

# Consultation on proposed changes to Homelessness Support Services in Hampshire

## Information pack



**Consultation period: 15 June – 10 August 2018**

## Alternative formats

To request this information in another format such as large print, audio or Braille, please contact Hampshire County Council at:

E-mail: **AS.Consultation@hants.gov.uk**

Telephone: **01962 847 267**

If you have any queries about this consultation, please get in contact with the County Council at:

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Telephone: **01962 847 267**

# 1. Introduction

Hampshire County Council is seeking the views of service users and other interested stakeholders on proposals to change County Council funded Homelessness Support Services.

**The consultation opens on midday Friday, 15 June 2018 and closes at midday on Friday, 10 August 2018.**

Homelessness Support Services (also known as Social Inclusion Services) are housing related support services for people over the age of 18 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

This document sets out proposals for changes to Homelessness Support Services, which focus on buying services that meet the needs of the most vulnerable homeless people (who are street homeless or at risk of street homelessness) and seek to reduce funding for services for people with less critical needs.

No changes would be made to services until after July 2019.

The short term nature of Homelessness Support Services means that most people who currently use services would be unlikely to be affected by the proposed changes, however some people who may need this type of service in the future would need to access housing related support from a range of other sources.

The County Council must meet a funding shortfall of £140million by April 2019, and of this, £56million is planned to be met from the Adults' Health and Care budget. The proposed changes outlined in this document would achieve a potential reduction of £1.8million.

Whilst the County Council does not have a statutory responsibility to fund specialist Homelessness Support Services, we are proposing a continued investment of £2.4million for services that meet the housing related support needs of the most vulnerable homeless people, some of whom may have eligible care and support needs or could develop eligible care and support needs in the future. The County Council would also ensure that anyone affected by the proposals who may have eligible care and support needs would be offered a *Care Act 2014* assessment and supported to access services that meet any identified needs.

From April 2018, under the commencement of the *Homelessness Reduction Act 2017*, people who are homeless or ‘*at risk of homelessness within the next 56 days*’ can receive support to relieve and prevent homelessness from district and borough councils. In addition, from October 2018, public services, including the County Council, will have a duty to refer anyone they identify as homeless or at risk of homelessness to district and borough councils for homelessness support and assistance.

These new duties have been designed to ensure that people who are at risk of homelessness can get help earlier to prevent homelessness and before they may need more intensive services.

The County Council has been working with district and borough councils in Hampshire to ensure that the proposed changes to Homelessness Support Services would align with any other services that these councils may provide to support the prevention and relief of homelessness. The County Council will also ensure that robust referral pathways are in place, so that where appropriate, the district and borough councils can refer people with care and support needs to other services funded by the County Council, or for assessment under the *Care Act 2014*.

## **Why your views are important**

It is important to the County Council that the views of the people who use these services, as well as feedback from other interested stakeholders, are carefully considered.

The County Council is seeking your views on:

- the services that we are proposing to continue to buy
- the services that we are proposing to reduce
- the potential impact of the proposed changes
- any alternative options that we should consider.

Your feedback will help to inform a decision by the Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health to be taken in December 2018 on the proposed changes to Homelessness Support Services.

## ***Serving Hampshire* – Balancing the budget consultation**

Last year, the County Council undertook a countywide consultation with residents to seek views on options for managing the anticipated budget shortfall of £140million by April 2019.

This shortfall is due to national austerity measures, combined with demographic and inflationary pressures. With less money available and growing demand for council services, especially statutory services, tough decisions will need to be made about what the County Council can and cannot do in the future. The Authority is required by law to deliver a balanced budget and therefore cannot plan to spend more than is available.

The *Serving Hampshire* – Balancing the Budget consultation included potential options around: reducing and changing services; introducing and increasing charges for some services; lobbying Government for legislative change; generating additional income; using the County Council's reserves; increasing Council Tax; and changing the local government arrangements in Hampshire.

Full details of the findings of this consultation can be found on the County Council's website.

## **Savings options for Adults' Health and Care**

The Adults' Health and Care Department has a savings target of £56million by April 2019 through proposals which are in line with the approach preferred by residents. Savings of this scale mean that we must challenge the way we currently provide services and look at how we can meet people's needs differently.

Under the *Care Act* 2014, the County Council has a duty to ensure that people's eligible care and support needs are met. In addition, the County Council also has a responsibility to promote wellbeing and prevent or delay the need for care and support services.

The County Council has looked carefully at all the options for meeting the required budget reductions and where we are currently buying services for people with a 'lower' level of need, we have considered whether there are different ways this support could be provided; for example, by working more closely with partners and by providing better information and support for people to access a range of existing services.

