

December District Councillor Report - Cllr Johnny Denis

Local Plan.

Southdowns national park will be consulting on its local plan in January- March please look out for it and make your views known

Primary School Places

Officers at East Sussex have acknowledged the arguments that Ringmer Primary is going to need more places and that it will look to expand. I have put them in touch with the relevant person at Strutt And Parker (representing Glyndebourne). On a personal note, I would rather Glyndebourne and the land available for school provision than additional housing as was previously proposed.

ESCC Budget

The Council are, as you will know, £55M shy of where they would ideally be. This means that to set a legal- as in balanced- budget they have already visibly dampened down internal costs – non recruitment to posts, and any expenditure without adequate justification and are on their way to setting serious cuts in the budget. This will come before council in February with the work happening now to identify all the cuts possible.

The Government will not be releasing its financial settlement until just before Christmas so no Council will know its exact position financially before then. I really hope that this government introduces multi-year settlements as frequently promised but not delivered by the last so that Councils can actually plan ahead.

Local Government reorganisation

We are all waiting for white papers on local government which will incorporate the government's desire to devolve some powers to regional/metro mayors and/or combined authorities. There is now the clear desire from central government to use this opportunity to Turn all councils into Unitary Councils (combining of county council functions with those of District Councils. The white paper will set out how the government wants to approach this.

My biggest concern is that with any such re-organisation to unitaries, combined authorities and Mayors is that the voices of people and communities will be lost and local power will be centralised away from them. I hope you will work with your district and county associations (ESALC) to raise the voice of towns and parishes so local voices are heard! I'm sure me and my colleagues will do what we can to amplify them!

Warm regards,
Johnny

Cllr. Jonathan (Johnny) Denis FRSPH

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