

[ The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP  
Secretary of State  
Ministry of Housing, Communities &  
Local Government  
([robert.jenrick@communities.gov.uk](mailto:robert.jenrick@communities.gov.uk))

] If calling, please ask for Elaine Jackson  
on 01883 732717

E-mail: [EJackson@tandridge.gov.uk](mailto:EJackson@tandridge.gov.uk)

[ ] 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2020

Dear Secretary of State

We are writing to you on behalf of Tandridge District Council with regards to the forthcoming White Paper “Devolution and Recovery”. You will have already received a letter from the Leader of Surrey County Council, Tim Oliver.

We would like to have the opportunity to put before you what we would consider a much better model, consisting of a Unitary Council for the east of Surrey which we believe would lead to greater efficiencies, cost savings and economic growth, together with a better representation of all demographics of the population in the east of Surrey and thus the preservation of local democracy.

The Council believes that the key to success for residents and businesses for the east of Surrey lies in a specific Unitary Council for the area. This could, for example, include the districts of Tandridge, Epsom & Ewell, Mole Valley and Reigate & Banstead. We enclose a map to show what a proposed Unitary Council for the east of Surrey could look like. Such a Unitary would serve a combined population of around 400,000 people. This would give a cohesive structure where services can be streamlined, savings made, and growth achieved – in contrast to the single Unitary Council for the whole of Surrey which has been proposed and which risks being too unwieldy, both geographically and from a population perspective.

As the figures in Councillor Oliver’s letter highlight, there are widening inequalities which have not been addressed by the existing County Council which is not sufficiently focused on the east of the county. This has meant that it has had trouble understanding and reflecting the priorities, needs and indeed the opportunities in the east.

Cont.

**[hrhelpdesk@tandridge.gov.uk](mailto:hrhelpdesk@tandridge.gov.uk) [www.tandridge.gov.uk](http://www.tandridge.gov.uk)**

Tandridge District Council, Council Offices, 8 Station Road East, Oxted, Surrey RH8  
0BT Tel: 01883 722000 - Monday-Thursday 8.30-5pm, Friday 8.30-4.30pm

The east of Surrey has very different characteristics to the rest of the county. Growth here has largely stalled, and infrastructure has stagnated. A Unitary Council for the east of Surrey would enable the invigoration of this part of Surrey, giving it the opportunity to fulfil its massive potential. The powerful Gatwick/M23 corridor lies at the heart of the east of Surrey and provides an excellent base from which to develop and regenerate the area. The impact of COVID-19 on Gatwick and its surrounding areas are well known. By having a Unitary Council that can focus on the renewal of the economy in this area, the prospects of success are greatly improved.

Surrey has a population of 1.2 million. A single Unitary Council for Surrey would be more than twice the size of the next largest non-metropolitan Unitary Council (Cornwall) and at least four times the size of all but four such Unitary Councils in England. The sheer scale of Surrey has, we believe, made it difficult for the County Council to remain solvent and to deliver services efficiently, effectively and equally. A single Unitary Council for Surrey would be required to perform not only the County Council's existing functions, but also those currently performed by the eleven districts and boroughs. This would be completely unmanageable.

Representatives from this Council would very much like to meet with you and give you more detail about how a Unitary Council for the east of Surrey could benefit your government's priorities and our residents. Please do let me know if there is a date that would be convenient for you.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Tony Elias, Leader of the Council and Leader of Conservative Group  
Councillor Catherine Sayer, Leader of the Independents and OLRG Alliance  
Councillor Chris Botten, Leader of the Liberal Democrats  
Councillor Martin Allen, Leader Independent Group

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Elaine Jackson  
Chief Executive