

Winchester City Councillor Report March 2021

1. Local Plan consultation

Winchester City Council has now launched its consultation on a Strategic Issues & Priorities document as part of developing its new 15-year Local Plan for the Winchester District. The consultation will run until Monday 12 April.

As previously mentioned, the Local Plan excludes the South Downs National Park, which has its own Local Plan. However, although it will not apply in most of this area, parishes may wish to consider the contents as it will impact on any parts of their parish outside the National Park and could affect neighbouring areas.

The consultation can be viewed here www.localplan.winchester.gov.uk.

A number of virtual information events are taking place over the next few weeks. Details of all the dates, and how to book a place, are listed here:

4 March – 2pm	click here to book
9 March – 7pm	click here to book
12 March – 10am	click here to book
20 March – 10.30am	click here to book

2. Council tax and charging increases

Winchester City Council's share of the Council Tax for the next financial year was approved at the full meeting of Council held on 24th February. The tax is to increase by 3%.

All other fees and charges will also be increased by an average of 3%. The exception is parking charges (as these were increased in October 2020 and the newly introduced charge for collecting garden waste).

The budget also contains a number of cost saving measures, including a reduction of 3.5 posts in the planning team.

3. Boomtown update

Last year's Boomtown Festival was cancelled as the result of the pandemic. No final decision has been taken yet on this year's festival. The organisers, Boomtown Festivals Ltd (BFL) are in dialogue with Winchester City Council officers with the expectation of going ahead. However, this will depend on a range of factors relating to the pandemic, both nationally and locally, including any restrictions in place during August which could prevent the event from taking place. It may also be the case that if the picture for August remains too uncertain over the next few months, BFL will have to take make a decision whether or not to proceed well advance of the festival date.

Although it is for BFL to plan their own response to Covid, council officers, working with the Director of Public Health, will be assessing Boomtown's proposals in detail in relation to the pandemic. Collectively they will be working closely with the event organisers to ensure that the appropriate Covid secure measures are considered and adopted, in line with national guidance and the lockdown restrictions in place at the time. If the event cannot be delivered in a 'Covid secure' way, then council officers will, in consultation with their public health colleagues, liaise with BFL and, if needs be, take action to prevent the event from taking place.

BFL have also recently submitted a planning application to South Downs National Park Authority to increase their currently permitted numbers to 74 999 with an additional 1000 Sunday tickets for locals. They have also applied for their current temporary consent for the festival to be made permanent. Details of the planning application can be viewed on the National Park website.

4. May elections

Elections for Hampshire County Council and for the police and crime commissioner for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight are scheduled to take place on 6th May. New regulations will apply to polling stations as result of the pandemic and residents may therefore find it easier to apply for a postal or proxy vote. This can be done by following this link <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/elections/absent-votes>

5. Get to Know Your NHS Public Meeting - 9th March at 7.30pm

A free online session is held on **9th March** for residents of north and mid Hampshire to hear more about their local NHS, as part of the Hampshire Together: Modernising our Hospitals and Health Services programme. The aim of the session is to describe how services are currently delivered and from where and explain why it is felt improvements could be made.

The event will take place online via Zoom videoconferencing due to the current restrictions in place to help combat COVID-19 pandemic. If you would like to take part, you can register by visiting <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/get-to-know-your-nhs-tickets-142325640823>.

The Hampshire Together programme is part of the government's plan to invest in the NHS and build 40 new hospitals by 2030, with north and mid Hampshire being one of the areas to benefit from funding. More information about the programme can be found at www.hampshiretogether.nhs.uk and details of how hospital services are currently provided can also be found online at www.hampshiretogether.nhs.uk/our-vision/how-hospital-services-are-currently-provided.

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