



SC000025938: Future Services Consultation results published



Southgate, Suzie
Head of Corporate Communications

The high-level findings from Hampshire County Council's recent 'Future Services Consultation' have been published. View the consultation results online: www.hants.gov.uk/future-services-consultation.

Held between January and March this year, the public consultation sought views on key proposals to change and reduce some local services in future to help the County Council address a recurring £132 million budget shortfall faced from 2025/26.

Like many councils nationally, County Council budgets are under huge pressure now and into the future and it's much harder to keep delivering crucial services with considerably less money available – because it's costing so much more to support growing numbers of children who need protecting from harm, abuse or neglect; deliver school transport for children with disabilities and additional needs; and support many more adults and older people with complex care needs and disabilities.

Hampshire has been in a better position than many other councils nationally as it has already spent well over a decade working differently and even more efficiently, generating income, and sharing resources with other public sector organisations, as well as disposing of land and buildings that are no longer needed. Plus, the Council's financial reserves have proven vital in helping to plug budget shortfalls along the way. But after 2025/26, the reserves available to help us balance the budget come to an end so difficult choices are needed on what services the Authority can continue to deliver in future so it can keep supporting those residents who desperately need its help the most.

Over 14,400 people responded to the 'Future Services Consultation'. Thank you to everyone who took part and provided their invaluable feedback during this

process. Your views from across Hampshire's schools, and those of the county's residents have been essential.

Feedback was invited on 13 options to help lower costs in future, and what it might mean for Hampshire residents if the County Council was to do things differently after April 2025. The options were:

- **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.

Next steps

The findings will be carefully considered alongside other relevant factors, including operational, financial, policy and legal considerations, as plans are drawn up for future service delivery.

County Councillor task-and-finish groups will shortly review the consultation documents and process, receive the high-level findings from the consultation and report to the County Council's cross-party select committees next month. Select committees will then review the consultation results and make recommendations to the Local Authority's Cabinet as a whole, who will take a collective final decision on 9 July.