

Update from Hampshire County Council – March 2023

Majority of Hampshire pupils offered preferred choice of secondary school

More than 97 per cent of parents in Hampshire have been offered a place for their child, at one of their three preferences for a secondary school in September 2023.

Of those who applied for a Year 7 place (for September 2023) by the application deadline, 90 per cent have been offered a place at their first preference school. The County Council received 15,400 on-time applications this year – an increase of 418 applications compared to the number received for places in September 2022 (14,982).

A set of Frequently Asked Questions to answer queries parents may have after receiving their offer have been published on the Admissions webpages.

The Admissions Team is now busy processing primary school applications with school place offers due to go out to parents on 17 April 2023.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20230301secondaryadmissions>

Hampshire to increase payments for all Homes for Ukraine hosts

The Leader of Hampshire County Council, Councillor Rob Humby, has today announced that the Local Authority will be increasing the payments made to all Hampshire residents hosting Ukrainian guests as part of the Government's Homes for Ukraine Scheme from £350 to £500 per month from March

This goes beyond the Government's recent decision to increase the thank-you payments for certain hosts only – those housing Homes for Ukraine guests who have been in the UK for 12 months or more.

The new host payments will be funded via the Government grant paid to upper tier local authorities to specifically support implementation of the Homes for Ukraine scheme locally. This funding is ring-fenced and cannot be used for any other purpose.

The county of Hampshire has welcomed the third highest number of Ukrainian nationals in England. Comprehensive ongoing support has been provided throughout the past 12 months.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/230223Ukraine>

Hampshire County Council approves £2.6 billion spending on services to Hampshire residents in 2023/24

£2.6 billion of public spending on the ongoing delivery of important local services to Hampshire's 1.4 million residents in 2023/24 has been approved by Hampshire County Council.

County leadership is also acutely aware of the very difficult decisions Hampshire residents face in their own household budgets to make ends meet, but reluctantly, in order to help deliver a balanced budget for 2023/24, we have no other choice but to increase the council tax precept. This is a decision we have not taken lightly. But even after this increase, we are still left with a £50.8 million shortfall in our revenue budget which we will have to fill using our reserves – built to buffer this and next year's anticipated budget shortfalls.

Hampshire County Council's council tax precept for the financial year beginning 1 April 2023, will increase by a total of 4.99%, of which 2% will go specifically towards adults' social care.

This equates to an annual charge of £1,460.25 for a Band D property – an increase of £69.45 per year or approximately £1.34 a week. The increase will generate £37m of vital extra income towards the delivery of crucial, quality services to the people of Hampshire in 2023/24, and still means that Hampshire has one of the lowest council tax precepts of any county in England.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/23022023Budgetdecision>

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Fun-packed campaign challenges children to 'defeat' veg at mealtimes

Hampshire schoolchildren are once again being encouraged to tuck into their 'monstrous' vegetables as part of the 'Eat Them To Defeat Them' campaign



During the Spring term, Hampshire County Council's school catering team HC3S will be offering themed lunchtime menu options, as well as games and educational resources that make eating vegetables more fun at school and at home.

The annual campaign, now in its fifth year, has resulted in more infant and primary-age children getting extra vegetables in their diets. According to the findings of [Veg Power](#) – the not-for-profit organisation behind the campaign – 59% of children in the schools' national programme say it makes vegetables more fun and 83% of schools say it is more popular than other healthy eating initiatives.

Further details about how school catering teams will be integrating the campaign into school meals can be found on the [HC3S website](#).

Visit the official website for more information about [Eat Them To Defeat Them](#).

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/210223eatthemtodefeatthem>

Reminder: Hampshire Highways does not give permission to third parties to plant trees on the highway.

I have received a reminder that individuals and organisations aren't allowed to plant trees or other plant on the highway. I've helped a couple of parishes get HCC to plant suitable trees on highways land, which will no doubt enhance the local environment.

Hampshire County Council is committed to tackling climate change and tree planting is a key part of the [Council's Climate Change Strategy](#). Trees bring profound social, economic, and environmental benefits to all. Highway tree planting is particularly beneficial. As such, we proactively survey areas with low canopy cover and/or which suffer higher pollution levels for future tree planting.

If residents would like to request highway tree planting, they can do so via the following link.

[Request Highway tree planting | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)

Cllr David Drew
Test Valley Central Division, HCC