



## Feast of Finals see Sutton & Epsom RFC runner-up

On Saturday, Dings Crusaders RFC hosted a veritable feast of four finals. A large and enthusiastic crowd was bathed in unbroken sunshine.

The day began with the amuse-bouche of Ashley Down Old Boys downing the colours of Hastings & Bexhill to the tune of 34-20. Next came the hors d'oeuvres, as Cheltenham North overcame Honiton 38-32. The penultimate plate served up a thrilling 28-24 win for Ealing Trailfinders over Old Bristolians.

The afternoon culminated in the main course: the Papa Johns Regional 2 South Plate Final between Sutton & Epsom and Drybrook. The latter, having lost this fixture 42-29 to Reed's Weybridge last year, came into this match on a season of unbridled success. Champions of the Regional 2 Tribute Severn League and winners of the Forest of Dean Combination Senior Cup with a 37-27 triumph over Cinderford, Drybrook now completed a trophy treble by vanquishing Sutton 36-27.

Freddy Bunting initiated proceedings, and the Squirrels dominated the early exchanges. A penalty was advanced to the 22. Having secured possession from their throw, Drybrook cut through the defence but lost the ball near the line. Fortunately, the referee brought play back for an earlier infringement. Fullback Haydn Lewis stepped up to give Drybrook a 3-0 lead. Sutton's start was further hampered by a cut to Ewan McTaggart's eye that temporarily forced the gargantuan lock off to be bandaged up.

The first signs of recovery came from a searing break by Tom Lennard that brought Sutton close to the enemy 22. Awarded a penalty, Sutton drilled it into the corner. McTaggart returned, the ball was won, and hooker Sam Lennie crossed the whitewash for the first try of the afternoon. Captain Bunting added the extras to give Sutton a 7-3 lead.

Invigorated, Josh Rea made a fabulous break that led to another penalty on the 22. However, the doughty Drybrook defence held firm. The game flowed end to end. On the half-hour mark, Sutton were awarded a penalty and Drybrook's Jack Moss was shown a yellow card. Opting for a try over points, S&E were rewarded as Sam Lennie forced his way over for a second try. Though the conversion missed, the Sutton supporters were soon celebrating again. McTaggart and Glanville secured the restart, and Adam Bibby jinked his way 40 metres to score a stunning solo effort. Bunting converted, taking Sutton to a 19-3 lead.

As has so often been the case in this annus mirabilis for Drybrook, it was their talismanic captain Mitchell Bourne who provided inspiration. He powered over the line from a catch-and-drive, with Lewis adding the conversion from the flank to close the gap to 19-10.

Approaching the break, Sutton were awarded a penalty near halfway. With clock awareness, Bunting knocked over the long-range effort to give Sutton a 22-10 lead at the interval.

The second half began swiftly. Drybrook's Mitchell Baldwin made a searing 40-metre break before flanker Bailey Watts applied the coup de grâce. Lewis converted to make it 22-17. With momentum on their side, Drybrook surged forward again. Cai Rogers made a stunning break, and McTaggart received a yellow card for high contact. Drybrook capitalised, scoring twice in five minutes. Cai Roberts crossed to level the match at 22-22, and Mitchell Baldwin added another try. Lewis converted to take the lead 29-22.

In a parallel to the first half, Sutton responded. McTaggart returned just in time for another attacking lineout. Lennie completed his hat-trick. Though Bunting missed the conversion, the score stood at 29-27.

Moments later, the pendulum swung again. Bibby was shown a yellow card, meaning the influential centre would miss most of the remainder. Sutton were awarded a penalty from 45 metres, but Bunting's kick narrowly missed.

Drybrook came close again with a clever kick that exposed Sutton's cover, but the defence scrambled back just in time. However, the respite was brief. Replacement Ioan Jones strode over for the crucial score, converted again by the nerveless Lewis to make it 36-27.

Sutton fought to the final whistle but could not close the gap. Drybrook's celebrations began at the final whistle.

Though Sutton came up short, their performance capped a season of definite upward trajectory. Drybrook were worthy winners, concluding a triumphant campaign—one that may require a carpenter to extend their trophy cabinet.

