



Statement on Local Government Re-organisation decision for Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Southampton and Portsmouth

The Government has announced their decision on the re-organisation of local government across Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Southampton and Portsmouth. Ministers have decided to create four mainland unitary authorities covering North Hampshire, Mid Hampshire, South-East Hampshire and South West Hampshire, in addition to the Isle of Wight. The electorate numbers for each of these areas are shown in appendix 1.

As a membership organisation representing the 265 local councils (parish and town councils) across Hampshire; Hampshire Association of Local Councils (Hampshire ALC) responded to the public consultation in line with our position paper issued in December 2025. In our response we did not advocate for any one of the proposed options as we recognised there was a range of views amongst our members. Individual local councils serve their communities and understand the particular characteristics, requirements and aspirations of their residents. We did however focus on the need for effective Local Council representation on any future democratic arrangements in the new unitary councils.

It is vital that arrangements for sub-unitary governance reflect the needs and priorities of individual communities and neighbourhoods. Hampshire ALC believes that these arrangements should facilitate the exercise of agency and influence by individual localities which relate to their particular circumstances. This will differ across the communities which will comprise the new unitary authorities announced today. It is important that patterns and arrangements for neighbourhood governance should not be imposed upon them through a uniform model but should be developed to reflect the characteristics and circumstances of individual communities.

Local councils represent an unequivocal link between communities with demonstrable democratic legitimacy. For many communities across Hampshire, their new principal authority could be perceived to be more remote than the current district and borough councils. It is vital that communities continue to be able to engage in a structured and systematic way: local councils must continue to be a suitable vehicle for this to be meaningful in a democratic and representative way.

Hampshire ALC therefore welcomes the Government's expressed commitment to the principles of community governance. It is important that this is rooted in democratic legitimacy and is driven by the communities which are being served.

Hampshire ALC looks forward to continuing to engage with the full range of stakeholders and partners to ensure the successful implementation of the new arrangements – including appropriate community governance for each neighbourhood across the county. These issues will be explored with local councils at a summit to be hosted in June 2026, and as part of an on-going dialogue as the process of introducing unitary authorities across the entirety of the county continues.

Hampshire Association of Local Councils
Eastleigh House, Upper Market Street, Eastleigh, Hampshire

25 March 2025



Appendix 1

North Hampshire: Basingstoke and Deane, Hart, Rushmoor	407,465
Mid Hampshire: East Hampshire, Test Valley, Winchester, New Forest	484,546
South East Hampshire: Fareham, Gosport, Havant, Portsmouth, part of East Hampshire (Clanfield, Horndean and Rowlands Castle), part of Winchester (Newlands).	510,102
South West Hampshire: Eastleigh, Southampton, part of New Forest (Totton and Eling, Marchwood, Hythe and Dibden and Fawley), part of Test Valley (Valley Park, Nursling & Rownhams, and Chilworth).	582,137
Isle of Wight	146,351