

# Hampshire County Councillor Update – December 2025




**Cllr Malcolm Wallace** ([malcolm.wallace@hants.gov.uk](mailto:malcolm.wallace@hants.gov.uk))




## 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.
-  [October 2025 Update](#) – Focuses on the MCCA competency for skills and employment support, and outlining how new powers and responsibilities will aim to close skills gaps and support employment pathways for people across the region.

 For general information and future updates, visit: [Devolution | Hampshire County Council](#)

## Government Consultation on Local Government Reorganisation – Have Your Say

Central Government has launched a public consultation on proposals to reorganise local government across Hampshire and the Solent area. This reform aims to simplify council structures by replacing the current two-tier system (county and district/borough councils) with unitary councils that deliver all local services in their area – from education and social care to waste collection and planning.

The changes would affect 15 existing councils, including Hampshire County Council, district and borough councils, and the unitary authorities of Southampton, Portsmouth, and the Isle of Wight. The Government's goal is to make services easier to access, more joined-up, financially sustainable, and to protect the most vulnerable in our communities.

The consultation runs until 11 January 2026, with decisions expected in spring 2026 and new councils potentially coming into effect in 2028.

This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to shape how local services are delivered. Residents, businesses, and community groups are encouraged to share their views.

### *What does this mean for parish & town councils?*

Parish councils will remain an important tier of local democracy, but changes to principal authorities could affect how services are delivered locally, funding arrangements, and the way parishes engage with new unitary councils. It's vital that parish councils respond to the consultation to ensure the voice of local communities is heard.

Have your say: [Visit the consultation page](#)

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

## Major M27 Closure Over Christmas – Plan Ahead

The M27 will be closed completely, in both directions, Junction 9 (Whiteley) to 11 (Fareham East) from 8pm, on 24 December 2025 to 4am on 4 January 2026.

A signed diversion route will be in place via the A27.



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, see [M27 J10 scheme website](#) or the accompanying PDF.

## Hampshire County Council Faces Record Budget Pressures

Hampshire County Council is dealing with one of the most challenging financial positions in its history. Despite making £734 million in savings since 2008 through efficiency measures and service transformation, rising costs and demand for essential services mean the Council faces a budget gap of £143 million in 2026/27, rising to a forecast £230 million by 2027/28.

Key factors driving this gap include:

- **Adult and Children’s Social Care:** More people are living longer and requiring support, adding millions to annual costs.
- **School Transport:** Costs for pupils with special educational needs have more than doubled in three years, from £43 million to £94 million.
- **Inflation and workforce costs,** including higher employer National Insurance contributions.



Reserves that have helped balance budgets in recent years are running out, and using one-off funds will not address the underlying structural deficit. Without significant national funding reform, Hampshire warns that local solutions alone cannot close the gap. The Council is consulting on further savings and service changes to focus on its legal duties and core services.

Have your say: [Budget consultation details](#)

## Future Secured for Hampshire's Outdoor and Study Centres

Hampshire County Council has confirmed plans to secure the long-term future of its six Outdoor and Study Centres, which provide thousands of children and residents with opportunities for outdoor learning and recreation each year. A new three-year strategy will focus on sustainability and growth.

Key points include:

- £2 million investment from reserves for essential maintenance through to 2028.
- Continued delivery of outdoor learning programmes for over 25,000 children annually, supporting confidence, resilience, and environmental awareness.
- Recreational opportunities for around 80,000 visitors each year, including families and community groups.
- A new commercial approach to strengthen financial resilience, encourage longer stays, and develop partnerships.



The Centres – including Calshot, Tile Barn, Runway's End, and others – offer activities such as climbing, watersports, camping, and environmental education. These sites play a vital role in promoting wellbeing and lifelong learning across Hampshire.

Residents, schools, and community groups are encouraged to make full use of these facilities and explore the opportunities they provide.

Find out more: [Read the full announcement](#)

## 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.

## Mobile Dental Service for Vulnerable Communities

NHS Hampshire and Isle of Wight has partnered with Dentaids, the Dental Charity, to provide a mobile dental service for residents who struggle to access regular dental care. The service offers free check-ups, oral cancer screening, advice, and emergency treatments such as fillings and extractions.

It supports anyone who is exempt from paying NHS dental charges or anyone facing health inequalities that make it difficult to access treatment, including:

- Families experiencing poverty
- People at risk of homelessness



- Children and new/expectant mothers in high-risk areas

Clinics operate from mobile dental units parked at community centres, public buildings, and sports facilities across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Locations include Southampton, Havant, Cosham, Portsmouth, and the Isle of Wight.

Appointments are arranged via referrals from community groups, GP practices, foodbanks, charities, and NHS 111, or by calling Dentaaid on 023 8001 4450. Cosmetic treatments are not included.

This initiative helps reduce pressure on existing dental services and improve access for those most in need. For more details, see the accompanying flyer or visit Dentaaid's [website](#).

## 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](http://myhomemadebetter.org)

## Home 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.



## Stay Connected – Sign Up for Useful Local Updates

Keeping informed about local services, safety alerts, and community opportunities is easier than ever. Here are some key platforms where residents and parish councils can sign up for updates:

### 1. Hampshire Alert

[Hampshire Alert](#) is a free messaging service run by Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary and partner organisations. It provides tailored updates on:

- Crime prevention advice
- Witness appeals
- Local policing news

You can choose how you receive alerts (email, text, or phone) and what topics matter most to you.



### 2. Connect to Support Hampshire

[Connect to Support Hampshire](#) offers information and advice to help people live independently and stay connected. Sign up for updates on:

- Care and support services
- Community activities
- Wellbeing resources

Ideal for carers, older residents, and anyone seeking local support.



### 3. Hampshire County Council Updates

[Hampshire County Council Resident Newsletter](#) provides:

- County-wide news and updates
- Information on services, consultations, and events
- Emergency alerts and seasonal advice



### 4. Winchester City Council Updates

[Winchester City Council](#) provides email newsletters covering:

- Local news and events
- Planning and consultations
- Waste and recycling updates



### 5. Emergency Alerts and Incident Information

See the Hampshire County Council website on [emergency alerts and information during an incident](#) for how to register with alerts on flooding, extreme weather, and major incidents. You can also register with utility companies' Priority Service Registers for extra support during power cuts or water outages.

### Other Useful Sign-Ups

[Neighbourhood Watch](#): Often linked to Hampshire Alert for community safety updates.

[Parish/Town Council Websites](#): Many offer email alerts for local meetings and news.