

News from Scottish Labour



FOR THE MANY NOT THE FEW

SNP MUST INITIATE CROSS-PARTY TALKS TO EMPOWER SCOTLAND'S COUNCILS– BOYACK

The SNP Government must open cross-party talks on empowering Scotland's councils with immediate effect, Scottish Labour has said this morning.

Yesterday COSLA called for more tax-raising powers for Scottish councils faced with financial pressures of around £500m for the coming year.

Even before the economic impact of coronavirus became apparent, Scotland's councils had suffered a decade of underfunding from the SNP government with as much as £898.8m cut from non-ringfenced revenue budgets in real terms since 2013/2014 alone.

Scottish Labour is calling on the Scottish Government to heed the calls of COSLA and empower councils to take the measures needed to tackle the huge financial black hole foisted upon them by the pandemic and chronic underfunding.

Today, Scottish Labour local government spokesperson Sarah Boyack has called on the Scottish Government to open cross-party talks on how to empower Scotland's councils with 'immediate effect'.

Commenting, **Scottish Labour local government spokesperson Sarah Boyack said:**

"Local Councils must be empowered and funded properly to be able to support our communities, not just through the pandemic, but to invest to ensure that the local community infrastructure is in place to support people into work, to revitalise our town centres and neighbourhoods and to invest in education and care services.

"Last month the Accounts Commission highlighted "real concerns" about the financial sustainability of social care and education. The reality is that we've seen the damaging impact of increasing centralisation and underfunding of local government by the Scottish Government during the SNP's time in power. Local government needs to be empowered not micro-managed.

"The Blueprint presented by COSLA offers the chance for a cross-party agreement that our councils need to be empowered with fair funding, long term certainty and more powers to make the decisions our communities need. It is time for the SNP to enter into dialogue with COSLA and other parties to ensure that the micro-managing and cuts to councils end."

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