

Old Hastings & Tressell County Councillor Report Jeremy Birch
January 2012

* The Budget - the County Council set its budget this week with a further £19 million worth of revenue cuts; there will be £100 million over four years. However, in terms of capital spend they have a last agreed to release monies from the large reserves, especially the waste reserve that was built up in case the large energy from waste project came out much more expensive than expected. The funds now released will be spent on a further County Council contribution to the Hastings-Bexhill Link Road (providing the government's delayed decision is yes), ensuring high-speed broadband availability in areas where it is less commercially viable, other economic development projects etc. I moved that a moderate extra amount be taken from reserves to mitigate the affect of the high impact cuts to social services and children and to limit the reduction in street lighting maintenance and replacement. I was not successful.

* Traffic & Transport - I will be accompanying Old Town residents on 26th March when the council will be deciding its response to their petition calling for pedestrian safety improvements in High Street and elsewhere. There is a resident working party that came out of the public meeting last year and it is starting working on some proposals. The county highways department has repeated the commitment they made to me previously that there will be a full review of traffic and transport issues in the Old Town later this year when it will be possible to assess the impact of the Jerwood Gallery and the new arrangements at Rock-a-Nore Road and the Bourne.

* Winter Maintenance - The gritting of main routes by the County Council supplemented by Hastings Borough Council arranging for snow and ice clearance in shopping areas etc seems to have worked reasonably well over the current cold snap. You can check the map of gritting routes at <http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/roads/maintenance/saltingandgritting/find/default.aspx>

* Castledown School - The school has recently had a positive Ofsted report which states: "Castledown is a satisfactory school which is quickly improving under the strong leadership and clear vision of the headteacher. . . A local authority review in 2009 identified that the quality of teaching and learning needed improving urgently and this inspection confirms that these elements are now satisfactory> The full report can be found at <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/114474>