

## **Ward Report – September 2016**

### **Old Gore Ward**

#### **Paralympic Swimmer – honoured by Herefordshire Council**

In recognition of the outstanding contribution that Sascha Kindred has made to swimming in general and to the Paralympic Games in particular, and in recognising the major successes, medals and world records that he has achieved, especially in the 2016 Paralympic Games by winning a gold medal and breaking the world record for the men's 200 metre swimming medley, the Council has afford him the greatest honour it has in its power to bestow on any individual resident, namely admit Sascha Kindred to be honorary Freeman of the County of Herefordshire.

An award well deserved for an amazing athlete who lives and trains in Herefordshire.

#### **Fire Authority - budget**

Since the start of the 'austerity' period in 2010-11, the Fire Authority's annual revenue budget has reduced by 16 per cent in real terms. Taking into account the additional running costs over the last five years, such as inflation pressures, national pay rises, tax increases and maintenance of property and equipment, this has resulted in a headline budget reduction from £32.6 million in 2010-11 to £32.0 million in 2016-17.

In order to meet these pressures, the fire authority have made reductions in their workforce, including managers and support staff, made changes to crewing at fire stations, cut our spending budgets and removed two fire engines from the fleet. By 2019-20 the full implementation of these measures will be saving £6.7 million per year.

#### **Fire Service initiative - dying 2 Drive**

As part of the Service's suite of community safety initiatives the Dying 2 Drive scheme, now in its tenth year, took place in September 2015. The multi-agency road safety scheme aimed at reducing death and serious injury amongst young road users in Herefordshire had the highest ever number of schools signed up, with almost 1500 young people attending.

The events commenced with a hard hitting road traffic collision reconstruction, involving all of the emergency services and live casualties. The reconstructions were closely followed by powerful, interactive workshops run by the Fire & Rescue Service, West Mercia Police, Herefordshire Council, Safer Roads Partnership, West Midlands Ambulance Service and St John Ambulance. During these workshops, the consequences of bad decisions were explored and, amongst other activities, students were shown how to perform live saving cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

#### **Council four year financial settlement**

The four year financial settlement offer was made as part of the 2016/17 final central government funding settlement in February 2016. The offer, if accepted, will confirm

Herefordshire's revenue support grant, rural services delivery grant and transitional grant funding up to and including 2019/20

The current savings plan is shown below; by accepting the funding offer this plan remains appropriate.

Directorate	2016-7 £m	2017-8 £m	2018-9 £m	2019-20 £m	Total 2016-20 £m
Adults and wellbeing	4.1	2.3	1.8	1.7	9.9
Children's wellbeing	1.6	1.3	1.4	1.0	5.3
Economy, communities and corporate	5.2	3.4	2.3	2.3	13.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>28.4</b>

Successfully delivering savings of this scale requires longer term planning; knowing the grant element of longer term plans enables increased accuracy in targeting the financial challenges ahead.

If the offer were not accepted council funding would continue to be allocated under the current existing yearly process. The annual allocations could be subject to additional reductions to the current offer dependant on the fiscal climate and the need for central government to make further savings to reduce the national deficit. There is at this stage no indication of the potential levels of support which could be expected under such a system, and the council would be less able to rely on longer term plans. It is also possible, although currently not considered likely, that if national policy changed during the settlement period funding allocations could increase.

#### Four year funding deal: 2016-17 to 2019-20 10

The four year funding offer is shown below. The offer excludes a number of significant grant funding streams but does provide a degree of increased funding certainty. The offer has been labelled as a guaranteed minimum grant funding envelope however central government reserves the right to change the settlement due to unforeseen circumstances.

	2016-7 £000	2017-8 £000	2018-9 £000	2019-20 £000
Revenue Support Grant	17,470	10,090	5,370	620
Rural Services delivery grant	5,069	4,093	3,149	4,093
Transitional Grant	572	576	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,111</b>	<b>14,759</b>	<b>8,519</b>	<b>4,713</b>

#### Efficiency statement and business rate retention

The funding offer is conditional on the publication of an efficiency statement. There are no mandatory requirements for the efficiency statement however the published plan must demonstrate increased efficiency over the four year period.

The efficiency statement supports the council's journey to self-sufficiency; from 2019-20 it is intended that all councils will be funded locally from council tax and full business rate

retention. The exact details of how this funding mechanism will be implemented is yet to be shared and the council is currently preparing a response to the open consultation process.

The alternative is not to sign up for the four year funding deal and to apply each year. However, there is no certainty that a similar level of funding would be achieved from central Government. To date no other local authority have decided against taking the funding deal.

### **Herefordshire Council communication Strategy**

Herefordshire Council have published its communications strategy for 2016-2020. There is much the council needs to communicate to the community and an equal amount that the community needs to say to the council. How that is done will vary between levels of need and particular audiences. Whilst a large proportion of our audience are online and increasing use of social media can reach a wide audience with target messages, there will be some requirement for more bespoke contact.

Figures from the Office of National Statistics show that 11% of the Herefordshire adult population have never been on the internet. This suggests that there is significant potential, and for many people an expectation, that the local population interact with the council online. This still leaves a proportion of people who do not interact on line and other mechanisms need to be considered to reach these people where via the media or specific service support. Due to diversity across the Herefordshire community, it is important that the council communicates effectively with the right people, at the right time, in the right way.

The communication strategy will help the local community understand the key council priorities, as approved in the corporate plan 2016/20. It is important for citizens of the county to know what the council does, and the areas the council needs to focus on. Sharing those priorities is fundamental to creating a joint understanding of the role, purpose, and functions of the council.

Targeted communications will be implemented using knowledge gathered through a range of readily available data tools, though with the potential of further data collection necessary to ensure the council can continue to support the best methods of communication.

### **Budget consultation**

Less than one week remain for the residents of Herefordshire to have their say in this year's Budget consultation. The consultation runs until Friday 7 October and is asking residents for their views to help set future budgets and what residents might be able to do to help support their local communities.

To participate in the consultation visit [www.herefordshire.gov.uk/haveyoursay](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/haveyoursay) or complete a form at any Herefordshire library or customer service centre. Alternatively, send a Facebook message to hfdscouncil, Tweet #hfdsbudget or share your views with your local councillor.

### **Appointment of interim director of resources**

The Council have appointed Mark Taylor as interim director of resources. Mark's role as s.151 officer was also confirmed the last full Council meeting.

Mark comes to Herefordshire Council as a highly experienced finance director and qualified chartered accountant with significant experience in the public sector. Mark impressed us with his work with a number of local councils across the country in senior finance roles. Mark is currently completing an interim period at Middlesbrough Council. As Mark takes on the director of resources / s.151 officer role, he will also assist in recruitment to the permanent director of resources position.

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