

Public Document Pack

Notice of Meeting

West Surrey Shadow Authority Standards Committee

<u>Date and Time</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Contact</u>
Monday, 6 July 2026 at 2.00 pm	Council Chamber. Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames TW18 1XB	Democratic Services committeeservices@spelthorne.gov.uk

Membership	
Name	Ward
Councillor Jane Austin	Waverley Eastern Villages
Councillor Chris Bateson	Staines
Councillor Harleen Boparai	Staines South & Ashford West
Councillor Steve Greentree	Knaphill & Goldsworth West
Councillor Jonathan Hulley	Thorpe, Longcross & Ottershaw
Councillor Nirmal Kang	Heatherside & Parkside
Councillor Sarbie Kang	Camberley West & Frimley
Councillor Scott Lewis	Woodham & New Haw
Councillor Carl Mann	Thorpe, Longcross & Ottershaw
Councillor Louise Morales	Woking South
Councillor Isabel Mullens	Egham
Councillor Rory O'Brien	Sunbury Common & Ashford Common
Councillor Joanne Shaw	Guildford East
Councillor Sally Shorthose	West Surrey Shadow Authority
Councillor Richard Wilson	Bagshot, Windlesham & Chobham Ward

MEETING SUMMONS

To the members of the West Surrey Shadow Authority Standards Committee:

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the West Surrey Shadow Authority Standards Committee to be held on Monday, 6 July 2026 at 2.00 pm, for the transaction of the business set out in the following agenda.

Such meeting to be held in the Council Chamber. Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames TW18 1XB

For enquiries regarding this agenda contact: Democratic Services

committeeservices@spelthorne.gov.uk

Susan Sale
Interim Monitoring Officer
West Surrey Shadow Authority
Published: 26/06/2026

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AGENDA

Page nos.

1. Election of Chair

2. Appointment of Vice Chair

3. Apologies for Absence

To receive any apologies for absence.

4. Declarations of Interest

All Members present are required to declare, at this point in the meeting or as soon as possible thereafter:

- (i) Any disclosable pecuniary interests and / or
- (ii) Other interests arising under the Code of Conduct in respect of any item(s) of business being considered at this meeting

5. Minutes of previous meeting

1 - 2

To approve the minutes of the inaugural meeting of the West Surrey Shadow Authority Standards Committee held on 21 May 2026.

6. Public questions

Notice of questions must be provided in writing by email to the Monitoring Officer at monitoring.officer@westsurrey.gov.uk no later than noon, two clear days before the day of the meeting (noon on Wednesday, 8 June 2026).

7. Members' questions

Members must provide notice of the questions in writing by email to the Monitoring Officer at monitoring.officer@westsurrey.gov.uk no later than noon, two clear days before the day of the meeting (noon on Wednesday, 8 July 2026).

8. Member Development Programme Update

3 - 18

To note member training and development progress to date, endorse the proposals for next steps and provide any feedback.

9. Shadow Authority Constitution Update

19 - 42

To consider the proposed changes to the Constitution including:

- to recommend the adoption of revised Executive Procedure Rules into the Constitution, subject to adoption by the Leader
- to authorise the Monitoring Officer to make any consequential constitutional, formatting or cross-referencing amendments required to give effect to the changes
- to note the Monitoring Officer's intention to update the Constitution under her delegated authority to include the Executive Portfolio Holder appointments made by the Leader of the Council
- to note the changes to be made to the West Surrey Shadow Authority Constitution by the Monitoring Officer under her delegated authority

10. Appointment of Independent Persons

43 - 64

To consider the expressions of interests received from existing Independent Persons from the sovereign authorities to make appointments to the role of Independent Person. This role will assist with the arrangements for dealing with complaints about elected members and co-opted members until 31 March 2027.

Appendix A contains exempt information within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 and by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 Paragraph 1 – Information relating to any individual and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because disclosure to the public would be a breach of the individual's right to privacy and data protection principles, and would not meaningfully contribute to public understanding or accountability.

11. Schedule of meetings for the Remainder of the Shadow Period 65 - 88

To consider the options for future Shadow Authority meetings dates and times, agree a proposal for future meeting times for the duration of the 'shadow authority' term and agree next steps for proposing and agreeing future meeting dates from 1 April 2027.

12. Committee Forward Plan To Follow

To agree the Committee Forward Plan.

PLEASE NOTE: members of the public are able to attend the meeting in person. The meeting will also be broadcast online at www.youtube.com/user/Spelthornecouncil

The whole of the meeting will be filmed except where there are confidential or exempt items. In attending any meeting, you are recognising that you may be filmed and consent to the live stream being broadcast online, and available for others to view. Members of the press/public may film or record proceedings, blog or tweet proceedings and take photographs providing they do not disturb the conduct of the meeting.

The Chair of the meeting has the discretion to terminate or suspend filming/recording if in her/his opinion continuing to do so would prejudice the proceedings of the meeting or, on advice, considers that continued filming/recording might infringe the rights of any individual.

MOBILE TECHNOLOGY AND FILMING – ACCEPTABLE USE

Members of the public and the press may use social media or mobile devices in silent mode during meetings. Public Wi-Fi is available; please ask the committee manager for details.

Anyone is permitted to film, record or take photographs at Council meetings. Please liaise with the committee manager prior to the start of the meeting so that the meeting can be made aware of any filming taking place.

The use of mobile devices, including for the purpose of recording or filming a meeting, is subject to no interruptions, distractions or interference being caused to any Council equipment or any general disturbance to proceedings. The Chairman may ask for mobile devices to be switched off in these circumstances.

Thank you for your co-operation

**West Surrey Shadow Authority Standards Committee
on 21 May 2026 at 4:19pm
Council Chamber, Guildford Borough Council**

Members:

Cllrs: Sally Shorthose, Chris Bateson, Joanne Shaw, Richard Wilson, Louise Morales, Steve Greentree, Harleen Boparai, Sarbie Kang, Nirmal Kang, Jonathan Hulley, Scott Lewis, Jane Austin, Carl Mann, Rory O'Brien and Isabel Mullens

Election of Chair

Councillor Richard Wilson nominated and Councillor Louise Morales seconded Councillor Sally Shorthose as Chair of the West Surrey Shadow Authority Standards Committee.

RESOLVED that Councillor Sally Shorthose be elected as the first Chair of the West Surrey Shadow Authority Standards Committee.

Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Steve Greentree.

Declarations of Interest

There were none.

Election Of Vice Chair

Councillor Joanne Shaw nominated and Councillor Nirmal Kang seconded Councillor Chris Bateson as Vice Chair of the West Surrey Shadow Authority Standards Committee.

Also Councillor Rory O'Brien nominated and Councillor Scott Lewis seconded Councillor Carl Mann as Vice Chair of the West Surrey Shadow Authority Standards Committee.

Following a vote, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Chris Bateson be elected as the Vice Chair of the West Surrey Shadow Authority Standards Committee.

Establish a Standards Sub Committee

Councillor Sally Shorthose proposed and Councillor Louise Morales seconded to establish a Sub Committee of the Standards Committee, in accordance with paragraph 2.3 of Article 8 of the West Surrey Shadow Authority Constitution, to be known as the Standards Sub Committee, in line with the terms of reference set out in Part 3-B4 of the West Surrey Shadow Authority Constitution.

RESOLVED that the West Surrey Shadow Authority Standards Committee agreed to establish a Sub Committee of the Standards Committee, in accordance with paragraph 2.3 of Article 8 of the West Surrey Shadow Authority Constitution, to be known as the Standards Sub Committee, in line with the terms of reference set out in Part 3-B4 of the West Surrey Shadow Authority Constitution.

Establish a Constitution Sub Committee

Councillor Sally Shorthose proposed and Councillor Joanne Shaw seconded to establish a Sub Committee of the Standards Committee, in accordance with paragraph 2.3 of Article 8 of the West Surrey Shadow Authority Constitution, to be known as the Constitution Sub Committee, in line with the terms of reference set out in Part 3-B4 of the West Surrey Shadow Authority Constitution.

RESOLVED that the West Surrey Shadow Authority Standards Committee agreed to establish a Sub Committee of the Standards Committee, in accordance with paragraph 2.3 of Article 8 of the West Surrey Shadow Authority Constitution, to be known as the Constitution Sub Committee, in line with the terms of reference set out in Part 3-B4 of the West Surrey Shadow Authority Constitution.

To appoint members of the Standards Sub Committee

Councillor Sally Shorthose proposed and Councillor Joanne Shaw seconded Councillors Joanne Shaw, Richard Wilson, Louise Morales, Jonathan Hulley, Jane Austin, and Rory O'Brien

RESOLVED that Councillors Sally Shorthose, Joanne Shaw, Richard Wilson, Louise Morales, Jonathan Hulley, Jane Austin, and Rory O'Brien to be appointed to Standards Sub-Committee.

Closed 4:26pm

West Surrey Shadow Authority		
Report title: Member Development Programme Update		
Report to: Standards Committee		
Date: 6 July 2026		
Executive Portfolio Holder: Cllr Victoria Kiehl, Portfolio Holder for Governance, Democracy and Corporate Services		
Report of: Susan Sale, Monitoring Officer (interim)		
Report author(s): Democratic Services sub-workstream, Constitutional & Shadow Authority Workstream		
Wards affected: All		
Ward councillors informed: No		
Exempt from publication: No		
Key Decision: No	If a Key Decision, date registered on Forward Plan: Not applicable	
Report cleared for publication by:		
Workforce & People	Completed by Implementation Team	Not Known
Equalities	Completed by Implementation Team	Not Known
SRO (or their delegate)	Nicola Kilvington	23 June 26
Chief Finance Officer	Vicky Radford	25 June 26
Monitoring Officer	Susan Sale	25 June 26
Executive Portfolio Holder consultation		18 June 26
Chair of Standards Committee consultation		18 June 26
Head of Paid Service	Susan Sale on behalf of Andy Brown	23 June 26

Purpose of the Report:

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the West Surrey Shadow Authority Standards Committee on member training and development, including:

- 'Phase 1 Induction Training' delivered to date
- Training planned for the remainder of 'Phase 1 Induction Training' of the member development programme (until 31 July 2026); and
- The proposed approach to 'Phase 2 Training' (from 1 September 2026 to 31 March 2027)

Members are asked to note progress to date, endorse the proposals for next steps and provide any feedback.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the West Surrey Shadow Authority Standards Committee resolves to:

1. Endorse the Member Development Programme Delivery Approach and Principles set out at paragraphs 14 to 22;
2. Note the arrangements for 'Phase 1 Induction Training' of the Member Development Programme, set out in Appendix 2 to this report;
3. Authorise the Monitoring Officer to proceed with arrangements for 'Phase 2' of the Member Development Programme, and provide any feedback on the proposed Phase 2 Training Programme, set out in Appendix 3 to this report; and
4. Agree to receive a report from the Monitoring Officer at the September 2026 meeting of the Standards Committee with a progress update on the Member Development Programme.

Reason for Recommendations:

To ensure that a robust and comprehensive programme of member development activities is in place for the duration of the Shadow Period, supporting members to effectively discharge their responsibilities during this period and ensure they are equipped for their roles post Vesting Day.

Options, including alternatives (if any)

Option 1: Note and endorse the proposals in this report and agree that the Monitoring Officer proceed with arrangements to plan and deliver the Member Development Programme. This option is recommended as it will ensure that members are supported to carry out their roles during the Shadow period effectively and are best placed to take on full responsibilities from Vesting Day.

Option 2: Do not endorse the Member Development Programme proposals, do not agree that the Monitoring Officer should continue to deliver the programme and request that officers reconsider proposals. This option is not recommended as it

creates a risk that members are unable to discharge their statutory and other duties and creates delay.

Summary:

Introduction

1. Elected Members to West Surrey Shadow Authority have a vital role to play, during the Shadow Period, in preparing for Vesting Day and the transfer of full local government powers on that date.
2. The Shadow Period will require Members to act in a range of different capacities and consider and take decisions on a wide range of matters essential to successful implementation planning and transition.
3. The Shadow Authority Member Development Programme (MDP) aims to ensure that members are equipped with the knowledge and skills to both fulfil their role as Shadow Councillors, but also to then take up their duties as ‘full’ unitary authority councillors in April 2027. It recognises that the Shadow Authority Councillors have a mix of local government experience in a variety of previous local authority roles or none at all.

Role of the Standards Committee

4. The Shadow Authority Standards Committee Terms of Reference (section 3-B4 of the Constitution) include that the Committee is responsible for:

“monitoring and reviewing the Member Development Programme, including training on the Members’ Code of Conduct, to ensure it is comprehensive, robust and supports members to deliver their roles.”

Structure of the Programme

5. The MDP has been divided into three distinct phases:
6. **Phase 0: Member induction:** The focus of the member induction phase was on ‘housekeeping’, on ensuring initial statutory requirements were met, and making sure members were well equipped to take part in the inaugural meeting and start work as shadow councillors.
7. A summary of the member induction process is included at **Appendix 1**. This includes a summary of the feedback forms that members were invited to complete after the Induction Day held on 13 May 2026.
8. **Phase 1: Further Induction:** The focus of Phase 1 is ensuring that members have the relevant training they need to:
 - operate effectively as shadow councillors
 - participate in committees that they are members of (including completing mandatory training where required by the Constitution); and
 - understand key aspects of local authority governance and finance, to enable them to participate in decision making and discussions relating to the preparation of the implementation plan and the budget setting process.