## **The County Council's consultation policy**

Hampshire County Council is committed to five principles of consultation:

- to consult on key issues and proposals
- to consult in good time
- to be inclusive but with clear and appropriate limits
- to consult using clear, simple information
- to ensure responses are taken into account when decisions are made.

## 2. Background information

### **Local government responsibilities for people who are homeless in Hampshire**

Local government responsibilities for people who are homeless in Hampshire are divided between the County Council and the eleven district councils.

**The County Council is responsible for** meeting people's eligible care and support needs under the *Care Act 2014*. It also has responsibility for prevention and wellbeing but has no legal responsibilities to provide specialist homelessness services. From October 2018, the County Council will also have a responsibility to refer any person they identify as homeless, or at risk of homelessness, to the district and borough councils.

**The district and borough councils are responsible for** providing advice and assistance to people who are homeless and for the prevention of homelessness under the *Homelessness Reduction Act 2017*. They also have a responsibility to provide temporary housing for some homeless people whilst they work with them to find a longer-term solution.

However, the district and borough councils have no legal responsibility to meet the eligible care and support needs that some homeless people may have, and the County Council has a responsibility, under the *Care Act 2014*, for ensuring that these needs are met.

The County Council is working together with the district and borough councils in Hampshire to explore different ways of supporting homeless people that makes the best use of collective resources to deliver Homelessness Support Services in the future. This work has shaped the proposed changes to County Council funded services that are outlined in this consultation document.

## What help is provided by Homelessness Support Services?

Homelessness Support Services funded by the County Council provide a range of different types of help to people aged 18 and above who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The support provided by these services is often called 'housing related support' and includes help to:

- **find and keep accommodation:** This may include help to understand the rights and responsibilities of a tenancy agreement
- **manage money:** This may include help to apply for welfare benefits, pay rent and bills, address debt and budget on a low income
- **find employment training, voluntary work and education**
- **manage and address drug and alcohol issues:** This may include help to access specialist treatment services and support to reduce the use of drugs and alcohol
- **improve physical health:** This may include help to access General Practitioners (GPs) and health services, and support to manage longer term physical health issues
- **improve mental health and wellbeing:** This may include help to access mental health services and support to manage mental health issues.

## How this help is provided in Hampshire

The County Council currently funds housing related support within three main types of service:

- I. Intensive 24/7 supported housing and night shelter services
- II. 'Lower' level and/or 'move on' supported housing
- III. Community support.

These are described opposite.

## **I. Intensive 24/7 supported housing and night shelter services**

These schemes provide short-term housing and support for rough sleepers and people at risk of rough sleeping. Services aim to support people to move into more settled accommodation within six months.

Intensive 24/7 supported housing schemes have staff on site 24 hours a day and help people who have a high level of support needs.

The County Council also funds support services in one emergency night shelter which is based in Winchester. Service users are required to leave the building during the day unless they are involved in on site support groups.

Only the **housing related support** within these schemes is paid for by the County Council. Currently the housing costs are paid for by rent, which for most people is covered by housing benefit.

The County Council recognises that the Government intends to make changes to the way the housing costs for supported housing are paid for in the future, and that an announcement regarding what these changes will look like is imminent. The County Council will report on these changes in the report to the Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health later this year to ensure that they are considered alongside the proposals for changes to Homelessness Support Services.

## **II. 'Lower' level and/or 'move on' supported housing**

These schemes provide accommodation and support for individuals who are homeless and have less critical needs or are ready to move on from a more intensive supported housing service. Whilst some services do have a 24 hour staff presence, most people living in these schemes receive help from a visiting support service. Services aim to move people into more settled accommodation within 12 months.

As with the intensive 24/7 services, only the **housing related support** within these schemes is paid for by the County Council, the housing costs are paid for by rent, which for most people is covered by housing benefit.

## **III. Community support services**

These support services are available to any individual or family requiring **housing related support** to access accommodation or to maintain their current accommodation. Unlike the types of service described above, this support service is not 'attached' to accommodation and any person who is homeless or at risk of homelessness can receive help from this service regardless of their current housing status.

### 3. Proposed changes to Homelessness Support Services

Hampshire County Council, with responsibility for adult social care, along with the district and borough councils, who have responsibility for housing and homelessness prevention, have been working together to look at how best to deliver a range of Homelessness Support Services in the future and ensure that the County Council's funding meets the needs of the most vulnerable service users across the county.

