

Hampshire County Councillor Update 60

Dear All

The past month has been exceptionally busy, both across Hampshire County Council and here in Romsey Rural. The most significant county-wide issue has been the decision to begin a legal challenge to the Government's Local Government Reorganisation proposals. We have also finally seen the long-running temporary speed restriction lifted on the M27, while several major road schemes, local planning applications and water-company works continue to affect residents.

This update draws together the principal issues I have shared since 2 June. As always, please contact me if I can help with a County Council matter or follow up a problem on your behalf.

Highways and Transport Information

At last: M27 speed restrictions lifted

After years of disruption, National Highways removed the temporary 50mph limit between M27 Junctions 4 and 7 at 8pm on 23 June. All four lanes are now open in both directions and the motorway has returned to its normal operating arrangements.

This was very welcome news for everyone who relies on this stretch of the M27. The concrete-overlay project has been a National Highways scheme throughout; Hampshire County Council has had no role, power or control over the works, their traffic management or their timetable.

A small amount of final overnight work remains. The Junction 8 eastbound entry slip road is due to close overnight on 3 July for permanent sign installation. A further overnight closure of the eastbound carriageway between Junctions 4 and 7 is planned from 9pm on 20 July until 6am the following morning for final testing and calibration.

Latest National Highways information: [M27 Junction 5 to 7 concrete overlay](#)

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](#)

Dunbridge Lane: Southern Water returning to complete abandoned works

Southern Water has confirmed that it will return to Dunbridge Lane in August to complete the water-main replacement work it abandoned earlier this year after insufficient progress was made.

The new programme is currently scheduled from Monday 3 August until Friday 16 October. Southern Water says it will bring in a new team with additional resources and expertise, work in smaller sections to reduce disruption, and have a representative at each end of the closure to help maintain residents' access.

The purpose of the work is to reduce bursts, leaks and interruptions to local water supplies. I have made clear that the standard of delivery must be substantially better this time and that residents need regular, accurate information throughout the programme.

A public drop-in is being held at Awbridge Village Hall from 3pm to 6pm on Monday 6 July, giving residents an opportunity to ask questions directly of the project team.

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-a-problem/treehedge>

Flooding/drainage issues: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/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-a-problem/broken-signs>

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

Faded or missing road markings: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/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](#)

Romsey Rural Planning

Crawley Hill, West Wellow: application for up to 51 homes

A planning application has been submitted for up to 51 homes on land at Crawley Hill, West Wellow. The application reference is 26/01245/OUTS and all matters are reserved except access.

My principal concern is the proposal to create the access directly onto this stretch of the A36. Given the history of collisions, prevailing traffic speeds and the additional turning movements that a development of this scale would generate, the safety and suitability of the access must be examined very carefully.

I will support residents in making evidence-based objections and have raised the highway implications with Hampshire County Council officers. Residents who would like a briefing note on how to comment can email me at CLlrnadamsking@testvalley.gov.uk.

Applications can be found through: [Test Valley planning application search](#) using reference 26/01245/OUTS.

£11 million to address groundwater problems in Hampshire

Following the exceptionally wet winter and rapid rise in groundwater levels, Southern Water has outlined £11 million of investment in northern Hampshire to reduce groundwater infiltration into the wastewater network and limit the disruption caused by tankering.

- £5 million for work in St Mary Bourne.
- £3.5 million to seal more than 15 kilometres of sewer network in Penton Mewsey and Appleshaw.
- £2 million for similar sewer-sealing work at Goodworth Clatford.

These schemes are important because groundwater entering the sewer system can overwhelm capacity, increase flood risk and require extensive tankering. The investment needs to be matched by clear delivery plans and transparent reporting on whether the work is reducing infiltration in practice.

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.

Fawley Waterside public consultation

New proposals are being developed for the former Fawley Power Station site. The emerging vision is for an employment-led development using the site's strategic Solent location and continuing its association with energy, with potential activity across the clean-energy, maritime and digital sectors.

