

Budget



At a recent full Council meeting Conservative members approved a £2.1 billion budget for 2020/2021 with spending focused on the delivery of important local services for the people of Hampshire. In particular, funding will be prioritised for vulnerable children and adults, alongside key investments in Hampshire's roads and infrastructure, and further commitment to tackling climate change.

The County Council has a strong financial track record. Our budget proposals are the result of some very careful planning which began last autumn to address significant financial pressures resulting from the anticipated shortfall in our revenue budget of a further £80 million by April 2021. A key priority is to maintain high performing services for the people of Hampshire while keeping council tax the 2nd lowest of Counties nationally.

The annual Council Tax charge for a Band D property will be £1,286.28 – an increase of 3.99%, or just over £49 per year or 95 pence a week. 2% of this increase will be spent specifically on adults' social care, in line with Government policy. However, we continue to press Government Ministers for a long-term funding solution beyond 2021/22, as we simply cannot sustain growth in demand and cost indefinitely.

In the coming year, we will also be making significant one-off investments in Hampshire's future - with £3 million for maintenance of the County's 5,500 miles of roads and fixing potholes, and an extra £2 million of funding annually thereafter. Furthermore, and building on our commitment to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, we will be investing an additional £2 million in carbon reduction measures across the Authority and initiatives to help make Hampshire more resilient to the impacts of a changing climate.

Maintaining Hampshire's strong and prosperous economy has also been reflected in our budget plans – through a capital programme worth £386.5 million over the next three years to boost jobs and the quality of the environment. This provision for Hampshire's infrastructure brings the County Council's four-year total investment in the fabric of Hampshire, to £733 million – one of the largest capital programmes in the country. Schemes include:

- £94.8 million for new and extended school buildings in Hampshire to ensure there is a school place for every child in Hampshire – and giving a total of 19,100 new school places by September 2023
- £115.8 million for structural maintenance and improvement of roads and bridges in Hampshire
- £45.8 million for integrated transport schemes including over £10 million specifically focused on walking and cycling improvements
- £107.7 million for major improvement of school and other County Council buildings

Household Waste Recycling Centres

Did you remember to register your vehicles online, ahead of the launch by Hampshire County Council of a new permit system on 1st April 2020? The new system will be controlled by Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and will ensure continued free access for Hampshire residents to any of Hampshire's 24 HWRCs to dispose of household waste, while access for non-Hampshire residents will be for a fee of £5 per visit.

Some neighbouring authorities have already implemented a ban on Hampshire residents using HWRCs in their areas. That is not our intention in Hampshire – instead, a charge of £5 per visit for non-Hampshire residents has been introduced to offset the £500,000 annual cost of dealing with waste from non-Hampshire residents visiting our sites. This will contribute to our drive to manage costs across all services to help bridge the shortfall in our budget due to reductions in our funding from Government, rising costs and inflation, and growing demand for Council services.

Hampshire residents, including those who live in Southampton and Portsmouth, are able to register for free access to any Hampshire HWRC. Hampshire residents who already hold a van or trailer permit do not

need to re-register that particular vehicle. You may still register online at <http://www.hants.gov.uk/vehicle-registration-hwrc>. Residents without internet access, please call 0300 555 1389 to register.

Children's Services are Outstanding

Ofsted's 2019 inspection of HCC Children's Services resulted in a rating of Outstanding across all areas – which means children in Hampshire's care are safe and well looked after. Inspectors reported how the County Council's social workers are highly skilled at building meaningful relationships with children and that children in care benefit from high-quality support, which is making a real difference to their lives. Alongside this, Ofsted credited the County Council's strong political and corporate support – and how the well-targeted financial investment has enabled the Service's leadership team to implement an ambitious transformation programme. All of which has led to strengthened services, ensuring that the right help is available at the right time from the right people. The OFSTED report comes at a time when the County Council is working with over 10,000 children, young people and their families in need of specialist children's social care services.

Top of the Class

Final 2019 GCSE performance statistics released in February confirm that Hampshire pupils continue to perform better than their peers nationally at the end of Year 11. In Hampshire, 68.4% of pupils taking the exams achieved a pass at grade 4 in English and mathematics, compared with 66.7% last year and a national average of 64.9%. The figures are the final analysis of GCSE grades following examinations taken in 2019, adjusted to take account of the outcome of Appeals. Last year's examinations saw the final rollout of the three-year implementation of the 1 to 9 grade ratings for GCSEs - with 9 being at the very top of the scale and a pass grade being 4 or above.

