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Council tax payers across Scotland have been forced to compensate their local authorities following SNP budget cuts, a report has confirmed.

Audit Scotland, in its review into local government finances, stated SNP government funding “reduced in real terms” in 2017/18, but that it was “largely offset by increases in council tax and councils’ fee income”.

Nationalist ministers handed local authorities the ability to hike rates by three per cent last year.

That saw the levy applied to some average family homes in certain parts of the country rocket, making it unaffordable for some hardworking families.

The document, published tomorrow, shows council tax payers coughed up an additional £189 million in 2017/18 as a result.

Over the same period, SNP government funding was slashed by around £220 million.

Councils’ overall debt rose slightly to £15.1 billion, the report adds, while the “forecast trend is for further reductions in funding from the Scottish Government in the medium term”.

Scottish Conservative local government spokesman Alexander Stewart said:

“This report shows in very clear terms that following SNP government funding cuts, council tax payers have been forced to step in and pick up the slack.

“No tangible improvements to services have been made since these hikes, just more of the same under a nationalist government with its priorities elsewhere.

“In some parts of the country, these council tax hikes have made it impossible for normal working families to move to homes they need.

“Yet all of this could have been avoided if SNP ministers, at the very least, had maintained levels of funding for local government.

“This has been a lose-lose scenario for those paying council tax, who are now

worse off and still experiencing a below-par level of service.”