Local Government Reorganisation in Surrey: Joint submission from Reigate & Banstead Borough Council and Crawley Borough Council

9 May 2025

Reigate & Banstead Borough Council
Banstead | Horley | Redhill | Reigate

Crawley Borough Council

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Local Government Reorganisation in Surrey: Joint submission from Reigate & Banstead Borough Council and Crawley Borough Council

Introduction

Our proposition

Our proposition is for:

- A single tier of local government that brings together the area based on the existing authorities of Reigate & Banstead Borough Council in Surrey and Crawley Borough Council in West Sussex into the same unitary authority; and
- Removal of the hard administrative boundary that cuts across the heart of the Gatwick Diamond sub-regional economic growth area.

Simply put, this is the solution that will maximise the future economic growth potential of our area.

It makes no sense to perpetuate the administrative boundary through the middle of the sub-region's most significant economy when the Government's primary agenda is to achieve greater growth. Removing this boundary as part of local government reorganisation will deliver the efficiencies that come with that process; but also unlock economic growth benefits (including the proceeds of growth to the national exchequer) that far exceed any financial savings realised through the process of unitarisation.

While the differing local government reorganisation and devolution timetables have not been designed to support the exploration of cross boundary arrangements, we believe that this is an exceptional circumstance that requires a willingness on the part of Government to introduce flexibility and accept a limited amount of additional complexity for maximum gain.

We acknowledge that bringing together our two authorities alone may not be the final unitary boundary in order to take account wider proposals in both Surrey and Sussex. However, the process the Government has set out, using historic county boundaries as the basis for proposals, and the differing timeframes imposed on Surrey and Sussex, has rendered impossible our ability to suggest a definitive boundary at this stage.

We therefore ask that the Government first considers our cross-boundary proposal, and - if it sees merit in this - allows for further discussions for its incorporation into the wider proposals.

Outcomes

Our proposition will:

1. **Maximise the economic opportunity** of the Gatwick Diamond economic area
2. **Unlock the only sensible devolution geography** that genuinely delivers against White Paper objectives
3. Enable a **sensible geography for local planning to support the ongoing success of Gatwick Airport**, including a joined up approach to managing the impacts of the airport on the environment and local communities.

4. Allow for local and strategic **transport planning that supports the key regional transport corridors** (road and rail, north-south and east-west)
5. Unlock **sustainable housing solutions** while protecting sensitive landscapes
6. Ensure **continued delivery of high quality services** for our residents, and safe and legal services at Vesting Day
7. Allow for an **efficient and financially resilient** unitary authority
8. Unlock opportunities for **innovative models of service delivery, including prevention services**, working with public sector partners.

About this submission

Reigate & Banstead Borough Council and **Crawley Borough Council** are making this submission in response to the invitation for proposals for a single tier of local government issued by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on 5th February 2025.

It has received formal agreement from each authority as follows:

- Reigate & Banstead Borough Council, Executive Meeting, Wednesday 7th May 2025 following a meeting of the Full Council on 6th May 2025
- Crawley Borough Council, Cabinet Meeting, Wednesday 7th May 2025, following a meeting of the Full Council

The submission is being made in alignment with the Government's timetable for Surrey local authorities to submit proposals (9th May 2025). The deadline for West Sussex local authorities to submit proposals is not until 26th September. On that basis:

- Reigate & Banstead Borough Council is making this supplementary submission alongside being a joint signatory to the Surrey Three Unitary Proposal; and
- Crawley Borough Council is making this submission without prejudice to any future Proposal submitted on the West Sussex timetable.

This approach is the only option that we feel is available to us, given the processes and differing timescales that the Government have put in place for Local Government Reorganisation. It is disappointing that the process:

- Has provided no additional flexibility for our cross-boundary proposal to be submitted on timetable other than the Surrey timetable
- Underplays the realities of economic functioning areas where these are not coterminous with existing county boundaries; and
- Continues to promote scale as an antidote to systemic challenges within local government, ignoring the evidence of recent reorganisations.

Alignment with the Government's criteria: In preparing this submission we have had regard to the guidance from the Secretary of State set out in the Schedule to the original 5th February invitation letter, and to further guidance that has been issued both in writing and verbally since that date (including the feedback provided on the Surrey Interim Proposals and our joint letter of 21st March).

We understand from civil servants at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government that the 5th February 2025 invitation letter criteria will be used as the basis for decision-making, and we have used those criteria to inform this submission (see pages 7-8).

However, we would be worried if the response to our collective work over the past few months was merely a 'tick box' exercise against predetermined administrative criteria that (a) does not take account of the exceptional circumstances that the rest of this submission evidences, and (b) fails to acknowledge that there are proven models to managing risks to service delivery and wider reform emerging from a 'non-standard' approach to local government reorganisation (LGR) which looks across existing administrative county boundaries.

Our ask of Government

We appreciate that a cross boundary approach to unitarisation that we are suggesting introduces additional complexity in terms of the timeframes for delivery of LGR and Devolution in the area. However, this is not insurmountable, and we consider it justifiable given the huge economic benefits that will be unlocked.

The Government's suggested boundaries for devolution are based on historic county boundaries that do not recognise the reality of modern-day economic geography. Through this submission we are calling on Government to adapt this approach where the benefits can be shown to outweigh administrative convenience, and where there is an acceptable approach to mitigating wider risks.

The economic functioning area that spans the boroughs of Crawley and Reigate & Banstead is worth over £13bn. Co-joined by one of the world's busiest single runway airports, and at the heart of the Gatwick Diamond, this is the largest economy in the sub-region.

The use of historic county boundaries for the new Mayoral Strategic Authorities would see strategic planning split between two separate elected Mayors. Given the complexities involved in balancing economic growth, environmental protection and community benefit, plus the challenges of wider strategic planning and transport, this is clearly sub-optimal at best and non-sensical at worst.

This sub-optimality extends also to service provision. A key example is the Surrey and Sussex Healthcare Trust. Based in Redhill, and there within the Surrey Integrated Care Board (ICB), 50% of its users travel from within Sussex, with some of the greatest need emerging from Crawley. The Surrey-Sussex boundary is problematic in terms of meeting need and planning preventative approaches. LGR, if undertaken properly could accelerate rather than inhibit future service reform (see Sections 4, 7 and Annex 9).

We recognise that this submission presents a different answer to the question of future Devolution geographies to that in the Surrey Three Unitary submission, to which Reigate & Banstead is a joint signatory. We are committed to work constructively with Government to determine the best solution for a successful Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA) in the area.

It should also be noted that the current boundary is a quirk of recent history. The Surrey-Sussex boundary once ran through Crawley. Within previous re-organisations, Crawley could easily have been incorporated within Surrey, and likewise parts of Reigate & Banstead (such as Horley) within Sussex. Administrative boundary lines are not permanent, but fluid and adjust over time according to wider needs. This should not be a barrier to reaching an optimal solution.

Our ask to Government is therefore that:

- This submission is taken into account alongside the other Surrey proposals for two or three unitary authorities in the county

- A cross boundary approach that incorporates Crawley is included within the Government's Surrey LGR consultation; and
- The Government takes a flexible approach to future devolution boundaries, accepting that these cannot be finalised until such time as resolution is reached on a cross-boundary approach to LGR in Surrey that also takes account of the Sussex position.

Addressing the government's criteria

The rest of this submission elaborates on the rationale behind our proposition and how it will achieve our identified outcomes. The reference table below indicates in which sections each of the Government's criteria are addressed.

Criteria	Document reference
1. A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government.	Section 3
1.a Proposals should be for sensible economic areas, with an appropriate tax base which does not create an undue disadvantage for one part of the area	Sensible economic areas – Section 1 Tax base – Section 6
1.b Proposals should be for a sensible geography which will help to increase housing supply and meet local needs	Section 2
1.c Proposals should be supported by robust evidence and analysis and include an explanation of the outcomes it is expected to achieve, including evidence of estimated costs/benefits and local engagement	Section 11 References to evidence base throughout document
1.d Proposals should describe clearly the single tier local government structures it is putting forward for the whole area, and explain how, if implemented, these are expected to achieve the outcomes described.	Structures – Section 3 and Annex 1 Achievement of outcomes – throughout
2. Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.	Size – Section 3 Capacity – Section 5 Efficiencies and resilience – Section 6
2.a As a guiding principle, new councils should aim for a population of 500,000 or more	Section 3
2.b There may be certain scenarios in which this 500,000 figure does not make sense for an area, including on devolution, and this rationale should be set out in a proposal	Section 3
2.c Efficiencies should be identified to help improve councils' finances and make sure that council taxpayers are getting the best possible value for money	Section 6
2.d Proposals should set out how an area will seek to manage transition costs, including planning for future service transformation opportunities from existing budgets, including from the flexible use of capital receipts that can support authorities in taking forward transformation and invest to save projects	Service delivery approach – Section 5 Financial efficiencies – Section 6 Transition and implementation approach – Section 9
2.e For areas covering councils that are in Best Value intervention and/or in receipt of Exceptional Financial Support, proposals must additionally demonstrate how reorganisation may contribute to putting local government in the area as a whole on a firmer footing and what area-specific arrangements may be necessary to make new structures viable	Section 6
2.f In general, as with previous restructures, there is no proposal for council debt to be addressed centrally or written off as part of reorganisation. For areas where there are exceptional circumstances where there has been failure linked to capital practices, proposals should reflect the extent to which the implications of this can be managed locally, including as part of efficiencies possible through reorganisation	Section 6

3. Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.	Section 5, Section 7
3.a Proposals should show how new structures will improve local government and service delivery, and should avoid unnecessary fragmentation of services	Section 5
3.b Opportunities to deliver public service reform should be identified, including where they will lead to better value for money	Section 7
3.c Consideration should be given to the impacts for crucial services such as social care, children's services, SEND and homelessness, and for wider public services including for public safety	Section 5
4. Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.	Working together – Section 10 Local views – throughout, plus Section 11; Annex 6 and Annex 7
4.a It is for councils to decide how best to engage locally in a meaningful and constructive way and this engagement activity should be evidenced in your proposal	Engagement to date – Section 11; Annex 6 and Annex 7
4.b Proposals should consider issues of local identity and cultural and historic importance	Section 2
4.c Proposals should include evidence of local engagement, an explanation of the views that have been put forward and how concerns will be addressed	Engagement to date – Section 11; Annex 6 and Annex 7 Addressing concerns – Section 8
5. New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.	Section 4
5.a Proposals will need to consider and set out for areas where there is already a Combined Authority (CA) or a Combined County Authority (CCA) established or a decision has been taken by Government to work with the area to establish one, how that institution and its governance arrangements will need to change to continue to function effectively; and set out clearly (where applicable) whether this proposal is supported by the CA/CCA /Mayor	Not applicable
5.b Where no CA or CCA is already established or agreed then the proposal should set out how it will help unlock devolution	Section 4
5.c Proposals should ensure there are sensible population size ratios between local authorities and any strategic authority, with timelines that work for both priorities	Section 4
6. New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.	Section 8
6.a Proposals will need to explain plans to make sure that communities are engaged	Section 8
6.b Where there are already arrangements in place it should be explained how these will enable strong community engagement	Section 8

Section 1: Economic growth

DELIVERING AGAINST OUTCOMES

Outcome 1 - Maximise the economic opportunity of the Gatwick Diamond economic area

This section demonstrates that our cross boundary proposal better reflects the functional economic area and shows how bringing local authority boundaries into alignment with that can maximise the future economic growth potential of the area.

A well established and recognised geography and a sensible economic area

We strongly believe that bringing our two authorities together into the same local (unitary) authority is the most sensible reflection of local economic geographies.

History and geography: Reigate & Banstead Borough Council (R&B) and Crawley Borough Council (Crawley) together sit at the heart of the successful Gatwick Diamond sub-region, a well-established economic area with Gatwick Airport at its heart.

Gatwick airport and the area surrounding it has a 70-year history playing a pivotal role in the UK's economy.

The economic strengths of the area have developed in parallel to the growth of Crawley as a New Town and as Gatwick Airport became established and has expanded into one of the world's busiest single runway airports and the second busiest airport in the UK. The concept of the Gatwick Diamond in its current guise emerged in the 1990s as a regional economic identity, and was a focal point for regional investment and growth by the regional economic and planning bodies in existence in the 2000s.

Since that time, the area has been supported and promoted by sub-regional representative bodies, including the Gatwick Diamond Initiative and Gatwick Diamond Business. The Coast To Capital Local Enterprise Partnership geography, established from 2011, was centred around Gatwick Airport and the Inner Gatwick Diamond, as recognised in the organisation's most recent strategic economic plan 'Gatwick 360'.

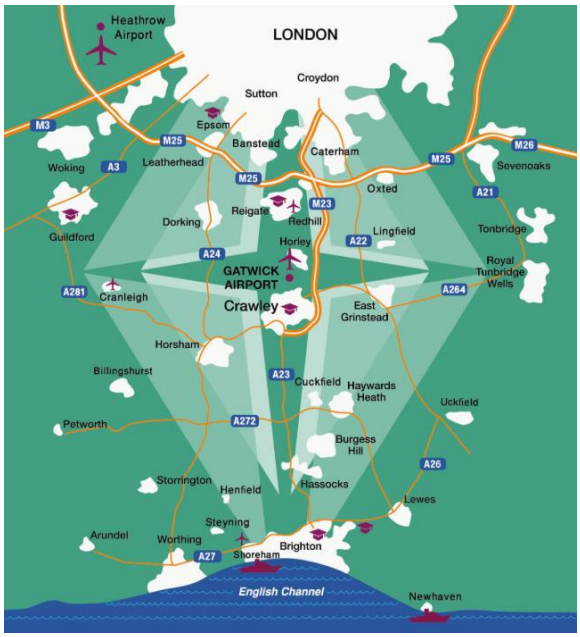
The Gatwick Diamond geography also has, and continues to inform, strategic planning and transport considerations - its strengths and strategic location being acknowledged in local plan documents prepared by local authorities in the area[1] and in strategic planning and infrastructure planning documents prepared for the Surrey area and jointly by Gatwick Diamond local authorities[2].

Reigate & Banstead and Crawley are located at the heart of the 'Inner' or 'Core' Gatwick Diamond, straddling the existing Surrey-Sussex county boundary. Gatwick Airport is located at the extreme northern boundary of Crawley, with its land ownership extending into Reigate & Banstead. The 'Outer' Gatwick Diamond area extends beyond our authorities, across authorities including Mole Valley, Horsham, Tandridge, Epsom & Ewell and Mid Sussex all of which contribute to the economic success of the sub-region.

[1] Reigate & Banstead Local Plan (Core Strategy and Development Management Plan); Crawley Local Plan;
[2] Surrey Local Strategic Statement; Gatwick Diamond Local Strategic Statement; Gatwick Diamond Infrastructure Study; Surrey 2050 Place Ambition

Map 1 below shows the local authorities which the Gatwick Diamond crosses. Map 2 demonstrates the relationship of the area with key settlements and transport corridors. Map 3 is useful in providing information about comparator areas.

Map 1: Local authorities within the Gatwick Diamond (Centre for Cities)



Map 2: Gatwick Diamond – key settlements and transport links (Gatwick Diamond Initiative)

Map 3: Gatwick Diamond and comparator areas (Centre for Cities)

Economic strengths: In our joint letter to the Minister of 21 March 2025 (Annex 3) we outlined the key strengths the Reigate & Banstead and Crawley economy, including our GVA contribution and sectoral strengths and high growth clusters.

The Gatwick Diamond is a £24bn region, home to 45,000 businesses and 500 international businesses, and many large multinationals. Key sectors include medical engineering, science, aerospace, computer gaming, AI, automotive, defence and service industries. The area's economy performs well above the national average on various economic indicators: productivity levels, share of high-skilled jobs and traditionally a track record in attracting investment[3].

The economy of the inner Gatwick Diamond (Reigate & Banstead and Crawley) is equivalent to that of Milton Keynes, and the GVA across the two authorities is bigger than both Brighton and Croydon, despite a significantly smaller population, contributing £13.05bn in GVA (over 50% of the Gatwick Diamond area's total contribution).

More information about the economic strengths of the area is set out in the independent report at Annex 5, prepared by the Gatwick Diamond Initiative, which highlights the role of the northern Gatwick Diamond area as a gateway for global connectivity and growth, and a pivotal economic zone for the UK. The sectoral strengths and international trade opportunities of the area surrounding Gatwick are also recognised in the Economic Strategies of Surrey and West Sussex County Councils[4].

The Surrey Three Unitary Proposal also identifies the strong cross boundary economic links that exist between the Crawley/Gatwick area and Reigate & Banstead and East Surrey.

Contribution to the national exchequer and future economic growth potential

Fundamentally, we know that the economic benefits of bringing our two authorities together will unlock huge economic opportunities – and indeed remove the risk of undermining the future economic strength and stability of the Gatwick Diamond. Removing the hard boundary between our authorities as part of LGR will not only deliver the efficiencies that come with that process; but also unlock economic growth benefits (including the proceeds of growth to the national exchequer) that far exceed any financial savings realised through the process of unitarisation.

[3] Centre for Cities, The Economic Geography of the Gatwick Diamond
[4] Surrey's Draft Economic Growth Strategy 2025-2030; West Sussex Economic Strategy 2025-2030

Our two Councils have an estimated Business Rates ask for 2024/25 of over £200m. The latest figures (ONS Regional GDP estimates 2022) on VAT take from our two boroughs is £748m, with a further £523m from other taxes captured by the ONS for the same period. The latest available income tax data (2022/23) at local authority district level shows a take of £1.338bn.

