

Winchester District Councillor Annual Report - March 2019

Cllr Vicki Weston's Annual Report



Winchester City Council Freezes Council Tax

There will be more money in the pockets of residents as Winchester City Council's sound financial management pays off. Households across the district will be better off this coming year after Winchester City Council said no to raising its council tax. The good news has been made possible because of the good financial management by the Council who has looked after the pennies so residents can look after their pounds. The city council recently received praise by external auditors for its financial health.

Percentage Change by authority of 2019 Council Tax

	Percentage change
HCC	3.00%
Police	13.50%
Fire	3.00%
Winchester Town Forum	3.00%
Parishes (average)	4.70%
Winchester City Council	0%

Winchester City Council goes from strength to strength.

Winchester District is:

- ✚ A premier business location
- ✚ Delivering quality housing options
- ✚ Improving the health and happiness of our community
- ✚ Improving the quality of the District's environment

This is being achieved in an environment of reducing government funding. Councils up and down the country are facing increasing pressure on services with reducing central government funding, so in the last couple of years Winchester City Council (WCC) has introduced a new way of budgeting called Outcome Based Budgeting. In 2018/19 we have made savings of £1.1m and the projected savings for 2019/20 are a further £0.96m.

These have been and will continue to be achieved through:

- ✚ Long Term Planning
- ✚ Improved Engagement
- ✚ Efficiencies
- ✚ Prioritisation
- ✚ Culture of Challenge and Innovation - transformation

+ Income Generation

This process will help us become self-reliant with an entrepreneurial approach to new income streams, but continue to invest in services like introducing doorstep glass recycling, while being able to freeze council tax this year, benefiting local residents and ensuring that the focus is on the effectiveness of the council.

Examples of income generation

- + Partnered home Purchase schemes that were introduced last year.
- + Investing in strategic property – example central Winchester and then renting them out.
- + Increasing the Park and Ride and Car park Utilisaiton
- + The transfer of the garage rents to the General Fund from the Housing Revenue account
- + Reviewing of fees and charges

Examples of efficiencies

- + Digital Action plan - greater use of technology to improve the delivery of our services increasing the opportunities for residents, businesses and visitors with increased efficiencies, reduced costs, better customer interactions and making a better use of data. This all leads to improved outcomes for those that we serve.
- + Back-office savings

Examples of Asset Management

- + Rent reviews
- + Be more energy efficient - following the refurbishment works to City Offices and the main reception a budget has been allocated to refurbish the West Wing. In addition to replacing the flooring and ceiling, the installation of energy efficient lighting is estimated to provide up to £8,000 per annum in savings.

Examples of Transformation

- + Automation, Digitalisation

WCC are investing in the District's infrastructure

Examples of Investment

- + **Sports and Leisure Centre** - £38 million project to build a new leisure centre, improving the health and happiness of our residents. We have also pledged to provide further sports hall facilities in the southern parishes. I have been speaking with Swanmore Community College so that they have been able to flag the need required in our area*. (see note on page 5)
- + The demolition and provision of a car park at Coventry House (Vaultex) following its acquisition. There is an existing budget to provide a surface car park in the programme; however, in line with the emerging Movement Strategy, the potential for a multi storey facility will be included in a feasibility study. Further details on this project will be reported later in

2019.

-  **Central Winchester regeneration** – Friarsgate Surgery, High Street property - The purchase of the Friarsgate Surgery with the plan to rent out but this helps secure the Central Winchester Regeneration projected, along with the Bus Station and this now in the ownership of WCC. The Council continues with its corporate priority to regenerate the city centre to create a new heart and additional life and vitality in the area, support business and the city centre economy, and make it a more attractive place for residents and visitors alike.

-  **Station Approach** - support business demand for Grade A office space and for job opportunities in the district. Investment in public realm and master planning with respect to the Station Approach area at Carfax and Cattlemarket subject to economic viability, business case and full review of delivery options.

-  **Bishop's Waltham units** develop new industrial space of our market town economy. The former Depot at Bishops Waltham is suitable for redevelopment. Interest has been expressed by a number of local businesses in the possibility of leasing new business accommodation. Initial feasibility studies have been completed and a planning application has been submitted for the demolition of the existing buildings and the construction of three new terraced industrial units, including hard and soft landscaping

-  **Tourist information Centre** - enhanced facility to showcase the city and district, worth a visit

-  **City Office reception** – better access, automation and service – a much more welcoming and user-friendly environment.

-  **Parking enhancement** – purchasing the Vaultex site, Coventry House Barfield Close will enable the Council to expand the Park & Ride parking scheme in the City to support our aim to improve the quality of the District's environment by reducing congestion and improving air quality. New Car parks or improvements. The provision of a new Coach Park at St Catherine's Park and Ride to replace the existing facility at Worthy Lane and improvements to Chesil car park. Alresford, with the provision of a new car park at The Dean in Alresford.

-  **Coitbury House** – refurbishment of currently unused building in central Winchester to provide much-needed office accommodation, provide a source of income to the Council, and revitalise the area. Architects have recently been appointed and works are expected to begin in 2019 subject to full business case approval.

-  **New Surgery** - provision of a replacement surgery in the city centre to replace the existing St Clements's Surgery.

- ✚ **King George V play area and skate park** – a budget has been allocated to replace the King George V Pavilion providing facilities for football, cricket and the boxing club. The project is at the feasibility stage and the potential for external funding sources such as grants are being explored.

- ✚ There is an existing budget to undertake capital refurbishment works to **Abbey House**; however, consideration is being given to more significant works to the property including its potential for alternative uses. Further detail and a business case will be reported when appropriate.

- ✚ **Glass recycling bins** - the Council will purchase new recycling bins for the kerbside glass collection recently announced waste collection contract extension for an autumn 2019 role out.

