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Report to Parish Councils – November 2024

This report is written is for Parish Councils meeting in November.

Some of the items here are from information circulated by ESCC but which may not have been drawn to the attention of parish councillors and others.

Budgets (again)

As announced in the press, as part of the process in moving towards a balanced budget for 25/26 ESCC needs to make significant savings – about £55M a year. Part of this might include curtailing or stopping services which are not statutory (i.e. not required by law). Some of these are for Adult and Social services and require consultation as I mentioned last month. The list of those currently out for consultation includes:

- The East Sussex Floating Support Service (ESFSS) is available to East Sussex residents aged 16+, living in, or moving to, independent or supported accommodation in all housing tenures who require housing-related support
- Supported accommodation for vulnerable adults – This service supports adults aged 18 and over whose primary need is a risk of harm due to being homeless. It comprises 28 units across two schemes located in Hastings and Eastbourne which support clients 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- Supported accommodation for adults with mental health needs – This service supports adults aged 18 and over who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, whose primary

need is risk of harm due to a recognised mental health need. It comprises 45 units across three schemes located in Hastings, Eastbourne and Rother which support clients 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- Phoenix Centre – The Phoenix Centre provides day services to older people with a range of complex physical and mental health needs living in the community. The service is based in Lewes and offers care and support to up to 25 people per day, Monday to Friday.
- Milton Grange day service and mental health community outreach – Milton Grange day service delivers a range of support and activities to older people living in the community who have complex mental health and physical needs
- Linden Court – Linden Court, located in Eastbourne, is a day service for people with learning disabilities. The service is used by 42 clients accessing the day service, mostly within the building
- Steps to Work – Steps to Work provides training to prepare clients with a learning disability or autistic people, with an assessed Care Act eligible need, for work, and support to find and retain employment
- Hookstead and St Nicholas Centre day services. These are day services for people with a learning disability.
- Community support services for people with a learning disability - East Sussex Community Support Service has two elements - Supported Living and a Community Support Service.
- Drug and alcohol recovery services – These services are commissioned to support those in recovery from drug and alcohol misuse to sustain their recovery via support networks and dedicated support for the street community, and to provide specialist support for carers of those affected by drug and alcohol misuse

Although these are perhaps surprisingly not statutory (i.e. ESCC is not mandated by law to provide them) I, like I believe all county councillors, took on my role because I want to help all residents. The above list would affect some of the neediest in our community. Although generally speaking alternatives would be found, it would probably not be as good. In some cases it could result in increased costs for districts and boroughs.

This is needed because we do not have sufficient funding from central government. For years we lobbied the previous government for more reasonable funding and continue to lobby this one. It does depend on the budget tomorrow (30th October) but more particularly on the 'settlement' which is announced by the government just before Christmas. Ideally such a settlement is for 3 years but for some years it has only covered the year beginning in April, which does not help with planning.

I will continue to report on this each month as the budget becomes clearer.

Booking System for Waste Recycling Sites

As part of the ESCC review of budgets, views are being sought on proposals to introduce a booking system at household waste recycling sites across the county

The move could reduce queuing at sites, help save ESCC as much £50,000 a year and help ensure only residents' waste is being disposed.

A consultation opened on Monday, October 28 and will run for eight weeks, closing on Sunday, December 22.

Although initially I thought this would not be sensible, apparently it has been in use for some time in Kent and is generally welcomed by residents.

You can give feedback at <https://consultation.eastsussex.gov.uk>.

Grants for Parishes

Most parishes have defibrillators, but these sometimes need replacing or installed at separate sites. I have had an email from a charity called London Hearts which is dedicated to the procurement and distribution of life-saving defibrillators across the UK for both public and private sectors. They have been given £500k of funding by the Department of Health and Social Care which can be used to provide about 50% of funding for local defibrillators. For more information see www.londonhearts.org.

I am aware of various other sources of funding or support for local communities including:

- Dungeness Power Stations. I sit on the Site Stakeholder Group which liaises between the massive project to decommission these and the local community. They often provide grants for local activities including some in East Sussex even though the power stations are in Kent. For example, this Christmas Rye food bank is their designated charity.
- Veolia Green and Food Waste Composting Facility. As a member of Place Scrutiny I recently visited this site near Lewes. Their 'output' is compost and they deliver 'one tonne bags' at no cost to local community gardens and similar.
- Southeast Water do make grants to local communities, for example to support playgrounds

If you have a project which might benefit, please let me know and I will put you in contact and try to help get it approved.

I am going to make this list of potential fund sources a regular in my report. Please let me know of you come across any and I will add them to the list.