### Teams:

#### *Sutton & Epsom:*

Scott, Ghumra, Bibby, Bunting (capt.), Huie, Lennard, Findlay E, Johnson, Lennie, Boaden, Glanville, McTaggart, Rea, Jones, Hegarty.

Replacements: Hilton, Madadangoma, Duey, Tame, Davies, Nelson, Symonds.



*Drybrook:*

Lewis, Chappell, Price, Baldwin, Roberts, Morgan B, Rogers, Jelf, Addis, Morgan L, Moss, Watkins, Watts, Peaper, Bourne (capt.).  
Replacements: Hale, Morgan C, Greenway W, Rowley, Tinker, Greenway R, Jones

Image credit: Iain Frazerr

## Surrey MPs unite against County on SEND silence

Surrey MPs have slammed the council for apparently closing down discussions on constituent SEND cases. In a rare case of unity between parties, both the Liberal Democrats and the Conservatives have written separate letters to Surrey County Council criticising its decision.

The letter comes after MPs were advised last week that Surrey County Council “will no longer provide a response to individual cases where a more appropriate alternative route is available”. But a council spokesperson said the most suitable route for parents wanting to challenge a decision is by a formal appeal.

Posting on X, formerly Twitter, Zöe Franklin, Lib Dem MP for Guildford said: “This latest correspondence is further proof of the council’s contempt for children with SEND requirements across our county.” Lincoln Jopp, the Conservative MP for Spelthorne, wrote on Facebook: “It is deeply troubling that Cllr Curran has written to all Surrey MPs seeking to restrict the level of engagement Surrey County Council will have with us on SEND matters. This decision risks families not getting the real help they need.”

Surrey County Council has come under fire in recent years for having one of the highest SEND tribunal appeal rates in England. Around 198 SEND-related complaints have also been upheld against it by the Local Government Ombudsman since the start of 2022.

The county council’s most recent Ofsted SEND area inspection found that children with SEND had “inconsistent experiences and outcomes”. But the Surrey authority would say it is on an improvement programme and is significantly investing in supporting SEND children both inside school and out.

The Lib Dem MPs claim many parents come to them with their case “only after they have exhausted all routes or have been unable to receive a reply”. Liberal Democrat MPs Al Pinkerton, Chris Coghlan, Helen Maguire, Monica Harding, Will Forster and Zöe Franklin have written to Surrey County Council’s Cllr Clare Curran to express serious concerns over the council’s new policy on Special Educational Needs (SEND) casework.

The Lib Dem letter read: “The decision to sever communication between our offices and the Council contradicts the principles [of improving outcomes and processes] and ultimately harms the very people we are all here to serve: the residents of Surrey.”

The Lib Dem MPs claim the council did not contact the group in advance to discuss her concerns before making this decision which effectively closes a vital avenue through which desperate families have previously sought help. They urged Cllr Curran to change her mind and continue a constructive relationship.

Conservative MPs Dr Ben Spencer, Rebecca Paul, Lincoln Jopp, Greg Stafford, Jack Rankin, The Rt. Hon. Claire Coutinho and The Rt. Hon. Sir. Jeremy Hunt have also penned a letter to the cabinet member to voice their concerns. The Conservative politicians said that “limiting engagement with MPs who advocate for constituents in this way is likely to be concerning for the public”.

Similar to their Liberal counterparts, the Tories explained consistent complaints raised by their residents were based on communication in sharing updates, following legal time frames and chasing up consultation responses. Claire Coutinho MP said she spent “around a third of my constituency surgeries helping parents dealing with SEND and EHCP cases.”

The Tory MPs’ letter noted that Dame Kate Dethridge, the DfE’s regional director, saw MPs’ inboxes as a “useful weathervane” on whether the council’s system is working.

The MPs wrote: “Where these issues arise, and particularly there appears to be a pattern or repeated concerns being raised, we must be able to advocate and engage, both on individual cases and on policy and service delivery issues.” But, the Tories added that if the decision stands, they would like further clarity on the scope of future engagement with MPs.