Hampshire's consistently high standards in education are reflected in well over 90% of our schools being judged good or outstanding by Ofsted. Where a school requires it, Hampshire offers a very successful Schools Improvement Service to help all our schools achieve the highest possible standards.

A Preferred Choice

Of those people who applied for a Year 7 place for September 2020 by the application deadline, more than 92 per cent have been offered a place at their first-choice school. This is no small achievement when you consider the size of the Hampshire local authority area, and the rising demand for school places year on year. Hampshire parents should be reassured that with our continued investment in schools to provide the additional places, we are keeping pace with the growth in pupil numbers. Pupils who did not secure a place at one of their chosen schools have been allocated a place at the next nearest available school. Parents have the right to appeal in these situations and their child's name will be added to the waiting list for their preferred schools. Places do become available if parents change their mind, or families move home.

The County Council received 14,417 on-time applications this year – an increase of 66 applications compared with the number received for places in September 2019. The admissions team is now busy processing primary school applications, with offers due to go out to parents on 16th April 2020. For more information about admissions, please visit <https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/admissions>

Our Commitment to Zero Carbon

A programme of tree and wildflower planting on highways land and verges in Hampshire will be part of a climate change action plan, as we press forward with a commitment to carbon neutrality for the County. The action plan covers all direct and indirect carbon emissions from the County Council's own activities – such as fuel, energy and waste. These activities account for around one per cent of all carbon emissions for the county of Hampshire. Therefore, the plan sets a target for Hampshire as a whole, which aligns with the national Government target of 2050. The Cabinet has agreed all recommendations in the report, including revoking the policy prohibiting consideration of wind turbines on County Council land, and establishing a programme of tree and wildflower planting on highways land and verges.

Hampshire County Council has taken an innovative and long-term approach to reducing carbon emissions from its estate and assets since Cabinet approved a Strategic Plan in July 2010. The original targets set for the Council's buildings, street lighting and business travel at that stage were: a. Phase 1 20% reduction by 2015. Phase 2 40% by 2025. Carbon Neutral by 2050. Over the last 9 years, a significant reduction of over

43% has been achieved. The first phase target was exceeded, and the second phase target achieved early in 2018 – 7 years early. Members have approved a new stretching target of 50% by 2025. Progress to date would indicate confidence that that can be achieved. Carbon emission reductions of 21,800 tonnes of carbon have been delivered to date – equivalent to planting a forest of trees covering 8,700 acres or 4,300 football pitches. Phase 1 of the Plan achieved energy savings of around £30 million including reductions in the school estate. Phase 2 has achieved a further £1.96million in the County Council’s corporate estate and street lighting. In addition, a total of nearly £400,000 in Carbon Tax savings has been achieved.

School Minibus Programme wins National Award

Hampshire County Council’s innovative Spend to Save scheme, which provides schools with minibuses as part of ensuring that eligible children have a safe home to school transport service, has won a Bronze Award against stiff competition from across the UK. The scheme won the Bronze Award in the ‘Working Together’ category of the Public Sector Transformation Awards, organised by the Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise (iESE).

Judges were impressed with the Spend to Save programme, which provides schools with fully-funded new minibuses for their daily use in exchange for transporting pupils who are eligible for local authority funded home to school transport. The take up rate has increased as a result and a range of options has been developed to suit the needs of different schools and colleges.

With 35 minibuses in the fleet, children in education settings benefit from their school using the minibus for school organised activities, such as school trips and other extra-curricular activities. Having the minibus based on their premises available for use in this way provides much needed flexibility and reduces pressure on the school or college’s budget.

20,000 People Benefit from Care Technology

The County Council is set to invest up to £67 million in care technology over the next ten years to support the growing number of elderly people and younger adults with disabilities in Hampshire. Through a new contract the Council expects the number of adults using technology to help them to live more independently to grow significantly over the next decade, with some 20,000 new people set to benefit over the next five years alone.

