

Anti cuts campaigners want council to honour pledges



The most vulnerable people in Edinburgh, the elderly and schoolchildren are among those who would be badly affected if the City Council goes ahead with its 2014-2015 budget proposals on 13 February, say local campaigners who will be lobbying the budget meeting later this week.

Edinburgh East Save Our Services, along with other community groups and trade unions, will demonstrate at the City Chambers from 8.30am on Thursday to urge the SNP/Labour coalition council to drop its austerity plans, which campaigners fear will devastate already hard-hit local services and target local people already suffering under the Westminster government's benefit cuts. Councillors will be discussing 'savings' of £36 million in the next year alone, resulting in increased care costs for the elderly and disabled; reduced provision for disabled people; increase in class sizes; and the closure of school libraries.

Costs will also be saved, say the council, in more competitive procurement of outsourced services, but campaigners argue this will only result in even lower wages and worse conditions for staff of council-funded organisations. It is estimated that these workers will see a 25 per cent drop in their wages by 2018.

Anti-cuts campaigners are asking councillors to honour their pledge when they came into office in 2012 to reduce poverty and improve services in the city. They will be urging them in particular to stand by their moral duty to defend the vulnerable and to consider other ways of making savings, such as reviewing the salaries of their top earners; revisiting the

higher levels of the council tax; rescheduling the repayment of interest on PFI contracts; and imposing a tourist tax on city hotels and businesses.

[More information from the group's website.](#)