

# Hampshire County Councillor Update – April 2026

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



## Hampshire & Solent Combined County Authority – Latest Update

This past month has seen several important steps forward in the creation of the Hampshire & Solent Combined County Authority (HSCCA), following the legislation laid before Parliament on 16 March 2026.

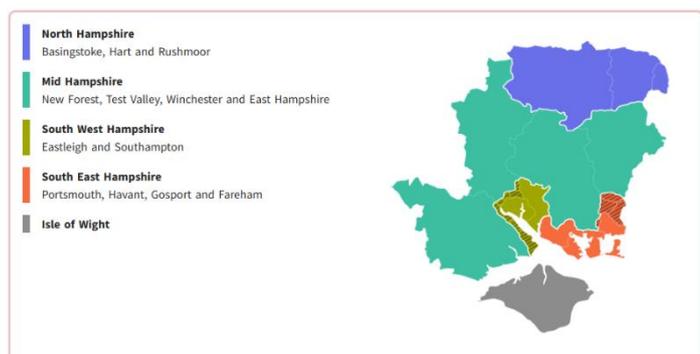
1. New HSCCA Website Launched
  - The new Hampshire & Solent Combined County Authority website is now live:  
[🔗 Homepage - HSCCA Website](#)
  - The website provides an accessible hub for residents and partners, offering updates, background information, and preparation work leading up to the Authority's formal establishment. This is the first public-facing digital presence for the new body and marks a major step in transparency and engagement.
2. Interim Chief Executive Appointed
  - A key operational development this month has been the appointment of Dr Ruth Adams as Interim Chief Executive for the new Authority.
  - She is supported by temporary senior officers including:
    - Interim Chief Financial Officer
    - Interim Monitoring Officer
  - Recruitment for permanent staff is now underway as the HSCCA accelerates its preparations for launch later this year.
3. Legislative Milestone Reached
  - While discussions have been ongoing for many months, the last four weeks have seen a significant formal step: Legislation to establish the HSCCA was laid before Parliament on 16 March 2026.
  - This confirms the Government's intention to bring devolved powers to the region, enabling the Authority to focus on transport, skills, housing, economic development, and more once operational.
4. Preparations for Launch Continue
  - The HSCCA is expected to be legally formed in summer 2026.
  - Devolved powers are planned to take effect from early summer 2026, allowing the Authority to begin strategic work.
  - The first Mayoral election remains scheduled for 2028.

## Local Government Reorganisation

The Government has confirmed that the existing two-tier system across Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight will be replaced with five new unitary councils, each responsible for all local services in their area.

The new unitary councils will be:

1. *North Hampshire Unitary* – covering Basingstoke, Hart and Rushmoor.
2. *Mid Hampshire Unitary* – covering Winchester, East Hampshire (majority), Test Valley (majority), and the New Forest (majority).
3. *South West Hampshire Unitary* – covering Southampton and Eastleigh, plus selected parishes from the New Forest and Test Valley.
4. *South East Hampshire Unitary* – covering Portsmouth, Havant, Gosport and Fareham, plus several parishes moving from East Hampshire and Winchester.
5. *Isle of Wight Unitary* – continuing as its own standalone authority.



These changes are intended to simplify governance by creating a single council in each area responsible for all services currently divided between Hampshire County Council and district/borough councils. The new authorities are due to become fully operational from 1 April 2028.

As part of Winchester City Council, our area will join the new **Mid-Hampshire Unitary Authority**, alongside:

- Winchester District
- Most of East Hampshire District
- Most of Test Valley Borough
- Most of the New Forest District

Under this new governance model, the Mid-Hampshire Unitary will take on all local service responsibilities, including those currently delivered by Hampshire County Council (e.g., highways, adult social care, waste disposal) and those delivered by Winchester City Council (e.g., planning, waste collection, housing services).

The Government has confirmed that nothing changes immediately for residents: services will continue as normal while transition planning takes place up to 2028.

You can follow updates, view maps, and read further detail at: [Local Government Reorganisation](#)

## Local Council Elections Update

Local elections will go ahead as planned this May, including elections for Hampshire County Council and Winchester District Council.

These elections will be the final set of elections for both Hampshire County Council and Winchester City Council before they are abolished and replaced as part of the move to a new system of unitary authorities.



The first elections for the new unitary authorities—including the new Mid-Hampshire Unitary Council—are expected to take place next May, in May 2027, as part of the national arrangements for electing “shadow” councils ahead of their formal launch in April 2028.



## Construction to Begin on Hampshire’s New High-Tech Recycling Facility

Construction is set to begin this spring on Hampshire’s new state-of-the-art Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) in Eastleigh — a major step forward in transforming the county’s recycling capabilities.

Expected to be fully operational by 2028, the facility will allow residents across Hampshire to recycle a much wider range of materials directly from the kerbside. This will include:

- A broader spectrum of plastic packaging, such as pots, tubs, trays and soft-plastic film
- Glass
- Metal packaging
- Paper and cardboard

This development follows the recent expansion of weekly food-waste collections, and together these changes represent a significant shift in improving household recycling rates and reducing environmental impact. The new facility will deploy advanced automated sorting technologies, with potential use of robotics and artificial intelligence to maximise material recovery and efficiency.

