

# Clr Chris Siddall

## Report to The Colnes Parish Councils & residents April 2017



I am delighted to be one of the “The Colnes Ward” representatives on Braintree District Council. The Council has a total of 49 elected members, 43 Conservative, 3 Labour, 2 Halstead residents, & 1 Green.

I am currently the Chairman of the “Overview and Scrutiny Committee”. This Committee operates independently of the Council Cabinet and senior executives in order to consider decisions made by Braintree District Council. Each year it requests topics from the Council members which are then looked into and reports back to the Council members and Cabinet, not just to allow Members of the Council to be better informed, but also to see how the Council can work better with its partners in delivering services, or how services are to be provided in the future. I believe this process is very useful and will help us tackle some of the key issues facing local authorities.

The committee during 16/17 have been looking at the following topics:-

- Broadband provision throughout the District
- Employment sites and Premises
- Obesity issues and challenges in the District

As your Councillor I have played an active role or been involved with the following:-

- Trustee of the ‘Earls Colne & Halstead Educational Trust’
- Trustee of the ‘Warner Textile Archive and Braintree Museum’
- Non Paid Director of ‘Warner Textile Archive Trading Limited’
- Director of ‘Ignite Business’ a non profit making organization, providing business advice and starter premises
- Member of the ‘Joint Locality Board’ setup between the District Council and Essex County Council
- Member of the LDF (Local Development Framework)
- Chairman of the “Overview and Scrutiny” Committee
- Deputy Leader of the Council
- Member of the Improvement Panel at EELGA (East England Local Government Association)

### **Grant Reduction**

The Council’s Grant from central Government has been reducing year on year, and this is expected to continue for some years to come. The grant effectively is the business rates collected by local Councils sent to central government which is then re distributed around the country to a formula. The promise from central government is that in the future 100% of the business rates collected will be kept locally, this sounds great in principal but time will tell as to how this finally plays out.

The Council has continued to invest on what matters to people throughout the district, clean streets and putting money into projects such as the ‘Green Heart of Essex’.

### **Local Issues**

I very much enjoy living in Earls Colne and work just 5 minutes away with my office based in Coggeshall, this enables me to be available for residents during the day time. I have worked hard for local residents and businesses and will continue to make myself available to support them with local issues.

### **Local Plan (Previously “Local Development Framework”)**

As a member of the previous “Local Plan Committee” (the LDF) the Council is working hard to help set out how Braintree District will take shape in the future. Without doubt there is a need for more housing, in particular affordable housing for our children and grandchildren. We need to make sure all new developments are built in the right place and that residents can have input as to where it is most appropriate. In my last report on the plan, I told you it should have been finished by the end of the year, it is now planned to be completed this time next year! Watch this space.

I feel we still need to focus more on the provision of affordable housing in the rural areas, current policy is that the villages are seen as “unsustainable” as many do not have good access to services such as public transport, shops etc, therefore they should not have significant development but I will continue to push for some modest development so young people can live and raise the next generation where they were born.

Chris Siddall