



Marlyn Glen

Scottish Labour MSP for North East Scotland

13 March 2008

Vulnerable children nursery scheme : "Scottish Government's duty to fund Dundee project," says MSP

Marlyn Glen said today that it is the "duty" of the Scottish Government to fund the scheme that offered free nursery places for two year old children from vulnerable families in Dundee.

She was responding to a letter of reply from Education Secretary Fiona Hyslop who said that "local authorities are best placed to decide what provision they need for vulnerable children in their areas"

This followed a plea from Ms. Glen that the Scottish Government should fund the nursery scheme in Dundee to "live up to its pledge" that helping these children was "a key priority".

In her reply to Ms. Glen, Ms. Hyslop said,

"As you will be aware, the 3 pilots were set up in 2006 for a two year period and the funding will end as originally planned by the previous Scottish Executive in June 2008.

"The pilots are being evaluated and we expect results to be available as from September 2008.

"The early years strategy which will be developed in partnership with local government will set the long term direction of policy and will consider the range of services needed to support young children and their families.

"In the meantime local authorities are best placed to decide what provision they need for vulnerable children in their areas, and it is open to all or any of the authorities of Dundee, Glasgow and North Ayrshire to make future provision based on their experience of the pilots if they wish to.

"There is substantial funding in the new local government settlement that can be used to support vulnerable children.

"Overall funding is being increased by over 12 per cent over the period of the spending review.

"It is for local authorities to set budgets in line with local needs and priorities."

Ms. Glen said,

"The SNP's council tax freeze has meant that they have forced councils to cut their spending and to reduce their services.

" The SNP Government wish to keep all the short-term glory of a council tax freeze to themselves while attempting to pass on to local councils the blame for cuts in services that they have imposed upon these councils.

"With over £30 billion to spend, it is the duty of the Scottish Government to help provide extra nursery provision for vulnerable children in Dundee."

WEBSITE LINKS

MARLYN GLEN www.marlynglen.org.uk

NORTH EAST SCOTLAND LABOUR : www.nescotlandlabour.org.uk