

Local Government Reorganisation



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What is Local Government Reorganisation

In Surrey, some services (like education, adult and children's social care and roads) are run by the County Council, while others (like bin collections, planning, and housing) are run by your local Borough or District Council.

But the national Government wants to simplify that system - combining councils into unitary councils so that one council delivers all services in your area.

This is called Local Government Reorganisation.

Spelthorne Borough Council	Surrey County Council
Car parks	Adult social care
Community centres and meals on wheels	Birth/death/marriage registration
Council tax and business rates	Bus passes
Elections	Disabled parking badges
Environmental health and food safety	Education and libraries
Fly tipping	Fire and rescue
Food and welfare network	On-street parking
Housing and housing benefits	Pavement repair and footpaths
Leisure centres	Potholes
Licensing	Roads and drains
Parks and leisure	Social services
Pavement cleaning	Street lighting
Planning and building control	Trading standards
Rubbish and recycling	Trees on pavement/road
Trees in parks	Verge cutting



Background

- on 16 December 2024, Central Government published a White Paper on the decentralisation of government power to local or regional authorities
- Surrey selected for the ‘first wave’ of reorganisation and devolution
- invited to submit an interim proposal to Government by 21 March
- final plan to be submitted by 9 May 2025



Part A - key headlines

11 D& Bs and Surrey CC agree:

- commitment to LGR to improve efficiency and unlocking devolution
- ambition to create a Mayoral Strategic Authority for the area and opportunities it would bring:
 - funding opportunities, saving efficiencies, wider approach to service delivery and accountability
- challenges:
 - disruption to social care services, dealing with council debt, staff retention and responding to Surrey's housing crisis



Part B - key headlines

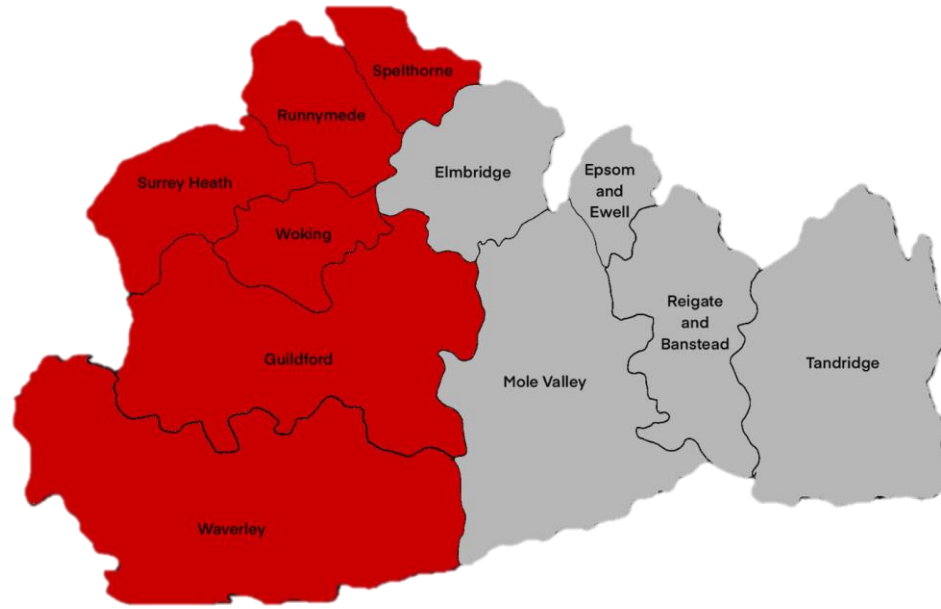
- Case for **two** unitary authorities:
 - greater economies of scale
 - reduces complexity of splitting services, such as social care, across three authorities
- Case for **three** unitary authorities:
 - balances financial considerations with residents' sense of place
 - more localism and resident engagement

Government may choose a single, two or three unitaries



Geography - 1.1: East/West

Spelthorne, Guildford, Runnymede, Surrey Heath, Waverley and Woking.



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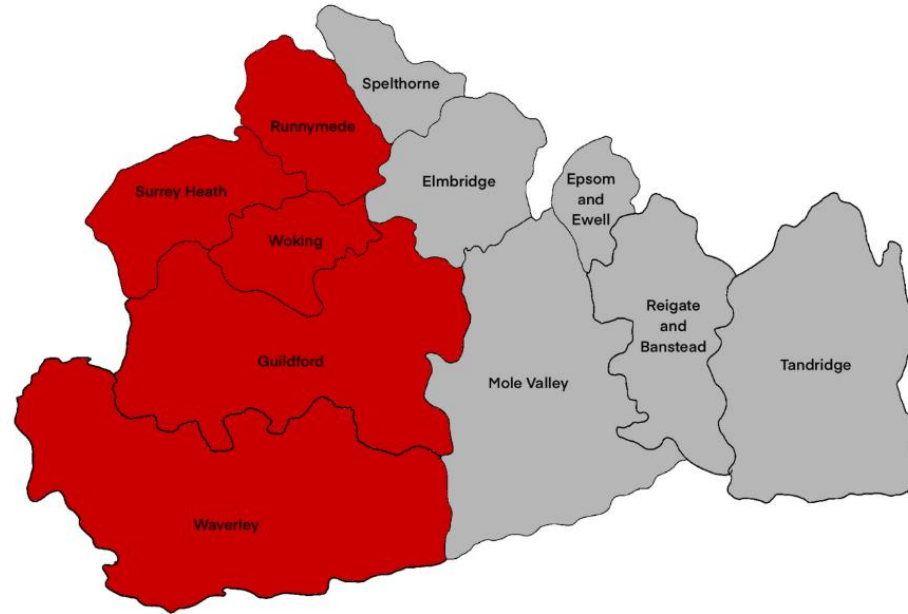


