

Balfour highlights need for Citizens Advice funding

Inadequate funding of local authorities could lead to closure of essential advice services.

Lothians MSP Jeremy Balfour criticised the Scottish Government for the inequality of funding given to local authorities, arguing that Citizen Advice Bureaux are in danger of closing or reducing services.

The Scottish Conservative MSP voiced his concerns on Wednesday during a debate held in the Scottish Parliament to recognise the work of the network of Citizens Advice Bureaux across Scotland.

In his speech Mr Balfour said that since 2013-14 the amount of money that The Scottish Government gives to local authorities has fallen by £276 million, while the budget granted to The Scottish Government by the UK Government has increased by more than £1 billion.

Mr Balfour said: "The work of Citizens Advice Bureaux in providing free, impartial and confidential advice to all is essential within communities across Scotland, including Edinburgh.

"Bureaux rely on funding from their local authorities, however, the Scottish Government is both underfunding local authorities and distributing this money unfairly between council areas.

"If the SNP do not get their act together and start providing local authorities with adequate funding, there is a real and

devastating danger that Citizens Advice and other essential support services will have to close.

“The SNP do not lack an appropriate budget, this has been given to them by the UK Government, they lack an effective system to fairly distribute this funding – and that needs to change.”