EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
For the community, by the community. A not-for-profit service

12th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

EPSOM & EWELL TIMES

Up to £1 where sold

Epsom’s Cllr McCormick gives Middlesex revival the irregular iambic treatment

20 March 2026



Historic nostalgia could be upheld in naming a new Surrey council next year. Surrey County Council has backed a symbolic call to recognise Middlesex in the name of a future unitary authority. But councillors were all too aware the proposal had no legal power in officially changing the name.

This move comes amid plans to abolish all 12 of Surrey’s existing borough, district and county councils and create two mega authorities to replace them, East Surrey and West Surrey. Middlesex was effectively abolished in 1965 and outside the living memory for many residents.

A majority of councillors supported a motion asking the government to name one of the new authorities “West Surrey and South Middlesex” as part of local government reorganisation due in 2027. Members voted 32 in favour, eight against with 24 abstentions at a full Surrey County council meeting on March 17.

The proposal, put forward by Robert Evans OBE (Stanwell and Stanwell Moor), centred on Spelthorne’s long-standing ties to historic Middlesex. The borough is the only part of the old county that ended up in Surrey after boundary changes in the 1960s, and remains the only Surrey district north of the River Thames.

Cllr Evans told the chamber the Middlesex name still carries weight for many residents and “cannot be erased”, arguing the change would recognise more than 1,000 years of shared history.

Cllr Harry Boparai, who put forward the same motion to Spelthorne Borough Council in January but was blocked, said he was “pleased” the issue was finally being heard. He explained how the name ‘Middlesex’, which may seem like a simple thing to some, “created a sense of connection to the place where I lived” and recognises the “heritage and identity” of the community.

But councillors explained that under current legislation, the final decision on any new council name will rest with the authority created after reorganisation not existing councils.

Even so, several members said the debate was about sending a message rather than making a binding decision. Cllr Sinead Mooney said “names really do matter”, adding that the motion reflects a genuine sense of identity among Spelthorne residents. Another described it as a chance to show the new authority that heritage should not be overlooked.

Others were more cautious. Cllr Joanne Sexton, leader of Spelthorne Borough Council argued that now is not the right time to focus on naming, with major structural changes ahead. She said the priority should be “working together and maintaining unity” during the transition, suggesting the issue be decided later with public consultation.

Cllr **Steven McCormick** (RA Woodcote and Langley EEBC and Surrey County Councillor) delivered a tongue-in-cheek poem suggesting the name had effectively already been decided. He said: “So toast to the history of Spelthorne’s old soul, while West Surrey wagons begin their first to roll.” Cllr Edward Hawkins joked confusion over boundaries left them unsure “which way to go” on the vote.

Despite mixed views, several councillors said they would support the motion simply to acknowledge the strength of feeling locally. Given it was the council’s last full meeting before the local election campaign gets underway, it is not surprising members did not want to rock the Middlesex boat, or vote.

Others opted to abstain, saying the decision ultimately lies elsewhere. In the end, the motion passed with cross-party backing.

While the result will not change the formal process, supporters hope it sends a clear signal: that for many in Spelthorne, Middlesex is more than just a historic footnote and it is still part of who they are.

Emily Dalton LDRS

Photo: David Howard Licence details

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY