

Devolution plans for Surrey

2 May 2025



Surrey County Council has set out how and why it wants merge with the 11 boroughs and districts to create two mega authorities as the deadline to submit local government reorganisation plans approaches.

The county council believes the best way forward is to split Surrey into eastern and western divisions.

On one side would be Woking, Spelthorne, Runnymede, Surrey Heath, Waverley and Guildford the other with Elmbridge, Mole Valley, Epsom & Ewell, Reigate & Banstead, and Tandridge.

The two new mega councils would have an overarching mayor responsible for, among other things, policing and fire services.

If the plans do go ahead, elections for the new shadow unitary councils would likely be held in May 2026, and a mayoral election most likely in 2027.

The county council argues its plan would “help ensure the future of local government in Surrey” was “cost effective, simplified and strengthened” while “unlocking further devolution for the county”.

It would, by their own figures, create the single largest combine authority ranked by gross domestic product per capita. Surrey County Council favours sticking to current boundaries because this would help unify public services, many of which are already shared.

It has rejected the idea of creating a single merged body despite it financially being the most beneficial.

Not only that, but forming a single mega council also comes with the “least amount of risk to vital social care services currently delivered countywide”, according to papers published ahead of the May 7 meeting.

The council has dismissed this because it would miss out on any devolved powers from central government given when two or more top tier authorities join forces. Instead, it is looking at what it calls the “two unitary model”.

Surrey County Council said this would be “the right size to achieve efficiencies, have better alignment between key areas of service expenditure and funding and therefore better able to withstand financial shocks, as well as better prioritise the delivery of high quality sustainable public services.”

Splitting into three, it suggests, “offers less financial resilience when needing to manage key areas of demand, in particular social care.”

Smaller authorities are less able to absorb the inherited debt, are likely to spend a greater proportion of revenue on debt servicing costs, and have less agility to redeploy resources in response to growing service demands, the council continued.

There would also be higher costs associated with the need to disaggregate services across three new authorities.

Beyond the financial risks, Surrey’s analysis of the three unitary model showed there would be greater disparity between the authorities across population, housing, flood risk , homelessness, and road maintenance backlogs.

Tim Oliver, Leader of Surrey County Council said: “Our analysis shows that two unitary councils would bring the greatest benefit to Surrey’s residents.

Two councils, in partnership with a mayor for Surrey, would save money, strengthen and simplify local government and with an east and west arrangement both councils would be in a strong position to continue to deliver high quality services to all Surrey residents.

“Of course, consideration must be given to the differing levels of debt that the authorities would potentially inherit, and we’re in talks with government about our request that the stranded debt be written off as well as providing financial support to those borough councils that need it.

“Most importantly, this proposal strengthens local community engagement.

“We know that residents want high quality services that are easy to access, and they want a real say in services and decisions that affect them. That’s why we’re proposing the creation of community-level boards across Surrey.

“These community boards will be locally determined but we would expect them to include representation from health partners, Surrey Police, voluntary groups, councillors, council staff, local town and parish councils and residents associations. We plan to pilot these boards over the coming months, and residents will have a say in how they are set up and delivered.

“We’re in a strong position as a county council, with good quality services and an excellent track record of stable finances after years of successful transformation. And working together with our residents and partners, we are well placed to deliver this important reorganisation.

“Ultimately, this work will unlock further devolution, meaning Surrey can elect a mayor which will bring more power, flexibility and funding closer to communities.”

Surrey County Council is expected to vote its plan through on May 7 before formally submitting it for consideration by the May 9 deadline

Government bailout to ease Woking’s debt burden

2 May 2025



Taxpayers will cover the cost of Woking Borough Council’s financial folly after the government agreed to “aid the reduction” of the bankrupt authority’s multi-billion pound debt.

The bail out will initially cover debt owed by the borough in 2026-27 but could be extended if needed.

The pledge is an attempt to prevent Woking from immediately destroying any new authority it joins as part of the Government’s merger plans for Surrey’s councils.

Woking Borough Council declared itself effectively bankrupt in 2023 when its regeneration plans collapsed leaving it with debts expected to £2.6billion and annual repayments far outstripping what it brings in every year through council tax.

The problem has since spilled into neighbouring councils after the Government selected Surrey and its 11 boroughs and districts to become a newly devolved and reorganised and merged-mayoral authority.

On April 4, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government said liabilities should be locally managed by councils.

