HCC 2027/28 Budget Consultation

Hampshire County Council has launched its budget consultation, inviting residents, service users, partners and stakeholders to share their views on how we can continue to balance our budget while protecting the services that matter most to Hampshire com munities.

Over many years, we have worked hard to manage public money responsibly through careful financial planning, service improvements, efficiencies and the strategic use of reserves. By March 2028, the County Council will have reduced costs by £770 million while continuing to deliver high-performing services.

However, like councils across the country, Hampshire continues to face significant financial pressures. Demand for services keeps growing, particularly for social care support for vulnerable children and adults, while the cost of delivering those services continues to rise. At the same time, Government funding has not kept pace with increasing need, meaning the County Council is forecasting a budget shortfall of almost £199 million in 2027/28.

To give you an idea of the financial pressures we are facing:

- Every month, around 45 more older residents need our help paying for care after their own savings run out.
- We are supporting more adults and children with increasingly complex needs. These are essential responsibilities, and we cannot simply turn people away.
- School and post-16 transport spending has risen from £50 million to £92 million in four years, particularly because of growing demand for transport for children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities. This despite our saving many millions through investment in new SEN provision and constant review of school travel policies and arrangements.
- The Government's increase in employers' National Insurance has also added to care providers' costs, feeding through into the fees councils must pay.
- The Government's Fair Funding changes are taking around £28 million out of Hampshire's funding in 2027/28, widening the shortfall we have to close.

Despite these challenges, Hampshire continues to deliver high-quality services for residents. Independent reviews have repeatedly recognised both our financial management and the quality of our services: Children's Services is consecutively rated *Outstanding* by Ofsted and Adult Social Care is rated *Good* by the Care Quality Commission, reflecting the hard work and commitment of colleagues across the organisation.

Have your say on Hampshire's future
As we plan for the financial year ahead, we want to hear people's views on ways to help balance the County Council's budget.

Our public consultation sets out a range of options to help address the financial challenge, including further efficiencies, generating additional income, changes to service delivery, introducing or increasing charges, increasing council tax, using reserves and seeking additional support from Government.

While we will continue to do everything possible locally, the scale of the challenge means local action alone will not be enough. We continue to make the case to Government for fairer funding for local government and greater flexibility to respond to local needs.

The consultation is open until 11.59pm on Sunday 13 December 2026.
As a valued partner, your views are extremely valuable. We would also be grateful if you could help raise awareness of the consultation through your own networks and encourage those you work with to take part.

Full details of the consultation, including how to respond, are available at:
www.hants.gov.uk/budgetconsultation