

ANNUAL REPORT FROM WINCHESTER CITY COUNCILLORS FOR 2017/18

This is a very long report for which we make no apologies – it demonstrates the breadth of work Winchester City Council undertakes. The Ward Councillors during the year have supported many residents in their planning, housing, neighbour disputes, line painting, potholes(!), snow clearance, bin collections, and so on. But on top of this, the City Councillors undertake a great deal of work to ensure services are debated and delivered for the benefit of residents and we hope you enjoy reading about all that is available to you.

❖ Cllr Caroline Horrill elected Leader of Winchester City Council.

Ward Councillors have additional responsibilities as follows :

Cllr Kim Gottlieb - Planning, Overview & Scrutiny and Cabinet (Sport & Leisure) Committees.

Cllr Lisa Griffiths - Cabinet Member, Portfolio for Health & Wellbeing and Chair of Cabinet (Sport & Leisure) Committee.

Cllr Ernie Jeffs - Planning and Overview & Scrutiny Committees.

❖ Fly Tipping

Council achieves 100% success rate in fly tip prosecutions. Winchester City Council has been actively looking to reduce fly tipping in the district and has demonstrated its zero tolerance approach to fly tipping.

The Neighbourhood Services team at the City Council works in partnership with Hampshire County Council and other authorities to deter fly tipping. The increase in prosecutions is part of a county-wide fly tip strategy which both encourages the deployment of enforcement groups and works with local magistrates to encourage greater use of the maximum available penalties. To date, those found guilty of the anti-social offence have been ordered to pay a total of £26,606.84 in fines and costs. In one case, a 12 month custodial sentence was imposed as a result of the partnership working across local authorities and gathering of evidence.

❖ Air Quality Action Plan for the city centre

Air Quality Action Plan has nine high impact core actions aimed at improving air quality and working towards meeting the relevant air quality objectives within Winchester district.

Confirmation has been received from the Council's independent monitoring consultants that for the first time in 2016 there was no breach of statutory emissions levels at the bottom of St George's Street.

❖ Safer Communities - A partnership approach

Winchester City Council's Community Safety and Neighbourhood Services Team works side-by-side with the police, Council teams and others as part of the Community Safety Partnership to deliver a range of actions that reduce crime and disorder.

❖ New Council Strategy

A new and inspirational Council Strategy adopted, based around four core outcomes (housing, environment, economy, and health & wellbeing), and sets out a clear direction for the Council in the medium-term.

❖ **Local Plan for the Winchester District passes inspection**

After its successful Examination in Public and the incorporation of modifications, the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 – Development Management and Site Allocations (LPP2) was adopted by the Council on 5 April 2017.

LPP2 allocates land to help deliver the development strategy for new housing, economic growth and diversification set out in Local Plan Part 1 and will guide future planning decisions in Winchester District (excluding that part of Winchester District with the South Downs National Park).

❖ **Council supports Spring Clean**

This year's Great British Spring Clean will take place from 2nd – 4th March

❖ **Winchester responding to Government housing plans**

Winchester City Council's ambitious plan to double the number of homes it is building in the next three years has received a welcome boost from the latest Government announcements.

The Government White Paper included plans to support a major increase in building affordable homes. The City Council has already secured grant towards its plans and is now talking to Government officials to secure more funding. With over 200 Council homes delivered or under construction since its programme began three years ago, the City Council is now determined to build a further 300 homes by 2020.

❖ **Central Winchester Regeneration Project - Supplementary Planning Document Vision for Central Winchester Regeneration Area.**

The local community were invited to help shape this vision and it received positive responses from the public with over 1,500 local people and businesses getting involved earlier this in 2017. The rolling programme began with a 'Starting Again' event on 10 March, followed by roadshows across the District community, including events in Alresford and Bishop's Waltham. The Community Planning weekend, held in the Guildhall on 24 and 25 March saw 700 people attend while street surveys were used to reach those aged between 25 and 50, and over 150 students from local schools, colleges and universities were also involved and shared their views. The business and creative communities were engaged through the BID, Chamber of Commerce and an Enterprising and Creative Economy Workshop. The draft SPD was presented to the public in November and the formal consultation period started in mid-December until early February 2017. During this eight week period a variety of meetings and exhibitions have been held so that as many people and organisations as possible can have their say. Details on the outcomes shortly.

