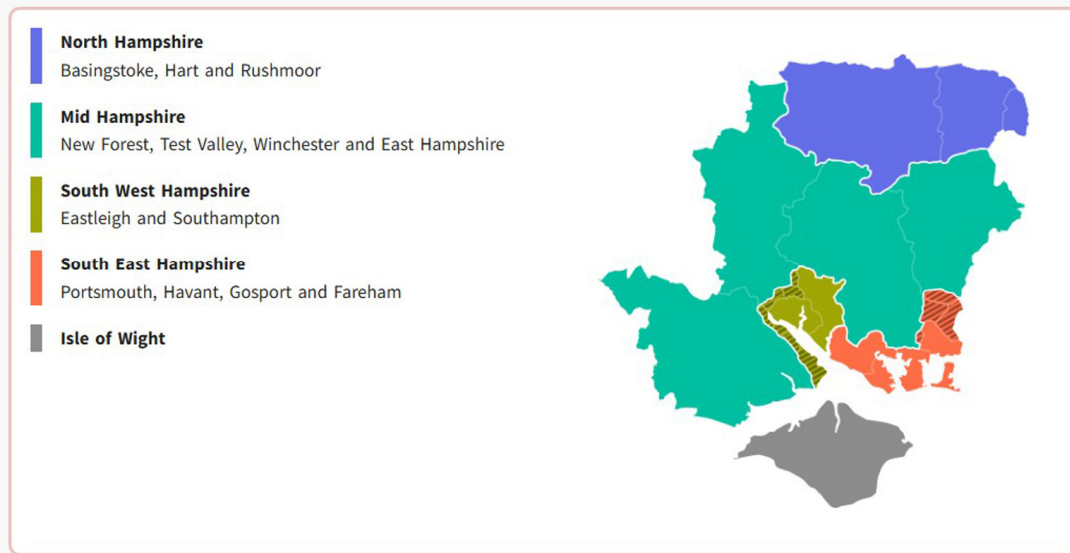


Update from Hampshire County Council – April 2026

Structure of Local Government in Hampshire and the Solent from April 2028



The Government has announced its decision on the future of local councils across Hampshire and the Solent area

It has announced a move to a simpler system of local government, with five new unitary councils replacing the current 15 county, district, borough and unitary councils that serve Hampshire, Southampton, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight. Each new council will be responsible for delivering all local services in its area.

Under the model chosen by Government, there will be four new unitary councils on the Hampshire mainland, with the Isle of Wight remaining a standalone unitary council:

- North Hampshire: Basingstoke, Hart and Rushmoor
- Mid Hampshire: New Forest, Test Valley, Winchester and East Hampshire
- South West Hampshire: Eastleigh and Southampton
- South East Hampshire: Portsmouth, Havant, Gosport and Fareham
- Isle of Wight

For more details, including the map of the new councils and current timeline for the next stages, see www.hants.gov.uk/lgr.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20260325lgrdecision>

Hampshire County Council has published its first-ever Biodiversity Report, showcasing the wide range of work underway across the county to protect, restore and enhance the natural environment

From planting more than 120,000 young trees and creating new habitats to establishing community orchards and supporting the recovery of rare species such as the great crested newt, silver studded blue butterfly and field cricket,

The report covers progress made between January 2023 and January 2026 and sets out how the County Council is working with partners and communities to drive long term action for nature across Hampshire.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20260320BiodiversityReport>

Update from Hampshire County Council – April 2026

Hampshire County Council has welcomed the successful prosecution of a rogue trader who has been sentenced for the possession and underage selling of illicit electronic cigarettes, commonly known as vapes, at a business in Aldershot

Following a detailed investigation by the County Council's Trading Standards officers relating to incidents in June and August 2024, Amit Shrestha, aged 30, of Porter Close in Aldershot, was sentenced to pay £1,260 within 12 months on Friday 20 March at North Hampshire Magistrates Court in Basingstoke. His business, HX Retail Group Limited, was further sentenced to pay £14,780 within 28 days, amounting to a total of over £16,000 in connection to the possession and underage selling of illicit vapes from his business premises.