9. A summary of the Phase 1 MDP is included at **Appendix 2**. This includes details of training and development sessions undertaken at the time of writing (and member attendance) and sessions that are planned for the remainder of the Phase.
10. The Committee is asked to note the arrangements for Phase 1 of the Member Development Programme. A further update on session attendance will be provided to the September meeting of the Standards Committee.
11. **Phase 2: Deepening knowledge and readiness for post Vesting Day role:** Phase 2, from September 2026 onwards, will incorporate a wide range of development sessions, focusing on the skills and knowledge members need to operate in the latter stages of the Shadow Period and then to work effectively beyond Vesting Day when the authority takes on full local government responsibilities including service delivery.
12. It is during this phase that it is proposed to offer members more detailed 'topic-based' training, as well as ensuring that those members who will have decision making responsibilities for statutory and regulatory services are properly equipped to do so.
13. An outline Phase 2 MDP is included at **Appendix 3**. The details of the phase are still being developed but feedback from Members is welcomed – the Committee is requested to agree that the Monitoring Officer continue work to finalise this phase, and provide any feedback to inform ongoing work. An update on Phase 2 will be provided to the September 2026 meeting of the Standards Committee.

Delivery approach and principles

14. **Training format:** Training will be offered either in person, online or using a hybrid approach. The format selected will depend on the nature of the session content.
 - Skills training may be delivered in person where face to face engagement will assist with skills development (for example the Charing Skills sessions in Phase 1 were delivered in person, due to the fact that formal meetings are held in person).
 - Committee training is being delivered as hybrid, with Committee members encouraged to attend in person (to assist in the establishment of relationships and effective working between committee members and officers), with other members (including those who may act as substitutes) able to attend remotely. Committee training where practical will generally be delivered on the same day as a Committee meeting.
 - Topic specific training to build knowledge will primarily be delivered online, to ensure it is accessible to as many members as possible (see below).
15. **Training timing:** It is planned to deliver training sessions during the working day, avoiding Fridays and school holidays. Given the compressed timeframes set out in the Surrey (Structural Changes) Order 2026, unfortunately it was necessary to deliver some Phase 1 training during the May 2026 half term. Where a particular training session is of paramount importance, consideration

will be given to running a second session during the evening who members unable to attend during the working day.

16. It is recognised that Members will have varying availability to attend training at different times of the day and week according to their personal circumstances. For this reason (and as noted below) every effort will be made to record training sessions. Where Members are unable to attend or access specific training relevant to their roles, alternative arrangements will be made.
17. **Trainers:** Member Development sessions may be delivered 'in house' (for example by Statutory Officers or Officers from the Implementation Team) or by external parties.
18. The trainer will be selected, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, based on consideration of:
 - the subject matter
 - whether appropriate in-house knowledge and experience exists
 - the capacity of Officers
 - any time constraints
 - any costs associated with external training; and
 - any value that would arise from the session being delivered independently (for example by a Member Peer)
 - any opportunities for training to be shared (for example utilising training being run by a sovereign authority or by East Surrey Shadow Authority).
19. **Accessibility:** Every effort will be made to accommodate any accessibility needs that Officers have been made aware of, including the provision of printed material on request and adjustments for in-person attendance.
20. **Access to training material:** Where possible, material from all training sessions will be made available to members. This will include:
 - circulation of training session slides
 - circulation of recordings of training sessions, where these are available
 - a library of training information available via SharePoint

** Note recordings may not be available for some face to face sessions; and for the discussion or Q&A sections of online training.*
21. **Signposting:** Information about other development opportunities being provided by third parties will be provided to members where these are relevant, for example webinars, e-learning and peer support provided by the Local Government Association (LGA).
22. **Member's personal development needs:** Members may identify that they have specific personal development need in order for them to operate effectively. These needs may vary depending (for example) on any Committees

upon which a Member sits. The Monitoring Officer will consider any requests for individual development activity on a case-by-case basis.

Costs and budget

23. There is no dedicated Member Development Programme budget for 2026/27; however, the Chief Finance Officer has agreed that part of the £900,000 awarded to the Programme by MHCLG in April 2026 should be allocated to “Democratic and Member Enablement”.
24. A small amount of funding (£4,500) was secured from the Programme budget for the Induction Day, covering venue hire, refreshments and other ancillary costs.
25. To date no additional costs have been incurred, with Statutory Officers providing some sessions and the LGA providing training sessions to West Surrey Shadow Authority at no cost. The LGA is also kindly permitting Shadow Authority Councillors to attend various online webinars at no cost, despite the Shadow Authorities not yet being member organisations.
26. Any other costs associated with use of external trainers or venues or member attendance at events will need to be approved by the Chief Finance Officer.
27. An update on any training costs, and information about anticipated member development programme costs for 2027/28, will be provided in future updates to the Standards Committee.

Consultation:

28. Member induction proposals were developed by the Shadow Authority Implementation Programme Workstream, in consultation with the Returning Officer for West Surrey, and the Implementation Planning Board, including the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) and his Deputy.
29. Phase 1 of the Member Development Programme has been developed in consultation with the Monitoring Officer and the Implementation Programme Board, via the Shadow Authority Workstream, as well as officers with responsibility for Member Development from a number of sovereign authorities.
30. Outline proposals for Phase 2 of the Member Development Programme have been developed in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, Implementation Programme Theme Leads, as well as Officers with responsibility for Member Development from a number of sovereign authorities.
31. Consultation has been undertaken with Cllr Wilson as the Chair (elect) of the West Surrey Shadow Authority Standards Committee who had no comments on the draft of this report.
32. Consultation has been undertaken with Cllr Kiehl as the relevant Portfolio Holder for Governance matters who has commented that the timing of training is an important issue for members and that during the working day is difficult for many. Being mindful of the limited resources of the Shadow Authority, Officers will be able to offer a second session, during the evening, for any training considered to be of critical importance. The Portfolio Holder has also

commented that recording the session may limit participation and engagement, which is understood, but agreed that on balance, recording them is helpful; it should be noted that for all training sessions there is a 'Q&A session' at the end, after the recording has ceased to encourage member participation.

Risk Management and Implications:

33. One of the main benefits of having a robust Member Development Programme is it helps mitigate risk by ensuring Members have the knowledge and skills to discharge their responsibilities effectively.
34. As we continue to develop Phase 2 of the MDP, consultation and engagement with the Standards Committee as well as relevant Officers, will ensure that the programme covers the wide range of topics and skills required to ensure Members can operate effectively in a Shadow capacity, and are best placed to assume full responsibilities at Vesting Day.
35. Financial costs and Officer capacity have been, and will continue to be, considered as the MDP is developed further; but these are not considered to present a substantive risk to delivering an effective Development Programme.

Financial and Value for Money Implications:

36. As noted above there is no dedicated budget for a Member Development Programme in 2026/27; should any funding be required it will need to be approved by the Chief Finance Officer
37. Where possible, external training costs will be kept to a minimum; and other costs (such as member attendance at conferences) will require a clear business justification.

Section 151 Officer Commentary:

38. West Surrey Council will operate in a very challenging financial environment, with significant budgetary pressures and limited financial resources from 2027/28 (Vesting Day), coupled with increasing demand and costs of service delivery, and reducing government funding. The Unitary Council will be increasingly reliant on Council Tax as the primary source of income.
39. Decisions made by the sovereign councils in West Surrey and the West Surrey Shadow Authority will need to consider the ongoing financial impact and ensure that expenditure does not exceed the resources available. It is vital that significant importance is placed on effective financial management and medium-term financial sustainability to protect service delivery and achieve a balanced budget position going forward.
40. Investing in Member Development during the Shadow Period will ensure governance arrangements at West Surrey Council can operate efficiently and effectively from Vesting Day.

Legal Implications (Monitoring Officer Commentary):

41. The West Surrey Shadow Authority Constitution requires that Members may not sit as Members of either the Standards Committee or Audit & Governance

Committee without completing mandatory training. The same provision applies to Members who may wish to sit on these Committees as Substitute Members. Training has been provided in advance of the first substantive meeting of these Committees.

42. All members are also strongly encouraged to attend Code of Conduct Training and one session has been provided, with a further to be arranged. This is important early training to ensure that Members are aware of their obligations in respect of interests and their declarations for the register to ensure they don't inadvertently fall foul of the criminal offence of the Localism Act 2011.
43. A strong Member Development Programme is essential to ensure the conduct of effective and lawful decision making, by well equipped, skilled and knowledgeable members, to ensure a robust governance framework and compliance with the Council's best value duty.

Workforce Implications (Director of Human Resources Commentary)
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44. This commentary is provided by the Surrey County Council Director of People and Change in the capacity of People, Workforce and Culture Workstream Lead.
45. There are no significant workforce implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report. Delivery of the Member Development Programme will require some officer input and capacity from within the implementation programme and, where relevant, sovereign authorities to support the design and delivery of topic-specific training for members. However, this is not considered to give rise to any substantive staffing issues and can be managed within existing arrangements.

Equality and Diversity:

46. The Public Sector Equality Duty is defined in the Equality Act 2010 and requires public bodies to:
 - eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
47. Phase 2 of the MDP proposes training for all members on the Public Sector Equality Duty; in addition specific training will be provided where Committee members need it (for example, Employment Committee members).
48. As set out at paragraph 19 above, the MDP will be designed and delivered in a way that aims to ensure all Councillors have equal access to training and development opportunities.

What Happens Next:

Phase 1 of the MDP will continue to be delivered throughout July 2026.

Subject to agreement by the Standards Committee, work will continue to plan Phase 2 of the MDP, building on the identified delivery approach and principles, and the outline programme included at Appendix 3.

A further report will be brought to the Standards Committee in September 2026.

Report Author: Cath Rose / Anna Miller; Constitution & Shadow Authority Sub-Workstream, People & Governance Theme

Appendices:

- Appendix 1: Member Induction
- Appendix 2: Phase 1: Further Induction
- Appendix 3: Phase 2: Deepening knowledge and readiness for Vesting Day

Sources/background papers:

None

Appendix 1: Member Induction

The focus of the member induction phase was on 'housekeeping', ensuring initial statutory requirements were met, and ensuring that Members were well equipped to take part in the inaugural meeting and start work as Shadow Councillors.

Induction Day:

	West Surrey Member Induction Day
Date	13 May
Format	Face to Face
Location	Camberley Theatre
Invited	90 Councillors
Attended	81 Councillors
Presenters	Internal (Returning Officer, LGR Programme Senior Responsible Officer (SRO), Deputy SROs, Monitoring Officers)
Focus	Introduction to the Council and the LGR programme; Safe and Legal session including information on register of interests; Admin session including personal information forms and photos; ICT session including issue of laptops and email addresses
Cost	£2,898.52 (venue hire, catering & incidentals)

Induction Day Feedback:

	West Surrey Induction Feedback					
Number of forms	60					
Rating / 5 (av)	4.2					
Session ratings (%)	Very good	Good	OK	Poor	Very Poor	Blank
Welcome to the Council	45%	30%	18%	3%	0%	5%
Safe & Legal	58%	30%	8%	0%	0%	5%
Admin	47%	28%	17%	0%	2%	8%
IT	67%	27%	8%	0%	0%	0%
Close	37%	15%	5%	2%	0%	43%

Mop up sessions:

A mop up session was held on the morning of the Inaugural Meeting for those members unable to attend all or part of the main induction day. These sessions were used to issue laptops/emails, take photographs and collect personal and register of interests information. The vast majority of Members who were not able to attend the main induction days were able to attend these mop up sessions.

A very small number of councillors who were not available on either date were offered individual sessions.

All councillors who were unable to attend the main induction days were asked to review a recording and the slide packs from the relevant Welcome and Safe and Legal session.

Metrics:

	West Surrey Induction Metrics
Declarations of office	100% signed in advance of inaugural meeting
Personal information form	98.89% complete
Registers of interests	TBC
Laptops issued	100% issued in advance of inaugural meeting
Email addresses issued	100% issued in advance of inaugural meeting

Appendix 2: Phase 1: Further Induction

The focus of Phase 1 is ensuring that Members have the relevant training they need to:

- operate effectively as shadow councillors
- participate in committees that they are Members of (including completing mandatory training where required by the Constitution); and
- have a solid understanding of key aspects of local authority governance and finance to enable them to participate in decision making and discussions relating to the preparation of the implementation plan and the budget setting process.

