

AT A MEETING of the County Council of HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held  
at the castle, Winchester on Thursday, 9th November, 2023

Chairman:

\* Councillor Patricia Stallard

Vice-Chairman:

Councillor Keith Mans

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|-----------------------------------|---|
| * Councillor Nick Adams-King      | * Councillor Adam Jackman               |
| * Councillor Prad Bains           | * Councillor Gavin James                |
| * Councillor Lulu Bowerman        | * Councillor Andrew Joy                 |
| * Councillor Jackie Branson       | * Councillor Mark Kemp-Gee              |
| Councillor Ryan Brent             | * Councillor Melville Kendal            |
| * Councillor Ann Briggs           | * Councillor Rupert Kyrle               |
| * Councillor Steven Broomfield    | * Councillor Peter Latham               |
| * Councillor Pamela Bryant        | * Councillor Hugh Lumby                 |
| * Councillor Graham Burgess       | * Councillor Alexis McEvoy              |
| * Councillor Fran Carpenter       | * Councillor Lesley Meenaghan           |
| * Councillor Roz Chadd            | * Councillor Derek Mellor               |
| * Councillor Peter Chegwyn        | Councillor Rob Mocatta                  |
| * Councillor Adrian Collett       | * Councillor Arun Mummalaneni           |
| * Councillor Mark Cooper          | * Councillor Kirsty North               |
| * Councillor Rod Cooper           | * Councillor Phil North                 |
| * Councillor Tonia Craig          | * Councillor Russell Oppenheimer        |
| * Councillor Alex Crawford        | * Councillor Sarah Pankhurst            |
| * Councillor Debbie Curnow-Ford   | * Councillor Tanya Park                 |
| * Councillor Tim Davies           | * Councillor Stephen Parker             |
| * Councillor Christopher Donnelly | * Councillor Louise Parker-Jones        |
| * Councillor Alan Dowden          | * Councillor Neville Penman             |
| * Councillor David Drew           | * Councillor Stephen Philpott           |
| * Councillor Barry Dunning        | * Councillor Jackie Porter              |
| Councillor Liz Fairhurst          | * Councillor Roger Price                |
| * Councillor Michael Ford         | * Councillor Lance Quantrill            |
| * Councillor Steve Forster        | Councillor Stephen Reid                 |
| * Councillor Jonathan Glen        | * Councillor Elaine Still               |
| * Councillor Tim Groves           | * Councillor Kim Taylor                 |
| * Councillor David Harrison       | * Councillor Tom Thacker                |
| * Councillor Marge Harvey         | Councillor Michael Thierry              |
| * Councillor Pal Hayre            | * Councillor Martin Tod                 |
| * Councillor Juliet Henderson     | * Councillor Andy Tree                  |
| * Councillor Edward Heron         | * Councillor Jacky Tustain              |
| * Councillor Dominic Hiscock      | * Councillor Rhydian Vaughan MBE        |
| * Councillor Keith House          | * Councillor Malcolm Wade               |
| * Councillor Zoe Huggins          | * Councillor Jan Warwick                |
| * Councillor Rob Humby            | * Councillor Bill Withers Lt Col (Retd) |
| * Councillor Wayne Irish          | * Councillor Seán Woodward              |

\*Present

Honorary Aldermen Keith Chapman, Andrew Gibson and Michael Woodhall were also present.

**183. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Ryan Brent, Rob Mocatta, Stephen Reid and Michael Thierry, and from Honorary Alderman Robin McIntosh.

**184. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3, Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Non-Pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 5 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

**185. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the County Council meeting held on 28 September 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**186. DEPUTATIONS**

A deputation was received in accordance with Standing Order 12 regarding plastics recycling.

The Executive Lead Member for Universal Services thanked the deputation for their attendance and will respond to them in due course.

**187. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman had pleasure in announcing a number of awards the County Council had received together with Council and community events attended since the last Council meeting:

- Grace Osborne in Property Services who recently passed her Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) and is now a Chartered Surveyor within the Estates Management team.
- For the tenth successive year the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens were awarded a Gold Award for Britain in Bloom, South & South East, Heritage and Parks 2023 at the end of September.