Mr Shrestha, trading as HX Retail Group Limited, as well as operating as a sole trader, had pleaded guilty on 28 November 2025 to selling a vape containing nicotine to a 15-year-old volunteer in June 2024, as well as being in possession of over 500 illicit vapes found on the retail premises.

Information about the sale of counterfeit vapes or tobacco – or any sales to underage people – can be reported in confidence to Hampshire's Trading Standards

service: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/business/tradingstandards/contact-us>

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20260320IllicitVapes>

Hampshire County Council has unveiled an initial £850,000 support package to help low-income households during unexpected financial shocks

It forms part of the new Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) launched by the Government's Department for Work and Pensions, which has allocated a total of £10.4 million to Hampshire for 2026/27. The remaining funding will be rolled out across the county from June and is designed not only to help people in immediate hardship but also to reduce the likelihood that households fall back into crisis.

The new fund is set to replace the annual Household Support Fund from April and is part of a national shift towards a more stable and long-term approach to local crisis support. The Government has confirmed that the CRF will provide multi-year funding that gives councils greater certainty and allows for more effective planning. The CRF will also become the primary source of local welfare support, helping vulnerable households manage the continued rising cost of living while enabling councils to build stronger, preventative support networks.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20260320CRFinterim>

Over 26,000 energy-saving LED streetlights will be introduced across Hampshire from next month, helping to cut electricity use, reduce carbon emissions and deliver long-term savings

The Hampshire County Council upgrade programme will see existing lighting units replaced with modern LED alternatives. The new lights are significantly more energy efficient, expected to reduce electricity consumption and associated carbon emissions by around 60%, while also offering a longer lifespan and improved light quality.

Further details of the areas where new LED lights will be installed can be found [on the County Council's website](#).

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20262003LEDStreetlights>

Update from Hampshire County Council – April 2026

Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority set to deliver transformative changes across the region and has secured a major investment fund of £1.3 billion — making it one of the largest allocations ever received by the area

This significant funding will support the new Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority (HSCCA), which will focus on boosting economic growth, encouraging innovation among local businesses, and creating more opportunities for communities when the Authority is created later this year.

To support the establishment of the HSCCA it will receive 40% of its investment fund each year, together with additional funding to support the HSCCA's internal capability, for the financial years 2026/27 and 2027/28. This approach will support the organisation to set up and take on its new responsibilities. The full investment fund will then be released when a Mayor is elected in 2028, ensuring that the HSCCA is fully resourced to deliver transformative changes across the region.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20260317HSCCASI>

Hampshire residents are being encouraged to check they are registered to vote ahead of the County Council elections on Thursday 7 May 2026, an important opportunity for people across the county to influence decisions that shape everyday services – from roads, schools and social care for vulnerable children and adults, to country parks, libraries and tips

Hampshire's 78 County Councillors represent all the people within their divisions and use their local knowledge to help the Authority make decisions on the £3.3 billion of local services provided each year to Hampshire's 1.4 million residents (excluding Southampton and Portsmouth). To vote in the County Council election, residents must be on the electoral register. The deadline to register is 20 April.

Register to vote at [gov.uk/register-to-vote](https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote).

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20260316Elections>

More than 90 per cent of Year 6 pupils in Hampshire offered first preference secondary school and more than 97 per cent of year 6 children in Hampshire (13,548) have been offered a place at one of their three preferences for a secondary school in September 2026

Of those who applied for a Year 7 place (for September 2026) by the application deadline, 90.09 per cent have been offered a place at their first preference school. The County Council received 13,880 on-time applications this year – a decrease of 350 applications compared to the number received for places in September 2025 (14,230).

The Admissions Team is now busy processing primary school applications with school place offers due to go out to parents on 16 April 2026.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20260302nationalofferday>

David Drew

Test Valley Central Division, HCC
Harewood ward, TVBC