



Winchester Councillors' Report October 2025

Local Government Reorganisation

There is an old joke that a driver in a smart car stops outside a quiet country pub and demands of a local enjoying a quiet pint whilst sitting in the sun, 'How do I get to London?' The reply from the countryman is 'You don't want to start from here!'

This might apply equally to the local government reorganisation. No doubt re-organisation is required. Local Government funding is a very major problem. Social care knocks a huge hole in the county budget, an ever increasing chasm as the population ages.

The council tax as a means for paying for local services is convoluted and unfair. The tax is calculated on the theoretical value of your home in 1991 and into which of eight bands it falls. The top band is properties in excess of £320,000, at 1991 values. That alone suggests the unreality of the system. No government since the 'poll tax' fiasco has dared to make changes. Talks on a 'wealth tax' or 'mansion tax' raise howls of anger.

Local Government Reorganisation submitted option

A collective submission from twelve of Hampshire's districts, including WCC, has been sent to the Government. The submission had to be made at this time. There is no option for delay. The issue was discussed at an extraordinary Full Council meeting on 24th September. In truth, it was rather less of a debate and rather more the nature of the selected option being explained and then questions on the development of the options. Winchester could of course have not submitted any option, but this of course would have been to surrender to whatever the Government decides. A great deal of officer and member time has been spent working out the best options given the parameters set by the Government. These options were developed in co-operation with other councils in the county. The selected options have been backed by a majority of councils in Hampshire (Basingstoke and Deane, Eastleigh, Fareham, Hart, Havant, New Forest, Portsmouth*, Rushmoor, Southampton, Test Valley, and Winchester), representing more than three quarters of local authorities in the area.

All three proposed options meet the Government's criteria for reorganisation, with an average population size of 500,000, and financial analysis shows that all three options would deliver over £63 million in recurring annual savings, through streamlined services, reduced duplication, and more efficient governance.

An alternative put forward by Hampshire County is to create a larger district that merges Winchester with Basingstoke and Aldershot. This would include the southern parishes of Denmead, Wickham, Southwick and Aldershot which seems a most unhappy idea and highly illogical.

'Close enough to be local, big enough to stay strong.'

Outline of the three option variations of the four new mainland and Isle of Wight unitary model

Option 1		Option 2		Option 3	
					
North Hampshire: Basingstoke and Deane, Hart, Rushmoor	407,465	North Hampshire: Basingstoke and Deane, Hart, Rushmoor	407,465	North Hampshire: Basingstoke and Deane, Hart, Rushmoor	407,465
Mid Hampshire: East Hampshire, New Forest, Test Valley, Winchester	598,823	Mid Hampshire: East Hampshire, Test Valley, Winchester	417,159	Mid Hampshire: East Hampshire, New Forest, Test Valley, Winchester	484,546
South West Hampshire: Eastleigh, Southampton	423,221	South West Hampshire: Eastleigh, New Forest, Southampton	604,885	South West Hampshire: Eastleigh, New Forest*, Southampton, Test Valley*	510,102
South East Hampshire: Fareham, Gosport, Havant, Portsmouth	554,741	South East Hampshire: Fareham, Gosport, Havant, Portsmouth	554,741	South East Hampshire: East Hampshire*, Fareham, Gosport, Havant, Portsmouth, Winchester*	582,137
Isle of Wight	146,351	Isle of Wight	146,351	Isle of Wight	146,351

Progress on Sun Hill

Sun Hill or Alresford Down as it is now named continues to progress with many parts now falling into place. The new road access of the A31 is likely to open once HCC have completed their road safety audit which can be carried out after October 12th. The innovation of a new route into the town hasn't happened since the railway opened on October 2nd, 1865. Since the opening of the road link discharges some planning conditions, more rapid progress can be made on house building, with the possibility of some twenty nine affordable homes becoming available by March or April 2026.

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