



Issue 247 28th January - 3 February 2019

Stage 1 Debate: Budget (Scotland) (No.3) Bill

The Budget Bill as proposed needs serious revision. It isn't that its all bad - there is a welcome increase in Health spending for example. The serious issue isn't so much how the Scottish Government intends spending its budget. The problem is the size of the budget the Scottish Government [intends to raise.](#)

Rather than using the powers they have to provide the services people need the plan is to throw Councils into crisis. Local Government is being hammered (see below for apt example). It is simply not tenable to describe the settlement proposed as fair. Councils are tightly restricted in how much they can raise for themselves. Where they have raised revenue the Scottish Government is using that as a substitute for rather than supplement to their own funding - and what money councils get is increasingly ring fenced

The cuts that will be seen in services cannot be blamed on the Westminster austerity - these are the Scottish Government's own choice. For at the same time as services come under threat the Scottish Government boasts of either below inflation increases in business taxes - or of actually lowering them. Being "the lowest taxed part of the UK" is nothing to be proud of when it means unmet needs and a declining social fabric. The Scottish Government claims to be anti austerity . They should , and if they are disinclined to Parliament should insist -that they make good on that promise . [Scotland needs a budget to defend services](#)



Moray Council is proposing some of the [biggest cuts to local services seen in Scotland](#) in recent years. Moray Council is set to close Swimming Pools, Libraries, stop School Crossing Patrollers and cut jobs to stave off bankruptcy.... the proposed cuts can be found [here](#).

Moray Council was initially expecting to have to save about £12million from its annual revenue budget of £214million. That total has risen to £14.8million following the announcement of the Scottish Government's own draft budget proposals.

[Listen to UNISON Moray Branch Secretary Suzanne Wright](#) denouncing cuts in services and jobs on BBC Highland & Islands Radio.



Fair Work Charter for Severe Weather

Shockingly, EAST LOTHIAN COUNCIL workers have been advised to [set aside holidays to cover absences due to bad weather](#) ...

maybe they should read our briefing on the [Fair Work for Severe Weather Charter](#).

The Charter isn't mandatory, but it does aim at encouraging employers to prioritise the health safety and wellbeing of their workforce during episodes of severe weather. It is explicit that workers should not be put at risk by attending or attempting to attend their place of work.

Pick of the Media

23/01/19 [truthout.org](#)

[LA Teachers Claim Victory After Week-Long Strike.](#)

23/01/19 [bbc.co.uk](#)

[Scotland could become net-zero for greenhouse gas emissions by 2045... if there is a will for change.](#)

23/01/19 [readitforward.com](#) [unison-scotland.org](#)

[13 great reasons why libraries matter](#) - and [why cutting libraries increase poverty and inequality.](#)

23/01/19 [leftfootforward.org](#)

Appallingly, the benefits system still [discriminates against those with mental illnesses.](#)

22/01/19 [holyrood.com](#)

[Named person plan suffers fresh setbacks..](#)

22/01/19 [tuc.org](#)

[Workers still suffering from longest pay squeeze in 200 years, says TUC](#)

UNISON is promoting a UK Parliamentary petition '[Repeal the two child limit to Tax Credits and Universal Credit](#)', launched by former UNISON president Margaret McKee. It is encouraging members and the public to sign.

Read the latest from UNISON's General Secretary Dave Prentis on his blog [here](#).

PUBLIC WORKS: TOOLKIT

[Public Works](#) is the UNISON Scotland campaign for jobs, services, fair taxation and a Living Wage... and against austerity. [This toolkit](#) provides branches with campaign resources to save our public services from the cuts driven by an austerity that is a political choice not an economic necessity.

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