

# Epsom & Ewell voters urged to prepare for historic Surrey elections

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Residents in Epsom & Ewell are being urged to “get ready to vote” ahead of major local government elections on Thursday 7 May 2026, which will shape how the borough is governed for years to come.

The vote will determine who represents the area on the new East Surrey Council, one of two unitary authorities set to replace Surrey’s current two-tier system in April 2027. Epsom & Ewell will join Elmbridge, Mole Valley, Reigate & Banstead and Tandridge within the new East Surrey authority.

The change marks the end of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council as a standalone authority, with all local services — from bin collections and housing to roads, education and social care — brought under a single council structure.

## A decisive moment for local representation

The councillors elected in May will serve for five years and will initially operate as part of a “shadow authority”, taking key decisions on budgets, council tax, governance structures and staffing ahead of the new council formally taking over in April 2027.

For Epsom & Ewell residents, the elections carry particular weight. The borough has long been dominated by Residents’ Association councillors, but the move to a much larger East Surrey authority — covering a wider political landscape — is expected to dilute that local dominance.

With 72 councillors representing 36 wards across East Surrey, voters will elect two representatives per ward under a first-past-the-post system. The outcome will influence not only local priorities but how strongly Epsom & Ewell’s voice is heard within the new regional structure.

## What changes — and what doesn’t

Despite the scale of reform, day-to-day services will continue as normal until April 2027. Existing borough and county councillors will remain in post until then, meaning residents should not see immediate changes to service delivery.

However, decisions made by the newly elected councillors over the next year — including financial planning and organisational structure — will shape how services are delivered in the future.

The elections are also part of a broader shift towards devolution, with proposals for a Surrey-wide strategic authority expected to follow, potentially bringing additional powers over transport, adult education and economic planning.

## Key deadlines for voters

To take part in the election, residents must be registered to vote by midnight on 20 April 2026. Voting can take place in person, by post or by proxy.

Those voting in person will need to bring valid photo identification, such as a passport, driving licence or older person’s bus pass. Voters without suitable ID can apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate by 5pm on 28 April.

Applications for postal votes must be submitted by 5pm on 21 April, while proxy vote applications close at 5pm on 28 April.

## “Don’t miss your chance”

Election officials are encouraging residents not to miss the opportunity to shape the future of local government.

Mari Roberts-Wood, Returning Officer for the East Surrey elections, said: “Don’t miss your chance to have your say in these important elections. This is your opportunity to choose who represents you on issues that directly affect your day-to-day life in your local area.”

With Epsom & Ewell set to lose its borough council and be absorbed into a much larger authority, the May vote represents one of the most significant changes to local democracy in the area for decades.

Sam Jones - Reporter



Photo: Dog at a polling station. Chris Caulfield

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