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A call to vote at the new East Surrey Council election 7th May

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Voters Urged to Have Their Say in First East and West Surrey Council Elections

With just one week to go until polling day on Thursday 7 May, voters across Surrey are being urged to take part in the first elections for the new East Surrey and West Surrey unitary councils.

The vote marks a major step in the reorganisation of local government across the county. From 1 April 2027, the new councils will assume responsibility for all key local services currently split between county and district/borough councils. These include education, waste collection, highways, housing, planning, children's services, adult social care and more.

Those elected next week will initially sit on Shadow Authorities for East and West Surrey. These bodies will oversee the transition to the new system, including setting budgets and council tax levels, agreeing staffing structures and governance arrangements, adopting codes of conduct, and preparing for the transfer of services ahead of vesting day.

Mari Roberts-Wood, Returning Officer for the East Surrey elections, said: "These elections are your opportunity to choose who represents you on your new council and makes decisions on important local matters, including how the council is set up, so be sure to use your vote."

Andrew Pritchard, Returning Officer for the West Surrey elections, added: "Electors will be able to vote for up to two different candidates to represent their ward. Remember, your vote is your decision and yours alone. You do not need to tell anyone how you voted."

Polling stations open 7am–10pm

Polling stations will be open from 7am to 10pm on Thursday 7 May. Voters attending in person must bring an accepted form of photo ID. Without it, you will not be able to vote and will be asked to return with valid identification.

Accepted forms of ID include a UK, EEA or Commonwealth passport, a UK or EEA driving licence, biometric immigration documents, and certain concessionary travel passes such as an older person's bus pass or an Oyster 60+ card. A free Voter Authority Certificate is also valid. Expired ID can still be used if the photograph remains a good likeness, but the name must match the electoral register.

For full details of accepted identification, visit the Electoral Commission website.

Find your polling station

Voters are advised to check their poll card carefully before attending, as polling station locations may have changed. You do not need your poll card to vote, but it provides useful details including your polling station.

You can find your polling station, ward, and a list of candidates by entering your postcode here:

surreylgrhub.gov.uk/elections/vote-person

If you have lost your poll card, you can still vote.

Those voting as a proxy must attend the polling station allocated to the person they are voting on behalf of, not their own.

Postal voting guidance

If you are voting by post, it is important to follow the instructions carefully to ensure your vote is counted. You may vote for up to two candidates where applicable.

Make sure you:
complete your ballot paper in secret
fill in the postal voting statement correctly
place all documents in the correct envelopes
seal the envelope yourself

Postal votes should be returned as soon as possible. If you are unable to post it in time, you can hand it in at a polling station up to 10pm on polling day.

Emergency proxy voting

If you are unable to vote in person due to illness, an emergency, or because your photo ID has been lost or damaged, you can apply for an emergency proxy vote until 5pm on polling day.

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Details and application forms are available via the Electoral Commission website.

Accessible voting

Polling stations are equipped to support voters with additional needs. This includes accessible entrances, low-level polling booths and assistance from trained staff. Voters are encouraged to ask for help if required.

Further information

You can find more details about the elections, including wards and candidates, at:
surreylgrhub.gov.uk/elections

For broader information about the local government reorganisation in Surrey, visit:
surreylgrhub.gov.uk

General guidance on voting is available from the Electoral Commission.

For residents without internet access, local electoral services teams at district and borough councils can provide assistance by phone.

The 7 May elections represent the first stage in establishing the new unitary councils, which will replace Surrey's current two-tier system in April 2027.

Sam Jones – Reporter



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