

Signed off by	Mari Roberts-Wood, Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer for Reigate and Banstead
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To	Council
Date	1 October 2026

Key Decision Required	Yes
Wards Affected	All

Subject	Interim Polling Place & District Review 2026
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Recommendations
That the premises and final recommendations set out in Annex 1 be designated the polling places for the polling districts stated with effect from 1 st December 2026.
Reasons for Recommendations
To ensure that all electors have reasonable facilities for voting in elections at the forthcoming parish council elections in May 2027, according to the rationale provided for each proposed change within Annex 1 to this report.
Executive Summary
The review includes: (i) Polling districts, which are the areas created by the division of wards into smaller sections. Within each polling district a polling place can be determined which is convenient to electors. (ii) Polling places, which are the locations, normally the buildings, in which polling stations are sited.
The above recommendations are subject to approval by Full Council.

Statutory Powers

1. Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the council has a duty to divide its area into polling districts and to designate a polling place for each district.
2. The Electoral Administration Act 2006, as amended, introduced a duty on all local authorities in Great Britain to review their polling districts and polling places at least once every five years. Reviews must be started and completed within the period of 16 months that starts on 1 October of every fifth year after 2013.
3. Under section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983, the next compulsory review must be undertaken within a 16-month window between 1 October 2028 and 31 January 2030.
4. Regulation 14(2) of The Local Government (Structural Changes) (Transitional Arrangements) Regulations 2008 designates the Returning Officer of the successor council (East Surrey Council) at any election of councillors of parishes in the area of a predecessor council (Reigate and Banstead Borough Council) that will take place after the reorganisation date.

Background

Definitions

5. The following definitions may be helpful when reading the report and Appendices.
 - (i) The “Electoral Registration Officer” is the statutory officer responsible for maintaining the electoral register and absent voting arrangements within the Reigate and Banstead electoral area. The Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) is currently Mari Roberts-Wood.
 - (ii) The “Returning Officer” is the statutory officer responsible for the management and delivery of elections and referenda within the Reigate and Banstead electoral area. The Returning Officer for East Surrey, Adam Chalmers, will be responsible for the forthcoming Town and Parish Council elections on 6 May 2027.
 - (iii) “Unitary wards”, “county divisions”, “borough wards” and “parish wards” are the geographical electoral areas by which the whole of each local authority area is divided respectively, ensuring fair and effective representation based on population size and local community ties. The county divisions and borough wards will cease to exist from 1 April 2027 as a result of Local Government Reorganisation in Surrey.
 - (iv) “Polling districts” are geographical electoral areas into which wards and constituencies may be sub-divided. The designation of polling districts is determined by the Council (or by the Electoral Registration Officer under delegated authority where it is impractical to report to the Council).
 - (v) “Polling district codes” or “polling district identifiers” are the administrative references used by electoral practitioners as a prefix for elector numbers within electoral registers.
 - (vi) “Polling places” are the buildings or areas designated by the council where electors in a polling district go to vote in person. The designation of polling

places is determined by the Council (or by the Electoral Registration Officer under delegated authority where it is impractical to report to the Council).

- (vii) "Polling stations" are the number of issuing desks in the building or area that is the designated polling place. The arrangement of polling stations is determined by the Returning Officer for the respective election(s).

Timing of the review

6. The new polling districts will be used for the next scheduled parish and town council elections.
7. The timetable for this review is as follows:

Timetable	Date
Notice of Review	06-Aug-26
(A)RO's Proposals/Comments	07-Aug-26
Consultation Period	7 Aug - 7 Sept 26
Consider Responses	8-Sept - 16-Sept-26
Prepare final proposals	17-Sep-26
Decision	01-Oct-26
Conclude Review	27-Nov-26
Republish Register	01-Dec-26

Key Information

Methodology

8. Schedule A1 to the Representation of the People Act 1983 sets out all the steps that must be undertaken to complete a review. Officers have also had regard to guidance published by the Electoral Commission. This includes:
 - a. Publication of a Notice of the Review and initial proposals arising from a preliminary review conducted by the Electoral Services team (published on 7 August 2026).
 - b. A public consultation (conducted from 7 August - 7 Sept 2026). Further information is provided under paragraphs 35 to 55 and Annex 2.
 - c. Consultation of Acting Returning Officers for parliamentary constituencies which overlap with the Reigate and Banstead electoral area. Further information is provided under paragraphs 51 to 53 and Annex 2.
 - d. Seek representations from such persons as it thinks have particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have

different forms of disability. Further information is provided under paragraph 54.