Since then, the Government has committed to “supporting any new authorities in Surrey with the rationalisation of Woking’s assets, whether through the provision of interim financial support” it said this could be involve “further tranches of financial support for any remaining unsupported debt” until “new authorities are financially sustainable”.

The council would still be expected to continue cutting costs and finding “best value” for taxpayers by selling off its assets – even after the Surrey was reorganised, according to papers published this week.

Leader of Woking Borough Council, Councillor Ann-Marie Barker, said: “We welcome the government’s statement of intent regarding future financial support. It marks an important step towards addressing our debt position as part of wider discussions on the future structure of local government in Surrey.

“Whilst there is much still to be agreed, this announcement provides a degree of certainty as we continue to work closely with government and other Surrey councils to secure a sustainable financial future for Woking and ensure the best possible outcomes for residents.

“We are doing all we can to put our house in order by setting a balanced budget and having a strategic plan to sell assets. We remain committed to delivering our Improvement and Recovery Plan to the ensure that we enter any future arrangements in the strongest position possible.”

ENDS

Will Surrey’s Debts Force Us to Have a Unitary Authority?

2 May 2025



Billions of pounds in crushing debt could force Surrey and its boroughs and districts to become a single mega council – potentially merged with a neighbour, following government feedback on its devolution and reorganisation plans.

Two plans were submitted in March over how to dissolve local government in the county and create a new streamlined system.

The county council and a handful of the boroughs favoured splitting Surrey into two authorities with Elmbridge worried about being ‘punished’ if it is grouped with debt-ridden neighbours – while the majority of the districts favoured three. Both would have an overarching and directly elected mayor.

Now, those plans could all be for nothing if they are unable to demonstrate how to deal with the more than £5 billion of debt owed – and in particular £2.6billion from bankrupt Woking Borough Council and £1billion at Spelthorne where government commissioners have recently been appointed to take over.

The letter from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government was sent to all chief executives of Surrey’s boroughs, districts and county council, in reply to the councils’ plans.

It read: “The county and district co-authored plan shows that greater efficiencies are available where there is less disaggregation, with the single unitary enabling the greatest efficiency that could benefit the management of local debt.

“Given the scale of the financial challenges facing Surrey, we would welcome further detail on how the ability to manage debt compares in each of the different options.

“As the long-term financial sustainability of the three unitary option seems most challenging in this context, we will need more information on how you will manage the risks of disaggregation to meet the financial sustainability criteria as well as the approach to debt management.”

“We suggest meeting to discuss in more detail local proposals for managing debt.”

The ministry said that if Surrey was to shift towards a single unitary model, unlocking devolution would mean partnering up with neighbouring authorities or joining a neighbouring mayoral authority. “

To achieve this, the area will need to ensure the proposed devolution geography meets the criteria set out in the English Devolution White Paper.

A Surrey-only devolution would only work, it added, under the two or three unitary council proposals “subject to achieving sensible population ratios between unitaries”.

The ministry also specifically asked for evidence on how any new merged authority “would enable financially viable councils, including identifying which option best delivers value for money for council tax payers”.

It added; “We note the desire for clarity and further discussions around the area’s debt position and your preferred option for Government to write off the current estimated debt of £1.5bn.”

Woking Borough Council is short £1.5billion – once all its assets are accounted for.

It continues: “The default position is that assets and liabilities remain locally managed by councils, but we acknowledge that there are exceptional circumstances where there has been failure linked to capital practices.

“Where that is the case, proposals should reflect the extent to which the implications of this can be managed locally, including as part of efficiencies possible through reorganisation.

“Commissioners should be engaged in these discussions.

“It would be helpful to see further detail in proposals on the projected financial sustainability of proposed unitaries and how they could manage debt locally.”

ENDS

Mole Valley Solar farm decision

2 May 2025



The biggest possible solar farm was before Mole Valley District Council last week with councillors voting to reject the eco energy project – despite warnings they could lose taxpayers hundreds of thousands of pounds on appeal.

Plans for a 55 hectare solar farm in Cobham Road in Fetcham, large enough to power about one third of all the homes in the borough, came before the council’s development management committee on April 23.

Councillors narrowly voted seven to five with one abstention to refuse the 49.5 megawatts plant arguing it was an inappropriate use of green belt land and too close to ancient woodland.

