

The Rt Hon Member Jim McMahon MP  
Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Surrey Leaders Group  
Reigate Town Hall  
Castlefield Road,  
Reigate  
Surrey  
RH2 0SH

10 January 2025

Dear Jim McMahon MP,

### **Surrey Leaders response to the English Devolution White Paper**

As the Leaders of all the Districts and Boroughs of Surrey, and as the MPs representing the residents and businesses of Surrey, we welcome the White Paper on English Devolution.

We welcome and share the Government's commitment to devolve power to communities, to improve the efficiency of local government, and to support every area to achieve its full potential. We believe that optimising the value of local areas is critical to achieving Government's Missions, set out in its Plan for Change.

We owe it to our residents to fully consult as we work at pace towards establishing a system that is more efficient, more financially robust, and which delivers the effective, value-for-money services that our residents and businesses have a right to expect.

We have seen Cllr Tim Oliver's letter to you and endorse the key sentiments that he set out.

We represent the entire political spectrum within Surrey, and we can confirm that we are all committed to moving together at pace to bring forward proposals for devolution and the reorganisation and unitarisation required to unlock that.

The only area of disagreement with Cllr Oliver's letter is that we do not support the cancellation of the county election in May 2025, and urge you to allow it to go ahead.

The current system of local government has stood for 50 years. We are conscious that the decisions we take now will set the framework for our long-term future. We want to consult with the residents of Surrey and as committed democrats, we believe the elections are necessary to give us clear electoral mandates to take this process forward during this transition period.

Given that we have consensus across the political spectrum, we do not believe that this needs to affect the pace of change.

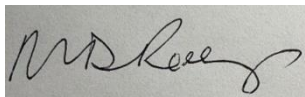
We can confirm that we have agreed as Leaders that we will bring together a virtual team – led by Cllr Hannah Dalton, Chair of the Surrey Leaders Group, and Cllr Tim Oliver - to prepare collaborative proposals to the timelines set out by you and your team. That collaborative process has already begun.

As well as working with Cllr Oliver and with Surrey County Council, we will work with wider stakeholders such as MPs, the NHS, Police and Fire authorities, with town and parish councils, with businesses, residents and social and with the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors – as well as with MHCLG – to bring forward a collaborative set of proposals that represent the best outcome for Surrey and for the UK.

We wish you a happy new year and look forward to working with you and your team.

Yours,

Leaders of the District and Borough Council of Surrey, MPs



Cllr Mike Rollings  
Leader, Elmbridge  
Borough Council

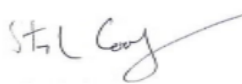


Council

Cllr Hannah Dalton  
Leader, Epsom and  
Ewell Borough



Cllr Julia McShane  
Leader, Guildford  
Borough Council



Cllr Stephen  
Cooksey  
Leader, Mole Valley  
District Council



Cllr Richard Biggs  
Leader, Reigate and  
Banstead Borough  
Council



Cllr Linda Gillham  
Co-Leader,  
Runnymede Borough  
Council



Cllr Steve Ringham  
Co-Leader,  
Runnymede Borough  
Council



Cllr Don Whyte  
Co-Leader,  
Runnymede  
Borough Council

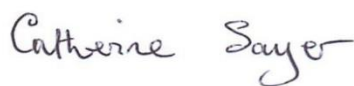


Cllr Joanna Sexton  
Leader, Spelthorne  
Borough Council



Heath Borough Council

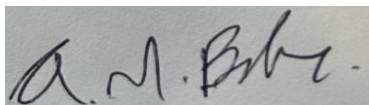
Cllr Shaun  
Macdonald  
Leader, Surrey  
Heath Borough Council



Cllr Catherine Sayer  
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District Council



Cllr Paul Follows  
Leader, Waverley  
Borough Council



Cllr Ann-Marie Barker  
Leader, Woking  
Borough Council



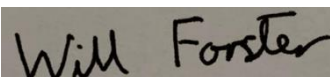
Chris Coghlan, MP for  
Dorking and Horley



Zoe Franklin, MP for  
Guildford



Monica Harding, MP  
Esher and Walton



Will Forster, MP for  
Woking



Helen Maguire, MP for  
Epsom and Ewell



Dr Al Pinkerton, MP for  
Surrey Heath

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Chief Executives of the Surrey District & Borough Councils and Surrey County Council