

Update from Hampshire County Council – April 2024

Hampshire County Council considers consolidating office spaces across Hampshire

Proposals by Hampshire County Council to reduce its office accommodation in towns across the county will be considered next week, as part of efforts by the Local Authority to consolidate staff into fewer buildings and help save money on running costs

The proposals set out a strategy for implementation in the coming years, as part of the County Council's regular work reviewing the use of its buildings, and ensuring that facilities keep pace with changing patterns of use.

Many of the people working in County Council offices spend a significant proportion of time working directly in the community with people who need them – delivering local services such as social care to vulnerable children and adults, enabled by technology. Some staff are also working remotely, which has become a more frequent pattern since the Covid-19 pandemic.

Buildings such as libraries and register offices, which are important public-access amenities, were included purely to consider the opportunities for how any office space within them might be used in future. The review of office accommodation does not consider closing any libraries or other public services.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20240603Officeaccommodation>

Hampshire County Council to sell buildings in Winchester

Hampshire County Council will shortly be marketing three sites in Winchester for sale - Three Minsters House, on the High Street, Four Chimneys Family Centre, near the Andover Road, and property on the County Council's Monarch Way site, near the Romsey Road

These buildings will close to staff later this year, and services run from these sites will be relocated to other County Council buildings in Winchester. The services will be moved to other locations within Winchester that are accessible by public transport, and local people will still be able to use them.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20240319winchesteroffices>

£300,000 of illegally sold vapes and fake tobacco seized by Hampshire County Council

Illegal vapes and fake tobacco products valued at £300,000 have been seized by Hampshire County Council's Trading Standards over the last 12 months – in their crackdown on retailers who sell vapes to under 18s

Parents are rightly concerned about their children having access to vapes following an alarming rise in vaping by young people. The vast majority of traders in Hampshire act within the law but we are putting more resource into catching the irresponsible minority whose actions put people at risk. Our Trading Standards team has ramped up activity to clamp down on illegal and underage sales and, as a result, we have seized large amounts of illegal vapes that breached the legal limit of nicotine or that were sold illegally to underage people. We have also seized pouches of counterfeit tobacco which are not subject to the usual manufacturing standards and could contain any substances. This haul of 15,000 contraband items has been kept out of the hands of consumers and will now be destroyed. This is a great result that underscores our commitment to keeping people in Hampshire safe."

More information about Hampshire County Council Trading Standards can be found by visiting: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/business/tradingstandards>

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/06032024TSvapehaul>

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Creating a smoke-free generation comes a step nearer

Up to £23 million will be spent from April 2025 over the following seven years to support Hampshire smokers to quit, and to help stop people taking up the habit in the first place

Smoking is the single biggest preventable cause of ill health and premature death in England, costing the taxpayer millions and placing a huge burden on the NHS and social care. Helping people to quit smoking therefore is vital and is one of our key statutory responsibilities.”

The County Council’s current commissioned service, [Smokefree Hampshire](#), offers stop smoking support that is personalised to meet the needs of its clients.

Currently some 3,500 people in Hampshire are supported to quit each year via this service.

In 2022, it was estimated that 10.5% of adults living in Hampshire smoked. It is also estimated that some 4,500 Hampshire residents die, and 8,600 residents are admitted to hospital each year because of smoking.

Local Authorities’ Public Health budgets are ‘ring-fenced’ by Government. This means they cannot be spent on funding other services.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/19032024Smokingcessation24>

County Council invites communities to bid for funding to plant disease resistant elms

In a boost for nature recovery, communities across Hampshire are being invited to apply for funding to plant disease resistant elm trees. The once abundant species has been decimated by disease in recent decades, but new varieties are now taking root across the county

The initiative to support its comeback is possible thanks to a grant from The Tree Council secured by Hampshire County Council’s Forest Partnership.

Enquiries are open now for the 2024/25 tree planting season which starts from the autumn.

Organisations such as town and parish councils, local groups and landowners can find out more information on the Hampshire Forest Partnership [webpage](#).

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/19032024DiseaseResistantElms>

New forum launched to encourage young people with additional needs and disabilities to speak up

Young people across Hampshire with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) have an exciting opportunity to join a new youth forum to voice their opinions and share experiences directly with decision makers from the local authority on topics that directly affect them – such as education, training and employment opportunities

Anyone aged 14 to 25 with SEND can join the new SEND Youth Forum – you don’t need to have a formal diagnosis or an Education Health and Care Plan.

Members will have opportunities to make new friends, learn new skills, feed back their firsthand experiences of education, work and training, gain insight into how decisions that affect them are made, and influence those decisions at times too. The Forum has been set up in collaboration with learners currently enrolled in the County Council’s Supported Internship programme, which offers real workplace experience alongside support and training with a range of Hampshire employers.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20240319SENDforum>

Cllr David Drew
Test Valley Central Division, HCC