

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT TO HAWKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

23 JANUARY 2019

1. Local Government Finance Settlement

The Local Government Finance Settlement was published on 13 December 2018. The financial year of 2019/20 represents the final year of the current spending review period and as such the majority of grant figures are in line with the four year settlement that was released in 2016/17.

There were previous announcements in the Autumn Budget on 29 October 2018 for additional funding in adults' and children's social care in 2019/20, which will provide £12.9m of additional funding to Hampshire, together with extra current-year funding for pothole repairs of just under £12m. These are one-off amounts which do not address the challenging financial predicament.

Regarding Council Tax, the referendum limits for 2019/20 are "up to 3%" for HCC and HFRA. There is no further social care precept increase for HCC this year. So the HCC element of Council Tax will go up by 3%.

2019 is an important year for Hampshire County Council as we await the results of the Comprehensive Spending Review and the long-awaited Green Paper on Adult Social Care.

2. Ham Barn roundabout

Greatham Parish Councillors are very concerned about the design of the Ham Barn roundabout, which they say is impossible to get across at peak times. In November Greatham PC asked me to write to Highways England to encourage them to replace the Ham Barn roundabout with a flyover or underpass. I argued in my letter that the roundabout was unsafe, polluting and bad for the local economy. I have received a non-committal reply from HE which included some positive noises as follows:

“We are currently working with the Department for Transport to consider various investment options for the A3 for the next five-year investment period until 2025. One such aspect is the need for further studies at this location to develop potential solutions to reduce congestion. We expect the DfT to announce the specific projects for the 2020 to 2025 investment period in late 2019.

While we await their decision, we will continue to monitor the junction and if evidence informs us of the urgent need for intervention, we shall look at possible improvements.”

I suspect nothing will happen for another few years but it is interesting to note that Highways England do seem to have this on their “to do list”.

3. Opening of new relief road in Whitehill & Bordon

I was pleased to attend the opening of the new relief road on 7 January in Whitehill & Bordon. Executive Member for Environment and Transport Cllr Rob Humby cut the ribbon together with Dave Axam, the Chairman of the M3 Local Enterprise Partnership who funded the construction of the road.

The new road is effectively a by-pass which allows motorists to avoid driving through Whitehill & Bordon. It is a pleasant and interesting drive surrounded by forests and construction sites for all the new housing.

The road will improve connectivity which will be good for the local economy. Residents will also benefit from faster journey times up the A325.

4. Draft Strategy for the Health and Wellbeing of Hampshire 2019-2024

A consultation has been launched on the next five-year plan for improving Health and Wellbeing in Hampshire. The Health and Wellbeing Board are keen to hear the views of Councillors, staff, partners and other interested organisations and individuals to help improve the final Strategy. They would be grateful for responses by Friday 22 February.

An analysis of feedback on this draft will be compiled and discussed at the next Health and Wellbeing Board meeting on 14 March, where we will sign off a final Strategy document. Once this high level Strategy has been agreed, a more detailed Business Plan will be created, setting out the Board's top priorities for action in 2019/20 based on the new Strategy.

The draft priorities in the plan are as follows:

- Improve mental health and emotional resilience for children and young people. This will prioritise prevention and earlier intervention to improve mental health and reduce pressure on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). There will be a particular focus on vulnerable groups, including Adverse Childhood Events, the mental health of parents including perinatal mental health, and emotional resilience in educational settings.
- Improve physical health in children and young people through prevention and early intervention. This will prioritise healthy weights, physical activity and reducing smoking in pregnancy.
- Work more collaboratively across organisations and disciplines to improve outcomes and services, including integrated or aligned approaches where appropriate.

You can view an electronic version of the draft Strategy here

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/haveyoursay/consultations/healthandwellbeing> and there is also a link to a short survey to enable people to send in feedback. You can also email comments to hampshirehwb@hants.gov.uk

5. New “Recreation and Community Heritage Fund” launched

A new Recreation and Heritage Community Fund of over £500,000 is being set up by Hampshire County Council to simplify the grant application process and open it up to a wider range of organisations.

The Recreation and Heritage Community Fund will make awards of up to £100,000 and support projects which provide community benefit and/or help

organisations become self-supporting, thus reducing reliance on public sector funding in the long term. In addition, small one-off grants from £1,000 to £3,000 will also be awarded to help pump prime community events and activities.

The Fund will replace four existing grant schemes so that local community organisations and projects will only need to apply to one funding scheme. For information, the funds being replaced and amalgamated in this new fund are as follows:

- Recreation and Heritage Investment Fund
- Community Investment Fund
- Activity Grants
- Community Building – Capital Fund

6. South Downs Volunteer Conservation Fund

A new fund has been set up by the South Downs National Park Trust which provides funding as well as volunteer support for conservation projects. Grants of up to £5,000 are available for non-profit organisations, parish councils and landowners in 2019 for projects that care for and enhance the South Downs National Park and promote opportunities for people to understand and enjoy it.

Almost any project which helps to conserve or enhance the National Park is eligible, provided it fits with the National Park Partnership Management Plan and makes use of the South Downs Volunteer Ranger Service. Project examples include refurbishing a community pond, creating a sensory garden, creating wildflower meadows and butterfly banks.

The deadline to apply for the first round of funding is 31 March 2019 and the first grants will be awarded in June 2019. Find out more at www.southdownstrust.org.uk/volunteer-fund

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