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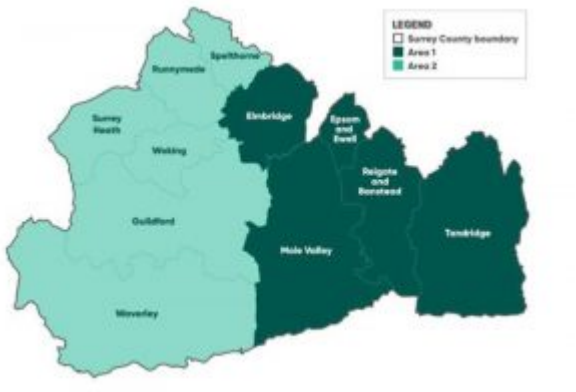
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How would you pronounce “WSASMC”?

1 August 2026



One of the first orders of business for the newly formed Liberal Democrat-run, £4billion indebted West Surrey Council – will be to seek to change its name.

A motion is being put forward by Spelthorne-based councillors to rebrand West Surrey Council into the catchily named West Surrey and South Middlesex Council (WSASMC).

Proposed by Councillor Harry Boparai the motion to the Thursday, July 30, West Surrey Shadow Authority calls on the council to ask the government to rebadge the new body before it formally comes into being.

Posting to Facebook he described it as the most important motion for Spelthorne in 50 years.

He said: “Yes this is about identity that has been brushed under the carpet since 1965 which is shameful.”

His motion reads: “It is important that the name of the new unitary authority accurately reflects the history and identity of the communities it serves.

“Unlike the rest of the new authority Spelthorne lies north of the River Thames and has been historically a part of Middlesex, not Surrey, for centuries.

“Indeed, the postal address of properties in Spelthorne remains Middlesex.

“This council resolves to ask the government to rename the West Surrey Authority as West Surrey and South Middlesex as this would more accurately reflect and respect the history and identity of all the communities it serves.

“It would also remind councillors, officers, and others on a daily basis of the existence of a part of the new authority on the other side of the River Thames.”

The timing comes just two days after West Surrey Council leader Cllr Paul Follows issued his vision for the future of West Surrey. It mentions West Surrey 18 times. It never once says South Middlesex.

Cllr Follows said: “It is our collective understanding that this motion has broad opposition support.”

Had the council waited until it formally took over, in April 2027, it would require a two-thirds majority of members to change its name.

Leader of the opposition, Cllr Jane Austin criticised the decision to push forward with the name change during the summer holidays, when many residents would be away.

She said: “It is extraordinary that the Liberal Democrats’ first major signal of intent for West Surrey Council is to debate changing its name rather than tackling the enormous challenges facing the new authority.

“They are attempting to push through a significant change without consulting the nearly 700,000 residents we have been elected to serve.

“Meanwhile, the real issues – integrating six councils, managing around £4.5 billion of inherited debt and ensuring the new authority is ready for Vesting Day – remain unaddressed, and councillors are still largely in the dark about the administration’s intentions.

“I understand why many people in Spelthorne feel strongly about their Middlesex heritage, but Spelthorne is one of six council areas that will form the new authority, and its name must represent everyone.

“West Surrey does exactly what it says on the tin.

“By contrast, the proposed alternative is cumbersome and is being advanced without first seeking the consent of the residents it would represent. Rather than bringing people together, it risks creating division from day one.”

“In my view, it is outrageous that the Liberal Democrats are prioritising rebranding over building a council that is financially secure, well run and focused on delivering for residents.”

East Surrey Council has no plans to change its name.

Chris Caulfield Local Democracy Reporter

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