

Report to Marshland South Division

Cllr. Chris Dawson

Norfolk County Council

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A further 12 months has flown by, and I'm almost 2 years into the role. It has been a fairly steep learning curve, however I have received excellent support, not only from NCC officers and staff, but a number of Conservative colleagues, Liz Truss and her team, along with the officers of the 9 Parish Councils. To all I am continually grateful.

Member Champion for the Rural Economy, and am working closely with the Cabinet Member for Business to promote and support activity in the west of the county (specifically our part).

With regards to council duties relating to Norfolk as a whole, I have continued to sit on both the Planning Regulatory and Infrastructure & Development Select Committees, and was appointed to the County Deal Member Engagement Working Group (MEWG), earlier this year; the MEWG is a small cross-party group tasked with examination of the evolving County Deal situation, making observations and recommendations, and reporting back to their respective party groups. In addition to this, I will be taking the lead on a new Task & Finish group of 5 councillors, with a brief to examine and appraise current policies and protocols relating to NCC Highways' responses to consultations by local authorities' planning departments (LPAs).

they have placed in me, by embracing my methods of reporting and updating, and in allowing me to represent them, unquestionably, in their fight. There are 2 mums in particular, and many of you will

### **Walsoken**

Work has been undertaken in the examination of upgrading the Basketball area on Sleights Drive. Quotes are now with the PC, with the kind offer a generous donation from local business Fountain Fresh.

The issue of a new roundabout on the A47 at Broadend Rd has been taken up. We are currently awaiting improve traffic management date to

support a nearby planning application for 300+ homes – although CCC Highways are taking the lead, NCC are co-consultees, and I receive regular updates. I have been in contact with BCKLWN planning department, to advise them of wider considerations, in respect of the application. I recently met with Liz Truss at the site, and she has taken the matter up with the Transport Minister. We will continue to monitor, and press fully for this much needed infrastructure.

Factoring in the above, highways repairs and responses have become more challenging this year, and will continue to do so. Without wishing to sound like a broken record, we are faced with increased demands, increased costs, and a 'decreased' budget, in real terms. With the principal requirement of the NCC budget being to support the Adult and Children's Services departments, I'm afraid that all other areas will be competing for the remaining monies. Whether this situation may improve under a County Deal, or not, remains to be seen, however there is a potential.

Regarding the County Deal examination, this is proceeding, with almost fortnightly meetings, and I anticipate that our work should be complete by October, as the matter will come before Full Council in December. Currently I have reservations over a Directly Elected Leader, in respect of governance, and this is an important area which will require addressing – for many members.

Having said that I need to be more efficient in my use of time, this now appears to be dragging on somewhat, so I'll move to the thanks; starting with my Conservative colleagues.

I had little idea of how much having continuity of administration through County and Borough would empower and facilitate, not only the support on personal lines, but the focus and direction of the officers, and I can't stress enough the benefits of this. With regards to the NCC officers, their support, engagements and response times have been exemplary, again greatly easing stress-levels and issue resolution.

Acknowledgment must be given to the residents of the Division, as every enquiry or engagement has been undertaken with respect and politeness, patience and understanding. Not only does this make the role a more positive experience, but it certainly rewards and encourages, and so thank you.

This also applies to our Parish Councils, again the positive engagement has continued, and I have been made to feel very much part of the team throughout. I'm grateful again for the patience and trust afforded.

Saving the biggest thank 'til last, out Parish Council Clerks. Somehow we always replace good clerks with good clerks, diligent, consciences, and all possessing good humour (a must). It has been a pleasure to work with you again this year, and I'm very aware that you all work not only to support, but also 'protect' me, usually from myself \*please see above.

I greatly always appreciate your engagement, and also how fortunate I am to have you work alongside. Thank you.

Best wishes

Chris.