Cllr Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning said: “We know and appreciate the important role MPs play for their constituents, and value strong relationships with our MPs, both about council services and policies, and their advocacy on behalf of Surrey to the national government. We have clear channels of communication between all Surrey MPs



and the council.

“The recent communication sent to all MPs was to remind them that the correct process for families who are dissatisfied with a final council decision is to challenge it by way of a formal appeal. This is the appropriate and most effective route for families, and information on how to do this is always included when families are notified in writing of the council’s decision.”

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## Illegal dumps dump a dumps in Surrey

Persistent and ongoing fly-tipping problems have forced the permanent closure of a Surrey recycling centre, Reigate and Banstead Borough Council has said.

The Lower Kingswood site in Stubbs Lane has been plagued with illegal dumping despite being plastered with warning posters saying flytipping was a criminal offence – and that continued misuse would result in its closure.

The council has said it will continue to monitor the site after its Monday, May 19 axing in an effort to deter any further tips.

The flytipping, it added, was not only a nuisance but risked contaminating recycling turning it into useless landfill.

Cllr Hannah Avery (Conservative, Horley Central and South), is the executive member for neighbourhood services.

She said: “We’re grateful to the many residents who do the right thing when recycling their waste.

“Unfortunately, fly tipping at our recycling sites, which can contaminate this recycling, undermines the efforts of the responsible majority.

“I want it to be easy for residents to recycle as much as they can, so am really pleased that all households in the area local to Stubbs Lane can now use our full collection service and are able to recycle all the materials collected at Stubbs Lane, with the exception of textiles, from home.”

The council said its efforts to curb the illegal fly tipping, including fixed penalty notices, failed to prevent large volumes of non-recyclable waste being dumped at the site.

Reigate and Banstead run an alternating waste collection service. Week one – which it calls blue week, collects food as well as paper and cardboard – with a fortnightly garden scheme for members.

The second week, dubbed green week, collects food, paper and cardboard – with a fortnightly mixed recycling and general refuse of anything that can not be recycled.

The council said it has reminded all its residents, businesses, and charities they must dispose waste responsibly and that failure could result in prosecution or a £400 fixed penalty notice.

Stubbs Lane flytipping (image RBBC)

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## Cleanliness is next to Godliness in Epsom

On Sunday, 4th May, the sun was shining — and so were the smiles of Councillors Steven McCormick (RA Woodcote and Langley) and James Lawrence (LibDem College). While Steven knew what to expect having joined the group several times before, James was astonished to be greeted by a 110-strong team of volunteers, all equipped with litter pickers, high-vis jackets, and green and grey litter bags (more on those later), gathered and ready in Rosebery Park.

The volunteers, from ASEZ WAO and the World Mission Society Church of God, had travelled from Surrey, London, and as far afield as Manchester, Guildford, and Birmingham. Their mission: to clean up the parks and streets of Epsom as part of a “Reduce Plastic” campaign — an initiative backed not just by words, but by real action.

The event began with inspiring words from the councillors. Councillor James expressed his surprise at the turnout, admitting he had expected a group of around 11 but was delighted to see 10 times that number. “This is wonderful — amazing,” he said. “It’s so pleasing to see so many young faces in the crowd... so many people think activism is just shouting something online, but it’s fantastic to see people actually doing something.”



Councillor Steven added: “Hopefully people will just put litter in the bin — I know it’s a big ask — but what you’re doing is great and sets a really good example. You don’t just explain it, you actually do it. Really good job.”

Although Councillor Neil Dallen (RA Town) was unable to attend in person, he sent a message of encouragement via email, which was read out by a representative: “Best wishes to you all. This country depends on volunteers in many ways. A clean and tidy town encourages others to keep it clean and discourages littering and graffiti.”

The mostly young adult volunteers were uplifted by the councillors’ support, giving them a resounding cheer and calling out, “We love you!” Following the speeches, a short presentation was given on plastic pollution, highlighting the dangers of microplastics and encouraging people to think about how they can reduce plastic in their daily lives — something we can all take part in.

