

Council funding gap rises to £80 million

An extra £10 million of cuts will need to be identified by The City of Edinburgh Council next year, it has emerged, as councillors prepare to make “difficult” spending decisions.

The increase brings the gap in the council's 2023/24 budget to £80 million, a significant rise from the £70 million reported to the finance committee just last month.

The latest estimate for looming cutbacks was revealed in the City Chambers on Thursday at a full council meeting.

Lib Dem leader Kevin Lang said elected members will have to face up to difficult decisions in the coming months in the lead up to February's budget setting when £80 million of savings will be needed.

It is understood a report explaining why the funding gap has increased will go before the finance and resources committee in November.

Cllr Lang said council group leaders have begun meeting weekly in preparation and he took aim at SNP and Green members for not being present at a session held on Monday.

“Does [the council leader] not agree with me, particularly given the connections that those two parties have with their counterparts at Holyrood, the importance that they

themselves see and hear the consequences of the decisions of their parties because of this and so many other councils in Scotland?"

Responding, Labour council leader Cammy Day said: "I absolutely share your concerns, the business plan is an officer document that's been brought forward to leaders to try and shape the next vision of the council for the next five years and more.

"It's hugely disappointing that the SNP have failed to take part in any of these discussions, to give fairness to the Green Party they have taken part in some but didn't turn up this week.

He added: "We stand here as the lowest funded council in Scotland as Councillor Lang highlighted £80 million of cuts – probably the worst cuts I've seen in my time in this council and it's shameful that the SNP and Greens running the government won't come to take part in their party's failures to fund the capital city."

by Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter

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