

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL report to **Boarhunt Parish Council** – 8th January 2025

Devolution

The Government published its English Devolution White Paper on 16th December 2024 setting out a programme of devolution and Local Government reorganisation across England.



The vision outlined by Government is that all parts of England are to be part of regional Strategic Authorities that have a **regional Mayor**. These Strategic Authorities, working in a similar way to existing Mayoral Combined Authorities will have responsibility for driving growth and shaping public services across wider regional geographies covering strategic leadership of key place shaping responsibilities such as economic regeneration and growth, strategic planning, skills and employment and strategic transport.

Hampshire County Council could be one of the local authorities to be included in the Government's **Devolution Priority Programme (DPP)**.



At the end of August 2024, an agreement was made with the Isle of Wight Council, Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council, to submit to Government a joint Expression of Interest (EOI) in forming a single combined authority for the collective area of the four upper tier authorities.

Inclusion on the fast-track **Priority Programme** would be the first step towards creating a Strategic Authority across the wider region incorporating the local authority areas of Hampshire County Council, Isle of Wight Council, Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council.

In addition to the creation of a new Strategic Authority, the Government is also expecting all areas across the country to produce local government re-organisation plans by Autumn 2025. This will create new large unitary authorities which, for Hampshire, will mean bringing together the County Council, 11 borough and district councils and small neighbouring unitary authorities into a number of new large unitary authorities.

Given that HCC has more than 1.4 million residents and the White Paper requires all unitaries to have not less than 500,000 in each unitary, it might mean some districts/boroughs transition from Hampshire into perhaps Portsmouth or Southampton [each currently have approximately 300,000 residents], although reassurance has been given by Government that every effort will be made not to split a district or borough.

I will keep you informed as things progress but be aware that devolution with elected Mayors is not an option, it is a route required by central Government for all local authorities. For more information and detail read - <https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx>? or the Government White Paper - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-white-paper-power-and-partnership-foundations-for-growth/english-devolution-white-paper>

Community Grants



Don't forget that grant applications for a Councillor grant close at the end of January. These grants are intended to help small, local, community groups eg lunch clubs, scouts, community centres, village associations, school PTAs, local Church, etc. Grants allocated are fairly small and **MUST** meet the published criteria. See –

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/community/grants/grants-list/county-councillor>.

Also, you must discuss with your County Councillor **BEFORE** application is made. All applications must be made online. *I look forward to hearing from you!*