

## **ESCC report for Brightling Parish Council 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

### Budget

The draft budget and council plan for 2022/23 was agreed at Cabinet last month. The budget proposed no new savings beyond those already agreed and suggested investing more in key areas to prepare for future pressures.

The proposals include:

- Cancelling savings of £900,000 which were due to be made from the early help service.
- Earmarking an extra £5 million for priority services in the year ahead, especially where new spending will reduce future demand .
- An extra £6m to combat climate change, to be spent between 2023 and 2025
- An extra £31m to be spent on maintaining roads and pavements in a good condition over the next 10 years.

The report to Cabinet said that demand for our services is more crucial than ever, especially for the most vulnerable residents, following the pandemic. It shows how careful financial management and the hard work of staff over several years has allowed a budget with no additional savings to be put forward. And it set out how setting aside some resources now will allow ESCC to prepare for growing demand and changes in areas including social care and special educational need.

To help prepare for a future which is still uncertain, the budget includes raising Council Tax by 1.99 per cent and the Adult Social Care precept allowed by Government by 2.5%. If adopted, this rise would see a typical (Band D) household pay an extra £1.33 a week for County Council services.

### Bidders shortlisted for £730m Highways contract

Three bidders have been shortlisted to provide highway maintenance and infrastructure services for East Sussex from May 2023.

The county council has selected Ringway Jacobs, Balfour Beatty Living Places, and Colas to move to the next stage of the procurement process. The selected bidders have now been invited to submit detailed tenders about how they would deliver highway maintenance, improvement schemes and a range of other highways services.

The new £730million Highways Infrastructure Services contract will replace the council's current £300m seven-year contract with Costain and Jacobs. The new contract is likely to run for a maximum of 14 years – with an initial seven-year term and an option to extend by a further seven years subject to satisfactory performance.

The deadline for receipt of the detailed tenders is March 2022, with the announcement of the preferred tenderer to be made in September 2022.

### East Sussex Pension Fund invests in sustainable global equity portfolio

The East Sussex Pension Fund is investing £200m of its passive equities in the Osmosis Resource Efficient Ex-Fossil Fuels Strategy, as part of its ongoing commitment to rid its portfolio of fossil-fuel equities.

The portfolio has already achieved a carbon intensity reduction of 63% as of December 2021, as well as a reduction in water consumption of 67% and a reduction in waste generation of 61%, relative to the MSCI World Index.

### Senior School applications

Thousands of students learnt whether they received a place at one of their preferred secondary schools when school admissions for September 2022 were announced last week.

Of the 5,634 applications received by East Sussex County Council, almost 96 per cent of children have been given a place at one of their three preferred secondary schools, with 87.6 per cent securing their first preference.