

Hampshire County Councillor Update – October 2025

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Devolution

Elections for the new Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA) for Hampshire and the Solent have been confirmed for May 2026. As well as promoting the interests of the wider region to central Government, the Mayor will work with local council leaders to make strategic decisions for our region in areas such as transport, skills and employment support, housing and planning, and tackling climate change.

Attached is the first newsletter update about the progress of the Hampshire and the Solent Mayoral Combined Authority (MCCA). More information can be found at: [Devolution | About the Council | Hampshire County Council](#)

Local Government Reorganisation



Local Authorities across the Hampshire and Solent region have now submitted their plans on reorganisation to central Government (graphic shows the Hampshire proposal).

Going forward, the estimated schedule is:

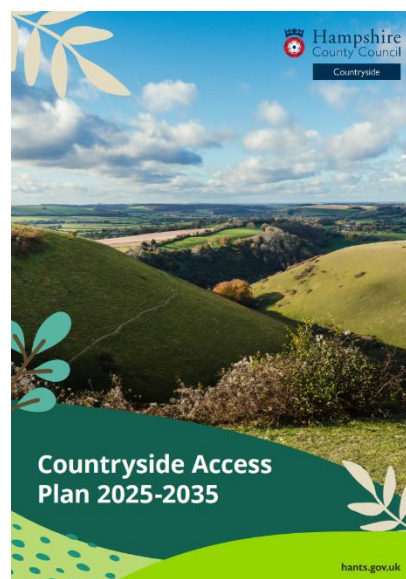
- **November 2025** – Government-led public consultation on the options
- **March 2026** – Government announcement of new Local Authority structure in Hampshire
- **May 2026** – Mayoral election, plus elections to existing County & District Councils
- **May 2027** – Elections for new Unitary Councils (shadow elections)
- **April 2028** – Anticipated go live for new Unitary Authorities

Hampshire Countryside Action Plan 2025-2035 Approved

Hampshire's Rights of Way network comprises 2,883 miles (4,639km) of public footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways, and byways open to all traffic. Hampshire County Council has statutory responsibility as the Highway Authority for managing and maintaining the Public Rights of Way network. This includes maintaining the legal record (the definitive map and statement) and the assertion and protection of public access through the management and maintenance of rights of way.

The role of a Rights of Way Improvement Plan is to:

- **Understand** – the extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public
- **Identify and enhance** – the opportunities provided by local rights of way for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the authority's area
- **Assess and improve** – the accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems.



An updated plan covering 2025-2035 was approved at the Universal Services decision day on 22-Sep. The three delivery areas from the 2015 to 2025 Countryside Access Plan have been retained and four new focus areas incorporated within them:

- Delivery Area A: Developing a strategic approach to network management
- Delivery Area B: Working with other organisations and with volunteers
- Delivery Area C: Listening, Informing, Educating
- New Area of Focus: Planning/transport systems
- New Area of Focus: Health and wellbeing
- New Area of Focus: Access for all (physical, mental, cultural, socioeconomic)
- New Area of Focus: Climate change/resilience and environment.

A copy of the new plan can be found on the Hampshire County Council website: [Countryside Access Plan 2025-2035](#)

Bishops Waltham Care Home Site

At the Hampshire 2050 decision day on 18-Sep, The Executive Member approved disposal of the former Bishops Waltham House care home site. Several offers for the site have been received; however, none have come from the NHS.

