

## **Closing the Gap**

At a recent meeting, HCC Cabinet weighed up a wide range of options for closing the £140 million budget gap the Authority faces by April 2019. With our revenue support grant from Government soon coming to an end, together with rising inflation and significant increases in the numbers of elderly people, younger adults and children needing care - the pressures are mounting and HCC has some extremely hard decisions to make. Our priority must continue to be supporting the growing numbers of vulnerable children and adults who rely on our care, and for whom we have a statutory responsibility – an approach residents have told us they also support.

Achieving a further £140 million of savings, on top of the £340 million of spending reductions we have had to make since our funding from central Government began to reduce in 2008, will be our biggest challenge to date. Of the £140million we have to save, only approximately £40 million comes from reduced grant, whilst £50 million is down to inflation, and a further £50 million comes from demographic pressure – from higher numbers of adults needing care, not just the elderly and more children in care. We continue to put Hampshire's case to Government - communicating with Ministers and MPs to encourage them to take a fresh look at the ideas we have for easing some of these problems, through options such the introduction of nominal charges at our Household Waste Recycling Centres, for example. Local people are telling us they would prefer a nominal charge than to lose a convenient local service. We hope the Government might let us pilot some of these ideas.

Hampshire's town and parish councils also have a valuable part to play, which is why the County Council are proposing that £0.5 million is made available for more joint initiatives with local councils, to enable local communities take a more active role in supporting some services. Officers had suggested a £250,000 fund, but Members doubled that to £500,000.

By law, the County Council must deliver a balanced budget, and we are considering very carefully, the implications of all the proposals. Every County Councillor is alert to the extent of the financial outlook and it will be for all Members, when we meet in full Council in November, to reconcile a sustainable way forward. Based on the outcome of that meeting, Hampshire County Council will prepare the Budget for determination, next February, including next year's level of council tax.

## **Best Historical Buildings in the Country**

Schools built in the 1980s by Hampshire County Council have been ranked by the Government as among the best historical buildings in the country. Bosmere Junior School in Havant, Springwood Junior School in Waterlooville and Fleet Infant School have all been awarded Grade II listing by the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on the advice of Historic England. The ranking means the school buildings are of the same architectural and historical significance to the nation as other Hampshire landmarks such as the Hurst Point Lighthouse in the New Forest, and the Mayflower Theatre in Southampton.

## **Looking after someone else's child?**

Children sometimes need to live away from their parents when the family needs help, perhaps during a parent's hospital stay, or if parents work abroad. When this is the case, it's important that the County Council is notified of the private fostering arrangements.

If a young person is being cared for by someone who is not their parent or a close relative, for 28 days or more, by a private arrangement, this is called 'private fostering'. The term applies to children under 16 (or under 18 if they are disabled). Private foster carers must inform the local authority, under Private Fostering Regulations, to comply with the law. In Hampshire, this means telling Children's Services at Hampshire County Council.

The law only applies when a young person is cared for by someone **outside their immediate family**. Adults can care for an immediate relative, such as a brother, sister, grandchild, step-child, niece or nephew, without needing to notify anyone. If the child is your immediate relative, you can still contact Children's Services if you want to, if you feel you need some advice. Call children's services on 0300 555 1384 or email [childrens.services@hants.gov.uk](mailto:childrens.services@hants.gov.uk)

## **Children in Care**

Hampshire County Council has opened five new children's homes across the County, with a sixth soon to be completed - providing a better home environment to some of the County's most vulnerable children. The new homes will have much lower running costs, benefiting from 21<sup>st</sup> century, energy-efficient building techniques and technologies such as solar power. The redesign was also an opportunity to choose the best possible locations for vulnerable children to grow up in. All the homes are near to good transport links, within walking distance of schools and also within easy reach of local amenities and leisure activities, enabling young people to develop their independence safely.

## **Trading Standards**

Hampshire County Council Trading Standards have helped vulnerable residents recoup more than £2 million from scams and mis-sold goods and services. Since 2009, the service's Safeguarding Team have helped around 800 Hampshire residents subjected to financial abuse by preventing payments to criminals, cancelling ongoing subscriptions for unnecessary services or by arranging refunds. Local residents can also help protect their families, friends and neighbours by becoming a 'Friend Against Scams' or a 'Scam Champion'. For further information please email: [tsadvice@hants.gov.uk](mailto:tsadvice@hants.gov.uk) or visit [www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk](http://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk)

## **Be Bright, Be Seen, Be Safe**

Now that the clocks have gone back and winter draws in Hampshire County Council has started a new road safety campaign. "Your Time to Shine" is a new campaign reminding children and their parents of the importance of being visible to traffic. Hampshire County Council is advising people who may be walking or cycling near traffic, to wear reflective clothing, and to make sure bike lights are clean and in good working order.

## **Hampshire Record Office**

Hampshire County Council's Record Office is celebrating 70 years of collecting, preserving and providing access to documents dating back more than 1,000 years – including a rare 10th century Anglo-Saxon charter, Florence Nightingale's letters and Jane Austen's baptism record

The Record Office officially opened on 20 October 1947, in the former premises of a bank in the city's High Street. It relocated to the County Council's Castle Avenue offices in 1959, then to St Thomas's church in 1972, before moving to its current, purpose-built premises on Sussex Street, in 1993. The Record Office offers free on-site and online access to fascinating items, including Poor Law records, title deeds, maps, photographs, diaries and parish registers - all stored in climate-controlled strong rooms. Wessex Film and Sound Archive, also based at the Record Office, brings history to life through 38,000 visual and audio recordings, from late Victorian times to the present day.

## **Funds for the Community**

I have a small budget for funding community related projects across the Division. For example, I have funded Lunch Clubs; Church group; trim trail for a school; music stands and theatre equipment for a school, playgroups; youth groups; Christmas party for village children; trips to the theatre for Golden Years; trips to the pantomime for young people, etc. The group must have a Treasurer and a bank account. To find out more visit <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/grants/county-councillor-grants.htm> and discuss the idea with me before making an application. Only one application per year per group. I look forward to hearing from you.

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