

Minutes of the Council
6 May 2025

Present:

Councillors:

M. Buck	T. Burrell	K.M. Grant
M.M. Attewell	J.R. Boughtflower	M.J. Lee
C. Bateson	J. Button	L. E. Nichols
S.N. Beatty	J.P. Caplin	K.E. Rutherford
M. Beecher	D.C. Clarke	J.A. Turner
S. Bhadye	S.A. Dunn	B. Weerasinghe
M. Bing Dong	R.V. Geach	H.R.D. Williams
H.S. Boparai	D.L. Geraci	P.N. Woodward

Apologies: Councillors J.T.F. Doran, M. Arnold, L.H. Brennan, R. Chandler, S.M. Doran, A. Gale, M. Gibson, S. Gyawali, K. Howkins, N. Islam, A. Mathur, O. Rybinski, D. Saliagopoulos and J.R. Sexton

44/25 Disclosures of Interest

Councillors Attewell, Boparai, Mooney, Sexton and Weerasinghe advised they were also Surrey County Councillors.

Councillor Woodward declared that he was a Member Director on the Spelthorne Direct Services Board.

45/25 Local Government Re-Organisation in Surrey

Council considered a report that outlined the two proposals for a single tier of local government in Surrey as outlined in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of the report.

Council was asked to endorse the submission to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government of the preferred proposal for 3 unitary authorities in Surrey as outlined in Appendix 2.

Councillor Boughtflower proposed and Councillor Lee seconded an amendment to the motion as follows:

“Council endorses the submission to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government of the proposal for 2 unitary authorities in Surrey as outlined in Appendix 1”.

The motion **FELL**

The Deputy Leader read out the following statement on behalf of the Leader of the Council:

“Good evening Mr Mayor & Members

I am delivering this statement on behalf of Councillor Joanne Sexton, Leader of the Council, who sends her apologies. She is unable to be here tonight due to prior commitments made before the County Council elections were postponed as part of Local Government Reorganisation.

This is a pivotal moment for Spelthorne. Last year, we celebrated 50 years of our Borough—our home, our community. Today, we're being asked to consider its future structure and sovereignty. As someone who has always lived here and is proud to serve, I know just how much this matters.

Let me be clear: the option of joining a London Borough, a move many believed deserved real discussion and consideration was dismissed. This is disappointing. Spelthorne is urban, unique, and deserves to shape its own future. This is about democratic fairness.

Across Surrey, council leaders regardless of party, have worked together on a better future for local government. After thorough analysis and real engagement, we stand united in recommending a bold and balanced approach: three new unitary authorities—East, West, and North Surrey.

Under this model, Spelthorne would join Elmbridge and Runnymede to form North Surrey. This makes sense, we share economic, social and community ties. This isn't just about lines on a map, it's about building councils that are local, responsive, and better at delivering the services people rely on.

Now, contrast that with Surrey County Council's own preference: two unitaries for the whole county. Let's be honest they haven't provided any clear, definitive evidence of major cost savings to justify their plan. And we have to ask: is that what democracy has come down to? Just the money? What about representation, accountability, and service quality?

Here in Spelthorne this Group Administration has made it a priority to listen to Residents and businesses. At our February Budget Briefing, local business leaders backed the three-unitary model. In April, our Spelthorne Partnership

meeting echoed those concerns residents spoke clearly about the risks of losing local democracy and service standards under a larger, remote structure.

And the message from the wider public could not be clearer. In last month's Surrey-wide residents' engagement nearly two-thirds **63%** supported the three-unitary proposal. Spelthorne had the strongest support across the county.

Residents in Spelthorne value local knowledge. Local decision-making. Real accountability. They deserve more than lip service, they deserve to be heard. Their views must be listened to, respected, and taken into account, not ignored.

With strong evidence and overwhelming public support, this Administration fully backs the move to three unitary authorities. We believe it is the best way to protect local democracy, enhance services, and truly reflect the needs of the communities and businesses we serve”.

Councillor Nichols requested a recorded vote.

For	Councillors Buck, Bateson, Beatty, Beecher, Boparai, Burrell, Button, Caplin, Dunn, Geach, Geraci, Grant, Nichols, Rutherford, Turner, Williams – 16 votes
Against	Councillors Attewell, Bhadye, Bing Dong, Boughtflower, Clarke, Lee, Mooney, Weerasinghe, Woodward – 9 votes
Abstain	0 votes

Council **resolved** to endorse the submission to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government of the preferred proposal for 3 unitary authorities in Surrey as outlined in Appendix 2 of the report.