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

ISSN 2753-2771

Some election detail on the new Surrey Councils

29 October 2025



Election dates in Surrey, and how the seats will be split in the two new mega councils, have been confirmed as more details emerge of how everything will work following the Government's local government reorganisation announcement. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government wrote to council bosses across Surrey laying out the roadmap to how and when the old authorities will be abolished. Councils will be sent a draft structural change order with a November 7 deadline to give their feedback. From there, parliament will scrutinise the plans in early January before the formal creation of East Surrey Council and West Surrey Council – and the abolishment of the existing authorities. Elections for the new councils will take place in May 2026 in order to create shadow bodies that will sit alongside the outgoing system. Those elected will be responsible for budgets and long term planning before formally taking over local government functions and powers on April 1 2027.

The new councils will run under a leader and cabinet model, as is currently the case with Surrey County Council. The outgoing councils will remain responsible for services in their areas until they are abolished on April 1 2027. It is understood wards in the new mega councils will follow the current county boundaries – having only recently undergone an electoral boundary review. The major difference will be that each ward will have two councillors representing their areas rather than the current one. Elections will be overseen by the head of paid service of Reigate and Banstead Borough Council for East Surrey Council, and the head of paid service of Runnymede Borough Council for West Surrey.

The ministry has said it wants the first elections to carry a five-year term and is scheduling the second ballots for 2031. After this it will revert to a standard four-year cycle. Writing to Surrey councils' chief executive, Ruth Miller, deputy director for local government reform and strategy, said: "This is in line with recent reorganisations and brings benefits of stability, with councillors serving most of their first year on the 'shadow' council. From your representations that means the election cycle will align with the majority

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ISSN 2753-2771

of elections to parish councils. Where that is not the case, we can, in further legislation, look to align parish elections with the 2031 election, and we will be guided by your views."

Any Parish council elections are expected to take place as normal in 2027. During the shadow year, the new councils will be expected to prepare and submit a devolution proposal or consent to a government plan, to progress the work for a Strategic Authority.

Chris Caulfield LDRS

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Image: Scout outside a polling station Molesey (image: Chris Caulfield)

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