

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – NOVEMBER 2008**Report by County Councillor Nigel Clarke****Introduction:**

I have attended the following commitments since my last report:

A seminar organised by the SEDA Rural Communities Committee on the outskirts of Guildford – an umbrella organisation to ensure that policies enshrined in the LAA & LSPs of the Counties & Districts took sufficient recognition of rural affairs as much of the thinking is very urban centric & unitary authority structured. I attended as a representative of the NFDC LSP & it caused me to think that our own policies are very much ‘town’ driven. Two briefings with Executive Member & Environment senior staff: one mainly concerned with the budget for 2009/10 & the effect that the lack of property driven income – land sales, planning fees & S106/infrastructure charges will have on the next two year’s capital programme – a shortfall of about a third. And the other with the Freight Transportation Strategy – a good thing, & more importantly the lack of a strategic framework for major roadworks & the impact of future developments in the Basingstoke area. There is no equivalent of PUSH which coordinates the development in the southern part of the County, yet Basingstoke is designated as a growth ‘diamond’ in the jargon of the SE Plan.

A Group meeting at which the major concerns were the Independent Pay Review Committee report & the Council stance on fluoridisation by Southampton PCT of part of its area & the County as well

Chaired the County’s Annual Parish & Town Transport Forum in Winchester where the quest was as usual to get quart out of a pint pot. One thing that did come out loud & clear was communications – between the bus companies & the user, the bus companies & the County, & the general presentation of travel information & timetables which tend to change, often at short notice. Full Council where the Fluoridisation Report was well debated (case not proven & not recommended) & the IPR Committee report which turned into political posturing, consequently, it was a long day in the Council Chamber. HAT Chairman’s review to take stock of the year’s progress & to decide where our priorities for 2009 should be? One conclusion was that more effort must be put into supporting the various strands of individual District LSPs as to-date they have been good at talking & writing, but not so good at delivering tangible outcomes.

Attended the Safe & Healthy People Select Committee where the principle themes were:

- Review of the Southeast Capacity Plan – the cluster of Queen Alexander Hospital (PFI) supported by community hospitals – Gosport War Memorial (upgrade) (Haslar to close which is very contentious), Fareham Community Hospital (upgrade), Oak Park, Fareham (new build), close Emsworth Victoria Cottage & Havant War Memorial Hospitals, Petersfield Community Hospital (no change) & major uplift of St Mary’s Hospital, Portsmouth. Complex, contentious, costly & challenging with one unresolved issue centred on accessibility to QAH – not easy for cars, taxis, ambulances or public transport.
- Surrey & Borders NHS Trust (Mental Health) consultation which had been presented as a ‘cut & dried’ estate rationalisation case only for it to be deferred until a proper clinical & service provision case had been made, along with a comprehensive property options study showing

how seven units could sensibly reduced to three modern units. A poor example of consultation which could have been handled far more effectively.

Other activities:

Attended the New Forest Consultative Committee where the principal speaker was the Director of Planning for the National Park who updated us on the progress of the consultations on their LDF, Sustainable & Recreation Management Strategies. The debate was overshadowed by the dog & horse brigade to the detriment of any consideration of wider considerations of economic growth, sustainable communities & the impact of NPA policies on the wider community of the NFDC.

Nigel Clarke