❖ **Council scoops Gold Standard award for local homelessness services**

Winchester City Council has become the first council in Hampshire and only the fifth in England to receive the Government's prestigious 'Gold standard' award in recognition of its work in preventing and tackling all forms of homelessness.

❖ **Winchester Criterium and Cyclefest returned to Winchester for 2017 and also for 2018**

With almost 10,000 attendees in 2017, this event has become hugely popular as a spectator and participant event, whether for competitors or just a gentle trip round the route, and is fully booked almost as soon as it's announced. 2018 will see a larger family cycle event and more pop up items to cater for the growth in demand and entertain attendees.

- ❖ New business support service for Winchester
Winchester City Council invited bids from organisations or individuals for a new business support service for the Winchester district for a two-year period from 1 June 2017. The business support service will provide training, networking, one-to-one advice sessions and mentoring tailored to the needs of businesses located in the Winchester area.

- ❖ Opportunity for a Winchester car club
This gives signed-up members the chance to hire a car on an hourly basis for local, short journeys. This can be especially useful for business people who need to attend meetings away from their base, without needing to pay for a pool car that is infrequently used.

- ❖ Winchester affordable housing scheme reaches major milestone
One of the district's largest affordable housing schemes in Winchester, the Chesil Lodge, a new Extra Care scheme providing 52 homes for people aged 55 and over is nearly completed.

- ❖ New affordable houses get off the ground in Alresford and Stanmore
The new Council homes in New Alresford, consist of 6 x 1 bedroom flats, 2 x 2 bedroom homes and a 2 bedroom bungalow which can be easily adapted to suit a family with a disabled member. FE Chase & Son Ltd has been appointed as contractor for the scheme.
The new Council homes in Bailey Close, Winchester, include 5 x 1 bedroom flats. HA & DB Kitchin Ltd have been appointed as contractor for the scheme.

- ❖ City Council buys Winchester bus station
Winchester City Council agreed to buy the freehold of the bus station site in central Winchester from bus operator Stagecoach.
The investment ensures the future of bus operations in the city centre and will generate income through agreements with bus companies for continued use of the station. The improvements have assisted in the safety and appearance of the station which dates from 1934. The new bus routes include the removal of the busses through the city centre High Street. The bus station has undergone a £400k renovation programme giving it an open and pedestrian-friendly layout, making it safer for all bus users – and improving real time bus information. The work on this project is a great example of partnership working between Winchester City Council, Hampshire County Council and the operators

- ❖ Changes to on-street parking permits
Changes to fees for on-street parking permits in Winchester came into effect in early May. There is no increase proposed in the cost of any first permit issued to a property - this remains at £22 - nor is there any change to permit allocations.
Charges for on-street parking permits in Winchester have remained static for the last 10 years and the only change is for second, third and fourth permits which will come into effect in early May.

- ❖ Winchester Parking Strategy
Helping people to find the right parking for their visit and the needs of the environment and air quality are at the heart of Winchester's Parking Strategy.
There are no changes to parking charges in the wider Winchester district and free evening and all-day Sunday parking is retained in the city to support the night-time and weekend economies.

The City Council is committed to the Park and Ride service and is looking at capacity to see if there is a need to increase buses at peak times or to develop options to enhance the service provided.

Charges for the Park and Ride have been frozen while most in the 'inner ring' are being reduced. Increases to charges in city centre car parks will be introduced in early May – the first since 2013. The changes are intended to encourage those who want to park for longer to use Park and Ride or the car parks in the inner ring. They are not designed to increase income.

A further Park & Ride bus has been purchased to provide extra peak hours service – every 7 minutes from 7.30am -9am and from 3.45pm-6pm.

