

Hampshire County Councillor update

January 2024

1. The Future Services Consultation

The consultation runs from 8 January to 31 March 2024, and signals the next stage in the County Council's plans to ensure it can focus key support to the most vulnerable people in Hampshire – such as protecting children from harm, social care for older people, and supporting adults and children with disabilities and additional needs - while meeting its legal duty to deliver a balanced budget in 2025/26.

Hampshire is in a better position than many other councils, but in the absence of a national funding solution to address the higher costs and demand pressures facing the whole of local government, tougher decisions and deeper savings are needed in Hampshire to ensure the local authority can keep providing critical services after April 2025 for those people who need its help the most.

Covering various local services, the consultation sets out 13 detailed options to help lower costs in future – by doing things differently and moving towards providing only those services that the County Council is legally required to deliver.

The consultation also provides the opportunity for working more innovatively to maximise, for example, environmental benefits such as encouraging people to reduce their waste through the creation of a more sustainable Household Waste Recycling Centre network and lowering Hampshire's carbon footprint by a more intelligent use of streetlights.

The 13 options within the consultation are listed below:

Adult social care charges: Proposals to change the way contributions towards non-residential social care costs are calculated, so that the amount someone pays towards their non-residential care and support increases from 95% to 100% of any assessable income remaining once standard outgoings are paid for and an allowance is made for general living costs such as food, utility bills and clothing.

Adult social care grant schemes: To withdraw funding for three Adult Social Care grant programmes that assist voluntary, community, and social enterprise organisations in Hampshire, namely the Council for Voluntary Services Infrastructure Grant, the Citizens Advice Infrastructure Grant and the Local Solutions Grant.

Competitive (one-off) grant schemes: To withdraw three competitive grant schemes which provide one-off grants to a range of community groups and organisations; namely the Leader's Community Grants, the Rural Communities Fund (including country shows) and the Parish and Town Council Investment Fund.

Hampshire Cultural Trust grant: To reduce the amount of grant given to Hampshire Cultural Trust to manage and deliver arts and museums services.

Highways maintenance: To reduce planned highways maintenance activities, incorporating larger-scale structural repairs, surface treatments on roads, and drainage improvements.

Highways winter service: To comprehensively review and revise the criteria used to determine which roads should be treated as part of the Priority One network to better align with current national guidance and reflect changes in travelling and commuting patterns, and to update the routes accordingly.

Homelessness Support Services: To stop funding services that the County Council does not have a legal requirement to provide, that support people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs): To provide a sustainable, cost-effective and fit for purpose Household Waste Recycling service within a reduced budget. This might involve introducing charging for discretionary services, implementing alternative delivery models, reducing opening days and/or hours or reducing the number of HWRCs.

Library stock: To reduce how much is spent on new library stock, such as books and digital resources, each year.

Passenger transport: To reduce the amount of money spent on passenger transport by withdrawing all remaining funding that the County Council is not legally required to provide. This includes funding for community transport services (incorporating Dial-a-Ride, Call and Go, Taxi Shares, Group Hire Services, and Wheels to Work), subsidies for bus routes that are not commercially viable, additional funding to extend the Concessionary Travel Scheme (older and disabled persons bus passes) and a review of the potential impact of reductions on the school transport service and social care budgets

Rural countryside parking: To introduce car parking charges at rural countryside car parks (such as nature reserves and conservation sites) that the County Council manages, where it is expected that doing so would be commercially viable.

School Crossing Patrols: To review the School Crossing Patrols (SCP) service by looking at each SCP site to decide if alternative safety measures exist or could be put in place that would enable the SCP to be safely withdrawn or be funded by other organisations.

Street lighting: To reduce the brightness of streetlights further and to extend the periods that streetlights are switched off during the night (by 2 hours) – where it is considered safe and appropriate to do so.

How to have your say

The consultation runs from midday on 8 January to 11:59pm on 31 March 2024.

Views can be provided on some, or all of the 13 service change proposals presented in the consultation.

Complete the consultation online

We would like to hear from as many people in Hampshire as possible – from residents, to businesses, schools, universities, community and voluntary groups, and our partners, to help us understand and consider the potential impact of any changes proposed.

Feedback can be provided by using the consultation Response Form, available online via the consultation webpage: www.hants.gov.uk/future-services-consultation

Responses can also be emailed directly to Hampshire County Council via: insight@hants.gov.uk or write to Freepost HAMPSHIRE. (Please also write PandO, IEU, FM09 on the back of the envelope).

Copies of the information packs and the consultation Response Form, along with Easy Read versions of these documents, will be available to view, download and print on the consultation webpage from midday today: www.hants.gov.uk/future-services-consultation

Additionally, each Hampshire library holds a standard reference copy of the Information Packs and a number of paper Response Forms.

