

COUNCIL 13TH SEPTEMBER 2018

PUBLIC Q&A

P	01	Question from:	Tony Mitchell
<p>What responses did you get from Government to your presentation of “the unprecedented challenges we face”? In particular, what was said about ‘new burdens’, social care, a Local Tourism Levy, University expansion and short term lettings, as cited in your response?</p>			
Answer from:		Cllr Charles Gerrish	
<p><i>As highlighted in the response to the Keynsham Area Forum, these issues were set out in the council’s detailed feedback to the Government’s Fair Funding Review. Although we have not received a detailed written response to the specific issues we raised through this process, this is in line with the expectation that Government would normally set out their responses to consultation when finalising their policy. Our latest information is that the Government will announce the results of the Fair Funding consultation at around the time of this Autumn’s budget statement.</i></p> <p><i>Given this, we therefore approached Government ministers directly to press our case and on 5th February, myself and the Leader met with Rishi Sunak MP, Minister for Local Government, regarding both the local government settlement and the specific requests set out in our Fair Funding Review submission. In addition, the Leader wrote formally on 16th May to highlight the specific issue in our Fair Funding response relating to short term holiday lets, highlighting in particular the need for a new Use Class for short term lets. We received a response from the Secretary of State dated 6th June which rejected this particular proposal. However, we continue to press this issue forcefully and on 17 June met with ministerial advisers at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), and, separately, with WECA Leaders and Kit Malthouse, Minister of State for Housing, specifically to discuss the issue of short term lettings. The Leader is due to have a further meeting with MHCLG on 17th September to press the short-term letting issue and the full range of requests we have set out.</i></p>			
P	02	Question from:	Tony Mitchell
<p>What ‘other issues’ did the Leader raise with which Government Ministers and what was their response?</p>			
Answer from:		Cllr Charles Gerrish	

As well as the key areas highlighted above, our response to the Fair Funding consultation requested a series of flexibilities and technical changes to help us raise more income locally, namely:

- *Full cost recovery for planning fees*
- *An extension of the Transition Grant received by the Council*
- *Extension of flexible use of capital receipts to fund transformation costs*
- *Adjustments to the Minimum Revenue Provision*
- *Removing fee exemptions for listed building applications*
- *Changes to Non Domestic rates exemptions for Listed Buildings standing empty*
- *Changes to the way office to residential conversions are treated under Business Rates retention*
- *Full cost recovery of licencing fees*

I am pleased to say that the issue of planning fees has recently been addressed through new regulations. We continue to press for change and encourage local groups, businesses and residents also to make their views known at national level on all these issues.