Afterwards, the councillors and volunteers set to work along three key routes in Epsom, including the town centre, the car park near Lidl, Epsom Square, Rosebery Park, and Mount Hill Gardens — all areas where litter had been reported. Recyclable and non-recyclable waste were carefully separated, with recyclable items placed in green bags and non-recyclable in grey ones.

Members of the local community praised the volunteers, and several even signed up for future events. Other environmental groups also offered words of encouragement, recognising the volunteers’ hard work. By the end of the day, about 40 bags of rubbish had been collected and left at an agreed pick-up point, where they were retrieved by a ranger from Epsom and Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) and taken to the recycling depot. The EEBC depot had kindly supported the volunteers by providing around 30 litter-picking kits, which proved invaluable.

The day stood as a shining example of successful collaboration between community volunteers, councillors, and council staff. More activities are already being planned by ASEZ WAO, based at the World Mission Society Church of God on East Street, in partnership with Councillors Steven and James. These include further plastic awareness events, potential upcycling initiatives, and of course, more litter picks.

Epsom was recently ranked the second-best place to live in England, and the volunteers are hopeful that, with continued community effort, it will claim the top spot next year. They are committed to working alongside the community and the council to inspire civic pride, keep our streets clean, and make our local area a pleasant place for everyone. As Councillor Neil noted, by setting a good example, we hope others will be inspired to keep Epsom clean and discourage littering and graffiti.

Olivia from ASEZ WAO summed up the spirit of the day, saying, “The event was brilliant — I loved it. I really hope it makes a difference, and if you have the time, I’d definitely recommend getting involved in something like this.”

Joe Adams

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## Epsom man awarded for psychosis interventions

A Peer Support Volunteer based in Epsom has won a Gold Award at the annual Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust Staff Awards for his extraordinary contribution to the Early Intervention in Psychosis (EIIP) team, which previously supported him.

David Laycock received the Award for a Person with Lived Experience, recognising his remarkable impact on the EIIP team for East Surrey, which supports individuals aged 14–65 who have experienced psychosis. Drawing from his own lived experience of the disorder, David now helps others on their path to recovery, sharing his personal story to inspire hope, reduce stigma, and encourage engagement—particularly among men who may find it difficult to talk about mental health.

He also contributes to the development of EIIP workshops, including the service’s innovative Canal Boat project, which teaches service users to drive a boat—an initiative designed to build confidence and aid recovery through hands-on learning and empowerment.

David received his award during the trust’s 17th annual Staff Awards, an event held at Reigate Manor Hotel on Wednesday, 14 May. Over 160 guests attended, including Councillor Rich Michalowski, Mayor Elect of the Borough of Reigate and Banstead.

Reflecting on the recognition, David said: “Having been cared for by the team I now volunteer with and to be recognised at such a prestigious event celebrating the incredible work so many people do within the trust has been extremely humbling. Volunteering with EIIP has been so rewarding in so many ways, from helping to organise groups to being able to share my lived experience—every aspect of my journey has been supported by our incredible team.”

David’s nominator added: “He has overcome his challenges and now proactively supports others. He is warm, welcoming and has



a lovely sense of humour he brings to everything.”

Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust provides a wide range of specialist services in mental health, learning disabilities, and substance misuse. Operating across Surrey, North East Hampshire, and parts of Sussex, the trust also delivers social care for individuals with learning disabilities in Croydon and autism assessment services in Hampshire. With a workforce of over 2,400 staff across 39 sites, the trust is a major regional provider. This independent recognition underscores the Trust’s ongoing role in promoting recovery-focused, person-centred care through the dedication of staff and volunteers alike.

**Image L-R:** Graham Wareham, David Laycock, Peer Support Worker, Andrew Jackman, Lead Governor

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## Strip Woking’s debt-man of his OBE MP says

The “chief architect” behind the financial collapse of Woking Borough Council should be stripped of his OBE to local government, the town’s MP has said. In 2023 the council declared itself effectively bankrupt with debts expected to pass £2.6 billion on the back of a failed regeneration scheme. It has led to some communities resembling a ‘bomb site’, heaped huge tax rises on residents’ bills and a gutting of popular public services.

