

Local Government Re-organisation.

Government has today confirmed plans for local government reorganisation in Surrey, announcing that two new unitary councils will replace the existing twelve councils in April 2027, creating a simpler and more efficient system for delivering services across the county. We would appreciate your support in sharing this information with your community.

Government is clear that this once in a generation reform will see stronger local councils in charge of all local services, equipped to drive economic growth, improve local public services, and lead and empower their communities – ultimately it will help drive up living standards.

Government confirmed their commitment to repayment in-principle of £500m of Woking Borough Council's debt in 2026-27. This is a first tranche of repayment support, and government will continue to explore what further debt support is required at a later point.

Elections for the new councils will take place in May 2026, with the new authorities formally taking over responsibilities from 1 April 2027. Existing councillors will remain in post until 31 March 2027. This transition period will enable detailed work for reorganisation and devolution to take place, and services will be delivered as usual throughout the process.

Government is also clear that simplifying local government ensures a strong foundation for devolution. The establishment of a strategic authority will be subject to the relevant statutory tests being met and there will be ongoing discussions between local officials and the Minister. The ambition is to have a Mayor for Surrey, and local officials will be working with Government on the timeline for this, following discussions with the Minister for Devolution.

The creation of two unitary councils, East Surrey and West Surrey, means that from April 2027 an East Surrey unitary authority will replace the current areas covered by Elmbridge, Epsom and Ewell, Mole Valley, Reigate and Banstead, and Tandridge councils. A West Surrey unitary will take over the areas of Guildford, Runnymede, Spelthorne, Surrey Heath, Waverley, and Woking.