❖ **Council's financial commitment to voluntary organisations holds fast**

In the last financial year Winchester City Council gave grants totalling approximately £670,000 to local voluntary organisations who support the Council to deliver its strategic priorities.

The Council awarded 127 grants to approximately 99 organisations across the Winchester District, ranging from £500 to £168,000. Community organisations apply annually for one-off projects, small grants or core funding which assists them with their operating overheads. The Alresford Men's Shed and New Alresford Town Trust are just two organisations that have benefitted from grants.

❖ **City Council to appoint architects to kick-start Winchester Sports Park project**

Winchester City Council and The University of Winchester have appointed two highly experienced national architectural practices to undertake design work for the new sport and leisure centre which forms part of the exciting new Winchester Sports Park at Bar End. A planning application and public consultation planned for later this year.

❖ **Friarsgate car park re-opens**

The City Centre Friarsgate car park re-opened on 26 May. The new-look car park provides an ideal option for short-term parking to visitors and residents by restoring 72 parking spaces to the city centre. Four of these spaces are for drivers with blue disabled badges and two will contain public electric charging points. There are three motorcycle spaces as well as one reserved for the City Car Club, which was launched in June 2017.

❖ **Council invests £1m on Disabled Adaptations**

Winchester City Council has agreed to double its spending on adapting resident's homes, helping them to remain independent and in many cases making sure they can return home from hospital more quickly.

As part of the Government's Better Care programme, the Council is now investing over £1m every year on installing disabled adaptations such as level access showers, stair lifts and ramps, as well as extending properties to help disabled and vulnerable residents to be able to continue to live independently and remain in their own home, avoiding the disruption and expense of being placed in care homes and preventing extended hospital stays. The Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is a means tested grant helping people, including those living in the private sector, with the cost of adapting their homes, enabling them to continue living there. This is a mandatory grant for works that have been recommended as essential and necessary by an Occupational Therapist.

❖ **91% of tenants happy with Council - Tenant satisfaction rises by 3%**

Customer satisfaction with Winchester City Council has increased, with 91 per cent of tenants surveyed saying they are happy with the service they receive (compared to 89% when the survey was completed 2 years ago).

Satisfaction levels around housing repairs, opportunities to get involved and neighbourhoods in general has also increased, compared to the last survey in 2015.

Tenants did raise concerns about how easy it was to contact the Council, requesting more information to justify service charges and there were also calls for more discretionary works, such as internal decorations if funds could be made available. 88% of tenants said they felt they got value for money for the rent they paid.

The City Council has a long tradition for promoting Tenant Involvement. The TACT group (Tenants and Council Together) was established over 20 years ago and has played a key role in shaping housing services provided by the Council.

❖ **Council consults local businesses on rate relief following Central Government changes** **Winchester City Council has been awarded £900,000 from central government to help local businesses struggling with changes in their business rates bill.**

Following the recent Business Rates Revaluation, which was undertaken to review property rateable values by the Valuation Office (an agency of HMRC), Winchester City Council has been awarded funding to assist businesses which had a significant increase in their rates from the 1st April 2017.

A consultation is underway to determine how best to distribute the £900,000 to businesses via a rate relief scheme. Businesses can take part in the consultation at <https://winchester.citizenspace.com/revenues/rate-relief-for-businesses>

❖ **Council invests £100,000 in open space for residents in Abbots Barton** **Winchester City Council is investing £100,000 on developments to an area of open space in Abbots Barton. The new facilities, which will be in place by the autumn, will include new footpaths and improved access to the open space, a trim trail, new seating, stone fire circles and a sculpture trail.**

The improvements have been identified following a series of consultation events, which culminated in a vibrant and positive consultation day held in February. This event was attended by over 120 local residents who were able to talk to officers and discuss their ambitions for the area.

