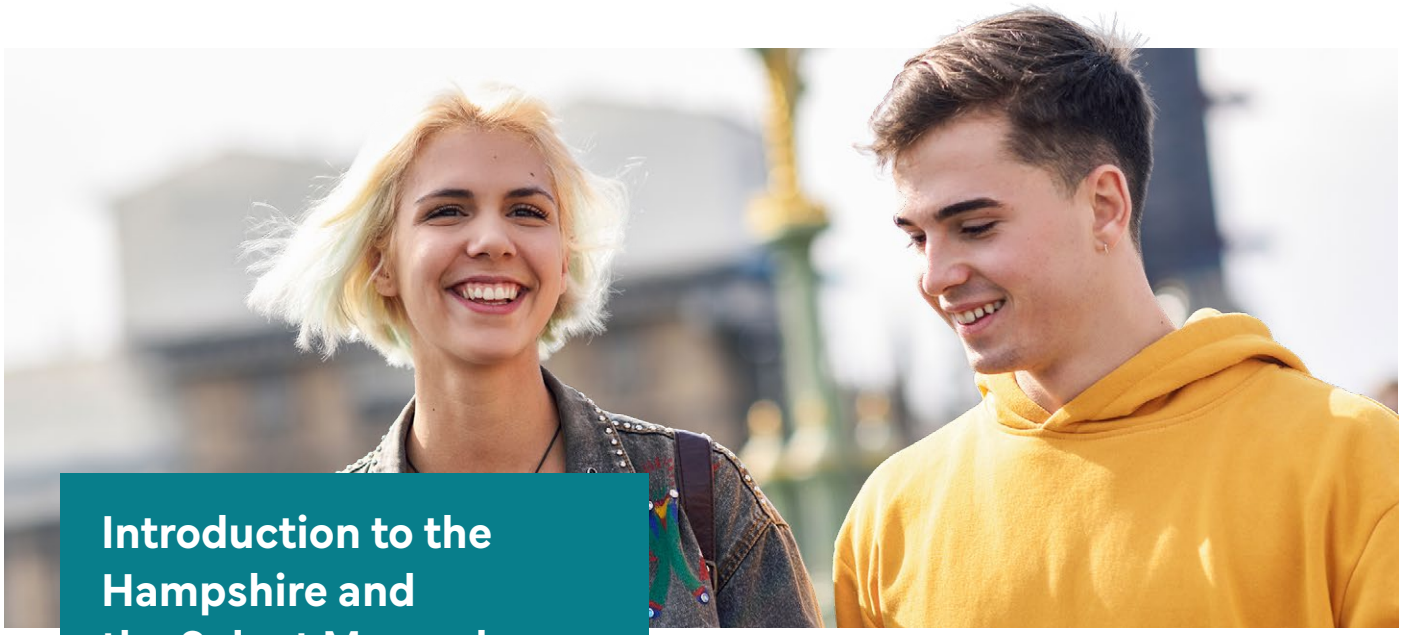
Hampshire and the Solent
MAYORAL COMBINED COUNTY AUTHORITY

Hampshire and the Solent devolution

August 2025 update



Introduction to the Hampshire and the Solent Mayoral Combined County Authority

The devolution of powers from Westminster to regions across England offers people the opportunity for more local decision-making and more influence on how money and government powers are used to benefit their regions and their communities.

Background to devolution in Hampshire and the Solent

Upper tier Local Authorities in Hampshire and the Solent (HatS) approached government to explore devolution last year. In February 2025, the area was accepted onto the Devolution Priority Programme (DPP), paving the way for specific powers and funding to be transferred from central government to a new Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA) covering Southampton, Portsmouth, Hampshire, and the Isle of Wight.

Role of the MCCA

The MCCA will take on powers from central government, giving the region greater control of how it's governed through more decisions being made in the region, by people who know and understand the region, rather than in Westminster. Its main goal is to tackle regional challenges and make the most of opportunities across Hampshire and the Solent — boosting investment, creating jobs and homes, and reducing inequalities between communities.

