

Council Restructure Consultation – Important.

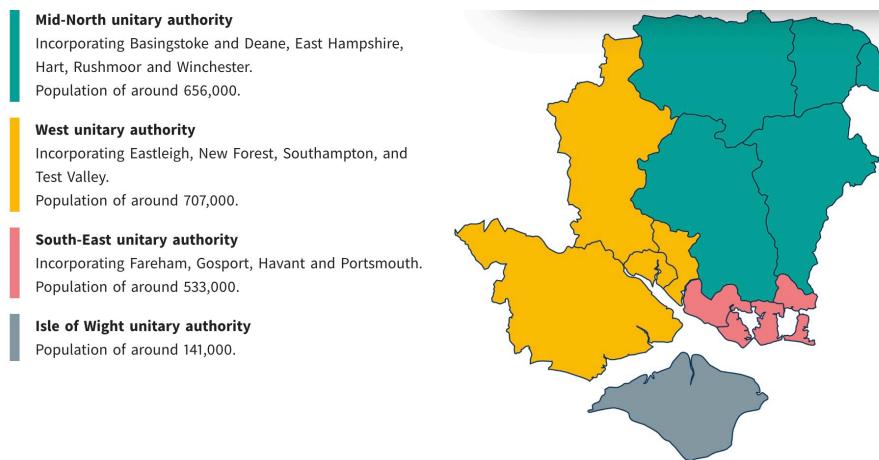
The council restructure of Hampshire councils (for us this is Hampshire County Council and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council) is now at the consultation phase.

It is important that everyone completes this as the final decision will affect us especially regarding the services we receive and how planning decisions are made. The web address is below but rather than typing all these characters, the link can be easily found on the front news section of the community website www.wooltonhill.com

<https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation/hampshire-isle-of-wight-portsmouth-southampton/consultation/>

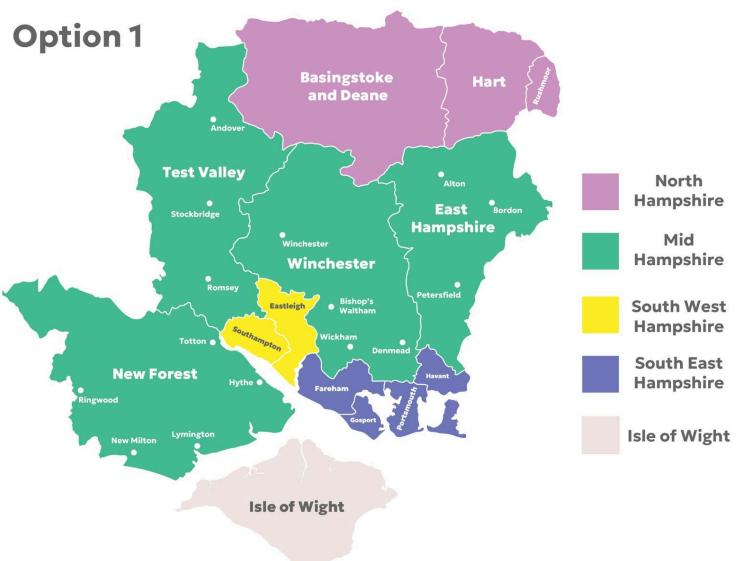
Decisions around Recycling Centres and number 7/7A Bus have affected us badly.

Hampshire County Council, who made those decisions, are proposing a very large area for local services and decision making. They have called this Mid-North unitary authority. As can be seen on the map it stretches from the north of Hampshire to just above Southampton and Portsmouth.



However, our ward councillors at Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council want to see a much smaller council area (Option 1).

They believe this would fulfil a brief of '*Close enough to be local, big enough to stay strong*' as decision makers would better understand the needs of North Hampshire residents.



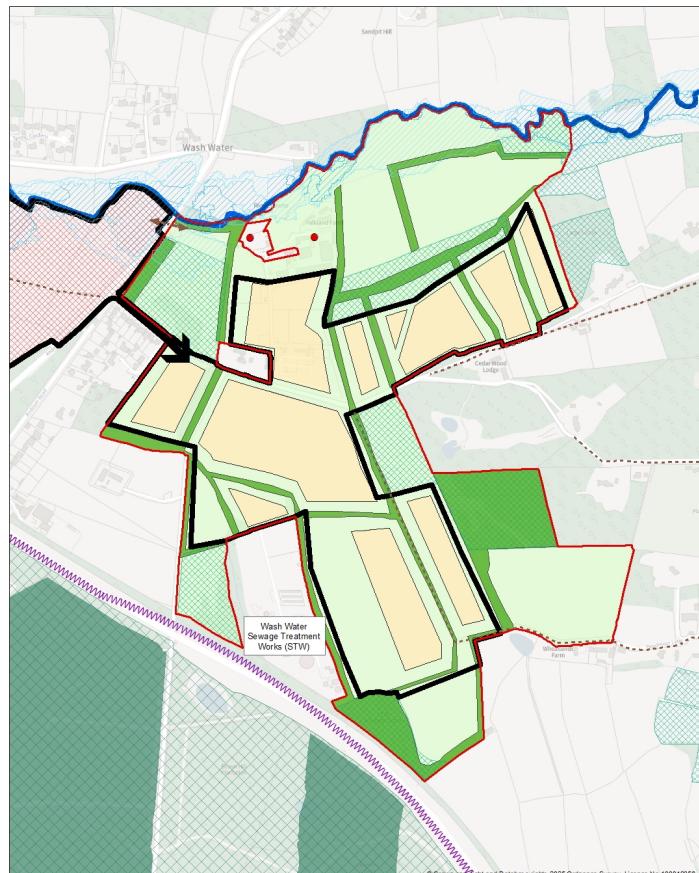
The other options in the consultation do not affect ourselves as they mainly affect New Forest.

