



## OFFICER REPORT TO COUNCIL

### SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL – ELECTORAL REVIEW: FINAL REPORT

#### **KEY ISSUE/DECISION:**

This report provides an update on the conclusion of Surrey County Council's (SCC) electoral review process, which was conducted by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE).

The Council is asked to note the final recommendations, which will determine the names and boundaries of SCC electoral areas (divisions) from the May 2025 local election onwards.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

1. An electoral review aims to ensure fair representation for residents and examines the structure of local council elections, including:
  - a) The total number of councillors elected to the local authority.
  - b) The quantity, name and boundaries of divisions.
  - c) The number of councillors per division.
2. The LGBCE conducts electoral reviews for several reasons, including requests from local authorities, scheduled periodic reviews, or significant changes within a council area. SCC's review was necessary because it had been 12 years since the last review (2010-2012).

#### **THE ELECTORAL REVIEW PROCESS:**

3. The electoral review involved three main stages:
  - a) **Council Size Consultation:** In December 2022, SCC submitted a response to the LGBCE in favour of retaining 81 single-councillor divisions. The LGBCE confirmed in February 2023 that SCC would continue to have 81 councillors.
  - b) **Division Boundaries Consultation:** The commission undertook the task of re-drawing division boundaries to meet statutory criteria, ensuring effective and equitable representation. Between February and

May 2023, an initial public consultation was conducted to gather input on community perspectives and preferences for the division boundaries. This feedback informed the commission's draft proposals, which were subsequently released for public consultation from August to October 2023.

- a. Following this, the commission held a limited further consultation on aspects of the refined proposals between January and March 2024, which focussed specifically on Elmbridge.
- c) **Final Recommendations:** In May 2024, the LGBCE published its final recommendations, which were subsequently laid before Parliament in July 2024. Following a statutory objection period ending in October 2024 (during which no objections were raised), the recommendations were formalised through the Surrey (Electoral Changes) Order 2024, signed on 20 November 2024.

#### **DEVELOPING THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE:**

4. SCC formed a cross-party councillor task group to lead its response to the review. The group comprised:
  - Cllr John O'Reilly (Conservative) – Chair
  - Cllr Amanda Boote (Residents' Association/Independents)
  - Cllr Jonathan Essex (The Green Party)
  - Cllr Will Forster (Liberal Democrats)
  - Cllr Tim Hall (Conservative)
  - Cllr Nick Harrison (Residents' Association/Independents)
  - Cllr Robert King (Labour)
  - Cllr Hazel Watson (Liberal Democrats)
5. The task group coordinated responses to the Council Size and Divisional Boundaries consultations.

#### **OUTCOMES OF THE ELECTORAL REVIEW:**

6. The final recommendations report by the LGBCE outlines the new electoral arrangements for SCC. The key points include:
  - a. SCC will continue to have 81 councillors representing 81 single-councillor divisions.
  - b. The boundaries of 56 divisions will change, with 25 divisions remaining the same.

- c. The names of 11 divisions will change, with 70 remaining unchanged.
- d. **Fair Representation:** The number of electors per councillor is projected to average 11,911 by 2029, an increase from the 2022 average of 10,820.
- e. Detailed maps of the each of the 81 new boundaries can be accessed online:  
<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/3bef6b888e6f449aa465d505de8da6b9/>

#### **NEXT STEPS:**

- 7. The Surrey (Electoral Changes) Order 2024 will result in the changes to division boundaries being implemented at the local elections in May 2025. This Order is essential to ensure that the new arrangements are legally binding and enforceable. The Order will mean that the current county division boundaries will become obsolete and the May 2025 election will be run using the new boundaries as set out above.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Council is asked to:

- a) Note the final recommendations of the electoral review process.
- b) Recognise the efforts of the cross-party task group in shaping SCC's response.
- c) Note that the new county division boundaries will come into effect in May 2025.

#### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS – MONITORING OFFICER:**

The review has been conducted by the LGBCE in accordance with the powers and rules within the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (The 2009 Act). There are no further legal comments arising out of the decision of the LGBCE.

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**Sources/background papers:**

- [Local Government Boundary Commission for England \(LGBCE\) Final Recommendations Report, May 2024.](#)
- [The Surrey \(Electoral Changes\) Order 2024](#)