Programme

Title	Description	Format	Trainers	Cost	Date & time	Members invited	Delivered?*
What to expect from the inaugural meeting	Session to introduce members to the process, content, and format of the inaugural meeting	Online	Monitoring Officer	None	20 May, 5pm	All councillors	✓
Executive training	Interactive session covering the role of the Executive in the Shadow period and how to operate effectively	Online	LGA	None	27 May, 2pm	Executive members	✓
Employment Committee Training	Session introducing the scope of the Committee and explaining the roles and responsibilities of Committee members.	Hybrid	Monitoring Officer & HR Leads	None	28 May, 10am, Camberley	Employment Committee members (optional for other members)	✓
Member Code of Conduct	Session providing practical information about the Member Code of Conduct, to include Disclosure of Interests and Gifts & Hospitality	Online	Monitoring Officer	None	2 June, 2pm	All councillors	✓

Chairing Skills	Workshop to equip new, and refresh experienced, chairs with the tools and strategies necessary for a smooth running of a meeting, in the context of remote and physical meetings.	In person	LGA + Member Peer	None	11 June, 2pm, Guildford	Chairs and Vice Chairs of Council and all Committees	Deferred due to low attendance
Constitution & Decision Making	Session providing practical information about Council governance and how decisions are made during the Shadow Period	Online	Monitoring Officer	None	16 June, 2pm	All councillors	✓
How Local Government Finance works	Session covering terminology, basic duties/powers, where our money comes from (revenue & capital), where are money is spent (revenue & capital), what's on the balance sheet.	Online	Chief Finance Officer	None	23 June, 2pm	All councillors	
Securing a Foundation Strategic Authority for Surrey	Joint briefing session introducing Foundation Strategic Authorities and anticipated timelines and milestones for an FSA in Surrey	Online	SRO and Programme Director	None	29 June, 4pm	All councillors (East and West)	
Comms & Social Media	A session to provide members with information about communications support and how to effectively and safely engage via traditional and social media	Online	Communications Leads	None	1 July, 4-5:30pm	All councillors	
Audit & Governance Committee Training	Session introducing the scope of the Committee and explaining the roles and responsibilities of Committee members. Mandatory for Committee members and substitutes	Online	LGA	None	2 July, 10am	Audit & Governance Committee Members. Optional for other member including those intending to act as substitutes	

Standards Committee Training	Session introducing the scope of the Committee and explaining the roles and responsibilities of Committee members. Mandatory for Committee members and substitutes	Hybrid	Monitoring Officer	None	6 July, 12 noon, Staines-upon-Thames	Standards Committee Members. Optional for other member including those intending to act as substitutes	
Overview & Scrutiny Committee Training	Session introducing the scope of the Committee and explaining the roles and responsibilities of Committee members.	Hybrid	Centre for Governance & Scrutiny	None	9 July, 10am, Runnymede	Overview & Scrutiny Committee Members. Optional for other member including those intending to act as substitutes	
Financial Governance	Session covering why financial governance is important, the law – powers and duties, roles and responsibilities of key officers and Members, External Audit, Internal Audit, key financial processes (budget setting, monitoring, year-end, key financial decisions	Online	Chief Finance Officer	None	13 July, 1pm	All councillors	
Member-Officer Protocol	Session providing practical information about the Member-Officer Protocol and how to develop positive and constructive working relationships between members and officers	Online	LGA	None	16 July, 4-6pm 2nd session TBC	All councillors	
Woking & Spelthorne Debt	A briefing session specifically focusing on the issue of debt in West Surrey and how the issue will be managed within LGR transition planning	Online	Interim S151, Commissioners	None	TBC	All councillors	

* as of 16 June

Attendance: Attendance records for all sessions are being kept. The table below provides a summary of attendance levels so far.

Title	Committee members	Other members
What to expect from the inaugural meeting	Not applicable	TBC
Executive training	10/10	Not applicable
Employment Committee Training	15	5
Member Code of Conduct	Not applicable	42
Chairing Skills	Deferred due to low attendance*	Not applicable
Constitution & Decision Making	Not applicable	49

* invitation was extended to a total of 12 Chairs and Vice Chairs

Appendix 3: Phase 2 - Deepening knowledge and readiness for Vesting Day

Phase 2 will incorporate a wide range of development sessions, focusing on the skills and knowledge members need to operate in the latter stages of the Shadow period and then to work effectively beyond Vesting Day when the authority takes on full local government responsibilities.

This phase is still in development and the sessions are presented in no particular order. Committee members are invited to review the list of proposed topics below and provide any feedback.

- Repeat of Member Code of Conduct (evening session)
- Repeat of Constitution & Decision Making (evening session)
- Budget setting
- Public Sector Equality Duty
- Safeguarding
- Data Protection
- Online Safety
- Introduction to Fire & Rescue
- Combined Fire & Rescue Service (Governance)
- Emergency Management & Resilience
- Pensions (Governance)
- Being a councillor beyond Vesting Day, and member casework
- Planning Committee Training
- Licensing Committee Training
- Corporate planning & performance management
- Procurement, contract management and social value
- Children's Services*
- Adult's Services*
- Corporate Parenting
- SEND
- Education, schools and libraries*
- Health, including public health, health & wellbeing board
- Highways, transport, road safety & major infrastructure*
- Communities
- Housing
- Homelessness
- Waste collection, recycling & disposal
- Climate change
- Parking & enforcement
- Regulatory services, including trading standards
- Economy, growth & regeneration
- Strategic and local plan making
- Environment, Street Scene, and Open spaces

** more than one session may be required*

West Surrey Shadow Authority Standards Committee		
Report title: Proposed Constitution Amendments		
Report to: Standards Committee		
Date: 6 July 2026		
Executive Portfolio Holder: Cllr Victoria Kiehl		
Report of Monitoring Officer: Susan Sale, Monitoring Officer (interim), susan.sale@westsurrey.gov.uk		
Report author(s): Susan Sale, Monitoring Officer (interim)		
Wards affected: All Ward councillors informed: No		
Exempt from publication: No		
Key Decision: No	If a Key Decision, date registered on Forward Plan: Text here	
Report cleared for publication by:		
Workforce & People	No implications	N/A
Equalities Impact Assessment	No implications	N/A
SRO (or their designate)	Nicola Kilverton	25 June 26
Chief Finance Officer (interim)	Vicky Radford	25 June 26
Monitoring Officer (interim)	Susan Sale	25 June 26
Executive Portfolio Holder consultation		24 June 26
Committee Chair consultation		23 June 26
Head of Paid Service (Interim)	Susan Sale on behalf of Andy Brown	25 June 26

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1** The current Shadow Executive Procedure Rules adopted into the West Surrey Shadow Authority Constitution provide a mechanism for questions from members of the public but do not include a provision enabling Shadow Authority Members to submit questions to the Shadow Executive at their meetings. This was not the intention of the Leader, who is keen for members of the Shadow Authority to have the opportunity to ask questions at meetings of the Shadow Executive, of both the Leader and any member of the Executive.

- 1.2** This report proposes the formal adoption of new revised Executive Procedure Rules into the West Surrey Shadow Council Constitution to include new provisions relating to Questions by Members of the Shadow Authority, at Executive meetings. The intention is to enhance transparency, accountability and democratic engagement.
- 1.3** The proposed arrangements are based on a review of existing constitutional arrangements at the existing Surrey County Council and West Surrey councils, and also the Shadow Authority's adopted rules relating to Questions from Members to the Shadow Authority, and the existing adopted Shadow Authority Procedure Rules relating to question to the Shadow Executive from members of the public.
- 1.4** Whilst currently the chair of the Shadow Executive may use their discretion to allow question from Members to be taken, the amended procedure will provide Members with a formal mechanism to seek information and hold Executive Members to account, whilst ensuring meeting of the Shadow Executive remain efficient and well managed.
- 1.5** It should be noted that the arrangements for Shadow Executive meetings are within the remit of the Shadow Leader. Any amendments to the Constitution, however, are within the remit of the Shadow Authority, who act upon recommendations from the Standards Committee. The new proposed Executive Procedure Rules are being considered by the Leader, and subject to his adoption of them, the Standards Committee are simply asked to recommend to the Shadow Authority, their formal adoption into the Constitution.

2 Recommendations:

- 2.1** That the Standards Committee of the West Surrey Shadow Authority resolves:
 - 2.1.1** **Subject to the decision of the Leader to adopt revised Executive Procedure Rules as set out in Appendix 2, (to include a new section relating to 'Questions by Members'), to recommend to the Shadow Authority that these revised Executive Procedure Rules, be formally adopted into the West Surrey Shadow Authority Constitution at Part 4.2 in place of the existing.**
 - 2.1.2** **To authorise the Monitoring Officer to make any consequential constitutional, formatting or cross-referencing amendments required to give effect to the changes arising from the revised Executive Procedure Rules.**
 - 2.1.3** **To note the Executive Portfolio Holder appointments made by the Leader of the Council, as set out in Appendix 3 to this report, and recommend that the Shadow Authority notes the Monitoring Officer's intention to update the Constitution under her delegated authority to include these appointments.**

- 2.1.4 To note the recent changes that will be made to the West Surrey Shadow Authority Constitution, by the Monitoring Officer under her delegated authority, as set out in Appendix 4 to this report.**

3 Reason(s) for recommendation:

- 3.1** To strengthen transparency and democratic accountability within the Shadow Authority governance framework.
- 3.2** To provide Members with a formal mechanism for raising matters relating to Executive functions.
- 3.3** To align the Shadow Authority's constitutional arrangements with existing established practices operating across Surrey County Council and some of the West Surrey councils, as well as providing consistency for Members with other adopted Shadow Authority constitutional arrangements.

4 Next steps

- 4.1** Subject to the Committee's recommendation, the proposed new amended Executive Procedure Rules will be referred to a meeting of the Shadow Authority for approval of them being included within the Constitution.
- 4.2** If approved, the amended document will be incorporated into Part 4.2 of the Constitution.
- 4.3** The revised arrangements would take effect immediately following adoption.
- 4.4** A new version of the Shadow Authority Constitution, dated 30 July 2027, would be published on the Guildford Borough Council and Future Surrey websites, to include all amendments.

5 Exemption from publication

- 5.1** This report is not exempt from publication.

6 Background and Proposal

Shadow Executive Procedure Rules

- 6.1** The Shadow Executive Procedure Rules currently contain provisions allowing members of the public to submit written questions to members of the Shadow Executive. However, no equivalent provision exists for Members of the Shadow Authority.
- 6.2** The absence of a formal mechanism for Member questions limits the opportunities for Members, who are not members of the Shadow Executive, to seek information and publicly question Executive decision-

makers on matters relating to Executive functions. This is currently at the discretion of the Leader as Chair of the Executive meetings.

- 6.3** The ability of Members to ask questions of Executive Members is a well-established feature of local authority constitutions and provides an important mechanism through which Members can raise matters of local concern, seek clarification regarding Executive activities and support democratic accountability. These arrangements support openness, accountability and transparency in decision-making.
- 6.4** The proposed arrangements would complement, rather than replace, the existing role of the Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 6.5** As part of the report to the Leader regarding amended Executive Procedure Rules, a review has been undertaken of constitutional arrangements operating at the Surrey County Council and West Surrey councils, as well as a review of consistency of provisions within the currently adopted West Surrey Shadow Authority Constitution, to consider whether the proposals are in accordance with existing constitutional arrangements.
- 6.6** Currently across Surrey, of the existing sovereign councils that operate a strong leader model, two permit member questions at the Executive, two leave it to the Chair's discretion and others contain no provision. Within the West Surrey Shadow Authority constitution, members are currently permitted to ask questions at meetings of the Shadow Authority, as are members of the public, and members of the public are allowed to ask questions at meetings of the Shadow Executive, but elected members are not.
- 6.7** It is proposed that a new section entitled "Questions by Members" be inserted within the Shadow Executive Procedure Rules, as set out in Appendix 1 to this report. This proposal is currently being considered by the Leader.
- 6.8** The proposed rule would allow any Member of the Shadow Authority to submit a written question relating to an Executive function by providing at least four clear working days' notice to the Monitoring Officer. There are some grounds provided for the Monitoring Officer to refuse questions for example, where they are offensive or vexatious. Members would be limited to 3 questions each on materially different topics, with each having a maximum 150-word count limit, an overall time limit of 30 minutes for member questions, and questions taken in order received subject to one question from each member before subsequent questions are taken.
- 6.9** Questions would be asked and answered without debate at a meeting of the Shadow Executive. Responses could be provided verbally, by reference to published information or in writing within 5 working days.

- 6.10** Provision is also made for urgent questions, subject to the consent of the Leader and notification to the Monitoring Officer by noon on the day of the meeting.
- 6.11** The wording of the proposed change is attached at Appendix 1 to this report, and a complete version of the proposed rules with the changes shown as tracked changes is produced at Appendix 2.

Minor amendments by the Monitoring Officer

- 6.12** The Scheme of Officer delegations adopted by the Shadow Authority as part of their Constitution, provides that the Monitoring Officer may make changes to the Constitution in line with Article 12.4 which provides:

“The Monitoring Officer may make amendments to this Constitution:

To give effect to a decision made by the relevant decision-making body or person having the power to make that decision;

Where the Monitoring Officer considers this necessary to reflect legislative change, to secure consistency, or to address any legal ambiguity or other legal issue; or

For any other reason, provided that any amendment does not seek to remove any function reserved to the Shadow Authority under Part 2-4 of the Constitution and provided that any amendment made under this sub-paragraph is reported to the next available meeting of the Standards Committee.”

- 6.13** The Monitoring Officer is intending to make changes to the current West Surrey Shadow Authority Constitution under her delegated authority, as set out in Appendix 4. The changes will be incorporate in an updated version of the constitution dated 30th July 2026, published shortly thereafter.

Portfolio Holders

- 6.13** Article 6 of the Constitution provides that the Shadow Leader may establish portfolios of executive functions and appoint a portfolio to each member of the Shadow Executive to be known as Portfolio Holders. The Leader of West Surrey Shadow Authority has established portfolios and appointed them to members of the Shadow Executive. These are set out at Appendix 3. The Standards Committee should recommend to the Shadow Authority that they note the new Portfolio's and the Portfolio Holder's and that the Monitoring Officer will be updating Article 6 to reflect these arrangements.
- 6.14** The Leader has the authority, as set out in Article 6 of the constitution, to make decisions regarding any scheme of delegated decision making by individual Portfolio Holders. He has not made any such decisions as yet.

