

Hampshire County Councillor Update – November 2025

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Devolution Update – Hampshire and the Solent MCCA

Preparations continue for the creation of the Hampshire and the Solent Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA), with elections for the new Mayor scheduled 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.

Two recent briefing packs provide further insight into the development of the MCCA:

-  [August 2025 Update](#) – Introduces the proposed structure of the MCCA, outlines the powers being negotiated with Government, and explains how the new authority will work alongside existing councils.
-  [September 2025 Update](#) – Focuses on how new powers and responsibilities will support the region's transport system, improving connectivity and infrastructure for residents, businesses, and communities.

 For general information and future updates, visit: www.hants.gov.uk/devolution

Local Government Reorganisation – What's Next for Hampshire?

Local authorities across the Hampshire and Solent region have now submitted their proposals for reorganisation to central Government. These plans aim to simplify and strengthen local governance by replacing the current two-tier system with new unitary authorities.

The proposed changes are designed to improve efficiency, accountability, and service delivery across the region. A Government-led consultation is expected to begin soon, giving residents and stakeholders the chance to share their views on the options.

Here's the anticipated timeline:

- Late 2025 – Public consultation opens
- March 2026 – Government announces new Local Authority structure
- May 2026 – Mayoral election and elections to existing County & District Councils
- May 2027 – Elections for new Unitary Councils (shadow authorities)
- April 2028 – New Unitary Authorities go live

These changes will work alongside the development of the Hampshire and the Solent Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA), helping to shape the future of local decision-making.

 For more information, visit: [Local Government Reorganisation | About the Council | Hampshire County Council](#)

Hampshire County Councillor Grants Open!

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.

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.

Major M27 Closure Over Christmas – Plan Ahead

Hampshire County Council has announced a *full closure of the M27 between Junctions 9 (Whiteley) and 11 (Fareham) from 8pm on 24 December 2025 to 4am on 4 January 2026.*

This one-off closure is part of the M27 Junction 10 Improvement Scheme, which supports the development of Welborne Garden Village. During this period, engineers will install a giant pre-constructed underpass beneath the motorway using an innovative “box slide” technique—avoiding months of disruption from lane closures and overnight works.



What You Need to Know:

- The M27 will be closed in both directions between J9 and J11.
- A signed diversion route will be in place via the A27, which is expected to be very busy, especially between 10am and 4pm daily.
- There will be no westbound entry at J11 and no eastbound entry at J9 during the closure.
- Drivers can still exit the motorway at both junctions.

Motorists are advised to plan ahead, consider alternative routes or public transport, and avoid non-essential travel during peak times.

For full details and updates, visit: www.hants.gov.uk/M27-J10-xmas

Foster Focus Week – Could You Help a Child Find Their Way Home?

This Foster Focus Week, Hampshire County Council is encouraging residents to consider becoming foster carers and help children on their journey back to a safe and loving home.

The theme this year, “Going Home,” highlights the vital role foster carers play in supporting children who may eventually return to their birth families. Fostering is about more than providing shelter—it’s about offering stability, compassion, and hope during a critical time in a child’s life.

Foster carers work closely with social workers and families to ensure children are cared for in a nurturing environment while plans for their future are made. You don’t need any special qualifications—just a spare room, a positive outlook, and a genuine desire to help. Full training, ongoing support, and financial allowances are provided.

Fostering can be flexible to suit different lifestyles, whether you’re working, retired, single, or part of a couple. What matters most is your ability to offer a safe and supportive space where a child can feel valued.

If you’ve ever thought about fostering, now is a great time to explore it further. You could be the person who helps a child feel safe, grow in confidence, and find their way home.

Find out more or request an information pack at: www.hants.gov.uk/fostering



Hampshire's Children's Services Team Named 'Team of the Year'

Hampshire County Council's Out of Hours Children's Services Team has won the 'Team of the Year' award at the Social Worker of the Year Awards 2025, a national celebration of excellence in social care.

The team provides vital support outside of normal working hours—during evenings, weekends, and bank holidays—responding to urgent safeguarding concerns involving children and adults. Their work ensures that vulnerable individuals receive timely help and protection, even when most services are unavailable.

This award recognises the team's outstanding collaboration, professionalism, and dedication to keeping children and families safe. It also reflects Hampshire's continued leadership in social care, with its Children's Services department rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted for the second consecutive time.



Learn more at: www.hants.gov.uk/News/20251020teamoftheyear

Join Swanmore College as a Co-opted Governor

Swanmore College is inviting applications for a *Co-opted Governor* to join its Board of Governors. This is a fantastic opportunity to support local education and help shape the future of the college and its pupils.

Governors play a key role in setting the college's strategic direction, supporting the leadership team, and ensuring every student receives a high-quality education in a safe and nurturing environment.

No prior experience is needed—full training and support are provided. The role involves around three hours per week during term time, with meetings typically held on Monday evenings.

If you're passionate about education and community, and want to make a difference, Swanmore College would love to hear from you.



To find out more or apply, please contact the college directly at: governors@swanmore-sec.hants.sch.uk or sandra.cox@swanmore-sec.hants.sch.uk

Have Your Say – School and Post-16 Transport Consultations

Hampshire County Council is launching two public consultations on Monday 3 November, inviting views on proposed changes to its School Transport and Post-16 Transport policies for the 2026/27 academic year.

The School Transport service is a statutory provision for children of compulsory school age who meet national eligibility criteria. The Post-16 Transport service, however, is discretionary and supports young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in accessing further education or training.

The proposed changes aim to:

- Clarify policy wording to make both services easier to understand
- Withdraw the Spare Capacity Seats Scheme, which currently offers spare seats on contracted school buses to non-eligible pupils on a temporary, chargeable basis
- Prioritise eligible pupils in transport planning, making spare seats less likely to be available

For Post-16 Transport, the Council proposes to:

- Focus support on SEND students from low-income families
- Require parental contributions for all supported transport
- Introduce Independent Travel Training for some students
- Ask parents or carers to act as Passenger Assistants where reasonable

These consultations are open until Sunday 7 December 2025, and feedback will help shape final decisions in early 2026.

To read more and take part, visit: www.hants.gov.uk/consultations

Spotlight on Bishop's Waltham Men's Shed

The Bishop's Waltham Men's Shed continues to be a fantastic example of community spirit in action — offering a welcoming space for people to connect, create, and contribute to local life.

Originally based at the Cricket Club, the group has now settled into its new home at the *Reading Rooms in Curdridge*, following a period of growth that saw membership outgrow their previous facilities. They meet every *Tuesday and Thursday morning from 10am*, and new members are always welcome.

The Shed is more than just a workshop — although it is well-equipped with hand and power tools. It's a place where people come together to work on personal and community projects, share skills, enjoy a chat over tea, and support one another. Their work includes refurbishing benches, restoring telephone boxes, and contributing to local events and fundraising efforts.



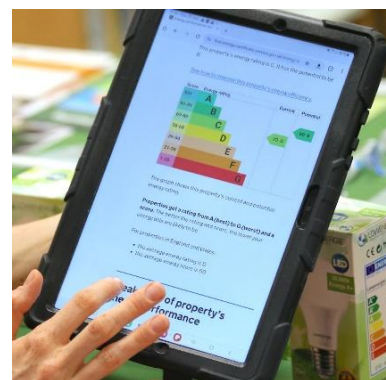
For more information or to get involved, visit their website: bwmensshed.co.uk or follow them on [Facebook](#).

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.