

Hampshire County Councillor Update 45

Dear All

Apologies for the lateness of this month's report. Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation have been all consuming topics recently, leading me to fall behind with the 'normal' workload.

Here's my latest County Councillor update:

Highways Information

Old Salisbury Lane flooding

Much progress in the last four weeks over this issue.

The installation of a new drainage system is progressing well, some delays have meant an extension to the road closures in place there into the coming week, but a solution is hopefully now in sight.

Proposed Accessibility Improvements at A3090 Winchester Road/Halterworth Lane Junction

Hampshire County Council have proposed improvements to improve cycling and walking facilities around the junction of Winchester Road and Halterworth Lane.

Proposed Improvements:

- Widened Footway on A3090 Winchester Road: The footpath on the south side will be expanded to accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists.
- Improved Crossing at Halterworth Lane: The crossing will be realigned for better visibility and safety.
- Widened Footway for Abbotswood Residents: The footpath from Abbotswood to Winchester Road via Silverwood Rise will be widened for shared use.

These enhancements support Hampshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) goals of encouraging walking and cycling for short trips, improving safety and accessibility, and promoting sustainable travel.

Timeline: Works are expected to commence in Summer 2025.

For future updates, visit the scheme webpage: [A3090 Winchester Road/Halterworth Lane Junction Improvements Romsey](#).

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/brokensigns>

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>

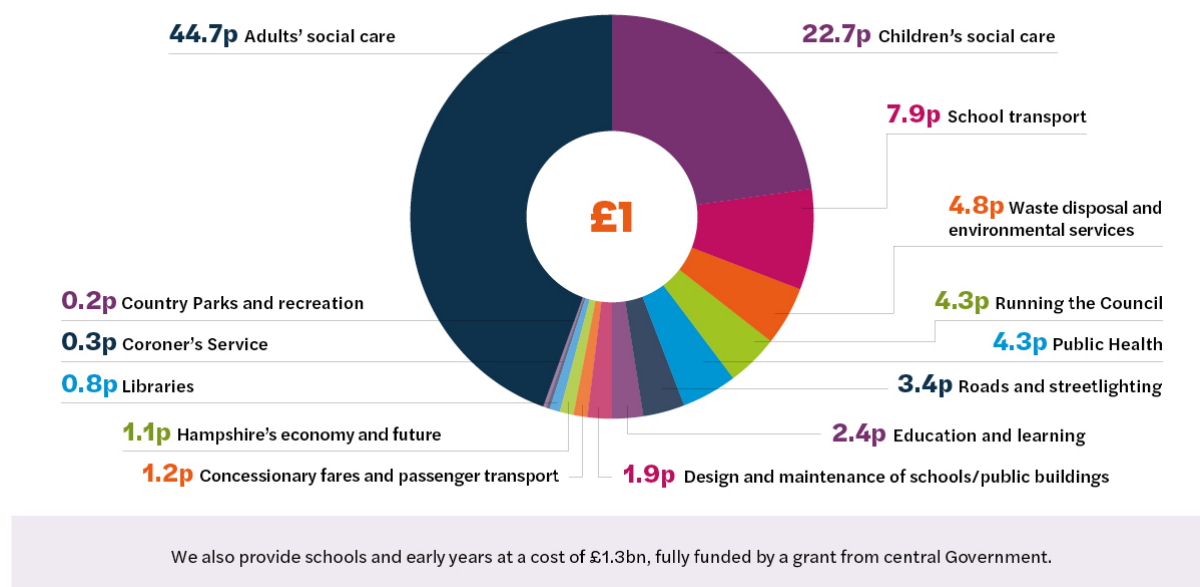
Problems with rights of way:

<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.

Hampshire County Council's Budget

This graphic below shows you how each £1 of your Council Tax will be spent next financial year in Hampshire. When you include schools spending then social care, school transport and education make up almost 87% of our budget.



At our budget setting meeting last month I asked Hampshire's Full Council to agree our budget for the year ahead which sees an increase of 4.99% in Council Tax. We had asked the government to increase it by a larger amount and they refused our request.

Why did we ask for a larger rise?

None of us want to increase Council Tax. But, the County Council's services are underfunded, and the reason for that in large part is our historically low Council Tax rate, which is why we needed to request an above 5% increase from Government.

Hampshire's Council Tax this financial year is £1533.24 for a band D property - the second lowest in the country. In Surrey the equivalent rate is £1,758.60, West Sussex £1,714.95, and Oxfordshire £1,820.56 for example.

Each 1% of Council Tax increase in Hampshire nets an additional £8million in revenue for the Council. So, a 5% increase results in £40 million in additional revenue this year.

Offset that against the ever rising cost of social care. Every month in Hampshire we see a net increase of 30 people living in care homes who become reliant upon the County Council to pay their costs - even at the most basic level of care these 360 people add a further £18.7 million of cost to our budget each year.

Every month we are seeing an additional 200 applications for Education Health and Care Plans - the first step for children to register for 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 £24 million per year at the end of the pandemic to £105 million next year.