- Presenting the staff 40 year Long Service Awards at Serles House on 5 October, followed by attendance at the 25 year Long Service Awards in the Great Hall, meeting many members of staff who all talked very positively about their time with the Council.
- Attendance at Winchester Cathedral for the Law Sunday Service on 8 October.
- Attendance at the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Farnbrough Air Sciences Trust on 23 October, recognising the contribution made to aeronautical science over more than a century. The Trust seeks to make available to the public the story of Farnborough's unique aviation history.
- A very interesting visit to Butser Ancient Farm with His Royal Highness, The Duke of Gloucester on 27 October.
- Attendance at a Festival of Remembrance on 29 October hosted by the Royal British Legion, at The Point, Eastleigh. The Chairman found this was a very moving occasion and was especially heartened to see so many young people in attendance, and acting as Standard Bearers.

In regard to services of remembrance, the Chairman hoped Members would be able to join her for the County Council's Staff Remembrance Service on Friday 10 November at 10.55 am outside the Great Hall.

It was with much sadness the Chairman recorded that former Honorary Alderman Alex Varden had passed away. Alex represented the Odiham Division from 1985 until his retirement in 2001. Councillors Glen, Collett and Withers paid tribute to Alex and the Council observed a one-minute silence as a mark of respect.

## 188. **LEADER'S REPORT**

The Leader opened his report by referring to the distressing events in the Israel-Gaza conflict. His thoughts were with all victims, their families and loved ones including those in Hampshire who may have family and friends in the region.

The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum declared a major incident last week in response to Storm Ciarán. The Leader thanked the emergency services, local authorities and partner agencies for their collaborative response together with the County Council's Highways Team; Education and Inclusion Officers supporting schools to ensure safety of pupils; communications officers providing crucial warning and information messages including travel and safety advice, and to frontline team supporting communities across Hampshire.

Last month the County Council renewed its pledge to the Armed Forces Covenant demonstrating the Council's continuing support and gratitude to all members of Hampshire's Armed Forces community. The Leader thanked everyone involved in organising the Covenant renewal ceremony and paid tribute to Councillor Andrew Joy, the County Council's Member Champion for the Armed Forces, and to Kate Steels, Senior Armed Forces Programme Manager.

The Leader was also looking forward to attending the Remembrance Service at Winchester Cathedral over the coming weekend.

The Leader reported on the consultation regarding important changes to nursing and specialist care accommodation for older adults against the backdrop of difficult choices the County Council faced as a result of exceptional cost pressures in adult social care services. The Leader emphasised the importance of the Council continuing to deliver the right services in the longer term and to prepare for growing demand from an ageing population. The consultation is open until 11.59pm on Sunday 12 November.

The Leader also reported on the consultations regarding proposed changes to the Council's school and post-16 transport policies to provide more flexible transport arrangements to better respond to children and young people's needs, demand and to external market pressures, whilst responding to the latest statutory guidance from the Department for Education. The Leader confirmed the proposals were not part of a savings programme and do not include changes to the eligibility criteria. Anyone wishing to respond should do so by Wednesday 6 December. Analysis of the consultation feedback and final recommendations for both policies will be considered by the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services at a Decision Day in 2024.

On World Mental Health Day last month, the Leader was pleased to announce Councillor Zoe Huggins as the new Member Champion for Mental Health who will be raising awareness across Hampshire and within the Council as well as actively supporting various initiatives such as the Council's "Chat About" scheme launched last November. Sessions have been held in 28 libraries welcoming over 5,700 people to chat over a hot drink, connecting with others in their local community and finding out about additional support if it was needed.

The Leader referred to the resolution of Council in July on underage vaping and welcomed the Government's recent announcement creating a smokefree generation with additional funding for local Smoking Cessation Services. This would see the County Council receiving in the region of £1.5m per year additional funding until 2028/29 to expand the Hampshire Stop Smoking Service. The Council has been at the forefront in responding to the concerning trend of youth vaping, with officers in Public Health, Schools and Trading Standards' teams working collaboratively to support schools and crack down on underage sales. The County Council would be responding to the Government's consultation.