- ✚ **Movement Strategy** – explore the options available, and financing of these, to support the emerging Movement Strategy for Winchester City.

- ✚ **The Strategic Asset Purchase Scheme (SAPS)** identify assets for the Council to acquire which will help meet its strategic objectives and also generate ongoing revenue streams.
 - It is important to note that WCC is only investing in the district and only if there is a strategic gain as well as good financial sense, providing a financial return to support the Council services.

Following a number of successful acquisitions in 2018/19, an additional budget of £15m has been allocated to 2019/20 in order to continue the acquisition of property to support the Council's ambitions, and in line with the principles of the 'double win' that have been established to date. This brings the total allocated since the introduction of the scheme to £45m.

Housing

- ✚ The establishment of a Housing Company to support the delivery of sub-market rented housing. The Partnered Home Purchase (PHP) scheme allows the Council to invest its capital resources into shared ownership properties providing revenue via rental income on the share the Council owns and the potential to generate increased capital receipts in the future. It works by providing an ongoing revenue stream to the council through rental payments from residents who are moving onto the property ladder through the council investing in an open market shared ownership property.

- ✚ The delivery of one thousand new Council homes, 600 by 2020 and the rest over 10 years these include the delivery of 77 properties at the Valley, Stanmore the recent Chesil Lodge extra care units and many more smaller developments. The council also ranks one of the most

active for rural affordable homes being delivered.

- ✚ Winchester City Council's ambitious house building plans have been given the seal of approval after it was announced it had passed the Government's house building targets with flying colours. The Government's Housing Delivery Test compares how many homes are being built against how many are required in the district. The city council scored 121 per cent, meaning it is exceeding the Government's requirement for housing provision in the last three years. Councils which do not meet the 95 per cent delivery target are required to set out action plans on how they will address this failing.

In the Pipeline

- ✚ **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** – community projects. A £1m allocation was approved in September 2018 allowing community groups to apply for a share of between £10,000 and £200,000 for their essential infrastructure projects.
- ✚ **Goods Shed, Bar End**– options are being explored to provide small business units.
- ✚ **River Park Leisure Centre area** – exploring alternative uses for the land where the existing leisure centre is located once the new Winchester Sports and Leisure Park is open. **District-wide Sports hall capacity*** – gave approval to a £50,000 revenue budget to consider the feasibility of building a separate sports hall elsewhere in the district. A feasibility study has been commissioned and is underway; a report is expected in Spring 2019.
- ✚ **Solar Farm** – opportunities to invest in a solar farm either independently or in partnership are being explored. The potential benefits include supplying the Council with its own energy, supplying energy to Council owned assets including housing tenants, providing tenants with the option of a cheaper and greener energy supply
- ✚ **Bridge at City Mill** – the existing bridge over the Itchen at this location is narrow and the addition of a footbridge for pedestrians is being carefully considered.
- ✚ A budget of £250,000 per annum over the next 3 years has been allocated to energy management projects. Expenditure will be subject to a business case as individual projects are identified. As well as reducing the Council's carbon emissions it is anticipated that projects will provide additional income and/or savings to the Council.

What contribution has WCC made towards climate change?

Climate change is always on the agenda and considered with any project and we have been making changes that we can control as every small step makes a difference.

- + Installation of solar-photovoltaics on the roof of City Offices; contributing to a saving of 14.7 tonnes of carbon/annum towards the Council's goal of cutting 929 tonnes carbon/annum by 2020/21.
- + LED lighting in City Centre Car Parks
- + Reduction in the hours of street lighting overnight.
- + Replacement of fans/air conditioning units in Council Buildings with more energy efficient models.
- + Council Housing.
 - o Installation of cavity wall insulation and the addition of added insulation in loft spaces.
 - o Replaced disliked "Economy 7" heaters with modern Air Source Heat Pumps in areas without mains gas.
 - o Built over 300 new homes to higher energy efficiency standards with more to come in the next few years.
- + Planning
 - o Adopted planning policies that require private sector buildings to be built to higher energy standards. New Leisure Centre will have excellent energy rating and solar panels.
- + Vehicles. Staff encouraged to use public transport, walk or to use less polluting vehicles/ The council runs electric cars for neighbourhood wardens and pool cars.
- + Park and Ride Buses have latest EURO VI Engines.
- + Water Fountains in Tourist areas to avoid use of plastic bottles. Considering how we can lead on this and install water fountains around the city.
- + Glass Collection Service will increase re-cycling and energy saving for producing new glass products.

What are Winchester City Council's Services?			
Housing Provision 5,000 social houses 8,000 tenants Enabling new build	Environment Planning and Enforcement Waste Licensing Environmental Health	Heath & Happiness Landscapes and spaces Culture Sports & Health	Business Economic growth Tourism
Estate Management	Legal & Democratic services	Benefits administrations Universal Credit	Revenue collections Rates, council tax

As your Councillors we remain committed to you and your community providing information and direction and representing your views in Winchester.

- ❖ Long standing councilors and have held various roles at Council giving us a good broad understanding of local matters.
- ❖ We are able to signpost you to the correct departments and the best contacts when issues arise to offer you maximum support promptly.
- ❖ We can represents you by regular attendance at all the village parish council meetings making sure they receive regular updates, and then taking your views back to Winchester.
- ❖ Work collaboratively with the Authorities and Parish Councils
- ❖ We are an advocate for you at Council meetings making sure that the rural parishes are represented.
- ❖ Keep you informed with reports in Parish Magazines and email bulletins.
- ❖ Your Winchester City Councilors for 2019 – 2020 are Cllr Vicki Weston, Cllr Linda Gemmell and Cllr Frank Peason