

Leighton Andrews AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus
Minister for Public Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref: P-04-591
Ein cyf/Our ref: LA/05063/14

William Powell AM
Chair, Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
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9 October 2014

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 30 September seeking my views regarding a UNISON petition against funding reductions for Local Authorities.

Local Authorities receive around a third of the Welsh Government Budget in recognition of the vital services they deliver. As a consequence of UK Government decisions, by 2015-16, our budget will be around 10% lower in real terms than it was in 2010-11. However, we have protected Local Government from the worst of these cuts. Over the past five years, spending per head on local services in England has **decreased** by around 7% in cash terms, whilst in Wales it has **increased** by 3%.

Within the Draft Budget announced on 30 September, the decisions taken by Ministers are based on a range of evidence of the funding pressures facing all public services in Wales. The Draft Budget will be scrutinised over the coming weeks by the appropriate Assembly Committees, before final determinations are made in December.

The UNISON petition specifically mentions the importance of Local Government social services in relation to the health service. In recognition of this, an additional £10 million has been made available through the Local Government Settlement for 2015-16 for social services. This additional funding has been made available to help to mitigate the pressures on social services.

The UNISON petition asks the Welsh Government to “reconsider the proposed budget cuts of up to 4.5% for Local Government”. The Welsh Government did not propose “budget cuts of up to 4.5%”. My predecessor advised local authorities that they should be preparing for a range of funding scenarios. I announced the Provisional Local Government Settlement for 2015-16 on 8 October. The overall reduction in the general revenue funding from the Welsh Government for 2015-16 is 3.4%. Whilst I acknowledge this is a challenging settlement, the funding it provides is just one of the sources Authorities need to take into account when drawing up budgets plans. They have a range of tools to help them manage future budgets and they receive income from many sources, including other Welsh Government grants, grants from other government bodies and Europe, council tax, and local fees and charges.

I meet regularly with Local Authority Leaders and also with UNISON representatives to discuss a range of matters and I will continue to do so.

Thank you for drawing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely,
Leighton Andrews

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