In total, this suggests a value to the exchequer of £2.8bn, yet this understates the total value of the contribution given that much of the tax take is not recorded at a local level, and because many people living in neighbouring areas commute into our towns to make their living. If Business Rates were an accurate barometer of total tax take, based on the location of economic production, it would suggest a total contribution of some £6.85bn.

The outlook for further growth and further tax revenues is strong. The Government has stated that it is minded to approve the expansion at Gatwick Airport. This would see the emergency runway to the north of the existing runway be upgraded, increasing capacity by a third. Land around Gatwick Airport is already coming forward to support future economic growth. Gatwick Green will see a further 2000 jobs, an additional £79m GVA per annum.

The high growth sector clusters in the area – which as noted above include MedTech and life sciences, aviation and defence manufacturing and training and financial services – have considerable growth potential but need coherent support for that to be optimised. A cross boundary approach to skills provision will help achieve this, building on work undertaken by Coast to Capital LEP to broker improved relationships across the area between skills providers and employers and explore opportunities for a higher education presence to unlock further economic growth potential

Further potential exists from the creation of the Gatwick Airport Economic Zone, which covers a wide area overlapping existing county boundaries and aims to achieve long term, sustained economic development across the region surrounding the area through joint public and private sector working.

Through mechanisms agreed within Crawley's recently adopted Local Plan, approval of the current Gatwick DCO will trigger a review of the whole safeguarded land with substantial potential for future land release for housing and commercial development (although options for housing development are likely to be limited due to proximity of the airport), and associated economic growth. Adjacent to the Airport, south of Horley, an additional large-scale opportunity for commercial development of sub-regional significance exists via an allocation in the Reigate & Banstead Local Plan. There is also significant potential for commercial development in Crawley town centre, as demonstrated by the successful introduction of Grade A office space.

The economic counterfactual

Our area's potential is already constrained by the fact that it falls across two county administrative areas. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to change that. Overlaying the existing divide with a Mayoral Strategic Authority boundary would compound the problem and arguably worsen the constraint.

The Economy Spotlight report by Coast to Capital on the Reigate & Banstead – Crawley Growth Area (Annex 4) considers this question. It finds that the reinforcing of the Surrey-Sussex boundary through this economic functioning area runs contrary to the sensible characteristics the Government states strategic authorities should have. It also highlights the key strategic economic agendas that such an arrangement would negatively impact upon, including

commuting networks, employment, strategic housing growth and economic growth. For example, undermining the creation of local growth and skills plans, employment support, and coherent infrastructure and land use planning. The opportunity to address housing challenges, create employment and skills opportunities, secure inward investment to benefit established and emerging businesses, and grow tax revenues will be undermined. As a result, our residents will lose out and our area's contribution to the Government's growth agenda will be inhibited.

The fact that the Gatwick Diamond is a thriving economic sub-region is in spite of, rather than because of, existing administrative boundaries. As the future economic potential of the area is increasing, the opportunity to align local and regional governance structures to support this should be grasped.

Section 2: Housing, transport and place identity

DELIVERING AGAINST OUTCOMES

Outcome 3 - Enable a sensible geography for local planning to support the ongoing success of Gatwick Airport, including a joined up approach to managing the impacts of the airport on the environment and local communities

Outcome 4 - Allow for local and strategic transport planning that supports the key regional transport corridors (road and rail, north-south and east-west)

Outcome 5 - Unlock sustainable housing solutions while protecting sensitive landscapes

This section demonstrates how a cross boundary geography presents opportunities for a more joined up approach to local and spatial planning, enabling better management of environmental pressures. It will unlock housing delivery by providing a more sensible geography for the identification of housing sites; and help ensure proactive infrastructure planning and investment to ensure genuinely sustainable new development.

A means of unlocking housing delivery

As well as the economic benefits, bringing our two authorities together will help to increase housing supply and meet local needs. It should be noted at the outset that both of our authorities have a strong track record of housing delivery, including the provision of affordable homes.

Housing market areas: The local housing market area is complex, particularly influenced by proximity to London but also the polycentric settlement structure of the Surrey/Sussex area. The overlap between the East Surrey Housing Market Area (HMA) and the Northern West Sussex HMA is a reflection of this; acknowledged both in Reigate & Banstead's latest HMA Technical Paper (2024) and Crawley's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2019.

The evidence shows a functional relationship between Crawley and parts of Surrey, with the strongest relationship (in house price and commuting terms) being with Horley and areas to the south of the M25 in Reigate & Banstead. The Crawley SHMA also recognises that the growth of the economic hub around Crawley/Gatwick could over time influence the housing market geography, and that the HMA geography could change over time, particularly if/when Gatwick Airport expands.

This cross boundary functional relationship is also identified in the Surrey Three Unitary Proposal.

Housing need and supply: Both our authorities have high levels of housing need. Under the standard method, Reigate & Banstead has a housing need of 1,306 and Crawley of 654.

Both authorities are also constrained in terms of housing land supply. Economic growth is no longer being met by sufficient housing and population growth to meet the needs of local employers. Crawley, with a population of 120,000 has a job base of 93,000, the second highest job density in the southeast. Consequently, the town (with an employment rate of 86%) has to import labour from across the region.

Crawley has all but exhausted the strategic housing sites within its boundaries. Increasingly, it relies on development in neighbouring areas to meet its housing need, exemplified by the

planned developments on Crawley's boundaries. Crawley has announced a housing emergency, driven by a lack of sufficient supply and the increasing unaffordability of owner occupation and the private rented sector. Despite a strong track record of social housing development, the borough has not been able to keep up, constrained as it is by its boundaries and the restrictions of Water Neutrality placed upon the area by Natural England.

In Reigate & Banstead, the majority of the borough is impacted by one or more environmental or policy constraints, including Green Belt, National Landscape, and flood risk areas. House prices and social housing need are similarly a major local concern.

Crawley's view is that the constraints on development to the south of the town (as described above) means that opportunities for future growth to the north must be explored (recognising that there are also extensive constraints here as described above).

Bringing the two authorities together into the same unitary authority will create the conditions for a more proactive and joined up approach to land-use planning that recognises these constraints. Sites on Crawley's boundaries (such as West of Ifield, a priority site for Homes England with the potential to deliver 10,000 homes) could form part of any new unitary. A joined up approach to local and strategic infrastructure planning make it more realistic that major strategic housing opportunities such as at Redhill Aerodrome and land to the east of Salfords could be fully unlocked.

Removing the hard administrative boundary that severs the complex East Surrey / North West Sussex Housing Market areas will enable a genuinely strategic approach to housing delivery across a wider area so that new housing can support economic growth, and benefit from properly planned and funded supporting infrastructure (including transport infrastructure), unlocking strategic development sites whilst also protecting sensitive areas from over-development. The market certainty that such an approach brings will create the conditions for prompt investment and strong delivery.

A sensible geography for transport and infrastructure planning

Key national and regional transport corridors including the M23, and London-Brighton rail line run north-south through Reigate & Banstead and Crawley, connecting (in Reigate & Banstead) to east-west road and rail corridors (the M25 and North Downs rail line connecting Gatwick to the rest of Surrey and the Thames Valley).

These provide a key sense of connection between our authorities and others within Surrey. A survey of residents' connections with place by Reigate & Banstead Borough Council (see Annex 6) demonstrates strong connections with Crawley in the south and central parts of the borough whilst the north of the borough looks more to the north. There is a clear correlation with strategic transport corridors when defining sensible geography.

Coherent planning and investment around these transport corridors will be essential to support future economic growth and the efficient delivery of public services. Splitting local and strategic planning responsibility for these corridors will - as a minimum - add complexity and risk and may undermine the ability to secure further investment (which in turn can unlock new strategic housing and commercial development sites).

The future success and growth of Gatwick Airport (whether under a single or two runway scenario) will continue to place significant pressure on the surrounding transport network, with around 80% of vehicles bound for the airport passing through Reigate & Banstead.

Developing a strategic approach to sustainable, active and public transport whilst placing the vital transport hub of Gatwick Airport on the very margin of the proposed authority (and thereby also dividing up what should be closely integrated sustainable surface access networks) would undermine the potential to deliver a step change in transport and travel across the area.

On the other hand, bringing our two authorities together would mean a more coherent and joined up approach to working with the Airport and planning to manage the local and environmental impact on the area and ensure the most sustainable passenger travel options.

Similarly, removing the current administrative boundary between our authorities would bring benefits in terms of planning to manage and mitigate local environmental issues such as flood risk (associate with the River Mole catchment) and water supply and water quality, which without additional planning and investment will continue to constrain the development potential of our area.

Local identity and community coherence

As Section 1 demonstrates, there is a long established economic identity around Gatwick and the Gatwick Diamond.

