

Report to Ashburnham Parish Assembly 2017

As usual the budget has taken up much of the Council year **with lower funding** leading to more cuts and East Sussex's part of the Council Tax rising by 5% of which 3% is to help with Adult Social Care

New computer terminals have been installed at all of the county's 24 libraries, improving the Council's network of free to access PCs and enabling people to use the internet and email, search for jobs and look up a wide range of information. Among those benefitting from the upgrade are users of the IT For You scheme which offers advice and support on using IT to prepare a CV and apply for work

There were **positive educational results** reported in the summer, including improvements in GCSE and A level results. At **Key Stage 1**, the percentage of East Sussex pupils achieving the expected standard was **higher than the national average in reading, writing and mathematics**. At Key Stage 4 our Progress 8 score was +0.04, significantly higher than the national average of -0.03. 87.1% of primary schools are judged to be good or outstanding, an increase of 10.1 percentage points since August 2015. 77.8% of secondary schools and 100% of maintained special schools are good or outstanding against national averages of 77.6% and 93.2% respectively.

A **National Funding Formula** for schools has just undergone consultation round 2. The aim is to equalise per pupil funding. This means that some Local Authorities and schools will gain money and some will lose because the total amount of money to be distributed will remain the same. **It looks as though East Sussex as a whole will have more money to distribute but no longer have a say in how this is done resulting in 43% of the County's schools being worse off.** The schools which will break even or benefit are those which comply with the government's preferred model for academies; 1,000+ pupils in a secondary school and 2 form entry primary schools. Complaints by Local Authorities which have smaller rural schools during consultation round 1 resulted in the introduction of a "sparsity factor" to address the problem. Unfortunately it only works for a few East Sussex schools as to qualify a school has to be 5 miles away as the crow flies from its nearest neighbour. There is a big health warning with the foregoing in that there has been talk in the media that the government was going to do a certain amount of rethinking and it is unclear what effect a general election will have.

A new integrated service **bringing health visiting and children's centres** together was launched in June 2016. The new service aims to help families be self-sufficient in their communities by providing appropriate early intervention and support, and keep children aged 0-5 safe and healthy by providing accessible, comprehensive, high quality services, promoting social inclusion and equality and respecting diversity.

The percentage of court proceedings, to ensure timely decision making about long term care for children, completed within 26 weeks has increased from 22% in April 2016 to 63% in December 2016.

East Sussex County Council will receive £8.2 million for the East Sussex Strategic Growth Project to create new employment developments in areas including Bexhill and Eastbourne. £5 million has been granted towards a £44 million redevelopment of the Devonshire Park area including a new conference complex. More than 1,000 **new jobs** are expected to be created as a result which will benefit all residents in the County.

East Sussex County Council is one of seven local authorities which have agreed to form a partnership called Transport for the South East (TfSE). The vision for this new body is for strategic transport planning for the whole area, unlocking economic growth and improving lives for residents. To begin with, TfSE will run in shadow form as it develops its strategy and operation, consulting with transport operators, businesses and the public. With government agreement, TfSE could move to full operation from 2019.

A new seven-year contract for the provision of highway services in the county began on 1st May 2016. The contract with Costain CH2M replaced the existing arrangement of three separate contractors being responsible for highways, street lighting and traffic signals. The new contract has seen the introduction of a new website and online system for people to report highways issues; www.eastsussexhighways.com. In the first 6 months of the contract East Sussex Highways completed over 220 planned road works, 10,000 minor works, laid 64 miles of tarmac, answered 26,000 calls and progressed major works in areas such as Hailsham and Uckfield.

The e-Sussex project to rollout faster **broadband** in previously isolated areas has improved access to services, jobs and education. Over 66,000 premises have been connected to improved broadband speeds in the first phase of works and the second phase to connect a further 5,000 of the hardest to reach premises in the county is underway but difficulties are still being experienced in homes and businesses which have not been able to gain access to improved broadband speeds.

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