

**From:** Heather Brannan-McVey - Councillor <brannan-mcveyh@northlan.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 21, 2023 1:02 PM  
**To:** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Finance <DFMCSF@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** Jean Jones – Councillor <JonesJ@northlan.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** Swimming Pool Fund clarity required

Dear Cabinet Secretary

We write to you today to seek clarity on the Barnett Consequentials for the £63million fund established by the UK Government to aid swimming pools in England. Confirmation of receipt of funds was given on 7<sup>th</sup> June in response to a question to Scottish Ministers by Foyso Choudhury MSP. Will this be used in a swimming pool fund? If so, when will local councils have access to it? There has been no announcement to date.

North Lanarkshire Council has endured terrible cuts over the last 16 years resulting in a £300 million reduction in budget. Due to reduction in resources NLC have highlighted that Kilsyth Pool is on a list of long facilities including swimming pools, leisure, cultural and community centres in scope for closure. This financial situation as been compounded by growing energy costs with bills more than doubling in recent years.

Pools are expensive to open but children and adults learn essential lifesaving skills within the pool. Health and well being of all ages is improved through swimming. There is no greater cost than the loss of a life. Our community is land locked but surrounded by water. Learning to swim is an essential life saving skill. Kilsyth Pool and facilities like it across the country should stay open. The best way for us as a community to demonstrate the value we all place on the Pool is to use it. Pool user numbers are up 22% from last year to this demonstrating the value that our community has for the pool.

We have also written to the NLC Chief Executive to highlight the importance of Kilsyth Pool and should resources be made available to NLC from the Scottish Government that Kilsyth Pool should receive the investment required not only to keep it open but to invest in it to be a sustainable resource for our community for years to come.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Heather Brannan-McVey  
Councillor Jean Jones  
Ward 1 Kilsyth and Villages  
North Lanarkshire Council  
**[Redacted]**

## Scottish Government Response

T : 0300 244 4000

E : scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Councillor Heather Brannan-McVey  
brannan-mcveyh@northlan.gov.uk

Our Reference: 202300377257

Your Reference: Swimming Pool Fund clarity required

26 October 2023

Dear Councillor Heather Brannan-McVey ,

Thank you for your email regarding the recent announcements by North Lanarkshire Council to close a number of sports and leisure facilities.

The Scottish Government places great importance on sports and leisure facilities, they are vital in supporting the physical and mental health of the nation and we recognise the significance of these facilities for the overall wellbeing of those who use them regularly.

We welcome the announcement by North Lanarkshire Council on 03 October 2023 that they will protect culture, sport and leisure facilities for the duration of the council term. However, we recognise that there remains concerns over the long term sustainability of sports and leisure facilities, in part due to the cost of living crisis. The Scottish Government have repeatedly called on the UK Government to use all the powers at its disposal to tackle this cost of living crisis and to provide appropriate energy bill relief to leisure facilities.

For its part, The Scottish Government are providing nearly £13.5 billion in the 2023-24 Local Government Settlement; increasing the resources available to Local Government by over £793m, which represents a real terms increase of £376m or 3 per cent.

As confirmed in the Autumn Budget Revision on 28 September 2023, all consequentials available from the UK Spring Budget have now been allocated, with the Local Government Settlement increasing by £254 million accordingly. This contrasts with the £6 million of consequentials allocated at the Spring Budget for swimming pools.

In 2023-24, North Lanarkshire Council will receive £779.7 million to fund local services, which equates to an extra £25.4 million to support vital day to day services or an additional 3.4 per cent compared to 2022-23. It is for democratically elected Councils to manage their own budgets and to make decisions on the priorities in their local communities.

It is vital that all partners at a local level work together to explore all avenues and approaches to ensure, where possible, that local clubs and communities have access to sport and leisure facilities.

Yours sincerely

**SHONA ROBISON**

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Tha Ministearanna h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

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