❖ **Green light for 76 new Council homes in Stanmore** **Plans to build 76 new homes in Stanmore was approved – with work set to commence in the next 12 months.**

The plans for the Valley, Stanmore, have been adopted following an extensive consultation process with local residents that influenced the design of the homes and enabled local people to express the importance of retaining open space surrounding them. As a result the appearance of the buildings has been designed to complement the overall look of the area, whilst maintaining a large open space for the community. There is a huge problem of housing affordability locally and the City Council is committed to providing new council homes to tackle the problem, including proposals for The Valley. The Valley is a key part of our strategy to double the number of Council homes built between 2017 and 2020, and provide good access to affordable housing options for our residents.

❖ **Council ups transparency with new style reporting** **Winchester City Council has adopted a new way of reporting to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

The quarterly reports set out the Council's progress against budget, key performance and project measures and will be presented to a cross-party committee who look to monitor delivery.

The first report includes information on Major Projects such as the Central Winchester Regeneration Scheme, and also outlines the performance in services areas such as Council Tax collection and Planning Application processing.

❖ **Surgery plans move a step closer**

Plans for a replacement doctor's surgery in the heart of Winchester have moved a step closer as Winchester City Council's Cabinet has approved plans to relocate St Clements Surgery to new premises at Upper Brook Street Car Park.

The move has been a long-standing ambition for the Council and comes after planning consent was granted last year. The new surgery will allow the practice to deliver higher standards of healthcare for residents and will secure an improved use of land within in the Council's ownership, part of the organisation's strategic plan to make more of its existing assets for the benefit of local people. It is expected that the construction and occupation of the new surgery will be completed by Summer 2019.

❖ **Winchester City Council Cabinet meetings take to the road**

Every other Winchester City Council cabinet meeting will be held in a different location around the district for the rest of the municipal year, which runs until May. This decision was recently taken by cabinet to reflect the diversity and geographic scope of the district, which covers a wide area of central Hampshire spanning 24 miles north to south and 18 miles east to west as the crow flies.

❖ **Living Wage Foundation measures to tackle Winchester's affordability**

Winchester City Council is one of only four authorities in the south east of England to be accredited by the Living Wage Foundation and detailed ways in which this influences the Council's social and community policies.

These policies include:

- A local council tax reduction scheme which replaces the national council tax benefit scheme and does not require a working age benefit claimant to pay any council tax until they are earning a basic wage
- An ambition to double the number of council homes delivered to more than 600 homes by 2021
- Running a national pilot scheme to help claimants move to Universal Credit
- Supporting people who are struggling to start a working life by using mentors
- Supporting and promoting the ReadEasy campaign which helps adults to read with confidence
- Ensuring that both Council employees and its contractors' staff are paid at least a living wage.

❖ **New opportunities are part of vision for Winchester**

Station Approach stakeholder workshop draws upon local insight

New employment and leisure opportunities for Winchester are set to move a step closer after recommendations on a fresh process for regenerating the Station Approach area of the city. Our vision for Winchester sees residents able to find good jobs locally and enjoying modern leisure facilities that are important for health and happiness. A new vision for the regeneration of the area around Winchester Railway Station was revealed at a workshop for invited stakeholders on Monday 20 November, stimulating lively debate among attendees.

Led by appointed architects Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands (LDS), the stakeholder workshop gave participants the opportunity to discuss the importance of the Station Approach site – and the priorities and constraints for enhancing and developing the area. The event saw lively debate about the character of the city and how the project could further contribute to Winchester's unique assets.

Station Approach encompasses the busy railway station and the Council-owned Cattlemarket and Carfax sites. It is an area with significant potential for new commercial and residential uses as well

as improved public realm and better access for pedestrians and cyclists. The vision is to create a fitting gateway to the city and a new hub around the station, including the provision of grade A office space.

❖ **Lower rents for council tenants**

Council tenants in the District will see their rents reduced by 1% from April next year.

Despite inflation being currently over 3%, Councillors have supported Government demands on social landlords to reduce rents, which will help keep Council housing affordable for thousands of residents in the Winchester district. As part of the Welfare Act 2016, Government has determined that councils and housing association rents should reduce by 1% each year up to 2020. With private rents in Winchester being some of the highest in the south east of England, the reductions will mean council rents will be significantly lower, and in many cases as much as 50% below market rents

❖ **£15m added to strategic asset fund to support future Council services**

At a Full Council meeting Members ratified a plan to increase Winchester City Council's ability to invest in strategic assets that can be used to boost the organisation's income and support local services going forward.

