

The Wokingham local government settlement – spending power up 6.3%

I have been working hard on the issues around money for local services in Wokingham. During this year I have welcomed favourable responses to requests on potholes and road maintenance, and on social care, where there were particular pressures.

I argued for two main improvements in overall funding for Wokingham for 2019-20. First, I wanted to continue with the business rate retention pilot we have benefitted from this year. The government has confirmed we can do so. Second, I wanted to eliminate the threat of negative grant, and ensure a decent level of settlement for the overall budget.

Yesterday in his statement the Secretary of State said he

“intends to directly eliminate the £152.9m negative rate support grant in 2019-20 using foregone business rates. This will prevent any local authority being subject to a downward adjustment”

As a result Wokingham will see one of the largest increases in spending power, with a gain of 6.3% compared to the England average of 2.8%. I look forward to seeing the improvements in services and the good value Council Tax this should allow.