

Hampshire County Councillor Update – September 2025

Cllr Malcolm Wallace (malcolm.wallace@hants.gov.uk)



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.

More information can be found at: [Devolution](#) | [About the Council](#) | [Hampshire County Council](#)

Local Government Reorganisation

Under national plans for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), central Government intends to replace Hampshire County Council, 11 district and borough councils across the county, plus the unitary councils of Southampton, Portsmouth and Isle of Wight, with a number of unitary local authorities, all delivering the same public services as they do now to help make councils more efficient and effective. All 15 local authorities in the region have been tasked to come up with proposals for how councils should be reorganised, which will be submitted to central Government by 26 September.

Hampshire County Council has developed a model that would see the current 15 councils in the area replaced by four new unitary councils – three on the mainland and one for the Isle of Wight. The HCC proposal for four unitary authorities has been estimated to save around £50 million a year. Separately to this, a group of district councils (including Winchester) are reviewing alternative options, all based around five unitary authorities.

Estimated schedule for Local Government Reorganisation:

- 26 September 2025 – Local Authorities submit proposals to the Government
- 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

Support for Ukraine – Homes for Ukraine

Homeowners with spare rooms are still needed to host Ukrainians on the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Homeowners can earn up to £6000 tax-free.



Hosts are needed both for new Ukrainian guests and for Ukrainian guests who have already settled in Hampshire but are seeking new accommodation because their initial six-month hosting arrangement has come to an end.

Many Ukrainians have found work locally and may have children at school, so need less support than someone just arriving in the country. Guests will be re-matched to suit your circumstances, usually with the opportunity to meet the previous hosts before the arrangement is finalised.

For more information, or if you think you can help, see:

[Homes for Ukraine](#) | [Community and living](#) | [Hampshire County Council](#)
[Support for Ukraine - Winchester City Council](#)

More HCC 'Savings' Announced

Following a public consultation, Hampshire County Council's Cabinet has agreed further changes to the way some local services are delivered. These include alterations to the way school and post-16 transport operates, changes to the management and charging arrangements for two older adults' day services, as well as reductions to highway maintenance, although the latter will, for the most part, be offset by increases in Government grant funding. Together these service changes will generate savings of £9.86 million, year on year.

The County Council's Cabinet has agreed savings in the following areas:

- £4.32 million in Highway Maintenance - reducing Local Authority core funding for annual highway maintenance, while maximising the use of increased Government grant funding. Reductions in this area will not impact other highway maintenance activities such as pothole and road defect repairs, the renewal of road markings, sign and drainage cleaning.
- £210,000 in Older Adults' Day Services - seeking an alternative provider to deliver and develop day services at Chesil Lodge in Winchester and Newman Court in Basingstoke
- £2.55 million in Post-16 Transport Only - amending the eligibility criteria. The changes will apply for students starting new courses from September 2026. Transport arrangements approved for students in previous years will remain in place if the student's circumstances remain the same.
- £2.77 million in both School Transport and Post-16 Transport – modifying use criteria.

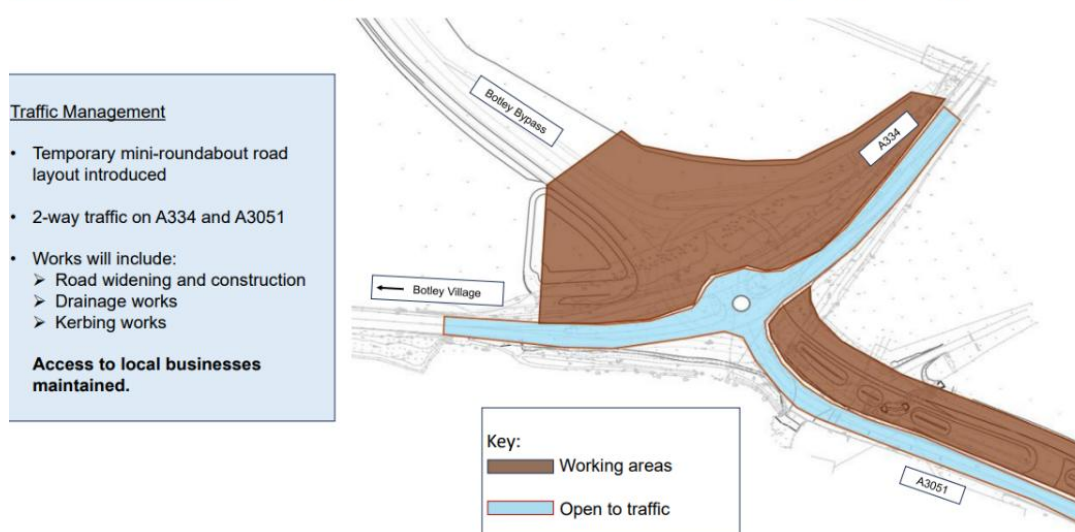
More information about the savings and public consultation are available in the [Cabinet Report](#).

