370,000 cut to Speech and Language Therapy services, retaining these services to support young people and encouraging schools to use available capacity.
- £1.5 million cut to inclusion and support education in 2024/25, protecting the provision of special schools and allowing parents and teachers to make positive choices with the interest of the young person at the centre.

Ben was hugely disappointed at the news that the SNP and Greens' progressive alternative to the council administration's budget proposals was voted down yesterday by Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat councillors. Sadly, the appalling cuts to our education services will not be reversed in their entirety, as campaigned for by the SNP group. While Ben – as your local MSP – fully understands the difficult budgetary choices faced by local government, he shares the view of his councillor colleagues in Edinburgh that education is a key priority and that any cuts could and should have been avoided.

I hope this information was helpful, and thank you again for your engagement on this important matter.

Joe

Joe Higgins (he/him)
Caseworker | Office of Ben Macpherson MSP
Edinburgh Northern and Leith

Thank you for your email and raising this important issue with me.

My colleague Liz Smith is leading for our group on the budget and has made different proposals. The final decision will be voted on today. I will pass on your concerns to her.

If I can help with anything else please let me know.

Kind regards,
Jeremy

Jeremy R Balfour MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament for the Lothian Region

Scottish Government

Dear Helen Duncan,

Thank you for your correspondence sent on 20/02/2023. Your query will be passed to the relevant area for consideration and has been given a reference number. Please quote this number in all correspondence. The Scottish Government aim to respond, where necessary, as quickly as possible and within the stated timescale as indicated on our website (<http://www.gov.scot/about/contact-information/how-to-request-information/>).

Yours sincerely
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