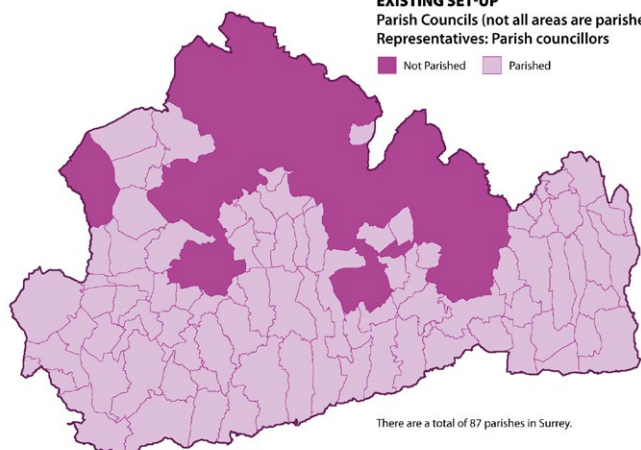


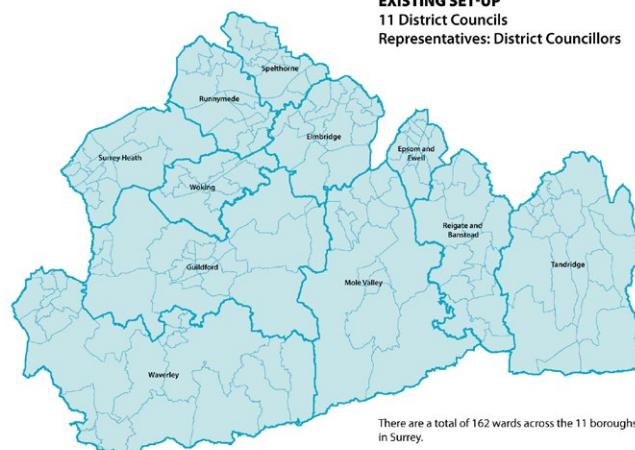
Democracy, Devolution and Dorking • changes affect everyone

At present this is the 4 tier political landscape of Surrey.

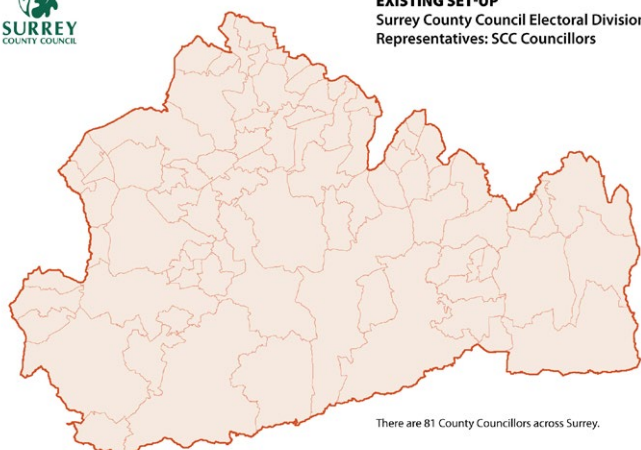
**TIER 1
EXISTING SET-UP**
Parish Councils (not all areas are parished)
Representatives: Parish councillors



