

County Councillor Jan Warwick (Winchester Downlands)

Parish Council Report July 2017.

HCC Financial Strategy

HCC Cabinet considered the end of year financial report on 19 June. As part of an established two-year budget planning strategy the County Council is facing its biggest financial challenge yet – with a further budget gap of £140 million to close by 2019/20. Planning has been taking place to identify some of the steps required: securing savings early; reinvesting in new, more efficient ways of working; and making prudent use of reserves to meet gaps in funding. To date, HCC has reduced spending by £340 million, since 2008 – when national austerity began.

HCC finances remain under immense pressure as demand continues to grow for County Council services – particularly social care for increasing numbers of older and more vulnerable adults and children. The central Government revenue support grant funding to Hampshire will cease in 2019/20. HCC welcome residents' views on the tough decisions for balancing the budget. Hampshire County Council has launched their survey this week and Parishes are invited to respond: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/news/jul03balancingbudget>

Hampshire Highways Contract

Skanska have been awarded the new highways contract, which officially starts on 1st August. The contract covers highways maintenance work on Hampshire's 9,600 miles of roads and footways, including resurfacing, winter salting, drainage and road repairs. There is an option to extend the contract for up to a further five years, subject to factors such as contract performance.

Skanska have invested in new fleet and equipment to deliver this service including their innovative pothole-patching machine, the 'Dragon Patcher'. The patcher is five times faster than traditional methods, saves money and is safer because it is operated from the vehicle's cabin.

It is nicknamed the 'dragon' because it expels flames to de-ice and dry out the road surface. It is then cleaned with compressed air and sealed with a stone mix and hot bitumen emulsion. With the surface repair completed in just two minutes, the patcher can move on to the next repair.

Potholes (and other highways issues) can be reported as usual via the HCC website:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblems>