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Vale of Glamorgan



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Re Vale of Glamorgan Schools funding

Thank you for writing to me about this important issue and for raising your concerns. I have clarified with the Welsh Government the funding position of the Vale of Glamorgan Council with particular reference to schools. I have included some information below which I hope will be useful to you.

I would like to start by assuring you that not a single Welsh local authority faces a reduction of more than 0.5% in their core funding next year. Delivering the best education for every child in Wales is a key priority for the Welsh Government and it has taken action to prioritise funding to the Local Government Settlement to ensure resources go straight to the front line to support schools.

School funding is the responsibility of local councils and it is expected that they deliver high quality education for every child and set budgets at a level which gives every school the resources needed to reflect this priority.

Capital Investment by the Welsh Government over the past decade has been considerable (in partnership with the Vale Council) with new school buildings in Cowbridge, Barry, Penarth and Llantwit Major. The most recent Cabinet Report from the Vale Council shows an increased contribution from Welsh Government which is now £83.823 million out of the total £142 million capital investment in schools. The plans for 2017 onwards show a reduction in the Council's contribution by £394,000.

Working with Local Government, the amount of funding being passed on to schools from Local Authorities has increased in recent years as Authorities have delegated more of the funding available to them for education to schools. Whilst the Welsh Government does not fund schools directly, they continue to provide significant additional grant funding for school improvement and raising school standards. Through the Education Improvement Grant for Schools over the next two years more than £225million will be invested in school improvement and the Foundation phase.

Current spending on local services in Wales has increased by 4.4% between 2010 and 2017, and this year, spending per head of population by local government in Wales is around £527 higher than in England. The Vale of Glamorgan will actually receive a slight increase, 0.2% which is equivalent to £300,000, in its core funding next year. The Vale of Glamorgan schools also carried forward total reserves of £2.3 million.

I want to clarify that the Vale of Glamorgan is not the lowest funded authority in Wales in terms of the core Settlement and schools. They are in 17th position ahead of Carmarthenshire, Newport, Flintshire, Swansea, Newport and Caerphilly. The

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lowest position alluded to in Cllr Thomas' letter considers all sources of funding including all grants, most of which are driven by population numbers, or eligibility for Free School Meals.

Over the next two years more than £187million will be invested in education by Welsh Government through the Pupil Deprivation Grant, of which almost all will go to schools to support the most disadvantaged learners. There will also be investment to support the reduction of infant class sizes, particularly where there are high levels of deprivation. The Welsh Government has invested more than £12.9 million in the Vale of Glamorgan through the Pupil Deprivation Grant since it began.

Welsh Government is working hard to offset the past eight years of cuts from the UK Government which amounts to £1 billion and to ensure that public services continue to function effectively. Indeed we have worked to protect education through these difficult years. You may be interested to know that in England, local government budgets have been cut by 12% since 2011.

I hope this is helpful and thank you again for taking the time to write to me.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely



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