In addition to this, the interrelationships between our communities in Crawley and Reigate & Banstead are already strong, reflecting the local labour market, housing markets and transport networks, as well as the settlement structure and complementary roles of the towns within our two boroughs, with any residents from Reigate & Banstead accessing retail and leisure services in Crawley.

The Reigate & Banstead Residents' Survey (Annex 6) suggests that the towns that the borough's residents visit most frequently are within the borough (Reigate, Redhill and Banstead), with the top towns visited outside the borough as being Epsom, Dorking and Crawley. Residents in the southern part of Reigate & Banstead report Crawley as being most frequently visited (second to Horley). Overall, the R&B residents rated connections with Crawley as the second best of towns outside the borough (second to Croydon).

In Crawley (see Annex 7), residents have stated a strong preference in terms of working location for remaining within the borough (94%), with Horsham (74%) as the next location of choice followed by Horley (72%) in Reigate & Banstead. Access to services was largely defined as being within a 30-minute duration of travel, with healthcare being the most frequently mentioned essential service (the local acute hospital being a 20-25 minute journey to Redhill in Reigate & Banstead).

People were generally willing to travel further for leisure with Brighton (67%) cited after Horsham (81%) and Horley (70%). The two main shopping destinations outside of the borough were Horsham (86%) and Brighton (76%) with Horley third (56%). There was a clear pattern of Horsham, Horley and Brighton being the key towns in terms of connections demonstrating both Crawley's positioning and its transport networks. and shopping activities, with Horley listed in the top three destinations outside of Crawley, after Horsham and Brighton.

This connectivity is also exemplified in the sub-regional travel to work area (see Annex 4), which illustrates close functional relationship and north-south travel patterns between our two authorities.

The existing county boundary line that divides Surrey and Sussex around Gatwick/Crawley has changed over time. Parts of Crawley have previously been in Surrey, and in the past, there has been discussion about amalgamating parts of Reigate & Banstead within Sussex. The connections and relationships between our communities reflects that this area is not strongly defined by the historic ties that may exist in other parts of our areas. Indeed, reinforcing this illogical boundary through future LGR and devolution will only work to enshrine this constraint for the next generation and prevent the realisation of the potential of this significant economic area.

Section 3: A single tier of local government, of an appropriate scale

A single tier of local government

Our submission proposes bringing Crawley Borough Council together with Reigate & Banstead Borough Council into the same local (unitary) authority.

Bringing Crawley together with Reigate & Banstead into the same local (unitary) authority introduces scale to the current Surrey population. It increases it from 1.23m to 1.35m, making the average population of a three unitary solution closer to the Government's 500,000 target (at 450,000 average). As set out in the Surrey Three Unitaries Proposal, which Reigate & Banstead Borough Council is a joint signatory to, this enables, across the whole Surrey area, unitary authorities with a clear functional identity and economic geography compared to larger unitary authorities which align less well with local places and communities.

Our cross-boundary proposal does not therefore compromise establishing a single tier of local government across the Surrey area; and in Annex 1 we have provided examples of different practical solutions which we encourage the Government to consider. A cross-boundary solution as part of Surrey LGR brings not only huge economic benefit but also additional population numbers and alignment with functional relationships.

Limitations: Unfortunately, our submission has been constrained by the Government's stipulated process, which has been predicated on 'within county boundary' solutions, and timetable, which sets Surrey and Sussex on different pathways. In particular the accelerated timeline for Surrey has disadvantaged further detailed consideration of how best to incorporate the significant economic functioning area across our two boroughs.

An appropriate scale

The 'target' scale of new unitary authorities proposed by Government has received considerable attention. One of the main arguments advocated for larger authorities is around provision of higher risk upper tier services – but here evidence[5] **does not** suggest that scale automatically translates to effectiveness; indeed, for personal, staff-intensive and preventative activity smaller scales are likely to be more appropriately provided at a more local place-based level.

Looking across local government at Adult Social Care for instance, there is no correlation between the size of an authority and the outcomes that authority achieves, or the costs related to that service. This is because economies of scale are just one element of a range of factors that determine quality. In the case of Adult Social Care, best practice sets out that this includes:

- Quality of Leadership
- Robust accountability and assurance
- Workforce capacity and capability
- Equalisation of resource and demand
- Market resilience and responsiveness
- Community and prevention focus
- Localism and connection with place
- Integration and partnerships

[5] IMPOWER Index – IMPOWER

These can all be nurtured by Councils of any size, but place is a key component which can be lost when operating at scale. There is tension between the local and delivery at scale, with local being needed for 'high-touch' integrated and preventative services and scale that benefits capital-intensive and specialist services plus commissioning and procurement. We believe there are proven models available that could allow for smaller areas to operate effectively around place, whilst allow scale to occur where this is needed (see Section 5).

It appears therefore that the rationale for 500,000 population can only be based upon a narrow view of local government finance rather than what delivers quality outcomes. It relies on estimates of economies of scale accrued by unitarisation, ignoring the evidence from recently formed unitaries that have not achieved anywhere near the saving figures claimed prior to unitarisation, and for many the underlying financial challenges and stresses remain unresolved and are once again coming to the fore.

While the assumption that scale always brings efficiency is therefore not evidenced, a more reasonable assumption is that pressures might be disproportionately concentrated in smaller areas and may be more dispersed and therefore better managed within larger areas. Yet this does not justify a standardised approach and runs the risk of larger areas diluting down historical strengths and local needs and identities.

Rightly therefore, the LGR process and criteria allows for exceptions where this can be justified, and we agree with the Government that scale is only one of the criteria that should be used in judging proposals.

Our view is that growth potential should be considered a crucial justification given its pre-eminence within the Government's national agenda. Both Reigate & Banstead and Crawley have enviable track records of economic development and growth. We both encourage and actively deliver new housing. Separating our councils, and overly diluting this focus in larger areas without this track record or propensity for new growth not only undermines the future prospects locally, but also reduces the potential contribution to the national mission for growth.

As noted in our previous correspondence to the Minister (Annex 3), we are aware that the population of our two authorities combined – at 276,500 – is considerably less than the stated 500,000 target. It may be that our proposal needs to be seen as a starting point rather than an end point. But the economic benefits of bringing our two authorities together will unlock huge economic opportunities – and indeed remove the risk of undermining the future economic strength and stability of the Gatwick Diamond. **The proceeds of growth that our proposal will unlock will far outweigh any direct financial benefits from unitarisation[6].**

There are also other reasons – local identity, geography and demography – that further underpin why – functionally – our proposal makes sense, which we elaborate on elsewhere in this submission.

What is also critical in making reorganisation a success is the process of decision-making on unitarisation; coherent transition planning work; and the implementation of service delivery

[6] That "the returns to the public purse from growing economies, building housing [and] preventing future needs" from LGR – if delivered in the right way – can be "far more significant than the short-term savings that accrue from consolidating existing functions." is recognised by Inner Circle Consulting for the DCN. They conclude "as a minimum, we would argue that all unitary proposals must address …the extent to which proposed arrangements … are fit and optimised to exploit the growth potential of places"

models that genuinely reflect a local area's (and population's) strengths and challenges. We expand on these in Sections 5 and 9. We also believe that there are models available that will allow smaller unitaries to exist whilst minimising the risks of disaggregation. These are set out in Section 5. Notwithstanding the fact that we consider there are exceptional circumstances to justify a smaller than 500,000 population, there are also over 60 unitary authorities of a scale similar to or smaller than our combined population (ONS Mid-Year Estimates 2023); and the Government will be aware that the vast majority of these are able to function efficiently and effectively.

We can also confirm that we are open to the inclusion of our two authorities within a single larger unitary authority as part of a three unitary Surrey solution (which we recognise may also have practical benefits of avoiding any devolution of local government reorganisation 'islands'). Likewise, we would be open to exploring similar options within Sussex, although recognising the implications for population numbers/targets. We have included some potential scenarios in Annex 1.

In the Reigate & Banstead Residents' survey, residents expressed a preference for a 3 unitary arrangement (37%) over a 2 unitary arrangement (12%) with free text comments suggesting a high level of concern that larger councils will be more removed from their local communities, as well as some concern that local areas will lose their identity and sense of community through unitarisation.

Section 8 explores how the concerns raised about unitarisation leading to loss of community coherence can be addressed.

Section 4: Unlocking devolution

DELIVERING AGAINST OUTCOMES

Outcome 2 – Unlock the only sensible devolution geography that genuinely delivers against White Paper objectives

This section demonstrates how removing the hard administrative boundary that divides our authorities brings greater alignment with not only the geographic requirements for devolution set out in the White Paper, but also unlock benefits across the breadth of the Government's devolution objectives, including economic growth and skills, spatial and transport planning, and public sector reform.

Our proposal for bringing together Reigate & Banstead and Crawley into the same local (unitary) authority is not solely about local government reorganisation. Indeed, it is driven by the devolution benefits of removing the increasingly illogical historic county boundary that cuts right across the heart of one of the most economically successful areas in the south east.

