

COUNCIL

Wednesday, 14 January 2026

Attendance:

Councillors Present

Achwal S (The Mayor)

Gordon-Smith
Achwal V
Aron
Bailey-Morgan
Batho
Becker
Bennett
Bolton
Brophy
Chamberlain
Clear
Cook
Cramoysan
Cunningham
Cutler
Eve
Godfrey
Horrell
Laming
Langford-Smith
Latham

Learney
Lee
Miller
Morris
Murphy
Pett
Pinniger
Porter
Power
Reach
Rutter
Scott
Small
Thompson
Tippett-Cooper
Tod
Warwick
Westwood
White
Williams
Wise

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors Brook and Wallace

[Recording of Meeting](#)

1. MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 24 SEPTEMBER 2025

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the Council held on 24 September 2025 be approved and adopted.

2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Councillors Porter, Tod, Warwick and Williams each declared disclosable pecuniary interests in respect of agenda items due to their role as Hampshire

County Councillors. However, as there was no material conflict of interest, they remained in the room, spoke and voted under the dispensation granted on behalf of the Audit and Governance Committee to participate and vote in all matters which might have a County Council involvement.

Councillor Tod also declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 7 c – Notice of Motion (Hampshire Mayoral Election) as he was a candidate for the new combined authority and due to the fact that the motion referred to the timing of this election, he left the chamber during consideration of this item and took no part in the discussion or decision.

Councillor Godfrey also declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 7 a – Notice of Motion (Armed Forces – ‘Credit Their Service’) as he was in the process of applying for payment from one of the schemes referred to (the Armed Forces pension and compensation schemes) and he left the chamber during consideration of this item and took no part in the discussion or decision.

Councillor Pett declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of agenda items due to his role as Council’s representative on the South Downs National Park Authority. However, as there was no material conflict of interest, he remained in the room, spoke and voted under the dispensation granted on behalf of the Audit and Governance Committee to participate and vote in all matters which might have a South Downs National Park Authority involvement.

3. **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR, LEADER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE.**

The Mayor referred to recent engagements and then announced his forthcoming charities events.

He then advised that the annual Mayor of Winchester’s Community Awards had been launched and that presentations would take place on 12 March 2026.

The Mayor then advised that he had written to the following recipients in the King’s New Year Honours:

Kim Wilkie of Bishops Waltham – a CBE for services to Landscape Architecture.

Sara Russell, Principal and Chief Executive Officer at Peter Symonds College – an OBE for services to Further Education.

Anne Fairhurst, Executive Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health at Hampshire County Council – an MBE for services to Adult Social Care.

Kim Quaintrell, Head of Reducing Reoffending, HM Prison Winchester – an MBE for Public Service.

The Leader then announced that he had recently attended the opening of Winchester hospital’s new orthopaedic out-patients department, which had been

officially opened by a former councillor, who had recently retired after 52 years as a hospital plaster technician.

The Leader then advised that, on behalf of the council, he had recently responded to the government's consultation on Local Government Reorganisation with the council's agreed proposal. He again highlighted the strength of the council's agreed proposal, versus the other submissions including that the scale and nature and proposed configuration of the four mainland geographies were supported by residents. A response was also made regarding the county council's submission, with particular focus on the economic geographies within this and particularly highlighting concerns of the Winchester district becoming part of a north Hampshire authority. The Leader advised that shortly after submission in October, the council was then required to undertake work on a detailed and extensive list of comparative activities ahead of the expected announcement in March by government. This had required the establishment of joint systems with other councils and additional work for officers, and he was grateful for councillors who had volunteered to be part of a cross-party group to help oversee the Local Government Reorganisation process.

The Chief Executive first drew attention to an upcoming sponsored charity event in which officers would be participating, and then proceeded to announce apologies for the meeting.

4. **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

There were no Questions before Council

5. **TO CONSIDER AND DETERMINE THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDED MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE HELD 27 NOVEMBER 2025 - PAY POLICY REPORT AND STATEMENT 2026/27 (AG170).**

Councillor Morris (Chairperson of the Audit and Governance Committee) moved that the Recommended Minute of the Audit and Governance Committee be approved and adopted (seconded by Councillor Chamberlain).

