

Scoring – in full

| Principle | Current two-tier system | | 1 Unitary | | 2 Unitary | | 3 Unitary | |
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| | Highlights | Score | Highlights | Score | Highlights | Score | Highlights | Score |
| Supports economic growth, housing and infrastructure delivery. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boundaries implemented fifty years ago do not reflect Surrey's current functional economic geography. Decisions on investment in local infrastructure and planning are split between lower- and upper-tier authorities, leading to disjointed strategic decision-making. Districts and boroughs provide cohesive place leadership, but | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrates investment decisions in local infrastructure and planning within a single unitary authority. Struggles to provide cohesive leadership across diverse communities and economic geographies. Is too large to design and deliver services tailored to local needs, hindering the growth potential of local economies. Faces challenges in housing delivery due to spanning multiple housing and economic geographies, | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joins up decisions on investment in local infrastructure and planning within unitary authorities. Local authority boundaries do not align with functional economic areas, embedding economic incoherence and diluting the strategic focus of new authorities, as seen in Dorset LGR. Faces challenges in housing delivery due to spanning multiple housing and economic geographies, which inhibits | 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aligns local authority boundaries with Surrey's functional economic areas, driving economic growth, housing delivery, and infrastructure development that reflect the unique character and needs of each place. Provides local leadership and makes policy and investment decisions that best support the priorities and challenges of each part of Surrey, including local plan making in | 5 |

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| | many powers and functions that foster growth sit with the county council, which is too large to design and deliver services aligned to local needs. | | which inhibits effective housing strategy and delivery, as seen in Cheshire and Wiltshire LGR. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risks community detachment, erosion of trust, reduced responsiveness, and impeded infrastructure planning by merging divergent geographies into a single council, as observed in Somerset and North Yorkshire LGR. | | effective housing strategy and delivery, as seen in Cheshire and Wiltshire LGR. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risks community detachment, erosion of trust, reduced responsiveness, and impeded infrastructure planning by merging divergent geographies into a single council, as observed in Somerset and North Yorkshire LGR. | | real housing market geographies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is deeply rooted in the communities it serves, enabling new councils to act as powerful advocates for their area, placing residents and local stakeholders at the heart of decision-making. | |
| Unlocks devolution | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With upper-tier functions sitting with Surrey County Council, establishing a Strategic Authority on a county | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One unitary authority would not enable the establishment of a Strategic Authority on a county footprint. Surrey would need to join a | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two unitary authorities would enable the establishment of a Strategic Authority across the county footprint or a wider geography. | 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three unitary authorities would enable the establishment of a Strategic Authority across the county footprint or a | 5 |

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| | <p>footprint would not be possible. Surrey would need to join a neighbouring mayoral authority to achieve devolution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is potential for duplication between upper-tier and strategic authorities. | | <p>neighbouring mayoral authority to achieve devolution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unable to effectively represent and foster conditions that catalyse local economic growth across the strategic geography, continuing the status quo and not supporting sustainable economic growth in the future. | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unitary boundaries do not align with functional economic geography, resulting in economic incoherence. This undermines the effectiveness of a Mayoral Strategic Authority, which would have to compensate for the lack of coherent planning at the local level before being able to use devolved powers effectively. Economic incoherence that inhibits growth. | | <p>wider geography.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With local authority boundaries that align with functional economic areas, the new unitary authorities will be able to provide a coherent and strategic approach to planning. This will help the Mayor of Surrey to best utilise their newly devolved powers. Research shows that economic coherence from local authorities best positions an area to unlock growth. | |

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| Values and advocates for Surrey's unique local identities and places. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As place leaders, districts and boroughs have a track record of providing effective leadership within their areas. Upper-tier functions are provided across a wide area, meaning the county council serves a variety of places that do not necessarily share a common local identity and have distinct needs and challenges. Surrey's three distinct economic clusters cut | 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would be the largest local authority in Europe. Would be too large and detached to effectively respond to and engage with local communities. Unable to deliver appropriately tailored structures for decision-making and service delivery that reflect resident priorities. Lacks the agility to deliver bespoke place-based services that residents recognise and engage with. | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The authorities would serve a variety of places that do not necessarily share a common local identity and have distinct needs and challenges. Creates arbitrary boundaries that disconnect Surrey's functional geographical areas, disempowering communities and inhibiting growth. | 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflects Surrey's three distinct geographical identities: north (akin to suburban London), south (Guildford-centric), and east (London and diverse rural economies with links to Gatwick). Creates conditions for services to be provided in a locally tailored and personalised way, fostering economic growth, housing delivery, and infrastructure investment. Engages communities at an appropriate | 5 |

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| | across existing district boundaries, resulting in fragmented services that are not coherently aligned to local needs, thereby not maximising the growth of local economies. | | | | | | scale to identify effective local solutions, reducing the impact on the public purse. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aligns with the views of local residents, who prioritise creating councils that understand local issues and make decisions locally. | |
| Provides strong democratic accountability, representation and community empowerment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two tiers of local government result in confusion for residents regarding accountability for services. District and borough councillors have a strong sense of place and local | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With two or three members per SCC division, the council would have a very large membership, disempowering local ward members. Too large and remote to respond to and engage with local communities effectively. | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three members per SCC division, in line with LGBCE guidance and best practice elsewhere. Too large and remote to respond to and engage with local communities effectively. Unable to develop a genuine | 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three members per SCC division, in line with LGBCE guidance and best practice elsewhere. Strong sense of place, ensuring new councils are well positioned to provide place leadership. | 5 |