Our case, when it comes to the devolution benefits, is simple.

The geographic basics

A Mayoral Strategic Authority that removes the hard administrative boundary that cuts across the heart of the Gatwick Diamond enables a MSA that addresses the geographic 'basics' set out in the White Paper. One that:

- Could have a scale more aligned with the indicative figure in the White Paper (noting the current Surrey county population of 1.2m)
- Is based on a sensible economic geography, that properly reflects and incorporates the strong, functional Gatwick Diamond economic area
- Reflects and does not cut across the established travel to work area around Gatwick
- Incorporates the coherent local labour market centred on Gatwick Airport, Manor Royal, and Crawley
- Does not lead to any devolution islands (assuming the boundaries are drawn correctly), can be contiguous with its constituent authorities, and allows for future improved alignment with other public sector boundaries.

Future potential and devolution objectives

The creation of a unitary council incorporating both of our authorities within a single MSA will achieve the Government's devolution objectives to a considerably greater extent than dividing the area between two MSAs.

Economic development and regeneration: Section 1 demonstrates the substantial economic benefits associated with bringing our authorities together and removing the existing administrative boundary that separates the Gatwick area, and its businesses, from a major part of its supply chain and labour market.

The driver behind devolution is economic growth; and our proposal will ensure that future growth potential can be secured rather than undermined. New Mayoral powers will enable targeted partnership working with Government to promote further innovation, secure inward investment, unlock commercial development opportunities and target future funding to fully

exploit the opportunities arising from the presence of the international airport. Ultimately, this will boost sub-regional productivity, jobs, and tax revenue.

Transport and local infrastructure: Section 2 introduces the key regional road and rail corridors that traverse our authorities and are essential to the current economic success of the area and unlocking its future potential. The benefits of creating a MSA that has responsibility for the transport links (and transport planning) from Gatwick Airport to London, the M25 and beyond are indisputable. Funding consolidation and increased autonomy for the strategic road network and investment decisions across the area will enable decisions that unlock strategic development sites. A simplified and stronger relationship with rail providers, as well as a new policy framework for bus service provision, will enable the improved network integration required for modal shift to sustainable transport methods.

Housing and strategic planning: Section 2 explains the housing need and opportunity across our area but also the constraints. Sensible strategic planning over a wide area, and long-term time horizons, is the only way that the area's considerable housing need can be addressed while also ensuring development takes place in a sustainable way that reflects environmental constraints, and benefits (rather than undermines) our local communities. The combination of Spatial Development Strategy powers, development management powers and levy raising powers will enable the development opportunities that do exist to be properly phased, planned and built out supported by the required infrastructure. The market certainty that such an approach brings will create the conditions for prompt investment and strong delivery.

Skills and employment support: Despite the economic strength of our combined authorities, and the significant potential for growth, there is more to do to ensure that our residents fully benefit from the opportunities that this creates.

In Crawley, despite having the second highest job density in the south east and a high an employment rate of almost 84% (south east average of 79%), educational attainment at Key Stage 4 is 4% below the national average and 5.7% of young people are on out-of-work benefits. There is a concentration of these issues within the more disadvantaged neighbourhoods of Broadfield, Bewbush and West Green, that sit in the top 20% most deprived nationally. There is also a growing higher skilled population for whom language and other factors are a barrier to accessing employment. Similarly, in Reigate & Banstead, while we have a highly skilled resident population overall with almost half (47%) qualified to NVQ level 4+ compared to the 43% nationally, we also have pockets of skills deprivation, including in parts of Merstham and Preston. Due to the tight labour market, relatively high house prices and competition from outside the borough, employers in the area often struggle to recruit employees at a number of skills levels.

Our area already has a strong track record of non-standard employment support and LGR when aligned with Devolution could create new opportunities again. Our area benefits from a range of further education provision with natural catchments that cross the county administrative boundary. However, there is little higher education presence in the area, which has been identified as limiting the future economic growth potential of the Gatwick Diamond area.

A MSA representing our combined area will be able to build on the positive progress made by the Coast to Capital LEP Employment and Skills Board to introduce a coherent Local Skills Improvement Plan for this high growth potential area; to build stronger relationships between education and skills providers, ensuring delivery matches need; and to build on the creation of

the Institute of Technology at Crawley College to explore opportunities for a higher education presence in the area and to strengthen research and innovation opportunities

Environment and climate change: While our economy is strong, investment and a consistent policy framework is needed to ensure that it can continue to growth while also positively contributing to national carbon reduction and clean energy targets. A MSA representing our combined economic area will ensure that Mayoral powers in relation to climate change and decarbonisation can be targeted to greatest effect. The White Paper recognises the opportunity that can be unlocked from future energy system planning across functional economic areas. Therefore, to draw an administrative boundary through a functional economic area such as the Gatwick Diamond will represent a missed opportunity – not only in relation to sub-regional energy planning but also a joined up approach to funding distribution and supporting skills provision to support the continued growth of low carbon sectors.

Health, wellbeing and public service reform: Our submission explores opportunities for improved health and wellbeing services and public sector reform in Sections 5 and 7.

Health service provision across our area (and Surrey more widely) is complex and does not fully align to existing county boundaries. Particularly when it comes to acute care, the current administrative boundary results in unnecessary complexity and inequitable service provision across the area. The opportunity to remove this boundary and re-align health structures with a more realistic functional cross boundary geography will deliver real benefits for overall population health and resident outcomes. While working relationships between local government and the health sector are strong at a local level in both Reigate & Banstead and Crawley, a Mayor for the area with a clear remit and responsibility within Integrated Care Partnership(s) will create the conditions to enable us to deliver on the health, wellbeing and prevention opportunities outlined elsewhere in this submission.

Public safety: Although police force and fire and rescue geographies currently align to county boundaries, the White Paper recognises that in some instances MSAs will not align with current boundaries. It accepts that in these cases it will be appropriate to take steps to ensure alignment in the longer term; including as necessary support from Government to introduce legislation to enable combining areas to achieve coterminous boundaries. As noted in Section 7 there are already good working relationships across the county boundary and shared back office and specialist functions; which provide a solid framework for boundary realignment at the appropriate time.

Size ratios between local authorities and any strategic authority

We believe our proposal for bringing together Reigate & Banstead and Crawley Borough Council into the same unitary authority will not only create a sensible administrative hierarchy for the sub-region that maximises economic growth potential, but also that it allows for sensible population size ratios between local authorities and a future strategic authority.

Of course, as this proposal is being submitted in advance of local government reorganisation proposals for Sussex, we only know part of the picture at this stage so cannot be specific about size ratios.

However, we anticipate that these would be well within the range of existing combined authorities which sees individual constituent local authorities making up anything from less

than 7% of a Combined Authoritys (CA) total population to around 75% of the CAs total population.

Timelines for devolution

We are disappointed that there has been no movement on the Government's original LGR and Devolution timelines to recognise the opportunity that exists for a growth-maximising cross-boundary solution.

We therefore ask that the Government takes a flexible approach to future devolution boundaries, accepting that these cannot be finalised until such time as resolution is reached on a cross boundary approach to LGR in Surrey. This flexibility should allow for the boundaries of the Sussex and Brighton MCA as consulted on to continue to be refined, to either expand or contract as Surrey devolution arrangements are developed following local government reorganisation across that county.

This flexibility will ensure that the best devolution solution is secured (capturing the economic growth and other benefits of removing the hard boundary through the heart of the Gatwick Diamond) while also enabling early devolution in Sussex (Mayoral elections in May 2026) with devolution in Surrey following the year after (Mayoral elections in May 2027).

Section 5: Sustainable public services

DELIVERING AGAINST OUTCOMES

Outcome 6 – Ensure continued delivery of high quality services for our residents; and safe and legal services at Vesting Day

Outcome 8 - Unlock opportunities for innovative models of service delivery, including prevention services, working with public sector partners

This section explains how a well planned and phased approach to transition and implementation can unlock early benefits for service provision and residents, while also safely managing the risks associated with disaggregation of more complex services. This precautionary approach will put new unitary authorities in a strong position – once established - to then deliver transformation and innovative models of service delivery and prevention.

Our proposed approach to implementation (Outcome 6) is explored more in section 9
Opportunities for public sector innovation (Outcome 8) are explored more in section 7

Unitarisation brings with it a once in a generation opportunity to deliver service improvement to benefit residents and secure authorities ongoing financial resilience.

In this section we explore models of sustainable public service delivery. In Section 6 we focus on financial efficiencies and resilience.

Service delivery opportunities:

New structures provide the opportunity to build on our locally high quality services to enhance and further improve delivery, through:

- Efficiencies from removal of duplication through consolidation of back office functions and economies of scale
- Building on existing established models of delivery and building resilience into stretched services
- Improved models of service delivery reflecting natural (cohesive) geographic and demographic communities and commonalities
- Delivering services as close to residents as possible enabling a more responsive service
- More holistic approaches to both place and people services by bringing together upper and lower tier authority functions
- An enhanced prevention role through bringing services together across a coherent area and enhanced collaboration with health and other public sector partners; and
- Retaining the advantages of economies of scale, and avoiding risks of disaggregation where appropriate, through the use of a shared services approach.

