

Dear Kate,

1. We have to stop shedding staff even though there are more cuts to be made in the next budgets.. I was on my feet in the Chamber protesting when then Chief Executive Alan Campbell told the new Council that we would have to get leaner, work smarter, etc. I pointed out that in that case we were heading for increased stress related sick leave and that's how it turned out to be.
2. Privatisation of public services are not something I would want to see. It usually ends in some kind of rip off
3. I think the Social Work budget has been expanding to meet a demand that is going to spiral upwards as Aberdeenshire's elderly grow more numerous. There will be increasing competition within the services for scarce resources but our elderly have to be protected and we shall have fight Holyrood for more funding to meet this looming crisis. Aberdeenshire' demographics are frightening already and problems originaally forecast for 2020 are with us now.
4. It's an increasingly uncertain world Kate and I don't have an answer to that.
5. If we are going to retain and attract people into public services then we must pay the going rate but, as you know, CoSLA hasn't been too good in the past with this. They have been too accomodating to the SNP government and seem to believe there is some sort of 'partnership.' Maybe even mutual respect ...?
6. I was appalled at the changes to the classroom assistants job spec and reduction in jobs.  
We shall have to wait and see how it works out after the summer holidays this year and prepare to make changes if required. Some schools may have greater numbers of children on the autistic spectrum and others with behavioural problems which require more classroom help.
7. The Single Payment is going to be catastrophic for a lot of people and a nightmare for our Council employees who will be in the front line and targets for public wrath. There is no way around government legislation and sympathy at the counter isn't going to cut it!!
8. We are all (yes Councillors too) involved in the pay freeze while the gap between rich and poor widens. No it isn't fair but hey! it's a Tory led government in a banker generated financial crisis so what else can we expect...? The Council Tax 'freeze' is unsustainable in the medium five year term and, as inflation rises (3% and above forecast for this year) we can only hope that realism and a 'thaw' sets in as soon as possible. If the crisis deepens, we should be asking the government to use the 3p discretionary tax available to them to readjust the tax burden for the less well off.

9. I will support the negotiations re the Green Workplace agreement with the Unions.

With kind regards,

Sam Coull