- e. Preparation of the final proposals to be recommended to the Full Council for approval, as set out within this report under Annex 1.

Evidence for consideration

- 9. This report will consider:

- a. The recommended proposals, as set out under Annex 1.
- b. Representations made during the public consultation from 7 August - 7 Sept 2026, as set out under Annex 2.
- c. Any comments from the Acting Returning Officer with regards to the suitability of polling places and districts. Two representations were made by the Acting Returning Officers for the East Surrey and Dorking and Horley constituencies in respect of polling places and districts within those areas, which are provided under paragraphs 51 to 53.

Preliminary review, scope, and initial proposals

- 10. The recommended proposals were drafted based on the Electoral Commission's guidance for the conduct of Polling Place and District Reviews, which states that –

“The local authority should undertake a preliminary review of the current polling districts and polling places with a view to establishing their suitability and identify any potential alternatives where required. This may be done before the start of the specified review period.”

- 11. As part of the preliminary review, the Electoral Services team considered feedback from staff and electors as to the suitability of polling places and the designation of electors to polling stations, based on survey, complaints and turnout data over the past three years.

Relevant considerations in respect of polling districts:

- 12. The following should be considered as part of the assessment of the suitability of polling district boundaries:

- a. Do the polling districts follow the different electoral boundaries (such that the Returning Officer can manage the different combinations of elections and referenda within each geographical area), such as parish and town council wards, borough wards, county divisions, unitary wards and parliamentary constituencies (both current and future)? For instance, a borough ward may overlap with multiple town or parish council wards, and therefore the division of polling districts within that borough ward must allow each combination of those polls to take place together, if required.

In the context of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Surrey, as the county council elections in May 2025 were postponed and then subsequently cancelled under the Surrey Structural Changes Order 2026, all of the following are still in effect:

- The legacy county divisions, as set out in the Surrey Electoral Changes Order 2012. These areas are still represented by sitting

county councillors until their office ceases to exist from 1 April 2027 due to LGR;

- The “new” county divisions, as set out in the Surrey Electoral Changes Order 2024. These areas came into effect for the May 2026 shadow unitary elections, as those unitary wards were based on the new county divisions within the 2024 Order; and,
- The legacy borough wards, as set out in The Reigate and Banstead (Electoral Changes) Order 2019. These areas are still represented by sitting borough councillors until their office ceases to exist from 1 April 2027 due to LGR.

The Association of Electoral Administrators published guidance on 22 January 2025 about publishing revised registers during transitional periods, which is still relevant until those legacy areas no longer exist on 1 April 2027. It said:

“When publishing on new boundaries, you should make sure your register is structured to reflect both existing and new boundaries. This is so you can supply relevant sections of the register to sitting councillors for areas they represent.”

Therefore, whilst no further county or borough by-elections are required for casual vacancies arising after 31 September 2026 (due to the provisions within the Surrey Structural Changes Order 2026, provided that two thirds of the seats are not vacant), the requirement to publish registers for sitting county and borough councillors still remains until 1 April 2027. As such, the register published on 1 December 2026 must continue to reflect the legacy electoral areas; and, the new unitary wards.

- b. Are the boundaries well-defined? For example, do they follow the natural boundaries of the area? If not, is it clear which properties belong in the polling district?
- c. Are there suitable transport links within the polling district, and how do they relate to the areas of the polling district that are most highly populated?
- d. Are there any obstacles to voters crossing the current polling district and reaching the polling place e.g., steep hills, major roads, railway lines, rivers?

Relevant considerations in respect of polling places:

13. There are a number of factors that will need to be considered when reviewing existing polling places or when assessing new polling places, including:

Factor	Consideration
Location	i. Is it reasonably accessible within the polling district? ii. Does it avoid barriers for the voter such as steep hills, major roads, rivers, etc.? iii. Are there any convenient transport links?

Size	iv. Can it accommodate more than one polling station if required? v. If multiple polling stations are required, is the polling place capable of accommodating all voters and staff required to provide a good service to voters? vi. Is the size sufficient to provide necessary private areas or privacy screens for photographic identification checks? vii. Is the size big enough to ensure the flow of voters and reduce the risk of congestion and queues even where there is a high turnout?
Availability	viii. Is the building readily available in the event of any unscheduled elections? ix. Is there any possibility that the building may be demolished as part of a new development?
Accessibility	x. Is the building accessible to all those entitled to attend the polling place? xi. Can the building accommodate any equipment provided to support disabled voters?