Role of the Mayor

The new authority will be led by a Mayor who will work with stakeholders and residents to align strategic initiatives with community priorities. The Mayor will also represent the region nationally and internationally. They have a key role in championing the region and in attracting inward investment that can be used to support regional growth. That investment will support initiatives that deliver better transport connectivity, skills and training options to support local employment and local businesses, housing to meet the needs of our communities, growth of sectors key to the HatS economy and regeneration of areas that are disadvantaged compared to other parts of the region. The Mayor, who will be elected in May 2026 for a four year term in office, will work alongside council leaders from Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, and Southampton on regional decisions. Local service decisions will remain with the existing councils.

Collaborative working

Working together, the MCCA and partner organisations will focus on strategic issues that benefit the region, ensuring joined-up governance and decisions that reflect the needs of local communities. The Combined Authority's remit spans seven key areas: transport and infrastructure; skills and employment; housing and strategic planning; economic development and regeneration; the environment; health, wellbeing, and public service reform; and public safety.

Continuing role of local councils

Local councils across Hampshire and the Solent will continue to deliver day-to-day services and remain accountable for local improvements in consultation with their communities. The MCCA will work closely with them to ensure our collective priorities for the region are aligned.

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Building a Better Hampshire and the Solent.

The journey so far...

In April 2025, the Government held a regional consultation on devolution. Most respondents supported a directly elected Mayor as someone identifiable and accountable to voters, who can give clear local leadership.

Respondents recognised that a Mayor can bring together councils and other public sector bodies to provide a unified approach to big decisions and regional strategies on infrastructure, investment, and policy.

Some respondents felt the MCCA could secure more government funding and resources for the region, with coordinated leadership expected to improve areas such as public transport connections and offer greater opportunities to tackle congestion.

In July 2025 Government confirmed that our region met the tests to progress with the creation of a new Mayoral County Combined Authority (MCCA) for Hampshire and the Solent. This follows the recent announcement about the introduction of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill.

With access to the devolution framework, we will have the powers we need to deliver more jobs, easier commutes, and new homes for local people. Devolution will give local leaders the tools to empower our region and deliver on people's expectation for positive change.

Forward plan

AUTUMN / WINTER 2025

Legislation laid by government and debated in Parliament to create the new **Mayoral County Combined Authority.**

EARLY 2026

Legislation is signed into law and the MCCA comes into existence.

SPRING 2026

Confirmation of candidates standing for election.

Notice of election issued **no later than 30th March 2026.**

MAY 2026

Elections for the new **Mayor of Hampshire and the Solent.**

Current work

There is a **Design and Set Up programme** working on the essential requirements to set up a new organisation that will bring regional government to our region. There is also a **Strategy and Policy programme**, planning for how the MCCA will meet its statutory duties set out in the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, and how it will develop the statutory plans that the MCCA is required to develop and implement.

Collaboration with government

We are working closely with government on all aspects of the programme and future updates will include information from government briefings where they may be relevant to stakeholders and partners.

Have your say

If there are specific topics you would like to know about, please contact the HatS devolution team and outline your areas of interest or queries, and we will endeavour to incorporate them into future updates.

Stay Informed

A website for the MCCA is also in development, which will be publicised when it's available. Future updates like this will be posted there as well. We appreciate the information in this summary is high-level and some stakeholders will need more detail. If that applies to you, please contact the team via the devolution mailbox, stating the nature of your enquiry, and we will direct your enquiry as appropriate within the programme.

The Hampshire and the Solent devolution programme: The four councils, Southampton, Portsmouth, Isle of Wight and Hampshire are participating in a programme to set up the MCCA. As part of this programme we will be producing regular updates for stakeholders. You can register to receive these directly by emailing **HatS.Devolution@southampton.gov.uk** and putting 'Devolution Updates' in the subject bar. If you do not wish to receive further information about devolution please email us.

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