

School Funding Meeting at Westminster

The White Paper & consultation on new national funding formula:

- Published in December 2016 – aims to address funding disparities in the current system where some areas are underfunding in comparison with neighbours e.g. Wokingham.
- Interested parties are encouraged to submit their views to the consultation by closing date – 22nd March 2017.

School funding more generally & broader cost-pressures were raised:

These included:

- national insurance and pension contributions
- staff wages
- the impact of the apprenticeship levy
- High-needs funding for pupils etc.

The Government response included:

- that it recognises cost-pressure and has published a range of tools and support to help schools.
- The increase of the total spend in education : £40B to 42B
- More information to be given to school regarding apprenticeships and how they can be utilised in schools (especially primaries)
- Schools need to appreciate that there is strong economic growth, but weak public sector growth – unless taxes are raised, cuts were enviable
- The importance of schools to complete the funding consultation – decisions had not be finalised.

Teacher recruitment and retention:

Issues raised include:

- absence of Reading/Wokingham-allowance
- affordable housing for teachers
- recruitment of teachers from abroad
- a focus on training at home

We were informed about:

- Department for Education-driven central digital database to save on advertising and agency costs when recruiting teachers.
- That advertising was an out-dated system of recruitment, and schools needed to be more active and creative in recruitment.

Recent developments:

Rob Wilson met last week with Cllr Charlotte Haitham Taylor, Lead Member for Children's Services at WBC, where he was able to discuss some of the concerns highlighted around school funding in Wokingham. He is working with Cllr Haitham Taylor and feeding her views back to government.

Future meeting:

I am meeting Rob Wilson on 28 April to go through our budget, our predicted outcomes in 3 years if the current funding cuts are applied. He has been to other schools, but they have all been in deficits with high staffing costs, he is interested in seeing ours as we have a healthy surplus and staffing from next year at 76% (currently 80%). We face cuts of £12,000 a year under the lasted proposal, so it will be interesting to have his views on school budget management moving forward.

Letters from Nik Gibb:

Attached are letters from Nick Gibb following the meeting.

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