Aggregation of lower tier services

Once the geographies of unitarisation are known, work to align and 'aggregate' lower tier services could begin – we don't believe that this will need to wait for the shadow unitary period or vesting day.

This approach means that financial savings will be realised early and can be built into the Year 1 budgets for the new unitary authorities, putting them on a sound financial footing.

Early opportunities will include the consolidation of lower tier authority contracts, systems and assets and coordination or sharing of regulatory service provision such as planning, building control and environmental health and licensing.

During the shadow period we would also anticipate arrangements to be put in place for the alignment of, and transition to, a joint approach for services such as housing and homelessness, and waste collection. Again, these will unlock efficiency savings early on in the lifetime of the new unitary authorities or allow for greater resilience of stretched services.

These early efficiency savings will help offset the acknowledged costs of transition, including short term duplication of senior staff and councillor costs within the shadow period, programme management costs and early redundancy costs.

Safe transition of high risk services, and the conditions for future reform

Our priority is the safe and legal delivery of all services at Vesting Day. We also recognise the complexity that comes, not only from disaggregating upper tier services such as social care, children's services and SEND; but also from introducing a cross-boundary element to that disaggregation. This does not however, mean that it cannot be achieved. It has been achieved elsewhere in the country with proper planning and support.

The challenge comes from the way in which Government has structured LGR, both the insistence of utilising counties as the base geography and the timeframes for submissions, not least for Surrey authorities and this submission.

Adult social care, children's services, SEND and public health: The government has rightly highlighted the risks associated with disaggregation of high risk upper tier services. Any reform from local government reorganisation must ensure the continuity of critical services such as adult social care, children's services, SEND and public health at Vesting Day while also creating the conditions for future reform.

The final decision of how these services will be transitioned and delivered will be for the new unitary authority, but given the risks involved in disaggregation and the need to avoid unnecessary fragmentation, especially given two upper tier authorities are affected by this proposal, we would propose using a shared services approach on an interim basis to allow for the proper planning required to ensure that new arrangements can be put in place safely.

In the longer term, decisions can be made about service delivery models that maximise the service delivery benefits of place-based delivery whilst also securing financial benefits from 'at scale' commissioning and procurement. This does not rule out any future disaggregation, where there is a strong case that this might lead to better outcomes.

This was the approach taken in Cumbria during its move to unitarisation. The disaggregation of Children's Services was placed at the heart of the improvement journey. This recognised the opportunity to reset leadership and culture, to create a more collaborative approach, and one that by working more local and integrated approach could improve outcomes. It was also thought that focusing on smaller populations would bring greater strategic capacity to focus on early intervention and prevention[7].

[7] https://www.copeland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/lgr_final.pdf

We also note that this approach is proposed in the Surrey Three Unitary proposal. Views within West Sussex are not yet known due to the different timeframes for submissions.

Different models for sharing services exist, but options that would be suitable for interim arrangements are outlined below.

Shared or joint service arrangements: The joint commissioning and delivery of upper tier services through formal partnership arrangements.

A joint or shared service model would be legally owned by all unitary partners and overseen by a joint committee providing oversight and accountability. Staffing and infrastructure would be pooled or seconded to a host authority and a s75 agreement with NHS bodies to enable coordination and integration. Delivery teams would work across the participating area. This model is likely to be preferred as it provides formalised arrangements, local flexibility and decision making, and will enable the new unitary authorities to benefit from early economies of scale.

Outsourcing: This introduces contractual arrangements with an external body – such as a company or trust, for example a local authority trading company or community interest company. Unitary partners would jointly commission the service(s) with staff and assets seconded or transferred. While this model also allows for early economies of scale, it may not be preferred due to the more complex governance arrangements and the dilution of local control and responsibility.

Addressing the fact that these services are currently provided across two county authorities will require close working with both counties. This will take account of the fact that Surrey County Council will not exist beyond April 2027, whereas West Sussex County Council will continue to provide services across its area for at least a further year beyond this. The models identified above would allow for this cross-boundary complexity to be explored and resolved during the planning and shadow phases.

In doing so we will look to learn from experiences elsewhere in the country where cross upper-tier authority unitarisation has been implemented, such as Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. Neither County Council has been involved in the development of this proposal.

Longer term service transformation and prevention

When it comes to service delivery, the real direct financial benefits of unitarisation come from longer term opportunities for transformation, service re-design, and a shift towards a focus on prevention working with public sector partners. This will deliver not only best value for council taxpayers but for the public purse more generally.

Prevention: Unitarisation offers a once in a generation opportunity to join up services across both tiers of local government and local health services, and to design them on a preventative footing.

Again, these decisions will be for the new unitary authorities, not our authorities, but the following examples demonstrate what can be achieved.

In Crawley, joint working is already underway with the local ICB to design Integrated Community Teams. The NHS has realised that the preventative agenda must be at a local level in order to create the necessary joining up across different services and community and voluntary services. Doing so allows for a better approach to higher cost residents either with complex needs or underlying vulnerabilities, producing better outcomes and reduced costs.

Reigate & Banstead is a key partner in East Surrey Place which also brings together health and public sector partners. Using an asset-based community development approach, the council has established 'Partnership Groups' in 5 of its most vulnerable communities. Membership is made up of local organisations and active citizens who develop a local action plan which helps identify and direct work around local issues and places, giving people living and working in those communities the ability to influence outcomes.

These Partnership Groups enabled highly effective collaboration between the council and local groups and residents in delivering the area's Covid welfare response during the pandemic, and since then have paved the way for genuinely system wide frontline collaboration between communities, the voluntary and community sector, local government, the NHS, local policing teams, housing providers and more.

The potential of such approaches is substantial. A non-Council example is the Jean Bishop Centre in Hull. By looking at the needs of the patient in their entirety (rather through service silos) and offering a more joined up approach to other local services, the centre was able to achieve a 50% reduction in emergency admissions across nearly 3,000 severely frail patients. It also saw A&E admissions for people over 80 by 13.6% and for residents in care homes by 18% and reduction in medicine costs of £100 per person per year.

While the timetable for LGR in Surrey has not allowed for any quantification of the scale of potential savings by designing high cost services on a preventative footing, the potential savings from these type of localised preventative approaches across public services are huge with the potential for applications across social services, SEND, housing and employment. But they require a shift away from an exclusive focus on siloed outcomes and scale.

Redesigning high cost services on a preventative footing requires services to be able to work with residents at a local level and in a holistic way that joins up local services. This way of working extends beyond local government and has the potential to benefit health and employment outcomes in particular.

Prevention by working across services is not a new idea. Often these ways of working are piloted, using external funding, and are proven to be successful. However, they rarely make the transition to mainstream services because of the scale of change required and the costs of running two types of service delivery in parallel. The opportunity that LGR provides is the once in a generation chance to start with a blank sheet of paper and to build services in a way that better meets the needs of residents while being mindful of the public purse.

This opportunity is also well timed. The cost of Local Government services is dwarfed by those relating to health and benefits. The creation of Integrated Community Teams within the health sector is central to the NHS's preventative agenda to provide better support for those with long term conditions and underlying vulnerabilities. As noted above, our area has been at the forefront of designing how we might better work collectively to support those with complex

needs across both tiers of local Government, health partners and the local community and voluntary sector. LGR, if done correctly, can be the catalyst for this change.

This agenda plays into the Government's new ten-year plan for health, directly contributing to two of the three 'key shifts', namely 'acute to community' and 'treatment to prevention'. The joint publication from the LGA, ADASS, Social Care Institute for Excellence, Mencap, Skills for Care, Think Local Act Personal, The Care Provider Alliance and Social Care Future, sets out the opportunity to deliver. There are also opportunities relating to Early Intervention, Care Leavers and more joined up approaches to reducing SEND costs when working collaboratively at the local level.

Other service amalgamation benefits: The bringing together of upper and lower tier services also others other service amalgamation benefits and opportunities for more efficient ways of working to deliver improved outcomes.

This includes benefits from a single authority:

- Having responsibility for local planning, highways planning, education planning and minerals and waste planning, creating the conditions for genuinely spatial local plans
- Having responsibility for both waste collection and waste disposal, resulting in service efficiencies and a more responsible approach
- Bringing together regulatory services such as environmental health, licensing and trading standards improving coordination and facilitating a holistic approach to awareness raising, risk mitigation and enforcement

Avoiding cross boundary fragmentation

As set out elsewhere in our response, we consider a cross boundary solution to be necessary to unlock sensible local government structures and devolution structures that will endure and realise the government's White Paper objectives.

In this sense, we would argue that in our proposal by its very nature avoids **further unnecessary fragmentation** across what is a functional economic, travel to work, labour market and wider housing market area.