Add to this the effect of employers National Insurance, which will cost us £10.5 million this year - we will get a one off reimbursement of £8 million from Government with nothing for future years.

I haven't mentioned inflation or pay rises - these of course add further to the bill. We have cut over £700million from our budgets in the last 10 years, and will continue to look for further savings, but frankly there is little left to find and our reserves will, by 2026/27, be exhausted. This is the context within which we find ourselves and the background to both well founded concerns around services and council tax.

For months now, I have tried to engage with this government about our financial situation and I have asked for meetings to discuss a positive way forward in partnership. In all that time I have been ignored despite huge pressures on our budget from adult social care and special education costs.

The County Council does not want to raise council tax above the 5% limit. We want to be given the tools to become more entrepreneurial, be given powers to decide where to spend and raise money free of Whitehall diktat. Perhaps our residents will not be surprised - given the present economic management of the country - all these suggestions were ignored too.

We were left with no choice but to agree to give the government our reasons to increase Council Tax above the referendum limit because it is all they asked us to do after finally replying to our letters calling for a meeting.

However, the government has said it will take money from shire counties like ours and give to councils in the midlands and north - some of them bankrupt. It has burdened us with increased costs via employer national insurance and living wage increases we will not get back. The situation is now much worse.

Hampshire County Council is well run. It has the second lowest council tax nationally. As I hope you can see, we sought the increase only due to the rising costs of social care, special educational needs and those increased costs and lack of funding from the government. We have used our reserves to balance the budget so far but this is not sustainable and by the end of the next financial year they will be gone.

So, tomorrow we will be presenting a budget which will include proposals for more savings and an undertaking that while we look for more ways to reduce our costs we will also be promising to continue to spend our budget wisely, protecting our most vulnerable residents, fixing the roads as best we can and looking after our children who are at risk of harm.

It needs to be said it didn't have to be this way. The government, it seems, is happy to use Hampshire County Council as its backdoor tax raising vehicle as it grapples with an economic mess of its own making. This is unfair but if we are to continue to provide the services we need, and our residents tell us loud and clear they want, then there is no choice that further savings or increases in council tax in the future.

Stubbington Outdoor Centre and proposed Secure Children's Home

There is much misinformation circulating about the proposals for a new Secure Children's Home at Stubbington.

Once a consultation has commenced there is a process through which we must go to reach a decision. So, let me be very clear:

- NO decision has been taken.
- The consultation responses have NOT been ignored.
- Both the forthcoming Select Committee and Cabinet meetings will be held in public and will be broadcast on the HCC Youtube channel.
- There are confidential appendices to the report which include commercially sensitive information, and we will only need to go into a private session of either the Select Committee or Cabinet if anyone wishes to interrogate the information contained within these. Frankly, I see no need to do this as they are in large part not material to the eventual decision.

We are working very hard to find a solution to the challenge we face over balancing the need for a Secure Children's Home (taking into account the constraints the Department for Education are placing on us in attempting to do so) vs the desire to maintain a study centre at Stubbington.

Struggling to keep your home warm in Hampshire? 🌡️

The Hitting the Cold Spots service, funded by Hampshire County Council, is here to help! 🏠✨

Get FREE support from experienced advisers at the Environment Centre (tEC), an independent charity. They can assist with:

Resolving energy billing issues
Saving money & energy at home



Advice line open Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm 📞 Call: 0800 804 8601 📧 Email: staywarm@environmentcentre.com

Find more info & advice at Hitting the Cold Spots – the Environment Centre (tEC) and the council's website, including energy efficiency tips and grant details:

<https://hantscoldspots.environmentcentre.com>

Southern Water outage - learning and compensation

Caroline Nokes and I met with directors of Southern Water yesterday along with other local representatives. The purpose was to hear the outcome of their review into the water outage before Christmas.

We ran through the issues of bottled water distribution, their operation of the priority delivery scheme and above all their communications. Southern Water need to hold water supplies locally and distribute them through many more water stations when there is a loss of supply. The local councils stand ready to support this, they only need ask - which for me is the greatest learning from the sorry situation before Christmas.

Caroline and I also raised the issue of compensation. Thanks to everyone who has been in touch to raise their failure to credit the agreed amounts to accounts so far. I will be submitting the list of remaining addresses awaiting compensation on Monday, if you have not as yet told me you have not received it then please drop me a WhatsApp or an email.

We also raised the issue of Grove Place retirement development which has 115 flats, but their water is billed by the management company for the site to each property from the overall account to which the supply is billed. They have been provided with £200 compensation for their account, equating to £1.74 compensation per property - which is clearly both inadequate and inequitable. Similarly the park home site on Upper Toothill Road where a similar situation has occurred.

The Big Band Buffet is back in Test Valley!

Join us on Saturday, March 29 at Danebury School (formerly Test Valley School), Stockbridge. 🎷🎺

This event aims to prevent social isolation and raise awareness of community safety for residents aged 55+.



Priority Registration:

Details of how to register in the poster:

Don't miss out on this wonderful opportunity to connect and have fun!