The Council had resolved two further Motions: in July on Gurkha veterans' pensions and welfare, and in September on 'Boys Need Bins'. The Leader had received a reply from the Minister for Veterans and Service Families confirming that discussions were ongoing with the Gurkha Veteran Welfare Committee over the Ministry of Defence's proposed uplift to a range of support services in the UK and Nepal. In respect of the second Motion, the Leader had written to Hampshire MPs requesting that they support Prostate Cancer UK's 'Boys Need Bins' campaign and their call for legislation for the provision of sanitary bins in men's toilets. Some responses had been received from Hampshire MPs.

The Leader concluded by reporting on the following awards and events:

- Attendance at the 25 Year and 40 year Long Service Celebrations.
- Attendance at the annual Children and Families Award Ceremony recognising the outstanding contributions of foster carers and staff in the County Council's Children and Families service.
- A visit to SMR Automotive Mirrors UK Limited located in Portchester, in the company of the Lord Lieutenant for Hampshire and His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester. SMR Automotive had received a prestigious Innovation Award as one of the South East winners of the 2023 King's Award for Enterprise.
- The first Hampshire Business Awards Ceremony will take place at Farnborough International Exhibition and Conference Centre on 30 November. The Leader thanked the 166 businesses across Hampshire who had submitted 260 nominations for the 14 award categories, including 26 in the 'Made in Hampshire' category sponsored by the County Council. The Leader also thanked The Business Magazine for working with the County Council to organise the Awards.

**189. QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 16.1.1**

Executive Members responded to questions submitted, as published, in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.1.

Question 5 - Councillor Porter declared a personal interest as a user of the Cart and Horses junction and is the Cabinet Member for Place and Local Plan at Winchester City Council.

**190. APPOINTMENTS**

The Council considered the report of the Chief Executive as presented by the Leader of the Council.

RESOLVED:

That the County Council approve the appointments set out in the report.

**191. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE AND SAVINGS PROGRAMME TO 2025 SAVINGS PROPOSALS**

The Council considered the report of Cabinet setting out the overall financial strategy for dealing with the budget gap to 2025/26 in light of various options available to the Council and the high level outcomes from the publication consultation exercise on balancing the budget.

In presenting the report the Leader highlighted that since 2018 the Council had repeatedly highlighted that if the funding regime for local government did not

change, the Council would not be financially sustainable in the longer term as it could not continue to make savings in other services to fund the demand pressures faced across social care, special educational needs and school transport services. This position was brought to the attention of Government again in 2022 in the Council's joint letter with Kent County Council, making it clear that if there wasn't change in the medium term, the Council would not be financially sustainable, given that by 2023/24 it will have taken £640m from its budgets over the last 13 years.

By 2025/26, based on current information from Government, the Council would be in the position for the first time of being unable to close the predicted two year budget gap of £132m through the identification of recurring savings alone. The proposals represented some very difficult choices however, the County Council must set a balanced budget by law.

The Leader reported that he would be sending a further letter after the meeting, which he would be asking Hampshire MPs to support, urging the Government to provide more support to Councils in the 2024/25 settlement with a view to fundamentally changing the way that local government is funded in the next Comprehensive Spending Review. The Leader had also met with a range of other County Council Leaders and it was clear that all were facing the same position. A joint letter from those Leaders would be sent to the Chancellor to add further weight to the voice of local government.

Despite the challenges faced, the County Council's financial prudence and the strength of the position of its reserves mean that the Council remains confident that it can balance the budget in 2025/26, assuming there were no further major financial shocks.

The Leader drew attention to the proposed range of stage 2 consultations that would commence in the new year, which would be seeking residents and stakeholders' views on the options under consideration for changing services from April 2025 onwards. The Leader encouraged everyone to participate in the consultation exercise.

Despite the challenging circumstances faced, the Leader was pleased to report that the County Council continues to provide some of the highest performing services in the country whilst still investing in new projects, in particular:

- Children's Services are outstanding and after 10 years of supporting the Isle of Wight Children's Services, the County Council would be leaving that relationship in the knowledge that they have the skills and processes to ensure children remain safe on the island and educational standards have increased significantly.
- £22.5 million investment into highways maintenance and a change of approach to dealing with repairs to the network.
- Ambitious investment plans to provide new state of the art facilities to help care for vulnerable adults particularly those who suffer from complex dementia.
- Effective working with the Hampshire Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to ensure a smooth transition of services to the County Council in a way that will generate economic benefits to the area in the future.

