



Margaret Stone. Norfolk County Councillor

Parish Council Report January 2018

COUNCIL TAX OPTIONS

Government have been told councils they will be allowed to raise an additional one per cent on general Council Tax this year. Norfolk County Council's chief finance officer is advising us to accept this offer, which will raise £4 million to our budget, every year – easing pressure on our services.

General taxation: Income tax, VAT: versus local taxation: Business Rates paid to government and given back to us as Rate Support Grant according to formula. London raise the most in Business Tax but we get more back than we pay into system in Norfolk

Rising costs and increased demand for services has put huge pressures on council budgets and in addition a two per cent pay rise is proposed for public sector staff who have been restricted for many years. Government are reducing the reliance on money from central government through our Rate support Grant (which comes from our general taxation) and gradually introducing locally raised funding for local services. This will eventually include all Business rates which we raise locally but which have gone to central government in the past. We need very successful businesses in order to pay for local services and will be more dependent on Council tax to support all local services, such as garbage collection, libraries, lighting, social amenities like parks. Government will continue to fund all major needs like hospitals, schools, major infrastructure projects etc. I

The council had been considering a 4.9 per cent rise – 1.9 per cent for general services and 3 per cent for adult social care. However, the Government announced last month that councils could levy a further one per cent for general services.

A 5.99 per cent rise would increase the county council's share of band D bills by £74.74 per year, to £1,322.68.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON SERVICE REDESIGN

Public consultation has just completed on savings proposals. Suggestions that council buildings should have multi-purpose use. Some libraries are too big now and might welcome sharing with some children's services to reduce costs. Likewise, some children's centres might benefit from additional services such as children's libraries. No building should just have one use.

Too expensive Subsidised bus services:

Many buses running half full. Suggestions regarding improving Border hopper or community vehicles which operate when more people will use them. Don't stop subsidies but rationalise where it goes by supporting those providing best service for the majority

ROUNABOUT A146:

Work is starting next week on a roundabout which will replace the A146 Hales junction which currently has the worst accident record for a main road in Norfolk.

“It’s inevitable that there will be some disruption during the three months that the build will take but we’ll all be working to keep that to a minimum and are grateful for everyone’s patience while work is underway.”

The £1.63m roundabout, paid for by money Norfolk County Council received from the Government’s new National Productivity Investment fund

CHILDRENS SERVICES:

After recent evaluation of children’s services, we are back on track with a good Ofsted report. Numbers of looked after children still high but early prevention working going well and team morale is high

Adult social services

Reablement increased and emergency admissions for elderly people being reduced with a special unit managed by GPs dealing with patients over 65 at NNUH. Better triaging so minor issues such as urine infections dealt with immediately