Romsey Young Carers - New Facebook Page

Romsey Young Carers are a brilliant local charity who support young people who find themselves with caring responsibilities, they've just established a supporters Facebook page, do please take a look and follow them here: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61572603660690...>



Who Are Young Carers? Young Carers are children and young people whose lives are impacted by caring for a family member with a long-term illness, disability, mental health issues, or substance abuse problems. Their responsibilities often extend beyond practical tasks to providing significant emotional support, which can affect their daily lives.



Their Mission: Romsey Young Carers aim to offer practical help, emotional support, and opportunities to shine. Their tailored approach empowers young carers to thrive, not just survive.

Let's support these incredible young individuals and the amazing work Romsey Young Carers do!

County Councillor Grants

My county councillor grants have now been fully allocated for the year. Thanks to everyone who has requested them. A review of the county councillor grant scheme will be carried out this Spring, which will likely delay the opening of the new scheme until August or September. I will let you know more details as soon as I have them, probably around May or June.

Grants awarded include:

Baby Necessities, Romsey Extra – baby bank items
The Romsey Show – community area at the show
Winchester and Eastleigh Diabetes Support – garden grant
Lockerley Parish Council – speed indicator device
Sherfield English Bowls Club – new mower
Romsey Town Council – Christmas lights
Sherfield English and District Association – magazine costs
West Tytherley Parish Council – speed indicator device
Chilworth Village Hall – roof mounted solar panels
Michelmersh and Timsbury PC – plans for a new pavilion

Getting About

Last month I attended Wellow, West Tytherley, Nursling and Rownhams, parish councils and spoke at public meetings in Fareham, Wellow, Dummer, St Mary Bourne and Sparsholt, I also presented to the meeting of the Test Valley Association of Town and Parish Councils in King's Somborne, presented an award at the Hampshire and IOW PCC Awards in Winchester and most enjoyably spoke at the 50th Anniversary event of Romsey WI – there was cake!

Contact


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



Contact me:

t : 07771 727402

e: Nick.Adams-King@hants.gov.uk

 facebook.com/nickadamsking

CLLR NICK ADAMS-KING
Caring for Romsey Rural

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL FAST-TRACKED FOR DEVOLUTION PRIORITY PROGRAMME

Hampshire County Council has been accepted onto the Government's fast-track Devolution Priority Programme (DPP) – marking a significant milestone in the journey towards devolution for Hampshire and the wider area.

[Hampshire County Council Fast-Trackled for Devolution Priority Programme | Hampshire County Council](#)

APPRENTICESHIPS – THE GATEWAY TO A BRIGHTER FUTURE

This National Apprenticeship Week, 10 to 16 February, Hampshire County Council is coordinating a series of special online and in-person events for both employers and those wishing to develop their career, to find out more about the benefits of apprenticeships, how they work, and the wide-ranging opportunities on offer across Hampshire.

[Apprenticeships – the gateway to a brighter future | Hampshire County Council](#)

FORMAL CONSULTATION TO GO AHEAD OF PROPOSED MERGERS OF INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS

Local residents in Fareham and Lymington will be asked for their views on the possible mergers of two infant schools with two junior schools in their areas.

[Formal consultation to go ahead on proposed mergers of infant and junior schools | Hampshire County Council](#)

PEEL COMMON PRIMARY SCHOOL TO RECEIVE MAJOR UPGRADE

Pupils at the newly created Peel Common Primary School in Gosport will soon enjoy an upgrade to their facilities.

[Peel Common Primary School to receive major upgrade | Hampshire County Council](#)

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL APPROVES COUNCIL TAX INCREASE TO SUSTAIN ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Hampshire County Council has today (13 February) approved budget plans for 2025/26 prioritising the delivery of vital public services to residents who are most in need, while ensuring budget pressures can be managed for the coming financial year.

[Hampshire County Council approves Council Tax increase to sustain essential services | Hampshire County Council](#)

DEVOLUTION FOR HAMPSHIRE – HAVE YOUR SAY IN THE GOVERNMENTS CONSULTATION

Hampshire residents are invited to have their say on once-in-a-generation devolution proposals for Hampshire and the Solent region in the eight-week public consultation launched today by central government.

[Devolution for Hampshire – have your say in the Government’s consultation | Hampshire County Council](#)

STUBBINGTON STUDY CENTRE DECISION MAKING PROCESS GETS UNDERWAY NEXT WEEK

Proposals will be considered in the coming days to replace Stubbington Study Centre with a new specialist secure welfare children’s home, while enhancing the educational experiences on offer at other outdoor sites owned by Hampshire County Council

[Stubbington Study Centre decision making process gets underway next week | Hampshire County Council](#)

GOVERNMENT APPROVES NEW SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOL FOR WHITELEY

More children with severe learning difficulties (SLD) are set to benefit from specialist school places following confirmation from Government that dedicated funding is to be made available for a new special school in Whiteley.

[Government approves new special needs school for Whiteley | Hampshire County Council](#)