

# COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT TO SHEET PARISH COUNCIL

**14 NOVEMBER 2017**

1. Serving Hampshire consultation

At the Full Council meeting on 2 November 2017 the County Council approved a report on implementation of £140m of savings. In the short term, this involves some immediate spending on IT investment in order to gain efficiencies. HCC will also be investing in more social workers with a view to better supporting troubled families and thereby reducing the number of children taken into care. In the medium-term, the detailed cost savings as a whole are subject to further consultation and executive decision-making. A detailed public consultation is now expected in the New Year. Two further points are worth noting:

- Councillors have backed a new £500,000 fund to help Parish and Town Councils to provide more services themselves. This could for example help increase the frequency of grass verge cutting or could help with purchasing equipment. Details of the scheme's application process are currently being developed.
- The Council passed a resolution calling on the Government to give Hampshire the powers to undertake a trial scheme that enables the Council to charge OAPs a nominal £10 charge for bus passes. This would raise around £3m and we believe that the public would prefer this charge than to see unviable bus services cut.

The County Council is lobbying Government hard to give us other powers to charge for other services and we shall also be watching the Budget closely on 22 November to see if the Chancellor provides any meaningful additional support for local government.

2. Future Skills Centre opens in Whitehill and Bordon

The Future Skills Centre is the latest in a series of new, world-class technical training facilities which we at HCC are delivering across the County with a view to transforming the skills infrastructure in Hampshire. This facility has the potential to be a great resource for young people across East Hampshire.

The innovative new building, built by Hampshire County Council and substantially funded by the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), was officially handed over, on 13 October 2017, to Basingstoke College of Technology, which is operating the centre, and providing its comprehensive range of vocational training courses in the construction sector, including apprenticeships.

The Home and Communities Agency secured an award of £3.8 million to fund the project, through the Local Growth Fund Grant from the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership, and then selected the County Council to build the new facility and identify an operator. The County Council also put £250,000 towards the building costs for the new centre.

Although the focus is on training for the construction sector, the centre is the new local hub for technical training and will host a broad adult and community learning programme for the wider community.

The first cohort of students is already taking courses at the centre, developing skills in carpentry, brickwork, plumbing and the built environment. Both full time and part time study options are available, as well as apprenticeships.

At the opening ceremony, Damian Hinds MP said: “I was delighted to be part of the official opening of the Future Skills Centre, and to meet students already at work in the new facility. It’s certainly an exciting time for the area and I would encourage any young person with an interest in construction to take a look at the courses available.”

### 3. South Downs National Park Trust gets Charitable Status

The South Downs National Park Trust has been set up with the aim of working “to enhance and protect the South Downs National Park for future generations.”

The Trust is independent but will be supported by South Downs National Park Authority staff for its first three years – ensuring that funds raised can be focused on work in the National Park. The Chair of the Trustees is Julie Fawcett who is an entrepreneur.

**RUSSELL OPPENHEIMER**  
**County Councillor for Petersfield Hangers**