The first public consultation runs from 30 June until 21 July. The proposals are important not only for the New Forest but for jobs, investment, infrastructure and economic growth across the wider Solent area. An outline planning application is expected later this year after feedback has been considered.

Consultation information: [Fawley Waterside](#)

Celebrating Hampshire's Adult Social Care and Public Health staff

It was a privilege to speak at Hampshire County Council's Adults' Health and Care and Public Health Making a Difference Awards and to help celebrate the extraordinary work carried out every day by colleagues across these services.

The awards recognised frontline practitioners, support teams, managers, emerging talent and partners whose compassion, professionalism and innovation improve lives across Hampshire. Every nomination represented a story of care, commitment and positive impact, often delivered quietly and away from public attention.

Adult social care and public health touch families at some of the most difficult and important moments in their lives. I was delighted to thank the employees and partners whose dedication enables people to live with greater independence, dignity and security.



Getting About

I've been to Awbridge, Michelmersh & Timsbury, Chilworth, and West Tytherley Parish Councils this month. I've also spoken at Southern Area Planning in respect of applications in Sherfield English and Michelmersh and Timsbury, sadly in both cases the planning applications were given permission despite local opposition.

Contact

Do please get in touch if I can ever be of any help. For those using social media, I post very regular updates on local issues, roadworks, planning applications and County Council services on my Facebook page: facebook.com/nickadamsking

Contact me:
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e: Nick.Adams-King@hants.gov.uk
 facebook.com/nickadamsking

CLLR NICK ADAMS-KING
Caring for Romsey Rural



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 passengers as Hampshire County Council confirms funding for 100+ bus shelter upgrades

Passengers across rural areas in Hampshire are set to benefit from an improved travel experience as 41 parish councils have been awarded grants to refurbish or replace 137 bus shelters

[Boost for passengers as Hampshire County Council confirms funding for 100+ bus shelter upgrades | 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](#)

Welcome to the family – Best Start Family Hubs set to expand into three new locations

Residents of Gosport, Andover and Alton will be the next in Hampshire to welcome Best Start Family Hubs – one-stop shops supporting families from pregnancy and early years through to starting school and beyond

[Welcome to the family – Best Start Family Hubs set to expand into three new locations | 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](#)

Plans progressed for more special needs school places in Eastleigh, Aldershot and Hart

More children with special educational needs (SEN) in and around Eastleigh will soon be able to access the right support closer to home, thanks to plans which received the green light today

[Plans progressed for more special needs school places in Eastleigh, Aldershot and Hart | Hampshire County Council](#)

Inspiring young people into the creative sector at Basingstoke Festival

Hampshire County Council and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council have launched a Creative Work Experience programme giving young people the chance to break into the creative industries, gain hands-on experience, and showcase their talents at this year's Basingstoke Festival

[Inspiring young people into the creative sector at Basingstoke Festival | Hampshire County Council](#)

Ringwood care home recognised with Veteran Friendly Framework status ahead of Armed Forces Day

Residents at Bickerley Green care home in Ringwood now benefit from enhanced support and more personalised care after the home achieved Veteran Friendly Framework (VFF) status

[Ringwood care home recognised with Veteran Friendly Framework status ahead of Armed Forces Day | 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>

M27 Junction 5 to 7 concrete overlay

The temporary 50mph limit was removed on 23 June, although a small number of final overnight closures remain during July.

<https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/south-east/m27-junction-5-to-7-concrete-overlay/>

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>

Fawley Waterside consultation

The first consultation on the emerging employment-led proposals for the former Fawley Power Station site runs until 21 July.

<https://fawleywaterside.co.uk/>

Test Valley planning applications

Use the online planning search to view and comment on applications, including Crawley Hill, West Wellow, reference 26/01245/OUTS.

<https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/planning-services/planning/viewplanningapplicationsonline>