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HAMPSHIRE CHRONICLE

Letter from Westminster



**Winchester MP
Steve Brine**

THE *Hampshire Chronicle* has carried its' share of good news for Winchester and the surrounding area during its long history but we've had a double helping this month that is to be celebrated and is worthy of note.

First, you may have noticed some

exciting news about major new investment we have secured for the Royal Hampshire County Hospital? The Trust will be able to access 'seed' funding right away to develop plans for a £500m major re-build which will secure long-term safe and sustainable services in our much-loved and relied upon district general hospital.

In recent years I've successfully lobbied for small amounts of funding to improve the Emergency Department or relocate the hospital Pharmacy team, and they are all really important to the patient experience, but this is on a totally different scale. It's a huge vote of confidence from the Government and the NHS.

This does not mean there are not choices to be made and other battles to fight; the success of the local NHS cannot be only about tertiary care.

I want to see the prevention green paper I wrote before leaving office (as a health minister) turned into reality and as the public finances recover, ministers must address the overall public health spend and its effectiveness.

Equally, it was very good to hear adult social care form part of last week's Queen's Speech. We may have had a torrid time trying to address the issue in 2017 but it's time to return to the scene of the crime and face the reality the confronts many of you every day. Without a parliamentary majority - or an opposition remotely interested in a cross-party solution - it's going to be fiendishly difficult but to govern is to choose.

I am regularly in the hospital, meeting clinicians and senior management and I look forward to working closely with the Trust, and Government, as we develop plans to transform the hospital for the benefit of my constituents. More on this at www.stevebrine.com/prioritynhs

Secondly, when I led a big "schools in Winchester" debate in Parliament this summer, I could only hope we'd get such a positive response from ministers.

That plea, for a long-term funded plan for schools, came on top of years of campaigning - including through the f40 group of which I am a member - and is a big win for this area.

There is always more to do but this £2.45m cash boost will be very welcome in my constituency.

School budgets may have been largely protected from austerity, and per-pupil funding may have risen, but changes to the lump sum and significant cost pressures have really tested our hard-working headteachers and governors.

On top of that we have a serious issue with high needs funding in Hampshire with many local schools seeing a marked increase in the needs of children, especially with regards to social, emotional and mental health.

I think parents and teachers will recognise this positive response to the very real concerns I raised on their behalf in Parliament. This is what experience and credibility delivers for our area.

**Steve Brine MP
Winchester and Chandler's Ford**