

# UNISON Scotland *Influencers*

## General election briefing 2024

### COUNCIL CUTS

Fourteen years of Tory austerity have left local services cut to the bone. The proportion of the Scottish Budget allocated to councils fell from 30% to 23% over the past 10 years (Audit Scotland).<sup>1</sup>

This year, to balance their budgets Scottish councils need to fill a budget gap of £585 million, and a total of £780 million over the next 2 years.<sup>2</sup> Nearly a quarter of Scottish councils fear they are close to bankruptcy.<sup>3</sup>

Investing in essential services like housing, education, social care and transport - and those who provide them - creates jobs, boosts demand and generates economic activity. Spending on public services redistributes wealth, tackles inequality and creates resilience. These can, and should be, at the centre of UK economic strategy.

### QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- Will you make sure public services and jobs are central to economic recovery?
- How will you ensure local decision making about public services?
- How will you ensure adequate funding for local services?

### USEFUL RESOURCES

- [Briefing – Local Government Funding Settlement 2024/25](#)
- [Briefing – Post-Covid Economic Recovery Plan](#)
- [Audit Scotland report – May 15 2024](#)

---

<sup>1</sup> Total spend both revenue & capital. p.10 [https://audit.scot/uploads/docs/report/2024/nr\\_240116\\_local\\_government\\_finance.pdf](https://audit.scot/uploads/docs/report/2024/nr_240116_local_government_finance.pdf) <sup>2</sup> [Scotland's councils face severe challenges to balance the books | Audit Scotland](#) <sup>3</sup> LGUI, [State of Local Government Finance in Scotland](#)