

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – ANNUAL REPORT – 2017/2018

SOBERTON & NEWTOWN PARISH COUNCIL



Every month I prepare and submit a detailed written report to Soberton & Newtown Parish Council on the work of Hampshire County Council. I also make sure that I publish regular articles in the local parish magazine and do my best to keep everyone fully informed throughout the year. Consequently, I will endeavour to keep this report short and focused upon just a few of the key issues which the County has had to grapple with and draw attention to some of the many achievements we have managed to secure.

Council Tax

At full Council held on Thursday 22nd February 2018 elected members agreed a 5.99% increase in the council tax precept for 2018/19 (which is made up of a 2.99% core council tax increase which Government now expects all councils to implement, and 3% specifically to support adult social care pressures). Residents in the average band D property will pay £1,200.96 for Hampshire County Council services in 2018/19 – or around £1.31 extra per week.

Hampshire's council tax precept remains one of the lowest in the country. This has been no mean feat when factored alongside the very tough decisions we have needed to make in order to live within our means given the reduction and eventual removal of the Revenue Support Grant and the £480 m of savings we have to make by 2020.

Despite those challenges and the need to make economies the Cabinet and Conservative group have agreed to save all Hampshire household waste recycling centres, as well as community transport schemes and school crossing patrols. Reductions in these services had been under review but the pressure was eased by an extra 1% council tax increase Government authorised us to make for social care and in the final adjustment of the local government settlement by the Government, when additional funding was allocated to Hampshire. All that helped to offset demands on the budget, although it should be noted that adult social care costs HCC significantly more than £1 million every day!

Hampshire Road Repairs

The County Council has invested an extra £10m each year in our planned maintenance Operation Resilience programme and this is proving effective in reducing the rate of decline of our roads. However, without additional Government funding, it is simply not possible to deliver overall improvements in Hampshire roads from year to year. Consequently, the County Council are lobbying the Government for more money. The motorways and major trunk roads maintained by Highways England receive around 52 times more funding than local roads – this is a huge gap which must be addressed. Local councils are also drastically underfunded for maintaining highway bridges. In Hampshire, we estimate we have only around 20 per cent of the funds needed to safely maintain all of Hampshire's bridges over the next 10 years.

Short Breaks for Children with Disabilities

Grants totalling more than £2.2 million have been agreed by Hampshire County Council for short breaks, provided by community and voluntary organisations, for carers of disabled children, across the County. Over the past twelve months, just over 2,200 families, from all over Hampshire, have accessed short break activities. The type of break being funded in 2018/19 will include:

- educational and leisure activities for disabled children, outside their homes;
- day-time care of disabled children either in their home or elsewhere; and
- services to assist carers in the evenings, at weekends and during school holidays.

Meals on Wheels for Young People

The Meals on Wheels service is being extended to include young adults for the first time. The County Council will continue to provide meals for older Hampshire residents but a new £16 million contract will enable the authority to support people aged 18 years and above. People with learning difficulties, mental health issues and physical disabilities are among those who will benefit from the new service. The

service delivers a hot two-course lunch with the additional option of afternoon tea. Meals on Wheels drivers are also trained to carry out a wellbeing check as well as delivering the food.

There are currently 1,770 customers receiving Meals on Wheels from one to seven days a week and nearly 35,000 lunchtime meals are delivered each month. Over 64% of customers are aged 75 years and over, with 36 per cent aged between 55 and 75 years. The proportion of those people aged 85 years and over is expected to increase by almost 30% to 54,600 people by 2023 as society continues to age.

Men's Mental and Physical Health

In partnership with other agencies in France, Belgium and the Netherlands, more than 2.6 million euros has been secured from the European Regional Development Fund to support a four year project to develop models, workshops, tools and training to improve opportunity and access for men to improve their mental and physical health. Nationally, just over three out of four suicides (76%) are by men and suicide is the biggest cause of death for men under 35 years.

Helping to Reduce Obesity

Almost 7 in 10 of Hampshire adults are overweight or obese and the cost to the NHS in Hampshire in managing diseases related to obesity is estimated at almost £340 million per year. The County Council has commissioned a new self-referral service for people aged 18 years and over. If you are a resident in the administrative county of Hampshire, or are registered with a Hampshire GP and have a Body Mass Index [BMI] of 30+, or don't know what your BMI is but think you might qualify for this **free service**, call 0345 602 7068. People who qualify will be offered a free tailored service and will aim to lose not less than 5% of their body weight.

£1 million for Leisure Centre

The County Council has agreed to give WCC £1 million towards the cost of a proposed new sport and leisure complex at Bar End, Winchester.

Energy Savings

Hampshire County Council is lighting the way to energy savings by replacing 75% of light fittings in its buildings with low energy LEDs. The light replacement project is part of a wider energy saving programme which has seen the County Council reduce its carbon emissions by 38.1% since 2010 – saving around £30 million in energy costs in total.

Switching to LED lighting will reduce energy and maintenance costs by £240,000 a year, as well as lowering carbon emissions. The County Council are well on track to reaching their 40% carbon reduction target by 2025, with the ultimate aim of being carbon neutral by 2050.

The light replacement project is part of the County Council's £2.7 million investment in to its Energy and Carbon Management Programme. As well as saving around £30 million in energy costs since 2010, the County Council has also reduced its carbon tax charges by £330,000 since the start of the programme

The Future

Council has agreed to the establishment of an independent cross-party commission, inviting leading experts in environment and economic development and members of the community to help develop a Vision for Hampshire 2050. Account will need to be taken of national economic changes in the post Brexit era, housing growth, the impacts of a changing climate and conflicting land management priorities. The aim is that the Commission will take evidence during 2018 and early 2019, with a full report on the findings of the Commission presented to the County Council in the summer of 2019.

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