

Public meetings in Chippenham 26th September; Devizes 27th; Salisbury 28th; Trowbridge 29th and Marlborough 5th October

Summary of the Questions and Answers relating to the 4 year offer, these will be attached to the Cabinet and Council paper on this subject

Q1 – Has the Council lobbied Government about the cuts to funding?

A1 – Yes. The Council has lobbied continually over the past years and has supported the Local Government Association, the County Council Network and the Society of County Treasurers and several other bodies that lobby Government on funding. In addition the Council's Chief Financial Officer is a member of the National Committee that is reviewing funding and the future of business rates. All Councils are concerned about the cuts.

Q2 – What happens if the Council doesn't take up the 4 year offer?

A2 – Councils that choose not to take up the offer will be subject to the existing process for determining the level of central funding that they will receive.

Q3 – Will the Council definitely get the funding shown in the 4 year offer?

A3 – We have to work on that assumption, although we understand that the needs formula that underpins the system will be revised before the end of the offer period in 2020. We expect that there could be changes but it is unclear what they could be.

Q4 – What happens at the end of 4 years?

A4 – We don't know with enough clarity. We continue to lobby and seek to influence the future consultation that is taking place on 100% of Business Rates being allocated to Councils, on a needs basis, which may have affect funding.

Q5 – When will the basis of 'need' be reviewed by Government?

A5 – There is no firm date for this but it is expected to be before 2020. The Council's view is that there should be a high weighting for rurality, older people and children's safeguarding. The Government will set out the criteria and thus distribution formula for needs.

Q6 – Why is the support grant falling? How much has it fallen since the financial crisis?

A6 – It is falling as the Government addresses the country's financial deficit. Over the decade to 2020 the government support grant to Wiltshire will have fallen by nearly £100m to zero.

Q7 – Does the Council receive other Government grants?

A7 – Yes. There are ring-fenced grants for schools, housing benefits and other smaller grants but these can't be used for other purposes. In addition there are other specific grants but they are not material in terms of affecting the overall grant reduction and demand pressures.

Q8 – When will the Government agree the 4 year offer?

A8 – We are likely to hear further details in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement on 23rd November 2016 and then the detail in the funding settlement is likely to be announced early December 2016.