

Hampshire County Councillor report

March 2024

1. County Council Budget Consultation

I talked about the ongoing consultation on the County Council's future services in my last report. That consultation is seeking Hampshire residents' views on proposals to change and reduce some local services and help the Authority address a £132 million budget shortfall faced by April 2025.

You can read more about the consultation here: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/haveyoursay/consultations/future-services-consultation>

A reminder about the areas covered by the consultation - road maintenance and winter gritting, public transport, street lights, school crossing patrols, parking charges at rural countryside car parks, homelessness support, library stocks levels, adult social care contributions, grants for voluntary and community organisations, funding to Hampshire Cultural Trust and changes or closures of local Household Waste Recycling Centres.

Many people have already responded. The consultation runs until **the end of the month** so if you have not responded yet, I do encourage you to take part. This affects us all. A number of people have emailed me with thoughts - again, do still reply to the consultation or email the thoughts to the Council's Insight & Engagement Unit on insight@hants.gov.uk.

2. HCC budget 2024-25

The County Council's budget for the next financial year has been approved by council. This budget covers £2.6 billion of public spending on the ongoing delivery of important local services to Hampshire's 1.4 million residents.

From 1 April 2024, Hampshire County Council's portion of council tax will increase by a total of 4.99%, of which 2% will go specifically towards adults' social care and supporting the county's higher numbers of older people and adults with complex needs and disabilities – in line with Government policy. This equates to an annual charge of £1,533.24 for a Band D property – an increase of £72.99 per year or approximately £1.40 a week.

The increase will generate an extra £39 million of vital income towards the delivery of crucial services to the people of Hampshire in 2024/25, and still means that Hampshire has one of the lowest council tax precepts of any county in England. Even with this increase, there is still a significant gap in the budget which will be filled from reserves – dedicated funds set aside specifically to address such shortfalls.

The County Council also approved the spending of £880.6 million over the next three years on capital programmes to help boost jobs and the local economy, the quality of the environment and contribute towards the County Council's commitment to tackling climate change. This provision for Hampshire's infrastructure, including more school places, improving roads and bridges and investing in the fabric of Hampshire's older people's social care estate, is one of the largest in the country, and brings the County Council's four-year total investment in the fabric of Hampshire to £1.4 billion, providing a huge boost to the local economy through jobs, skills and construction.

3. Transforming in-house care for older people

I have referred previously to the proposed changes to how the County Council operates its in-house care homes for older people. The plan is to focus on specialist nursing and complex dementia care, as well as short term pre and post-hospital support, to better meet the needs of the county's ageing population.

These plans have now been approved, comprising a £173 million investment programme. It will increase the overall number of beds available to local people from 900 to 1,000, within a reduced network of 13 homes. Approving these plans secures the long-term future of our in-house homes ensuring they remain in the Authority's ownership – in stark contrast to the many other local councils who have sold their homes in recent years.

4. New Local Transport Plan approved

The County Council's new local transport plan (known as LTP4) has been approved. Its aim is the boost economic prosperity, reduce carbon pollution and help promote healthy lifestyles and build stronger communities over the next ten years. It is guided by two principles, widening the choice of travel options that people can use and providing a transport system that puts people first and creates high quality places.


5. County councillor grants scheme

Thank you to everyone who applied for grants from the County Councillor grant scheme before its close on 29 February. I was able to support a diverse range of projects from across the division this year, including helping the coronation party and new Christmas lights switch on in Whiteley, supporting works to the village hall in Waltham Chase and the youth club at the Methodist Church there, a grant towards the Cricketers Pond renovation in Curdrige, help refurbishing the war memorial in Swanmore, contributions towards goal posts in Droxford and play areas in Hambledon, support for the film club in West Meon and new signs and a telephone kiosk in Woodlands.

Councillor Hugh Lumby, Meon Valley Division



The banner features a white background with an orange wavy graphic on the left. At the top right, it displays the Hampshire County Council logo and the slogan 'Making the most of your money'. The main title 'Future Services Consultation' is in large, bold, black font. Below it, the text 'Tell us your views on ideas for changes to some local services' is written in orange. To the right, an orange box contains the text 'Have your say by 31 March 2024' in white, with the URL 'hants.gov.uk/future-services-consultation' below it.

 Hampshire County Council

 Making the most of your money

Future Services Consultation

Tell us your views on ideas for changes to some local services

Have your say by 31 March 2024

hants.gov.uk/future-services-consultation