Meanwhile cross boundary integration of service provision (whether through the aggregation of lower tier services or the disaggregation of upper tier services) can be achieved by:

- Recognising and planning for the different timeframes for LGR and devolution across the area
- Establishing early and constructive working relationship and programme management and governance arrangements (see section 9 and 10)
- Minimising disaggregation risks for high risk services at Vesting Day by the use of interim models that avoid immediate disaggregation of complex upper tier services such as adult social care, children's services and SEND.
- Place based delivery models; and
- Learning from other areas.

Section 6: Financial efficiencies and resilience

DELIVERING AGAINST OUTCOMES

Outcome 7 – Allow for an efficient and financially resilient unitary authority

This section explores how financial efficiencies can be achieved and the overall financial resilience of bringing our authorities together; recognising that work to develop proposals for LGR are still in the early stages in West Sussex. Initial efficiencies from alignment and consolidation of lower tier services will benefit the initial financial resilience of a new unitary, with savings from transformation activity being of a greater scale but taking more time to achieve safely and without compromising service delivery.

Local government reorganisation will deliver efficiencies against a 'do nothing' scenario. However, in the light of the forthcoming Fair Funding Review, the benefit of these savings to council finances and to local service delivery may be limited. New unitary authorities will be increasingly reliant on council tax income for their future financial sustainability and to manage the impact of rising demand across local government services.

From experience elsewhere in the country it is also clear that the direct financial benefits of local government reorganisation can take some time to be realised, if indeed they are realised at all. We are concerned of the scale of the supposed efficiency savings being suggested in some quarters and how divorced these seem to be from the realities emerging for those who have unitarised in recent years. These hypothetical models are simply not based on recent evidence.

This is not to say that reorganisation does not present the opportunity for direct efficiencies. But it makes it even more important that the process of unitarisation is properly planned and managed, with appropriate support from government, to ensure taxpayers get the best possible value for their money.

The differing timescales that our authorities are working to for LGR, and lack of flexibility in the Government's process to allow for cross boundary proposals, has limited our ability to undertake in-depth cost/benefits analysis.

Work in West Sussex has not been sufficiently advanced given the 26 September deadline, however the general scale and type of costs and benefits associated with Surrey LGR are explored in more detail in the Surrey Three Unitary proposal, which Reigate & Banstead is a joint signatory to.

As noted in the introductory section to this submission, fundamentally the proceeds of economic growth to the national exchequer that a cross boundary unitary authority will unlock will far exceed any direct financial savings realised through the process of unitarisation.

Short term financial efficiencies

We have identified opportunities across our authorities for:

- Reduced councillor numbers, associated allowances and electoral costs
- Reduction in senior management numbers and associated salaries (although recognising costs associated with redundancy)
- Reduced back office costs through removal of duplication, including systems and staff (although recognising costs associated with redundancy)

- Co-location and some reduction in operational assets
- Efficiencies from procurement, securing economies of scale and increased buying power

We believe that while there will be costs associated with the implementation process, it will be possible to realise some financial efficiencies from consolidation of systems and procurement activity prior to Vesting Day, putting new unitary authorities on the strongest possible footing for longer term transformation and innovation activity. This is further described in Section 5 above in relation to the aggregation of lower tier services, and section 9 in relation to the types of anticipated costs.

Longer term transformation and service re-design

The real benefits of unitarisation come from longer term opportunities for transformation, service re-design, and a shift towards a focus on prevention working with public sector partners. This will deliver not only best value for council taxpayers but for the public purse more generally.

Given the very short time frame to put this proposal together we have not had the opportunity to develop detailed analysis in this area.

It will be fundamental to shape and re-design services, given that as a new unitary we will have the responsibility of some of the disaggregated County responsibility such as Adult Social Care, Special Educational Needs and Road / Highways.

The focus will be upon those outcome areas that are high cost, high demand and/or deliver poorer outcomes for our residents. Not taking the opportunity to introduce reform in these areas would be a wasted opportunity given the impact on local government finance. These include:

- **Children**
  Reigate & Banstead has the highest total population and third highest proportion (22.6%) of 0-18 population in Surrey; Crawley has the highest proportion (23.9%) in West Sussex. In both instances, proportions are higher than the South East and England averages (ONS 2023 Mid Year Estimates). Both authorities have high numbers of children in families claiming Jobseekers Allowance. Public Health outcomes for the authorities highlight (Public Health England) pre-school development levels, pupil attendance, emergency hospital admissions and re-admissions, out of work benefits and homelessness as the areas of focus. These are outcomes that require local integration and preventative approaches rather than scale.

- **Adults**
  Reigate & Banstead has the second highest population aged 65+ in Surrey, although ranks 7th of the 11 authorities proportionally. Crawley's 65+ population is the lowest, proportionally, in West Sussex (ONS 2023 Mid Year Estimates). This brings a better overall population balance across the proposed area. Health outcomes in our area for this age cohort are generally positive but with some risk factors around general health, falls and hip fractures, highlighting a key prevention opportunity that would benefit from localised joint working.

- **SEND**
  The current challenges with SEND provision are well recognised, including both rising demand (evidenced by increases in the number of Education, Health and Care Plan

requests in the area) and the increasing complexity of needs. At the same time, the existing funding environment is extremely challenging; and the sector faces considerable supply, workforce and skills challenges. In 2024 the Isos Partnership set out the five enablers of improvements in local SEND systems. The first of these relate to the co-production both with young people and their parents/carer, and with key strategic partners, to drive a system with users at its heart. The nature of SEND services and the need for efficiencies of scale make this a prime candidate for a shared service approach on a longer-term basis. Any localisation would therefore be limited to the coproduction elements with young people, parents and carers.

- **Homelessness**
  In recent years, both authorities have seen a substantial increase in homelessness and temporary accommodation costs. In Crawley, these - if measured as a percentage of net revenue budgets – are one of the highest in the country. Unitarisation presents a significant opportunity when it comes to homelessness in four respects. The first is to bring together statutory housing duties with those owed to children and vulnerable adults to create improved and accelerated pathways. The second is to provide improve support to enable people to move into alternative accommodation. The third is to target the two main driving factors of mental health and alcohol and substance misuse. The fourth is to take a wider strategic look at the provision of accommodation.

As noted above, when it comes to the most costly but higher risk services, the emphasis will first be on the safe transition of services using a shared services model or similar. This manages the risks of disaggregation. The review and evaluation of interim service delivery measures once unitary authorities are fully established will allow for the medium-term realisation of efficiencies from commissioning and procurement activities.

At this stage, we envisage the longer-term view will see a mixed economy approach. For those functions that benefit from economies of scale, we would look to test the viability of a shared services approach or similar being formalised on a more permanent basis. However, where prevention, improved outcomes and greater efficiency require a more localised approach, it is right and proper to bring these into the new unitary structure in a way that does not create undue risk at Vesting Day, before any disaggregation and subsequent transformation.

Debt

Neither Reigate & Banstead or Crawley are subject to or facing Best Value intervention and/or in receipt of Exceptional Financial Support. Annex 8 explains our collective debt situation.

A high-level overview indicates that collective debt between the two authorities has a value of £229.3m. The majority of this figure (£224.3m) is attributable to the Housing Revenue Account debt held by Crawley Borough Council. This debt is affordable and serviced within the 30-year HRA business plan and has no impact on the General Fund A short-term debt balance of £5m is held by Reigate and Banstead. Reigate and Banstead does not have a Housing Revenue Account. Existing external debt is not therefore a significant issue in bringing our authorities together.

The underlaying need to borrow is determined by the capital financing requirement, details of this is displayed in Annex 8.

It is our joint view that it is not appropriate for the Government to expect Reigate & Banstead - as a Surrey local authority – to contribute to the resolution of the debt problems of other local authorities in Surrey that are geographically distant from it, solely by virtue of historic administrative boundaries. Likewise, from a Crawley perspective, it would be unreasonable to ask its residents to bear a portion the costs of debt incurred by an authority with whom there is no operational or strategic relationship.

Setting this objection in principle to the Government's 'ask' aside; bringing our authorities together will not compromise the financial sustainability of a new unitary authority and indeed provides opportunities to enhance it compared to the 'do nothing' scenario.

It will create additional opportunities to manage existing and future debt, which may include revenue spend efficiencies (as discussed in Section 6); the disposal of a limited number of operational assets via estate rationalisation; and opportunities for additional revenue generation via the development activity across our combined landholdings.

Tax base

This proposal is not able to speak for other parts of Surrey or Sussex. The Surrey position is captured in the Surrey Three Unitaries submission. The Sussex position will not be set out until September as a result of the Government choosing different timeframes. Instead, this proposal sets out the position for Reigate & Banstead and Crawley.

