

Annual Report by Cllr Peter Hudson March 2017

The past twelve months have been extremely busy. Chasing the inevitable highway problems from potholes, excessive mud on the road, continued flooding on the Longstanton By-Pass, monitoring and moving travellers from the Park and Ride, stopping ludicrous traffic diversions to name but a few. Successfully lobbying hard to save the Mobile Library Service after several requests from residents of both Over and Longstanton. In addition to this, supporting and working with the Parish Council and District Council Colleagues, particularly in planning issues and the contravening of planning conditions as in the incorrect routes taken by HGV traffic from the Northstowe site as well as other issues and being an active member of both the Health and Audit and Accounts Committees of the County Council.

Again, I have received a large amount of personal correspondence from our residents with requests for help on a number of issues that affect their everyday lives. Over the past twelve months I have received 148 requests from residents for help on such diverse issues as school placements, home to school transport, special educational needs requirements, parent and school difficulties, social care for the elderly and venerable adults, corporate parenting as in children in care and general council benefit entitlements. 141 of these cases were resolved to the complete satisfaction of our residents, the remainder were either not possible for various reasons or the information given was found to be untrue. I find this individual case work very satisfying and rewarding, especially when common sense prevails.

I have continued my work in finding and helping our low income families to take advantage of the new extended free child care, From September 2017 working parents of 3 and 4-year-olds will be entitled to 30 hours of funded childcare and early learning – a doubling of the current universal entitlement. In order to access the additional hours, parents will need to complete an online check, and will receive a code to redeem with a childcare provider. The new website for parents and providers is www.childcaresupport.tax.service.gov.uk/8

Whilst HM Revenue and Customs have already written to some families to raise their awareness of the forthcoming increase, systems are being developed to support providers with this new process and are expected to be available from June 2017. As with many government initiatives, very few, if any, were aware of this entitlement or indeed the changes, now I'm very happy to report that many of our young families from the three parishes I represent are taking advantage of this much needed help.

The Health Committee, which takes up the majority of my time, holds the County Councils Public Health budget, one of its responsibilities is the commissioning of the 0-19 years Healthy Child Programme which consists of Health Visiting (0-5yrs), Family Nurse Partnership (intensive home visiting programme for teenage parents) and School Nursing (5-19yrs). The universal-progressive service is delivered at 4 levels: Community, Universal (all children receive a universal offer), Universal Plus (additional help for those who need it provided by a single agency), Universal Partnership Plus (intensive support for children with complex needs with multi-agency involvement). The aims of the Healthy Child Programme are to: help parents develop and sustain a strong bond with children, encourage care that keeps children healthy and safe, protect children from serious disease (through screening and immunisation), identify

health issues early, reduce childhood obesity and support children to achieve their educational potential.

Council Budget 2017/18

After a very noisy and vigorous debate, the Council finally managed to pass a budget.

There were several options on the table, with some groups wanting to raise the County Council contribution to the Council Tax by as much as 5% per year for the next 3-4 years (2% council tax, 3% adult social care)

At the end of a very long day, the Council Tax was raised by 0% with a 2% raise to be ring-fenced for Adult Health and Social Care which the County Council now has responsibility for. The council was presented with a full and balanced budget based on the 2 and 0% increases. I believe that this was a good result, as many of our residents are low paid and cannot afford any excessive tax rises.

The council has continued to lobby government and explain to them that increasing taxation locally to offset an unfair national funding formula cannot be justified. That lobbying paid off, and Cambridgeshire will receive additional transitional grant funding for Adult Social Care from government of £8.3 million in 2017/18, £6.5 million in 2018/19 and £3.3 million in 2019/20.

It is essential that the County Council continues to change how it operates even more than it has done over the past few years. The shared Chief Executive and shared services with other Local Authorities are saving many millions of pounds - backroom money put into front line services.... This has to be taken much further to enable a slimmed down, transformed, highly efficient council, to provide the highest level of services to our residents at the lowest possible cost.