The proposals have taken into account the current location of supported housing schemes and the importance of these services locally whilst seeking to ensure a consistent service offer to any individual sleeping rough in the Hampshire County Council local authority area.

The County Council would **continue to spend £2.4million on Homelessness Support Services** and our proposal is to prioritise this funding to **directly meet the needs of the most vulnerable homeless people**.

This would mean that we would **continue to fund the intensive 24/7 supported housing and night shelter services** that are used by people sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough and **reduce the amount of money spent on services in lower level and 'move on' supported housing and community support by approximately 70%**.

In most cases, support would no longer be 'attached' to 'lower' level and/or 'move on' supported housing, enabling services to be targeted to meet the needs of the most vulnerable.

This would mean that, in addition to the intensive 24/7 supported housing and night shelter services, the County Council would fund community support for:

- people who are moving on from intensive 24/7 supported housing
- people living in 'lower' level and/or 'move on' supported housing or moving on from these schemes, and unable to access support from other sources
- single homeless people and couples with complex support needs who are unable to access support from other sources.

**Most people who currently use community support services for help to prevent homelessness would need to seek support from other services.**

The County Council would work with the district and borough councils and current service providers to plan the transition to any new arrangements

and to ensure that people who may be affected by any changes are provided with clear information regarding alternative support services and how to get help to prevent homelessness in the future.

The changes to services that would be made under this proposal are described in detail below and could achieve a reduction in budget of £1.8million.

## **I. Intensive 24/7 supported housing and night shelter services**

### **What services are currently provided?**

There are currently five intensive supported housing schemes funded by the County Council. These services are in Basingstoke, Fareham (shared service with Gosport), Test Valley, Rushmoor (shared service with Hart) and Winchester.

People sleeping rough in areas where there is no intensive scheme can access the services located in Fareham, Test Valley, Rushmoor and Winchester for up to 12 weeks whilst alternative options are sought within their local area. The Basingstoke service can only be accessed by people with a local connection to the Basingstoke and Deane area.

The County Council also funds support services in one emergency night shelter which is based in Winchester

The location of these services is shown on the map in appendix one.

Approximately **£1.7million** is spent on the support provided in this type of accommodation.

### **What changes are we proposing?**

There are no changes proposed for the level of intensive 24/7 supported housing or night shelter services.

## II. 'Lower' level and/or 'move on' supported housing

### What services are currently provided?

The County Council currently funds 'lower' level and/or 'move on' supported housing in all district council areas apart from the New Forest and Winchester.

The location of these services is shown on the map in appendix one.

Approximately **£0.5million** is currently spent on the support provided in this type of accommodation.

### What changes are we proposing?

We are proposing that the support required by people living in these schemes could be provided differently through enhanced housing management services (paid for by rents), the community support service (described in **III** opposite) and from other community based services.

The proposed changes for 'lower' level and/or 'move on' supported housing are described in detail by area below:

- **Basingstoke, Fareham, Gosport. Test Valley, Rushmoor and Hart:**  
Support services funded by the County Council would no longer be 'attached' to 'lower' level and/or 'move on' supported housing in those Hampshire districts where we fund services in intensive 24/7 supported housing schemes. However, people living in these schemes would still be able to access the County Council funded community support service described in **III** if this additional support is required.
- **Havant, East Hampshire and Eastleigh:**  
The County Council would continue to fund support services 'attached' to some current 'lower' level supported housing in Hampshire districts that do not have 24/7 services and develop these services to ensure that they are able to support people with more complex needs. This proposal would support the provision of five units of accommodation for single homeless people in Havant, seven units in East Hampshire and three units in Eastleigh. People living in other 'lower' level schemes in these district areas would be able to access the community support service described in **III** if this additional support is required.

- **New Forest:**

There are currently no supported housing schemes for single homeless people in the New Forest. A need for this type of scheme has been identified and we are proposing that support would be available from the community support service described in **III**, should the New Forest District Council wish to develop a new scheme as part of their local Homelessness Strategy.

- **Winchester:**

The County Council does not provide any support funding for 'lower' level and/or 'move on' supported housing in Winchester. However, there are several 'lower' level supported housing schemes already operating in this area where people are supported by County Council funded community support. This model of service would continue under these proposals.

### **What would these changes mean?**

Any individual living in a 'lower' level or 'move on' scheme would still be able to receive support from a County Council support service if this is required, however in most areas this support would no longer be attached to a named supported housing scheme.