Council proceeded to ask questions and then debate the matters in the recommended minute.

At conclusion of debate and following the seconder (Councillor Chamberlain, having reserved his right to speak) addressing the meeting, and then summing up by the proposer (Councillor Morris), Council then voted on the Recommended Minute before it.

RESOLVED:

That the recommended minute of the Audit and Governance Committee held 27 November 2025 be approved and adopted:

1. That the Pay Policy Statement for the financial year 2026/27 be adopted.

6. **INFORMATION FOR COUNCIL**

Councillor Pett provided a verbal report to the Council regarding the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA), for which he was the Council's representative, and his update included the following matters.

- Since his last update, SDNPA had appointed a new Hampshire County Council representative and in December 2024, a new Chief Executive.
- Closer integration between the Park Authority and the South Downs Trust had been established with a new directorate for growth and organisational development.
- National Parks were seeking power of competence to sell expertise (especially in green finance) and it was hoped that a clause within the Devolution Bill will include such powers.
- Local Government Reorganisation may reduce elected representation on the National Park Authority (NPA) board. The NPAs were working to influence the development of the Hampshire Solent MCCA.
- New statutory Partnership Management Plan had been recently approved after 18 months of engagement.
- Progress was ongoing on the Regulation 19 draft of the South Downs Local Plan. Strengthened policies within the Local Plan were envisaged regarding farm building conversions for tourist accommodation, and for the addition of self-build units to rural exception sites.
- Differences remained between national housing targets and the constraints of protected landscapes.
- Progress had been made to increase land managed for nature from 25% to 33% by 2030, which would require 13,000 additional hectares.
- Initiatives and pressures within the SDNPA were reported on, including accessibility via public transport networks to the park interior.
- A new five-year planning application for the Boomtown festival had been recently submitted.

Councillor Pett then responded to questions.

7. **NOTICES OF MOTION**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15, four motions had been submitted for Council.

a) **Armed Forces – End to the Unjust Benefits System for Veterans – ‘Credit Their Service’**

Councillor Godfrey left the chamber during consideration of this item and took no part in the discussion or decision.

The first motion submitted was by Councillor Lee and was as set out on the agenda and was seconded by Councillor Laming. Following its introduction by Councillor Lee, Council then debated the matters in the motion. In summary the following points were raised:

- The council should understand additional costs of it supporting the motion.
- The council should ensure that outcomes of the motion should continue as a legacy to the future unitary council responsible for the area. However, they would need to make their own decisions on processes at the appropriate time.
- Repeal of the Legacy Act was regarding lawfulness of acts during military service. The proposals in the motion was compensation (for the individual and their family) for significant personal consequence in military service.
- The council should use the discretion afforded to it on any elements in favour of veterans.
- The council will look within the budget regarding topping up the existing discretionary housing payments fund, as this was depleted each year.
- It was confirmed that support for the motion would be inclusive of disabled facilities grants.

Having reserved their right to speak, the seconder of the motion (Councillor Laming) then addressed Council, followed by the proposer of the motion (Councillor Lee) who exercised their right to respond to debate.

The Council then voted on the motion as set out on the agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the motion proposed by Councillor Lee (seconded by Councillor Laming) be supported, and that this Council resolves:

1. To support the Royal British Legion's "Credit Their Service" campaign, recognising the injustice caused when military compensation is treated as income in local means-tested benefits.
2. To amend all relevant Winchester City Council policies to ensure that

- All Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payments and War Disablement Pensions are fully disregarded when assessing financial liability for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG).
 - All Armed Forces compensation and War Pension income is fully disregarded when assessing eligibility or award levels for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP).
 - The same principle is applied wherever legally permissible in Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit calculations within local discretionary parameters.
3. To embed this position explicitly within the Council's Private Sector Housing Policy and DFG Policy Statement, citing the Armed Forces Covenant duty to ensure fair treatment.
 4. To publicise the policy clearly to veterans, local voluntary groups, and Armed Forces representatives across the district.
 5. To write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions urging national reform so that military compensation is fully exempt from all means-tested Department for Work and Pensions benefits.
 6. To work with the Royal British Legion, the Hampshire Armed Forces Covenant Partnership, and neighbouring councils to support consistent adoption of "Credit Their Service" principles across Hampshire.

b) Protecting Streams and Rivers Across the Winchester District

The motion submitted was by Councillor Learney and was as set out on the agenda and was seconded by Councillor White.

