

**CLLR HILARY COX
ANNUAL REPORT - WINTERBORNE DIVISION
DORSET COUNTY COUNCIL
2015/16**

The Council Tax Bills show a 2% rise and also an Adult Social Care precept (more details can be found on dorsetforyou.com/council-tax-2016-17). An extra £48.51 on a Band D property.

This year's settlement from Central Government was particularly harsh for Dorset, a 47% cut and by 2017/18 there will be no funding at all – in fact unless the formula is changed, we will be funding other authorities!

How can educating a child in Hackney cost £500 but only £180 in Dorset?

Or another example,

Central Government funding per head in an urban authority is £1,600 but a rural authority £252?

Our MPs and Councils managed to extract some transitional help so that we could set a budget of £265m which includes a measly £19.4m Revenue Support Grant from Government and a promise to revisit Local Authority Funding, but I am not holding my breath!

Whatever happens, financial pressures will continue until as a country we learn to live within our means.

Dorset County Council has saved £70m since 2010 and to set this year's budget we will have to find another £13m in savings in the year.

Plans are in place and will have to be implemented - £500k from bus subsidies, far more innovative community schemes, making better use of school and adult social care vehicles + £1m next year.

Mobile library stops which are seldom, if every used, are being cut. Consultation on dorsetforyou.com. SEN pupils now have 'personalised budgets' so 100 pupils are now driven by their families or friends which is better all round.

All the above and many others are not going to make the savings needed so work is now well underway to radically change how to deliver the services we need in the future.

Whatever happens in the eastern bloc of authorities – last week Dorset councillors gave a strong steer towards setting up one Shire Dorset authority with one councillor per ward/division able to work on residents' behalf.

Not a takeover from county as far more needs to be given back to towns, boroughs and parishes to decide almost pre 1974, but not quite. There needs to be strategic planning in an upper tier along with services that cannot be done locally – efficiently and value for money.

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Much work to be done and so little time. It is taking up a lot of mine along with the work I still hold dear, the Environment. A recent study has shown the economic value of our very special environment at £1.56 billion providing 30,000 jobs. As we all know Dorset is the natural place to do business. I am still involved with County Farms, Jurassic Coast, Local Nature Partnership and, of course, whatever needs to be done in the Winterborne Division.

I have held three Division meetings – all District and Parish Councillors invited. Discussions on various topics, always Highways, but others too. Next one is in June/July, date to be confirmed.

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During the next few months I will be visiting all the Division villages, if not the Parish Councils meetings, at least the excellent pubs and hope to see you there.

Wishing you all the best.

Yours Hilary C