## **III. Community support services**

### **What services are currently provided?**

This support service is currently available to any individual or family requiring housing related support to access housing or to maintain their current housing. Alongside a visiting support service, current services also provide support and information through drop-ins based in district and borough council offices, and other locations across the county.

Additionally, specialist community support services known as street outreach services are available in Fareham, Gosport, Winchester, Test Valley, Hart, Rushmoor and Basingstoke. These services help people sleeping on the streets to access housing and any other services that they may need, such as GPs for health issues, Job Centre Plus for benefit claims and services for support with mental health and substance misuse issues.

The County Council currently spends approximately **£2million** on community support services.

## What changes are we proposing?

The County Council is proposing to reduce the amount of money spent on community support services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and only fund support services for people who are moving on from the supported housing services described in I and II, those living in 'lower' level and/or 'move on' supported housing and single homeless people with complex support needs.

The service that would be provided would be short term, maximise the use of other resources, for example organisations that are available to provide support with budgeting and debt, and focus on supporting people to access other services that meet their needs at the earliest opportunity.

This reduction is being proposed so that the County Council can focus the available funding on meeting the needs of the most vulnerable homeless people and continue to fund intensive 24/7 supported accommodation services for people who are sleeping rough and have limited alternative options. The proposed new community based service would be designed to ensure that people who have moved on from these services have support to maintain their new accommodation and are able to seek support at an early stage to address any difficulties they may face in the future.

Under this proposal:

- most people who use this service for help to prevent homelessness would need to seek support from other sources. The County Council would work with the district and borough councils and current service providers to plan the transition to any new arrangements and ensure that any individual who may be affected is provided with clear information regarding alternative services and support to access these services
- community support funded by the County Council would only be available for people living in 'lower' level and/or 'move on' accommodation, people moving on from intensive 24/7 supported accommodation and single homeless people (including people sleeping rough) who are unable to access other sources of support
- the County Council would only contribute funding to specialist street outreach services in areas where the district and borough councils choose to jointly fund this type of service with the County Council.

## What would these changes mean?

The short term nature of community support means that most people who currently use services would be unlikely to be affected by the proposed changes; however people who require this type of help in the future may need to seek support from a range of other sources:

- individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness would need to go to their local district or borough council as a first point of contact for advice and support. Where appropriate, following initial assessment, people would be signposted to other community services for additional support, including organisations offering debt and money management advice. Where more complex support needs are identified, the district and borough councils could refer people to other County Council funded support services, including drug and alcohol services, the Mental Health Housing and Support pathway, Wellbeing Centres, and for assessment under the *Care Act 2014*
- under the *Care Act 2014*, people who may have a need for care and support can have their needs assessed by the County Council. Following assessment, they may be offered services to meet their needs or signposted to other community services
- families requiring support additional to their housing needs could be referred, or refer themselves, to the County Council's Family Support Service. This service includes intensive support for families whose lives are affected by multiple difficulties including health problems, children with poor school attendance and long-term unemployment. Following assessment, a family may be offered family support or signposted to other community services including those provided by health professionals.

Whilst other sources of support are available, the vulnerability of some of the people who use community support services may mean that they do not seek or access the help they need to prevent homelessness. This could result in an increase in homelessness and street homelessness, and an increase in the number of people who subsequently require services from the district and borough councils.

The County Council will continue to work with all partners to explore how we can collectively meet the varying needs of individuals and families earlier and before they may need more intensive services.