Update on Botley Bypass – Pinkmead Junction

From Monday 8 September to Friday 12 September, a new temporary mini roundabout will be installed at the Junction of the A334/A3051. The work will take place over five nights requiring 3-way temporary traffic lights which will operate from 2000 to 0600. The change is designed to improve traffic flow in all directions and is in advance of the construction of a permanent roundabout as part of the Botley Bypass scheme.

The temporary mini roundabout will be needed until late summer 2027. Over this period, the layout may be adjusted to support different phases of the bypass works. For more information and updates visit <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/transportchemes/botleybypass>

Phase 1 – September 2025 to Early Spring 2026



Highways Winter Service – Update from Cllr Bowerman, Executive Member for Highways & Passenger Transport

A review of the Hampshire County Council highways winter service has now been completed.

The Priority One salting network, which receives the most frequent winter treatments, has been comprehensively reviewed to ensure it fully aligns with national guidance.

The review that has been undertaken by officers has adopted a robust, evidence-based, approach that fully meets national guidelines and best practice. As a result, the Priority One network will be reduced in length with some roads moved to the new Priority Two Community Route network. These changes will help the County Council make savings on vehicles, salt, and operational resources.



Improved weather forecasting tools are also being introduced that will allow the Highways Team to more effectively and efficiently target those areas that are expected to freeze. This will reduce the number of unnecessary treatments (where roads remain above freezing), and free up staff resources to focus on other essential frontline tasks such as pothole repairs.

A new combined Priority Two and Community Route network will be introduced at a later date that will include roads removed from the Priority One network as well as routes serving more schools, additional bus routes, and access roads to more residential areas. This change also follows national guidance, which recommends maintaining either a secondary or community network, but not both.

There will continue to be a large stock of community grit bins across the network for roads that are not routinely gritted. However, the way salt bins are managed will also be changing. Of the 4000 bins currently in place, around 500 have not been used since 2017. These will no longer be maintained going forward and will eventually be removed. Currently, all the bins are inspected and refilled annually by an external contractor but from now on, the inspections will be carried out by our own Highways Team, and bins will only be refilled when they are less than half full. Requests from the public and parish/town councils to refill bins will still be fulfilled.

Ahead of the coming winter season, the County Council's website will be updated with new maps and travel advice, and information will also be shared via social media. Details of the new Priority One salting network can be found on the following link: [Road salt \(grit\) bins | Hantsweb](#)

Flags on Property Owned or Maintained by the County Council – Update from Gary Westbrook, Chief Executive

We have received a number of queries about the painting of roundabouts and placing of flags on property owned or maintained by the Local Authority, with some of you commenting on how frequently these are appearing locally. With that in mind, I wanted to clarify the approach we are taking.

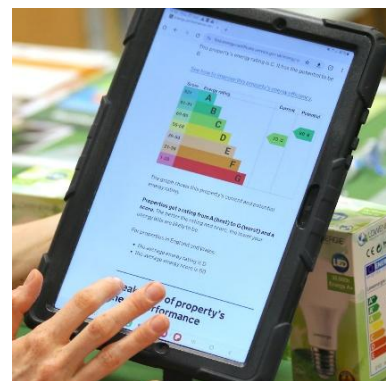
We would encourage members of the public to consider the safety of themselves and other highways users when placing unauthorised items on property owned or maintained by the County Council, particularly in the case of streetlights or roundabouts. Items already placed will be considered for removal as part of our routine highway maintenance activity - however anything that is placed that poses a risk to the safe operation of the public highway will be prioritised for immediate removal.

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.