Now, the town’s MP has said one of the drivers of Woking’s financial decisions should be held accountable. In February 2025, the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) announced it was looking into the “professional standards” of two “individual accountants” – one of whom is Ray Morgan in respect of Woking Borough Council’s operations and investment activities. Mr Morgan served as CEO for 14 years before retiring in March 2021 having been made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire in 2007 on the back of green initiatives he oversaw. His efforts even drew praise from King Charles while he was the Prince of Wales who said it was an example of local government “enhancing the wellbeing of its residents — now and in the future.” Mr Morgan described being given the award as an honour and that he was disappointed the MP for Woking should seek its removal.

Mr Morgan was identified in November 2024 as being “the principal architect of the council’s investment decisions” based on clear “documentary evidence and the information provided by stakeholders”. Addressing the Houses of Parliament was the Woking MP Will Forster. He said: “The former chief executive of Woking borough council, Ray Morgan OBE, has been identified in a public interest report as the chief architect in bankrupting my council, leaving it with debts of £2 billion. Does the Leader of the House agree that the very least the Government could do is remove his OBE for services to local government? Will she agree to hold a debate in this House so that we can discuss Government policy on removing honours when wrongdoing has been committed?”

As well as singling out the actions of Mr Morgan, the MP also pushed for a debate on the removal of honours from any individual found to have committed serious failings in public office. Responding, Leader of the House Lucy Powell MP, said she was “really sorry” to hear about the case and urged him to contact the special committee that convenes to look whether individuals should be allowed to hold on to their honours where “there is a strong case for nominations to be removed.” She said: “It is absolutely right to say that we need to make sure that people are held accountable for their actions. Where they have received nominations, that is something that we should consider.”

Mr Forster said he has now formally submitted a letter to the Honours Secretariat calling Mr Morgan’s OBE to be removed. Mr Morgan said: “I was honoured to receive the OBE in 2007 and am disappointed that the MP for Woking should seek its removal.”

Image: Woking Borough Council chief executive Ray Morgan. Screengrab from webcast of Woking Borough Council meeting 11.02.21

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## Yes to chocolate, tea, apples and grapes

We might have another reason to enjoy our daily cup of tea or small piece of dark chocolate, as a new study from the University of Surrey has found that naturally occurring compounds called flavan-3-ols – found in cocoa, tea, apples and grapes – may improve blood pressure and the health of our blood vessels.

The research, published in the European Journal of Preventive Cardiology, analysed data from 145 randomised controlled studies, and found that regular consumption of flavan-3-ols can lead to a reduction in blood pressure readings, particularly in people with elevated or high blood pressure. In some cases, the average blood pressure-lowering effects were comparable to those seen with



some medications.

Flavan-3-ols were also found to improve the function of the endothelium – the inner lining of blood vessels – which is crucial for overall cardiovascular health. This improvement occurred independently of blood pressure changes, suggesting a broader positive impact on the circulatory system.

Professor Christian Heiss, lead-author of the study and Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine at the University of Surrey, said:

“The findings are encouraging for those looking for accessible ways to manage their blood pressure and support their heart health through enjoyable dietary changes. Incorporating small amounts of commonly consumed foods like tea, apples, dark chocolate, or cocoa powder into a daily balanced diet could provide beneficial amounts of flavan-3-ols.

“While not a replacement for prescribed medications or medical advice, including more flavan-3-ol-rich foods in a daily routine could be a valuable addition to a healthy lifestyle, especially for those with higher blood pressure. These are findings that, although promising, require ongoing investigation.”

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## No release from LGR releases

### **Surrey district and borough councils submit proposal to government outlining vision for future governance in the county**

Today, district and borough councils in Surrey have submitted proposals to government outlining their vision for the future of local government in Surrey.

Nine district and borough councils support the formation of three unitary councils (Epsom & Ewell, Guildford, Reigate & Banstead, Runnymede, Spelthorne, Surrey Heath, Tandridge, Waverley and Woking) while two district and borough councils (Elmbridge and Mole Valley) and the county council favour two. Both proposals are published on council websites.

