Hampshire County Councillor Update 60

Highways and Transport Information

M3 Junction 9: major summer closures

The M3 Junction 9 improvement project is moving into another significant phase, with closures likely to create wider disruption around Winchester, the A34, A33 and surrounding villages.

- 3 to 5 July, overnight from 8pm to 6am: M3 northbound closed between Junctions 9 and 8.
- 6 to 30 July, Monday to Friday nights from 8pm to 6am: M3 northbound closed between Junctions 10 and 9.
- 9pm Friday 31 July to 6am Monday 3 August: full weekend closure of the Junction 9 roundabout and its connecting slip roads and local approaches.
- Further full-weekend closures are planned for 21 to 24 August and 11 to 14 September.
- The Junction 9 northbound entry slip road is expected to remain closed from 31 July until winter 2027.

During closures, please follow the official signed diversions rather than satnav directions, which may attempt to send vehicles through unsuitable local roads or back towards closed sections.

Project information and updates: M3 Junction 9 improvements

Reporting Highway Problems

Links to report road issues are here:

Potholes: https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/potholes

Tree/hedge problems: https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-ahttps://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/treehedgeproblem/treehedge

Flooding/drainage issues: https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-ahttps://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/floodingproblem/flooding

Pavement problems: https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/paving

Broken or missing signs: https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-ahttps://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/brokensignsproblem/brokensigns

Faulty street lights: https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-ahttps://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/streetlightproblem/streetlight

Faded or missing road markings: https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-ahttps://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/road-markingsproblem/road-markings

Problems with rights of way:
https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/rightsofway/reportaproblem

When reporting an issue, you'll be sent an email confirming a reference number for the report. If you would like me to follow this up for you then do please forward that message to me and I will chase for you.

Local Government Reorganisation: Hampshire begins Judicial Review

On 9 June, Hampshire County Council's Cabinet agreed that the Council should pursue a Judicial Review of the Government's decision on Local Government Reorganisation. Formal proceedings were commenced later in the month.

This is not an attempt to preserve the existing system. Hampshire County Council and the district and borough councils are due to be abolished under reorganisation. The issue is whether the replacement structure has been chosen lawfully, transparently and with proper regard to long-term financial sustainability.

The Government selected a five-unitary model which would divide communities across the Hampshire and Solent area and transfer valuable development opportunities and business-rate income into new authorities centred on Southampton and Portsmouth. Hampshire's concern is that the decision was taken without the underlying financial evidence and modelling being made available, despite repeated requests.

The structures being created will serve more than two million residents and could last for decades. If they are financially unsustainable, the consequences would be measured not simply in boundary lines but in poorer services, higher costs and potentially tens, if not hundreds, of millions of pounds over the next decade. Judicial Review is the only mechanism available to obtain answers and test whether the decision-making process was lawful.

Read the County Council's update: County Council begins legal challenge over Government's LGR decision

The housebuilding consequences for rural Hampshire

One particularly important aspect of the proposed boundaries is their effect on future housing development. Significant housing sites would be removed from New Forest, Test Valley and East Hampshire and transferred into the new authorities centred on Southampton and Portsmouth.

Those homes would then help the cities address their housing shortfalls, while no longer counting towards the housing requirements of the rural areas from which the land has been taken. New Forest, Test Valley and East Hampshire would still be expected to meet substantially increased Government targets, but with fewer planned development sites available to them.

The likely consequence is still greater pressure to identify greenfield land around villages and in the countryside. This is why the financial, planning and service-delivery effects of the chosen boundaries must be properly examined rather than dismissed as a technical argument about council maps.

The BBC report considering this issue is here: Local government reorganisation and rural housebuilding

County Councillor Grants Scheme reopens

Hampshire County Council's County Councillor Grants Scheme reopened on 1 July. Each County Councillor has an annual budget of £5,000 to support worthwhile projects in their division, with grants generally available from £100 to £1,000.

The scheme can support not-for-profit organisations and community groups, including youth and sports activities, village halls, social-support projects, environmental and outdoor initiatives and equipment such as defibrillators.