What can't be considered?

14. The following issues are not within scope of this review:

- (i) **Further changes to electoral areas** – including parliamentary constituency, borough/town/parish ward and county divisional boundaries. This review is concerned only with the arrangement of polling places and polling districts; however, it must have regard to the arrangement of those other electoral boundaries and ensure the polling district boundaries align with those for the proper conduct of elections and referenda.
- (ii) **Community identity** – whilst this is a relevant consideration for an electoral boundary review (e.g. when making changes to county divisions, parliamentary constituencies and borough / parish ward boundaries), it is not relevant for the purposes of a polling place and district review, which is an incidental process to ensure that the arrangement of polling places and districts are:
 - Convenient for voters; and,
 - Efficient for the Returning Officer to conduct elections according to the electoral area boundaries made by Parliamentary Order following any boundary review.

Policy on the use of schools

15. It should be noted that the Acting Returning Officer is entitled to use, free of charge, schools maintained or assisted by a local authority as well as those schools that

receive grants from funds provided by Parliament. This includes academies and free schools.

16. It is the policy of this local authority to avoid using schools where possible to minimise disruption to education services within the borough, however in some cases it may be unavoidable if there are no suitable alternatives in a particular polling district.
17. Over the past ten years, the local authority has subsequently reduced the number of schools designated as polling places across the borough.
18. In cases where use of a school is unavoidable, the Electoral Services office will consult with the school to conduct a risk assessment to identify any health and safety or safeguarding risks and agree how best to mitigate them. For instance, this could include a temporary closure of the school (e.g. inset day) or location of the polling station in a separate, secure area of the site with the provision of security staff to manage voter access.

Implementing polling district changes

19. If approved by the Council, the changes proposed within this polling district and places review will result in new polling districts being created and existing polling district boundaries being amended.
20. If the council makes any alterations to the polling districts in its area, the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) must amend the register of electors accordingly (Section 18A (5) Representation of the People Act 1983).
21. It is intended that alterations to polling districts will be included when the register of electors is republished on 1 December 2026 (including the renumbering of elector numbers).

Options

22. To approve the recommendations for the reasons set out on page 1 and within Annex 1. If approved, a full list of the proposed polling places for the next scheduled elections on 6 May 2027 is included within Annex 1 for completeness.
23. To reject the recommendations. This is not recommended, as the current arrangement of polling districts and polling places is not considered to be suitable for the next parish/town elections on 6 May 2027. In doing so, the local authority would be at risk of failing in its duty to ensure that all electors have reasonable facilities for voting, in accordance with the Electoral Commission's guidance which it must have regard to.

Legal Implications

24. Local authorities must comply with the following legislative requirements regarding the designation of polling districts and polling places:
 - (i) each parish in England and community in Wales is to be a separate polling district, unless special circumstances apply
 - (ii) the council must designate a polling place for each polling district, unless the size or other circumstances of a polling district are such that the situation of the polling stations does not materially affect the convenience of the electors

- (iii) the polling place must be an area in the district, unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area wholly or partly outside the district (for example, if no accessible polling place can be identified in the district)
- (iv) the polling place must be small enough to indicate to electors in different parts of the district how they will be able to reach the polling station

Financial Implications

- 25. If adopted these changes will not require additional growth in the Returning Officer's budget for the delivery of future elections and referenda.
- 26. There are therefore no specific financial implications to consider.

Equalities Implications

- 27. Local authorities have a duty to review the accessibility of all polling places to disabled voters and ensure that every polling place, and prospective polling place, for which it is responsible is accessible to disabled voters 'so far as is reasonable and practicable'.
- 28. According to the Equalities and Human Rights Commission the duty to make reasonable adjustments comprises three requirements.
- 29. For service providers and those exercising public functions, these requirements are:
 - (i) Where a provision, criterion or practice puts disabled people at a substantial disadvantage compared with those who are not disabled, to take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage.
 - (ii) Where a physical feature puts disabled people at a substantial disadvantage compared with people who are not disabled to avoid that disadvantage or adopt a reasonable alternative method of providing the service or exercising the function.
 - (iii) Where not providing an auxiliary aid, for example a ramp for wheelchair user, puts disabled people at a substantial disadvantage compared with people who are not disabled, to provide that auxiliary aid.
- 30. Every person should be able to vote without facing barriers. By identifying and understanding the physical, psychological and information barriers disabled people may face when voting, Returning Officers will be better able to make appropriate arrangements to help support them.
- 31. As part of this review, the local authority must consider the accessibility of potential polling stations when considering designating or reviewing a polling place. In doing so it must seek to ensure that:
 - (i) all electors in a constituency in the local authority area have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.
 - (ii) so far as is reasonable and practicable every polling place for which it is responsible is accessible to electors who are disabled.

