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Plans for East Surrey Council continue to progress

14 September 2026

Plans for the new East Surrey Council continue to move forward as Surrey's local government reorganisation programme progresses with the full support of both central government and Surrey leaders. Key decisions are helping shape a modern, locally focused council that will deliver high-quality services for residents and communities.

The East Surrey Shadow Executive met on 14 September to continue preparations for the launch of the new authority on 1 April 2027. Councillors reviewed progress on the implementation of local government reorganisation and considered a number of important decisions that will help ensure services continue smoothly from Vesting Day.

A key decision at the meeting was to approve Woodhatch Place in Reigate as East Surrey Council's main office from 1 April 2027. This short-term arrangement provides a practical and cost-effective base for the new authority, ensuring it can operate safely and lawfully from day one while longer-term property plans are developed.

Access to council services will remain local and convenient for residents. Existing council offices across East Surrey will continue to provide face-to-face support, alongside online and telephone services, giving residents a choice in how they access help and information.

Looking beyond council boundaries, councillors backed proposals for East Surrey and West Surrey to work together on strategic county-wide issues through a proposed Foundational Strategic Authority. Members recognised the potential benefits for transport, housing, economic growth and local funding, while also calling for further details from government on matters including any future visitor levy and Surrey's devolution arrangements.

The meeting also explored how communities could play a greater role in shaping the future council. An early East Surrey Council Strategy was discussed, setting out a vision for an inclusive and sustainable East Surrey where people feel heard, supported and connected. Councillors also considered community-led neighbourhood governance arrangements that would give residents and local organisations more influence over local priorities and services.

Protecting local identity and civic traditions was another important area of discussion. Councillors supported the creation of Charter Trustees in Elmbridge and **Epsom & Ewell** from 1 April 2027, and in Reigate & Banstead if a proposed parish council is not established. These bodies help preserve historic traditions, ceremonial events and local heritage during the transition to the new council structure.

Preparations for Vesting Day also included consideration of the legal agreements needed to create the new councils. These agreements will set out how assets, contracts, responsibilities and financial obligations transfer from Surrey County Council and the district and borough councils to East Surrey and West Surrey, while also establishing how the two authorities will work together on shared services and other arrangements after 1 April 2027.
Councillor Steve Wotton, Leader of the East Surrey Shadow Council, said: "The pace of progress demonstrates our determination to make East Surrey Council a success. Each milestone is taking us closer to creating a council that is shaped by local priorities and focused on what matters most to residents.

"We have a real opportunity to create a stronger platform for long-term economic growth, investment and infrastructure improvements across Surrey, this will help us to rethink on how key services, such as SEND, are delivered for people across our communities.

"By combining services at a strategic level and empowering communities to shape local decisions, we can create better outcomes for residents and build a stronger future for East Surrey."

In the months ahead, shadow councillors will use Section 24 powers to review and approve key financial decisions as Surrey prepares for the creation of East Surrey and West Surrey councils. This will help protect the finances of the new councils by ensuring major spending commitments made before 1 April 2027 are in the long-term interests of residents and support a strong start for the new authorities.

Surrey County Council

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

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