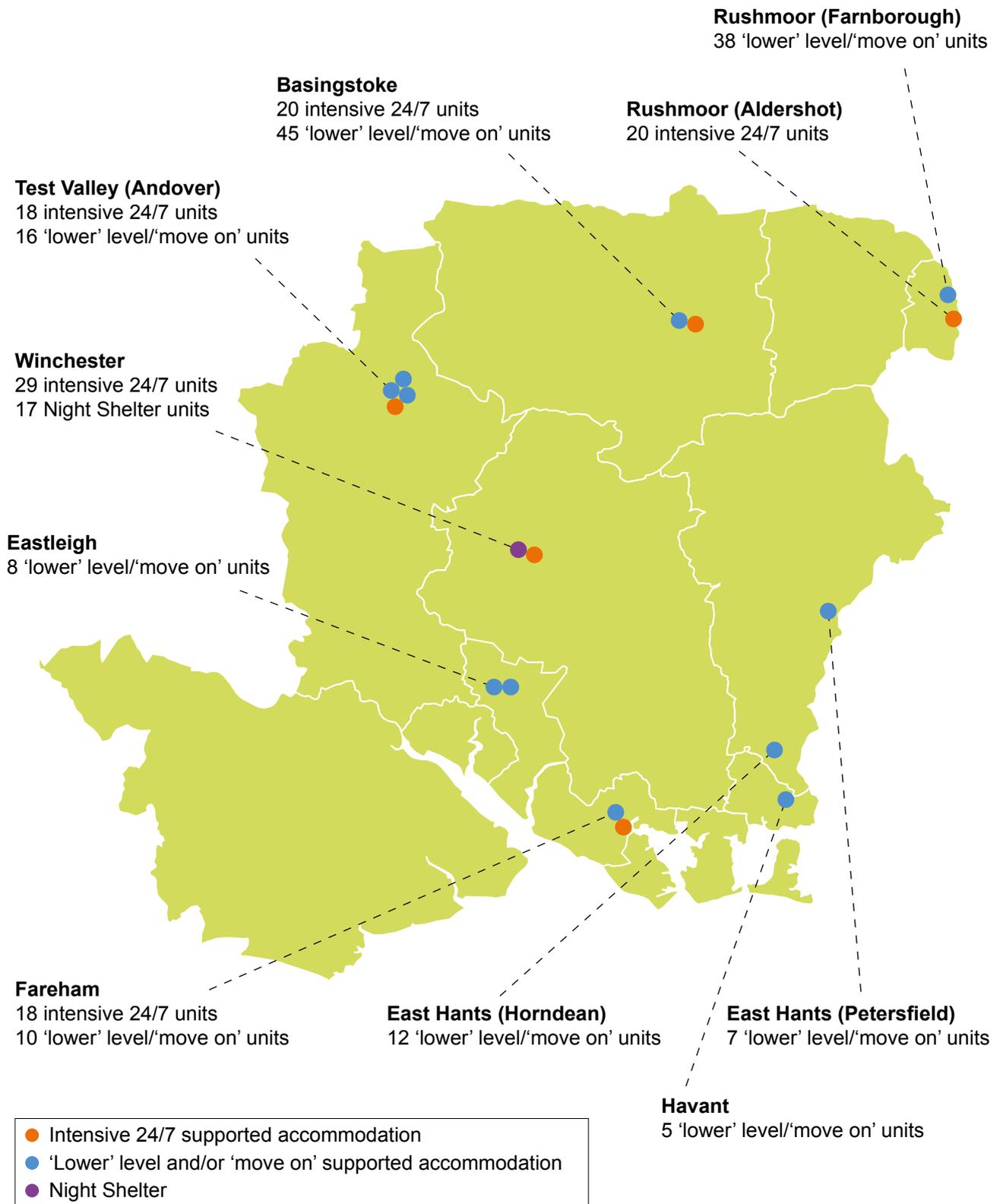
## 4. Options considered and rejected

In developing the proposals to change Homelessness Support Services, the County Council has considered several other options which have subsequently been rejected.

- A. The County Council could maintain the current level of spend and service.** This option has been rejected because of the pressures on the County Council's budgets and the fact that the Authority is required by law to deliver a balanced budget. Therefore, with limited resources, the proposals have been designed to support those people who have higher levels of need and are most at risk of sleeping rough.
  
- B. The County Council could focus funding on the delivery of 'lower' level supported accommodation and community support.** This option has been rejected because there are other ways that people with less critical needs can access support and these services cannot meet the accommodation and support needs of the people most at risk of sleeping rough.
  
- C. The County Council could withdraw all the funding for this type of service as it is not a service that we have a legal responsibility to provide.** This option has been rejected because the County Council wants to work in partnership with the district and borough councils to support homeless people and ensure that specialist services are available for vulnerable people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and may have eligible care and support needs either now or in the future.

# Appendix one

## Hampshire County Council funded supported housing services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness



# How to have your say

Thank you for reading through this information pack. You are invited to give your views on these proposals.

## **Responding by post**

To provide your feedback you can use the consultation questionnaire provided with this document. Please return the questionnaire to the County Council in the pre-paid envelope provided. If you do not have a pre-paid envelope, please post your response to **Freepost HAMPSHIRE**, writing 'AS Consultation' on the back of the envelope.

## **Responding online**

You can go online to **[www.hants.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.hants.gov.uk/consultations)** to complete the online questionnaire for this consultation.

## **Responding by email**

You can also email your response directly to the County Council using the email address **[AS.Consultation@hants.gov.uk](mailto:AS.Consultation@hants.gov.uk)**

**This consultation will run for eight weeks from 15 June 2018 to 10 August 2018. Please note that responses received after this date will not be included in the findings report.**