As part of the new contract, a ‘private pay’ service will also be pursued. This will enable adults who do not qualify for adult social care support to purchase the wide range of proven care technology now available to the County Council’s social care clients. Third parties, including other local authorities and NHS partners, will also be able to buy the services from Hampshire.

£19 million transformation of Hampshire's Country Parks

Focused investment in country parks around the County is successfully increasing visitor numbers and ensuring the parks are on track to become financially self-sufficient in the future. Work is now under way to improve facilities at Queen Elizabeth Country Park, Staunton Country Park, River Hamble Country Park, Manor Farm and Titchfield Haven Nature Reserve.

Improvements to the country parks include refurbished buildings, improved play equipment, new trails and new catering facilities. New Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) systems at the parks has also seen payment compliance for parking increase to nearly 100%. This ensures a fair system for everyone and enables funding to go back into maintaining the parks.

EU Citizens

Hampshire County Council is welcoming news that 23,530 out of 43,000 of Hampshire’s EU citizens have already signed up to the Government’s EU Settlement Scheme, which is designed to protect the rights of EU citizens living in the UK. Since Autumn 2018, the County Council has sought to provide assurance to its own staff and to signpost Hampshire residents to advice about the EU Settlement Scheme.

The Scheme, which involves an online registration process, has been designed specially to enable those EU citizens, already lawfully based in the UK, to remain living and working in the UK after 30th June 2021. Support and advice is available for those needing help with the online form or assistance with complex cases at the Citizens Advice Bureau – <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/immigration/staying-in-the-uk-after-brexit/>

Business in Hampshire

With latest figures showing 15,174 more new businesses were established in Hampshire last year – more than in any previous year, did you know businesses large and small can benefit from the help and assistance provided by Hampshire County Council’s business investment and growth service – Business Hampshire? The team works with a range of public and private sector partners to ensure access to a wide range of support programmes are available. See the website for more information about what is available – <https://businesshampshire.co.uk/> The site has been created to showcase all that is great about Hampshire, with the aim to attract new business investment into the County and to support the growth and success of our existing local businesses.

Hampshire saw 15,174 new companies registered in 2019 – up 6.5 per cent on the previous year. The rise brings the total number of registered companies in the county to 114,831, up three per cent on the end of 2018. The statistics come from the Inform Direct Review of Company Formations, based on data from Companies House and the Office for National Statistics.

Bus Passes

A reminder to all bus users that as from 1st April 2020 there will be no automatic renewing of older people’s concessionary bus passes which have not been used in the 12 months prior to their renewal date. However, on request an eligible older person will be issued with a pass. This process will help to reduce unnecessary cost of issuing passes to people who have moved away from the area or distress to relatives where a pass-holder has died. It will also help to reduce the potential for fraud if a pass is delivered to an address where the pass-holder no longer lives. The overall budget for the Hampshire Concessionary Travel Scheme is £13.1 million. Visit <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/publictransport/buspasses> or apply and pay by phone on 0300 555 1376.

Connect to Support Hampshire

Hampshire County Council is putting out a call to all handypersons, gardeners, cleaners, therapists, counsellors.... And more! We are launching a new FREE Marketplace directory on Connect to Support Hampshire in May 2020 and are looking for individuals and businesses who provide services that could help adults stay independent and well. Find out more about Connect to Support Hampshire Marketplace here at <https://www.connecttosupporthampshire.org.uk/information-for-marketplace-providers?>

Childcare Choices

If you are a parent of a three or four year old child receiving 30 hours of free childcare make sure that you reconfirm your working and income details to ensure that your child continues to receive the free hours. Failure to reconfirm your details may result in your child losing their additional free hours. For more information or to check your Childcare Service account, visit <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/> or call 0300 1234097.

Hampshire Domestic Abuse Service

Help and access to support services for:

- Victims and survivors of abuse
- Children living with domestic abuse
- People who may be abusing or hurting someone
- Professionals seeking advice

Please call us on the Advice Line [24 hours] to discuss your situation so that you can access the best service – 03300 165 112. Always dial 999 if you are in immediate danger or in an emergency.

Patricia Stallard

Executive Lead Member for Children’s Services & Young People

Hampshire County Council

Councillor for Winchester Southern Parishes

[Newlands, Denmead, Boarhunt, Southwick, Wickham, Knowle, Soberton, Newtown]

March 2020