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Geography - 1.2: East/West

Spelthorne, Elmbridge, Mole Valley, Epsom and Ewell, Reigate and Banstead and Tandridge



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Geography – Option 3: three unitary approach

North-west Surrey

Elmbridge, Runnymede, **Spelthorne**

(Population 330,000 residents)

East Surrey

Epsom & Ewell, Mole Valley, Reigate & Banstead, Tandridge

(Population 410,000 residents)

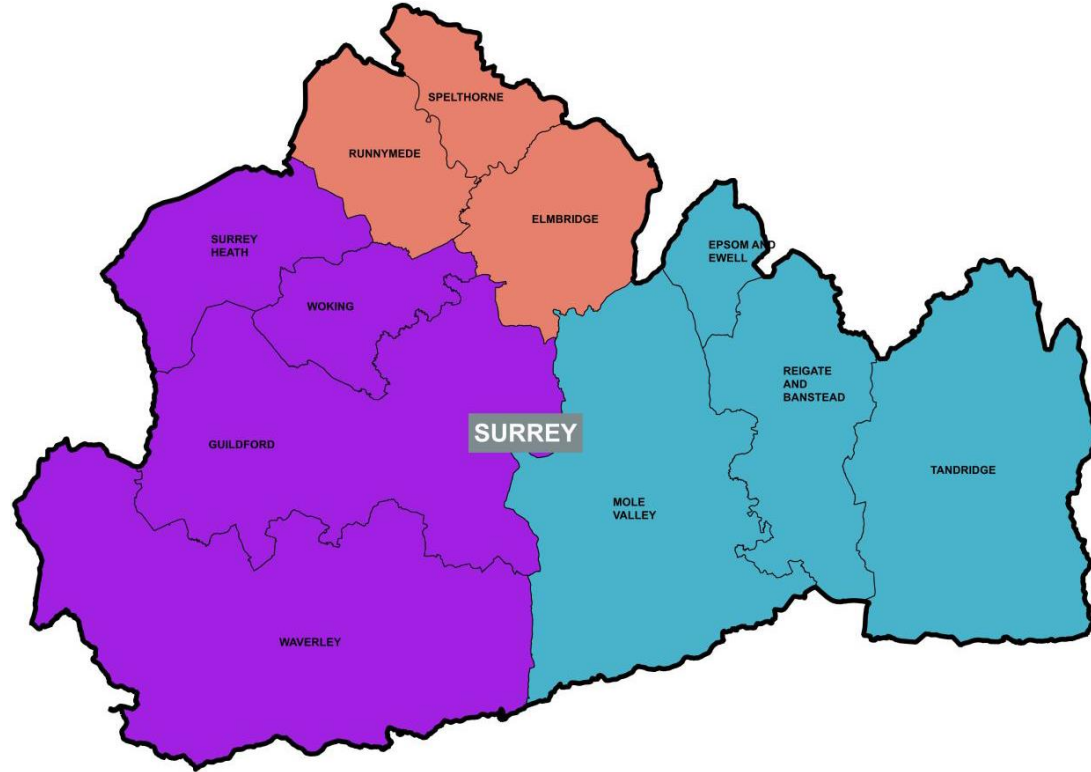
South-west Surrey

Guildford, Waverley, Woking, Surrey Heath

(Population 470,000 residents)



Geography – Option 3: three unitary approach



Three unitary approach - the benefits

- maintain a **strong connection** to **local identity and place** while also meeting the aims and objectives of local government reorganisation
- enable communities to continue to feel that they are **represented** and that their unique **social, cultural, and economic characteristics** are reflected in local governance
- naturally align with economic **geographies** and commuting patterns to drive local economic **growth**



Councillors and elections

- both proposals recommend new unitary councils hold ‘all-out’ elections every four years
- Spelthorne currently holds elections every 4 years, some are three years
- up to three Councillors per ward
- shadow Cabinet elections in May 2026



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Implementation

- **Phase 1: Pre-planning (inc. government-led resident consultation) - May to October 25**
- Phase 2: Planning and preparing - Sept 25 to May 26
- Phase 3: Shadow governance - May 26 to March 27
- Phase 4: Implementation - April 27 onwards



Next steps

- Government still working with D&Bs and County Leaders
- resident engagement
- councils continuing assessing proposals
- **Spelthorne Full Council meeting 6 May** to discuss final proposal
- final plan must be submitted to Government by 9 May 2025
- Government consultation (late summer/autumn)
- shadow Cabinet elections in May 2026
- decision reached and unification begins May 2027



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