

## District Councillor's Report at 28 February 2023 PC meeting

District Councillor Iona Parker attended the meeting and reported on the following matters:

**a) 2023-24 BDC Budget** – The budget had now been set and the District element of Council Tax would increase by 2.5%, which is less than the maximum permitted. BDC have also agreed to hold back funds provisionally earmarked for the Millenium Link (A120 to Braintree Shopping Village) and provide a £25 rebate to every Council Tax payer instead. They have put aside £1 million for 'cost of living projects' and agreed to continue the Councillor Community Grant Scheme at £1250 per District Councillor. They have also agreed not to reduce the Street Cleaning Agreement payments for at least another year [Members welcomed this decision]. Funds had been allocated to investigate a charging system for the Green Bin Collection service.

**b) Local Elections on 4 May 2023** – Everyone was reminded that suitable photographic ID would be required for all voters. Anyone without suitable photographic ID can apply in advance to BDC for a certificate enabling them to vote.

**c) Government Consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** – The NPPF was under review again and BDC had submitted a lengthy response to the consultation. In particular they had requested that the "5 year Housing Supply" criteria be removed because Council's could approve sufficient applications to meet the criteria but if builders did not commence construction in a timely manner then those properties would not count towards the '5 year housing supply target' and Council's would be penalised.