The proposal submitted by district and borough councils supporting three unitary councils is underpinned by the following priorities:

- supporting economic growth
- housing and infrastructure delivery
- unlocking devolution
- valuing and advocating for Surrey’s unique local identities and places
- providing strong democratic accountability, representation and community empowerment
- securing financial efficiency, resilience and the ability to withstand financial shocks
- delivering high-quality, innovative and sustainable public services that are responsive to local need and that enable wider public sector reform.

Speaking about the proposal for three unitaries, Councillor Hannah Dalton, Chair of the Surrey Leaders Group and Leader of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, said: “Today, district and borough councils have submitted a proposal for local government reorganisation in Surrey, a proposal rooted in what local government is all about: local identity, representation and economic alignment.

This is a once in a generation opportunity to shape Surrey’s future, to improve outcomes and opportunities for our residents, businesses and people across the county who rely on us most. We look forward to the government’s response to our proposal.

The government set out proposals for local government reform in the English Devolution White Paper. This outlines their plans to move away from the current two-tier system of district and county councils.

Residents can keep up-to-date with plans for local government reorganisation on the Surrey Local Government Hub.

Proposals can be read here: [Epsom and Ewell Democracy](#) and on all Surrey council websites.



## Surrey's children services improve

After a seven-year improvement process, Surrey County Council's children's services spun its 'Inadequate' Ofsted rating to 'Good' on May 9.

Inspectors looking at the council's performance in March found "services have improved substantially since the last inspection". In 2018 Surrey was slammed with an 'inadequate' rating for their children's services, which include supporting children and families' welfare and protecting vulnerable kids. This picked up slightly in 2022 but Ofsted inspectors still said they still "required improvement".

But the new Ofsted report finds "most children and families in Surrey now receive the help, protection and care that they need". The report read: "A model of strengths-based practice has become embedded since the previous inspection. In particular, the quality and consistency of relationship-based practice, direct work with children and families, and written records have significantly improved."

The inspection focussed on the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection, those of children in care, and those of care leavers, as well as the impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families. Each of these focus areas were also judged to be 'good', alongside the overall effectiveness.

Inspectors said: "Given the size and geography of Surrey, this is impressive and means that most children in Surrey receive effective help and support that improves their lives."

The report detailed social workers use creative life-story work to help children understand why they are in care. It read: "The impact of this was evident in the words of one child, who, after completing life-story work, said, 'Considering everything that has happened to me, and everything I have been through, I am pretty amazing.' "

Clare Curran, cabinet member for children, families and life-long learning, said the services have been on an "amazing improvement journey". She explained a lot of hard work from the council's staff and partners has gone into "tirelessly supporting Surrey's children in often very difficult circumstances".

Speaking to the Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS), the Conservative councillor said the Ofsted report put the new authorities under local government reorganisation in the "strongest position". Cllr Curran said: "It will really empower the new shadow authorities to take services for children and young people to the next level."

A model of strengths-based practice has become embedded since the previous inspection. In particular, the quality and consistency of relationship-based practice, direct work with children and families, and written records have significantly improved.

Recruitment, especially in senior and experienced professionals, has been flagged as an issue in the past for Surrey as part of a wider national problem. Inspectors said the county has improved its staffing since the last inspection which has partly been tackled by the council's training and development programme.

Some inconsistencies and room for improvement were highlighted on children's safety plans- which outline specific safeguarding risks in the present and future. Inspectors found their safety plans did not always clearly show the immediate actions a family should take for child protection, or what to do if risk increased.

Inspectors also highlighted the county council is inconsistent in providing support and services to children placed outside of Surrey. These kids, who are born in Surrey, may have to live outside the county because that is the best home for them currently. But Ofsted found children living outside of Surrey do not always get timely health inspection or get the protective responses needed if they go missing or are at risk of exploitation.

Inspectors noted that some care leavers (18-year-olds who are leaving foster or residential care) are not studying, working a job or in training, the report noted. Although the numbers are reported to be reducing, leaders recognise there is more to do.