The Group Leaders responded to the proposals and recognised the challenges that the County Council faced, that savings were not proposed arbitrarily and that the Administration was striving to balance the budget in the most effective way possible. Concerns were expressed about the approach being taken to commercialism and increasing income; whether spending was being targeted in the right areas, for example refurbishment of the Council Chamber and the upcoming conference on Hampshire 2050; that the Budget Consultation document was complicated and resulted in a poor response rate, and the absence of any reference to Local Government Re-organisation in the report.

During the course of debate many Members commented on the unenviable task and difficult choices the County Council faced. Views were expressed about the impact the proposals would have on people with disabilities and mental health difficulties; the effect of lobbying and whether enough support was being received from Hampshire MPs, and the unintended consequences that would arise from the proposals. Concern was also raised about the future of some services for children such as school transport and special needs support. The importance of not reducing the quality of the services provided by the County Council was also highlighted.

The County Council had continued to manage its reserves well, the intended purpose of which was to use when needed. It was noted that some of the Budget Bridging Reserve (BBR) would be used to balance the budget in 2023/24 with further use of this reserve earmarked for 2024/25. However, it was clear that a change to how local government is funded was urgently needed. It was noted that the County Council continues to have one of the lowest council tax rates in the country despite having one of the lowest funding levels.

Executive Lead Members highlighted the increasing demand for adult social care and the consequence of demographics in terms of age, disability and mental health challenges was having a significant impact on the budget. Recognition was given to the robust commissioning of contracts in this regard and the excellent partnership work carried out by County Council officers with the NHS. There were many innovative initiatives, some involving automation and use of technology, that were achieving positive outcomes whilst reducing costs. In terms of innovation, other initiatives were being considered in other areas such as thermal patching of roads, which is quicker, more cost effective and environmentally friendly; the way in which highways are managed, how highway teams operate and the re-use of items that are taken away from roads. School crossing patrols were being looked at carefully with focus remaining on the safety of children. Genuine cost savings had been achieved in Children's Services by changing the way services are delivered to achieve better outcomes for children and young people.

The Leader spoke in reply to a full and thorough debate and he thanked all Members for their contributions. In response to comments about lobbying, the Leader emphasised the positive effect the joint letter with Kent County Council had achieved resulting in the significant outcomes in the Autumn Statement, and in particular the County Council's social care budget. The Leader also reported that several Hampshire MPs had raised awareness of the County Council's situation in the House of Commons together with lobbying on policy matters such

as home to school transport. Meetings with the local MPs had been held at which the County Council's situation had been made very clear, including discussions as to how the local MPs could help. Despite the current landscape, focus would continue to be on the County Council doing the very best it could in the delivery of its services and protecting its most vulnerable residents. In conclusion, the Leader recognised and thanked the County's Councils officers for their hard work during very difficult and challenging times.

The Chairman confirmed that the recommendations would be taken separately with a vote being held on each. For each of recommendations a) and b) the majority of Members present voted in support and those recommendations were carried. For recommendation c) Councillor Keith House requisitioned a Recorded Vote in accordance with Standing Order 22.3 and 10 other Members rose in their seats to signify their support. The outcome of the Recorded Vote of those Members present in the meeting at the time the vote was conducted was as follows:

FOR (46):

Councillors Adams-King, Bowerman, Branson, Briggs, Broomfield, Bryant, Burgess, Carpenter, Chadd, Rod Cooper, Curnow-Ford, Davies, Donnelly, Drew, Dunning, Forster, Glen, Harvey, Hayre, Henderson, Heron, Huggins, Humby, Jackman, Joy, Kemp-Gee, Kendal, Latham, Lumby, Mans, McEvoy, Mellor, Mummalaneni, Kirsty North, Phil North, Oppenheimer, Parker, Penman, Philpott, Quantrill, Stallard, Still, Thacker, Vaughan, Warwick and Withers.

AGAINST (22):

Councillors Bains, Chegwyn, Collett, Mark Cooper, Craig, Crawford, Dowden, Groves, Harrison, Hiscock, House, Irish, James, Pankhurst, Park, Parker-Jones, Porter, Price, Taylor, Tod, Tustain and Wade.

ABSTAIN (1):

Councillor Andy Tree.

