

2015/16 Annual Report from County Councillor Tony Hicks

Basic information – County population – circ 600k

The Democratic framework. Gloucestershire – 6MPs, County Council has 53 elected Division Members, and there are 6 Districts with average 33 elected Ward Members. My County Division covers 16 Town/Parishes consisting of from 5 to 14 elected Councillors.

The Past – 2014/15. County Council spend – some £428million non School and £390million Schools. This was the last year of the 4yr savings plan but we achieved with very little reduction of services. We protected services to Children, young people and Adults, froze council tax, invested in public health activities, reduced our debt burden, increased Apprenticeships across the County, supported libraries, improved Fire and Rescue services, and planned substantial waste disposal developments. In spite of difficult weather conditions and the introduction of a new Highways contract we managed road conditions reasonably well. Our local schools have fared well and support from our County education staff have been helpful in the situations of ever demanding OFSTED standards.

The New – 2015/16. County Council spend will be £420million non-School, and some increase to £400million funding for schools (inc 204 Primary and 38 Secondary). This means we are still having to make more savings but at a lower level than in previous year. This still means some challenging reshaping of services. For example in Adult care where people are living longer with more complex needs we are investing to enable people to stay in their own homes rather than take up beds in hospitals and residential homes. We are also working closely with NHS colleagues to provide more efficient clinical and social care. We are also helping learning disability young people to lead more independent lives with better chances for employment, rather than getting stuck in residential homes.

Most of what will continue to be achieved will be looking after Children and Families with needs, continuing Public Health support, improving Highways, Trading Standards, Libraries, the Fire Service and Waste disposal. We also look forward to further improvements in Apprenticeships and local Schools.