CONSERVATIVES have agreed yet another austerity-defying budget for Fareham.

Despite losing its entire Revenue Support Grant from government, the Borough share of council tax will rise by just 1p a day for the average home.

The Council spends £46m delivering services, but the amount raised in council tax accounts for only 14% of that sum, so we have to raise the rest by investing YOUR money wisely.

For example, over £26m has been invested in the last 3 years in commercial property, mainly in Fareham Borough, producing an income of nearly £2m a year.

Without this income your council tax would have to be increased by nearly 30%.

The resulting budget sees the Council’s services remain intact and a district council tax which remains almost the lowest in the country.

Car parking charges are frozen for the 7th year and continue to apply only in the town centre, and free in the evenings and Sundays in the long-stay car parks.

Council Leader Seán Woodward said: “Times are incredibly hard in the public sector, but we have been able to preserve all the services which our residents value while respecting that many, particularly those on fixed incomes, would find even modest increases in our charges difficult to bear.”

WELBORNE is on track for its own railway station, linking the new garden village directly to London Waterloo.

A feasibility study commissioned by Fareham Borough Council and carried out by Network Rail in November sees it as a viable project, costing up to £78m.

It’s good news all round as the Council has been awarded £10m by the government to deliver vital road improvements to upgrade the M27 J10 to an all-moves junction.

Four potential sites for the new station were identified, the most favoured option being within Welborne, with direct access into the development allowing flexibility for the local transport strategy.

It would have parking for 200 vehicles and a drop-off space.

Phase 1 of the plan shows a 250m platform to accommodate a 12-car train on the existing single track.

Phase 2 shows restoration of the double track between Fareham tunnel and Botley, with two platforms.

Fareham Council Leader Seán Woodward said: “A railway station at Welborne is part of our vision for a well-connected, thriving new community and we recognise the strong employment and social benefits that this would bring.

“It is our aim to work with the appropriate partners to make this happen and, most importantly, to ensure that we do not make any planning decisions that could prejudice the future delivery of a railway station at Welborne.”

Managing Director at Buckland Development Ltd John Beresford said: “Our plans for Welborne always included safeguarding an area of land for a potential rail link.

“This feasibility study is an encouraging next step that keeps an exciting transport option open.”

SKETCH: Outline of Phase 1 preferred option.
Day centre closure a major loss to locals

THE POPULAR, homely Kershaw Day Centre in Wyton Way closed in December after 30 years. Councillor Pamela Bryant said: “The closure means many of our local residents have to travel further afield to other centres. Before this, Borough and County Councillors are upset to know that those living in central Fareham don’t have the pleasure of a truly local service at present.” Age Concern ran the purpose-built centre for many years, but following new contracts offered by the owners, Hampshire County Council, the charity decided it could not afford to bid for the contract.

Age Concern still has contracts at other Hampshire centres in Locks Heath and Gosport. At the time of writing no decision has been made on the building’s future and it is hoped another organisation can be found to bring it back into use.

Engineers still baffled by Highlands mystery ‘bump’

He said: “The team at Highways Laboratory undertook investigative works at the location by taking core samples. This provided the geotechnics team with an idea of the make-up to the current road structure and confirmed no large voids were present within the metalled surface.”

Phase 1 of a CCTV survey of the drainage system has been completed. On completion of Phase 2, Hampshire Highways will be able to decide the best course of action for remedial works. He added: “Hampshire Highways confirmed the site is monitored daily and signs warning of the uneven surface checked and re-erected if necessary. “Until this ‘bump’ has been fully rectified I would highlight caution when driving along this stretch of road; we will continue to liaise with Hampshire Highways in ensuring the remedial work is completed as soon as practical.”

Appeal for litter pickers

BADM weather during the winter has blown litter across paths and into the shrubs and hedgerows. Tin cans, plastic bottles and used containers can become a hazard as well as being unsightly. Councillors Pamela Bryant and Louise Clubley want these areas to be tidied as the spring flowers start to bloom. They are organising a ‘litter pick’ at Park Lane recreation ground on Saturday, March 17 meeting in the Leisure Centre car park at 10am. If enough people join in, a wider area of the ward could be covered.

Bin men complimented

Christmas refuse collections were once again carried out without much disruption. It was good to receive compliments from residents who appreciated their bins being emptied during the festive period.

Eight crews employed by FBC empty on average 1,236 bins a day with an average weekly total of 6,211 per crew, totalling over 49,000 collections per week.

Safe youth environment

Xperience Youth Club in Trinity Street is a popular meeting place for young people three times a week. Trained youth workers offer a venue to chill and chat, play games, enjoy arts and crafts, music, cooking and opportunities to learn new skills.

It’s part of Fareham’s Y-Services which is supported by the Council and gives young people access to support at home and in the community.


Better security for bowls club

A BOWLS club is pleased with recent improvements made possible through funding from Fareham Council and County Councillor Peter Latham’s devoted budget.

