

Royston Town Council

General Purposes and Highways Committee 16th October 2023

County Councillor's Report

The County Council has identified a forecast overspend of £16 million largely resulting from costs of caring for Looked After Children and transporting children with special educational needs and disabilities to and from school. To reduce this the council has instigated a selective freeze on some recruitment of staff to fill vacancies which do not relate to statutory services. How long this will last and what impact it will have remains to be seen.

Consultations on savings in Family Centres and Youth Services are underway. Some poorly used family centres are likely to be closed as a result of this, but the Royston Family Centre is well used and therefore unlikely to be affected. The impact on Youth Services is more likely to be an issue since there will be a reduction in the number of young people that will be able to access these.

The County Council's Highway development management officers are attempting to get Redrow and their contractors to complete the unfinished works at the entrance to Hedera Gardens, to install the planned street lights and speed limit and to build the planned second entrance. Unfortunately the legal provisions available make it difficult to ensure that developers get on and get such work done in a timely fashion. There is a financial bond that can be forfeited but the conditions under which this can be done are very limited.

Work is continuing on diverting footpath 17 which crosses the railway and the by-pass to a safer route under the railway at the end of Ivy Lane and then over the currently unused bridge over the by-pass.

Council officers have responded to a petition calling for a lower speed limit on part of the A505 by saying that the speed limit cannot be reduced because the traffic is going too fast. The Highways & Transport Panel has however said it will reconsider this if some more data on current traffic speeds is gathered. I have arranged for this to be put in hand.

Many people have enquired about work done to remove vegetation from the A505 central reservation. Apparently this was done as part of clearance of a ditch which runs between the two carriageways and included the removal of some trees that were judged to be too close to the road.

Steve Jarvis

County Councillor for Royston West & Rural

October 2023