The decision went against the advice of officers who said Mole Valley’s decision would likely be overturned on appeal – and the council charged costs

Cllr Abhiram Magesh (Liberal Democrat; Mickleham, Westcott & Okewood) said: “It will end up costing the council hundreds of thousands of pounds.

“It will affect the council’s balance budget.”

He said decisions like this were “not defensible by the legal material planning consideration” and that councillors needed to use vote with their brains, “not with your heart “

“What we can be considering, is the economic impact and the financial impact to not only the wider council but the area.”

The developers, Ethical Power, had argued there was an “overriding” case that delivering renewable energy outweighed the “modest impacts” and that they were “proud to bring forward the project”.

Their spokesperson added that it represented a “unique opportunity” to “tackle climate change in Mole Valley” by contributing to energy independence and clean power.

Had the power plant been any larger it would have been classified as a nationally significant project requiring government sign off, the meeting heard.

Others challenged the environmental benefits of green energy at the expensive of locally grown food and argued that the 40 year proposed life span of the site was anything but temporary.

Cllr Simon Budd (Conservative; Brockham, Betchworth, Buckland Box Hill & Headley) said: “The land that you are covering up, It’s good quality land that grows food.

“At the moment the food is grown in Fetcham and its sold in Fetcham in a farmers shop in Fetcham, you’ve got zero miles, you’ve got grain that goes off to make bread, fantastic zero miles on it.

“If you cover up land in Fetcham people have still got to eat so you’ve got to import grain.

He added: “I feel very strongly about turning what is good agricultural land into what is basically you are ruining the countryside you really are ruining it.

“The gain of a little bit of electric is not worth the loss of this land.”

Waverley not waiving planning fees spark protests

2 May 2025



Angry homeowners hit with hefty planning bills and court threats gathered outside Waverley Borough Council to protest against levies that have left some at risk of losing their homes, or going to jail.

About 20 people have so far come forward with what they say are huge and unexpected infrastructure levies for work done to their homes.

They have been shocked by the short notice to come up with, in some cases, £70,000 for work they would have been expected to be exempt from – and would have been if they’d filled out a form.

Instead they have been pursued and threatened with court action if they do not pay.

On Tuesday April 1, those affected protested outside the council’s executive meeting and challenged the authority on whether it had any “genuine intent” to review its Community Infrastructure Levy process.

Community Infrastructure Levies are payable on developments of more than 100 square metres, unless homeowners actively apply for an exemption. Large

developers expect there to be an infrastructure charge, which can often take the form of community buildings such as a doctor's surgery or hall. Where these are not suitable money can be paid.

The levy is used to offset the impact development has on an area and can be bid for by public bodies or community groups for projects.

The problem has been some people feel they are being wrongly hit with the fees – and the heavy handed approach the council has taken in chasing the money.

In most cases the council says it has been correct in issuing the bills -despite anger from those who feel wronged.

The exception, it said, was the highest profile case so far, of Steve and Caroline Dally who were stung with a £70,000 bill for a home extension and given no opportunity to argue their case.

The rest, the council argues are not as straightforward – with any long-term solutions not expected until at least May,

Councillor Liz Townsend, portfolio holder for planning said: “I can assure members here and residents that the council is committed to carrying out a discretionary review where householders previously subject to CIL liability can request a discretionary review.”

She added: “There have been a number of extremely speculative and scaremongering comments about the nature of this review by some councillors which is very concerning.

“However I would like to assure residents again that we are committed to investigating and assessing each individual case that is submitted to the council and the process for undertaking this will be fully disclosed in the report coming to the executive at the beginning of May.”

However, asked if the council had powers to withdraw liability notices for “whatever reasons it sees appropriate” the leader, Cllr Paul Follows, responded: “I think we are comfortable to acknowledge that's what the regulation says. Yes. I don't think there is anything else I can add to that but I am sure what the regulation says.”

Asked “For whatever reason you deem fit?”

Cllr Follows replied: “Yes – but at the same time I do think you have to recognise we can't in ourselves act unlawfully in the withdrawal of the CIL liability – there are things we have to do here.

“This is not a straightforward process. If anybody has been advising you that it is a straightforward process I would consider widening your advice.

“One of the problems here – we've effectively got three categories of individuals in this process.

“Individuals who may have had some fault of the council, and although we're still checking the details, for example would be Mr Dally who we've looked at – and most of us have concluded he was told something in error and I think there will probably be some remediation that takes place there.