Ward Councillors Pamela Bryant and Louise Clubley went to Fareham Bowls Club in Park Lane to see for themselves.

New doors have been fitted to the club house, improving security and making access easier. Roof improvements are waiting for better weather and the committee also has other plans, including better lighting.

PHOTO: Louise Clubley with committee members outside the new security doors.

Community ideas will go into Funtley play park upgrade

OFFICERS are in the process of choosing design and deliver improvements at Funtley play park.

Councillor Louise Clubley said it followed a consultation with residents who came up with ideas to improve the area at Funtley Recreation Ground.

New equipment will be installed in the grass area, including a basket swing, climbing wall, wobble board and more. The existing equipment will have a mini makeover before being painted. Outdoor gym equipment will also be installed along the pathway. It’s hoped to complete the work by summer.

To view the designs, visit www.fareham.gov.uk/leisure

Vital services are saved from County Council cuts

COUNTY Councillor Peter Latham reports the community transport, school crossing patrols, and Waste and recycling centres have been saved from cuts.

The County Council has to make savings of £140m by 2020 on top of the £340m they have already made in the last 8 years.

The report of chief officers to the council in September put these vital services at risk.

However, the Conservative cabinet requested senior officers to explore all viable options to refine or revise their recommendations.

After further discussions and investigations additional funds have been found this year to save the services.

Peter Latham said: “ Conservatives on the County Council always fight for the whole community to save vital services when they can.”

MP told of local plan concerns

COUNCILLOR Pamela Bryant met Fareham MP Suella Fernandes to discuss issues raised by local residents regarding development proposals in the Draft Local Plan.

Pamela stressed the concerns received from residents living in Funtley regarding proposals for further development within the last piece of countryside.

With planning applications having been received, Pamela and Louise will be speaking at the Planning Committee when these are discussed.

Pamela congratulated Suella on her recent appointment as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Exiting the European Union.

Borough councillors

Tony Backhouse (Fareham North) said: “Conservatives continued to hold monthly ward surgeries at The Leisure Centre on the second Saturday of each month, 10am to 11.30am. It is becoming popular for local residents to discuss a variety of concerns and for the councillors to be made aware of local issues.

We meet in the café area, with County Councillors Peter Latham and Fred Birkett who are available to discuss issues within their remit.

Forthcoming dates: March 10, April 14
FAREHAM Men’s Shed (FMS) has been awarded a grant of £1,500 by County Councillor Fred Birkett.

The money will enable the group to buy specialist power tools and two high specification dust extractors for their woodworking workshop.

FMS started life in May 2016 and has gradually grown to a membership of 43 at the end of 2017. It is a club for men generally aged 55 and older and meets from 10am until 2pm each day, Monday to Thursday.

Fred Birkett said: “Retirement, and even worse the loss of a partner, can come as a great shock and leave someone very lonely. “The Shed is somewhere to meet and make new friends. Whether it is just for a chat and a cup of tea or to learn new skills and make something in the workshop members are free to do what they want and stay all day or just for an hour. “The group has been involved with several community projects including converting a double decker bus for the homeless and repairing cages at The Ark animal rescue centre. “Currently the group is talking to Redlands Lane Junior school about the possibility of making outdoor equipment."

She said: “Air pollution has improved significantly since 2010 but we recognise there is more to do which is why we have put in place a £3.5 billion plan to improve air quality and reduce harmful emissions. “I am delighted to see Fareham taking this seriously and that discussions are underway, and I look forward to seeing firm plans for action as they develop further.”

PHOTOS: Traffic gridlock in Fareham centre. Inset (above) Environment Minister Dr Thérèse Coffey (below) Portland Street monitoring station.

SHED YOUR WORRIES AND JOIN THIS PRACTICAL MEN’S SKILL GROUP

POOR AIR quality caused by traffic pollution in several parts of Fareham led to a Government minister visiting to see what action the Council is taking.

The Council is taking it seriously and, with ANPR cameras monitoring 27 sites across the Borough, is doing its best to improve the situation.

There will be a new air quality working group consisting of councillors and other partners.

A survey will be carried out to see the nature of traffic using these roads and the information will be part of our new plan that must be submitted to the Government by the end of March this year.

The Government recently published a new Air Quality Plan, looking at ways of reducing unacceptable levels of nitrogen dioxide vehicle emissions.

The report highlighted hotspots in Fareham, including the A27 near the Delme roundabout down to Quay Street roundabout, part of Gosport Road, and along the A27 to the Station roundabout. It sparked a recent visit to Fareham by Environment Minister Dr Thérèse Coffey to discuss the Council’s plans to tackle the problem.

She said: “Air pollution has improved significantly since 2010 but we recognise there is more to do which is why we have put in place a £3.5 billion plan to improve air quality and reduce harmful emissions. “I am delighted to see Fareham taking this seriously and that discussions are underway, and I look forward to seeing firm plans for action as they develop further.”