

MIDLOTHIAN NEWS

Over the last year, Midlothian's Conservative Councillors have been working hard to hold the SNP administration to account and stand up for the issues that really matter for local people.

This is against a backdrop of the SNP Government asking local councils like Midlothian to deliver ever more services while reducing their overall budgets.



Councillors Peter Smail, Pauline Winchester and David Virgo

FIGHTING FOR BETTER LOCAL HEALTHCARE SERVICES

The Scottish Conservatives were the only political party to oppose SNP proposals to reduce the budget for Midlothian's Integrated Joint Board (IJB), which provides healthcare services for local residents.

Scottish Conservative Healthcare spokesperson Councillor Pauline Winchester said: "It is disgraceful that the SNP cut the IJB's budget by £1.3 million. The Council cannot demand that the IJB makes cuts as it is a separate entity. Furthermore, local

people depend on its services.

Pauline continued, "I trained as a Paediatric Intensive Care nurse and have worked in the community caring for children with exceptional care needs. I and my colleagues on the Council are committed to continue to champion the local healthcare services on which so many people rely."

Negotiations between the council and the Integrated Joint Board are continuing.

HOLDING THE SNP TO ACCOUNT

The Conservative Group challenged the SNP's spending on unnecessary projects like leisure attraction Destination Hillend, instead of core services such as schools and roads.

Midlothian East Councillor Peter Smaill said: "It is deeply concerning that Destination Hillend's costs have soared from an initial estimate of £9.5 million in 2019 to around £33

million. We have therefore called for an examination of the project by the internal audit team.

Peter continued, "We believe the project needs to be brought under control so the Council's limited resources are not wasted and can be spent on vital everyday services such as schools and maintaining our roads".

PROTECTING LOCAL SERVICES

The Scottish Conservative Group have fought hard to protect local community policing teams and ranger services from Midlothian SNP cuts, retaining our ability to protect local people and their surroundings.

Bonnyrigg Councillor David Virgo said: "The Conservative group are proud to have fought hard to protect local policing teams and the ranger services at a time of increasingly drastic cuts to local government budgets. We are pleased that local policing and countryside management services have been protected this year, and we will continue to speak up for them moving forward".

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