

Correspondence Report For Information	17 October 2017
Corporate Policy and Resources Committee	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Leader and Champion
Outcome	Establish key relationships with Government, agencies and potential strategic partners
Lead Officer	Director of Performance
Cost: (If applicable)	Nil

The purpose of this report is to inform Elected Members of correspondence received.

1. Rates Support Grant Cuts

Correspondence has been received from Mr John Kelpie, Chief Executive of Derry and Strabane District Council. (Appendix A)

Mr Kelpie has written to the Department of Finance, the Secretary of State and to the Department for Communities on behalf of the Chief Executives of the 7 Councils impacted by the recent interim 4% cut to Rates Support Grant that was applied subsequent to 2017/18 rates processes.

The letter highlights that in the absence of urgent intervention, the cuts will have significant rates and service implications for the 7 impacted Councils and result in an inability to invest in the key interventions identified in Councils Community and Growth plans. The cuts have no financial impact on the 4 wealthier Councils and this raises serious questions in terms of equality and rural proofing.

The 7 Council Chief Executives and Heads of Finance have requested that an urgent meeting is convened with relevant Government officials/Ministers as soon as possible to discuss serious concerns and enable Councils to further demonstrate the serious implications of the cuts.



Derry City & Strabane
District Council
Comhairle
Chathair Dhoire &
Cheantar an tSratha Báin
Derry Cltite & Strabane
Destrict Council

AD/LMcG

02 October 2017

Mr David Sterling
2nd Floor West
Clare House
303 Airport Road West
Belfast
BT3 9ED

Dear David,

Rates Support Grant cuts

I write on behalf of the Chief Executives of the 7 Councils impacted by the recent interim 4% cut to Rates Support Grant that was applied subsequent to our 2017/18 rates processes. You will be aware that this £18.3m funding exists to enable the less wealthy and more deprived Councils to provide equality of service provision with the more affluent Councils. We are furthermore extremely concerned by very real future threats to this grant following conversations at regional finance groups.

In the absence of urgent intervention, this will inevitably have very significant rates and service implications for the 7 impacted Councils and result in an inability to invest in the key interventions identified in our Community and Growth plans. Whilst we acknowledge the overall Executive budget challenges, cuts to this grant obviously have no financial impact whatsoever on the 4 wealthier Councils and this raises serious questions in terms of equality and rural proofing.

We have been mandated by each of our Councils to seek a 7 Council delegation as a matter of urgency with relevant Government officials/ Ministers. The 7 Chief Executives and Heads of Finance would therefore request that an urgent meeting is convened as soon as possible to discuss our serious concerns and enable us to further demonstrate the very serious implications of these cuts.

Derry

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98 Strand Road
Derry
BT48 7NN

Strabane

C/o Council Offices
47 Derry Road
Strabane
BT82 8DY

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Given the potential impact, this letter has also been sent to James Brokenshire, Secretary of State and Leo O Reilly, Department for Communities in anticipation of a joint meeting being co-ordinated. I look forward to your urgent response.

Yours sincerely



John Kelpie
Chief Executive