



North Ayrshire Council

Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

Meeting of the Council

Wednesday 2 November 2022

Responses to Questions

Question

(18) a question by Councillor Foster to the Leader of the Conservative and Unionist Group in the following terms:

“What does the Leader of the Conservative Group believe will have the worst impact on North Ayrshire residents - the rise in mortgage repayments, the run on pension funds or the imposition of austerity 2.0 arising from the Tories “mini-budget”?”

Response

“Taking the points raised in reverse order:

Austerity is a set of political economic policies that aim to reduce government budgets deficits through spending cuts or tax increases. We will require to wait on the Chancellor’s Budget later this month to determine what Austerity, if any, is needed. Closer to home, the Council in setting its budget will need to practice Austerity by cutting spending/employment or raising the Council Tax.

Pension Funds - The Times noted the other day that the economic and financial situation has been transformed in a matter of days. The pound has recovered and is even slightly above where it was before the mini budget, the prices of government bonds are also higher and there is no run on pension funds.

Mortgage Payments - Bank Rate has been below 1% for the last 13 years, is now at 2.25% and is likely to peak at around 5%. This increase is not unexpected and is a result of the inflation in the UK of 10.1% caused by Covid support, energy payments, war in Ukraine and other factors. As a matter of interest, this rate is lower than the Europe average and the 114% reported by our socialist comrades in Venezuela.

Closer to home, it is clear that the socialist policies of the Labour Group have not found favour with the North Ayrshire voters, who viewed the return of a Labour Administration with disdain and ensured that they were returned with the lowest number of councillors ever. In fact, one fewer than the 10 Conservative councillors.

In 2010, Liam Byrne the former Labour Chief Secretary to the Treasury left a note saying to the incoming Conservative Government, “Dear Chief Secretary, I am afraid to tell you there is no money left.”

So, we will take no criticism or lessons from the Labour Party.”

Question

(19) a question by Councillor Marshall to the Cabinet Member for Education in the following terms:

“Does the Education Portfolio holder support the proposal in the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill as debated at Holyrood that will allow people as young as 16 to legally change their gender?”

Response

"Yes, I support the proposal"

Question

(21) a question by Councillor Foster to the Leader of the Council in the following terms:

"To ask the Council Leader whether they "detest the Tories"?"

Response

"I thank Councillor Foster for his question, which I assume is referring to a previous comment made by the First Minister. When asked if she would prefer a Labour or Tory Government in Westminster, she commented that she "detested the Tories and everything they stand for". I'm sure any sensible person would know she was referring to Tory Governments and not to individuals or voters. If Councillor Foster is asking me if I share that view, then I think he knows the answer as does everyone else in this Chamber."