

News from ...



Peter Peacock Scottish Labour Regional MSP for the Highlands and Islands

5 March 2008

Over 300 Council Job Losses Prediction

Over 300 jobs will be axed by Highland Council following their agreed budget cuts.

The prediction comes from Highlands and Islands Labour MSP, Peter Peacock, following publication of some council job loss figures in council papers for today's council meeting (Thurs).

Peter Peacock also cast doubt on the council maintaining its "no redundancy" policy.

Highlands and Islands Labour MSP, Peter Peacock said: "Despite what is in the Council papers this week, the full scale of the job losses hasn't been made known.

"They have only mentioned a theoretical total of full time equivalent jobs, but the number of post holders affected will be far higher because of the number of part time jobs that exist and will be affected.

"To admit there over 200 full time equivalent jobs going is bad enough, but that probably means there are over 300 jobs going in total, when you consider the part time employees.

"This mix of part time and full time jobs currently provide vital services to a range of vulnerable groups, so the effects will be very widespread and serious.

"You can't remove 300 people who have been delivering vital services and not expect real damage to people's lives.

Peter Peacock also raised questions about the Council's redeployment and redundancy policy following publication of this week's council papers.

He said, "The Council has been making a virtue of a no redundancy policy, but that now seems in doubt.

"It appears that those being lined up to lose their job will be offered another job, but if that does not compare to their current job, they could be given contractual notice in accordance with the council's redundancy policy.'

"So it appears some staff could well be being made redundant after all.

"If you are a trained and skilled librarian losing your job, as is the case, it is of little value to your clients or little comfort to you as an individual that you may be offered a job collecting council tax, or working in the roads department.

"You are neither skilled to do that, nor probably want to do that.

"So the council will be under using key skills people to deliver their services, or making them redundant.

"That is hardly a good use of people and is all so unnecessary, while the SNP Independent administration is busy sacking people and cutting grants to voluntary organisations it is banking £17 million of taxpayers hard earned cash in a reserve fund for a purpose no-one is very clear about."

ends

Website link

Peter Peacock's website : www.peterpeacock.org.uk

Highlands and Islands Labour : www.handilabour.org.uk