

# **Cllr. Ian Carrington – Feb 2023 Parish Council briefing note:**

## **County Council Budget**

The council's budget for 2023-24 was formally approved by the full council at their meeting on Friday 17 February.

The final budget included the addition of £8.7m to the development fund. The money for this will be drawn from the council's reserves, and it will be used for projects that benefit local communities.

There was also an additional £7m for road maintenance, meaning the highways budget for 2023/24 has now risen to around £93m. Council tax will rise by 4.99% in total (this includes a 2% rise for adult care). However, Lincolnshire will still have one of the lowest council tax rates in the country. Despite the rise in council tax, and additional government funding, the council will still need to use a further £7.5m from its reserves to balance the books, based on current projections.

## **Lincolnshire Fire & Rescue**

Four Lincolnshire fire and rescue officers (plus Colin the rescue dog) joined the 77-strong team sent by the UK to assist with rescue operations after the earthquake which hit Turkey and Syria. Operating in southern Turkey they worked in the most grueling conditions, searching hundreds of buildings and locating and rescuing a number of survivors. The team was thanked and applauded at the council meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> February for performing the most valuable service under the most difficult circumstances.

## **Cost of Living**

Lincolnshire County Council is working with all the District Councils in the county to provide help for anyone in difficulty through cost of living situation. There is a dedicated web page at [lincolnshire.gov.uk/council-councillors/cost-of-living](http://lincolnshire.gov.uk/council-councillors/cost-of-living) which contains advice, details of funding and other assistance and access to a wide range of services. Parish councils can help by making sure any vulnerable residents they are aware of are directed to the help and information which is available.

## **Policing**

Lincolnshire Police has announced plans to reduce the number of PCSOs by almost half. I spoke against this in the County Council meeting, and will continue to oppose. Since their introductions PCSOs have established themselves as well respected parts of the communities they serve. However effective modern strands of policing may be, I believe we need more uniforms on the streets not less, especially in our rural villages and towns. Policing in the community – not from behind the walls of Nettleham HQ. The Government has provided money to increase the number of police officers in the county, and that's good news. But it should not be an excuse to cut PCSOs. The Chief Constable must think again.

## **Housing I**

I was delighted to attend a Construction Awards ceremony as the North Kesteven District Council Exec Board member for housing, where NKDC's Potterhanworth Passivhaus scheme won Best Sustainable Development. Responding to climate change needs real action, not empty words. At NK we now only build to the very highest environmental and energy efficiency standards and it's great to have that recognized. We've also committed to a £21m program of retrofitting our existing council housing stock, all part of our determination to reach carbon net zero.

## **Housing II**

It's also vital that we make sure all new development meets those high standards. Our Local Plan is shared by NKDC with the City and West Lindsey and LCC is a partner. As an North Kesteven rep to the management committee I've been part of NK's push to toughen up the Plan to force developers to build energy efficient houses in ecologically sound developments. We're currently waiting for the results of the Planning Inspectorate's review of the draft Plan, but I'm very hopeful that they will pass it. Which will mean we will have one of the most environmentally effective Local Plans in the country. North Kesteven deserves nothing less.