

Devolution

You will no doubt have seen in the Press that the proposed “Solent City” deal between Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight has failed to get the support of Westminster. This follows a series of meetings, including one attended by the all Council Leaders, including Hampshire County Council, and the relevant MPs.

The County Council has always advocated that the proposal made no economic sense by creating false divisions – geographically and between Authorities. For instance, splitting up Hampshire’s highways functions would have led to inevitable but unnecessary expense.

Mental Health Centres

As the Mental Health Champion for the County, I was delighted when Prime Minister Theresa May recently visited one of the County’s mental health Wellbeing Centres to find out more about the service following the Government’s announcement to improve mental health nationally. There are presently 11 Wellbeing Centres across the County, including one in Fareham, which specialise in tackling the emotional, physical and practical impact of poor mental health. The Centres are jointly commissioned by the County Council and Hampshire’s five Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) as part of an £8 million contract with the voluntary sector.

Mental Health Wellbeing Centres act as a ‘one stop shop’ with a menu of services covering employment and housing, as well as a range of support to help people with both their physical health such as smoking cessation and improved levels of physical exercise, as well as their mental health. People can self-refer or are referred by their local GP. The Centres also support people with more serious mental health conditions, working in conjunction with the local County Council/NHS mental health team. The Centres currently operate in Winchester, Eastleigh, Romsey, Andover, Hythe, New Milton, Basingstoke, Fareham, Gosport, Havant and Aldershot. Many are located in shop fronted buildings based in town centre locations making them convenient for people to visit and travel to.

Carers

If you are caring for someone who needs your help due to a health condition, disability or frailty you may find it useful to know that Hampshire County Council fund emergency planning for carers. Up to 48 hours free care may be available for the person you care for in the event of an emergency. This is a free service and no adult services assessment is needed. Telephone Freephone 0800 1691577.

School Meals

There is to be a small increase in the price of a school meal, with effect from 1st April 2017. An increase of five pence is being introduced to meet the rising cost of providing school meals, and takes the price per meal to £2.15. Over 70,000 healthy school meals are served in Hampshire’s primary and secondary schools, across the county daily. All HC3S school meals meet the Department for Education’s rules for healthy school dinners. Menus also adhere to the Hyperactive Children’s Support Group’s recommendations to remove over 70 additives and colourings that could affect children’s behaviour.

Health Reminders

- By the time people reach their 40s and 50s many will have dramatically increased their risk of developing conditions such as type 2 diabetes, cancer and heart disease, so why not have a free health check? If you are aged 40 – 70 years go online to - <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/healthcheck>, or visit your GP.
- If you want to want to lose weight and think you might have a Body Mass Index of 30+ (or you may not know what your BMI is) there is a Hampshire County Council funded free service offered by Weight Watchers. They can be contacted on 0345 602 7068, quoting WWRS095. Obesity and related illnesses in Hampshire costs the NHS £338m per year.
- Domestic abuse. The County Council is a partner in the Integrated Domestic Abuse Service for Hampshire (IDASH) and offers a confidential help service for women, men, children and young people experiencing

domestic abuse. Telephone: 03300 165112 but in an emergency always call 999. More details on <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/healthandwellbeing/domesticabuse.htm>

Winter Highways

- From October through to April, highways teams are on standby 24 hours a day, seven days a week whenever freezing road surfaces are forecast. There are around 5,300 miles of road in Hampshire and they are salted on a priority basis. 'Priority One' routes carry the majority of Hampshire's traffic and include A roads, some B roads, major bus routes, roads to hospitals and other key emergency hubs, large schools and colleges, areas of high traffic concentration and public transport interchanges. There are 39 'Priority One' salting routes across the three weather bands in Hampshire, each taking around three and half hours to complete.
- Hampshire's winter fleet has 45 vehicles to salt the roads, and each is fitted with a snow plough. Additionally, around 120 farmers and other contractors are on standby with snow ploughs.
- The Council has supplied more than 3,000 salt bins to communities throughout Hampshire.
- Around 25,000 tonnes of salt are stocked ready for the winter in barns strategically placed across Hampshire at Hook, Havant, Bishops Waltham, Weyhill, Totton, Micheldever, Dummer and Petersfield. Salt is delivered throughout the year to ensure each barn is at full capacity at the start of the winter, and stocks are topped up when needed.

You can find out more about priority routes and where to find your nearest salt bin on the map, see <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/severeweather/salting>

Adoption and Fostering

Could you provide a home for Hampshire children who are unable to live with their birth families? The County Council are particularly looking for homes for older children, teenagers, siblings and children with disabilities or special needs.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) are children and young people who have either travelled alone or who have become separated from anyone with parental and/or care responsibility for them. As you may expect, these children and young people are often distressed and frightened as a result of the experiences they have been through. Increasing numbers of refugees are entering the UK with many of the young people coming from Syria, Eritrea, Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran. Most are boys aged between 13 and 17 years. In some cases the children will speak little or no English.

Good foster carers can make a huge difference to the lives of many unaccompanied children and young people. The County Council are looking for carers who have the resilience to manage the huge differences these children and young people are facing on a daily basis and, with support, help the child or young person to access education and establish a routine with their day-to-day living. If you have a spare room, childcare experience and the time to support an unaccompanied asylum seeking child, contact the Recruitment Team on 0300 555 1384 for further information.

A reminder - Bus Pass

In order to reduce the wastage of replacing passes that are no longer required, as from 1st April any Older Person's Concessionary Passes which have not been used in the six months prior to their renewal will no longer be subject to **automatic** renewal, but should be renewed on request. This will reduce the wastage of replacing passes which are no longer required.

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