

County Councillors Report 2019 Ferring AGM.

In addition to my role as a West Sussex County Councillor, at the start of last year I also held the role of Vice Chairman of the Performance & Finance Select Committee Chair that scrutinise WSCC decisions, which provided me with close insight into the Councils finances which are over £500 million a year. Last July, I was privileged to be offered the Cabinet position for Highways and Infrastructure.

With the growth in housing and commercial development, a key local highway project is the multi-million pound scheme dualling of the A259 and in particular the section from Station Road, Angmering to Ferring. Site clearance commenced in February this year in preparation for the start of the contract which is planned to take 18 months. This will feature a new cycling and pedestrian route to the south separated from the main carriageway by a verge. As far as possible the scheme will be constructed off - line to minimise disruption to road users.

Other highway improvements implemented this year was the £100,000 traffic calming scheme in Sea Lane, Ferring which has been well received by residents in addressing the speeding and safety issues as well as improving the pedestrian crossing point.

Even in difficult financial times WSCC is still providing grant funding, using its new crowdfunding platform, and I was pleased to support a grant by WSCC of £1900 towards Ferring Cricket Club's non-turf cricket pitch. Such grants have helped 77 worthwhile groups across West Sussex raise funds since its launch last May.

Along with education, fire services, the fight against waste, encouraging improved recycling and investment in our new solar farm at Chichester, WSCC plan to create new community hubs where a range of services will be available. The first hub to get the go ahead is Worthing which will see the children and family services, registration services and library services based out of a redesigned Worthing Library, due to open in 2020.

However Local Government continues to have challenging financial issues due to the reduced Government funding over the past few years, along with increasing demands in Adult Social Care and Supporting Children and Young People. Even though WSCC has saved £213 million over the past nine years there is still a £145 million budget shortfall over the next four years. These challenges have led to an increase in council tax of 4.99% made up of a 2.99% for county's core element plus 2.0% specifically for adult social care. This is the equivalent to an additional £1.27 per week for the average Band D household.

The life of a Councillor is varied and always interesting and it's a privilege to be elected to serve the community and I thank you for your continued support.
Cllr Roger Elkins