The £50.5 million project is being delivered in partnership with Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council, ensuring consistent recycling services and infrastructure across the

region. The collaborative investment became possible once the Government finalised national recycling requirements in 2025, giving councils the certainty needed to progress long-term planning.

## Highways - New Process for Informing Local Residents of Upcoming Works

Hampshire Highways will soon be changing the way it notifies residents and businesses about upcoming planned maintenance works.

From the end of March, homes in areas affected by larger maintenance schemes will receive a simple A5 postcard rather than a detailed letter. This postcard will direct residents to a new, dedicated webpage where the most up-to-date information about the works will be available.



The reason for the change is straightforward: printed letters can quickly become out of date when plans shift due to weather, operational changes, or unforeseen issues. By moving to online updates, Highways can ensure residents always have access to the latest details — including revised dates, working hours, and traffic-management arrangements.

The new approach brings several benefits:

- Up-to-date information: Online updates can be made instantly, so residents aren't relying on letters that may be outdated by the time they arrive.
- More efficient use of resources: Less printing and postage means more funding can go towards maintaining and improving the road network.
- Supports digital transformation: Many residents now expect to find information online; this shift reflects that change.
- Better for the environment: A single postcard creates far less waste than multi-page letters.

This new system won't apply to:

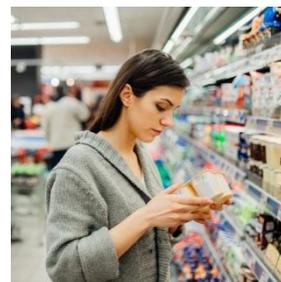
- Short-term works, such as surface dressing — contractors will continue to deliver letters for these.
- Small, very local repairs arranged directly by local depots.

You can still find all roadworks information — including utility works — on one network, and details for the strategic road network remain available through National Highways at [www.trafficengland.com](http://www.trafficengland.com).

Highways recognise that some residents may find online access more difficult. Anyone needing assistance can still contact the Highways Operation Centre by telephone and receive the information they need.

## Parish Council Briefing: Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) – Interim Arrangements

Hampshire County Council has launched interim measures to support residents facing sudden financial hardship as the new Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) replaces the former Household Support Fund from April 2026. An initial £850,000 package has been approved as part of Hampshire's £10.4 million allocation for 2026/27.



While the full CRF scheme is being developed for approval in June 2026, temporary arrangements ensure continuity of support. Citizens Advice will provide crisis payments and financial-resilience support, the County Council will issue payments following professional referrals, and District and Borough councils will assist households with housing-cost shortfalls.

These short-term measures are designed to maintain essential support for vulnerable households while the County Council prepares a long-term, preventative welfare approach under the new fund.



## Parish Council Update: LED Streetlighting Expansion Across Hampshire

Hampshire County Council has confirmed that more than 26,000 new LED streetlights will begin installation across the county from next month as part of a major upgrade programme.

The scheme will replace existing streetlights with modern LED units, which are significantly more energy-efficient. The Council expects the new lighting to cut electricity use and associated carbon emissions by around 60%, while also providing longer lifespan and improved light quality.

The project will be delivered in two phases:

- Phase 1 (starting April): Installation of 9,300 LED lights on non-residential roads by the end of the year.
- Phase 2 (to spring 2028): Replacement of 17,500 additional lights on main routes and residential streets.

Each streetlight typically takes 15–20 minutes to replace. The majority of locations will experience no disruption, although some areas may require temporary traffic management for safety.

Once both phases are complete, Hampshire will have over 38,000 LED streetlights, representing about 26% of all streetlights under County Council management. The upgrade is expected to reduce long-term energy costs and contribute to county-wide carbon-reduction goals.

## Botley Bypass – Update

Hampshire County Council has confirmed that work on the Botley Bypass is progressing well as the scheme moves into a more complex construction phase. This next stage requires some temporary traffic management so that engineers can safely link new sections of the bypass with the existing road network.



The most significant forthcoming disruption will be a period of full road closures during the summer half-term, from Friday 22 May to Monday 1 June. These closures will enable the construction of the new A3051/A334 roundabout, including raising road levels by around one metre. Signed diversions will be in place. Further details will be provided closer to the time.

Throughout late March and April, there will continue to be a mixture of daytime and overnight traffic lights on the A3051 and A334 to support drainage and earthworks. Pedestrian and cycle access will remain open. These arrangements are temporary and designed to limit disruption as much as possible.

The bypass continues to be delivered on schedule and is expected to open in late Summer 2027, bringing long-planned benefits to Botley by easing congestion, improving air quality, and creating safer walking and cycling links. Full details, maps, drone footage, and the latest traffic management notices can be found on the county council's dedicated webpage:

 <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/transportchemes/botleybypass>

## Hampshire County Council Announces £4.3m Thermal Upgrades for Schools

Hampshire County Council has approved plans to invest over £4.3 million in upgrading roofs and windows at seven schools across the county, improving insulation, reducing energy use and helping buildings better cope with both winter cold and summer heat.



The works include enhanced insulation, improved ventilation, better rainwater drainage and the replacement of ageing windows and roofing materials. Construction will begin during the summer holidays to minimise disruption to pupils. The upgrades will support more comfortable learning environments while reducing heating costs and carbon emissions.

## 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 tailormade 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.

For more information go to [myhomemadebetter.org](http://myhomemadebetter.org)