- 32.** Access to the polling station is still a barrier to some disabled people who want to cast their vote in person. The main physical access issues that were considered as part of any new polling place evaluation included:
- (i) polling places and stations with steps into the entrance, or otherwise inaccessible
 - (ii) narrow doorways and corridors
 - (iii) lack of space within the polling place that did not enable motorised wheelchair manoeuvrability
 - (iv) lack of space and secrecy for the elector and their companion to discuss the elector's choice of vote
 - (v) lack of low-level polling booths or booths/tables that didn't provide disabled voters with confidence that they could cast their vote in secrecy as they were positioned close to the polling station staff
 - (vi) a lack of chairs to enable people to rest
 - (vii) a lack of a clear display of guidance or aids (such as tactile voting devices) to enable people to feel confident about the process
 - (viii) inadequate lighting
- 33.** This interim review does not designate any new polling places that haven't already been:
- (i) assessed by the Electoral Registration Officer according to these criteria;
 - (ii) reported to the Council as part of historical reviews; and,
 - (iii) used by the Returning Officer at recent elections.

Communication Implications

- 34.** Any changes to the designation of polling districts and places will be communicated with voters as part of the Returning Officer's:
- (i) publicity campaign (e.g. website, social media, and borough news articles and other materials);
 - (ii) briefing and frequently asked questions documentation provided to the customer contact team and polling station staff;
 - (iii) election materials provided to voters (e.g. a change of polling place will be highlighted on poll cards); and,
 - (iv) equipment provided at polling stations (e.g. additional signage around both the previous and new polling place) to direct voters to the correct location.

Consultation

Requirements

- 35.** The length of the review process is not prescribed, provided all the steps required by the legislation can be undertaken within it.

36. However, the time allowed for consultation should be sufficient to enable interested persons and groups to read and understand the proposals, gather comments and respond with any alternative arrangements that they may wish to submit.

Methodology

37. Notice of the review was included within the Community Partnerships newsletter and within Borough e-News.
38. The following stakeholders were contacted in writing when the consultation period started on 7 August 2026 inviting them to comment on the proposals, including:
- (i) All Unitary, Borough, County and Town/Parish Councillors within the Reigate and Banstead area;
 - (ii) Political parties;
 - (iii) Members of Parliament for constituencies within the Reigate and Banstead area;
 - (iv) Parish and Town Councils;
 - (v) Acting Returning Officers for parliamentary constituencies within the Reigate and Banstead area; and,
 - (vi) Surrey Coalition

Borough, County and East Surrey (Reigate & Banstead area) Councillors

39. Information about the public consultation was sent via email to Unitary, Borough, County, Town and Parish Council elected Members within the Reigate and Banstead area on 7 August 2026.
40. One representation was received from Councillor Mark Johnston on 8 September 2026, who is a ward councillor for Reigate (unitary ward); and, Meadvale and St. John's (borough ward). His proposal was to;
- (i) *"Merge RGT1 with RGT2, name RGT1 and renumber other RGTs accordingly*
 - (ii) *Merge RDW1 with RDW2, name RDW1 and renumber other RDWs accordingly*
 - (iii) *Merge RGT4 with RGT5A and name RGT3; and,*
 - (iv) *Merge RGT4A and RGT5 and name RGT4."*

The rationale for the above proposal was to:

- *"Make data handling easier both online and in terms of the organisation of leaflet delivery*
 - *Making telling at polling stations easier — Colman Redland e.g. had seven polling districts attending on 7 May.*
 - *Reduce the total PDs in Reigate ward from 11 to 8".*
41. Having regard to the relevant considerations for the arrangement of polling districts set out under paragraph 12(a) of this report, whilst the Electoral Services team support the proposal, it would not be possible to implement until after 1 April 2027. It is therefore excluded from these recommendations but will be considered as part of the next review after 1 April 2027.