7 Consultation

- 7.1** The proposed arrangements have been informed by a review of constitutional provisions operating across Surrey authorities.
- 7.2** Any comments or changes made by Standards Committee will be incorporated into the report presented to the Shadow Authority for approval.
- 7.3** Consultation has been undertaken with the Chair (elect) of the Standards Committee.
- 7.4** Consultation has been undertaken with both the relevant Portfolio Holder and the Leader of the Council, within whose gift it is to make arrangements for meetings of the Executive. They had no comments.

8 Key Risks

- 8.1** There is a risk of a perception of a lack of democratic accountability if members are not allowed to ask questions publicly of Executive members in respect of their functions.

9 Options

- 9.1** **Option 1** – Introduce a Member Questions on Notice Procedure (Recommended). This option would introduce a formal constitutional mechanism enabling Members to submit questions to Executive Members, improving transparency, accountability and Member engagement.
- 9.2** **Option 2** – Maintain Existing Arrangements. This option would mean that Members would continue to have no formal mechanism to ask questions of the Shadow Executive.
- 9.3** **Option 3** - Propose alternative arrangements. Members of the Standards Committee could provide alternative suggested arrangements for the Shadow Authority to consider.

10 Issues for consideration

10.1 Financial Implications

- 10.1.1** The proposals can be implemented within existing resources. Any additional administrative work associated with the management of Member questions is expected to be minimal.

10.2 Section 151 Officer Commentary

10.2.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

10.3 Legal Implications

10.3.1 Local authorities have discretion to establish constitutional procedures governing the conduct of meetings and participation by Members. The proposed arrangements support the principles of openness and accountability contained within the Local Government Act 1972 and recognised principles of good governance.

10.3.2 The Standards Committee is responsible for advising the Shadow Authority on the development of a Constitution for West Surrey Council and this report is in line with that requirement.

10.4 Interim Monitoring Officer Commentary

10.4.1 The proposed amendment represents good governance practice and aligns with arrangements operating within a number of the Sovereign Councils.

10.5 People/Human Resources Implications

10.5.1 There are no direct human resources implications arising from this report.

10.6 Equality and Diversity Implications

10.6.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

10.6.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

10.6.3 This duty has been considered in the context of this report, and it has been concluded that there are no equality and diversity implications arising directly from this report.

11 Overview & Scrutiny Comments

11.1 Not applicable

12 List of Appendices

12.1 Appendix 1 - Proposed Constitutional Amendment: Executive Procedure Rules

12.2 Appendix 2 - Proposed Constitutional Amendment: Executive Procedure Rules (Track Changes)

12.3 Appendix 3 – Establishment of Portfolio's and Portfolio Holder appointments by the Leader

12.4 Appendix 4 – Constitutional amendments to be made by the Monitoring Officer under delegated authority.

13 List of Background papers

13.1 Constitutions of Surrey County Council, Guildford & Waverley Borough Councils, Woking Borough Council, Spelthorne Borough Council and Surrey Heath Borough Council.

13.2 Constitution of West Surrey Shadow Authority

Questions by Members

- 4.3 A Member of the Shadow Authority may ask the Leader, or any other member of the Shadow Executive, a maximum of three questions, on materially different topics, at a meeting of the Shadow Executive, on any matter in relation to which the Shadow Authority has powers or duties, or which affects the area of the Shadow Authority, and which relates to an Executive function.
- 4.4 A Member wishing to ask a question must submit the question in writing to the Monitoring Officer at monitoring.officer@westsurrey.gov.uk, no later than two clear working days before the day of the meeting.

The length of any such question is limited to a maximum of 150 words.

- 4.5 Any such questions may be rejected by the Monitoring Officer if it appears to them that it is
- Defamatory, frivolous, vexatious or offensive,
 - Not about a matter for which the Shadow Executive has powers or duties,
 - Is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Shadow Executive within the last six months,
 - It requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information,
 - It refers to legal proceedings taken or anticipated by or against the Shadow Authority, or
 - It would more appropriately be dealt with by the Shadow Authority under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or the Data Protection Act 1988 as amended.

If a question is rejected by the Monitoring Officer, the member shall be advised of the reason for rejection.

- 4.6 A question relating to an urgent matter not otherwise included on the agenda may be asked provided that:
- (a) the consent of the Leader has been obtained; and
 - (b) the text of the question has been provided to the Monitoring Officer by noon on the day of the meeting.
- 4.7 An answer to a question from a member, may be given verbally at the Shadow Executive meeting, by reference to published material or information readily available to Members, or in writing, within 5 clear working days of the meeting.
- 4.8 Questions shall be put and answered without debate

- 4.9 Questions will be taken in the order in which they are received by the Monitoring Officer, subject to the provision that all members who submit such a question shall have their first question dealt with before any additional questions from them are considered.
- 4.10 There shall be a total time limit of 30 minutes at a meeting of the Shadow Executive for taking questions from members. Questions shall be taken in the order in which they are received, except that the Chair may choose to take similar questions together. If the 30 minutes expires during a supplementary question or answer, the Chair may allow the supplementary question to be heard and responded to.
- 4.11 At the meeting, the member is able to attend either in person or remotely to put their question and has the right to ask one supplementary question without notice to the same Member. The supplementary question must arise directly from the original question or the reply. The member has a maximum of 1 minute to put their supplementary question and the Member responding has a maximum of 2 minutes to respond verbally or may respond within 5 clear working days of the day of the meeting.
- If the member is not able to attend the meeting either in person or remotely, the question may be read out by an Officer.
- 4.12 The question and any written response will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

PART 4-2: SHADOW EXECUTIVE PROCEDURE RULES

1.0 Meetings of the Shadow Executive

- 1.1 The Shadow Executive will meet as indicated in the Shadow Authority's Schedule of Meetings. The Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Leader, may agree to change the date of any programmed meeting, to cancel a meeting or to arrange additional meetings as they see fit. At the request of the Leader, the Monitoring Officer shall convene an additional meeting of the Shadow Executive.
- 1.2 The Shadow Executive may meet in public or in private, subject to legal requirements and the Access to Information Procedure Rules set out Part 4-6 of this Constitution.
- 1.3 The Leader will chair meetings of the Shadow Executive or in their absence, the Deputy Leader will preside. Where both are absent, the Shadow Executive Members present will elect one member of the Shadow Executive to chair that meeting.
- 1.4 Attendance by other Members of the Shadow Authority or the public shall be in accordance with the Access to Information Procedure Rules, found at Part 4-6 of the Constitution, by invitation under Rule 1.5 below, or set out in Rules 4.1 to 4.2 below.
- 1.5 The Shadow Executive may invite any person they consider appropriate to its meetings to discuss matters of mutual interest or to advise. Such persons may only be given access to confidential and/or exempt information on terms to be decided by the Monitoring Officer to ensure that the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part 4-6 of the Constitution are observed.

2.0 Quorum at meetings of the Shadow Executive

- 2.1 No business shall be transacted where at any time during the meeting of the Shadow Executive, or a Committee established by the Shadow Executive, there are fewer than a third of the total membership, subject to a minimum of three members, of the Shadow Executive or Committee of the Shadow Executive present.

3.0 Taking of decisions by the Shadow Executive

- 3.1 Shadow Executive decisions, including those taken under delegated powers, shall not take effect until they have been recorded in writing, as required under the Access to Information Procedure Rules as per Part 4-6 of the

Constitution, and shall not be implemented until the call-in process (if applicable) has been concluded.

4.0 Members attending and speaking at Shadow Executive Meetings

- 4.1 The Chair of the Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall be entitled to attend any formal public meeting of the Shadow Executive and to speak to any matter on the agenda for that meeting, provided they are not precluded from attending due to having a relevant interest in the matter, in accordance with the Code of Conduct at Part 5-1 of the Constitution.
- 4.2 Other Shadow Authority Members not described above may also speak at such meetings with the permission of the Chair, provided they are not precluded from attending due to having a relevant interest in the matter, in accordance with the Code of Conduct at Part 5-A of the Constitution.

Questions by Members

- 4.3 A Member of the Shadow Authority may ask the Leader, or any other member of the Shadow Executive, a maximum of three questions, on materially different topics, at a meeting of the Shadow Executive, on any matter in relation to which the Shadow Authority has powers or duties, or which affects the area of the Shadow Authority, and which relates to an Executive function.
- 4.4 A Member wishing to ask a question must submit the question in writing to the Monitoring Officer at monitoring.officer@westsurrey.gov.uk, no later than two clear working days before the day of the meeting.

The length of any such question is limited to a maximum of 150 words.

- 4.5 Any such questions may be rejected by the Monitoring Officer if it appears to them that it is
- Defamatory, frivolous, vexatious or offensive,
 - Not about a matter for which the Shadow Executive has powers or duties,
 - Is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Shadow Executive within the last six months,
 - It requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information,
 - It refers to legal proceedings taken or anticipated by or against the Shadow Authority, or
 - It would more appropriately be dealt with by the Shadow Authority under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or the Data Protection Act 1988 as amended.

If a question is rejected by the Monitoring Officer, the member shall be advised of the reason for rejection.

- 4.6 A question relating to an urgent matter not otherwise included on the agenda may be asked provided that:
- (a) the consent of the Leader has been obtained; and
 - (b) the text of the question has been provided to the Monitoring Officer by noon on the day of the meeting.
- 4.7 An answer to a question from a member, may be given verbally at the Shadow Executive meeting, by reference to published material or information readily available to Members, or in writing, within 5 clear working days of the meeting.
- 4.8 Questions shall be put and answered without debate
- 4.9 Questions will be taken in the order in which they are received by the Monitoring Officer, subject to the provision that all members who submit such a question shall have their first question dealt with before any additional questions from them are considered.
- 4.10 There shall be a total time limit of 30 minutes at a meeting of the Shadow Executive for taking questions from members. Questions shall be taken in the order in which they are received, except that the Chair may choose to take similar questions together. If the 30 minutes expires during a supplementary question or answer, the Chair may allow the supplementary question to be heard and responded to.
- 4.11 At the meeting, the member is able to attend either in person or remotely to put their question and has the right to ask one supplementary question without notice to the same Member. The supplementary question must arise directly from the original question or the reply. The member has a maximum of 1 minute to put their supplementary question and the Member responding has a maximum of 2 minutes to respond verbally or may respond within 5 clear working days of the day of the meeting.
- If the member is not able to attend the meeting either in person or remotely, the question may be read out by an Officer.
- 4.12 The question and any written response will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

5.0 Questions by Members of the Public

- 5.1 Members of the public may submit written questions to any member of the Shadow Executive.
- 5.2 A member of the public is limited to asking three such questions, on materially different topics, at any meeting of the Shadow Executive.

- 5.3 No public questions shall be permitted at the inaugural meeting of the Shadow Executive.
- 5.4 Any such questions may be rejected by the Monitoring Officer if it appears to them that it is
- Defamatory, frivolous, vexatious or offensive,
 - Not about a matter for which the Shadow Executive has powers or duties,
 - Is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Shadow Executive within the last six months,
 - It requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information,
 - It refers to legal proceedings taken or anticipated by or against the Shadow Authority, or
 - It would more appropriately be dealt with by the Shadow Authority under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or the Data Protection Act 1988 as amended.

If a question is rejected by the Monitoring Officer, the member of the public shall be advised of the reason for rejection.

- 5.5 The Monitoring Officer may, having consulted the questioner, reword any question received to bring it into proper form and to secure reasonable brevity. Copies will be circulated to members of the Shadow Executive or Committee as appropriate.

The length of any such question is limited to a maximum of 150 words.

- 5.6 A question will only be accepted by the Monitoring Officer from a member of the public if it is submitted in writing via email to the Monitoring Officer at monitoring.officer@westsurrey.gov.uk by noon, 2 clear working days before the day of the meeting, provided it is not rejected due to any of the grounds above.
- 5.7 Questions will be taken in the order in which they are received by the Monitoring Officer, subject to the provision that all members of the public who submit such a question shall have their first question dealt with before any additional questions are considered. Questions shall be directed to the Shadow Leader, Shadow Deputy Leader or appropriate Shadow Executive Member. Questions will be asked and answered without discussion. Any Member may decline to answer a question, provide a written reply or nominate another Member to answer it on their behalf.
- 5.8 There shall be a total time limit of 30 minutes at a meeting of the Shadow Executive for taking questions from members of the public. Questions shall be taken in the order in which they are received, except that the Chair may

choose to take similar questions together. If the 30 minutes expires during a supplementary question or answer, the Chair may allow the supplementary question to be heard and responded to.

