

2018/19 Annual Report – Derbyshire County Council

This is the second year of the Conservatives being in control of Derbyshire County Council. We decided at the outset that we wanted to make changes, become more efficient and obtain better value for money. As I stated in my last year's report we decided on a new structure which meant deleting the post of Chief Executive, instead we have 4 Strategic Directors, and the 4 main departments are Commissioning, Communities and Policy, Children's Services, Adult Care and Economy, Transport and Environment and they manage over 30,000 employees.

I don't need to remind you that all councils are under pressure to save money and where it was relatively easy to start with each year it does come harder, however, Derbyshire is 'Financially well placed' compared to some other councils, that was the view of the Local Government Association when they were invited to look at the way the county council is run.

We are constantly looking at ways of reducing costs but at the same time delivering a good service, one of the big projects we are looking at delivering in a different way is the Library service. We are committed to keep all of our libraries open but we are looking at encouraging local volunteers to take on the running of some of our smaller establishments. We have recently asked for expressions of interest but rest assured even if voluntary groups take over they will be given help for a number of years to establish themselves, libraries over the years have changed and they are now more community hubs and we realise they are valued by our residents.

As you can imagine improving our roads is a major responsibility and currently Derbyshire tops the list of county councils nationally for customer satisfaction in roads and has just been given an extra £8.4m to help repair them. We have repaired some 66,000 pot holes this year, nearly triple the normal amount but we realise there is still some way to go but you can always report a pothole if you see one or any other problems on the pavements or highways by reporting it on Derbyshire.gov.uk/doitnow.

We have or are commissioning new care homes, work has already started on a new care home with library combined in Belper, a new care facility and extra care centre in Buxton has recently opened and plans are already drawn up for a new care home in Cotmanhay. These homes are to replace very old

established care homes, they are sometimes well loved but the facilities are dated and residents have a right to expect new modern en suite facilities when they do have to use a care home.

We have this year introduced some new grant Action Grant schemes, these can cover youth activity, community activity, physical activity and sport and community safety.

Trusted Trader celebrated its 10 year anniversary recently, this scheme can give residents confidence they need any jobs doing, all the Trusted Traders are vetted by the DCC team.

I could go on but just a few facts and figures so that you can see the breadth of services we have to deliver, over 3.500 miles of roads and pavements, subsidised bus fares for 187,000 pensioners and 64,000 teenagers, looking after 80 countryside sites, helping 13.500 older and disabled people live independently at home, supporting 20,000 carers, providing foster home or residential care for 770 children, running 21 children's centres and helping 30,000 under-fives get the best start in life.

This year we have kept the Council Tax rise as low as we could with an increase of 3.99%, lower than the maximum allowed by Government and we are looking at how we can achieve a council tax freeze for two years from 2021.

Locally as usual there are the problems of speeding drivers, generally people do keep within a mile or two of the speed limit but there are always the exceptions to the rule and we do have some mindless idiots who think the estate is a race track. Parking is another problem, or should I say inconsiderate parking, DCC did hold a Community Involvement session in which they asked parish and town councils if they would like to get involved in helping delivering some services, we are already registered for the Snow Warden scheme and at a meeting held at County Hall quite a few parish council said providing equipment was provided they might take on some of the jobs such as sign cleaning, cutting back overgrown hedges, these are jobs DCC do but sometimes it can take weeks whereas a parish council could respond in days, other things are being looked at with the results and suggestions being fed back to the next Parish/Town/DCC Liaison meeting.

Work has commenced on changing to LED lighting in the area, the LED lights will be less costly to run and should last longer, Broadband is still being rolled

out across Derbyshire and although quite a bit of West Hallam has been covered there is still more to do.

As always if any residents have any problems or concerns if they contact me I will always do my best to help.