

Report from Cllr Jeremy Birch 8 July 2012

- **Old London Road major diversion:**

Activity: Crane lifting portacabins into Salvation Army premises Proposed Dates: 11 July 2012 and 19 July 2012

Temporary Road Closure on Old London Road, at No. 416 (Salvation Army).

Diversion for light vehicles via Alfred Road - Canute Road - Saxon Road and vice versa.

Diversion for HGVs via A259 - Queens Road - Elphinstone Road - The Ridge

- **School exclusions:** Schools in East Sussex are excluding more pupils than schools in other local education authority areas. The county is the 19<sup>th</sup> highest out of 150 for exclusions. And 27% of the permanent exclusions are primary school children (11 years or under), compared with 11% nationally; 23% are children with special needs, compared to 8% nationally. This is not satisfactory as exclusion especially at an early age can damage a child's whole educational experience. I am particularly concerned how this affects Hastings children.
- **Educational attainment gap:** County Council recently discussed the successes and failures of its corporate plan for last year – 2011-12. A worrying feature was the widening of the gap from 26.5% to 31.7% between those young people obtaining 5 good GCSEs (A to Cs) who receive free school meals and those who don't. Free school meals eligibility is the well-used indicator for school student poverty. The gap in primary schools remained unchanged, while the gap between the lowest achieving under-5s and the rest widened. In the meeting I raised the issue of the need to narrow the gap and raised the fears that this could have particular relevance to Hastings. We will have to look at the new funding formula for schools coming next year to see if this can assist the needs of schools in more challenging areas.
- **Learning disability day centres:** The County Council is reviewing the provision of day centres for people with learning disabilities. This has led to the rationalisation of the number of centres in the Hailsham/Eastbourne area. The review will move on to look at provision in Hastings and Bexhill – Beeching Road and the Conquest Centre. It is important there is the fullest involvement of users and their families in the discussion about any changes.
- **Children's centres:** The number of stand-alone children's centres in Eastbourne, Bexhill and rural Rother is being reduced. Essentially there will be a hub centre with satellites attached. The satellites will still provide a location for different services for children but will no longer be drop-in centres for parents and children. A similar review may take place in Hastings and again we have to make sure that parents and communities affected are able to have their say.

Cllr Jeremy Birch – 01424 425585

If you would prefer not to receive the county councillor's report please let me know; otherwise feel free to copy it on to others.