- 5.9 At the meeting, the member of the public is able to attend either in person or remotely to put their question and has the right to ask one supplementary question without notice to the same Member. The supplementary question must arise directly from the original question or the reply. The member of the public has a maximum of 1 minute to put their supplementary question and the Member responding has a maximum of 2 minutes to respond verbally or may respond within 5 clear working days of the day of the meeting.
- 5.10 If the member of the public is not able to attend the meeting either in person or remotely, the question may be read out by an Officer.
- 5.11 The question and any written response will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

6.0 Business at Shadow Executive meetings

- 6.1 The business to be transacted at meetings of the Shadow Executive will be set out in an Agenda for the meeting in question, subject to any requirements or exemptions under the Access to Information Procedure Rules, set out in Part 4-6 of this Constitution.
- 6.2 The Agenda may be supported by additional papers prepared by the officers, or by or on behalf of other bodies, subject to requirements about disclosure of confidential or exempt information.
- 6.3 The Shadow Executive is obliged to consider matters referred to it by the Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee, or by the Shadow Authority for consideration under the Scrutiny Rules.
- 6.4 The Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part 4-6 of this Constitution will apply to notice of meetings, agendas, and access to reports and background papers. Where matters are for decision, the Agenda must stipulate those which are Key Decisions, as per Part 2-12 (Article 12) of this Constitution, and those which are not, in accordance with the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part 4-6.
- 6.5 The Shadow Executive will, at each formal meeting, confirm the record of decisions taken at its previous meeting as a correct record.
- 6.6 The Monitoring Officer, or their nominated representative, shall be responsible for preparing and distributing the Agenda for Shadow Executive meetings, attending meetings for the purpose of advising the Shadow Executive on

matters within their area of responsibility and recording decisions as required under this Constitution.

- 6.7 In taking decisions, the Shadow Executive must satisfy itself that it takes adequate and appropriate advice from its Officers who shall be present at any meeting where a decision is being taken, and that the advice is duly considered in determining the matter. Where there is any doubt about vires or probity then advice must be obtained from the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Finance Officer. Decisions shall be made in accordance with the general principles of decision making set out in Part 2-12 (Article 12) of the Constitution.
- 6.8 Any member of the Shadow Executive may require the Monitoring Officer to place an item on the Agenda for a stipulated meeting of the Shadow Executive.
- 6.9 The Monitoring Officer will ensure that any matter referred to the Shadow Executive by the Shadow Authority or the Shadow Authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee are placed on the Agenda for the next appropriate meeting of the Shadow Executive.
- 6.10 Any Shadow Member may request the Leader to place an item on the agenda of a meeting of the Shadow Executive. The Leader shall have sole discretion as to whether or not to grant such a request and, if so, whether the Member in question can speak to the item at the meeting in question.
- 6.11 The Head of Paid Service, the Monitoring Officer and/or the Chief Finance Officer can include an item for consideration on the agenda of a Shadow Executive Meeting. In pursuance of their statutory duties, they can require that a special meeting of the Shadow Executive be convened.
- 6.12 Except in cases of urgency, business cannot be conducted at formal meetings of the Shadow Executive unless it is included in the agenda for the meeting. Where it is urgent, there must be compliance with the requirements of the Access to Information Procedure Rules at Part 4-6.
- 6.13 The Shadow Executive will report to the Shadow Authority as required under the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part 4-6 on any matter which is classified as a Key Decision and is dealt with under special urgency procedures.

7.0 Voting at Shadow Executive Committee Meetings

- 7.1 Voting at Shadow Executive meetings will be by a show of hands or by electronic means. Any Member may require, immediately after the vote is taken, that the minutes of the meeting record how they voted or abstained.

7.2 Where there are equal votes cast, the person presiding will have a second and casting vote and is not constrained by the way they cast their substantive vote.

7.3 Voting for any office or appointment, including any paid appointment, where more than one person is nominated shall be in accordance with Shadow Authority Procedure Rule 17 in Part 4-1 of the Constitution.

8.0 Shadow Executive Committees

8.1 The Shadow Executive may appoint such Committees as it considers necessary and appropriate to assist in the discharge of functions. In making such appointments, the Shadow Executive must specify the name of the Committee, its membership and the terms of reference of the body.

9.0 Motion under Shadow Authority Procedure Rule 6.3 in Part 4-1

9.1 A mover of a motion under Shadow Authority Procedure Rule 6.3 in Part 4-1 of the Constitution which has been referred to the Shadow Executive for consideration, may attend the meeting of the Shadow Executive when their motion is under consideration and may explain the motion. The mover of the motion will be advised of the date and time of the meeting when the matter is to be considered, and they will be sent an electronic copy of the relevant papers.

10.0 Resolving a dispute or disturbance

10.1 In the case of any dispute during proceedings of the Shadow Executive, the Shadow Authority Procedure Rules 13 and 14, found in Part 4-1 of the Constitution will apply. The person presiding at the meeting will rule on the issue in question and their ruling shall be final.

11.0 Substitute Members

11.1 There shall be no substitutes of the Shadow Executive Members.

12.0 Approval of urgent business

12.1 Where any matter is urgent and cannot await the next meeting, the Head of Paid Service may take the necessary action, provided that they have first consulted the Shadow Leader (or Shadow Deputy Leader if the Shadow Leader is unavailable) and the appropriate Statutory Officer(s).

- 12.2 Where action is taken under rule 11.1 above, the action taken, and the response to consultations, shall be reported to the next ordinary meeting of the Shadow Executive.

13.0 Conflicts of Interest

- 13.1 Where any Shadow Executive Member has a conflict of interest, they will follow the requirements of the Shadow Authority's Code of Conduct for Members as set out in Part 5-1 of this Constitution.
- 13.2 If all, or a majority of the Members of the Shadow Executive present have a conflict of interest, then consideration will be given to applying to the Monitoring Officer for a dispensation from the provisions of the Code.
- 13.3 If the discharge of a Shadow Executive function has been delegated to another body or individual and a conflict of interest arises, then it will fall to the body or individual who delegated the matter to take the decision. Where that body or individual also has a conflict of interest, then consideration will be given to applying to the Monitoring Officer for a dispensation.

Appendix 3

Paul Follows	Leader of the Council	LGR, Devolution (lead), Regional and Strategic Partnerships, Communications and Public Engagement, Debt Resolution (secondary) & Corporate Strategy (secondary)
Shaun Macdonald	Deputy Leader of the Council	Property and Assets, Community Safety, Key Partners Lead (Police, Fire & Rescue, NHS, Local Resilience Forum) & Devolution (secondary)
Alan Ashbery	Portfolio Holder for Transport, Infrastructure and Regulatory Services	Transport (including Highways), Major Infrastructure Projects (lead), Planning, Regulatory Services (including Trading Standards), Enforcement & Parking
Ann-Marie Barker	Portfolio Holder for Environment, Place and Economy	Waste Management, Green Spaces, Sustainability, Economic Development, Placemaking, Skills, Adult Learning, Leisure & Libraries, Arts and Culture
Victoria Kiehl	Portfolio Holder for Governance, Democracy and Corporate Services	Democratic Services, Governance, Standards, Legal, Risk Management, HR, EDI (lead), Corporate Services, Corporate Strategy (secondary), Local Committees (lead), Annual Plan & Performance Tracking
Julia McShane	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities	Social/Council Housing (construction, maintenance & tenant engagement), Homelessness, Housing Association Partners, Community Services & Partnerships (including VCO's). Public Health (Secondary). HRA (Secondary).
Ellen Nicholson	Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health	Adult Social Care (incl. commissioning), Adult Social Care Operations (Legal/Transport/Finance), Adults Mental Health, Prevention Partnerships & Safeguarding (secondary), Care Act Duties. Public Health (Lead)
Leslie Rice	Portfolio Holder for Finance	Finance (Revenue & Benefits, Accounting & Treasury), Procurement, Internal Audit & Debt Resolution (Lead), General Fund and HRA (Lead)
Dale Roberts	Portfolio Holder for Transformation, Digital and Customer Experience	Customer Services, Transformation, IT (incl. digital & data), Insight (data/digital), Organisational Development, & Corporate Strategy (lead)
Liz Townsend	Portfolio Holder for Children, Families and Education	Children's Social Care, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Commissioning, Education Services, Early Help and Family Support, Public Health Functions for Children, Children and Adolescent Mental Health, Youth Services, Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Governance (Lead), Children's Services Operations (Legal/Transport/Finance). Public Health (Secondary)

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Appendix 4

Amendments to be made to the West Surrey Shadow Authority Constitution by the Monitoring Officer

Financial Procedure Rules

Paragraph 5.2 of the Financial Procedure Rules at Part 4-7 of the constitution provides that the Head of Paid Service is responsible for preparing West Surrey Council's Pay Policy Statements, "for consideration by the Shadow Executive and approval by the Shadow Authority". This is inconsistent with the Terms of Reference of the Employment Committee which provide at paragraph 2.1 that within the functions of the Employment Committee are "preparation of the annual Pay Policy statement to be agreed by the Shadow Authority.

The MO's view is that the Pay Policy must be approved by the Shadow Authority to comply with section 38 of the Localism Act and it is more appropriate for the Employment Committee, rather than the Executive to consider it and make a recommendation for its adoption by the Shadow Authority.

The Mo will therefore make the necessary amendment to the Financial Procedure Rules.

Employment Procedure Rules

Paragraph 6.6 of the Employment Procedure Rules at Part 4-4 of the Constitution provide in table 1 arrangements for the appointment of Statutory Officers of West Surrey Council, including the post of 'Chief Education Officer'.

Since legislative changes were implemented a Unitary local authority no longer has a dedicated Statutory role of Chief Education Officer, and the duties of this former role have been amalgamated into other Statutory roles.

The MO will remove the reference to the Chief Education Officer.

Functions

Paragraph 11.1 of Part 3A of the constitution sets out a table with the principal functions of the Shadow Authority and identified the body responsible for each function. The function of the Corporate Schedule has been omitted.

The MO advises that the Corporate Strategy should be developed by the Shadow Executive and then recommended by them to the Shadow Authority for formal adoption.

The MO will amend the table at paragraph 11.1 to provide that the function of “Adopt the Corporate Strategy” is the responsibility of the Shadow Authority and that “Recommendation of a Corporate Strategy” is the responsibility of the Shadow Executive.

Standards Committee Terms of Reference

Paragraph 5 of the Standards Committee Terms of Reference does not specifically state that the Constitution Sub Committee should be politically balanced.

The MO’s view is that whilst it does provide for this elsewhere in the constitution, it would be useful to include it within the terms of reference.

The MO will amend paragraph 5.1 to add the words “The Constitution Sub Committee will be politically balanced as far as is achievable”, at the end of the paragraph.

The numbering of paragraph 9 of the Standards Committee Terms of Reference is not correct and the MO will amend the numbering to be sequential.

Financial Procedure Rules

At the meeting of the Executive on 9th June 2026, the Executive adopted a General Consents document for local authorities requiring consents from the Shadow Executive in relation to the s24 Direction, expected to become legislation on 3rd July 2026.

The MO advises that this should be incorporated into the constitution.

The MO will include this as appendix 3 to the Financial Procedure Rules at Part 4-7 of the Constitution.

Shadow Authority Procedure Rules

The Shadow Authority Procedure Rules (Part 4-1) provide in Paragraph 2.2.2 that the Monitoring Officer may amend the date, time or venue of an ordinary meeting in agreement with the Chair and Head of Paid Service, prior to a summons being issued. Paragraph 2.3.2 provides that the Monitoring Officer may alter the place, date and time of an ordinary meeting in consultation with the Chair, the Leader and the Head of Paid Service.

It is proposed that the Monitoring Officer have the ability to alter the date, time and venue of an ordinary meeting and that for a Shadow Authority meeting it should be in consultation with the Chair, Leader and Head of Paid Service, whereas for a Committee meeting it should be in consultation with the Chair of the Committee and the Head of Paid Service.

The MO intends to amend the wording in paragraph 2.2.2 and 2.3.2 to reflect the above and ensure consistency.

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West Surrey Shadow Authority		
Report title: Appointment of Independent Persons to the West Surrey Shadow Authorities until 31 st March 2027		
Report to: Standards Committee		
Date: 6 July 2026		
Executive Portfolio Holder: Cllr Victoria Kiehl, Portfolio Holder for Governance, Democracy and Corporate Services		
Report of / Lead Officer: Susan Sale, Monitoring Officer (interim)		
Report author(s): Democratic Services sub-workstream, Constitutional & Shadow Authority Workstream		
Wards affected: All		
Ward councillors informed: No		
Exempt from publication: Partially – Open Report & Exempt appendix 1		
Key Decision: No	If a Key Decision, date registered on Forward Plan: Not applicable	
Report cleared for publication by:		
Workforce & People	Implementation Team	
Equalities	Implementation Team	
SRO (or their delegate)	Nicola Kilvington	23 June 26
Chief Finance Officer	Vicky Radford	21 June 26
Monitoring Officer	Susan Sale	25 June 26
Executive Portfolio Holder consultation		24 June 26
Chair of Standards Committee consultation		23 June 26
Head of Paid Service	Susan Sale on behalf of Andy Brown	25 June 26

Purpose of the Report:

This reports requests that the Standards Committee of the West Surrey Shadow Authority consider the expressions of interests received from seven existing Independent Persons of the twelve sovereign authorities in Surrey and recommends to the Shadow Authority that it makes appointments to the role of Independent Person for the purposes of the Localism Act 2011 to assist with the arrangements for dealing with complaints about elected members and co-opted members until 31 March 2027.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Standards Committee of the West Surrey Shadow Authority recommends to the West Surrey Shadow Authority:

1. That it appoints Bill Donnelly, Jane Clarke, Belinda Knight, Murray Litvak, John Smith, Dean Spears and Tim Stokes as Independent Persons for the remainder of the Shadow Period until 31st March 2027; and
2. That an allowance of £1,159 per annum, pro rata, as detailed in the Shadow Authority's Members' Allowance Scheme be paid to each of the Independent Persons, together with expenses for travel, where such costs are incurred in connection with their duties.

