

Council leader writing to Michael Gove about lack of levelling up funding

Midlothian council leader, Kelly Parry, is to write to Levelling Up Secretary Michael Gove to express her 'disappointment' at the county being ignored for a third time.

The council has missed out on funding from three rounds of the UK Government's Levelling Up scheme despite being the fastest growing local authority area in Scotland.

The latest funding round of £112million in Scotland was announced this week with monies awarded to projects which had already been submitted in the previous round, so that councils were unable to submit new applications.

A meeting of councillors has agreed to send a letter to Mr Gove to voice their frustration at being overlooked again, urging him to consider them if any funding becomes available.

Cllr Parry said: "Midlothian is the fastest growing council in Scotland with a growing population and an urgent need for investment infrastructure.

"Midlothian received no funds from Level Up One or Level Up Two and, in fact, the UK Government did not even give us a chance to apply for funding from Level up Three. which is incredibly disappointing.

"Not a single penny has come to Midlothian and every

Midlothian resident and taxpayer should be outraged.”

Cllr Derek Milligan, Labour, said it appeared the county was being penalised because it was the fastest growing in Scotland.

He said: “It seems that people think there is a lot of work in the area, a lot of growth in the area so the council does not need money. It is the exact opposite actually, because we have that growth we need more support but in reality we are being penalised for it.”

Local MP Owen Thompson described the decision not to include Midlothian in the funding rounds as a “disgraceful and cynical move”.

Speaking after the council meeting, he said areas which were covered by Scottish Conservative MPs had been ‘looked after’.

He said: “It is such a disgraceful and cynical move to see areas with Tory MPs being looked after by the Levelling Up funding.

“Millions of pounds have gone to Douglas Ross and David Mundell’s constituencies while Midlothian is left hanging.

“We need to see more investment coming to Midlothian from the UK Government coffers.”

Levelling Up funding – which was created to replace the EU’s structural funds and is allocated by Gove’s department – has been criticised by The Scottish Government as it does not allow ministers in Edinburgh to have any influence on how money is spent.

Proposals for Moray, North and South Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire, Glasgow, Dumfries and Galloway and the Scottish Borders all received funds from the latest round of grants.

by Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter



Cllr Kelly Parry