

Residents' views sought on proposals for future services in Hampshire

EMBARGOED UNTIL: 2pm 12 March 2025

12 March 2025

Hampshire County Council has launched a public consultation today (12 March 2025) inviting people to provide their views on proposals for savings in four service areas, as part of steps by the Authority to help meet a remaining budget shortfall of at least £97.6 million for 2025/26. The **Future Services Consultation – Spring 2025** runs from **12 March to 7 May 2025**, and signals the next stage in County Council plans to ensure it continues to support the people who are most in need in Hampshire, while meeting its legal obligations to deliver a balanced budget.

The consultation follows the previous Future Services Consultation which ran from January to March 2024, seeking views on proposals for savings in 13 service areas.

Leader of Hampshire County Council, Councillor Nick Adams-King said: "Prioritising the delivery of vital public services to residents who are most in need is our crucial core function. This includes protecting children from harm, social care for older people, and supporting adults and children with disabilities and additional needs. Demand and costs in these areas are now at record levels, putting immense ongoing pressure on our budgets. Despite having cut over £0.7 billion from our budgets in the last ten years, and continuing to transform how we work, being more efficient, innovative and commercial in our approach to delivering services, this still isn't enough, and our budgets simply can't keep up with that demand.

"Every month we are seeing an extra 200 applications for Education Health and Care Plans - the first step for children to register for Special Educational Needs (SEN) support. That exponential rise is the reason our budget for Home to School Transport (for which SEN children qualify for free) has increased from £28 million per year ten years ago, to £105 million from this coming April.

"In the absence of any fundamental change to how central Government funds social care pressures, we continue to seek greater savings ourselves, so we can keep delivering core services (those which we are required to provide by law) to those in Hampshire who need our help the most.

"Therefore, a number of further savings options are on the table and we are inviting residents to provide their views on these proposed service changes, their potential impacts, as well as whether there are any other ways in which the savings might be made."

Councillor Adams-King added: "While the prospect of a devolution deal for the wider Hampshire and Solent area has enormous long-term significance, bringing extra funding and decision-making powers to our region, it does not solve our immediate budget challenges or

the need to deliver for local people, here and now. We have made the case for many years that without root-and-branch national funding reform in the area of social care, the financial pressures in these areas will remain in future.

“We want to be clear that we stand firm in our unwavering commitment to all our residents, no matter our financial situation, and will leave no stone unturned as we endeavour to reduce our costs even further in order to be able to balance our budget and protect those in the greatest need.

“Asking our residents for their views is vital to this – please do take the opportunity to have your say.”

Four detailed options are set out in the **Future Services Consultation – Spring 2025** to help lower costs in future.

Residents are now invited to consider what it might mean for them if the County Council were to do things differently in these areas.

The savings proposals being consulted on cover:

- **Planned highways maintenance:** to remove funding provided each year by the County Council to supplement Department for Transport (DfT) funding for planned highway maintenance activities, incorporating larger-scale structural repairs, surface treatments on roads, and drainage improvements.
- **Older Adults Day Services:** for the County Council's HCC Care and Support Service to stop running the older adult day care services at Chesil Lodge (Winchester), and Newman Court (Basingstoke). These day care services provide a range of individual and group activities (e.g. crafts, exercise, singing) together with personal care. People currently attending day care services and their carers would continue to have their eligible needs met either through these services transferring to an independent provider or through alternative care provision.
- **Post-16 Transport only:**
 - To focus the County Council's resources on those most in need, by amending the eligibility criteria for Post-16 transport assistance so that the County Council would only assist with travel for Post-16 students with special educational needs or a disability, and who are from a low-income family.
 - To make Post-16 Transport provision more sustainable in the long-term by requiring all families of students who receive County Council-provided Post-16 transport assistance to contribute to the costs of transport for their child.
 - To support SEND students to develop their independent travel skills by introducing mandatory Independent Travel Training (ITT) for some Post-16 students.
 - To make Post-16 Transport provision more sustainable in the long-term by requiring parents/carers/responsible adults to act as a Passenger Assistant where it is reasonable for them to do so.
- **Both School Transport and Post-16 Transport:**
 - To reduce the number of unused seats by utilising bus pass usage data.

- To increase flexibility to meet short-term variations in demand by using the full licensed capacity of buses.
- To make discretionary transport more viable by asking parents to increase their financial contribution towards the cost of the transport.
- To promote the most independent forms of transport assistance by prioritising a Public Transport Season Ticket or Personal Transport Budget over contracted transport, where this is appropriate and more cost effective.

The service change proposals outlined within the consultation would contribute around £9.9 million in total towards balancing the budget for 2025/26 while ensuring that the delivery of essential services is maintained.

How to have your say

The consultation runs from **12 March to 11:59pm on 7 May 2025.**

We are proposing changes to four services and views can be provided on some or all of them, as preferred.

Feedback can be provided online via the consultation webpage: www.hants.gov.uk/future-services-consultation

Copies of the information packs and the consultation Response Form, along with Easy Read versions of these documents, are also available to view, download and print on the consultation webpage. The documents can be listened to via screen reader and 'Read Aloud' technology.

If you need a copy of the Information Pack or the Response Form in another language or format or if you have any queries about the consultation, please contact: insight@hants.gov.uk.

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

Where possible, people are encouraged to consider completing the consultation Response Form online as this will help save money, both in postage and in staff time in manually entering responses to the consultation. Internet access is available through local Hampshire County Council libraries.

Final decisions on the proposals will be made by the County Council's Cabinet as part of their decision meetings during summer 2025.

ENDS

For media enquiries please contact:

Corporate Communications

Email: corporate.communications@hants.gov.uk

Corporate Communications
The Castle, Winchester, Hampshire SO23 8UJ
www.hants.gov.uk

EMBARGOED