

ERC Leader Cllr Tony Buchanan SNP, has expressed disappointment over funding package as deal slammed as 'the worst ever seen' by many Council Leaders

Posted by RM64 - 30 Dec 2021 11:22

30/12/2021

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News

5 hrs ago

Funding deal slammed as 'the worst ever seen'

By William Brown Reporter

East Renfrewshire Council's leader has expressed his disappointment over the funding package for local services set aside by the Scottish Government in this month's budget.

Councillor Tony Buchanan joined forces with the leaders of Scotland's 31 other councils to unanimously raise concerns over a lack of resources during a virtual meeting of local authority body Cosla.

East Renfrewshire is to receive around £205million from Holyrood in 2022/23, which is an increase of more than £9m, or 4.8%, from its 2021/22 settlement.

However, that is below the rate of inflation, which stands at just over 5%.

Officials at Cosla said an urgent meeting with First Minister Nicola Sturgeon was needed to discuss the funding package for Scottish councils.

Alison Evison, Cosla president, described how many council leaders have described the latest settlement as “the worst they had seen.”

She said: “Council leaders were clear that we could not sit back and simply accept this – and there was a real strength of feeling that enough is enough.

“Not only do leaders consider that we have been given a real-terms cut, the local government settlement makes no provision for pay, inflation or increased demand for services, nor for the increased burden of National Insurance contributions.”

Gail Macgregor, Cosla’s resources spokeswoman, added: “All 32 of Scotland’s council leaders were clear that they owe it to their communities to take the case for a better financial settlement directly to the First Minister as a matter of urgency.”

However, the Scottish Government has defended the settlement.

A spokesperson said: “Despite the continued economic uncertainty facing us all as a result of the pandemic, we are treating councils fairly and providing a real-terms increase of over 5% to local authority budgets for the coming year.

“Councils themselves asked for financial flexibilities this year, such as the ability to take their own local decisions on raising council tax, which we were pleased to provide.”

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