

Budget 2015/16: The county council has just set its budget for 2015/16 – the third year of their over £60 million cuts programme. It amounts to £18 million of cuts with the largest contribution being made by adult social care. Elderly persons care, respite care for families of disabled children, support to young people in danger of offending are just some of the areas facing serious cutbacks. I moved an amendment on behalf of Labour councillors which would have given £2 million additional spending both to adult social care and to children's services, put money back into the public transport budget that has recently been cut and into the youth service. This was to be financed largely from taking money out of the substantial reserves the county council has built up. Unfortunately it was defeated due to the combined votes of the ruling Conservative Group backed up by UKIP councillors.

Bus campaign: I reported last year that the County Council had cut subsidies to local bus services which meant that the 28 and 344 would cease to run on Sundays as the operators did not consider them viable without financial support. The 28 is a vital route along The Ridge through Ore Village and to the town centre, taking in the Conquest Hospital, and the 344 is an important link between Hastings and Rye and serving Fairlight, Pett, Winchelsea Beach, Rye and Playden via Ore Village. The Hastings Parking Board, an East Sussex County Council body on which sit four councillors from Hastings Borough Council, has voted to use parking revenues to fund the reinstatement of the Sunday services of the 344 and the 28. This victory is a direct result of the pressure from local residents and particularly from the Don't Stop the Bus campaign.

Frederick Road: The petition signed by Frederick Road residents calling for a 20 mph limit and a ban on heavy vehicles was discussed on 26th January. My borough council colleague Cllr Tania Charman spoke on behalf of the petitioners and I spoke as the local county councillor. Unfortunately the lead councillor for highways who makes decision on petitions like this did not support us and the petition was rejected. However, the highways department will be currently carrying out a survey on the impact of any extra traffic from the Link Road in this part of The Ridge and this will highlight if Frederick Road will see even more traffic, which may give us more priority and create further need for a review.

Isobel Blackman: The county council has awarded the contract for running the Isobel Blackman Centre to Sussex Community Development Agency. The county council staff who currently provide the day care will be transferring to the new provider under TUPE regulations which are related to continuing the terms and conditions of transferring staff. As a result there has to be formal consultation with staff as part of this process. Although the intention remains to work to contract transfer on 6th April this cannot be guaranteed due to those TUPE discussions. But the current arrangements in Isobel Blackman will continue until this work is concluded. The county adult social care department has assured me there will not be any gap in provision.

Deferred care costs: A consultation has been launched on proposed changes to a scheme which helps people pay for residential care. The County Council plans to change its deferred payment scheme to fit with the Government's new Care Act, which comes into law in April. The scheme offers a deferred payment agreement – a loan of money to homeowners who have to pay the full cost of their care because of the value of their home. The

proposals include changes to how people pay set-up and administration charges, extending the scheme to include extra care and sheltered housing and allowing loans of greater value in exceptional circumstances. The changes, which will bring the scheme into line with the new national rules, will not affect people who are already signed up to a loan. People who are already signed up to a deferred payment agreement will see no change and these proposals, if approved, will only affect new applicants to the scheme. The consultation runs until Tuesday, February 24. A decision on the recommendations will be made in March and a new scheme will be in place for April 1. People can have their say on the proposals online at www.eastsussex.gov.uk/haveyoursay

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