

Formal Council Questions and Responses

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1 **Question to the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Community and Resources - Concurrent expenditure to Community Councils.**

Councillor Martyn Kellaway asked:

On the 19th November the Cabinet Member for Community and Resources on behalf of this administration decided to axe the payment of concurrent expenditure to Community Councils. This action deprives 60-70 volunteer Councillors who help in their communities of funds vital to supporting those very communities which have no access to other facilities and services which continue to be fully available to other wards in Newport.

The block grant which they have received over many years has been used to maintain these Community Centres, or Village Halls, allotments children's play areas, playing fields maintaining graveyards and other services which are provided as part of the council tax in other wards of the City that do not have Community Councils.

These are good people trying to do the right thing.

Can you tell me what financial help will be put in place by this administration to ensure that these important facilities can continue in a fair equitable manner into the future or what concurrent services this administration are prepared to take over.

The Leader and Councillor David Mayer replied:

The question acknowledges that the Concurrent Grant is operating as a 'block grant' – and always has, and this is the main reason for ending it, given that Community Councils can precept to replace this 'block grant', which the Council increasingly cannot justify given other pressures on its finances.

Community councils have made their own decisions on delivering services without co-ordination or permission with the City Council and in the current financial climate, the City Council may not choose too or be able to run these. They are currently available due to decisions made by the Community Councils and the additional precepts they raise themselves.

Services across the City have developed over many years and it is not realistic or feasible to have play areas, community halls etc in every ward / part of the city but they are available for use by all residents of the city, wherever they live.

It is for each Community Council to decide how to deal with the loss of grant and until that is done, the question cannot be answered. However, there is no financial provision for these facilities / assets to be supported in going forward and therefore, as said, the City Council may not choose too or be able to run these.

Activity by volunteers in our communities is highly respected by our council and we will continue to support this in every way that we can.