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Thank you for your letter dated 13 January to the Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP about your council's resolution seeking government funding to cover council staff pay rises. I have been asked to reply as this matter falls within my ministerial responsibilities.

I agree that local government workers provide an invaluable safety net for people across the country and I recognise and appreciate the commitment of this hard-working group of people. I know that their efforts make a real difference in local communities. This is why we have provided funding certainty and stability to the sector. The 2020/21 settlement for local government responds to the pressures that councils are facing by providing access to the largest increase in spending power since 2015.

Under our proposals, Core Spending Power is expected to rise from £46.2 billion to £49.1 billion in 2020-21, an estimated 4.3% real terms increase. This includes a £1bn cash grant for social care, which means that councils will benefit from having £2.9bn of extra funding for the core services that are so important to residents. Beyond social care, we are protecting vital front-line services by increasing elements of core settlement funding in line with inflation, and we will consult on a 2% core council tax principle for all councils next year.

Outside of the main Local Government Finance Settlement, local government will also see increases from wider resources made available this Spending Round. The Chancellor has confirmed that the NHS' contribution to the Better Care Fund will grow in line with the additional investment in the NHS; and on the vital issue of supporting children and young people, there will be a £700m increase in grant funding for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

However, it's right that detailed employment matters such as pay are for local government employers to determine, in consultation with local government unions. Ministers do not have a formal role in such matters. Given this, I do not think that it would be appropriate to comment. However, my officials will continue to engage with you on relevant matters.

Thank you for writing in on this important matter.

LUKE HALL MP