I would encourage organisations in Romsey Rural with a suitable project to review the guidance and contact me. Applications will be considered against the scheme criteria and the benefit they can provide to local residents.

Full details and the application form: Hampshire County Councillor Grants Scheme

Connect to Work: a new employment route for people with social care needs

A dedicated route has opened into the Connect to Work programme for people receiving social care support. This is a practical opportunity for residents with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, mental-health needs or other complex barriers to receive tailored help into sustainable employment.

Hampshire County Council has secured £18.7 million of national funding for the wider Connect to Work programme. Support is voluntary and individually tailored, and can include one-to-one help, training, job matching and continuing support for both the participant and the employer after work begins.

Employment is not simply about income. For many people it can provide independence, confidence, purpose and a stronger connection to their community. The right support can also help employers recruit and retain people whose abilities might otherwise be overlooked.

Information and registration: Connect to Work

Hampshire and the Solent economic update

The June Economic Dashboard showed that the Hampshire and Solent economy continued to grow at a solid pace in the three months to April, broadly in line with the United Kingdom as a whole.

There were encouraging signs from retail activity and some stabilisation in demand, although regional business activity softened slightly during May. Inflation remained above target but broadly stable, while local firms continued to report high input costs and evidence that some of those costs were being passed on to consumers.

The labour market remained stable but subdued, with PAYE employment and unemployment broadly flat in May. Pay growth in Hampshire and the Solent remained comparatively strong, despite some easing nationally. These figures underline both the resilience of our local economy and the continuing pressure on households and businesses.

Testwood Lakes and water safety

There was deeply distressing news from Testwood Lakes after a 15-year-old boy was reported missing while swimming on 24 June. A major multi-agency search followed, and Hampshire Police later confirmed that his body had been found. My thoughts remain with his family, friends and everyone affected by this tragedy.

The incident is a heartbreaking reminder that open water can be dangerous even in warm weather and even for confident swimmers. Parents and carers are encouraged to discuss the Water Safety Code with children and young people, including the "Float to Live" advice and the importance of calling 999 immediately in an emergency rather than entering the water to attempt a rescue.

Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership advice: Water Safety for parents and carers

Have your say on the future of policing

The Government is considering significant changes to policing across England and Wales, including the possibility of merging existing police forces into larger regional organisations. These decisions could reshape policing in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight for many years.

Policing works best when it understands and reflects the communities it serves. Whether residents support locally focused policing, see advantages in larger forces or have concerns about accountability and local identity, it is important that Hampshire voices are heard before decisions are made.

Complete the Police and Crime Commissioner's survey: Police Force Merger Consultation

Please help tackle hare coursing in rural Hampshire

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary has continued patrols and enforcement activity against hare coursing. This is not a harmless rural pastime: it involves trespass, damage to crops and land, intimidation of farmers and residents, and organised criminality.

Residents should report suspicious vehicles or activity, particularly groups entering fields with dogs, to the police. Call 999 where an offence is happening or there is an immediate risk; otherwise report through 101 or the police online reporting service. Vehicle registrations, descriptions and locations can be extremely helpful, but nobody should put themselves at risk to obtain them.

General Updates

Hundreds of illicit vapes and cigarettes seized from premises in Ringwood and Totton

Illegal vapes, cigarettes and hand rolled tobacco with a total street value of over £3,000 have been seized from two retail premises in Ringwood and Totton following a joint operation between Hampshire County Council's Trading Standards team and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary

Hundreds of illicit vapes and cigarettes seized from premises in Ringwood and Totton | Hampshire County Council

Boost for electric vehicle use as Hampshire County Council unveils plan for 17,000 community chargers

People across Hampshire are set to benefit from the introduction of around 17,000 electric vehicle charge points, with new infrastructure set to be installed in local areas where 'off-street' charging from home is not an option

Boost for electric vehicle use as Hampshire County Council unveils plan for 17,000 community chargers | Hampshire County Council

Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority formally established following parliamentary approval

The Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority (HSCCA) has been formally established following parliamentary approval of the statutory instrument, marking a major milestone in the creation of a new authority to lead strategic decision-making across the region

Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority formally established following parliamentary approval | Hampshire County Council

Hampshire approach to domestic abuse highlighted at House of Lords committee

House of Lords evidence showcases Hampshire's partnership approach as new campaign warns of increased domestic abuse risk during major men's football tournaments

Hampshire approach to domestic abuse highlighted at House of Lords committee | Hampshire County Council

New supported employment pathway opens for people with social care needs

Hampshire County Council has announced a new, dedicated gateway into its Connect to Work programme for people with social care needs, helping more residents move into and stay in meaningful employment

New supported employment pathway opens for people with social care needs | Hampshire County Council

New Chair to lead Hampshire Skills Partnership in boosting skills and the local economy

The Hampshire Skills Partnership – a collaboration between Hampshire County Council, education and training providers, and businesses – has appointed Julie Milburn, Principal and Chief Executive Officer of Sparsholt College Group, as its new Chair

New Chair to lead Hampshire Skills Partnership in boosting skills and the local economy | Hampshire County Council

Advice for staying safe and well ahead of red heat health alert

With temperatures set to reach and exceed 35°C in some parts of Hampshire this week, a red heat health alert will come into place across Hampshire from 1am tomorrow (Wednesday 24 June) until 11pm on Thursday 25 June

Advice for staying safe and well ahead of red heat health alert | Hampshire County Council

Free summer holiday activities now open to book in Hampshire

Families across Hampshire can now book free holiday activity sessions as the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme returns for summer 2026

Free summer holiday activities now open to book in Hampshire | Hampshire County Council

Hampshire confirms longer-term help for residents facing financial hardship

Hampshire residents facing financial hardship are set to benefit from a major package of support, agreed today by Hampshire County Council

Hampshire confirms longer-term help for residents facing financial hardship | Hampshire County Council

Thousands of Hampshire residents to benefit from expanded weight management support programme

More Hampshire residents will be supported to improve their health and wellbeing after plans for continued investment in adult weight management services were approved today

Thousands of Hampshire residents to benefit from expanded weight management support programme | Hampshire County Council

A system that works for all – New plan to transform special needs support in Hampshire

An inclusive education system that supports children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) from early years right through to adulthood - that's the vision of a new landmark plan to transform SEND support in Hampshire

A system that works for all – New plan to transform special needs support in Hampshire | Hampshire County Council

County Council begins legal challenge over Government's LGR decision for Hampshire and the Solent area

Hampshire County Council has decided to proceed with a judicial review in relation to central Government's decision to reorganise councils across the Hampshire and Solent area

County Council begins legal challenge over Government's LGR decision for Hampshire and the Solent area | Hampshire County Council

Boost for local communities as Hampshire County Councillors Grants Scheme opens this July

Vital support to local organisations, projects and initiatives that strengthen communities across the county will be available from Hampshire County Council's popular Members Grants Scheme which will reopen on 1 July 2026

Boost for local communities as Hampshire County Councillors Grants Scheme opens this July | Hampshire County Council

Useful Links

Hampshire County Councillor Grants Scheme

The scheme reopened on 1 July, with grants of between £100 and £1,000 available to eligible not-for-profit organisations and community projects.

https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20260626MembersGrantsScheme

M3 Junction 9 improvements

National Highways is publishing closure information for the next major construction phase, including overnight and full-weekend closures.

https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/south-east/m3-junction-9-improvements/

Connect to Work

A fully funded voluntary programme offering tailored employment support to disabled people, people with health conditions and residents facing complex barriers to work.

https://www.prosperityhampshire.org.uk/connect-to-work

Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership water-safety guidance

Practical advice for parents, carers, children and young people, including the Water Safety Code and Float to Live guidance.

https://www.hampshirescp.org.uk/parents-and-carers/water-safety/

Police Force Merger Consultation

Residents can share their views on the Government's consideration of larger regional police forces and the future of policing in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

https://survey.alchemer.eu/s3/91139326/Police-Force-Merger-Consultation-Have-your-say