Political parties

42. No representations were received from political parties.

Members of Parliament for constituencies within the Reigate and Banstead area

43. No representations were received from Members of Parliament.

Parish and Town Councils

44. Representations were received from Horley Town Council and Salfords and Sidlow Parish Council. These are included within Annex 2.
45. **Horley Town Council:** supports the proposed changes affecting Horley East and Horley West, Salfords and Sidlow. Its response welcomes the creation of new polling districts, the use of Horley Library for HRC2B, the move of HRC4A to Tanyard Barn Community Centre, the move of HRE5 to Edmonds Hall, and the proposed relocation of HRE4 from Tanyard Barn Community Centre to St Wilfrid's Church. It considers that the proposals simplify electoral administration, improve accessibility for voters and better reflect local town and parish ward boundaries. The Council also raised operational points about access and security arrangements at Horley Library, risk assessment arrangements for the Horley Town Council offices at Albert Road, the potential for voter confusion arising from two different polling places on Albert Road, and the need for improved signage and parking arrangements at Tanyard Barn Community Centre.
46. **Salfords and Sidlow Parish Council:** does not object to the proposed polling places or the principles of the proposed polling arrangements. Its representation focuses on the naming of parish wards and the identifiers used for polling districts within Salfords and Sidlow. The Parish Council has requested that the parish wards currently described as Ward 1, Ward 2 and Ward 3 be named Salfords North, Salfords South and Sidlow respectively, and that polling district codes HRE1, HRE2 and HRW1 be changed to SAS1, SAS2 and SAS3. This is on the basis that the current "HR" prefixes may imply an association with Horley, whereas Salfords and Sidlow is a separate parish with its own local identity.
47. Having considered both representations, no resulting change is recommended to the polling places proposed within Annex 1. The representations from Horley Town Council support the substantive polling place changes and the operational matters raised will be addressed through the Returning Officer's normal polling station planning, including venue risk assessments, liaison with venue managers, poll card information and local signage.
48. The request from Salfords and Sidlow Parish Council (SASPC) to rename parish wards is outside the scope of a polling district and polling place review, as parish ward names are determined through either a Community Governance Review (CGR) or Boundary Review rather than through this review. As the Council has recently concluded a CGR, a further review of community governance arrangements in this particular area is not anticipated for ten to fifteen years, in accordance with Government guidance. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England

(LGBCE) is expected to commence a boundary review sometime after 1 April 2027, during which SASPC may submit its request for new parish ward names during the associated public consultation.

- 49.** The request to amend polling district codes is also outside the scope of this review, as it is an administrative function determined by Electoral Services practitioners. Electoral Services teams in East and West Surrey are currently reviewing the format of the codes. This separate review intends to:
- (i) resolve any existing duplicate codes across each unitary area; and,
 - (ii) reflect the new unitary ward names, ensuring consistency across each unitary area. This therefore takes precedence over the request to align them with parish ward names.
- 50.** The review of polling district codes is expected to be implemented when the revised registers are published on 1 December 2026.

Acting Returning Officers

- 51.** Consultation of Acting Returning Officers for constituencies overlapping with the Reigate and Banstead electoral area included the Acting Returning Officers for:
- (i) The Reigate Constituency.
 - (ii) The East Surrey Constituency.
 - (iii) The Dorking and Horley Constituency.
- 52.** Representations were received from the Acting Returning Officers for the East Surrey and Dorking and Horley constituencies.
- (i) East Surrey ARO:**
- “There were no issues identified regarding the effectiveness of the arrangements at the last Parliamentary General Election. As the (Acting) Returning Officer for the East Surrey Parliamentary Constituency, I therefore support the proposals for the Polling Districts which fall within the constituency (HMN1-7) and their respective Polling Places.”*
- (ii) Dorking and Horley ARO:**
- “The (A)RO for MVDC supports the proposed changes to our part of the constituency, as set out in the report.”*
- 53.** Having considered both representations, no resulting change is recommended to the polling places proposed within Annex 1.

Disability groups

- 54.** Consultation of community groups with particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability included:
- (i) Surrey Coalition of Disabled People; and,
 - (ii) SCOPE.

55. These stakeholders were invited to comment during the public consultation via email on 17 August 2026. No comments were received from either group during the consultation window. No resulting change is therefore recommended to the polling places proposed within Annex 1.

Appendices

- 1.** Annex 1: Final (recommended) proposals
- 2.** Annex 2: Representations by consultees