Reason for Recommendations:

In order to comply with the provisions set out in the Localism Act 2011, the Shadow Authority is required to appoint at least one Independent Person to assist with the arrangements for dealing with complaints against Councillors (including Co-Opted Members).

Independent Persons may also be required by the Employment Committee of the West Surrey Shadow Authority in respect of other matters relating to any proposed dismissal of a Statutory Officer.

Options, including alternatives (if any)

Option 1 (recommended): The Standards Committee is asked to endorse the proposed appointment of Bill Donnelly, Jane Clarke, Belinda Knight, Murray Litvak, John Smith, Dean Spears and Tim Stokes as Independent Persons for the Shadow Period until 31 March 2027.

Option 2 (not recommended): The Standards Committee could decide to recommend that only some of the applicants are appointed to the post, noting that the Council must have at least one Independent Person under the Localism Act 2011. This is not recommended as it would reduce the size of the pool and create a risk of not having sufficient capacity within that reduced pool; leave the Interim Monitoring Officers without Independent Person availability due to leave, potential conflicts of interest; limited coverage in the case of multiple complaints.

Option 3 (not recommended): The Committee could resolve that none of the applicants to the post should be appointed at this stage and the post should be re-advertised. This option is not recommended as it will result in a delay to the appointment of an Independent Person(s) during the Shadow Period and leave the Shadow Authority non-compliant with its statutory duty.

Exempt Information

This report is partially exempt. The substantive report is open but appendix 1 is exempt in accordance with schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, due to

it including personal information relating to an individual. The view of the Monitoring Officer is that the public interest test does not override the exemption.

Executive Summary:

1. The Localism Act 2011, section 28(7), requires the standards arrangements adopted by the Shadow Authority to include provision for the appointment of at least one Independent Person.
2. Section 28(8) of the Localism Act 2011 sets out the test of independence and further details are set out in Part 3-B4, paragraph (h) of the Constitution.
3. The views of the Independent Person must be sought and taken into account by the Shadow Authority before it makes any decision on any allegation of councillor misconduct that it has decided to investigate.
4. The Shadow Authority's arrangements, as detailed in Part 4-5 of the Constitution (Standards Procedure Rules), provide for the Monitoring Officer to seek the views of the independent persons at other stages of the complaints process, e.g. at the initial assessment in deciding whether there is a potential breach of the code of conduct at all and, if there is, whether it is in the public interest to carry out an investigation or seek an informal resolution, or take no further action.
5. The views of the Independent Person may also be sought by the Shadow Authority in any other circumstances provided for in the adopted arrangements and the Constitution, as well as by the Councillor who is the subject of the complaint.

Role of the Committee

6. The Shadow Authority Standards Committee Terms of Reference (section 3-B4 of the Constitution) include that the Committee is responsible for:

"recommending to the Shadow Authority the appointment of at least one Independent Person as required under section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011."

Expressions of Interest

7. In light of the need for the appointment of at least one Independent Person for the remainder of the Shadow Period until 31 March 2027, it is proposed that they should be drawn from the existing pool of Independent Persons of the sovereign councils within Surrey. These Independent Persons have already been through a formal recruitment process when first appointed by their respective local authorities and possess significant experience of dealing with

Code of Conduct complaints for local authorities both at County and District and Borough level.

8. Expressions of interest have been invited and seven responses from existing Independent Persons (IPs) have been received. These include Bill Donnelly, Jane Clarke and John Smith (all three act as IPs for Epsom and Ewell BC, Guildford BC, Mole Valley DC, Reigate and Banstead BC, Spelthorne BC, Surrey Heath BC and Waverley BC), Belinda Knight and Dean Spears (both of whom are IPs appointed by SCC), Murray Litvak (Runnymede BC) and Tim Stokes (Woking BC).
9. Where available the original applications for the proposed Independent Persons are attached as a confidential Annex to this report.

Proposed Appointment of Independent Persons for the Shadow Period

10. Further to consultation with the Interim Monitoring Officers for the East and West Shadow Authorities, it is proposed that all of the IPs who have expressed an interest in the role for either Shadow Authority be appointed as Independent Persons for West Surrey Shadow Authority. But it should be noted that the same Independent Persons are recommended to East Surrey Shadow Authority for appointment as their Independent Persons too. This will provide a larger pool of Independent Persons available to both Shadow Authorities and enable Monitoring Officers to avoid any potential conflicts of interest and to increase coverage and capacity.
11. The appointments will be from 30 July 2026 (subject to the decision of the West Surrey Shadow Authority) for the remainder of the Shadow Period until 31 March 2027.
12. Officers will undertake further work for the appointment of the Independent Persons for West Surrey Council from Vesting Day (1 April 2027) and these appointments will be for a period of four years.

Consultation:

13. The Monitoring Officer for West Surrey Shadow Authority has been consulted on the approach taken to recommend appointments of Independent Persons during the remainder of the Shadow Period.
14. Consultation has also been undertaken with Cllr Richard Wilson as the Chair (elect) of the West Surrey Shadow Authority Standards Committee.
15. Consultation has also been undertaken with the West Surrey Shadow Authority Implementation Team.

16. Consultation has also been undertaken with Cllr Victoria Kiehl as the Portfolio Holder for Governance, Democracy and Corporate Services. The Portfolio Holder has no comments to add to the report.

Risk Management and Implications:
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17. Failure to appoint an Independent Person could result in the delay of the consideration of any matters detailed in the Constitution that either require consultation with, or the involvement of, an Independent Person, as specified by the Localism Act 2011. Approval of at least one of the named persons detailed in this report would avoid this risk.

Financial and Value for Money Implications:
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18. The allowances payable to the Independent Persons during the remainder of the shadow period (£1,159 per person per annum) will be funded from the Devolution & Local Government Reorganisation Implementation Fund which is funded jointly by the predecessor authorities and managed under a Memorandum of Understanding.
19. The Members' Allowance Scheme adopted by the Shadow Authority at their inaugural meeting on 21 May provided that appointed Independent Persons receive a payment of £1,159 per annum. This will be pro rata for the remainder of the Shadow Period.

Section 151 Officer Commentary:
--

20. West Surrey Council will operate in a very challenging financial environment, with significant budgetary pressures due to increasing demand and costs of service delivery and reducing government funding. The new unitary will be increasingly reliant on Council Tax as the primary source of income.
21. Decisions made by the sovereign councils and the West Surrey Shadow Authority will need to consider the ongoing financial impact and ensure that expenditure does not exceed the resources available. It is vital that significant importance is placed on effective financial management and medium-term financial sustainability to protect service delivery and achieve a balanced budget position going forward.
22. The costs are part of the Member Allowances allocation.
23. Having Independent Persons appointed ensures good governance for the Shadow Authority.

Legal Implications:

24. As detailed in the body of the report, the Localism Act 2011, section 28(7), requires the standards arrangements adopted by the Shadow Authority to include provision for the appointment of at least one Independent Person.

Monitoring Officer comments:

25. Independent Persons are often conflicted within the same matter if, for example they are asked to advise the Monitoring Officer at the outset, support the Subject Member and also advise the Sub Committee post investigation. It is therefore helpful to appoint several to ensure that conflicts and absences do not have operational impact.
26. All of the Independent Persons recommended have been through a previous recruitment process and are already experienced and knowledgeable so should be able to add value to the standards and ethics regime within the Shadow Authority.

Workforce Implications

27. There are no Workforce implications to be considered.

Equality and Diversity:

28. The Standards Procedure Rules comply with equalities legislation including the Public Sector Equality Duty as defined in the Equality Act 2010 and which requires public bodies to:
 - eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

What Happens Next:

29. Subject to agreement by the West Surrey Shadow Authority Standards Committee, they shall make a recommendation to the Shadow Authority meeting on 30 July for formal approval of the appointments.
30. Officers of the Implementation Team, together with the Monitoring Officer, will commence the recruitment process of Independent Persons for the West Surrey Council later this year, with a view to submitting a report to the Standards Committees of the Shadow Authorities in early 2027. A recommendation from the Committee will then be considered by the Shadow Authority prior to vesting day to approve further appointments to take effect from 1 April 2027.

Report Author: Arabella Davies; Constitution & Shadow Authority Workstream Lead, People & Governance Theme

Sources/background papers:

None

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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West Surrey Shadow Authority		
Report title: Review of 2026/27 Shadow Authority Council & Committee Meeting Times		
Report to: Standards Committee		
Date: 6 July 2026		
Executive Portfolio Holder: Cllr Victoria Kiehl, Portfolio Holder for Governance, Democracy and Corporate Services		
Report of: Susan Sale, Monitoring Officer (interim)		
Report author(s): Democratic Services sub-workstream, Constitutional & Shadow Authority Workstream		
Wards affected: All		
Ward councillors informed: No		
Exempt from publication: No		
Key Decision: No	If a Key Decision, date registered on Forward Plan: Not applicable	
Report cleared for publication by:		
Workforce & People	Shella Smith	18 June 2026
Equalities	Vicky Hibbert	17 June 26
SRO (or their delegate)	Nicola Kilvington	23 June 26
Chief Finance Officer	Vicky Radford	21 June 26
Monitoring Officer	Susan Sale	25 June 26
Executive Portfolio Holder consultation		23 June 26
Chair of Standards Committee consultation		23 June 26
Head of Paid Service	Susan Sale on behalf of Andy Brown	23 June 26

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1** During the debate, at the inaugural meeting of the West Surrey Shadow Authority (WSSA) on 21 May 2026, on the proposed Schedule of Meetings, councillors expressed views on when shadow meetings should take place in order to ensure that shadow councillors are able to attend and fully participate as there were concerns about meetings taking place at the originally proposed 2pm start time.
- 1.2** Following the debate, WSSA approved all meeting dates, times and locations up to and including 30 July 2026, subject to the start time of the next meeting of Full Council, on 30 July 2026, being amended to 7pm. WSSA also agreed that the issue of the accessibility of council meetings for councillors be referred to the Standards Committee for consideration and to review the proposed Schedule of Meetings, having conducted an Equalities Impact Screening Assessment and consulted with the Leader. The matter would then be reported back to the Shadow Authority meeting on 30 July 2026.
- 1.3** The Standards Committee is asked to consider the implications of changing the proposed start times of shadow authority and committee meetings in the shadow year taking into account the impact different start times will have on councillors, staff and residents. Due to the complexities of managing the shadow authority meeting dates alongside the sovereign councils, this review has considered changing the start times of meetings and not changing the proposed dates.
- 1.4** The report sets out background research into authorities that have undergone Local Government Reorganisation and looks at other research undertaken into local government meeting accessibility.
- 1.5** Options are proposed for consideration by the Standards Committee to allow them to agree a proposal for future committee dates during the shadow period to put forward to the Shadow Authority at its meeting on 30 July 2026. It also sets out the further proposed work to be undertaken to prepare a schedule of meetings for West Surrey Council post vesting day (1 April 2027).

2 Recommendations:

That the Standards Committee resolves to:

- 2.1** **Consider the options (set out in paragraph 11) for future Shadow Authority committee meetings dates and agree a proposal for future meeting times for the duration of the ‘shadow authority’ term (to 31 March 2027) taking into account the research and background information set out within the report.**

- 2.2** **Agree the next steps for proposing and agreeing future meeting dates from 1 April 2027 (post vesting day), as set out in paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2.**
- 2.3** **Recommend the proposal for future meeting times for the remainder of the shadow period (as agreed in recommendation 2.1) to the Shadow Authority for consideration at its meeting on 30 July 2026.**

3 Reason(s) for recommendation:

- 3.1** (Recommendation at 2.1) To ensure that meeting times during the shadow period are properly considered and do not interfere with the work of sovereign authorities, or compromise attendance by councillors who are 'twin', 'triple' or 'quadruple' hatters.
- 3.2** (Recommendation at 2.2) To ensure that the approach to further work for the schedule of meetings from 1 April 2027 (post vesting day) is agreed.
- 3.3** (Recommendation at 2.3) Following consideration of the recommendations made to it by the Standards Committee, the Shadow Authority has the authority to approve the final recommendation. This will be considered in the wider context of equalities, accessibility and public engagement and in line with best practice, in order to maximise the potential for participation.
- 3.4** **Next steps**
- 3.5** This report, along with the views of the Shadow Standards Committee will be presented for consideration at the West Surrey Shadow Authority meeting on 30 July 2026.
- 3.6** It is proposed that a comprehensive exercise be undertaken in September 2026 to develop a proposed schedule of meetings for West Surrey Council that will run from 1 April 2027. This will involve seeking the views of councillors, revisiting best practice principles (as outlined in paragraph 7) and taking into account the increased number of committees that the authority will need to have in place once it has assumed full responsibility for council functions from the predecessor councils.

4 Exemption from publication

- 4.1** This report is not exempt from publication.

