

County Councillor ANNUAL Report for Petersfield, Liss and Hangers

April 2020

Our first year under our new leader Cllr Keith Mans has been a successful one for Hampshire County Council. We continue to be regarded as one of the best-performing Councils in the country. Our services are all rated good or outstanding and our schools achieve some of the best exam results in the country. We also have strong capital reserves of over £600m which enables us to invest in new roads and new schools.

Most County Councils are implementing a maximum-permitted Council Tax increase of 4% in April 2020. Hampshire is no exception – we still have a revenue budget shortfall of £80m due to demand pressures from social care and cost inflation so we are going for the full 4% to help plug that gap.

Even after this 4% increase, Hampshire will still have the second lowest precept in the UK. We are optimistic that HM Government's Social Care Green Paper and Comprehensive Spending Review will ease the pressure on local government finances later this year.

Budget (2020-21) includes spending £2.1 billion on delivering important public services for our 1.3 million residents during the next financial year. An extra £2 million each year for fixing potholes, with an additional £3 million for 2020/21. This is on top of the £10 million spent annually on Operation Resilience - the long-term strategy to ensure Hampshire's road network is more resilient to the impact of heavy traffic and worsening winters.

Social care pressures top the list of priorities with number of people aged 75+ in Hampshire increasing by almost a third over the next few years. Half the 4% council tax increase will go directly to adult social care.

HCC will also bring forward major investment in Hampshire's economy, jobs and the quality of the environment - with projects totalling £386.5 million over the next three years. Schemes include:

- £94.8 million for new and extended school buildings in Hampshire to ensure a school place for every child in Hampshire – and 19,100 new school places by September 2023
- £115.8 million for structural maintenance and improvement of roads and bridges in Hampshire

- £45.8 million for integrated transport schemes including over £10 million specifically focused on walking and cycling improvements
- £830,000 to deal with the impact of ash die back disease
- £3.2m LED Street lighting replacement scheme

The highlight of the municipal year at Hampshire County Council came in June 2019 when Hampshire's Children's Services were rated "Outstanding" across all areas by OFSTED. No other County Council has achieved this outstanding rating and it is great to know that children in Hampshire are so well looked after. Every month the County is working with over 10,000 children and young people in need of specialist social care services. It is also worth mentioning at this point that over 90% of Hampshire's schools are rated good or outstanding by OFSTED.

In October 2019 the Hampshire 2050 Commission issued its final report. The Independent Commissioners, drawn from a range of backgrounds, identified Climate Change as the key driver for change in Hampshire. The Commission's conclusions therefore provide a timely endorsement of the County Council's decision to declare a climate emergency in July 2019.

HCC continues to innovate by using technology to generate income and reduce costs. HCC is now the largest public sector provider of shared services, with three London boroughs joining our platform this year. We are also extending the use of technology in adult social care, including the rollout of Amazon Alexa devices and "cobots" which provide physical support for care workers.

Finally there are three things happening currently which I would like to mention briefly:

- There is currently a 10-week public consultation opened on 9 January 2020 asking Hampshire residents for their views on **the emerging vision for Hampshire's Libraries** to 2025 and the level of need for library services in specific local communities. There are 10 libraries which have been identified for possible closure, none of which is in East Hampshire. The alternative to closures is to reduce opening hours across the board.
- A new **resident permit system will begin operating at HWRCs** in April 2020. The system will be controlled by Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and will ensure continued free access for Hampshire residents to any of Hampshire's 24 HWRCs to dispose of household waste. Hampshire residents can register up to three vehicles via the Hampshire County Council website.

- Up to **£2million has been set aside for climate change projects.** A programme of tree and wildflower planting on highways amenity land will also be funded by ringfencing 100% of capital receipts from the sale of surplus highways land.

Russell Oppenheimer
County Councillor, Petersfield Hangers Division