

## **Hampshire County Council Divisional Report for Corhampton & Meonstoke Parish Council**

### **HCC Budget 2017/18**

At the County Council meeting to be held on 16<sup>th</sup> February members approved the recommendations to balance the budget for 2017/18 – prioritising funding for vulnerable children and adults, and to deliver £98 million of savings, as set out in proposals agreed in 2015. The County Council spends around £1.9 billion per annum on serving Hampshire's 1.3 million residents – a responsibility which it takes very seriously, and one that requires meticulous management of taxpayers' money, and responsible planning for the future. Ever since national austerity measures began in 2008, the council has applied a two-year financial planning strategy. This involves delivering significant savings early, and reinvesting them into more modern and efficient ways of working, while making careful use of reserves to meet gaps in funding, to protect services as far as possible. Residents have reported that they support this approach, and to date, it has delivered £340 million in savings, in total, so far. The Council Tax will still remain one of the lowest of all County Councils nationally, and deliver value for money for Hampshire taxpayers - sustaining some of the strongest essential services in the country.

Over the next two years, the funding picture gets no better, and by April 2019, we will need to find a further £140 million in savings to balance our budget, on top of the £340 million already saved. Meanwhile, demand continues to go up in areas such as social care, especially for Hampshire's growing older population - and Government now expects councils to increase Council Tax by a maximum of 6%, over the next three years, to specifically address these social care pressures. Hampshire has decided to set the increase at 3% over the next 2 years. This would enable us to prudently use the money upfront, on a one-off basis, and help offset the major pressures that adult social care presents.

This means that for 2017/18, there will be a 3% increase in County Council's Council Tax precept to address the adult social care funding pressures, plus a 1.99% general increase – representing a 4.99% increase overall. However, the money generated will still not be enough to deal with the expected increases in demand for social care over the next few years.

The recommended increase in Council Tax realises a charge by Hampshire County Council for the year beginning 1st April 2017, of £1,133.10 at Band D – or around £1 extra per week.

The approved capital budget proposes significant investment in Hampshire's economy, building plans and jobs, totalling £520 million over the next three years. The funding in Hampshire's infrastructure and long-term assets, up to 2019/20 includes proposed £179 million investment in new and extended school buildings to provide a further 10,915 new primary and secondary school places. This investment will ensure a school place for every child in Hampshire, while boosting jobs and the local economy, and maintaining Hampshire's high position in parental choice. £122 million is also set aside for major repairs, maintenance and improvements to schools and other public spaces.

£109 million has been earmarked for structural maintenance of roads and bridges, with £100 million scheduled for integrated transport schemes to improve access to key employment areas, and smaller local projects to improve safety and traffic flow on the roads. This includes seven major infrastructure schemes totalling £85 million.

### **Schools' Funding**

The new national schools funding formula consultation runs until the end of March. To help inform our response, County Councils' network (CCN) has circulated a survey to member councils for cabinet members for education and children's services to complete by the end of this week.

Emerging CCN analysis suggests that while the majority of county authorities see an uplift in funding, because any increase and decrease is capped at 3%, the total 'gain' is not enough, as historical discrepancies have not been addressed.

The new formula is also based on a regressive methodology, rather than need or cost drivers. Moreover, sector analysis suggests that over 1,000 rural schools will have their budgets cut as they do not benefit from the 'sparsity' factor.

CCN will work with DfE to highlight these dependencies, while we have high-profile media with BBC News and Countryfile Magazine planned to press this messaging.

### **Scam Warning**

Hampshire County Council's Trading Standards service is reminding residents to be alert to cold callers. The latest scam involves a cold caller purporting to be from the Office of Fair Trading investigating a company that had done

work at the target resident's address and saying that the householder may be due compensation, but demanding a contribution toward court costs.

Residents are advised not to rely on identity cards as proof the caller is genuine as it is always best to make independent enquiries using a telephone number sourced independently. Information provided by cold callers, such as telephone numbers, should not be relied upon when making checks.

Consumers have statutory rights when buying at the door, including a 14-day right to cancel contracts for goods and services worth over £42, the right to a refund, replacement or repair if goods are faulty, falsely described or not fit for purpose. However, these rights can only be exercised if the seller is a trader who gives correct contact information. Trading Standards recommends residents do not buy goods at the door. For more details, visit [hants.gov.uk/tradingstandards](http://hants.gov.uk/tradingstandards).

Members of the county council's 'Buy With Confidence' scheme are audited to ensure their trading practices are legal, honest and fair. Details can be obtained by calling 01962 833620, e-mailing [buy.with.confidence@hants.gov.uk](mailto:buy.with.confidence@hants.gov.uk) or via [buywithconfidence.gov.uk](http://buywithconfidence.gov.uk).

Anyone with information about cold callers or who requires advice on doorstep crime should call 01962 833666 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm). Outside those hours, call the police on 101 or 999, if intimidated. e-mailing

### **Tourism grants**

Hampshire County Council is calling for businesses to apply for a grant that would help develop their tourism projects. The European LEADER grant programme is administered by Hampshire County Council and applications can be for grants from £10,000 to £50,000 for projects that attract visitors to the local area, including visitor centres, signage and interpretation boards.

### **Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE)**

As a reminder, the LGBCE has now approved the pattern of divisions for the county for implementation in this year's County Council elections to be held on Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> May. (*A timely prompt to check you are on the electoral roll and whether you will need a postal or proxy vote?*) The recommendation for the Meon Valley division retains the settlements of Corhampton & Meonstoke, Droxford, Exton, Hambledon, Shedfield, Shirrell Heath, Swanmore, Waltham Chase, Warnford, West Meon and with newcomers of Curbridge, Curdrige and Whiteley. 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 this revised Meon Valley division, up from just under 12,000. The division has therefore lost Beauworth, Bishops Sutton, Bramdean & Hinton Ampner, Cheriton and Soberton. Bramdean & Hinton Ampner will be drawn into the Bishops Waltham Division comprising the settlements of Beauworth, Bishops Sutton, Bishops Waltham, Bramdean & Hinton Ampner, Cheriton, Colden Common, Durley, Kilmeston, Owslebury, Tichborne, Twyford and Upham.

### **Devolution and Combined Authorities**

The past year of local government has been dominated by the devolution issue and elected mayors and clarion political egos. The latest is that there are no active deals on the table. There are noises off that Portsmouth is still trying with other Solent City pretenders. And, unconfirmed rumours of Basingstoke and its near neighbours are harbouring Unity authority thoughts. The government position appears to be that they are unlikely to support any changes without there being general agreement across Hampshire and that means the agreement of HCC. The current administration has no wish to see the fragmentation of Hampshire and a concomitant risk of increased local government overheads by duplication or even triplication of essential services: highways, education social services etc. It does mean however that the original combined authority deal without an elected mayor could be revived.

**Cllr Roger Huxstep**  
**Member for Meon Valley Division**

**8<sup>th</sup> March 2017**