

Date: 17 November 2008  
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Professor Forsythe  
Chairman, Standards Committee  
Devon County Council  
County Hall  
Topsham Road  
Exeter  
EX2 4QD

Dear Professor Forsythe

Distribution of County Council Community Fund Budgets in an election year

I am writing following a meeting of East Devon District Council's Standards Committee when the issue of the spending of County Council Community Fund Budgets during an election year was raised.

It was suggested during the last meeting that the distribution of Community Fund money by County Councillors in an election year could be seen to be giving that Councillor an unfair advantage going into an election. It was also suggested that there was a public impression that Councillors might be 'buying votes' ahead of such a poll as in many cases the public did not understand that the money was from an existing County Council budget. The Committee felt that although they understood how the Community fund budget worked, many of the public did not, and that poor public perception could easily undermine the work of our Standards Committees.

I have been asked that the issue be made aware to the County Council Standards Committee with a recommendation that the County Council considers putting a freeze on the distribution of Community Fund money for 12 months before any County Council Election.

You will see that I have copied in Phil Norrey, Chief Executive, so that he is made aware of these concerns.

On behalf of East Devon's Standards Committee, I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Denise Lyon  
Corporate Director  
(Deputy Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer)

Cc: Phil Norrey, Chief Executive, Devon County Council