

Hampshire County Council Report 2016-2017.

It has been a challenging year against a back ground of continued government cuts to local government funding and whilst Hampshire County Council has tried hard to operate against this back drop the council is now cutting too deep. Social care for the young and old is seriously affected and everyday services are now under threat.

Service Reductions a few highlights.

Youth Services and Children's Centres

All but 11 Children's Centres have been closed leaving only one per district and the children support services are not currently meeting the needs of all the young mums and children. The numbers of children going into care is increasing year on year as the safety net services disappear the problems get worse.

Health and Social Care

The NHS has been put under severe pressure by the slashing of Social Care budgets. Vulnerable Hampshire residents have been severely affected and the NHS is in crisis for all of us. The waiting time for patients needing a hospital bed is going up, where the lack of a care plan for the current elderly or vulnerable occupant to go home with has not been done. A third of all GPs are set to retire in the next 5 years without enough new GPs to cover this. Since it takes 6 years to train a GP we are already in a potential crisis situation.

Roads and Transport

There has been a 20% cut in staffing the Hampshire Highways department since 2010 and budgets for spending on road maintenance slashed. Pavements will not be maintained more than once in one hundred years and pot holes continue to pose a severe risk for motorists and cyclists.

Recycling centres

The opening hours have been reduced and charges introduced at our local tips or recycling centres. The council are still considering closing some Recycling Centres altogether and selling the land. Charges have seen an increase in fly-tipping on verges and in rural areas and the local recycling banks with bins for bottles and paper have been slashed in number.

Conclusion

It is clear this continued cutting across the board is not sustainable and a large number of Hampshire people are worse off, the increase in council tax adding a double whammy to their situation. A new approach is required with a reprioritising of the County Council's finances and greater pressure on the government to stop cutting local government funding. Only a change in the Conservative administration can achieve this and the Liberal Democrats are committed to making that change happen and restoring the services Hampshire people need.

A Couple of positives

Hampshire School Exam Results

Based upon the aggregate data in January for the County on 66 of the 70 schools and academies. The results are showed that 63% of students across Hampshire have secured 5A*-C including English and mathematics compared to 60% last year. The national average was 57% last year and the press are reporting a decline in results nationally this year. If that proves to be the case, the schools within Hampshire will have performed very strongly.

Count them in Campaign

I put a motion to Hampshire County Council to support this British Legion campaign by writing to the Prime Minister and all Hampshire's MPs to get questions about the Armed Forces community onto the census. The Government's official statistics body, the Office for National Statistics (ONS), along with their devolved equivalents, are already starting to plan what questions will be in the next UK census. Despite an estimated 1 in 10 of the UK population being members of the Armed Forces community, there's very limited information about where they are or what their needs might be. The idea being the more we know the better we can support the armed forces community when and where it needs it.

This motion was universally supported by all parties and councillors, who all saw the importance of helping our veterans and their families.

Malcolm Wade