“There are individuals who have been advised poorly...as part of their building project. Yes I can understand their frustration with the council but actually their issue is with the private advice which has been inaccurate and their first course of resolution would be through the liability insurance of the private advisor.

“And thirdly there are individuals that disagree with the concept of homeowner CIL but have been charged legally for it at this point of time and that's subject to a different discussion of whether we should charge homeowners or not.

“It broadly falls into those three camps.”

The council said it would be taking this final group into consideration in May when it is due to discuss potential changes to CIL.

A longer term solution is not likely to be finalised until the council's local plan – effectively the planning rules it must abide by – is signed off in 2027.

Image: Waverley CIL protests (image Waverley Conservative Council Group)

Surrey SEND parents owed money

2 May 2025



Parents of children with special educational needs who were left with little choice but to use private educational psychologists may be due money back from Surrey County Council.

So far 27 families have been reimbursed for having to go private between the 2023 summer term and May 2024 due to a lack of qualified professionals able to create educational care plans.

This has resulted in £26,475 being returned to families – although it has not been a straightforward process for some parents.

The figures emerged following a recently published complaint against Surrey County Council.

The local government and social care ombudsman upheld that the authority refused to reimburse a mother who used a private educational psychologist in support of her son's education health and care (EHC) needs assessment.

The ombudsman also upheld the council delayed making payments for her son's tutor and that its communications were poor.

The ombudsman upheld further complaints about delays at Surrey County Council in completing needs assessments due to the national shortage of educational psychologists – but that it has since been satisfied with the steps being taken to resolve the issue.

Between the 2023 summer term and May 2024 Surrey County Council said it temporarily agreed to reimburse private reports due to its backlog.

The ombudsman said: “If we were to investigate this complaint it is likely that we would find fault.

“This is because the council accepted that a report from an educational psychologist was required and used the one obtained by Miss X.

“Therefore, it should have reimbursed her for the full costs. Also, when responding to Miss X's complaint, the council accepted there were delays making payments to (the child's) tutors.

“Whilst the council did apologise, this is likely to have caused Miss X distress in the form of uncertainty that wasn't remedied.

“I therefore asked the council to write to Miss X within one month to apologise and to make a payment to her for the full cost of the educational psychologist assessment she obtained and to offer a payment of £100 to remedy the distress its delayed payments to tutors caused her.

“To its credit, the council agreed.”

Councillor Clare Curran, cabinet member for children, families and lifelong learning, said she was not able to comment on any individual children specifically, but the council accepted the findings from the ombudsman report and apologised to the family affected for any distress caused.

A spokesperson for the council added: “Where we used the private EP report as the sole advice during that time at the parent/carer's request we would cover the cost.

“However, if we did not use it as the sole advice then we would not reimburse.”

They added that authority was now operating at over 90 per cent “timeliness” and able to meet demand.

Image: New Surrey County Council HQ, Woodhatch Place on Cockshot Hill, Reigate. Credit Surrey County Council

Surrey Police know where they're going with more of them

2 May 2025



Surrey Police will have ‘the highest number of officers in a generation’ after locking up money for 40 more patrol cops. The estimated £2.5million in central government money is part of a Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee and will add to the 222 extra officers who joined the force since March 2021 – and its March 2025 total of 2,336 officers. The new recruits will likely comprise 25 full time police officers and 15 special constables.

The programme is part of the government’s plan to have at least one named, contactable, officer in each neighbourhood, as well as dedicated teams on patrol in town centres and other hotspots. There will also be dedicated antisocial behaviour leads in every force which Surrey Police said reflects the government’s recognition of the public’s crime and safety concerns.

Surrey Police Chief Constable, Tim De Meyer, said: “For us, the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee is a chance to strengthen our presence in the heart of our communities, with officers working alongside residents, identify local issues, and resolve problems before they escalate. It’s about building lasting relationships and ensuring that we are seen as a trusted resource, not just an authority figure. The guarantee reinforces our commitment to community engagement, crime prevention, and proactive policing. With this initiative, we will be better equipped to build stronger relationships, deliver more targeted interventions through our hotspot policing efforts, and improve overall safety for the communities we serve. The promise of increased officer numbers will enable us to further tackle issues such as anti-social behaviour, theft, and drug-related crimes. While the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee presents several advantages, it also comes with challenges that we must address to ensure its success. The demand for resources across the Force must be managed effectively to ensure that neighbourhood policing remains a priority, even in times of high demand. Additionally, engaging with communities that have historically had strained relationships with the police can take time and require a sensitive, consistent and tailored approach. However, these challenges present an opportunity for us to demonstrate our commitment to transparency, community-focused policing, and problem-solving.”