With £2 million lost in central government funding over the past five years and a further £4.5 million budget reduction expected over the next four, the Council is looking to adopt a more entrepreneurial approach to its finances by supplementing its existing assets, investing in property and land across the district. The decision saw the Council approve the addition of an extra £15 million to its strategic asset purchase scheme – bringing the total available to spend on investments up to £30 million. Income generated by investing this increased amount will be used to fund local services.

❖ **Winchester's residents help keep Air Ambulance flying**

Winchester residents have helped raise a staggering £24,000 for Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance, by using council clothing recycling points around the district to turn their unwanted clothing, shoes and textiles into cash.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance provides exceptional pre-hospital critical care to those who need the highest level of urgent medical treatment, whenever they are in need and wherever they are. The charity rely on donations to keep the Air Ambulance in service.

❖ **Kerbside glass collection considered for Winchester**

Winchester City Councillors are considering introducing kerbside Glass Collection. As part of its commitment to helping residents create a more environmentally-friendly district, Winchester City Council will discuss the feasibility of a monthly kerbside glass collection service for all households as part of the revised specification for its waste collection contract which is currently being prepared.

Increasing recycling levels are part of the City Council's aim to improve the quality of the District's environment, along with the protection and enhancement of open spaces and the reduction of harmful emissions.

❖ **Traveller Development Planning document consultation reaches key stage**

Winchester City Council has reached a key stage with publication of its Traveller Development Planning Document (Traveller DPD).

Local authorities are required to plan for the accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers in accordance with Government guidance. The Traveller DPD safeguards and allocates sites to meet identified traveller accommodation needs for the District - outside of the South Downs National

Park. Following consultation on the draft plan during summer 2017, the Council has amended the DPD following feedback from local people. At Full Council it was agreed by members that the DPD could now be published for consultation.

❖ **Winchester Future 50**

Funding secured for two-year pilot project to manage Conservation Areas

It is more than 50 years since the creation of the first Conservation Areas in Britain. The Historic Environment team at Winchester City Council, working closely with Historic England, has been successful in securing an offer of funding from Historic England for a new pilot project 'Winchester Future 50'; to aid the production of conservation area management plans. The funds will support the two-year "Winchester Future 50" project in part of the Winchester Conservation Area, starting in early 2018. The project aims to work out and trial a new way to put together Conservation Area Management Plans. It focuses on the involvement of the local community to gather essential information required about the special buildings and local characteristics which can make up a conservation area.

❖ **New Look for the Winchester City Council website**

More user friendly and easier to navigate and access a service. To view the website <http://www.winchester.gov.uk>. It is divided up with all blue icons being online tasks like reporting Fly Tipping, Missed bins Pot Holes, Drain Problems, Noise and Light issues and many more and all the red icons services.

❖ **Winchester movement strategy and study now underway.**

Although it is city centre focused it's outcomes aim to improve journeys in and out of Winchester, reduce congestion and improve air quality.

❖ **Open Market Shared Ownership Scheme for Winchester District**

The newest way to get help buying a house in Winchester District is through **myhome** Partnered Home Purchase Scheme, an open market shared ownership facility available from Winchester City Council. You choose your home from the open market up to the value of £450,000, and we will share the purchase with you. If you have a steady income, **myhome** is the perfect way to get on the property ladder, in Winchester. WCC purchase the house and you in turn lease between 50-70% share, and pay monthly rent on the share you don't own. This must be your only home, you could be a first-time buyer, or returning to home ownership, you must have a clean credit history covering the last 12 months. Places are limited on the scheme, so a points-based system is used. Full details of criteria and how to apply can be found at <http://www.winchester.gov.uk/housing/home-ownership-with-winchester-city-council/>

You can contact your City Councillors as follows :-

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