

**Hampshire County Council
Meon Valley Division
County Councillor Roger Huxstep Member's Annual Report 2015-16**

Hampshire Railways A top-level rail summit was held at the beginning of last year to push for greater long-term investment in Hampshire's railways. South West Trains is one of the few regions making a positive contribution into rail infrastructure but this trains' region has suffered from years of underinvestment. Rail bosses, Hampshire MPs, Leaders of Local Authorities and representatives of Local Enterprise Partnerships met amid concerns that rail infrastructure serving Hampshire is unable to cope with continued growth in passengers and freight. It was explained that any improvements to rail links between Portsmouth and Southampton depended on work at Salisbury, Basingstoke, Woking and Waterloo i.e. improvements in the south of the county are dependent on other parts of the county and further afield. The aim of that summit, which was convened by the Leader of HCC, Cllr Roy Perry was to provide collective support to lobby for a fair share of Government investment to improve frequency and reliability on some of the most congested sections of railway in Britain. This initiative is continuing and if devolution happens it will be a significant factor in its success.

Hampshire's Children's Services cited in Ofsted Annual Report

Hampshire primary schools' performance has been reported as being in the top five in the south east and in the top quartile nationally. In early years' education, the County Council is one of two authorities nationally described as being 'the highest performing' for improving outcomes for pre-school children and ensuring they are well prepared to enter primary education.

Hampshire's Key Stage Results 2015

For Key Stage 2, Winchester District children have achieved better results year-on-year since 2013. For Key Stage 4 (GCSE) children they have improved upon their 2013 performance by a percentage point with 73% achieving 5+ A*-C grades including English & mathematics. For detailed results for individual schools visit: <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance/>

Hampshire Libraries at the forefront of innovation

Consultation feedback has shaped sustainable future for Hampshire's Library Service. A Library Service fit for the future will be delivered to the people of Hampshire, following one of the largest public consultations held by Hampshire County Council. The Library Strategy approved on 18th April has been shaped by the 9,500 responses collected during the consultation. The Strategy will provide an approach to meet customers' demands for a modern service - making the most of emerging digital technologies and investing in library buildings. Planned improvements include exploring the use of electronic self-service counters to provide extended opening hours in some locations, and the refurbishment of a number of sites to make them bright and more welcoming to visitors. In addition, the Home Library Service will be expanded to replace the relatively high-cost Mobile Library Service. 62% of consultation respondents were in favour of stopping the Mobile Library Service which is used by just 1% of total library customers, and costs £11.44 per visit per

customer, compared to £2.23 per static library visit. Mobile library vehicles are also in need of frequent repair as they near the end of their ten-year leases. As a result, the Mobile Library Service will no longer run after June this year. Additional alternatives offered by the Library Service include:

- Working with local communities in the 20 busiest mobile library stops to identify opportunities for volunteers to deliver books to appropriate community gatherings
- Offering free online library learning sessions in communities that will no longer have a mobile library stop
- Developing links with voluntary sector groups that provide community transport to help rural communities access their local library when they no longer have a mobile stop.

The County Council is facing its most challenging period of prolonged national austerity measures, which has seen huge reductions in the Authority's funding from central Government in recent years. The closure of the Mobile Library Service will contribute £360,000 towards a total library savings target of at least £1.7 million by 2020. Further savings are set to be delivered through a combination of the following approved proposals which also received public support during the consultation:

- Sharing library buildings with complementary partner organisations (77% agreed)
- Withdrawing poorly used library collections such as CDs, games, and DVDs (75% agreed)
- Increasing the number of trained volunteers to support paid library staff (58% agreed)

Further details, including the consultation results and a draft of the revised Library Strategy, can be found in the Decision Day report to the Executive Member for Culture, Recreation and Countryside.

- [Decision Day report to the Executive Member for Culture, Recreation and Countryside](#)

Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC)

A review of HWRCs resulted in changes to opening hours at Hampshire's 24 centres from 1st April 2015. The change followed consultation with residents on a number of options to shape the service for the future. These looked at affordable ways to ensure the County Council continued to deliver a modern, value for money service for Hampshire's residents. The changes did not result in recycling centres being closed down to meet the required overall budget savings for 2015/16, however, because of continuing budget restraints a further review through consultation started today. The 10-week public consultation to ask residents how they think

savings can best be made in the cost of running the county's household waste recycling centres (HWRCs). "The cuts the government has made to Hampshire's grant are now so severe that we simply cannot afford to carry on as before.