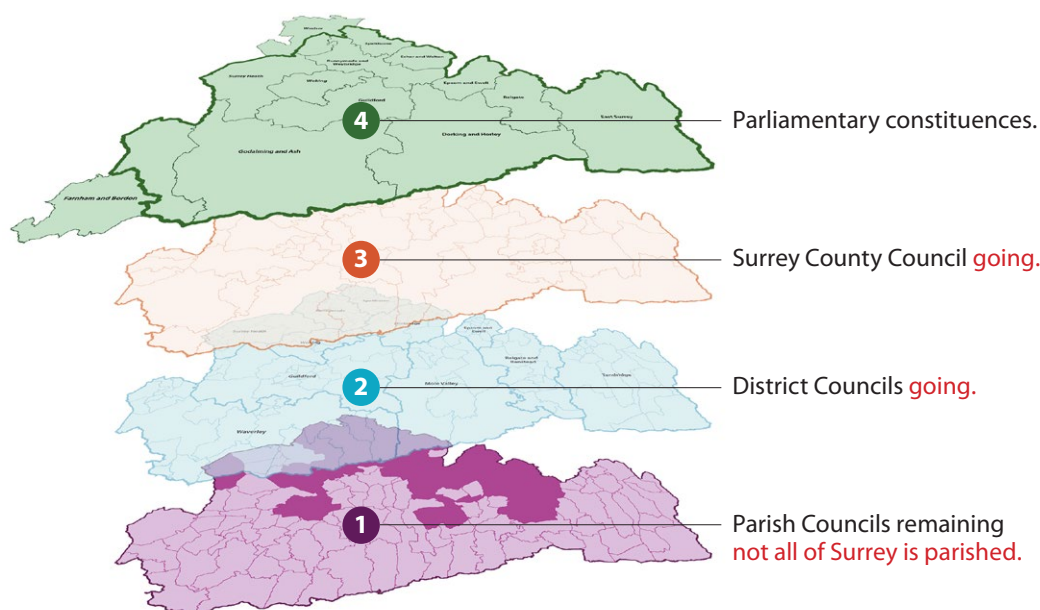
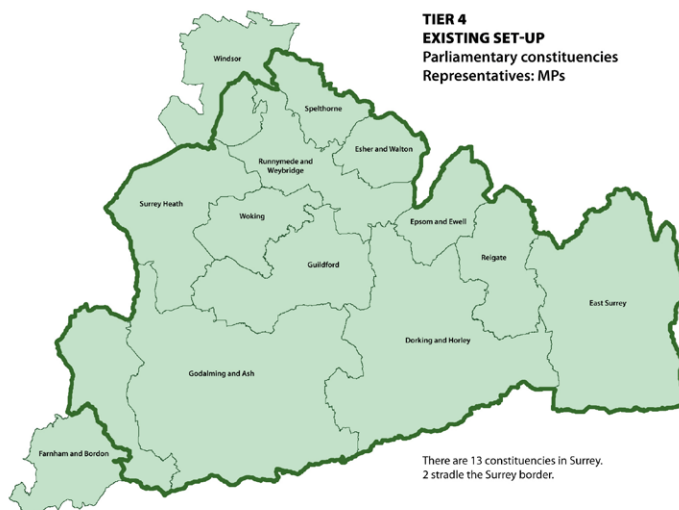
**TIER 2
EXISTING SET-UP**
11 District Councils
Representatives: District Councillors



**TIER 3
EXISTING SET-UP**
Surrey County Council Electoral Divisions
Representatives: SCC Councillors



**TIER 4
EXISTING SET-UP**
Parliamentary constituencies
Representatives: MPs



Why?

It's all part of the great shake-up where the government is devolving (transferring) some of its powers and responsibilities to local authorities. They tell us it's to increase democracy and local involvement, improve efficiency, and lower costs.

ALL County Councils in England must become mayoralities (ie run by a mayor) with far greater powers.

ALL local & borough councils must be merged to form mega-councils of around 500,000 residents.

Wherever you live in Surrey, this matters to you. **EVERYONE** is affected.



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COMMUNITY**

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We're non-party-political and want the best for Dorking.

So what is next?

Surrey will become either 2 or 3 unitaries. Tier 2 and Tier 3 will go.