Assistant Chief Constable, Tanya Jones, added: “By staying true to the Force principles, and embracing the goals of the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, we can strengthen our role as a trusted, proactive Force that works alongside local communities to tackle crime, improve public safety, and build a sense of community pride. As officers and staff, we must embrace opportunities to speak with local residents, build trust, and work collaboratively to prevent crime. We can create environments where residents feel heard, supported, and secure. It’s more than just policing, it’s about shaping communities in a way that promotes safety, confidence, and lasting social cohesion.”

Surrey’s Police and Crime Commissioner, Lisa Townsend welcomed the additional funding. She said: “Based on the funding allocation provided, it is projected that Surrey Police will benefit from an additional 25 police officers, as well as 15 Special Constables.” Adding: “Neighbourhood policing is a key commitment for Surrey Police, and residents are already benefiting from that focus, with an additional 3,500 charges and 2,500 more arrests across all crime types in 12 months. Initiatives such as the Safer Streets programme and hotspot policing have led to increased trust and greater intelligence gathering in our communities. However, forces across the country are also seeing a rise in ‘hidden’ crime types, such as fraud, domestic abuse and sextortion, and Surrey is no exception. These crimes have very real victims, and we must ensure those victims are getting support from specially-trained officers dedicated to pursuing justice for them. As part of the doctrine of operational independence, Surrey’s Chief Constable Tim De Meyer decides where his officers and staff are best-deployed to tackle offending. Under his leadership, the Force is one of the fastest-improving in the country. Both Tim and I are determined to ensure this brilliant progress is sustained.”

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Pedestrian visions of Mole Valley

2 May 2025



Masterplans for Dorking and Bookham are set to be signed off by Mole Valley District Council’s executive committee on April 16. These set out a bank of projects the council would like to “bring to life” in order to make “a lasting positive impact” on the towns. Among the works being considered are improvements to Dorking town centre, as well as connections to the three train stations. The council said it wants to improve streets and public spaces, get more people walking and cycling, and find uses for its vacant buildings.

For Dorking, the council wants to create a greater sense of arrival, improve its cultural offering, and address crash hotspots. A new “more attractive” civic hub would create an “important cluster” of cultural, leisure and civic buildings to encourage more people to spend time there – while pedestrianising access to Dorking Halls could help maximise the experience around the famous site. As a whole, the masterplan focuses on the town centre, public spaces, transport infrastructure, and HGV restrictions to protect the heritage character of the town.

The option to pedestrianise West Street was not taken forward in Dorking, but the idea of cutting cars from High Street in Bookham has been retained. The council is also looking to capture more of the visitors to Polesden Lacy and Box Hill into the historic core of Bookham village by reducing the impact of traffic and its “car dominated environment” and celebrating the town’s heritage and cultural links.

At this stage though, all options are concepts and not fully realised designs or planned projects. The intention, the draft masterplan reads, is to “plant seeds of ideas for change; as such they will need to be further developed subsequent to completion of this study.”

In a statement issued ahead of the meeting, Councillor Margaret Cooksey, cabinet member for community services, said she was pleased the masterplans had reached the approval stage and that the majority of feedback had been in support of the project. She said: “We listened to our communities and made necessary and appropriate changes based on the feedback received, before presenting the final plans to cabinet.

“Once the masterplans are approved, the commencement of these projects will depend on securing the necessary funding. Mole Valley District Council will explore various funding streams, including government grants, national organisations, and local contributions. We are committed to bringing these projects to life and making a lasting positive impact on Bookham and Dorking. Many of the schemes will require further discussions about their details in the future.”

The council said that more than 500 people engaged in the Bookham masterplan consultation and that there were more than 1,000 responses for Dorking.

Thames Water hopes £37m investment will end record sewer flooding

2 May 2025



Thames Water has said it will spend £37m upgrading its Mole Valley network raising hopes it could spell the end of homes, gardens and rivers being flooded with sewage waste.

The private utility company came in for heavy criticism for the “damage it has inflicted” despite huge profits and shareholder payouts while its pipe network falls into disrepair during the latest scrutiny committee meeting at Mole Valley District Council.