Parish councils including our own, East Woodhay Parish Council are not affected by this reorganisation.

It is important that our residents' views are heard and we encourage everyone to complete the consultation which closes on 11th Jan.

As part of the government demands on local councils to include significantly more sites for house building, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council have put together their site list as part of what is referred to as the Local Plan.

Included is a proposal for 500 homes at Oakley Farm which is by the A343 just south of Enborne river and right by the building work about to start at Wash Water.



Key

- Site Allocation Boundary
- Settlement Policy Boundary
- Borough Boundary
- Land at Watermill Bridge
- ➔ Principal Access

↔ Indicative Pedestrian and Cycle Access

■ Developable Area

■ Retained for Open Space

■ Existing Trees/Hedges to be retained and enhanced

— Statutory Main River

■ Flood Zone 2

■ Flood Zone 3

WWWW Road Noise

● Listed Building

- - - Public Right of Way

■ Ancient Woodland (SINC)

□ North Wessex Downs National Landscape

■ Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)

The **WWWW** is anticipated road noise from the A34. The Black Arrow marked is the proposed principal access from the Andover Road (A343).

There is a consultation event on Thursday 15th January 2026 from 2pm to 8pm at The Woodpecker Pub, Wash Water, RG20 0LU. This forms part of the statutory review called Regulation 18.

Although this land is in Highclere parish, it affects residents in East Woodhay. Not only for when any building work takes place but also because of the services and traffic in the parish e.g. schools, surgery, recreation grounds etc.

Please try and come along on 15th Jan to the Woodpecker pub and have your say.



Following the cessation of the 7/7a bus, East Woodhay Parish Council (EWPC) and Highclere Parish Council continue to seek solutions to try and restore a local bus service.

To further this effort recently a number of EWPC councillors and a representative from Neighbourcare attended a Hampshire County Council (HCC) forum, hosted by their transport team (who are responsible for bus services) and bus operators.

This focused on community operated services to replace cancelled bus operations. However, it soon became clear that was not feasible for us due to the HCC funding model presented by Hampshire Councillor Lulu Bowerman and her transport team.

Despite this, the forum allowed us to have further discussion with the HCC Transport Team and potential bus operators. HCC reiterated they will not restore the 7/7a service. We discussed the option of providing a local service for the area based out of Newbury. HCC stated they had looked at this option before the cessation of the 7/7a. HCC said they were not able to allocate the funding to support it, so they would not pursue this option.

We discussed the local service option with the bus operators. No operators were interested in restoring the 7/7a service. Only two bus operators were interested in looking at operating a revised local service. These were Basingstoke Connect (based out of Basingstoke) and Newbury and District (based out of Greenham and who operate other Newbury based local services). To review the feasibility of servicing the route these operators required the usage data from the 7/7a service. We were able to push HCC to provide the usage data from the previous provider, Stagecoach. However, on reviewing this information it is disappointing that it does not provide the resolution of data the operators require to assess feasibility. We are continuing to have further discussions with Basingstoke Connect and Newbury and District to review service options, funding and the feasibility of restoring a local service. Unfortunately, at present the feasibility of a short / medium term solution does not look optimistic.

However, we have identified that there may be a potential solution on a longer term basis as the Watermill Bridge development (in the north of our parishes where it borders Enborne), has a Newbury / Watermill Bridge bus route included in the planning application. We will discuss the feasibility of extending the route to cover our area with the HCC, West Berks, the developer and the bus operators.

In parallel, we are also in discussion with Newbury Handybus. This provides a request operation but not a regular service, so would be limited for our community. They have recently performed an audit of interest from the community via Facebook and said they received a good response. They are in the process of reviewing the feedback to determine if they would move forward and will keep us informed.

The two parish councils will continue these discussions with the bus operators to explore the feasibility of all the options for a short / long term solution and we will communicate progress.