

REPORT FROM NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLOR

The finances of Northamptonshire County Council remain under pressure and the principal reasons for this are two fold:

- Year on year reducing support grant from central Government. It will continue to reduce from £77m in the recently approved 2015/16 budget to £13m in 2019/20.
- Increasing demands from Childrens' Services much of which is due to the increasing number of children being taken into County Council care under its statutory duty. Also the increasing demands at the other end of the spectrum from Adult Social Care accounted for by demographic changes as the County's population ages.

Despite the huge challenges, the Administration at County Hall is adapting the structures of the Council to deliver our services to our residents on a more cost effective basis. The protection of the County's front line services is a very high priority. One example is libraries ; every library remains open, the range of services offered has widened and the opening hours have been extended to include Sunday opening.

The Highways budget is important to us in the rural areas. I have worked to protect it from budget reductions and the NCC Highways Maintenance Initiative has contributed to an improvement in the quality of work delivered by Highways' contractors. As more homes are built, the pressure on the highways infrastructure will continue to rise. It remains a high priority at County Hall.

The continuing roll out of Super Fast Broadband means that 98% of homes and businesses can be connected to the new service by the end of 2017. Taxpayers' money is being spent in enabling BT to extend the programme to the rural areas.

Northamptonshire County Council's share of the Council Tax has been increase by 1.95% in 2015/16. . A Band D property will increase from £1048 to £1069. Our County continues to enjoy the lowest Council Tax in England among shire counties.

If anyone wishes to reach me, they can do so by e mailing me on MClarke@northamptonshire.gov.uk and I will do my best to help.

Michael Clarke (NCC Councillor for Hackleton & Grange Park division)