

## **March 2022 -Report from AIV Winchester City Councillors to the Parishes**

### **Council Tax/ WCC budget setting 2022/23**

After the usual late night meeting, it was agreed to increase the City Council precept by £3.95 per annum for a Band D Property. The windfall of a better than expected outturn for 2021/22 has allowed us to make one-off investments in:

- An additional £100K for the Council's Hardship Fund, we anticipate increased need.
- £450K for maintenance of historic monuments, early intervention is key
- £250K to trial low carbon bins and buses, the necessary infrastructure is a challenge
- £40K for bike storage and cycling and walking improvements
- £150K for a food waste trial, finding the pitfalls before it becomes mandatory
- £185K to fund for cleaning market towns & city centres and replacement or repair of street furniture
- £25K to embed City of Sanctuary principles (more on this later)
- £100K to make improvements in the remote working system, it has creaked under the strain of the last two years

The new budget will be challenging with inflationary pressures, being added daily at present, and no sign of abatement.

### **Housing**

Council House rent increases will be kept below inflation at 3.1%. We have also increased the budgets for repairs, and capped service charges.

Particularly welcome is the £15.8m. for retrofitting energy efficiency measures on existing housing stock. This not only reduces service costs and improves quality of life for our tenants but also leads by example and increases the expertise locally in the necessary skills. The vast majority of the housing stock in Winchester District is less than energy efficient; given the embedded carbon in existing buildings, retrofitting is the way forward.

### **The Dean Car Park**

Some progress; WCC has secured the access road leading to the parking at the rear of the housing; It was vital to have control over the access road so as not to create a ransom strip, but at the cost of reducing spaces to 42. There will be a public consultation event covering the layout of the entire site, prior to a formal planning application. There was a suggestion that some interested parties would have priority for discussions behind closed doors; that would have been highly undemocratic but elected representatives have been included in conversations.

The big problem with the much needed parking on this site is the additional traffic on the Dean/Pound Hill crossroads, estimated at 200-300 per day, to an already problematic site. The additional housing on The Dean has increased foot traffic at this point as well, a tribute to the original principle of housing being near shops!

Jackie has arranged for a strategic review of this junction, to have a professional study and possible improvements will be very welcome. We have recognised this for many years as a problem junction and have been asking for solutions to be assessed.

### **On Street Parking**

The proposals for how Hampshire County Council intends to take back control of this matter will be published in early March. To make any money, and fund enforcement, there will need to be charges. We will continue to press for a minimum one hour free of charge to protect our town centre retailers and residents that have no choice but to drive to shop.

### **City of sanctuary**

#### **CROSS-PARTY AGREEMENT FOR STEPS TO SUPPORT ASYLUM-SEEKERS & REFUGEES IN WINCHESTER DISTRICT.**

Recent tragic events in the Ukraine has demonstrated how quickly and easily people living quiet peaceful lives in their own homes can become desperate refugees fleeing for their lives into a foreign country.

We are really proud and happy that there was unanimous, cross-party support at Winchester City Council for the Winchester Liberal Democrats motion to make Winchester District:

1. A more welcoming place for refugees and people seeking asylum;
2. Support taking practical steps, in dialogue with local and national organisations supporting refugees and people seeking asylum, to welcome and integrate all people into our communities, activities and culture;
3. Challenge anti-refugee and anti-migrant attitudes wherever they are found and support the Southampton and Winchester Visitors Group and Winchester City of Sanctuary in the promotion of the Together With Refugees campaign calling for a fairer, kinder and more effective approach to supporting refugees in the UK.
4. Winchester City Council be added to a list of supporters of [City of Sanctuary](#)

Thank you to [SWVG](#), [City of Sanctuary](#), [University of Winchester](#) for their support for this motion and look forward to working with [Hampshire County Council](#), [Two Saints](#) and others in making Winchester District a place of sanctuary to those fleeing persecution and violence.

Margot Power 01962 734167

Russell Gordon -Smith 01962 733219