

# Surrey takes over enterprise partnerships

1 March 2024

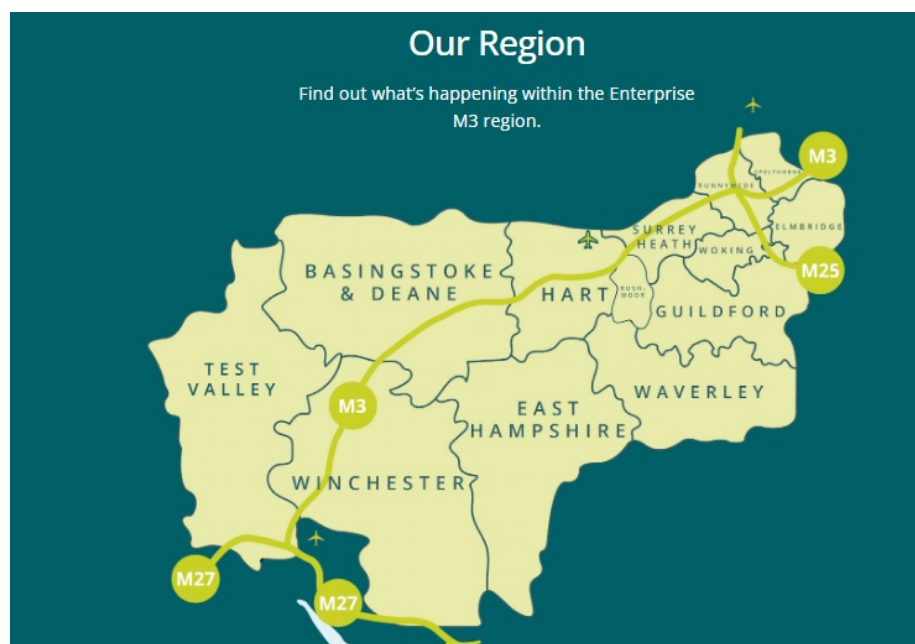
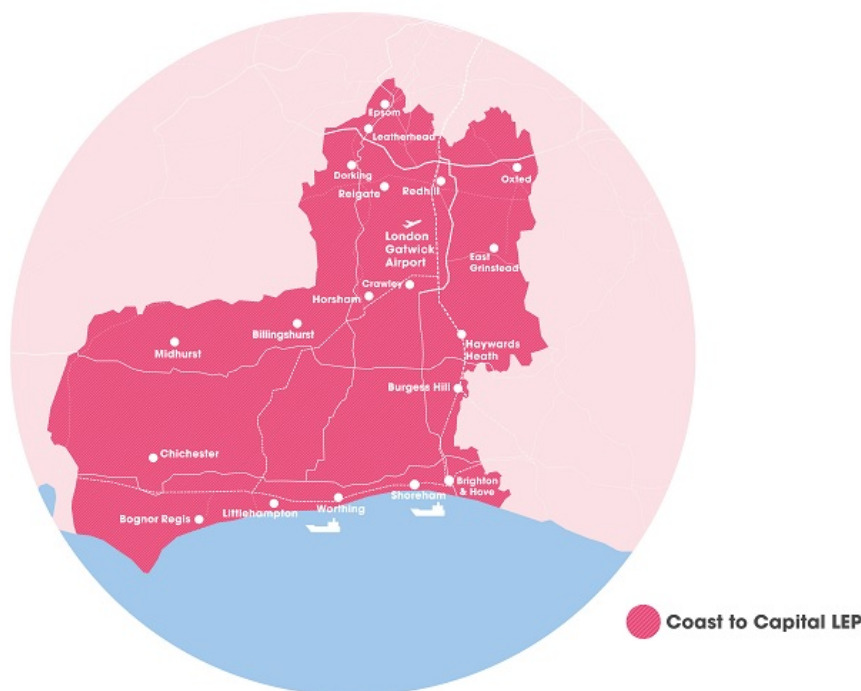


Businesses will be at the heart of Surrey's economic growth as they are set to benefit from a single strategic vision and leadership for the Surrey economy as part of the transfer of formal powers to Surrey County Council.

From April, the Council will take up the key functions currently held by the county's two Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), Enterprise M3 and Coast to Capital.

The change will see the council lead on an enhanced oversight and delivery role in driving sustainable economic growth across the county. It will absorb formal responsibilities to deliver business support through the new Surrey-wide Growth Hub and deliver government funded programmes focused on skills.

The areas covered by Coast to Capital on the left and Enterprise M3 on the right:



**Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth at Surrey County Council said:** "Surrey has a great economic story to tell. We're the UK's leading regional economy, with more than 100,000 businesses which generate more than £50 billion a year to the UK economy.

*"We know there is huge potential to grow this further – through targeted support to key sectors, and through working with employers, training providers and local residents to create a high-quality skilled workforce for the future."*

*"I very much welcome the transfer of these powers into Surrey County Council.*

*"It will mean for the first time we will have one organisation who, together with a strong independent business voice, will provide a clear, coherent and comprehensive approach to developing a strong sustainable economy. This is positive for business and for residents.*

*"I want to thank the government for hearing our case and also to our partners in the LEPs for working with us to ensure there is a seamless transfer of service at the start of April."*

Surrey has historically been divided across two LEP boundaries – Enterprise M3 operating in the west of the county and Coast to Capital in the east – which has presented challenges in terms of strategic coherence and created confusion for local businesses.

In March 2023, the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget statement announced the intention to integrate LEP functions into upper tier local authorities.

Aware of the positive impacts that could have for Surrey, the County Council took steps to engage early with partners to ensure it was ready to absorb and deliver these functions from the point of transfer.

**A report discussed and agreed by the Council's Cabinet on 27th February** acknowledged the move could have a range of positive benefits for local businesses and residents including:

- Setting a single economic vision for the county, ensuring Surrey-wide solutions are developed to support local economic growth.
- The development of a new Surrey business brand and website to make it easier for businesses to know where to access the right information, advice and guidance.
- The creation of a Surrey Growth Hub service to provide universal signposting support for business, as well as targeted interventions to help eligible local businesses in their journey to becoming high-growth.
- The creation of a Surrey Careers Hub (launched in September 2023), which delivers a range of activities focused on ensuring schools and colleges can help young people take their next best step.
- Improved join-up and efficiencies with existing council services and teams.
- Greater democratic accountability for decision-making related to local economic growth, that will be informed by a strong, independent, and diverse private sector voice.
- Future government funding to support local growth will now be focused on the whole of Surrey, instead of it being spread across larger regional areas.

Further announcements will be made in the coming months regarding the launch of the new Surrey business brand, website, and Surrey Growth Hub.