



Derry City & Strabane
District Council
Comhairle
Chathair Dhoire &
Cheantar an tSraitha Báin
Derry Citty & Strabane
Destrict Council

28th November 2017

James Brokenshire
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
Stormont House
Stormont Estate
Belfast
BT4 3SH

Dear Secretary of State Brokenshire,

Rates Support Grant cuts

I write further to my previous letter of 21st September 2017 on behalf of the Chief Executives of the 7 Councils impacted by the recent interim 4% cut to Rates Support Grant that was applied subsequent to our 2017/18 rates processes and the potential for further significant cuts to this grant.

We have since received a response from the Permanent Secretary for the Department for Communities confirming the 4% reduction and the further financial uncertainties going forward. Our request for a 7 Council delegation has been declined until such times as the financial position for the next financial year is better understood.

This response has since been considered by our Council in November and our Elected Members have expressed serious concern and resolved "that Council write to the Secretary of State requesting a meeting to discuss the impact of the proposed cut to the Rates Support Grant and Members concerns regarding refusal by Civil Servants to meet with those seven Councils affected by the cuts"

Whilst we acknowledge the overall Executive budget challenges and uncertainty and the efforts of the Department for Communities to ensure that as far as possible these pressures have been applied equally to all the programmes and sectors affected, this remains a matter of significant concern and impact to us. In particular, these cuts do not equally impact the 11 Councils in Northern Ireland with significant rates implications for the 7 least wealthy and most deprived Councils and no financial implications for the 4 wealthier Councils. It therefore raises serious concerns in terms of equality and rural proofing.

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In addition to this letter, we have also issued a response to the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Communities again requesting that our delegation is facilitated and seeking details of the equality screening and equality impact assessment processes in respect of the cuts.

I would therefore be grateful if you could consider the request from our Elected Members for a meeting to discuss the impact of the proposed cut to the Rates Support Grant and Members concerns regarding refusal by Civil Servants to meet with those seven Councils affected by the cuts. We have a statutory deadline of 15th February 2018 to strike our District Rate and this is a critical input with potentially very significant financial implications for the least wealthy and most deprived Councils.

Yours Sincerely



John Kelpie
Chief Executive