



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

**Jim McMahon OBE MP**

*Minister of State for Local Government and  
English Devolution*

2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

:  
Our reference: MC2025/02958

Councillor Tim Oliver OBE,  
Leader of Surrey County Council

5 February 2025

Dear Cllr Oliver

On 16 December 2024 I wrote to you advising that I was considering laying secondary legislation to postpone local council elections from May 2025 to May 2026, only in those areas where I am certain that postponing the election is necessary to help the area to deliver both reorganisation and devolution to the most ambitious timeframe – either through the Devolution Priority Programme or where reorganisation is necessary to unlock devolution or open up new devolution options.

Thank you for your subsequent letter to me setting out your request to postpone the Surrey County Council election from May 2025 to May 2026. I am very conscious of the work you would have undertaken locally to support such a letter and am grateful for your commitment and rapid engagement. I have carefully considered your request and given the urgency of creating sustainable unitary local government for the county area of Surrey, I have decided to agree to postpone the county election from May 2025 to May 2026. This will provide councils in this area additional capacity for speeding up reorganisation, and it will also enable Surrey to benefit from devolution as quickly as possible once new unitary local government is in place.

There was rightly a very high bar for postponing any local election and I am clear postponing the election to 2026 will support Surrey to deliver both reorganisation and devolution to the most ambitious timeframe.

I am laying the legislation necessary to postpone the May 2025 election for one year and to extend councillors' terms of office accordingly. The legislation will also postpone the changes to the County's electoral divisions made in recent boundary changes legislation, so they come into effect alongside the May 2026 election. This will ensure that any vacancies arising before May 2026 will be filled at by-elections on the current boundaries.

Today I provided an update on how the Government is taking forward its commitment to deliver the most ambitious programme of devolution this country has seen, and manifesto pledge to fix the foundations of local government. You will receive your statutory invitation for local government reorganisation separately, alongside all councils in your area, which will set out next steps for developing new unitary proposals.

I remain grateful for the leadership and commitment you have demonstrated on progressing with devolution and reorganisation and look forward to working with you to deliver these changes.

I am copying this letter to your Chief Executive. I am also copying this letter to the Surrey District and Borough Leaders, the Commissioners at Woking Borough Council, Surrey Members of Parliament and Police and Crime Commissioners.

Yours sincerely,



**JIM MCMAHON OBE MP**



This page is intentionally left blank