"The county council had been planning to make savings to meet a £98million funding shortfall by April 2017, but when the government announced its funding plans for local authorities for the next three years, Hampshire lost £48m more this year than had been anticipated.

"It is therefore vital that the resources we have in Hampshire are focused on where they can make the most impact, and how we deal with Hampshire's waste is part of this.

"We are now in a position where we need to establish how we can run the HWRC service with a much smaller budget in a way that is financially sustainable for Hampshire council tax payers in the long term."

The 24 sites are currently open every day except Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

24 is a large number compared with other areas, and it is clear we are no longer in a financial position to be able to provide this same level of service.

"This consultation is a genuine opportunity for people to tell us how they think a different and more affordable model can be established.

"We are asking people what they think of changes in opening hours - an hour less each day, weekend-only opening, winter closures - and what they think of closing some sites altogether.

"We will be looking at how many people use each of the sites, how much waste is collected, and the distances between sites.

"I would urge Hampshire residents to take part in this consultation and help us define an affordable service which works for them.

"No decisions will be made until we have looked at all the evidence and taken people's views into consideration."

For more information, and to respond to the consultation, visit www.hants.gov.uk/hwrc2016. If you answer question 6 you may wish to qualify your answer at Box 8. Otherwise you might find yourself agreeing to the closure of at least 4 sites.

Paper copies of the consultation can be obtained by calling 0300 555 1389 or emailing hwrc.consultation@hants.gov.uk.

The deadline for responses is noon on May 25.

Celebrations

The Commonwealth Flag was raised in Hampshire on Monday 9 March 2015, to mark Commonwealth Day, along with over 650 Commonwealth Flags across 38 Commonwealth countries. It was the second year that local authorities and civic dignitaries, community groups and charities throughout the British Isles had carried out local flag raising events and ceremonies of dedication to mark Commonwealth Day - building on 2014's highly successful inaugural events. The flag was raised this year only yesterday by the Mayor of Winchester in the presence of the Lord-

Lieutenant of Hampshire. The Magna Carta 800th Anniversary celebrations were hosted by HCC including a lecture in the Great Hall on 10 June. And, joyfully, **Her Majesty the Queen** on 9th September became Britain's longest serving Monarch and on behalf of the Council the Leader wrote to Her Majesty expressing our good wishes on her achieving that record. On 24th September a letter was received from the Chief Clerk to the Queen - Mr Christopher Sanadamas saying the Queen had asked him to thank the Council and to send her best wishes to you all.

Hampshire County Council - Highly commended at national landscape awards

Work to create a high quality outdoor space for schoolchildren in Basingstoke has earned Hampshire County Council national recognition in the prestigious Landscape Institute Awards. The in-house Property Services Landscape Team was highly commended in the awards, which were announced on 26 November and their work recognised as outstanding examples of work by the landscape profession.

Telecare service scoops national award

Hampshire County Council's Telecare Initiative has scooped another prestigious national award. The 2015 TSA (Telecare Services Association) Crystal Award for Inspiring Change and Progress within Technology Enabled Care Services was won by PA Consulting Group, for their inspiring Telecare partnership work with the County Council. Telecare is a 24-hour personal emergency monitoring service which helps people to continue to live independently in their own home. Using wireless technology and environmental sensors to continuously monitor those with care and support needs, 24-hour monitoring ensures that the right help can be provided immediately and also gives reassurance to relatives and carers who are not able to provide round the clock support.

General Election

The General Election showed how the people have spoken very emphatically in Hampshire. The Council has therefore committed itself to working with the MPs and the Government that the people have elected. The Leader wrote to all the Hampshire MPs, new and returning members, congratulating them on their election and invited them to meet in Winchester and brief them on County issues. This has culminated in an all-party parliamentary group for Hampshire, being established by Ranil Jayawardena MP. They are already involved in the Hampshire Railways initiative. The new Government was clearly elected on the promise to control public expenditure and, put simply, to live within its means and that has manifested itself in a severe reduction of the Revenue Support Grant to shire counties and districts, i.e. 37.4 % for Hampshire and 42% for Winchester District.

Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE)

Submissions to the LGBCE re a new pattern of divisions for the county closed on Monday, 11th January this year. On 15th March the Commission considered its final recommendations and will publish them on 5th April whence an Order is laid in Parliament in May for implementation at next year's County Council elections. The electorate for Hampshire's divisions in the district of Winchester is projected to be 101,315 by 2021 of which 14,512 are in the revised Meon Valley division, up from

just under 12,000. Accordingly, the recommendation for the Meon Valley division is to retain the parishes of Corhampton & Meonstoke, Exton, Hambledon, Shedfield, Swanmore, Warnford, West Meon and part of Soberton with newcomers of Curbridge, Curdrige and the more highly populated Whiteley. The division has therefore lost the more sparsely populated villages of Beauworth, Bishops Sutton, Bramdean & Hinton Ampner, Cheriton and part of Soberton. Bramdean & Hinton Ampner will be drawn into the Bishops Waltham Division comprising the parishes of Beauworth, Bishops Sutton, Bishops Waltham, Bramdean & Hinton Ampner, Cheriton, Colden Common, Durley, Kilmeston, Owslebury, Tichborne, Twyford and Upham.

Devolution and Combined Authorities

On 19th July the Leader of the County Council together with the Leaders of IOW, Southampton and Portsmouth and the 11 Districts of Hampshire sent a letter to the Secretary of State for Local Government indicating an intent to explore the possibility of gaining devolved powers from Government as a Combined Authority. On 4th September to meet a deadline set by the Government a more formal submission was made to the Chancellor of the Exchequer with the same signatories plus the 2 chairmen of the National Parks and with indications of support from The Police and Crime Commissioner, The Chief Constable, the Chief Fire Officer and the Chairmen of the Hampshire and IOW Fire and Rescue Authorities.

There was no response as originally promised around 24th November; later amended to end of January. It was then thought that there would be an announcement alongside the chancellor's budget statement and that didn't happen; believed to be due to there being an alternative bid made by local authorities in the south of the county prepared to offer up a 'metro-mayor' something that the original Hampshire & Isle of Wight bid did not want. However, it is clear the Government is firm that there can be no devolution deal without there being an elected mayor. If Hampshire is to remain as a single entity, it may be necessary for our shire to accept a mayor of some form just to avoid the formation of 'Solent City'. The all-party parliamentary group for Hampshire was in talks with the Treasury in an effort to secure a pan-Hampshire solution. As of 1st April, Cllr Roy Perry was not aware of councils in the Solent ratifying a combined authority proposal. He is continuing bilateral meetings with Hampshire council leaders to consider the options. Legal advice to date indicates that no combined authority can come into force without the consent of all local authorities in the area which of course includes Hampshire County Council.

HCC Council Tax

Hampshire's council tax next year will be the lowest of any county in England and Wales. This is despite the axing of the Government's Council Freeze Grant and the Government authorising county councils to raise Council Tax by 2% to pay for additional provision for adult social care and so ease the burden on the NHS. After 6 years with a standstill of Council Tax in the county, Hampshire has had to raise its precept by the maximum allowed without a referendum of 1.99% for a total rise of 3.99% this coming year. This is equivalent to an increase of £41.40 on a Band D property - an increase of 80 pence a week. In real terms after inflation of around

15% over the period, being taken into account the Hampshire tax is still lower than it was 5 years ago - a tribute to a competent and prudent administration. Hampshire is one of the largest counties in the country and the council has a budget of approximately £1.9bn per annum and a direct workforce of just under 10,000 employees and over 25,000 in education. Winchester City Council has also set its council tax. It is classified as a shire district and was not allowed to exceed an increase of £5.00 per annum for a Band D property. A level just below this was selected resulting in an increase of 9 pence per week for a Band D property. Soberton Parish Council's precept was raised 10.86% to £37.68 per annum, yielding a rate of 72 pence per week for a Band D property.

Cllr Roger Huxstep
Member for Meon Valley Division
Hampshire County Council

21st April 2016