

Hampshire County Councillor report

November 2021

1. County Council's first Climate Change Annual Report published

As COP-26 conference begins in Glasgow, Hampshire County Council has issued a detailed overview of its work towards tackling climate change, covering the 12 month period since the launch of its Climate Change Strategy. This first Climate Change Annual Progress Report 2020 – 2021 sets out the significant progress that is being made across the county to reduce carbon emissions and ensure that Hampshire is prepared for the impacts of climate change. The work is focused on key areas like reducing emissions from transport, making homes more energy efficient, generating local renewable energy and protecting and enhancing our natural environment.

The report makes it clear that Hampshire's residents and communities have a vital role in reducing emissions and preparing for the impacts of climate change in their own homes and through lifestyle choices. Multiple projects have therefore been set up to support communities to be active at a local level.

Among the projects featured is The Greening Campaign which has provided support and advice to 40 Hampshire communities, despite COVID-19, to work through a step-by-step process of reducing their carbon footprint. The first steps include taking very simple actions at a household level, such as reducing how much energy and water they use and to be more energy efficient.

At another level the focus is on actions to generate more local renewable energy. Together with iChoosr, in March 2021, the County Council launched the first Solar Together Campaign in Hampshire – a scheme that offers high-quality solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and battery storage to help residents generate their own green energy - maximising on bulk buying power to offer competitive prices for the purchase of panels. The County Council is also working with Community Energy South to build a network of community energy projects around the county.

Additionally, in supporting households to reduce transport emissions, the County Council secured Government funding for the installation of 50 on-street residential electric vehicle charge points (in Winchester and Eastleigh) and there are plans to extend this wider.

The Annual Report also highlights the critical role the natural environment plays in helping alleviate the impacts of climate change and how investing in initiatives like tree planting (over 1,250 trees during the past 12 months) and the Parish Pollinator Project to make improvements to pollinator habitats in Hampshire's towns and villages, are essential.

In a separate initiative, Hampshire County Council is offering grants to make community buildings more energy efficient as part of its commitment to combatting climate change. Measures that could be funded include solar panels, LED lighting, window replacements or insulation for buildings such as village halls and community centres. Applications are welcome from parish or town councils as well as community groups in unparished areas of Hampshire. For more information, visit: hants.gov.uk/community/grants/grants-list/parish-town-council-investment-fund

2. Boost your immunity this winter

Hampshire County Council is backing the NHS call for everyone to 'Boost your immunity this winter' by getting the COVID-19 booster and 'flu vaccine. With COVID-19 infection rates continuing to rise across the county, eligible residents are being urged to get their booster and 'flu jabs as soon as possible.

Free flu jabs are available to adults over 50, anyone with a long-term health condition, healthcare workers and carers, most children aged 2-16 years and pregnant women. A free COVID-19 booster is available to adults over 50, carers and health and social care workers, anyone living and working in care homes, people with certain health conditions and people who live with someone who is immunocompromised.

Residents eligible for the COVID-19 booster will be contacted by the NHS – if anyone has not been contacted within a week of reaching six months since their second jab they can call 119 or [book online via the NHS National Booking Service](#). Those who are eligible for a free 'flu vaccine can book an appointment through their GP surgery or local pharmacy. It is not too late to book a first or second dose of the COVID-19 vaccination: [anyone aged 16+ can book the vaccine through the National Booking System on the NHS website](#), go to a [walk-in clinic](#) or contact their GP surgery.

3. Support for Hampshire's children

Hampshire's eligible vulnerable children received food vouchers this October half term, thanks to further funding provided to the County Council by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). £591,810 of funding was granted by Hampshire County Council to schools, colleges and early years settings for the purchase of one £15 voucher per child for the one week October half term holiday.

Hampshire County Council is also encouraging parents and carers whose children are or may be eligible for benefits related free school meals to sign-up for free holiday and food scheme spaces over the Christmas and Easter holidays. More than 10,000 Hampshire children benefited from free places during this year's summer holiday. Parents and carers can [sign up](#) for free school meals using the [Hampshire Online FSM Application \(cloudforedu.org.uk\)](#) and find out what activities are offer in their area by searching the [Family Information and Services Hub](#).

4. Bus Service Improvement Plan

Hampshire County Council has reached the next important milestone in meeting the ambitions of the Government's 'Bus Back Better' strategy – aimed at driving significant improvements in local bus services (outside of London) - with the approval of its [proposed Bus Service Improvement Plan \(BSIP\)](#). This sets out the vision and the proposed steps that would be taken to achieve higher standards in bus travel in Hampshire. Hampshire's BSIP aims to be a catalyst for substantially increasing bus use across the whole of the county by creating the conditions that will both attract investment for bus services and infrastructure, as well as grow the number of passengers. A consultation exercise on the proposed BSIP will now be undertaken.

Cllr Hugh Lumby

Hampshire County Councillor, Meon Valley Division