

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT TO SHEET PARISH COUNCIL

OCTOBER 2017

1. Serving Hampshire consultation

The next phase of the County Council process to find £140m of savings by 2019 is for the Cabinet to bring forward detailed cost-reduction proposals. These proposals will then form the basis of a further public consultation.

A range of options is being considered including raising council tax, charging a nominal fare of 50p to those who have free bus passes, closing some household waste and recycling centres and removing some school crossing patrols.

The County Council is lobbying central Government hard to give us more powers to raise revenue by charging for services, to allow us to raise Council tax beyond the 5% limit if necessary, and also to clarify the future of adult care funding which is a major part of our expenditure in Hampshire.

Until we have clarity on the proposals I would suggest that it is a bit premature to consider making any representations. I will report back again in November once more detail has been published.

2. South Downs Local Plan consultation commences

The Pre-Submission version of the South Downs Local Plan opened for public consultation on 26 September and runs for 8 weeks until 21 November 2017. This will be the last opportunity for the public to comment before the plan is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in Spring 2018. You can read the plan and respond to the consultation online at: www.southdowns.gov.uk/localplan

A key message which all NPA Members wish to stress is this: when responding, please comment on aspects of the plan which you support as well as those you wish to challenge. For example, if you support the proposed 50% affordable housing allocation please say so!

The South Downs Local Plan will, on adoption, replace more than a thousand existing local plan policies currently operating in different parts of the National Park with one set of 96 consistent policies.

The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) is asking people to give their final comments this autumn and while they are mainly looking at the soundness of the plan they will also listen to comments on all other aspects of the plan. Every comment will be passed to the Planning Inspectorate who will respond to them as part of their examination into the Local Plan.

This is a landscape-led plan, based on the statutory purposes and duty for National Parks as specified in the Environment Act 1995. These nationally important landscapes are the reason the South Downs were designated a National Park and must sit at the heart of every planning decision which the SDNPA makes.

3. Hampshire Supporting Troubled Families Programme on track

There has been a positive evaluation of this crucial area of Council activity. A report to the Hampshire Cabinet has highlighted that Hampshire's STF programme is on track to meet the Government's new and more challenging targets around the number of families that need to be reached, and the intervention criteria achieved. By 2020, 5,540 Hampshire families will need to have been supported through the programme - more than double the number supported during the first phase of the scheme from 2012-2015.

By working closely with partner agencies, including the Police, schools and the Health Service, we are able to help families who are on the verge of crisis to make positive changes in their lives. They have been helped to get back into and stay in work, their children now attend school regularly and keep out of trouble outside of school, whilst their home lifestyles are safer and more settled. The benefits of this support are not only felt directly by the families on the programme, but also across the wider communities in which they live.

Independent evaluation of the second phase of the Hampshire programme is being carried out by Southampton Solent University.

4. One-stop community shops for those needing mental health support.

New plans will see extended opening hours during evenings and weekends, and social care and NHS mental health specialist staff brought together within the centres. A 'one stop shop' approach will also be developed for more areas such as crisis support and support for young people and families.

Support from the centres can be accessed by dropping in or through GP referral.

The plans for the Wellbeing Centres will make it much easier for people to access support in their local community as they will be able to drop in to their nearest centre. Our priority is to ensure that mental health is afforded the same attention and priority as physical health, which is what we are working on with our partners in the NHS to achieve.

The improvement plans are part of a new £8 million contract funded by the County Council and Hampshire's Clinical Commissioning Groups, awarded to Andover Mind, Solent Mind and Havant and East Hampshire Mind. These voluntary sector organisations, with mental health expertise, will work together to run the Wellbeing Centres across the county, from this month.

Havant and East Hampshire Mind operates from its centre at Leigh Park Community Centre in Havant. They can be contacted for advice on 02392 498916.

RUSSELL OPPENHEIMER
County Councillor for Petersfield Hangers

9 October 2017