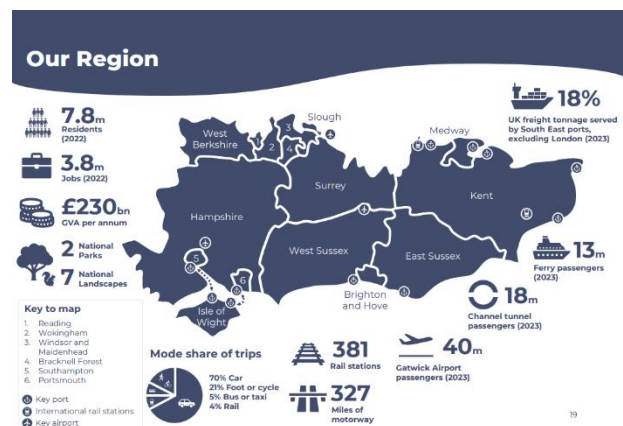
In the absence of any indication that the health authorities intend to proceed, the decision was made to move forward with the sale to one of the other interested parties. These parties meet the criteria for continued care home or alternative community use, in line with the Local Plan policy



SE Region Transport Strategy Approved

On 03-Oct, Hampshire County Council approved an update to the South East Region Transport Strategy, which sets out a long-term framework for strategic transport investment across Hampshire and the wider South East region through to 2050.

The strategy is intended to guide Hampshire's transport capital programme and support future bids for Government and regional funding. It outlines priorities for improving connectivity, reducing carbon emissions, and enhancing access to services.



However, during the Council meeting, several councillors raised concerns about the strategy's continued emphasis on road-building projects, calling for a stronger focus on public transport, walking, and cycling infrastructure to better address congestion, accessibility, and environmental challenges.

It's also important to note that responsibility for transport strategy in Hampshire and the Solent region will soon transfer to the Mayor, as part of ongoing devolution arrangements. Further updates to the strategy are expected as this transition progresses.

Botley Bypass

– Mini Roundabout at Pinkmead Junction

As of Friday 26 September, the A3051/A334 junction has been changed to a temporary mini roundabout to enable construction of a new permanent roundabout which will form part of Botley Bypass. During this period, the layout may be adjusted to introduce further minor improvements as the junction operates in a new way and to accommodate different phases of construction, please refer to the [phasing plans](#) for details. The permanent roundabout is scheduled to be installed by late Summer 2027.

– Viewing Area

As part of the project, a dedicated viewing area has been created for residents to safely observe the progress of the Bypass construction. You will find the viewing area along the track leading to Daisy Meadow Dairy Farm. From here, you can enjoy a clear view of both the bypass leading east down to the bridge (being constructed over the River Hamble) area and west towards the main compound on Winchester Street where the bypass will join the previous works.



For more information and updates visit

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/transportchemes/botleybypass>

Parish Council Bus Shelter Grant Scheme

The Parish Council Bus Shelter Grant is available for:

- Refurbishing existing shelters
- Replacing existing shelters

Overall aims are to:

- Improve the waiting area for passengers
- Increase patronage on local bus services



Eligible bus shelters must already be owned and maintained by the Parish Council. Up to £15K per shelter will be available. Grant stream will be available from Wednesday 15 October 2025.

A separate communication will be issued to all Parish Councils that will provide a link to further information. Parishes will need to submit a grant application and evidence of quotes. Technical support will be available via the Passenger Transport (infrastructure) team:

passenger.transport.enquiries@hants.gov.uk

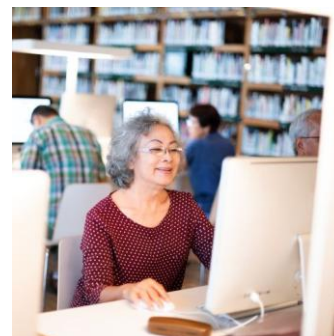
Help to Support Residents Facing Barriers to Employment

Hampshire County Council has unveiled plans to help more residents across the county into meaningful, sustainable work, especially those who have faced barriers such as long-term health conditions, caring responsibilities, or lack of qualifications.

The [Get Hampshire Working Plan](#) brings together local employers, health services, education and training providers, local authorities, housing associations and community organisations to tackle the root causes of unemployment and economic inactivity, and better connect employment, health and skills support, based on local needs.

The Plan, which sets out proposals to reform employment, health and skills support to tackle economic inactivity and support people into good work, addresses three urgent labour market challenges locally:

- **Labour market exclusion** – supporting people facing barriers to employment including women, residents impacted by ill-health and disabilities, and older workers.
- **Youth employment** – helping young people to thrive at the start of their careers, through better careers support, work experience opportunities, and skills training.
- **Insecure and low-quality work** – working with employers to create inclusive recruitment practices and match local talent to local, sustainable work opportunities.