5 Background and Proposal

- 5.1** Parameters of the review

- 5.2** The Standards Committee is asked to consider the implications of changing the proposed start times of shadow authority and committee meetings in the shadow year taking into account the impact different start times will have on councillors, staff and residents. Due to the complexities of managing the shadow authority meeting dates alongside the sovereign councils, this review has considered changing the start times of meetings and not changing the proposed dates.
- 5.3** Background research and best practice case studies
- 5.4** This section of the report sets out research and current thought in this area, including both barriers to participation and examples of good practice, to identify principles that encourage inclusivity for elected representatives and potential candidates.
- 5.5** Although the amount of research in this area is surprisingly modest, useful practice, thought and guidance does exist from which some important general principles can be drawn. There is also helpful consideration, and application, of the issues in Welsh local authorities where [regulations](#) and associated [statutory guidance](#) has been issued, to which (Welsh) local authorities must have regard in respect of the times and intervals at which meetings of a local authority are held.
- 5.6** Examples of research and best practice has also been drawn from those unitary authorities created since 2020 as part of local government change programmes, namely Buckinghamshire, North Northamptonshire, West Northamptonshire, Cumberland, Westmorland & Furness, North Yorkshire, and Somerset.
- 5.7** **Groups with the potential to be negatively impacted by meeting start times**
- 5.7.1** Women in local government
- 5.7.2** In 2017 a report was published in England – [The Final Report of the Local Government Commission by the Fawcett Society](#) - looking at barriers to the participation of women in local government and amongst its findings said that:
- “Many women councillors face significant barriers from the inflexibility of meeting times, and almost two thirds of women councillors feel that changing this will bring more women in”*
- 5.7.3** People with caring responsibilities in local government
- 5.7.4** People with caring responsibilities also face barriers to meeting attendance where they have to arrange care for others in their place.

5.7.5 People with disabilities in local government

5.7.6 While accessibility, not for consideration in this report, is key to inclusion for those councillors with a physical disability, the Fawcett report, when considering timings of meetings refers to those councillors who have “*chronic or fluctuating conditions such as Crohn’s disease or ME*” and found that for these people “*the inflexibility of meeting times was an issue*”.

5.7.7 In their official [LGA Toolkit for Disabled Councillors](#), the Association also emphasises that rigid start times penalise councillors managing chronic, variable, or energy-limiting health conditions.

5.7.8 People in paid employment in local government

5.7.9 Many councillors will undertake their public duties alongside paid employment, and this balance can be difficult where meeting times are not carefully considered, for example some councillors may find it difficult to attend daytime meetings.

5.8 Potential mitigations

5.8.1 Support to attend meetings for those in employment

5.8.2 Section 50 of the Employment Rights Act 1996 entitles councillors to time off for public duties but in practice this will often require leave to be booked, and some employers are more sympathetic to this requirement than others.

5.8.3 Consultation and flexibility

5.8.4 The Fawcett and the LGA toolkit both recommend that councils should consult on meeting times before agreeing any schedule and that this schedule should be properly tailored to take into account the survey results.

5.8.5 In Wales, this is already included in statutory guidance with councils being expected to survey their councillors at least once per term, shortly after each election, to assess their preferences and be committed to act on the conclusions.

5.8.6 Further considerations

5.8.7 In 2012, a Parliamentary Select Committee (Communities and Local Government) heard evidence from the Chair of a previous commission on a similar topic of Councillor representation. While the evidence was

some time ago, it is still relevant. Dame Jane Roberts said of that Commission:

“We recommended that councils should adopt modern business and meeting processes which seek to remove potential barriers to participation. These should include accessible meeting times (not necessarily in the day, and with specified end times), efficient chairing, the use of modern technology where appropriate, support for childcare, and concise paperwork. We felt strongly that councillors should be able to work in a variety of other employments, have domestic commitments, and be a councillor”

- 5.8.8 These recommendations show that there are various considerations and mitigations that should be considered to ensure that local government is as inclusive as possible, with meeting times forming part of that picture.
- 5.8.9 One matter not considered in this report but widely supported as key to inclusivity is the ability of councils to hold hybrid meetings – the government has indicated that it intends to legislate for such meetings but as yet has not and those committees convened under the powers of the Local Government Act 1972 must meet in-person.

6 Unitary authorities meeting times

- 6.1 Those unitary authorities formed since 2020 do not all follow the same practice in relation to meeting start times.
- 6.2 The following information has been collated from council websites – it is not a scientific exercise as each council’s governance structure is established in order to meet to its own needs, but it may be useful to councillors as a guide:

Council		Council	Cabinet	Committees	Scrutiny	Planning (and similar)	Community Forums (and similar)
Buckinghamshire		16:00	10:00	16:00	10:00	18:00	18:00
N. Northamptonshire		18:00	10:00	Various	19:00	19:00	Various
W. Northamptonshire		17:00	18:00	18:00	18:00	18:00	Various
Cumberland		13:00	10:30	10:30	10:30	10:30	18:00
West Morland & Furness		13:30	10:00	Various	Various	Various (daytime)	18:00
N. Yorkshire		10:30	11:00	10:00	10:00	14:00	10:00
Somerset		13:00	10:00	Various (daytime)	Various (daytime)	14:00	N/a

- 6.3 Where the information is available on the council’s website for shadow authority meeting times, these are set out below:

Council			Council	Cabinet	Scrutiny
Buckinghamshire			16:00	10:00	18:00
N.Northamptonshire			19:00	19:00	18:00
W.Northamptonshire			19:00	18:00	18:00
Cumberland			10:30	10:30	
West Morland & Furness			Various (daytime)	10:00	
N.Yorkshire			Not available on the Council website		
Somerset			18:00	16:30	

6.4 There is some differentiation between shadow year meetings and those following vesting day and notably post vesting day a variety of times for meetings across the councils and within each council.

6.5 Further detailed research would need to be undertaken to establish the process by which the times were agreed upon should councillors think it useful to their consideration of the matter.

7 Adhering to best practice guidance and future arrangements

7.1 Best practice would suggest that a consultation should be undertaken to identify what the current cohort of councillors would find most useful.

7.2 This may be at authority level, at individual committee level, or both.

7.3 Equalities information should also be considered in order that the needs of not only current councillors, but prospective candidates and members of the public are also taken into account.

7.4 A variety of meeting times is likely to be most beneficial taking into account the types of meetings, numbers and types of attendees (including councillors, officers and witnesses) and the volume of democratic meetings for the whole authority.

7.5 Best practice also suggests that a guillotine be provided for in the council's constitution and adhered to in meetings – something that the West Surrey Shadow Authority has already provided for (three hours) in its Constitution.

7.6 Practically, any consultation and proper consideration of the results, will take time to undertake and would lend itself more reasonably to the agreement of times for the meetings post vesting day (1 April 2027).

7.7 In addition, a deferred decision on meeting times would allow for a clearer picture on hybrid meetings to emerge as this could influence decision making on the matter.

The government has said that

“The government is of the view that in-person authority meetings remain vital for local democracy, but that hybrid and remote attendance, and proxy

voting, will enable local authorities in England to develop more modern, accessible, and flexible working practices.

We have carefully considered arguments for and against remote attendance and proxy voting, and we plan to legislate to support permanent provision in relation to both policies, when parliamentary time allows.”

8 Analysis of sovereign council meeting schedules

- 8.1** The [meeting schedule](#) reviewed (and agreed up to 31 July 2026) by the West Surrey Shadow Authority on 21 May 2026 has been compared with sovereign council meeting schedules to identify times which can be facilitated without a clash of meeting, venue or support staff.
- 8.2** Availability was compared on the basis of four possible start times for each meeting date: **10am, 2pm, 5pm and 7pm**. These times were selected as they provide a broad range of options for each date and would be likely to provide sufficient time for a meeting to be held and complete the business on the agenda. Potential clashes with committee meetings held by sovereign councils were also taken into account.
- 8.3** The results of this comparison have been analysed to identify start times which are consistently available throughout the Shadow Authority year for each committee. The results of this analysis are as follows (and summarised in Table 1 below):
- 8.3.1 Shadow Authority:** Meetings could commence at 2pm or 7pm on all dates. The other start times were not consistently available on all dates. It should be noted that sovereign councils have meetings which clash with a 7pm start time, and these are likely to affect a number of West Surrey councillors who are also Borough/District Councillors. Affected councillors would be unable to attend either the Shadow Authority or sovereign council meeting if this start time is selected.
- 8.3.2 Executive:** Meetings could commence at 10am or at 2pm on all dates. The other start times were not consistently available on all dates. *(It should be noted that following discussions with the Interim Statutory Officers, the Leader of West Surrey Shadow Authority has already agreed that the West Surrey Shadow Executive will take place at 10am and this has been actioned.)*
- 8.3.3 Overview and Scrutiny Committee:** Meetings could commence at 10am or at 2pm on all dates. The other start times were not consistently available on all dates.
- 8.3.4 Audit & Governance Committee:** Meetings could commence at 2pm or 5pm on all dates. The other start times were not consistently available on all dates.

8.3.5 **Standards Committee:** Meetings could commence at 2pm on all dates. The other start times were not consistently available on all dates.

8.3.6 **Employment Committee:** Meetings could commence at 10am or at 2pm on all dates. The other start times were not consistently available on all dates.

Table 1: Summary of start time availability when compared with sovereign council meeting schedules

Meeting	Host	Start time (if consistent for all meetings during Shadow Authority year)			
		10am	2pm	5pm	7pm
Shadow Authority	Guildford Borough Council Offices	Not Possible	Possible	Not Possible	Possible*
Executive	Woking Borough Council Offices	Possible	Possible	Not Possible	Not Possible
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Runnymede Borough Council Offices	Possible	Possible	Not Possible	Not Possible
Audit & Governance Committee	Waverley Borough Council Offices	Not Possible	Possible	Possible	Not Possible
Standards Committee	Spelthorne Borough Council Offices	Not Possible	Possible	Not Possible	Not Possible
Employment Committee	Surrey Heath Borough Council Offices	Possible	Possible	Not Possible	Not Possible

*Note: creates clashes with sovereign District and Borough Council committee meetings.

Principles of meeting scheduling

8.4 Meeting start times and venues are normally scheduled to be consistent throughout a council year for each committee. This provides clarity and certainty to councillors, residents and officers. It also facilitates effective administration of meetings and calendar management, as well as enabling the calendar of meetings to be approved rather than considering each individual meeting independently. Meetings which do not use the usual venue or start time should be exceptions agreed as necessary.

- 8.5** The schedules of meetings for the Shadow Period were prepared in consultation with the Joint Committees and due to the complexities of scheduling meetings, it was accepted that it would be challenging to coordinate dates for the Shadow Period. The West Surrey Joint Committee considered the draft schedule at its meeting on 13 March 2026 and noted the potential for holding Shadow Authority meetings in the evening, with the remainder of committee meetings during the day.
- 8.6** The key principle in scheduling shadow authority meetings has been to avoid clashes with sovereign council meetings; for the County Council, these are usually held in the morning (10 am or 10.30am start) with the exception of Cabinet meetings which are held at 2pm; for the District/Borough Councils, these are usually held in the evening, where meeting start times vary between 6.30pm and 7.30pm, with the exception of some Licensing Sub Committees which are held during the working day.
- 8.7** Holding meetings during the working day disadvantages councillors who have daytime employment; however, for councillors with parental or caring responsibilities, it can be easier to arrange childcare or carers' respite during working hours. For parents with school age children, holding meetings at 10am is more beneficial as this avoids both the morning and afternoon school run. These issues also apply to any members of the public wishing to attend meetings.
- 8.8** Transport is also a consideration – public transport is generally less readily available following late night meeting finishes, depending on location. There may be personal safety issues associated with using public transport late at night. For councillors, officers and members of the public travelling by private car, avoiding the morning and evening rush hours will be a consideration.
- 8.9** Consideration should be given to the distance councillors could be expected to travel following the late conclusion of a meeting.
- 8.10** There may be additional costs associated with holding council meetings outside of regular working hours, such as building security and utilities costs, staff overtime costs and the cost of additional Member expenses claims (for example, taxi fares).
- 8.11** The impact of the rules on the duration of meetings is another consideration to ensure that there is sufficient time to complete the necessary business as required. The Constitution makes provision for a meeting to run for three hours, unless members vote to continue it. There should also be consideration of the quality of decision making later in an evening.

9 Consultation

- 9.1** A formal consultation has not been undertaken with councillors for the purposes of this report however research into what other authorities have in place and initial WSSA member views have been taken into consideration when formulating options.
- 9.2** The West Surrey Shadow Standards Committee feedback will be included when the report is presented to the Shadow Authority.
- 9.3** For proposals around meeting dates and times from 1 April 2027, it is proposed that a full consultation exercise will be undertaken in September to seek views on potential meeting times from 1 April 2027.
- 9.4** Consultation has been undertaken with the Leader of West Surrey Shadow Executive, who has confirmed that all meetings of the Shadow Executive will commence at 10.00am. The Schedule has been amended to reflect that.
- 9.5** Consultation has also been undertaken with the Portfolio Holder for Governance, Democracy and Corporate Services. The Portfolio Holder's feedback is summarised as follows:
- Could members include consideration of 12 noon for formal meetings;
 - the start time does not need to be the same for different committees - for full meetings of the Shadow Authority maximising attendance by members is critical and evening meetings best achieve that;
 - Current members of each Committee should be asked for their views now; it would be a fair approach to allow committees to agree their own start time; and
 - Could the committee consider the geography of West Surrey and the miles members may have to travel in determining times when making its recommendations.

10 Key Risks

- 10.1** There is a risk that if the shadow committee meeting times do not align with councillors expectations and ability to attend that meetings will not be quorate and necessary committee business and decision making will not be able to take place.
- 10.2** There is a risk that the shadow authority may not be able to attract and retain staff in key areas where regular evening attendance at meetings is

required. There is also a risk of not being able to attract and secure witness attendance by partners at meetings outside of the traditional working day.