Following its introduction by Councillor Learney, Council then debated the matters in the motion. In summary the following points were raised:

- Did 'cultural history' (as referenced in resolution 2) include industrial and agricultural practices that have formed the ecosystems around our rivers?
- Data from Rivers and Seas Watch indicated that the scale of the release of untreated sewage and storm water from the combined sewage overflows are a threat to public health, notably in recreational areas where this regularly occurred.
- The rivers and streams made Winchester and district special, and it was the council's responsibility to preserve these vital resources.
- Foul water discharges into our rivers must be monitored and practical steps to reduce the frequency and impact of these

discharges should be supported. The council should be open and transparent about its activity near its own water treatment works.

AMENDMENT – Moved by Councillor Godfrey and seconded by Councillor Bolton:

Add new Resolution 6. ***Request that the Council publishes a quarterly report on discharges from council-operated water treatment works.***

Council proceeded to debate the matters in the Amendment. In summary the following points were raised:

- The Environment Agency inspection reports indicated that council operated treatment works function well, however other discharges such as nitrates or phosphates were not currently monitored or reported on.
- The council operate many wastewater treatment plants and so it would not be effective use of resources to produce monitoring data for each. It would be better to direct these resources where interventions were planned for.
- The council was already working to upgrade its water treatment works.
- A quarterly report would take additional resources to achieve and may appear as the council 'marking its own homework'.
- The council would provide a link on its website to the Environment Agency, so residents could readily access the most up-to-date information.
- The council should be prepared to lead by example and measure and publish its own output.

Following the proposer of original motion (Councillor Learney) exercising their right to reply to the debate on the Amendment, council then voted on the Amendment as set out above.

AMENDMENT LOST

Council then proceeded to continue to debate the original motion before it and in summary, the following additional points were raised:

- The motion will protect all water ways in the district and not only chalk streams.
- Local voluntary groups must be commended for their work and campaigning for cleaner rivers.

- Occurrences of failure of some Southern Water wastewater networks (alongside agricultural runoff and road pollution) had demonstrated the vulnerability of our rivers and chalk streams.
- A 'Rights of River' approach within the motion may have provided a case for changes to legislation and was an approach adopted by some other councils in Hampshire.

Having reserved their right to speak, the seconder of the motion (Councillor White) then addressed Council, followed by the proposer of the motion (Councillor Learney) who exercised their right to respond to debate.

The Council then voted on the motion as set out on the agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the motion proposed by Councillor Learney (seconded by Councillor White) be supported, and that this Council resolves to:

1. Restate this Council's intention to lead by example to protect and restore our rivers and streams and their catchments.
2. Continue to advocate to Government and national and regional bodies, including the Environment Agency, for the protection of our chalk streams and other freshwater ecosystems.
3. Support local initiatives and citizen monitoring efforts that protect and restore river health, such as citizen science water testing and river fly monitoring, riparian buffer planting, natural flood management, creating wildlife corridors and sustainable agriculture partnerships.
4. Support public engagement to raise awareness of the importance of chalk streams and rivers to Hampshire's natural and cultural heritage.
5. Request that the Environment Agency publishes an annual "State of the Rivers" report to track progress in protecting the aquatic environment, in collaboration with local environmental organisations.

c) Hampshire Mayoral Election.

The Leader (Councillor Tod) left the chamber during consideration of this item and took no part in the discussion or decision.

The motion submitted was by Councillor Horrill and was as set out on the agenda and was seconded by Councillor Godfrey.