However, it hopes investment projects in Dorking, Earslwood, and Horley will increase its ability to manage storm flows, treat more waste water, and prevent “effluent” flooding rivers and waterways.

The investment was welcomed as a step in the right direction but many at the meeting aired their disappointment with the firm for letting the situation get this bad.

Last year, Thames Water spent 13,101 hours pumping sewage into the River Mole and its tributaries according to new government data seen by the MP – an increase of 10.9 per cent despite there being less rain.

Speaking after the meeting, the Dorking and Horley MP, Chris Coghlan, described the record as “simply unacceptable” but has since had assurances from Thames Water and environmental regulators that “long overdue” upgrades were on the way

He said: “For years, the entire water industry has been poorly managed and woefully under-regulated.

“To expect hard-pressed customers to now pick up the tab for 35 years of under-investment by Thames Water, while the company continues to flood my constituents’ homes and gardens with disgusting sewage is shocking.

“The Government and Ofwat have a duty to hold the water companies to account”, he said, adding that the regulator needed to be replaced with a body that would “will make Thames water pay up for the damage it has inflicted.”

In Dorking, Thames Water is putting £16m into new storm tanks to treat incoming sewage and reduce dumping of untreated waste.

At its Earslwood site, just outside Mole Valley, it will increase treatment volumes from 340 to 440 litres per second, helping to prevent effluent going into the river – and what does will be of a higher quality.

Horley will benefit from upgrades to improve performance in wet weather.

Councillor Stephen Cooksey, leader of Mole Valley District Council told the meeting: “The question that flows through my mind is, although you can’t answer it tonight, is how as a responsible company you’ve allowed your infrastructure to get into such a dreadful condition?”

Thames Water’s Alice Keeping described the £37m as “a substantial amount of money that we are going to invest going forward”.

A Thames Water spokesperson said: “In 2024 parts of our region experienced some of the wettest months in 250 years. This overwhelmed our sewer network which resulted in diluted wastewater being released into rivers. While all storm discharges are unacceptable, the sewage systems were designed in this way to prevent sewage backing up into people’s homes.

“Over the next five years we will deliver a record amount of investment across our network.

“We continue to execute our plans to upgrade over 250 of our storm overflows to reduce the number of storm discharges including at our sites in Crawley and Horley.

Esher Mill Road overflow sewage site (image Chris Caulfield)

Woking Council private school loan scandal

2 May 2025



A private school loaned millions of pounds at favourable rates by bankrupt Woking Borough Council has still to pay its overdue debts – with the local authority saying it is “taking appropriate legal advice” to get its money back. Greenfield School in Old Woking was lent £13.3 million by the now-bust borough, with the previous administration saying the money would help free up capacity within state schools.

Last year, £2.4 million of that was due to be paid back, but the school said it was short of cash and instead offered the council a town centre building it owned in exchange, worth considerably less than that. The council, which is in the process of offloading assets to pay off its own multibillion-pound debt, told the school in November last year that it did not have the capacity to take on any additional buildings.

Four months on, the two parties appear to remain apart on terms, with questions now being asked at Woking Borough Council’s March 20 executive meeting over

whether the school will be able to “regularise” its position. Councillor Dale Roberts, lead member for finance, said: “We made it clear that the strong preference of this council was that the school simply met their existing commitments. They are also aware that they are required to provide independent and professional advice on the viability of their plans to repay. Our needs must be front and centre to provide assurance that the school will be able to honour any revised terms and of course that means not just the repayment in November last year but for the whole of the arrangement.”

Cllr Roberts described the loans as “inappropriate” and that the “former administration had no business entering into any such arrangement”. He said: “I’d prefer not to comment on the legalities but I can say with some confidence that it was ultra reckless. The (previous administration) may or may not have acted beyond their legal powers but they certainly sprinted with blind ambition past the boundaries of good judgement.”

According to the papers published by Woking Borough Council, the unsecured loans between 2019 and 2021 helped the school to relocate into another catchment area and enter a different segment of the private education market. Woking Borough Council declared itself effectively bankrupt in 2023 and had to cut services while increasing tax by 10 per cent to help cover its financial meltdown. Greenfield School, which charges up to £17,010 a year, has previously told the council it “may not be in a position” to repay money owed.

Related reports:

No wonder Woking went bankrupt. Scandal of private school loans

Image: Greenfield School Woking (image Google)