

Sent: 25 April 2023 09:11

Subject: RE: NZET committee - air quality inquiry - additional briefing

Craig

Please find below lines on local authority block grant

2023-24 LOCAL AUTHORITY FUNDING

- We recognise the crucial role councils and their employees play in communities across Scotland and the challenging financial circumstances they face.
- In the most challenging budget settlement since devolution, we are providing nearly £13.5bn in the Local Government Settlement 2023-24.
- We are increasing the resources available to Local Government by over £793m, which represents a real terms increase of £376m or 3%.
- That is an increase beyond the flat-cash position set out in the 2022 Resource Spending Review.
- Local authorities also have a range of revenue raising powers that are not available to other public services, including newly devolved powers over empty property rates relief.
- The Scottish Government will also continue to press the UK Government for urgent additional funding for our joint priorities and would welcome support from across the Parliament, COSLA and individual local authorities in this respect.
- Local authorities are accountable to the public who elect them, and have the financial freedom to operate independently, taking account of local needs.
- The Scottish Government's policy towards local authorities' spending is to allow local authorities the financial freedom to operate independently.

NEW DEAL FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- We want to work with local government to build on the Covid Recovery Strategy and agree an urgent approach which supports delivery of public services.
- The First Minister met with COSLA President, Councillor Shona Morrison, on 31 March to reaffirm the Scottish Government's commitment to working with COSLA and SOLACE to agree a New Deal for Local Government in Scotland with the aim of providing greater flexibility over local funding, with clear accountability for delivery on shared priorities and outcomes.
- The New Deal for local government reflects a desire of both partners to re-set the relationship between the Scottish Government and Local Government
- That New Deal includes collaborative work on a Fiscal Framework for Local Government, alongside a new Partnership Agreement.

Helen