

‘Plug the Gap’

Notice of Motion

Motion received in terms of Standing Order No 19 on 24 December 2020, proposed by Councillor Joe Fagan, seconded by Councillor Gerry Convery, as follows:-

“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.

Most of this was not ‘new’ money. Most of what was announced in the package is only available if local authorities make full use of the complicated set of ‘fiscal flexibilities’ set out.

These fiscal flexibilities are no substitute for a fair funding settlement. This council still faces a financial perfect 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 Scottish local government over the last decade. Throughout this period South Lanarkshire has had to make savings, reducing jobs and impacting on the services we provide. 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 crisis in Local Government much worse.

This Council therefore pledges its support for the trade union campaign “Plug the Gap” and calls on the Scottish Government to Plug The Gap in Local Government finance in the 2021/2022 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. The government’s £500 for health and social care workers is welcome but many other council workers have made tremendous efforts during the pandemic.
- ◆ **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. We call on the Scottish Government to deliver a fair financial settlement for councils in 2021/2022 to protect services, jobs and the viability of councils going forward.
- ◆ **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.

- ◆ **Fully Consolidate the Living Wage** –Enshrine in law the existing commitment to fully consolidate the living wage for all local government workers across Scotland.”