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Big spending must be approved by new Councils from now

9 July 2026



Major financial decisions across Surrey must now be taken by the newly formed councils – despite the fact they will not take over for almost a year.

Elections held in May voted in two new authorities, East and West Surrey. In April 2027 they will take over the running of public services in the county, and all existing councils will be dissolved.

As part of the process the Government has written to the outgoing bodies to say key monetary decisions now need to be approved by the incoming authorities.

This means land sales or contracts over £100,000 must be kicked up the ladder – as well as capital contracts of more than £1m. It also covers staff contracts.

The order covers Surrey County Council and all the boroughs and districts except for Woking and Spelthorne as they are under the control of Government appointed commissioners due to the state of their finances and need to rapidly improve bottom lines to reduce the huge debt West Surrey will be lumbered with.

The Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government, said East and West Surrey should have a say on agreements to be entered to ensure they were in the best interests of the new councils or the residents of the areas they serve.

It would also ensure that any agreements do not undermine or diminish the anticipated benefits or savings as a result of unitarisation or have an effect on the financial position of the new councils.

In practice the old councils have already been operating under this model with the understanding that it would be formalised.

East and West Surrey Councils are expected to publish reports in the next few days that include recommendations into how services across two bodies will be run from next year.

These will come to their respective shadow executives on July 20 and 21 for approval.

Chris Caulfield Local Democracy Reporter

Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (image Google)

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