

Local government financial blackhole increased to over £50m

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The financial deficits of local authorities increased to more than £50m according to the Local Government Finance Statistics, published today.

Repeated SNP cuts to council budgets have meant that local authorities across Scotland faced a deficit of £53m in 2018-19 which was funded through council reserve funding.

This is a significant increase of over £15m from £38.9m the previous year.

In addition, the publication reveals that council funding reserves are decreasing year on year so that the total reserve funding available to local authorities has fallen by £27m overall.

Despite promising to abolish council tax, the SNP have left councils no choice but to hike bills to fill the hole left by savage cuts from central government.

The latest figures show that in 2018-19 the average cost of a council tax bill was £1,106 before reductions and £973 after reductions. In 2017-18 the costs were £1,069 before reductions and £936 after reductions.

Graham Simpson, Scottish Conservative shadow local government secretary said

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“The SNP government has consistently underfunded local government.

“Councils have been left with no option but to increase council tax on local residents in order to pay for essential services.

“Thanks to SNP budget cuts, the holes in council budgets continue to grow.

“The SNP government must now provide an extra £95m for local government in this year’s budget.

“That is completely reasonable and achievable given the massive funding boost due to arrive from the UK government.

“The SNP has no excuse, they must fund local services properly.”