

Cllr Luke Bennett - Banstead, Woodmansterne, Chipstead

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION / DEVOLUTION IN SURREY: What does it all mean and how will it impact Banstead, Woodmansterne & Chipstead over the coming years?

Much has already been said by the Government and others in the media on this subject, but residents and resident groups in my area have asked me to summarise my understanding of how this will impact us in Banstead, Woodmansterne & Chipstead.

I would also like to communicate my current (personal) understanding and elaborate on what we know - and what we don't (yet) know!

My understanding (as of 25.2.25) is:

1. This is a Government (Labour Party) initiative to simplify and streamline how services are delivered in Surrey and it was a Government decision to delay the (2025) Surrey County elections until May 2026 (in order to make the necessary changes and preparations). Surrey County Council (Councillors) have voted in favour of cooperating with the Government and being in the first wave of new Unitary Councils. The direction of travel is inevitable and (frankly) unstoppable, so the overriding shared view by County Councillors is to cooperate and optimise the outcomes, rather than resist / protest - only to be 'unitarised' later. Delaying the elections will save costs, as it makes little sense to hold an election for a Council which will ultimately cease to exist a year later. A small number of residents have voiced concerns to me that it is undemocratic to delay the elections as Councillors are elected for 4 years rather than 5 years. I understand this perspective, but rest assured, I will continue to work hard for Banstead, Woodmansterne, Chipstead for the duration of my term as your County Councillor - so you should have no concerns that you are missing out on the opportunity to replace me with an alternative Councillor 😊 - particularly as they would only have been in post for one year. If they were new to being a Councillor, they would spend most of that year developing an understanding of how Local Government works and how to get things done (to be honest)!

2. Incumbent Cllrs will remain in role until the new unitary council goes 'live'.

3. This 'reorganisation' impacts Borough and County Councils equally as all Councillors and all Councils will ultimately be replaced with the new Unitary (single-tiered) Council. This is NOT a [Surrey County Council](#) initiative.

4. My understanding is that the Banstead, Woodmansterne, Chipstead (political and geographical) 'boundary' will remain the same. Across Surrey, there will be two rather than one, Councillor per Council division / ward. In May 2026, there will be a local election to elect the two 'new' Councillors for our area.

5. A year later in May 2027, Surrey will likely elect a Metropolitan-style Mayor who will have overall strategic and financial control across the entire County of Surrey. Surrey is likely (but not yet confirmed) to be split into two parts - either north and south or east and west).

6. It is possible (but yet to be confirmed by Government) that the (2026) newly elected (Unitary Council) Councillors may 'shadow' the existing (currently incumbent) Councillors (at both Borough and County) Council between 2026 and 2027 in order that service delivery is not disrupted during the transition and reorganisation.

I trust this is helpful. I will share more updates as and when any new information becomes available to me. In the meantime, if you have any concerns or require my help, please email me via: luke.bennett@surreycc.gov.uk

Many thanks - Luke.