

ITEM No 7.3(a)

**MARGARET SMITH MSP
EDINBURGH WEST**

Elected Members
City of Edinburgh Council
City Chambers
High Street
Edinburgh EH1 1YJ

December 17th 2008

Dear Councillors,

Fairer Scotland Funding - Forth Ward

We are writing as the constituency MSP and MP for Edinburgh West to raise our concerns about the impact of funding cuts to organisations in Muirhouse, West Pilton and other areas of North Edinburgh.

As local representatives we share the concern of the many community based organisations in Forth who are to receive reduced funding next year. This will obviously have a detrimental impact on the services they provide and on their ability to employ and retain staff and volunteers.

We appreciate that the elected councillors and community members of the Forth Neighbourhood Funding Panel have done their very best to minimise the impacts. In the absence of a structured decision making process the Convenor and members attempted to put one in place. However, theirs was an impossible task given the amount of central government funding within the Fairer Scotland Fund.

However, we believe given the impacts of these changes on North Edinburgh that there are consequences for the city that the Council as a whole must now address. There needs to be a thorough audit and appraisal of the impact the funding differences will have on services and local jobs. It is clear that some of the potential gaps left by reduced funding may have knock on effects on the take up of council services. We're sure councillors are well aware that organisations such as North West Carers provide services for residents in other wards such as Almond and Inverleith so the consequences go beyond the Forth ward boundary.

We are also seeking assurances that the Council is and will continue to actively pursue other means of supporting affected local organisations. For example, the Council might provide Council advertising revenue to the North Edinburgh News where appropriate.

Whilst Margaret Smith MSP will treat as confidential any personal information which you pass on, she will normally allow staff and authorised volunteers to see it if this is needed to help and advise you. Margaret Smith MSP may pass on all or some of this information to agencies such as the NHS or local Council if this is necessary to help with your case. She may also wish to write to you from time to time to keep you informed on issues which you may find of interest. Please let her know if you do not wish to be contacted for this purpose.

**MARGARET SMITH MSP
EDINBURGH WEST**

There is also a need to work with the local organisations involved and others on the possibilities of joint working and ongoing synergies of service delivery, accommodation and so on.

Over the past few years we have seen at first hand the very good work done by many of these organisations. We appreciate your attention to this matter and your consideration of these points and hope that we can all work together to minimise the negative impacts of the move from the CRF to the Fairer Scotland Fund.

Yours sincerely,



Margaret Smith MSP
Edinburgh West



John Barrett MP
Edinburgh West

Whilst Margaret Smith MSP will treat as confidential any personal information which you pass on, she will normally allow staff and authorised volunteers to see it if this is needed to help and advise you. Margaret Smith MSP may pass on all or some of this information to agencies such as the NHS or local Council if this is necessary to help with your case. She may also wish to write to you from time to time to keep you informed on issues which you may find of interest. Please let her know if you do not wish to be contacted for this purpose.