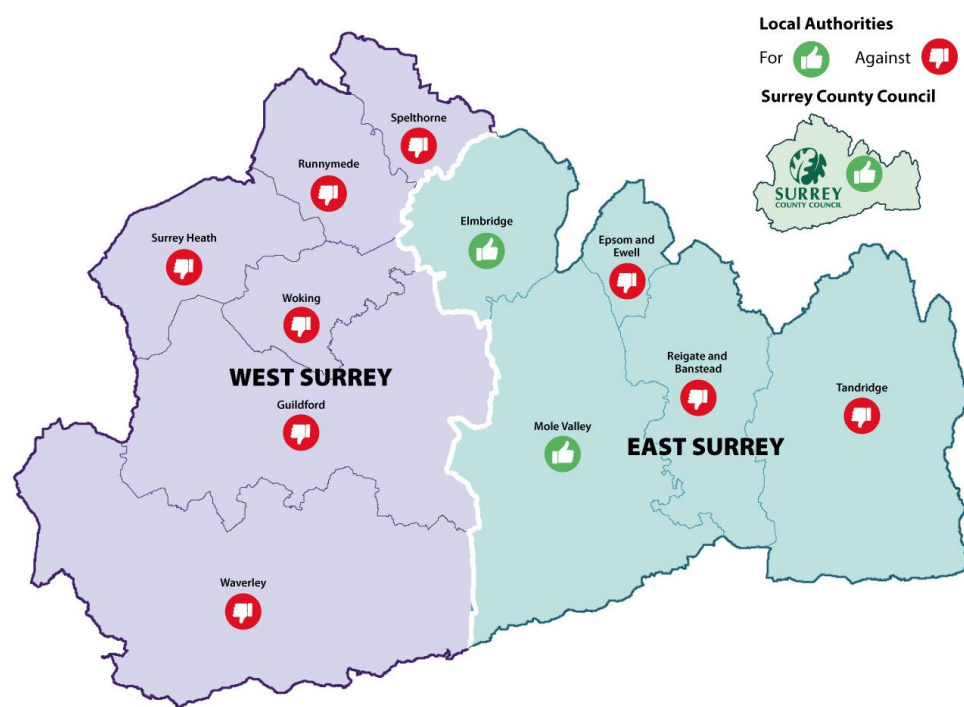


Public consultation on
both proposals closes
5 August 2025



bit.ly/40bH4Dw

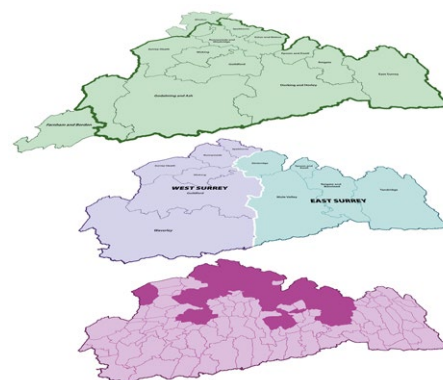
2 Unitary Proposal



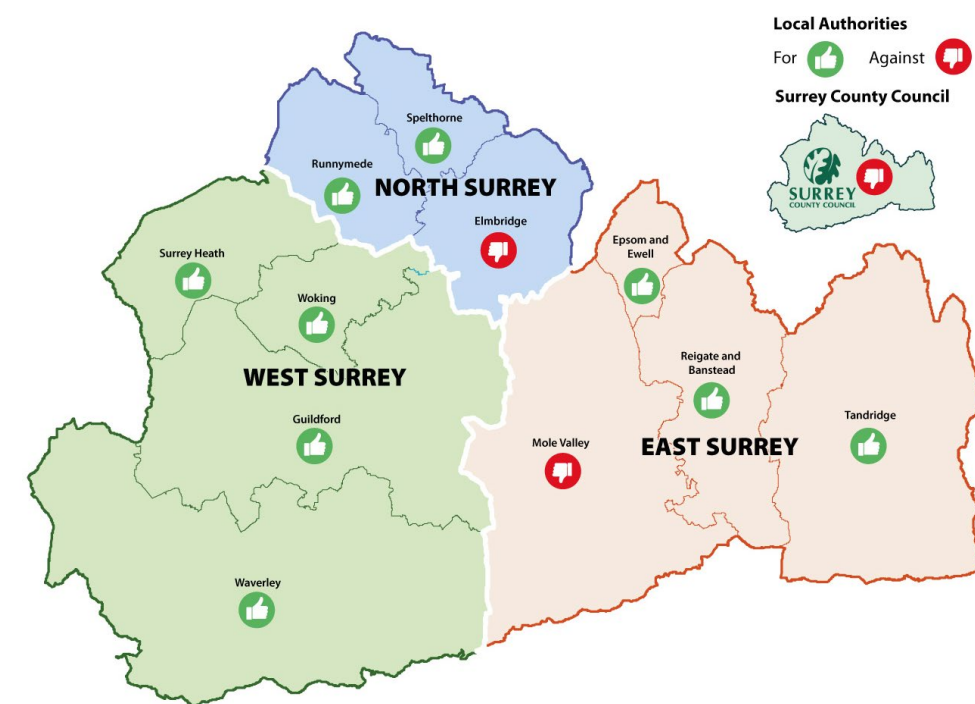
Find out more



<http://bit.ly/3U8AeLj>



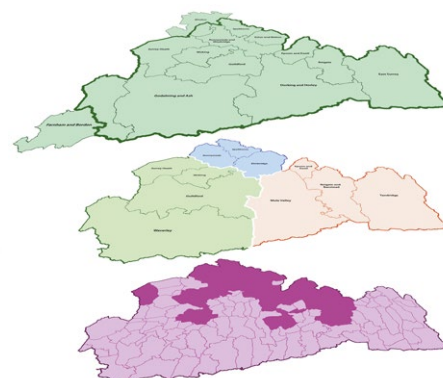
3 Unitary Proposal



Find out more



<http://bit.ly/4lCH0VA>



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Going, going, gone!

Mole Valley District Council will be assimilated with either 3 or 4 other councils to form East Surrey Unitary.

For better or worse, for richer or poorer?



2 Unitary proposal



3 Unitary proposal

Democratic representation: does it add up?

Across Surrey there are:



81 county councillors.



There are 162 wards in Surrey
x 3 councillors per ward

= 486 councillors.

The 2 Unitary proposal preferred by MVDC and Surrey suggests 86 for East Surrey and 76 for West Surrey = 162 councillors across Surrey. This looks to be 66.6% less councillor representation for residents across Surrey. There will be six division councillors for the whole of Mole Valley.

At present in Dorking there are 2 wards. Dorking will become a single division, Dorking Town.

Councillors workload will increase. Local authority councillors have been discarded.



6 councillors across 2 wards
Each councillor represents
1,900 voters.



New division = 1 councillor
Each councillor across Surrey will represent
an average of 11,911 voters.

