

Vision for Hampshire 2050

The vision for Hampshire for the next 30 years has been approved. Hampshire County Council (HCC) unanimously endorsed the conclusions of the Commission of Inquiry - Vision for Hampshire 2050. Cllr Keith Mans, Leader HCC said: "Our county, just like the country, is facing a time of rapid change which affects each and every one of us. From the impact of a changing climate, to the effect the digital revolution will have on the way we work, to future energy supply, there are many challenges we need to address. Ultimately, we want to secure a high quality of life for Hampshire's next generations, continuing to enjoy an attractive environment and a prosperous economy." See www.hants.gov.uk for Hampshire 2050.

Balancing the budget begins this autumn

This month saw the start of the County Council's budget planning timetable – with Hampshire residents' responses to this summer's Balancing the Budget Consultation are at the heart of proposals being considered by individual Cabinet members over the coming weeks.

Recommendations will then go to the Cabinet as a whole, later this month; before a final decision in November by the full County Council. Further to ratification by Cabinet and Full Council, some proposals may then be subject to further, more detailed consultation.

These proposals will set out a range of options for how the County Council could meet the significant funding gap of £80 million it faces by April 2021 – which are the direct result of further reductions in our funding from Government, rising costs and inflation and growing demand for council services such as social care - from an ageing population and higher numbers of vulnerable children needing care. After more than a decade of cost reductions which have delivered savings of almost £0.5 billion to date, understandably it's becoming more and more difficult to find opportunities for making deeper savings and deciding what the County Council can and cannot do in the future. Analysis of the consultation responses has shown that residents continue to support our financial strategy which includes targeting resources to support the most vulnerable children and adults in our communities and using reserves carefully to help address funding gaps to meet one-off demand pressures in areas such as social care. However, the feedback collected has also confirmed that a number of different approaches are likely to still be needed to meet the scale of the challenge ahead. Consequently, over the coming weeks, Executive Members will be asked to consider a range of savings options that seek to maximise income generation opportunities and minimise reductions and changes to local services in line with the consultation feedback. The scale of the challenge inevitably means that there will be an impact on services in order to achieve the £80 million savings that are needed.

Cabinet and the full County Council will then consider these proposals alongside other options to balance the budget, which include:

- * continuing with the County Council's financial strategy, which includes:
- * targeting resources on the most vulnerable adults and children
- * using reserves carefully to help meet one-off demand pressures
- * lobbying central Government for legislative change to enable charging for some services;
- * options for raising Council Tax by up to 4%;
- * considering further opportunities for working with other authorities in Hampshire to reduce costs.

The council has been consistently clear with Government that they need to be fairer in their funding of local councils. For decades, councils in shire counties have been left behind those in major cities and urban areas – receiving up to 60% less funding.

The Government's announcement, recently, of more than £3.5 billion for council services nationally for one year, is positive, but it's unlikely to make much difference to our overall medium term budget position – albeit it provides some much needed breathing-space in the short term to help meet the increasing demand pressures in social care services for next year.

Consequently, we can't afford to take our foot off the pedal with our longer-term financial plans. If

Hampshire is to remain one of the strongest local authorities in the country, providing good value for money to the county's taxpayers and consistently delivering some of the best public services to Hampshire's 1.3 million residents, we must receive the right level of financial support, on an ongoing and consistent basis, from Government. We will be making further representations to feed into the three-year Spending Review due to take place next year.

Hampshire County Council maps out the way forward for improving its recycling

As part of the County Council's budget planning, referred to above, a report has been produced into how savings could be made, while improving recycling. It will mark start of a radical overhaul of how waste is managed in Hampshire. Proposals to help meet the savings target are being examined with a strong focus on changes to waste and recycling in Hampshire.

With approximately 100,000 bin loads being delivered to our facilities for disposal every weekday, it is essential we make every pound we spend on waste and recycling count. Recent Government announcements on changes in the national waste system and the challenge of improving poor recycling performance in Hampshire, means we must reassess the way we deal with waste.

In terms of recycling, we know that our household waste recycling centres (HWRCs) achieve a much higher rate than kerbside bins collected by district councils – in the national recycling league tables, not one district council in Hampshire is in the top half. This demonstrates that there is considerable room for improvement.

By reducing the spend associated with household waste disposal, the County Council can protect the HWRC network - which residents value. Therefore, proposals will be considered for reducing the financial subsidies currently paid to the district councils.

These proposals will include passing on the full cost of rejected loads of recycling to the collection authorities (district councils). If approved by the County Council, the changes would not take effect before April 2021.

The world has moved on since we set up the current arrangements with the district councils to manage Hampshire's waste and recycling in the mid-1990s - and so must we. One in every five lorry loads of kerbside recycling arriving at our facilities now fails to meet recycling standards and we can no longer afford to subsidise the current system which is failing to deliver the standards agreed over 20 years ago.

We need to take decisive action to make sure that the reduced resources we have are targeted at boosting recycling levels. It is vital we have the right systems and funding arrangements in place to meet Government targets and future demand and this will be a challenge. We all need to work together to improve recycling performance across Hampshire.

Read the full report at: <http://democracy.hants.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=136&MId=5477>

Library Funding

Re the budget savings above, HCC has warned of 'significant budget reductions' to library funding. Savings proposals worth nearly £2.5 million from the library and countryside services budget form part of a raft of measures to address the Council's £80 million shortfall by 2021. The Council will have to 'think creatively' about what library customers want. This might include closures, reductions to opening times, or relocations. At this stage the proposals do not include detailed plans for any specific library, as these will come later as part of a public consultation.

Vaccinations

Parents are being urged to check that their children are up to date with their pre-school booster vaccinations. As they head off to school or nursery this autumn, a Public Health England (PHE) campaign, backed by HCC, underlines the safety and importance of vaccines. It advises that children need both

doses of MMR to be fully protected against measles, mumps and rubella, plus the 4-in-one booster vaccination which protects against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and polio. According to figures from PHE, 89.8% of children in Hampshire received the second dose of MMR by the time of their 5th birthday; for the 4-in1 booster 88.7% of five-year olds in Hampshire had been vaccinated. Also, don't put off the flu vaccination. HCC is urging people at increased risk from flu or who care for someone vulnerable to book their free flu vaccine. The vaccine will help to protect them this winter and avoid the spread of the highly infectious influenza virus. A winter flu jab is considered essential protection for the over 65s, young children, pregnant women and carers, as well as those with pre-existing long-term health conditions or a weakened immune system. The virus can spread fast in families, schools, care homes or hospitals, and lead to serious complications. The vaccination is available free of charge from GPs and pharmacies for these eligible groups. School children from Reception to Year 4 will get the vaccine by means of a free nasal spray at school vaccination clinics and pre-school children can receive it from the family GP. Vaccinating children aged two to nine is particularly important as they spread flu easily, putting families, other adults and the wider community at risk. Severe symptoms including fever, chills, aching muscles, headache, stuffy nose, dry cough and sore throat make it one of the most debilitating seasonal illnesses.

For more information visit <https://www.nhs.uk/staywell>

Cllr Roger Huxstep
Member for Meon Valley Division

7th October 2019