Aligned with the Plan, Hampshire will begin delivering the Connect to Work programme from November this year. This will provide targeted support to help disabled people, those with health conditions, and others facing complex barriers to employment, to secure good quality work.

Participants will receive up to 12 months of personalised supported employment from Employment Specialists, including support with job searching, confidence building, and tailored employer engagement. The programme is voluntary and uses a well-established model for helping people into work, connecting work, health and skills in a joined-up way.

Connect to Work is expected to support around 5,000 Hampshire residents over the next five years, helping them find and stay in good jobs that match their needs and aspirations. Detailed information on the Programme will be published in the coming weeks

More information on the variety of employment support currently available can be found on the County Council's website at:

[Employer support | Business and economy | Hampshire County Council](#)

Hampshire County Councillor Grants Open!

Following a detailed review, which resulted in a number of significant changes, the County Councillor grant scheme is now open for 2025-26. Groups and organisations can apply for funding for both revenue (one-off) and minor capital projects. Revenue grants should generally be used to support short term project related costs.

It is expected that the grants will benefit a wide range of groups/activities: for example, vulnerable children or adults, young people, facilities for older people, community facilities, parish councils (but only for specific projects), schools' minor traffic or safety works, local environment projects, and community safety.

More details are available on the County Council website: [County Councillor grants | Hampshire County Council](#). The 2025/26 County Councillor grant scheme is open until 28 February 2026.

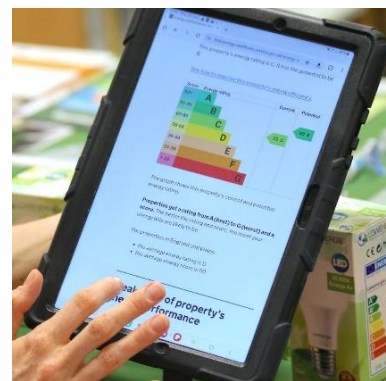
Finally, a reminder for Parents with children due to start secondary school next year: Applications are now open and should be submitted by 31 October!

Free Advice to Reduce Your Home Energy Bills

The Environment Centre has launched a ground-breaking service to make our homes warmer, greener and cheaper to run.

It's called ***My Home Made Better***, and it offers free and impartial advice on everything from insulation and heating upgrades, to switching to new energy-efficient technologies.

Experienced energy advisers will simplify complex information and dispel myths to guide you through your options and help you find the best ways to keep the heat in, lower your energy bills, and make your home more comfortable.



This is how it works:

1. You call 0800 804 8601 (or email) to chat with one of the friendly advisers. Lines are open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm.
2. You'll be asked about your property and circumstances, following which you will receive tailor-made recommendations and your own personalised plan. This will comprise a summary of everything discussed, including recommendations and things to consider before taking your next step.
3. When you're ready, search the independent directory to find local suppliers and installers.

This should be a fantastic new service, and I encourage everyone to make use of it! For more information go to **myhomemadebetter.org**

Energy Efficiency Grants

The following offer advice and support. But please carefully check eligibility for grants as they will depend on the type of home and your circumstances.

- [Energy Saving Trust](#) – Guidance for the type of insulation for properties
- [Great British Insulation Scheme](#) – Eligible if the property has an energy performance certificate (EPC) of D to G and is in Council Tax bands A-D
- [Warmer Homes](#) – Warmer Homes provides fully funded insulation, solar panels and other energy efficiency measures for owner-occupiers and private renters living in low-income households in properties that have EPC energy efficiency ratings from D to G. The previous iteration of this program has now closed, but the Government has just announced a further £26 million of funding has been awarded to our local consortium. Whilst the previous iteration of this scheme only funded measures in off-gas households, the new scheme will be open to all fuel types, including on gas households and off gas households.