

Hampshire County Councillor Report

Cllr Jan Warwick

February 2023

1. £2.6bn spending programme for 2023/24

Hampshire County Council's spending plans for 2023/24 are to be considered this month by the cabinet and then by full council. The plans total £2.6bn and cover the hundreds of services delivered by the council to its 1.4 million residents, including supporting its most vulnerable children and adults. The capital budget proposals will also be considered, with building and infrastructure projects totaling £645.3m over the next three years to be approved. The proposed three-year programme includes:

- £175m investment in new and extended school buildings to provide school places for children in Hampshire, delivering a further 4,393 school places and giving a total of 18,874 new school places by September 2025.
- £142m for structural maintenance and improvement of roads and bridges.
- £103m of Integrated Transport Plan schemes including £58m of schemes focused around walking and/or cycling improvements
- £100m to address condition-based enhancements to schools.
- An additional £0.3m funding towards the County Council's Flood Risk and Coastal Defence Programme as part of HCC's response to the challenge of climate change.

A final decision on the County Council's budget for 2023/24 will be made by the full County Council on 23 February 2023.

2. County Deal update

The government has welcomed the proposals put forward by HCC and others for a Pan-Hampshire County Deal, including a directly elected mayor and extensive devolution from central government down to the local area. The next stage is for government officials to meet with upper tier and unitary authorities across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight this month, including to explore how the proposals might be taken forward as part of their next wave of negotiations.

The proposals put forward can be seen at <https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/documents/s100275/Pan-Hampshire%20Deal%20Prospectus%202022.pdf>

3. 20 mph review

The review of the criteria for 20 mph speed limits within Hampshire has progressed to the next stage following last year's consultation and the work of a County Council Task and Finish Group. A report has been produced recommending a series of changes which will make it easier for communities who want reduced speed limits to promote speed reduction schemes and seek the introduction of lower limits. The proposals will now be considered further before progressing to full Cabinet for approval in June.

4. Roads

The bad weather we have all experienced this month has provided many challenges to Hampshire Highways, especially from blocked drains, flooding and potholes. Even though the weather has improved recently with the water tables falling, the overnight freezing temperatures have exacerbated the pothole situation with many more now appearing, and particularly in the rural areas.

Service demand across the highways service remains extremely high with demand far exceeds capacity at the present time and consequently all work is having to be prioritised so that the highest risk issues are repaired first. This includes the use of temporary 'infill' repairs to remove major potholes, these can then be addressed on a longer lasting basis later.

The outlook for this month is also unfavorable, with the Met Office suggesting that the weather is likely to be unsettled, with the potential for more periods of stormy conditions - potentially similar to those we experienced in February 2022 - and some further colder/wintry spells. One of the priorities now is therefore ditch and grip clearance to help alleviate surface water flooding and ice problems in at risk areas.

Please do continue to report highways issues online. A reminder that the number to call in emergency is **0300 555 1388** (0830-1700) Monday to Friday, or outside officer hours, **101**.

5. Drain cover thefts

Road users across Hampshire are being urged to be vigilant after a recent spate of drain cover thefts - leaving deep openings in the road surface which could cause a potential hazard to drivers, pedestrians and cyclists, and also result in significant expense to council taxpayers. To report a missing cover, please call the number given above or report it to the police online at <https://www.hampshire.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/>

6. Increased police numbers announced

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and Isle of Wight, Donna Jones, has presented her budget plan for the years 2023-24. She had previously pledged to increase police numbers by 600 and is on track to recruit these by the end of March this year. Her new budget has added an additional 50 officers to these numbers, to be funded through the police precept of council tax.