

Item 4. County and District Councillors Reports

County Councillor Edward Heron (report supplied on February 1st 2022)

1.HWRC update

The system of booking to visit Hampshire's household waste recycling centres (HWRCs) is to be made permanent following feedback from users who overwhelmingly supported the approach. It was introduced in June 2020 in response to the pandemic but also helped smooth visits and reduce queuing. The ability to book multiple trips will remain.

2. Support for Community Transport

With the COVID-19 pandemic still having an impact on levels of all public and community transport use across the county, Hampshire County Council has agreed to maintain contract payments for community transport operators at 100% from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Community transport operators have reported that around 35% fewer passengers are travelling than before the pandemic. The move will assist those operators in the recovery and operation of their services, supporting them to maintain service levels whilst they experience lower than usual passenger numbers, and user confidence rebuilds during the coming financial year.

3.County councillor grants

A reminder that applications for County Councillor grants for this financial year need to be submitted to me by Monday 14th February. The 2022/23 County Councillor grant window will open on 1 June. The link for applications is <https://www.hants.gov.uk/community/grants/grants-list/county-councillor>

4.Roads, Transport and Environmental investment

Hampshire County Council is to be asked to approve on 17 February an increased 2021-22 capital programme of investment in countywide highways maintenance, road safety, transport improvements, flood alleviation, waste management, and bridge strengthening, as well as economic development and town centre improvements, amounting to £112.885 million. This includes £7 million additional financial support for highways maintenance.

Planning continues for the next generation of waste infrastructure to support the county's ability to recycle a wider range of materials. As part of the capital programme of work is the continued development of a plan for a new materials recovery facility in Eastleigh.

The proposed programme and appendices highlight an Integrated Transport Programme of over £100 million in value. Local schemes to enable people to walk and cycle more for local journeys represent a £11.3 million investment.

Separately, Hampshire County Council is the first council in England to trial plastic bollards made from sugar cane on its pavements; these are being installed as a lower carbon alternative to the traditional concrete ones. The plant-based bollards are also lighter, easier to install and cheaper – costing £150 compared with £190 for concrete. They are also just as resilient in the event of a crash and do not splinter if they are hit by a vehicle. The proposal is part of the county's plans to meet its climate change targets to be Carbon Neutral by 2050 and resilient to a two-degrees rise in temperature.

In recognition of the importance of building resilience, the council has declared 2022 the "Year of Climate Resilience". This presents an opportunity for it to increase awareness of the importance of resilience and to develop some showcase projects in partnership with key stakeholders. More information can be found on the Council's Climate Change website:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/environment/climatechange>

5. Platinum Jubilee Celebrations

Hampshire County Council is putting plans in place to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee this year. These will provide opportunities for residents across the county to participate, including through schools, libraries, care homes, and outdoor sites. The primary focus is during the extended bank holiday weekend of Thursday 2 to Sunday 5 June 2022.

The plan also has a significant focus on complementing The Queen's Green Canopy theme, with £0.5 million to be made available to help organisations and communities plant trees across the county.

The celebrations will be launched on Thursday 10 February at a high-profile event in Winchester attended by HRH The Prince of Wales, who will unveil 'Licoricia of Winchester', a new life-size bronze statue of a prominent medieval Jewish woman, designed by award-winning sculptor Ian Rank-Broadley.

Councillor Edward Heron

HCC Lyndhurst & Fordingbridge Division

District Councillor Diane Andrews (report supplied on February 8th 2022)

I attended the funeral of Former District Cllr. Henry Forse. Henry represented Bramshaw, Copythorne North and Minstead for a four year term from 2007 to 2011. Henry sat on the Environment Committee and will perhaps be remembered for his dedication to keep black bin bags and his election campaign which made the national papers due to a slight change in his literature which said "Vote for Forse" the X in the box which followed was moved closer and no-one noticed until the literature was printed and delivered that the leaflet now read Vote Forsex. Needless to say, he won.

I will try to briefly bring you up to date on what has been going on. I am now a representative of NFDC on the NPA board. I was asked to be on the Planning committee but found that with the work I am already committed to, it would make it difficult to give the time needed to attend and commit fully to the committee.

The Planning committee at NFDC will be looking at an outline planning permission for the Marchwood military Port next week. This is yet another piece of land which is bringing more possible change to the Waterside.

With the Freeport due to be implemented at the end of March, the traffic infrastructure will be of great importance with changes to the A326 in some places already underway, re-routing buses through Totton and possible changes to the Waterside rail line. This makes Totton an important hub. As such we have had our first meeting to look at the redevelopment and updating of Totton. A project manager will be employed as soon as possible to work on this exciting project.

The word Freeport has been bandied around, what is a Freeport? It will, we are told, establish national hubs for trade and investment, promote regeneration and job creation. The idea is that a Freeport will create hotbeds for innovation. There will be tax benefits and relief in place by 2026. The government has promised 25 million pounds of seed capital funding. One carrot for Authorities to take on this onerous work is the ability to retain business rates. This is still in discussion as to how the business rates will be divided between the relevant authorities. There is a great deal of work still to be agreed.

Partnership for South Hampshire met last week for a workshop to discuss with the various Councils the opportunity to consider areas within South Hampshire to build 22,000 house to fill the deficit currently facing some partners. There is expected to be more discussion in the coming workshops this month.

This evening I was part of a Webinar on Green Infrastructure about levelling up access to nature in our local areas. It was obvious that there is real appetite across the country to really make a difference but there is a lack of policy to support those Local Authorities trying to protect green belt, ancient hedges and mature trees from pre-emptive developers. It must come from Government. Chris Grayling was asked to take the message back and actually do something about it.

Coming up on the 18th February there will be a briefing to all members of the long-awaited new Waste strategy.

Last week at Cabinet an Air Quality Supplementary Planning Document was introduced which will enhance the existing requirement to protect our air quality by introducing guidance for developers to minimise air pollution during development. This SPD will require developers to reduce or mitigate activities and reduce emissions to an acceptable level. There will be a six week consultation.

The Levelling Up White paper has now been published and we are taking stock of what this means for our Council priorities, services and partnership working, there will be a Levelling Up member briefing in March. It is a large document and it makes for excellent bed time reading.