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| | <p>connection. With one member per division, county councillors cover very large areas, resulting in a considerable workload.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different tiers with different councillors cause duplication for councillors and confusion for residents. • Upper-tier reliance on local place-level boards or networks, which evidence from Wiltshire and Somerset shows to be ineffective, creates | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to develop a genuine connection and understanding of matters important to local people. • Relies on local place-level boards or networks, which evidence from Wiltshire and Somerset shows to be ineffective, creating duplication of existing local structures and networks. | | <p>connection and understanding of matters important to local people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relies on local place-level boards or networks, which evidence from Wiltshire and Somerset shows to be ineffective, creating duplication of existing local structures and networks. | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reliance on ineffective and duplicative place-level boards or networks. • Alignment with functional geography builds a footprint to enable renewed focus on asset-based community development, working with people at a localised level, in places they recognise and relate to. • Enables adoption and embedding of new and innovative participative methods of engagement that improve local decision- | |

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| | duplication of existing local structures and networks. | | | | | | making and community engagement, as well as fostering community resilience. | |
| Secures financial efficiency, resilience and the ability to withstand financial shocks. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duplication across two-tiers and between districts and boroughs. • Debt held by some districts as well as the county council. • Smaller scale of districts means that some districts have been proven to lack resilience to withstand financial shocks. | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would be financially viable. • Significant financial benefits by reducing duplication, achieving greater economies of scale, and capitalising on opportunities for service transformation and improvement. • Despite the potential for significant annual savings through reorganisation and transformation, existing budget | 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would be financially viable. • Significant financial benefits by reducing duplication, achieving greater economies of scale, and capitalising on opportunities for service transformation and improvement. • Despite the potential for significant annual savings through reorganisation and transformation, existing budget pressures and stranded debt | 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would be financially viable. • Significant financial benefits by reducing duplication, achieving greater economies of scale, and capitalising on opportunities for service transformation and improvement. • Despite the potential for significant annual savings through reorganisation | 4 |

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| | | | pressures and stranded debt remain unresolved issues. | | remain unresolved issues. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By year 4, total savings of £86.1m (£39.9m from reduced duplication and efficiency, £46.2m from future transformation). | | and transformation, existing budget pressures and stranded debt remain unresolved issues. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By year 4, total savings of £62.3m (£22.5m from reduced duplication and efficiency, £39.8m from future transformation). | |
| Delivers high-quality, innovative and sustainable public services that are responsive to local need and enable wider public sector reform. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of services is split across two tiers, which is not conducive to outcome-based policymaking. Differing strategic | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No disaggregation of county council functions necessary. Brings complementary lower and upper-tier services into a single organisation, | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disaggregation of county council functions is simplified by Surrey CC's geographical operating models for frontline services. Brings complementary | 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disaggregation of county council functions is simplified by Surrey CC's geographical operating models for frontline services. | 4 |

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| | <p>priorities and objectives between lower and upper-tier authorities, and across different districts, result in competing demands and duplication for partners and stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many upper-tier functions are provided in a localised way that aligns with district boundaries. However, the county's size and scale mean the county council is seeking to provide services across a diverse area with a range of | | <p>ensuring strategic alignment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The size and scale of the organisation mean the council would lack the agility to meet the diverse needs and local challenges across the county. | | <p>lower and upper-tier services into a single organisation, ensuring strategic alignment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrative boundaries that divide Surrey's functional economic areas fragment service delivery and strategic direction, impacting the authorities' ability to foster local economic growth. The authorities would serve a variety of places that do not necessarily share a common local identity and have distinct needs and challenges. | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brings complementary lower and upper-tier services into a single organisation, ensuring strategic alignment. Aligns administrative boundaries with functional economic areas, providing coherent strategic direction and enabling holistic, preventative, and needs-based services. Delivers services as close as possible to places, making service delivery more | |

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| | local challenges. | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence from recent LGR examples (e.g., Dorset) shows that such a lack of alignment negatively impacts service delivery and economic growth. • Creates a democratic deficit, diminishing councils' ability to act effectively both at scale and locally. | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responsive, particularly for operative-run services that rely on local delivery and knowledge. • New councils have a deep understanding of needs and challenges within their areas, allowing them to make policy decisions tailored to local circumstances. • Alignment best positions new councils to work in partnership with others, fostering economic growth. • Builds on existing partnership working between local | |

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| | | | | | | | authorities and other partners (such as health), which already broadly aligns with the proposed boundaries. | |
| Total score (out of possible score of 30) and conclusion | Does not meet government requirements – the current system causes duplication across tiers, with different authorities responsible for different functions, leading to confusion for residents. It does not support the government's ambitions for devolution and growth. | 10 | Does not meet government requirements – while financially robust and achieving significant efficiency, a single unitary would be too large and remote from residents to empower local communities effectively or provide agile services to meet local demand. It would struggle to support local economic growth. | 13 | Partially meets government requirements – all authorities would be financially robust and achieve significant efficiencies compared to the status quo. However, they would be somewhat remote from local communities and people, potentially fragmenting service delivery. Additionally, the alignment of unitary boundaries does not fully support Surrey's functional economic areas, leading to economic | 21 | Fully meets government requirements – financially robust and efficient, the three-unitary model aligns with Surrey's distinct economic and social geographies, supporting stronger growth, housing delivery, and infrastructure development. It fosters local leadership, enhances community engagement, and ensures councils act as powerful advocates for their | 28 |

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| | | | | | incoherence, not supporting local economic growth. | | areas, leading to more responsive and innovative public services. | |