

AGENDA ITEM 4

PETITIONS

1. Lead Petitioner – Peter Burt

Reading Borough Council – No Budget Cuts

We have had enough of austerity and public spending cuts while the government helps billionaires to get richer and richer.

We call upon Reading Borough Council and other Berkshire Councils to reverse budget cuts, set a needs-based budget, and publicly demand the Labour government to provide adequate funds for local Councils.

RESPONSE by Councillor Terry (Leader of the Council):

I think it's really important that we are clear that we are not in a period of austerity. The early years of austerity following the 2010 General Election saw cash cuts in core council funding, whereas local government is now seeing a growth in funding, with Reading having a £6.2m increase over the next three years on top of the £4.3m we got last year.

The Council did, however, lobby the Government for greater financial flexibilities as part of our response to the provisional funding settlement in December.

The budget presented to Council tonight invests significantly in frontline services, with £4.7m extra for Adult Social Care and £3.8m for Children's Services, with the additional funding we have being targeted at the areas of greatest need. And this is on top of the more than £10m we were able to invest in those services last year. We also continue to invest in the things that are the highest priority for the people of Reading, including more social housing and improving our roads and public transport.

Reading Borough Council is able to make those investments due to the additional funding we have received and our own prudent management of our finances.

That is not austerity.