

Old Hastings & Tressell County Councillor Report

- **Fire service cuts:** At the June 5th meeting of East Sussex Fire Authority (which is drawn from members of the county council and from Brighton & Hove city council) members voted to remove the retained fire engine from The Ridge, reduce the number of firefighters at The Ridge and Roedean (in Brighton) fire stations, and remove a fire engine from a station in the City of Brighton and Hove. The three Labour councillors on the authority - Cllrs Phil Scott and Michael Wincott from Hastings and Cllr Bob Carden from Brighton - opposed the three proposed cuts to frontline fire services. The combined votes of Conservative, UKIP and Lib Dem councillors pushed through the cuts affecting The Ridge fire station.
- **Adult social care:** The Local Government Ombudsman has reported that East Sussex County Council tops their league table for the number of complaints made to them about an adult social care department. The adult social care scrutiny committee will be looking into this and why it might be the case. The June county council cabinet made a significant decision regarding the meals on wheels service. The service costs the adult social care department £583,900 after the recipients have made their payment for the meals. The provider of this service is Apetito and the contract, which was let in 2007, is due for re-tender so the county council is trying to look for changes and savings before considering a new contract. The county cabinet agreed "that a consultation is undertaken on the proposal to change our approach including the potential withdrawal of the current subsidy arrangements." Labour councillors expressed their serious disquiet at this consultation. No-one can be opposed to looking to provide a service more efficiently and to make savings but it's hard to see how a meals on wheels service can be run with no subsidy from the county council and the users not lose out.
- **Street Lighting:** Following a meeting held between my borough council colleague Cllr John Hodges, myself and senior county highways officers commitments were made to rectify some of the controversial lighting changes in the Old Town with the move over to LED. All existing decorative four-sided "Windsor" lanterns and tear drop "Albany" lanterns will remain in-situ and be fitted with LED modules. Then in recognition of the conservation issues in the Old Town they agreed to up to 27 locations decorative fitting more in keeping with the surroundings will be installed. The actual fitting is still to be agreed and the county's lantern manufacturer is currently putting together a sample. These 27 lanterns will replace a selection of existing functional lanterns including AC Ford lanterns. John Hodges and my other borough council colleague Cllr Dawn Poole then did a walkabout with lighting staff to identify precise locations for these 27 street lamps. The timescale for the replacement of the twenty seven lanterns will be dependent on the availability of the sample and the length of the planning process (where required).
- **Ofsted:** The county council's children's services department has received a very successful Ofsted report on its fostering, adoption and

safeguarding following a visit in January/February. Ofsted issued a “good” designation. The weaknesses that need to be tackled include the time taken to allocate children in need cases and also the outcomes for teenagers coming out of care, 41% of whom are not in education, employment or training. Now Ofsted have decided to come in between Monday 9 to Friday 13 June to inspect the county council’s school improvement arrangements. They will particularly be looking at how the council has supported and challenged schools in:

- Improving the number of good and outstanding primary schools
- Improving children’s readiness for school
- Closing the attainment gap between children entitled to free school meals and those who aren’t
- Improving performance at KS2 (aged 11) in maths
- Improving the number of young people in Education, Training and Employment.

- **Hastings Borough Council news:** The recent borough council elections left a council comprising 24 Labour councillors and eight Conservatives. At the council’s annual meeting Cllr Bruce Dowling was elected mayor and Cllr Judy Rogers deputy mayor. Cllr Jeremy Birch was elected leader with Cllr Peter Chowney as deputy leader. The meeting endorsed the programme for the year as presented by the leader:

<http://hastings.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s926/Appendix%20B%20-%20The%20Years%20Programme.pdf>

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