

County Councillors Report for 2017/2018

Aside from the numerous formal and informal meetings I have attended since becoming County Councillor for the division known as **Stalbridge & the Beacon**

I have been appointed to two regular committees at DCC.

People and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee & Dorset Health Scrutiny Committee.

The objectives being: Delivering good outcomes for the citizens and communities we serve through a constructive, proactive and objective approach to the consideration, scrutiny and review of policies, strategies, financial and performance issues. The work includes Overview and Scrutiny functions and key focus is to ensure that people in Dorset are Healthy and Independent. The Committee works alongside the Economic Growth, and Safeguarding and Health Committee's

I have been working with the A350/C13 users & taken part in the consultation and hosted meetings with Highways Officers, Chairmen and Parish representatives at County Hall. I met with the MP Simon Hoare and DCC Officers, I have travelled the entire Division with Roger Bell of DCC Highways in order to learn more about the issues around the transport network.

In September: Myself and the other Leaders and Chief Executives of the six Future Dorset councils met the Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in London to request an update on the Future Dorset proposal for Local Government Reorganisation. While all of Dorset councils awaited the decision from central Government the focus remained on business as usual and in developing collaborative relationships. As part of the Dorset Area Joint Committee

I reported back to my Divisional Chairman, Clerks and Councillors
On the revamping of the Dorsetforyou website redesign update

On behalf of residents in the Division I attended one of the Road Shows for "Live Better" when Dorset County Council launched an adult social care campaign called 'Prepare to live better'. The campaign aimed to educate people about the changing landscape of social care and encourage them to make provisions and plans for their future care needs.

Although the Division does not have a railway station, many residents use the train services, therefore I have kept them in the loop regarding South Western Railway (SWR) and the plans to introduce new metro trains in order to create a huge uplift in capacity on the South Western Railway network for commuters in and out of Waterloo.

Finally, in November there was an Announcement on LGR The Secretary of State, Sajid Javid announced that he was minded to support the Future Dorset proposal to replace Dorset's nine councils with two new unitary authorities.

I have reported on Dorset Direct The county councils corporate Customer Services Unit helping over 3.5 million customers with adult social care, waste management, schools and education, Highways and environment services, transport services as well as general information and advice regarding council services.

I felt it important to get an early message to you regarding the winter weather and the launch of our gritting season – which started on the 1 November.

I've updated you on the County Councils Low Carbon Dorset project for which Dorset County Council secured a £3.2 million grant from the European Regional Development Fund to deliver a '*Dorset Low Carbon Economy Programme*'. The programme is run by the county council and the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), with the aim of helping to improve energy efficiency, increase the use of renewable energy, and aid the development of new low carbon products in Dorset

Particularly interesting was the item on **Trading Standards fake artwork deal**, fake art works being advertised for sale by a Dorset based auctioneer, which led to a prosecution and media interest.

In December DCC launched its "partnership zones" bringing together professionals who help children and young people in their local area. These include social workers, teachers, police officers, GPs, health visitors, local businesses and others. I know many residents in the Division love the beautiful Dorset Coast and were pleased that the accolade of 'Outstanding Contribution to Tourism' at the Dorset Tourism Awards, went to The Jurassic Coast Team.

At the start of the year, Storm Eleanor gave us 90mph winds with over 30 fallen trees across the county.

I also reported to you that East Dorset District Council voted to support the Future Dorset proposal, and Purbeck District Council voted to withdraw their opposition to the proposal.

After the collapse of Carillion in Dorset I immediately informed to the Division that Dorset County Council did not have any current contracts with Carillion.

I have shared information on Hospital discharges and Delayed Transfer of Care and the link to the improved Better Care Fund (iBCF). And Citizenship ceremonies in Dorset The Gender pay gap which is significantly below the average for public and private sector organisations. The total overall gender pay level gap at DCC is just 1.26 per cent. I've also reported on the Ultrafast connections for the enterprise zone at Dorset Innovation Park

Finally, in March we learned that Local Government Reorganisation was actually happening in Dorset and two brand-new local authorities will formed in May 2019 This is a unique time for us, getting the opportunity to write the future shape of local government and public service across the county. Thank you to everyone that has contributed to getting here, it's been a long wait for the decision and now in less time we'll be part of a new future for Dorset.

Storm Emma thankfully took no one by surprise & DCC were well prepared many county council employees and members worked tirelessly to keep Dorset safe and moving.

Moving on, The County Council approved the budget and council tax increase for 2018/19 at its meeting on 15 February. I dare say everyone has received their bills, I have received a small handful of “gripes” although most people are aware of the challenges faced by local authorities.

During the last month of the municipal year we've had a Member Briefing - Ward Boundaries for New Unitary

All members were invited to a briefing session led by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. The session discussed the next steps in the electoral review process that will be developing the ward boundaries for the new unitary councils and gave members advice on what they should consider when drawing up proposals. The session also included the opportunity for to ask questions on the process for developing the new electoral arrangements.

The key speakers were Paul Rowsell (Head of Governance, Reform and Democracy at MHCLG), Colin Mellors (Chair of the Local Government Boundary Commission England) and Jolyon Jackson (Chief Executive of the LGBCE).

The first two tranches of our new Dorset for You website are set to launch at the end of April/ May This includes a new home page and the services that have been built and signed off so far e.g. Housing and Benefits. Web pages that are edited less frequently, and consist of straight forward, text-based information and transactions will be the first to be available to the public. They closely follow the style of the Gov.uk website and everything has been designed around our users' needs.

We have seen the Legal process to create two new councils begin.

The parliamentary process to dissolve Dorset's existing nine councils and create two brand new unitary authorities is underway. Known as a Structural Change Order, the legal document that will eventually be approved through both Houses of Parliament has now been officially submitted by the Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

The County Council Cabinet agreed multi-million pound investment in special educational needs provision in March.

More than £3M is being invested in education for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in Dorset.

Dorset County Council's Cabinet has agreed to spend just over £2M – plus a £1M grant from central Government – on creating eight specialist bases in mainstream schools to cater for children with complex communication needs.

That concludes my report on my first year serving as your County Councillor

Cllr: Graham Carr-Jones

Division Member Stalbridge & the Beacon

May 2018