

## **14 Appendix 3 - Phase 1 Consultation Written Submissions (inc. Surrey County Council's Response)**

14.1 Four responses were received directly in the form of statements rather than answers to the questionnaire. One response was from National Highways, another was from Surrey County Council, and two were from residents.

14.2 National Highways explained why they have no comment to make on the consultation.

14.3 Of the two resident statements: one was supportive of parishes, although concerned they may be too large; the other statement was opposed to the creation of parishes and concerned about potential increases in council tax.

14.4 The full response from Surrey County Council (SCC) is attached below:

Dear CGR Team,

In response to the Epsom & Ewell Borough Council Community Governance Review consultation which is due to close on 28th September, please find below a response from Surrey County Council.

Surrey County Council wishes to emphasise the importance of maintaining robust and inclusive community engagement structures.

Town and parish councils are important voices in their communities, but they are independent organisations and should not be treated as a substitute for meaningful engagement by all principal councils (districts and boroughs, the county council and new unitaries in the future). The Government expects that Local Government Reorganisation will strengthen community voice through direct and sustained community engagement. While collaboration with town and parish councils can support future service delivery, principal councils must lead on inclusive and accountable community involvement.

SCC is supportive of the statement made by Government that, whilst the decision to establish town and parish councils is a local one, areas considering new town or parish councils should think carefully about how they might be funded, to avoid putting further pressure on local authority finances and/or new burdens on the taxpayer. It is important to note that central government provides no funding to town and parish councils, with funding covered by parish precepts, directly affecting local taxpayers. SCC further notes that the average yearly parish council precept in Surrey for 2025/26 is £59.39, with Godalming

(Waverley) the highest charging parish at £122.15 and Peper Harow (Waverley) the lowest at £5.05.

SCC recognises the importance of effective and representative local governance. However, given the scale and complexity of the ongoing Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), resourcing a CGR at this stage may not be in the best interests of the council or the communities it serves. The potential changes to governance structures, local authority boundaries, and service delivery models under LGR could mean the outcomes of this CGR are misaligned with future arrangements or in need of subsequent revision. It risks diverting attention and resources from the more pressing strategic priorities associated with LGR. We offer this view in the context of ensuring that limited capacity is directed toward the most immediate challenges facing local government.

Kind regards,

Terence

Terence Herbert

Chief Executive

Surrey County Council

[www.surreycc.gov.uk](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk)