

I am sorry I am unable to be at the meeting this evening, unfortunately I need to attend a meeting of New Forest District's full Council. I have prepared the following report, which I am afraid is a little County focused, but this is where the greatest challenges are for the time being.

## **County Council**

Hampshire County Council as with all upper-tier authorities continues to face challenges. Since 2008 the Council has had to make savings of £340 million from its annual budget, with a further £140 million to be found by 2019/20. This doesn't mean that the Council's annual budget will have fallen by £480 million by 2019/20, but it will have remained at approximately £1.8 billion, roughly the same level as 2008.

The savings have been required to for three main reasons:

To meet the costs of inflation, especially wage inflation. Public sector pay awards have been low in recent years, but even so, when combined with welcome increases in the national minimum wage, increased salary costs are still a significant pressure.

To offset losses in central government funding. While Hampshire has long received less central government funding than similar Councils elsewhere in the Country, we have still seen this reduced even further and anticipate an end the revenue support grants by 2020. Despite this, Hampshire County Council still has the second lowest Council Tax of any County Council, £1,200 for a Band D dwelling compared to Dorset's £1,406.

And to meet the costs of increased demand in Children's and Adult's Social Services. Since 2008 the annual budget of the Adult Services Department has increased by nearly £100 million. This year, for the second year, the government has allowed the Council to increase its share of Council Tax by an additional 3%, ringfenced for Adult Social Care. This year that will raise an additional £17 million. This year the increased pressure for Adult Social Care in Hampshire will be £23 million.

The Council is investing Capital funds, £300 million over the coming years, to support new ways of delivering care services, increasing extra-care housing for example, to try and reduce future cost pressures while maintaining the quality of support offered, but a sustainable national solution needs to be found urgently.

Locally, our highways contractor is working to fix the damage caused by the recent cold weather and constant rain. This will take time but hopefully with better weather progress will be visible, but only if problems are reported. Please, if you see damage report it online at [www.hants.gov.uk/roads](http://www.hants.gov.uk/roads).

The County Council obtained funding from the Environment Agency for survey work in connection with the Avon, its tributaries and the culverts under the A338 within the Parish, this has now been completed and the report is awaited. This data will be used to inform the assessment of the required capacity of the A338 culverts and for the design of any works that may be required.

## **District Council**

Like the County, the District has faced many challenges but has sought to find new ways of working that have allowed frontline services such as weekly refuse and recycling collections to be maintained.

Work on the new Local Plan has continued and it is anticipated that a draft plan will be published for public consultation in June. It will not be possible to deliver the number of new homes required by government policy over the next 18 years, the plan runs to 2036, without significant change but it is hoped that the draft plan will do so in a way that maintains the special qualities of the New Forest District. Please do take the time to respond to the consultation when it starts, it will run for 6 weeks.