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Report to Parish Councils – July 2021

This is the monthly second report, following on from the report entitled 'May 2021' which was dated 25th May and intended for Parish Council meetings in June. This caused confusion – hence the change in title!

As a reminder, I am happy to receive feedback on which topics should be included, though preferably not those which are easily available on the ESCC web site or other sources.

This report is for all 7 parishes in Northern Rother. I may on occasion add parish-specific supplements.

COVID update

As of 25th June, East Sussex has a continued low rate of 152 new cases in the previous 7 days, slightly up from 14. In terms of cases per 100,000 population, East Sussex is 27, the South East 58 and England 101. I understand that hospital cases from COVID in East Sussex are very low - in about mid-June there were only two cases and I am told these were discovered only by testing of patients admitted for other reasons. This aligns with national figures which suggest that vaccinations are reducing the proportion of COVID patients admitted to hospital. However, the national trend is upwards due to the Delta variant.

Government funding has been provided to local authorities including county councils, unitary authorities and district councils. At ESCC government funding for COVID-specific costs of just

under £100m has been received up to April 2021 (the end of the financial year), £63m for specific departments and £37m for general funding. Of this £46m was spent on adult social care, mostly on infection control; £13m on children's services, for example helping schools to manage outbreaks; and smaller amounts in other areas, with the balance carried over for COVID costs this year.

Council Monitoring

At this time of year, the council reviews performance for the previous financial year. This report is 77 pages long and is being reviewed by cabinet in the next few days and then by full council in July. It is publicly viewable, for example in the agenda papers for Cabinet on 29th June. It follows a programme called Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR).

For those not wishing to read 77 pages there are some useful graphical summaries, in particular showing which targets have been met, which not, and which have been carried over as they are expected to be met, the latter particularly due to the pandemic which has caused some delays. Of 52 targets, 36 were met, 9 not met and 7 carried over. Targets are also 'RAG rated' which uses a traffic light system of Red, Amber or Green which makes it easy to see areas of concern and the details for that.

Cases

Each month I will give summaries for a sample of current cases across the Division.

- **Grass Cutting.** There is some dissatisfaction with grass cutting in several parishes. Most parishes pay for an additional 4 cuts by county making 6 in all. Typically, this has included cuts in April, May, July and August. June seems to be omitted, perhaps because in a typical year June is drier and has less growth. This seems not to be the case this year. I have meetings with Highways to discuss this and other areas and will report back. If there are urgent grass or hedge issues, in particular causing visibility or other safety issues, please let me know but also report them at <https://www.eastsussexhighways.com/report-a-problem>.
- **Northiam School Crossing Patrol.** In a policy set more than 5 years ago, ESCC only pays for these where traffic meets certain criteria, which has not been the case in Northiam for many years. For the last 5 years this has been funded by Persimmon under an agreement which runs out in July. I am working with the Parish Council to raise funds to extend this. The PC has agreed to provide some funding and we are seeking sponsorship for the balance.