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Our Reference: 202400437094

Your Reference: Correspondence from East Dunbartonshire Council, Council budget.

11 November 2024

Dear Ann,

Thank you for your email of 17 October regarding local government funding and the particular challenges facing East Dunbartonshire Council. I note the contents of the attached report.

Firstly, the Scottish Government recognises the financial challenges that local government are facing and that local authorities and their employees play a pivotal role in our communities. However, the previous UK Government failed to deliver for Scotland's finances over a sustained period and this has put significant pressure on public finances. Questions about the adequacy of funding must be seen in this context.

Despite the UK Government's austerity, the Scottish Government provided record block grant funding of over £14 billion to Local Authorities in 2024-25, a real terms increase of 2.5 per cent.

The independent Accounts Commission have also confirmed that the Scottish Government provided a real-terms increase to Local Government in this year, as well as in 2023-24 and 2022-23.

Although it is the statutory responsibility of all local authorities to manage and maintain the school estate, the Scottish Government continue to provide East Dunbartonshire Council with significant funding towards its school estate.

For example, through Phase 3 of the £2 billion Learning Estate Investment Programme, the Scottish Government will be providing the Council with significant funding for their priority project, Lenzie Academy. Moreover, through the £1.8 billion Scotland's Schools for the Future Programme, completed Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

Tha Ministearanna h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot



in 2021, the Council received over £10 million towards their three priority school projects: Lairdsland Primary School, Lenzie Meadow Primary School and Holy Trinity Campus. Furthermore, Scottish Government funding is intended to augment - not replace - local authorities' own investment in their school estate.

This evidence does not ignore the challenges councils face locally or the difficult decisions taken to balance budgets but does serve to highlight that where Ministers have had discretion, they have demonstrably prioritised Local Government.

With regards to funding for 2025-26, the Scottish Government is still assessing the impact of the Chancellor's Autumn Budget statement and I will be continuing to engage meaningfully with COSLA, on behalf of Local Authorities, in the coming weeks. As has been the case in previous years, the outcome of that engagement will be published in the Scottish Budget on 4 December 2024 and the Local Government Settlement in the week ending 13 December 2024.

I hope you find this information useful.

Yours Sincerely,



SHONA ROBISON

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