"We're redoubling efforts to make sure that every young person, particularly those who have care experience, is really supported to be able to fulfil their potential and achieve their goals," said Cllr Curran. She explained not every one will want to go to university, but it is ensuring people have the right career pathway, training or volunteering opportunities open to them.

Care leavers remain living with their foster carers when this is possible, and most live in suitable homes that meet their needs. However, a small number of care leavers do not obtain suitable permanent accommodation at the right time for them. The disparity in banding across 11 district councils is a perennial factor in a minority of care leavers not securing the right



accommodation at the right time.

Cllr Curran said: "It's showing the really good relationships our workers are developing with children and young people that they support, and putting children at the heart of their work. I was really pleased to see that the inspectors noted that our social workers work in a kind, sensitive, motivational, and respectful way. We're striving for all children to reach their full potential.

"I want to extend my personal thanks to the leaders of the service and also all of the staff for the tireless and determined way that they have worked with children and driven this marvellous improvement through.

"We know there is still more to do to ensure that every single child in Surrey gets the positive experiences and outcomes that they deserve. We are now focused on our areas for development and are united in our determination to continue to provide even better care for children and young people in Surrey."

Surrey County Council headquarters. Credit: Emily Coady-Stemp

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## Surrey Uni knows the display way to San Jose

A radical new approach to display screen technology could halve production costs, reduce harmful waste, and deliver brighter, more energy-efficient screens for our smartphones, smartwatches, and even certain medical devices, say researchers at the University of Surrey.

Most display screens use complex circuits made up of tiny switches called thin-film transistors (TFTs), which control when each pixel turns on or off and how bright it should be. However, building these circuits requires a lot of time, energy, water and harsh chemicals, making the manufacturing process expensive and resource-heavy.

At this year's Display Week 2025 Technical Symposium in San Jose, California (11-16 May), Dr Radu Sporea and Dr Eva Bestelink will unveil their latest research, based on a new type of electronic component called a multimodal transistor (MMT). Originally designed as a hardware AI computing element, the MMT also has the ability to simplify display circuits while improving performance and sustainability.

Dr Radu Sporea, Associate Professor in Semiconductor Devices at the University of Surrey, said:

"Our invention challenges decades of industry practice by embracing properties usually seen as flaws. In most displays, engineers try to eliminate the energy barriers that form where metals meet semiconductors because they restrict current flow. But instead of working around them, we've made those barriers central to how our transistors operate.

"Using these effects deliberately, we've shown that the electronic circuits at the heart of display screens can be made with fewer components and processing steps – reducing waste, cutting costs and improving performance. And because it works with existing materials and tools, it's a smarter, more sustainable upgrade for the screens we use every day. For the user, the reduced power requirements in operation will also mean significantly improved battery life."

The MMT's unique operation enables extremely compact, high-performance circuits that are particularly well suited to devices where size, energy use and image quality are critical – such as smartphones, tablets, smartwatches, automotive displays, and future wearable devices.

The technology is already showing promise in simulations, with real-world applications in AMOLED and microLED displays – two of the most advanced and rapidly growing areas of screen technology. It can also be integrated into current production lines with minimal disruption.

Dr Eva Bestelink, Senior Research Fellow at the University of Surrey's Advanced Technology Institute, said:

"I've been working on this technology since my undergraduate days at Surrey, where I had the idea to develop a transistor based on neural behaviour, so seeing it evolve into something with real-world potential is incredibly rewarding. We've shown that it's possible to rethink how displays are built without starting from scratch.

"The MMT lets us design circuits that perform better while also being cleaner and cheaper to make. That's a win for manufacturers, a win for users and a win for the environment. Beyond displays, it could also have major applications in areas like microfluidics, imaging arrays and hardware AI. We're still actively researching the AI potential, but the implication for revolutionising manufacturing is clear – especially if we're to achieve Net Zero."

Dr Bestelink and Dr Sporea will present their research on 15 and 16 May at this year's Display Week 2025 Technical Symposium





in San Jose, California. Their invention – the multimodal transistor (MMT), now granted a US patent – builds on more than two decades of pioneering research in thin-film electronics at the University of Surrey.

Image: By Redd Angelo in Technology CC0 license