

District Councillor Report for Hawkley Parish Council meeting 12th January 2022

Firstly, I must apologise for not being able to be with you tonight.

Many of you will have seen or heard about the proposals revealed last week to separate the current joint management team at EHDC and Havant Borough Council. This arrangement was created in 2009 and has served both councils well by reducing management costs and allowing resources for which there is low demand – for example heritage officers – to be shared between the councils.

A couple of events are likely to affect this balance – the forthcoming Government white paper on Local Government reorganisation and the creation of the Solent Freeport area which will most likely include Havant but not East Hampshire.

The current direction of travel on Local Government reorganisation would seem to suggest that a Solent Area authority may be created spanning Portsmouth, Southampton and areas between and adjacent, including Havant, and a North Hampshire area including Basingstoke, Andover and a number of other areas such as Hart and Rushmoor. The destination of East Hampshire is at present unclear although it would seem more likely to join North Hampshire or a potential central Hampshire authority including Winchester and parts of the Test Valley than the Solent area.

More details of this change will become available in the coming weeks, but we are of course in the process of setting the council budget for 2022/23 and this change will have an impact, primarily on how charges are allocated between the councils. I am involved in discussions on this in my role as Finance Portfolio holder and is the reason I cannot be with you this evening.

On other aspects of council services, we have been struggling with the shortage of HGV drivers, as have many organisations. This has particularly impacted waste collection. We targeted maintaining the regular and recycling waste collections at the expense of garden waste collections. By the beginning of December these were running over a week behind schedule. I am pleased to report that we had caught up by Christmas and normal Garden waste collections will resume in mid-January after the normal two week Garden waste service break.

As we approach the end of the civic year, I am evaluating the various grant applications I have received for my Councillor Community grant, and I will be in touch with applicants shortly to discuss their applications. With six parishes in my ward I try to be equitable to each community and on occasion this may mean scaling back of grant funding requests.

Again my apologies for not being with you in person, but please contact me should you have any questions.

Charles Louisson.