

Councillors of all parties call for funding overhaul

City councillors have called for a complete overhaul of how the Scottish Government funds local authorities – after fears the Capital is “doomed” by cuts from Holyrood.

With councillors putting together plans to cut around £47m from the 2019/20 budget, Green councillors have demanded changes in the financial relationship between The Scottish Government and the City Chambers.

In December it was revealed that Edinburgh is set to receive the lowest funding per head in its settlement from The Scottish Government – put down in part to the high proportion of pupils at private schools in the Capital.



Cllr Gavin Corbett

Green finance spokesperson Cllr Gavin Corbett said: "The Scottish Government has to come up with a much improved offer of funding for all local councils before it sets its final budget next month. Secondly, it has to commit to real and meaningful reform of council funding and finally ditch the council tax as promised by the SNP way back in 2007.

"But thirdly, it has to look long and hard at why Edinburgh is bottom of the pile in funding. As a capital city Edinburgh has extra pressures and costs which simply are not reflected in the way money is allocated between councils.

"I have calculated that a simple change in what is called the 'cost floor rule' would leave Edinburgh almost £50m better off and deal with the budget abyss for next year. Edinburgh residents expect us to carry the funding fight to both Scottish and UK governments and that is what I believe must be done."



Councillor Gordon Munro

The blame has also been pointed at Holyrood by Labour Cllr Gordon Munro, who believes cuts will continue without drastic changes.

He said: "Audit Scotland makes it quite clear that we need to change the way that local government is financed. We are at breaking point here as a city and as a council.

"I don't see any evidence of pressure being applied to the Scottish Government to change. I think it's cuts from now on unless something changes. We are doomed unless we change this."



Cllr Eleanor Bird (SNP) Forth Ward

But SNP Cllr Ellie Bird, said Westminster should take responsibility for squeezing funding to the Scottish Government.

She said: "It's also vital that we discuss the ideologically-driven austerity that has been handed down by successive Westminster governments costing Scotland more than £2 billion since 2010.

"As a direct result of this, both local and national government in Scotland faces significant financial challenges in meeting funding priorities. Despite the Tory chancellor's claims, his austerity agenda and the pain it's causing in our communities is not over."