



## **County Councillor's Report for 2015/6 – Cllr Sylvia Hughes**

This year saw the County Council embark on the biggest transformation of the Council in our history. We are looking to improve outcomes for citizens in a way that will make the Council more financially secure and deliver our vision of 'Making Northamptonshire a Great Place to Live and Work'. As the organisation moves to a Next Generation Council we will see a far smaller retained organisation commissioning services from a new set of accountable organisations and social enterprises which will be owned, managed and run by current council staff with partners.

The first of these delivery vehicles, First for Wellbeing, officially launched on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016. First For Wellbeing will deliver joined up wellbeing services to help people in the county live a happy and healthy life and as such will focus on the preventative agenda in order to stop people needing more expensive intrusive and social care and NHS services. This Community Interest Company will ultimately be able to secure additional income and new business to help increase the Council's financial security.

Northamptonshire is a growing county and over the next 5 years we expect to see an increase of over 50,000 people living in the county. These levels of growth have a significant impact on all services from roads, waste management and school places to targeted support such as social care for older people and people with disabilities and safeguarding services for children.

Our schools are under particular pressure from internal and external migration. Since the start of the school year there have been over 900 children arriving in the county each needing a school place. As part of the next stage of improvement in Children's Services we have begun work with the Department for Education to look at setting up a Northamptonshire Children's Trust. In line with the Next generation Council the Trust will enable services for children to be improved and sustained over the medium to long term. We have set up a Social Work Academy to improve our capacity to recruit and retain high quality Social Work staff and reduce reliance on agency staff. To help meet the increasing demand for adoption we have joined up with five other Local Authorities and two voluntary organisations as part of the Department for Education regional adoption agency project.

NCC provides 85% of the services locally including services for children, vulnerable and elderly adults, fire and rescue services, highway maintenance, facilities to promote wellbeing such as libraries and country parks, as well as promoting the county for employment and economic opportunities for all. There are increasing financial pressures on all areas of local government but Northamptonshire is meeting these challenges in an innovative and positive fashion by looking to the New Generation way of working.

Locally we have seen a number of highways improvements, new vehicles for fire and rescue as well as all the other services. I would like to pay a special tribute and thanks to the Retained Firefighters who keep us safe, First Responders who are often first on the scene after a 999 call and all who work in our schools and those who provide other essential caring services for our residents. I have been pleased to help a number of local organisations through my Empowerment Fund.

