

PRESS RELEASE

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BROOKSBANK - EU FUNDS TO BE REPAID?

Ian Hudgton MEP (Scottish National Party) today had confirmation from the East of Scotland European Partnership that Dundee City Council may be faced with a bill to repay some of the £27,000 grant it received for upgrading work carried out to the Brooksbank Neighbourhood Centre in 1998.

Mr Hudgton, was asked to make his enquiries by SNP Councillors in the City immediately after Labour, Tory and Lib-Dem Councillors in the City joined forces to vote through the closure of the Centre last Thursday. The MEP says the response he has received today means that the Council could face a clawback of funds granted to Brooksbank just four years ago.

The MEP commented:

"As soon as I heard that this important community facility was to be axed by the Labour administration, I contacted the East of Scotland European Partnership - the agency responsible for paying out grants such as the £27,000 allocated to Brooksbank. The response I have received will make uncomfortable reading for the Labour, Tory and Lib-Dem Councillors who voted to close Brooksbank in last week's budget.

In their response to my enquiries, ESEP states quite categorically that "any ERDF grant given to a project is done so on the basis that the project applicant will undertake its long-term maintenance and upkeep. It is a condition of ERDF grant that the applicant has to advise the Scottish Executive if a project is no longer fulfilling the original proposal in line with the approved application. This might occur if an ERDF-supported facility is closed, sold or has a change of use. If this scenario occurs, the Scottish Executive will have to assess whether the project applicant is liable for any repayment of grant. For a project which has only been operational for 4 years, there is likely to be serious consideration given as to whether sufficient value has been gained to the Programme."

SNP Councillor, Allan Petrie, who has already started a local campaign to keep the Centre open said:

“The information which Ian Hudghton has obtained calls into question the validity of last week’s Labour/Tory/Lib-Dem budget and may offer a life-line to the many individuals and groups who are desperate to keep this facility open. The SNP Council Group will be seeking an urgent meeting with senior Council officials to discuss the implications of these findings.”

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