

MOTION TO EAST LoTHIAN COUNCIL

29 October 2024

Impact of Austerity

Council notes with regret the recent statements, by Westminster Prime Minister on August 27th “There is a budget coming in October and it’s going to be painful”, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer who on July 29th advised that “difficult decisions” to find £5.5 billion of savings this year and £8.1 billion next year, will be taken, which demonstrate that after 14 years, ‘austerity’ will not end.

Council also notes that on May 19th Wes Streeting (now Secretary of State for Health and Social Care) stated “All roads do lead back to Westminster because even though this (Health) is devolved, decisions taken in Westminster have an impact on the NHS across the whole country”.

Council notes that on September 3rd the Scottish Government has had to make £500 million in savings to ease “enormous and growing pressure on the public finances”.

Council notes that according to the Wales Governance Centre at Cardiff University, the Welsh government is facing “serious budgetary challenges” in the region of £683 million, or face cuts to non-protected areas.

Council also notes that ‘two child benefit cap’ which impacts over 1,600 children¹ in East Lothian is to remain, that over 16,000 pensioners in East Lothian and almost 885K pensioners across Scotland² will lose their Winter Fuel Payments, that the energy price cap will be increased by 10% in October impacting almost every household across East Lothian.

Given the above, and this month’s budget statement, Council seeks a report by the Executive Director for Council Resources to be presented to the Cabinet Committee or the full Council by the end of the year as to what measures East Lothian Council can continue to take or may seek to take, to address the impact of continuing ‘austerity’ on our communities.

Proposed by (name): Lyn Jardine

Date: 11 October 2024

Seconded by (name): Lee-Anne Menzies

Date: 15 October 2024

Received by (name of officer): Linda Gillie, Team Manager – Democratic and Licensing

Date: 11 October 2024

¹ https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/two_child_limit/ - see interactive summary map

² [Winter Fuel Payment in Scotland – SPICe Spotlight | Solas air SPICe \(spice-spotlight.scot\)](https://www.spice.scot.nhs.uk/winter-fuel-payment-in-scotland/)