Tier 1 - Parishes

A civil parish is the smallest administrative division for local government in England, typically covering a village, small town, or a part of a larger urban area.

It's a legally recognised body with its own council or meeting, responsible for certain local services and community matters.

Stronger local communities

'The focus on local neighbourhoods and community engagement aims to empower residents and strengthen local communities certain local services and community matters.' (Surrey County Council)

'Parish and town councils are encouraged to actively participate in the LGR process, ensuring their communities are well-represented.' (Surrey Association of Local Councils)

Unparished areas are vulnerable

Dorking, Leatherhead, Ashted, Fetcham, Bookham, Westhumble, Box Hill, Pixham, North Holmwood and Westcott are unparished. They could lose their voice.



The future of Dorking

What does this mean for local residents, businesses & community groups?

Uncertainty until the government decides how to divide Surrey (timeline for Autumn 2025).

Uncertainty about the process after that.

Uncertainty about the election for councillors in the new authorities.

Uncertainty about the cost of all this.

We are not exaggerating

Nearly all MVDC Councillors we've asked have replied, "We don't really know. We're waiting for more information from the government."



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Does it matter

Are we facing a big black hole in our democracy?

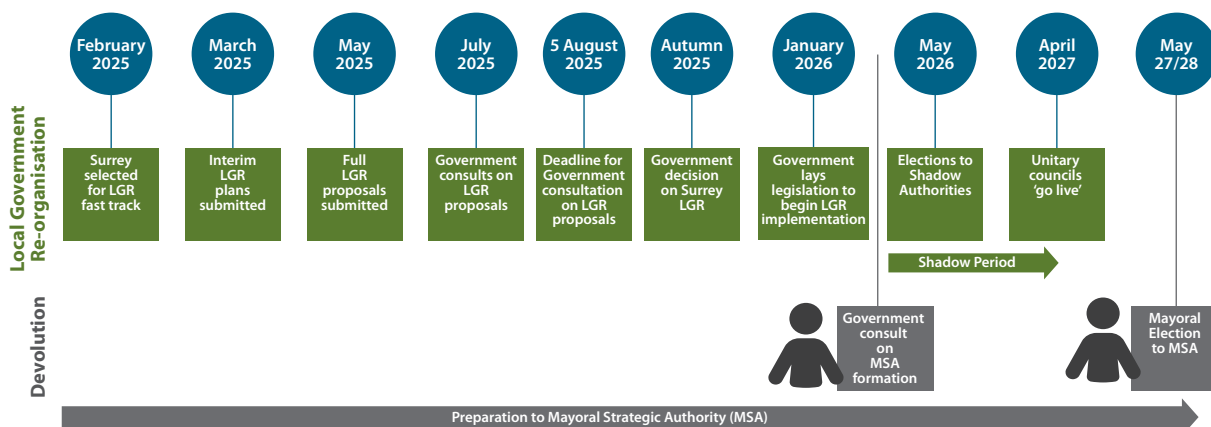
- We'll join 3 or 4 other councils with their own priorities, political make-up and finances.
- Non-statutory amenities like sport /leisure and other things we take for granted, eg public toilets, could disappear.
- Precious local assets from large (Pippbrook House/Dorking Halls) to community centres and small parcels of land could be auctioned to the highest bidder.
- We will have far less say in local matters important to Dorking.
- Councillor workload will double or treble.



Timeline

It's all being done incredibly fast: elections for the mega-councils are planned for May 2026.

10 months from July 2025.



Finance - who pays?

By agreeing to fast-track, Surrey County Council has been given a government grant to cover much of their costs.

Local councils have no such luck: they have to self-finance the costly transition to Unitary. **Cost unknown.**



Surrey County Council have done a detailed projection of costs: in brief, 2 unitaries is cheaper than 3 to set up.

The government has agreed to help defray Woking's huge £2bn debt (amount unknown), but across Surrey, local & borough councils are £5.5bn in debt.



The Cranleigh blog illustrates the concern people across Surrey have:

The fear is that ordinary people will be left to pick up the bill for failed investments and weak oversight. Without clear answers and real accountability, any attempt to "streamline" local government could just shift the burden without solving the core problem.

Let's get together for our Dorking Community

Dorking Community has called on MVDC to conduct a full and far-reaching campaign to inform Mole Valley residents about these changes. We would like to see a high-street shop exhibition and wish to hold a public meeting to ensure that all residents and community groups are fully informed about how these momentous changes will affect them and our vibrant community.

Get involved – join us, sign up today or email hello@dorkingcommunity.org.uk
Check our website dorkingcommunity.org.uk for regular updates and more information
or to sign up to support/help us find out more information.



Our community researchers have spoken/written to Surrey & MVDC councillors and our MP, searched the internet, read the information and discussed the implications. This document shares our findings with you. Join us to make sure Democracy in Dorking supports our community. E&OE July 15, 2025.



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