



Peter Peacock
Scottish Labour Regional MSP for the Highlands and Islands

news release

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Stinging Attack on SNP Government as promised Highland class size reductions set to be ditched

Highlands and Islands Labour MSP, Peter Peacock, has launched a stinging attack on the SNP Government as Highland Council are forced to recommend ditching class size reductions promised by the SNP at the election and for which the Council say they haven't enough money.

In a paper to be considered by the Councillors this week senior education officials reveal the budget set by the Council's previous administration is several million pounds short of the money needed to continue to make progress to cut Primary 1 to 3 class sizes to 18.

They ask Councillors to recognise that "implementation of the maximum class sizes cannot be progressed any further at this stage".

Peter Peacock said: "The SNP made clear promises to cut these class sizes during the election but as soon as they were in the door of St. Andrew's House they watered down that commitment to make year on year progress, then they short changed the Councils who now don't have the cash to deliver.

"This is yet another example of a growing list of broken promises from the SNP government.

"Those who voted for the SNP partly on the back of this promise will feel betrayed and let down.

"Every day the SNP Government continue to peddle the myth that they have given Councils enough money to deliver their manifesto promises, but we now have further evidence this is simply not the case.

"If there was enough money, how come their own Councillors, when they were in power in Highland, didn't put it in the Council's budget?

"Thankfully the new administration in Highland Council is prepared to set out the financial realities of just how tight their budget is.

"Not only can't the Council deliver what the SNP government so clearly promised, they are facing up to

having to make millions of pounds of cuts in next year's budget, so delivering on this SNP class size promise is not possible now, nor is it likely to be possible at any stage in the future given the budget cuts on the agenda.

"The new Council administration has been saddled with a duff financial deal following the SNP Councillors in the previous administration insisting they sign up to the `concordat' on finance and priorities.

"It seems that even the local SNP Councillors must then have realised it was a duff deal and quit the administration, no doubt in the hope of avoiding the blame for the broken promise and cuts coming through.

"Our schools and our Council deserve better treatment from the government.

"No doubt they will try to blame the Council, but the neutral Council Officials have let the cat out of the bag on another SNP promise broken."

Website link : www.peterpeacock.org.uk