11 Options

11.1 Option 1:

Recommend adopting the originally proposed start time of 2pm (and previously agreed deviations) for the remainder of the shadow year.

Pros: This option aligns with the originally proposed governance arrangements, supports officer availability and operational efficiency and reduces additional costs.

Cons: This option may disadvantage councillors with employment or other daytime commitments, as well as be less accessible to the public and conflict with meetings in constituent local authorities.

Risks: Reduced attendance is likely to affect representation and create perception of reduced transparency and accessibility.

Mitigation: Schedule meetings well in advance, provide clear public access to agendas and recordings.

11.2 Option 2:

Recommend alternative proposed start times as follows:

11.2.1 Executive meetings to take place at 10am (as already agreed by the Leader of West Surrey Shadow Authority)

11.2.2 Employment Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings to take place at 10am or 2pm

11.2.3 Audit and Governance Committee meetings to take place at 2pm or 5pm

11.2.4 Standards Committee meetings at 2pm

11.2.5 Shadow authority meetings to take place at 2pm or 7pm

Pros: This option is convenient for a variety of councillors and recognises the various different types of committee, numbers of attendees and special responsibility roles. It also supports inclusivity and still provides opportunity for public attendance.

Cons: Attendance could be compromised at either shadow authority or sovereign council meetings where there are meeting clashes.

Additional cost implications, resourcing pressures on officers and potential for reduced availability for key officers and/or witnesses to attend are a consideration for evening meetings.

Risks: Potential to isolate some councillors. Potential reduced administrative capacity to provide democratic services support and delay where urgent follow-up actions are required outside working hours for evening meetings.

Mitigation: Agree officer attendance model and build in support arrangements.

11.3 Option 3:

The Committee may wish to put forward one preferred start time for all shadow authority meetings

Pros: Member-lead approach reflects preferences of those who are required to attend and improves engagement, buy-in and attendance.

Cons: Potential delay in implementation and added administrative complexity.

Risks: Increased likelihood of meeting clashes and consequential inefficiencies in the governance arrangements.

Mitigation: The Committee to agree a preferred standard time.

12 Issues for consideration

12.1 Financial implications

- 12.1.1 There may be additional financial implications relating to holding meetings in the evening due to the use of buildings outside of regular office hours as well as payment of committee attendance allowance to Democratic Services staff (where applicable).
- 12.1.2 The Members' Allowances Scheme identifies two types of child and dependants' allowances. Whilst childcare is linked to a fixed rate, specialist care can be reimbursed at cost upon production of receipts, which may result in higher rates depending upon when the provision of specialist care is typically more expensive.
- 12.1.3 There is an assumption that the Members' Allowances Scheme makes provision via both the basic allowance and any Special Responsibilities Allowances to compensate councillors by way of loss of earnings and enable people to fulfil their councillor role. The reduced allowances

agreed for the shadow year reflect that full responsibility for functions has not yet been transferred from sovereign councils and that post vesting day, there will be additional governance and decision making required which will need to be accommodated both financially but also through an increased number of committee meetings.

12.2 Section 151 Officer Commentary

- 12.2.1 West Surrey Council will operate in a very challenging financial environment, with significant budgetary pressures from increasing demand and costs of service delivery, coupled with limited financial resources and reducing government funding from its inception. West Surrey Council will be increasingly reliant on Council Tax as the primary source of income.
- 12.2.2 Decisions made by the sovereign councils in West Surrey and the West Surrey Shadow Authority will need to consider the ongoing financial impact of those decisions and ensure that expenditure does not exceed the resources available. It is vital that significant importance is placed on effective financial management and medium-term financial sustainability to achieve a balanced budget position and protect service delivery.
- 12.2.3 Any direct cost implication of evening meetings will need to be put forward in the West Surrey budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2027/28. There could also be Indirect cost implications (such as time off in lieu) that would also need to be identified.

12.3 Legal implications

- 12.3.1 The timing of local authority committee meetings is not prescribed by statute and is a matter for each authority to determine, but the arrangements must be sufficient to enable the authority to discharge its functions effectively and in accordance with public law principles.
- 12.3.2 Committee meetings should support timely decision making on key matters ahead of vesting day.

12.4 Monitoring Officer Commentary

- 12.4.1 West Surrey Shadow Authority has a duty to be inclusive and consider the public sector equality duty. Consideration needs to be given to councillors and their ability to fully engage and fulfil their role, officers and employment obligations towards them, and most importantly the outcome of residents, communities, partners and stakeholders and their ability to engage with the democratic process.

- 12.4.2 Such issues are addressed within the report and members will need to balance different and competing factors to come to a reasonable outcome for the shadow period, in the confidence that a full consultation process will take place when bringing forwards proposals for a post vesting day schedule of meetings.

12.5 Workforce Considerations

- 12.5.1 There are workforce implications arising from the proposed meeting time options, particularly where meetings are held outside normal working hours. Evening meetings may create additional resourcing pressures for Democratic Services and other officers required to attend, including potential overtime or allowance costs, reduced officer availability, and the need to ensure appropriate support arrangements are in place. There may also be staff wellbeing and personal safety considerations linked to late travel, as well as a potential impact on the Shadow Authority's ability to attract and retain staff in roles requiring regular evening attendance. These issues may be exacerbated by officers continuing to provide a service to their sovereign council during the Shadow Period. These implications should be considered alongside member accessibility, public participation and the practical arrangements needed to support effective decision making during the shadow period.

12.6 Equality and Diversity Considerations

- 12.6.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful.
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 12.6.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 12.6.3 An initial Equalities Impact Assessment Screening Tool has been used to identify potential impacts (Appendix 1). This indicates that the various proposals set out within this report could potentially have an adverse impact on any people with a particular protected characteristic depending on what decision is put forward in relation to the times of

future committee meetings. A summary of the potential areas for consideration can be found below.

- 12.6.4 Holding meetings during the daytime will potentially impact on councillors of working age and be a barrier to them being able to attend. However, evening meetings could also impact on older people who may have concerns about travelling at night and there could be a perception of increased health and safety risks.
- 12.6.5 Residents may experience a similar impact with regards to ability to attend meetings in the working day and staff may also share concerns about travel and personal safety for attendance at evening meetings.
- 12.6.6 There could be an impact on residents, councillors and staff with disabilities with regards to meetings being held in the evening with some not wanting to have to travel at night or not having access to support services to enable them to attend and participate in an evening meeting.
- 12.6.7 There are also considerations to be made regarding religion and belief as evening meetings could potentially have an impact on Muslim councillors during Ramadan.
- 12.6.8 Personal safety is another area that could have an impact and in particular women could potentially be impacted as some may feel unsafe attending a meeting taking place in the evening including the associated travel to and from the meeting. This could also be applied to pregnant and/or breastfeeding mothers.
- 12.6.9 Following review and discussion by the Standards Committee and once there is a confirmed agreed proposal regarding future meeting times to take forward to the Shadow Authority for decision, a full Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken.

Overview & Scrutiny Comments

- 12.7 Not applicable

13 List of Appendices

- 13.1 Appendix 1 - Equality Impact Assessment Screening Tool

14 List of Background papers

14.1 West Surrey Shadow Authority proposed schedule of meetings 21 May 2026.

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Equality Impact Assessment Screening tool

Sense checking if a full EIA is required and to evidence due regard under the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010).



Purpose and when to use this tool

Use this tool to identify whether a decision could affect people with protected characteristics and whether you therefore need to complete a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).

What is an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)?

An Equality Impact Assessment is a structured analysis of how a proposal might affect different people with protected characteristics in different ways. It enables decision-makers to consider potential positive and negative impacts, identify mitigations, and maximise opportunities to advance equality. Completing and using EIAs is part of evidencing due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which is part of the [Equality Act 2010](#).

Under the PSED, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a [protected characteristic](#) and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a [protected characteristic](#) and those who do not.

Do I need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment?

This tool will help you decide whether a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is needed. It will also enable you to evidence that you have paid “due regard” to the different protected characteristics when making your decision, including when you have decided a full EIA is not needed.

Key to determining whether an EIA is required is whether any aspect of a new policy, function or service, or changes to an existing one, will have an impact on residents, service users or staff sharing protected characteristics. If it will, then it is likely that an EIA will need to be completed

If proposals could impact residents or staff across one or both new authorities, it is highly likely an EIA will be needed. Below are examples that could trigger the need for a full EIA – this is not an exhaustive list:

- **Service changes affecting residents’ experience, including:**



- Approach to service transition (disaggregation, aggregation, hosting, etc)
- Changes to eligibility, access or delivery models arising from LGR
- Budget setting for the new unitary councils
- Other policy and strategic choices affecting communities
- **Workforce and organisational changes, which could include:**
 - TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations) to the new unitary councils
 - Changes to working practices, locations or terms and conditions of employment
- **Programme implementation, which could include:**
 - Major procurement and contract decisions
 - Decisions on estate, ie buildings owned across all 12 sovereign councils

How to complete this screening tool

Complete the table in this document to assist you in thinking about potential equality impacts on the protected characteristics listed. Completing the table should help you decide if a full EIA is needed.

When completing this screening tool, consider:

1. What is changing and why.
2. Whether the proposal affect residents, service users, carers, staff or partners (access, eligibility, locations, channels, charges, terms, workforce changes)?
3. If there are different effects on people who share a protected characteristic (including indirect impacts)?
4. If there is limited or no evidence to rule out differential impact?
5. How each protected characteristic might be affected, using the table.
6. What evidence exists and any known gaps.
7. What your conclusion and next steps are (e.g. complete full EIA, gather more evidence, consult, record an EIA is not needed and why).

What kinds of impact should I consider?

Direct and indirect impacts: A rule that applies to everyone can still disadvantage some groups (indirect discrimination). Consider delivery channels (e.g. digital-only), eligibility thresholds, charging, opening hours, site moves, language/communication, and procurement/commissioning.



Intersectional and cumulative impacts: People may share more than one characteristic (e.g. older disabled women). Consider how impacts might combine or build up across multiple changes.

Positive, neutral, negative: Capture benefits as well as risks. Where there are risks, identify proportionate mitigations and how you will monitor them.

What next?

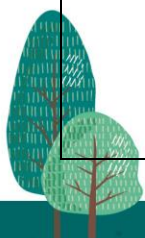
If the decision is made that a full EIA needs to be completed, you can proceed to the Template document, which can be found alongside this document and the [EIA Guidance](#) on the website. This will outline the steps you need to take to complete the EIA.

If you decide not to complete an EIA, you must record this. This might take the form of minutes of a meeting, an internal email or a record in a service plan. Most importantly, it must make clear why you have concluded that an EIA is unnecessary. If you are unsure whether a full EIA is needed or not, contact devolutionandlgr.pmo@surreycc.gov.uk for further support.

Impact of the proposals on residents, service users and staff with protected characteristics

Title of proposal	Description (what is changing and why)
Shadow Authority committee meeting times proposal	Proposal to move the Shadow Authority committee meeting times to start at 10am, 2pm, 5pm or 7pm

Protected characteristics	Potentially impacted (Yes/No/Unsure)	Additional details (evidence, risks, proposed mitigations, next steps – gather more evidence, consult, conduct full EIA)
Age – including younger and older people (e.g. are specific age groups excluded? Would the same process affect age groups in different ways?)	Yes	Younger people are more likely to be able to attend evening meetings due to potentially having work commitments in the daytime. Older people may be less keen to attend meetings in the evening due to



		to travel concerns at night and/or health and safety risks.
Disability- including hearing and/or visual impairments, physical disability, neurodevelopmental impairments, and long-term conditions (e.g. are information/questionnaires/consent forms available in different formats upon request?)	Yes	Dependent on the disability, people may find attendance easier or more challenging at different times of the day dependent on their needs and requirements.
Gender Reassignment (e.g. Is confidentiality of the resident or staff member maintained?)	No	N/A
Pregnancy & Maternity (e.g. are services suitable and accessible for pregnant and/or breastfeeding women?)	Yes	Pregnant women may be reluctant to attend meetings at night due to safety concerns.
Race- including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality (e.g. any specific needs identified for certain groups? Are interpretation and translation services required?)	No	N/A
Religion & Belief (e.g. are locations affected by closures or restrictions? Is there equal access to the service or potential barriers to participation?)	Yes	There is a potential for Muslim councillors to be impacted by meetings taking place during Ramadan.
Sex (e.g. is gender neutral language used in the way the policy or information leaflet is written? Are there different access requirements?)	Yes	There may be a reluctance for women and girls to want to attend evening meetings due to personal safety concerns when travelling at night.
Sexual orientation (e.g. is inclusive language used? Are there different access rates?)	No	N/A
Marital status/civil partnership (e.g. would there be any difference because the individual is/is not married/in a civil partnership?)	No	N/A

Have you identified any potential direct or indirect impacts on people with protected characteristics? If yes, you will need to complete a full Equality Impact Assessment.

No – not at this stage. Further analysis will need to be undertaken when there is a proposed way forward.



If 'No' please provide an explanation as to why an EIA is not required:

The screening assessment has shown that depending on what meeting time option the West Surrey Standards Committee wish to put forward to the shadow authority for approval, a full EIA will need to be completed to ensure that all protected characteristics are fully considered when the shadow authority makes a decision on the council diary for the remainder of the shadow year.

Sign-off: Susan Sale

Date: 23rd June 2026