Following its introduction by Councillor Horrill, Council then debated the matters in the motion. In summary the following points were raised:

- Delaying the mayoral elections created a technical issue regarding how a new combined authority can operate.
- The decision regarding a combined mayoral authority was made on the understanding that it would drive necessary investment to the area. Transition to a new authority should take place in the way that was respectful of the residents' expectations and giving Hampshire the stable framework that it deserved.

AMENDMENT – Moved by Councillor Pinniger and seconded by Councillor Power:

Add new words showing in **bold italics**.

This council notes the announcement last month from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government that the inaugural elections to select a Mayor for the new Hampshire Mayoral Combined Authority would not take place until May 2028.

This Council believes that the election of a Mayor for the Hampshire & the Solent Combined County Authority must happen as early as possible, preferably in May 2026, but should not be delayed beyond May 2027. ***This Council further believes that the most effective way of securing this change is through continuing with a collaborative and coordinated approach with other Hampshire and Isle of Wight authorities – and that the request should also include a restoration of funding levels to £43m a year.***

This Council resolves to:

1. Formally oppose the Government's proposal to delay the Hampshire Mayoral election from May 2026 to May 2028.
2. Write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government expressing this Council's concern at the proposed delay and calling for the election to proceed in May 2026 as originally planned and not to be postponed beyond May 2027 ***as part of a coordinated plan with other authorities and if current approaches are not successful.***

With the leave of the proposer of the original motion before Council (Councillor Horrill), Council agreed that the matters in the amendment were acceptable and that no debate on the amendment was required.

AMENDMENT CARRIED.

Council then proceeded to further debate the motion (as amended) and now the substantive motion before the meeting.

In summary the following points were raised:

- The mayoral election should proceed under the Supplementary Vote (SV) system as the First-Past-the-Post system risked conferring extensive executive powers on candidates elected with the support of only a minority of voters, particularly where multiple candidates stand.

Having reserved their right to speak, the seconder of the original motion (which was now as amended), Councillor Godfrey, then addressed Council, followed by the proposer of the original motion (Councillor Horrill) who exercised their right to respond to debate.

The Council then voted on the motion as set out on the agenda, as amended above.

RESOLVED:

That the motion proposed by Councillor Horrill (seconded by Councillor Godfrey), as amended (proposed by Councillor Pinniger, and seconded by Councillor Power) be supported, and that this Council resolves to:

1. Formally oppose the Government's proposal to delay the Hampshire Mayoral election from May 2026 to May 2028.
2. Write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government expressing this Council's concern at the proposed delay and calling for the election to proceed in May 2026 as originally planned and not to be postponed beyond May 2027 as part of a coordinated plan with other authorities and if current approaches are not successful.

d) Local Elections.

The motion submitted was by Councillor Horrill and was as set out on the agenda. The motion was seconded by Councillor Godfrey.

Following its introduction by Councillor Horrill, Council then debated the matters in the motion. In summary, the following points were raised:

- Stability, transparency, and public confidence all depend on scheduled elections taking place.
- The Supplementary Vote (SV) system would not be available for the forthcoming local elections.
- Local elections were one of the most fundamental ways residents engaged with local issues and voting in local politics was an important right.

- There was absolute confidence that officers had the capacity and expertise to deliver elections at this time, and there was absolutely no reason for them to be delayed.

Having reserved their right to speak, the seconder of the motion (Councillor Godfrey) then addressed Council, followed by the proposer of the motion (Councillor Horrill) who exercised their right to respond to debate.

The Council then voted on the motion as set out on the agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the motion proposed by Councillor Horrill (seconded by Councillor Godfrey) be supported, and that this Council resolves to:

Request that the Leader responds to the Minister accordingly – making clear that Winchester City Council does not support postponement of its elections.

8. **CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS**

There were no changes to committee memberships for Council to note.

9. **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL**

Council referred to the 13 questions which had been received, which were all heard at the meeting along with associated supplementary questions.

The questions received and their response were subsequently set out on the [council's website](#).

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 9.40 pm

The Mayor