



# BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

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Mel Stride MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

March 27<sup>th</sup> 2017

Dear Mr Stride,

## **Re: PROPOSED GOVERNMENT FUNDING CUTS TO LOCAL SCHOOLS**

I am writing to you on behalf of Buckfastleigh Town Council to express our very serious concerns about the impact of the government's funding policy on the education and wellbeing of our young people.

Following a recent meeting between the Town Council and representatives of the local schools it is apparent that the 'Fairer' funding formula, combined with cuts to the Education Services Grant, will result in very significant budget reductions for Buckfastleigh Primary School and South Dartmoor Community College.

We have seen estimates that by 2019, taking into account these and the rising costs due to inflation (which for schools will be 8.7% over the lifetime of this government according to the National Audit Office), Buckfastleigh Primary will effectively lose the equivalent of £446 per pupil (about 8%, the equivalent of 2 full time teachers or all support staff) and South Dartmoor Community College £483 per pupil (about 8% and the equivalent of 15 teachers).

This does not take into account other factors such as increases to NI contributions, the large pension deficit inherited (despite assurances) from Devon County Council, the government's new 'Apprenticeship Levy', which will have a significant impact on the Academy's budget (approximately £40,000 per year), or the proposed new increased business tax on solar panels (such as those installed on Buckfastleigh Primary School). All of these will have a major negative effect on our schools budgets' and therefore their ability to provide education to the standard necessary.

Devon has suffered historic levels of underfunding compared to the national average and these further cuts are likely to undermine the fantastic improvements made in educational provision in our community over the last few years. Buckfastleigh already has the highest level of child poverty in the Teignbridge District Council area with over one third of our young people classified as living in poverty. These are the children who now face even more disadvantage with cuts to their education, a reduction in the support available to those with special needs and the demoralisation of the hard-working and committed staff.

These cuts will also have a serious detrimental impact on the town's already struggling economy with local teachers and support worker's jobs under threat.

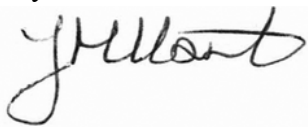
Buckfastleigh Town Council believes that investment in schools is an investment in the future of our communities and the country and that further cuts to school funding represent a serious undermining of our young people's education, ambition and talent.

In light of this, we would like to ask for:

- a) accurate information about the total budget changes for each year from 2017 to 2020 for Buckfastleigh Primary School and South Dartmoor Community College, including changes arising from all other known causes such as inflation, NI contributions, apprenticeship levy, etc.
- b) data regarding the impact of funding changes across Devon, including the total number of schools that will benefit and lose, the amount of change for each school and the number of pupils in each school affected.
- c) sight of any impact assessments that have been completed on the effect of the proposed changes on rural deprivation and child poverty,
- d) your assessment of the likely outcome of such changes on the education and life chances of our young people, and
- e) your commitment to work on behalf of the children in your constituency, to defend their education and fight for funding that sees real funding levels for children in Devon maintained, thereby protecting from further cuts to their education.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



Judith M. Hart  
Buckfastleigh Town Clerk

Cc: Rt Hon Justine Greening, Secretary of State for Education  
Councillor Stuart Barker (Devon County Council & Teignbridge District Council)  
Councillor John Nutley (Teignbridge District Council)  
Councillor Charlie Dennis (Teignbridge District Council)  
Buckfastleigh Town Council  
Ashburton Town Council  
South Dartmoor Community College  
Buckfastleigh Primary School

Buckfastleigh Primary School Governors

Local press and media