



Candovers Oakley And Overton Division
Hampshire County Councillor report
March 2024

1. County Council Budget Consultation

I talked about the ongoing consultation on the County Council's future services in my last report. That consultation is seeking Hampshire residents' views on proposals to change and reduce some local services and help the Authority address a £132 million budget shortfall faced by April 2025.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/haveyoursay/consultations/future-services-consultation>

A reminder about the areas covered by the consultation - road maintenance and winter gritting, public transport, street lights, school crossing patrols, parking charges at rural countryside car parks, homelessness support, library stocks levels, adult social care contributions, grants for voluntary and community organisations, funding to Hampshire Cultural Trust and changes or closures of Household Waste Recycling Centres.

Many people have already responded. The consultation runs until **the end of the month** so if you have not responded yet, I do encourage you to take part. This affects us all. A number of people have emailed me with thoughts - again, do still reply to the consultation or email any thoughts to the Council's Insight & Engagement Unit on insight@hants.gov.uk

2. HCC budget 2024-25

The County Council's budget for the next financial year has been approved by council. This budget covers £2.6 billion of public spending on the ongoing delivery of important local services to Hampshire's 1.4 million residents.

From 1 April 2024, Hampshire County Council's portion of council tax will increase by a total of 4.99%, of which 2% will go specifically towards adults' social care and supporting the county's higher numbers of older people and adults with complex needs and disabilities – in line with Government policy. This equates to an annual charge of £1,533.24 for a Band D property – an increase of £72.99 per year or approximately £1.40 a week.

The increase will generate an extra £39 million of vital income towards the delivery of crucial services to the people of Hampshire in 2024/25, and still means that Hampshire has one of the lowest council tax precepts of any county in England. Even with this increase, there is

still a significant gap in the budget which will be filled from reserves – dedicated funds set aside specifically to address such shortfalls.

The County Council also approved the spending of £880.6 million over the next three years on capital programmes to help boost jobs and the local economy, the quality of the environment and contribute towards the County Council's commitment to tackling climate change. This provision for Hampshire's infrastructure, including more school places, improving roads and bridges and investing in the fabric of Hampshire's older people's social care estate, is one of the largest in the country, and brings the County Council's four-year total investment in the fabric of Hampshire to £1.4 billion, providing a huge boost to the local economy through jobs, skills and construction.

3. Transforming in-house care for older people

I have referred previously to the proposed changes to how the County Council operates its in-house care homes for older people. The plan is to focus on specialist nursing and complex dementia care, as well as short term pre and post-hospital support, to better meet the needs of the county's ageing population.

These plans have now been approved, comprising a £173 million investment programme. It will increase the overall number of beds available to local people from 900 to 1,000, within a reduced network of 13 homes. Approving these plans secures the long-term future of our in-house homes ensuring they remain in the Authority's ownership – in stark contrast to the many other local councils who have sold their homes in recent years.

4. New Local Transport Plan approved

The County Council's new local transport plan (known as LTP4) has been approved. Its aim is to boost economic prosperity, reduce carbon pollution and help promote healthy lifestyles and build stronger communities over the next ten years. It is guided by two principles, widening the choice of travel options that people can use and providing a transport system that puts people first and creates high quality and prosperous places.

5. Schools

Funding of £5.9 million has been approved by the County Council to help more parents access childcare before and after school, following a grant from the Department for Education. This will enable the provision of childcare which 'wraps around' the school day, enabling parents and carers of primary school-aged children to access and pay for term time childcare from 8am-6pm. The scheme will start in September this year and run for two years.

In separate school news, 90.71% of the 14,587 online applications for a secondary school place in September have been offered a place in their first preference school, whilst more than 98% were offered one of their top three preferences.



Hampshire
County Council



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Future Services Consultation

**Tell us your views on
ideas for changes to
some local services**

**Have your say
by 31 March 2024**

hants.gov.uk/future-services-consultation