RESOLVED:

With reference to the report annexed to this Council report, that the County Council approved:

- a) The Q1 report on treasury management activity at Appendix 1.
- b) Delegated authority for the Director of Corporate Operations in consultation with the Leader and Chief Executive to allocate up to £5m from the Invest to Save Reserve to support Directorates in implementing their SP25 proposals.
- c) The savings proposals in Appendix 2, subject to further consultation and executive decision making where necessary.



**192. STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

The Council considered the report of Cabinet seeking approval of proposed updates, as detailed, to the adopted Hampshire Statement of Community Involvement (207) for planning matters. In presenting the report, the Leader confirmed that the development plan document must be updated every five years and sets how the County Council will involve consultees and interested parties in the preparation of Local Plan documents and planning applications.

RESOLVED:

That the County Council adopts the updated Hampshire Statement of Community Involvement as a statutory planning document in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

**193. REVIEW OF THE MEMBERS ALLOWANCES' SCHEME 2023/24**

The Council considered the report of the Employment in Hampshire County Council (EHCC) Committee seeking approval of recommendations following a review of Special Responsibility Allowances in the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2023/24 having taken into account the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

RESOLVED:

That the County Council, taking into account the recommendations of the IRP and the EHCC Committee, approves:

- a) No changes to the current SRA for the Deputy Leader of the Council.
- b) No changes to the current level of SRAs for the Opposition Group Leaders.
- c) No changes to the current level of SRAs for the Opposition Group Spokespersons.
- d) That no new SRA for Pension Fund Panel and Board members is created, and no other changes are made to the current Members' Allowances Scheme, save for the adjustments to Basic Allowances and SRAs with effect from 1 April 2023, in line with the recently agreed pay award of 3.88% for Senior Managers at Grade H, in accordance with the terms of the existing Scheme.

**194. HAMPSHIRE'S STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CONSTITUTION UPDATE AND AMENDMENT OF THE EDUCATION ADVISORY PANEL'S TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Council considered the report of the Executive Member for Education seeking approval of the updated Constitution for the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE), and to an amendment to the Terms of Reference for the Education Advisory Panel (EAP).

A question was asked about paragraph 3.11 of Appendix A (SACRE's Constitution) regarding collective worship in schools as set out in the Education Act 1996 was put to the Executive Member who was asked if he would consider writing to the Secretary of State for Education requesting that the decades old Education Act be amended to change the default position regarding religious worship in schools and instead reflect a more diverse and modern society. A further question asked for the belief of Humanism to be taken into account and included in any letter sent to the Secretary of State. In response, the Executive Member responded that he would consider the request of writing to the Secretary of State, in consultation with officers. The Executive Member did not consider the second question relevant to the report before the Council and would take this matter up offline.

During the course of debate, the Vice-Chairman of SACRE explained that although collective worship is required in all schools, they do have discretion as to what form that worship takes. The Vice-Chairman further reported that Humanism has been part of the Living Difference curriculum for many years and SACRE currently has a Humanist representative as a co-opted member. SACRE had recently considered (7 November) a recommendation that the Humanist representative be made a full Group A member, having taken into account recent guidance from the Department of Education including the case of *Bowen v Kent County Council*. Members noted that although there was not unanimous support, the recommendation had been agreed.

A suggestion that these matters could be considered at a future meeting of the Children and Young People Select Committee was noted.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the County Council approve the updated Constitution for Hampshire's Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education as agreed by the Advisory Council at their meeting on 4 July 2023 and contained in Appendix A to the report.
- b) That the County Council approve the proposed changes to the Education Advisory Panel's Terms of Reference as detailed in Appendix C to the report.

## 195. **HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

- a) **HIWFRA Questions**  
No questions had been received in accordance with Standing Order 16.3.
- b) **HIWFRA Report**  
The Council received the report as presented by Councillor Rhydian Vaughan, in his capacity as Chairman of the Authority.

196. **EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEE REPORTS**

The following information reports were received:

- a) Executive Lead Member for Children's Services  
Children's Services Procurement – Approval to Spend (Hampshire and  
Isle of Wight Educational Psychology)
  
- b) Executive Member for Education  
Additional Specialist Education Provision

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the Meeting at 1.45pm.

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Chairman,