

Hampshire County Council

Response from Nursling and Rownhams Parish Council

### **General Funding**

The Parish Council believes that the foremost priority of HCC should be to maintain the quality of care provided to vulnerable adults and children. I have summarised the main response below.

- 1) The Parish Council accept that it is probable the council tax charged will increase by the maximum amount and this would be the preferred option before cutting services.
- 2) HCC should approach central government to provide additional funding to maintain services to the vulnerable. Grants should be increased to fund public libraries and the 1964 Public Libraries and Museum Act should be updated, to enable service modernisation.
- 3) Review HCC services to improve income generated.
- 4) Review the efficiencies of services before cutting funding.
- 5) If the council tax rate is increased by the maximum amount careful consideration should be taken over increasing the cost of services offered.
- 6) Has HCC considered the new ways of working introduced due to the Pandemic and could this lead to potential cost savings in administration costs, without compromising services.
- 7) Use reserves held by the council with a plan to replenish funds over a 5 year period.
- 8) It was thought shared services would help with both cost savings and an increase in income.

### **Waste Services**

The Parish Council believe there is an opportunity to introduce some form of charging for waste disposal, but it should be a nominal amount as it was thought a higher charge would simply encourage fly tipping. I have summarised below.

- 1) The charge for a visit should be no more than 50p to £1, with charges for depositing rubble eliminated. It has been suggested that there may be a legal issue about introducing an entry charge. There was no legal issue created by introducing a rubble charge therefore call the charge a "Recycling Fee". A "Recycling Fee" will generate more income than the current rubble charge and enable HCC to sell the extra rubble to support building projects. It will be a win / win scenario and reduce the amount of fly tipping which has to be cleared by the council at extra cost.
- 2) To continue to use the booking system as it has increased the efficiency of the sites, enhanced the customer experience, and could possibly be used to administer some form of charging.
- 3) No sites should be closed as it is believed this will lead to an increase in fly tipping, thereby increasing the costs to the council.
- 4) Does HCC have any information relating to the costs in dealing with waste from fly tipping and has it increased since charging was introduced.

### Transport Services

- 1) Does HCC have any information on the uptake of concessionary fares and would the costs of administration exceed the increase in charged/
- 2) It is thought that bus services should be maintained or enhanced. The bus service in rural areas is vital for the elderly, less well off and young people.
- 3) Any cut in transport services would be in contradiction to the government's green agenda. It is thought that a good transport service will reduce road traffic, parking issues, road maintenance costs and help the environment.
- 4) It is believed the council may be able to reduce the Home to School transport to a subsidised service rather than a fully funded service, as it is known schools in the area operate different policies. However, the cost should not be excessive, as it may increase the level of traffic to schools.

### Hampshire Outdoor Centres

The Parish Council believes that there is an opportunity for more to be made of these Centres. Comments from Parish Councillors are shown below.

- 1) The Centres could be utilised to host activities for children and generate income. It is believed that more parents are working from home and the increase in demand for staycations, as well as school holidays would create opportunities for the centres to be advertised as a safe and fun environment.
- 2) It is thought the centres could be operated on a more commercial basis with a review of services offered, prices policy and the use of different price points to maximum their use throughout the year.
- 3) The centres should not be sold off to generate short term income. If run commercially, they could generate more income in the long term.

## **Conclusion**

The Parish Council accept the likelihood of a council tax rise and some price rises. However, it was firmly believed that the services to the most vulnerable have been cut back in recent years and no further cuts should be considered. Alternative sources of funding should be sought from government, genuine efficiencies and the council's reserves before cuts are considered.

**Roy Hamilton**  
**Clerk to the Parish Council**