

Hampshire County Council Report from Cllr Jan Warwick

March 2024

HCC budget 2024-25 The County Council's budget for the next financial year has been approved by the 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 County Council also approved the spending of £880.6 million over the next three years on capital programs, 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.

Transforming in-house care for older people The County Council operates in-house care homes for older people and will invest £173m on new 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 network of 13 homes. Approving these plans secures the long-term future of our in-house homes ensuring they remain in the council's ownership.

New Local Transport Plan (LTP4) 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.

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.