

## **REPORT FROM EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCILLOR – 2018**

**Jim Sheppard.**

The County is under much pressure at present due to the lack of funding from the Government. Having made savings of £112 million already we are still under pressure to save even more. We must save another £17 million this year plus another £30 million during 2020/21. These cuts in spending will inevitably lead to cuts in services.

Reluctantly, we will be reducing the Library services and making changes in how we deliver Adult Social Care. I can now say that seven libraries will be closing. These are at Ore, Ringmer, Polegate, Willingdon, Langney, Pevensey Bay & Mayfield. The mobile library will also be stopped. This will leave 17 libraries still open across the whole County. However, if there is a community that has lost its library and feels it is in a position to run its own service with volunteers, they will be helped by the County Council potentially offering a lease on a peppercorn rent in a building that the County owns. The Council may also lend, again on a peppercorn rent basis, a selection of core starter stock and the current fixtures and fittings of the library to help overcome these initial barriers. Some local communities are already considering these offers.

The Council's "Stand Up For East Sussex" campaign, which made the case for East Sussex's particular needs to be recognised by Government, gathered almost 6,000 signatures and was delivered to the Prime Minister in December. Councillor Glazier, Leader of East Sussex County Council, and Councillor Roy Perry, Leader of Hampshire County Council met with Sajid Javid, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government recently. They discussed how their Councils and Government can work together to tackle the challenges facing Local Government and communities in the South East, and to get a clearer understanding of Government's approach to Local Government funding. Following the meeting, and publication of the Autumn Budget, Councillor Glazier wrote to the Minister, on behalf of the County Councils, reaffirming the actions required to secure economic growth and the financial sustainability of Local Government in the South East. We are still waiting for his response.

After a very severe winter where the roads froze then thawed the potholes are going to get worse. Please bear with us and be patient, we will get around to repairing them but it takes time and resources.

I am a member of the Corporate Parenting Panel. We care for children being fostered, those being adopted and those in care at Council homes. We also care for children in secure accommodation. This is for their protection from various abuses, even from their own families. E.S.C.C. is amongst the tenth lowest for school attendance in the whole country. Our "Get a Grip" campaign aims to address this problem by telling parents to stop taking them on holiday during term times.

I am also a member of the East Sussex Fire and rescue authority. The headquarters have just moved from Eastbourne to Lewes where they share premises with Sussex Police. The new Chief Fire Fighter and Chief Executive is Dawn Whittaker appointed after the retirement of C.F.O. Gary Walsh. We have 24 fire stations, 12 crewed and 12 on call.

Almost 4,800 additional premises were able to be connected to superfast broadband at the end of quarter 2 as part of our second contract of works. Take up of superfast services under contract 1 is 46.3%, while the contract 2 take up is 31.7%. Please note that connection is not automatic. Customers will need to contact the Internet Service Provider of their choice to arrange a new broadband package.

Overall the County is doing the best it can with the resources it has.