We are encouraging people to consider completing the consultation Response Form online, where possible, as this will help save money, both in postage and in staff time in manually entering responses into the consultation.

For any queries about the consultation or if residents do need to request a paper copy of the Information Pack or the Response Form, or a copy in another language or format (such as audio, large print, or Braille) please contact: insight@hants.gov.uk, or call: 0300 555 1375

The responses submitted through this consultation will be collated and used to shape final savings proposals that will be considered by the County Council's individual Executive Members later this year.

2. Household DIY waste charges ended

From 1 January 2024, residents using Hampshire County Council Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) will no longer be charged for disposing of their DIY waste - in line with the Government policy changes.

Up to two 50-litre rubble bags, or one bulky item such as a sink or toilet pedestal, will be accepted for free, at a maximum frequency of four visits over four weeks. Anything more than this amount will be chargeable at current rates, as permitted by national legislation, to cover specialist disposal costs. DIY waste can be accepted at all HWRCs in Hampshire except New Alresford due to its restricted size. Customers must also be able to lift, carry and empty out their DIY waste.

The Council estimates that the removal of the charges could impose an additional cost to Hampshire council taxpayers of up to £2 million every year. This is because recycling or disposal of DIY waste, such as soil, rubble, asbestos and gypsum board, requires specialist processing and the fees we currently charge help to cover these expenses. This will need to be taken into account as part of the Council's savings proposals to help meet a £132 million budget shortfall faced by the local authority from April 2025. This will include a review of Hampshire's HWRCs.

3. Schools

Parents with children due to start school or move to a junior school in September 2024 are reminded that they have until **Monday 15 January 2024** to submit their primary school

applications. Parents will have the best chance of being offered a place at one of their preferred schools by applying on time and naming three preferences on their applications.

A recent survey across secondary schools and colleges in Hampshire shows a large increase in the percentage of young people both experimenting with, and using vapes. The survey shows that experimentation with vapes increases from 4% in year 7 to 53% in year 13. Similarly, vape use increases from 7% in year 10, to 18% in year 13. The Council is therefore continuing its clampdown on shops selling vapes illegally to underage buyers. Test purchase operations took place in December 2023, with visits to 17 different premises with teenage volunteers helping officers by going into the businesses to attempt to buy a vape, also known as an e-cigarette. Since September 2023, Trading Standards has prevented the sale of over £200,000 of illegal vapes and e-cigarettes by removing them from shops across Hampshire.

4. Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan consultation

The consultation on the updated plan is expected to start during the week beginning **8 January 2024** and to last for eight weeks. Details can be found at <https://www.hants.gov.uk/minerals-waste-update>

5. Climate change and nature recovery

The Council has published its Climate Change Annual Progress Report, which highlights the progress of council backed community initiatives and its own efforts to tackle climate change.

<https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/documents/s114962/Climate%20Change%20Annual%20Report%20-%20Appendix%201.pdf>

One example is the Solar Together scheme - over the past two years, 2,100 households have purchased competitively priced solar panels, resulting in the installation of 7,400kw of rooftop solar power, which has the capacity to save an estimated 46,000 tonnes of carbon emissions.

Separately, the Council is launching a survey asking residents where they would like to see improvements for nature recovery, their views on nature priorities and what action they may be taking locally to help nature in their area. Gathering this information is an important first step in the development of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy which aims to ensure Hampshire's natural environment is protected for today's and future generations. That strategy is intended to create a blueprint for the recovery of nature in Hampshire – outlining what we can do, where the opportunities for doing it are, and considering how it can be delivered alongside wider positive environmental outcomes for people and nature, such as reduced flood risk. It will provide organisations with a framework for developing nature recovery projects and help prioritise funding and investment in Hampshire's nature's recovery.

Here is a link to the online survey.

<https://lnrs-hampshireonline.hub.arcgis.com/pages/Leave%20a%20comment%20on%20the%20map?preview=true>

6. Roads

A final report for your perusal, this time the County Council's Highways Service Annual Review for 2022/23 which offers useful insights into the Highways team's activity over what has been an exceptionally busy and challenging period. You can access the review via the link.

<https://documents.hants.gov.uk/highways/HampshireHighwaysAnnualReview-2022-2023.pdf>

You will notice the continuing intensive focus on fixing potholes and other road defects following confirmation of the 3-year Stronger Roads Today campaign in July. This has enabled the deployment of significantly more repair teams and specialist equipment with the primary aim of making our roads better, fixing defects more quickly, and addressing the widespread deterioration from last winter's wet and freezing weather. You can find out more about the Stronger Roads Today programme here.

<https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/documents/s114218/Report.pdf>

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