Funding per head (across upper and lower tier services combined) is higher in Reigate & Banstead at £1,265 (slightly higher than the Surrey average) than in Crawley at £1,122 (lower than the West Sussex average). Below the headline figure the variations are much greater. Crawley receives less in Council Tax (£643 per head to £912 in Reigate & Banstead) due to the structure of its housing, but more in both Business Rates (£281 to £184) and Government Grants (£198 to £168).

One key risk to the current finance position is business rate reset. Unless suitably dampened this could see Crawley's finance position worsen by more than £2.8m and is a key threat within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). The Crawley MTFP forecasts a gap of £4.670m to £5.088m over the coming years, approximately 25% of the net revenue budget. Along with uncertainty around government grants, the other main drivers for this are establishment cost and the challenging economic climate.

Reigate & Banstead Medium Term Financial Strategy also forecasts a budget gap starting at £1.876m for 2026/27 and cumulatively rising to £5.283m in 2029/30. This is 24% higher than the current budget requirement. As with Crawley, the main financial challenges for Reigate & Banstead are staff establishment costs, economic factors and uncertainty around central government funding review outcomes.

Importantly in the context of LGR, the impact will be felt prior to unitarisation. This underlines the importance of the fair-funding review and not relying on the process of unitarisation to address underlying financial strain. The combined usable General Fund reserve position across our authorities as at 31 March 2025 is £42.350m (excluding HRA). A table in Annex 8 shows the total reserve position as at 31 March 2024, which was when that last statement of accounts was produced for both authorities.

Due to time constraints aggregated funding information is based on data produced using the Pixel Financial Management County Council disaggregation model. These are shown in Annex 8 and give an indicative overview of the combined financial position.

The combined Council Tax Base for 2025/26 equates to 101549.47 (See also Annex 8 which provides 2024/25 information). A Band D council tax property in Reigate Banstead will pay £264.87 and Crawley £239.04 which is slightly lower than Reigate and Banstead. The new authority will need to harmonise its council tax across its geographical area.

It is recommended that council tax harmonisation starts from year one of the new authority. It is to note that decisions around council tax setting are for the new authority to determine.

Section 7: Public sector service alignment and reform

DELIVERING AGAINST OUTCOMES

Outcome 8 - Unlock opportunities for innovative models of service delivery, including prevention services, working with public sector partners

This section explains how the real opportunities for public sector alignment and reform exist once local government reorganisation across both the Surrey and Sussex areas has been implemented and once MSA boundaries have been established; with a particular opportunity to improve acute healthcare provision. It also elaborates on how alignment of other public service and public safety boundaries with new local government boundaries can be secured in the medium to longer term.

Opportunities for service delivery innovation are explored more in section 5

The real opportunities for public sector service alignment and reform exist once local government reorganisation across both the Surrey and Sussex areas has been implemented and once MSA boundaries have been established. Until that time, for some areas, interim measures for some public services will be required.

In practical, administrative terms, the White Paper recognises that unitarisation and devolution will require some public sector service realignment – therefore the cross boundary solution we are proposing is clearly within scope and acceptable in principle to Government. At the same time – especially in relation to health – creating more appropriate administrative geographies that reflect current demand clearly unlocks the potential for sectoral reform benefitting not only residents but also the public purse.

Health

Section 5 provides some examples of the opportunity for transformative prevention activity.

Bringing the two authorities together provides a real opportunity for stronger whole system working, across health geographies that are already well advanced in working together and with local authorities on place based initiatives such as East Surrey Place; and community level integrated community or neighbourhood teams in West Sussex and East Surrey.

Combining our areas also presents the opportunity for Better Care Funding to be allocated at a geography that reflects local needs and assets and optimises benefits for local people.

Acute services in our area are provided by East Surrey Hospital, the catchment of which extends across our two authorities and beyond. Around 40% of hospital activity takes place in East Surrey, with around 30% in Crawley, and the hospital trust (Surrey and Sussex Healthcare Trust) also provides services at Crawley Hospital. This exemplifies how public sector service provision in this sector extends across existing county boundaries and highlights the functional geographies which future arrangements should seek to support.

The hospital trust is part of the Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care System (ICS), but the fact that the hospital is accessed by populations from two different ICSs is recognised as complicating care provision. This is particularly the case given the differing population-level health needs across the area - Crawley having a younger population, higher levels of deprivation and greater ethnic diversity compared to East Surrey, meaning its populations service needs are different.

The hospital trust's status as a minor rather than lead partner in Sussex healthcare structures results in challenges in understanding and planning for those different population needs, with the current situation risking exacerbating inequality in outcomes.

Combining our authorities provides the opportunity to properly address this anomaly. It will address the current disadvantage that exists in terms of planning for and administering acute health services across the county boundary, managing patient pressures, and coordinating commissioning activity (see Annex 9). Ultimately it will ensure better health outcomes for the whole population and the taxpayer.

Community level health partnerships can provide a solid building block for aligning strategic and acute health provision boundaries with local government and devolution boundaries in the longer term. This will also ensure that the health needs of local populations can be addressed by capitalising on local knowledge and connections and building effective and efficient joint working with local authority services such as social care, housing, community safety, public health, and support for those with multiple disadvantages.

Fire and rescue

Fire & Rescue (F&R) services currently operate on existing county boundaries, with Reigate & Banstead served by Surrey F&R and Crawley by West Sussex F&R. There is some collaboration between the areas, with Surrey, East Sussex and West Sussex F&R services sharing an emergency control room and collaborating on services such as prevention, education and community outreach.

However, under our proposal some realignment of service provision may be needed as an interim measure and in the longer term.

Under the Government's LGR timetable Surrey County Council will cease to exist in April 2027; with no MSA in place for the county until May 2028. As such, regardless of any cross boundary unitary geography, an Independent Fire Authority is likely to be required as an interim measure. We note that the White Paper recognises the potential for 'incidental' boundary alterations. Subject to the relevant agreements with West Sussex and the Home Office then, this could incorporate Crawley during the interim period to facilitate alignment with a cross boundary unitary authority. In the medium term the White Paper envisages a single Mayor taking on responsibility for one or more F&R Authority functions – and once final MSA geographies in the area are resolved we would anticipate that transfer occurring as envisaged by Government.

This approach we believe is practical, realises strategic ambitions, will help minimise disruption and avoid duplicated governance.

Police and Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

Police and Crime Commissioner: The offices of the Police and Crime Commissioners currently exist on a county-basis, with separate PCCs for Surrey and for West Sussex. MSAs will take on responsibility for the PCC once established.

Police services: Surrey Police operates over the current county area as does West Sussex Police. However, the services share a wide range of back office and specialist functions already, and cooperate, operationally, on a day-to-day basis. As part of the process of developing this proposal, this has been confirmed through conversations with Surrey Police. For example, shared back office services include procurement, fleet management, risk management and

staff support. Shared operational services include major crime, forensics, firearms, roads policing, public order, serious and organised crime, surveillance and cybercrime.

The differing timeframes associated with local government reorganisation and devolution in Surrey and Sussex will enable a phased re-alignment of Police governance and operational geographies during 2027-28 with consolidation once final MSA geographies in the area are resolved. We believe the level of existing shared operations between the forces minimises the risks associated with this process.

Emergency planning / resilience and community safety

Emergency planning and resilience: Emergency planning and resilience responsibilities are coordinated through Local Resilience Forums (LRFs), which align to police force areas. Crawley currently belongs to the Sussex Resilience Forum, while the rest of Surrey falls under the Surrey LRF. We would expect any re-alignment of LRF boundaries to mirror the process for realignment of Policing boundaries. In the event of an incident relating to Gatwick Airport, having the immediate area within a single LRF area would be beneficial.

Community safety: Community Safety Partnership arrangements would similarly be able to be re-aligned.

Section 8: Democratic accountability and community empowerment

One of the greatest concerns of lower tier authorities across our area is that moving to unitary structures carries with it a risk of reduced community engagement and neighbourhood empowerment. This is also recognised in the Surrey Three Unitary Proposal.

It is a concern that is backed up by the findings of the recent Reigate & Banstead Residents' Survey which indicated that a high proportion of residents do not support the transfer of the vast majority of lower tier council services to a larger authority (Annex 6).

At the heart of our proposal is therefore a commitment to ensure that this risk is not only mitigated but that we take the opportunity to in fact strengthen local engagement and empowerment structures and opportunities.

Existing engagement structures

As 'lower tier' borough councils we understand the necessity of close relationships between local government and the communities it serves. Both authorities have strong existing working relationships with our communities; for example:

In **Reigate & Banstead**:

- The borough is partially parished, with Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council and Horley Town Council covering the southern parts of the borough and well established residents' associations in the north
- We fund 5 Community Development Workers, who are embedded in those communities in our borough that have higher levels of deprivation and/or more vulnerable residents – Horley, Redhill, Merstham, Preston, and Woodhatch and Whitebushes
- We have a strategic grant relationship with 11 Voluntary and Community Sector organisations. These core relationships enable collaborative working and shared delivery to improve resident wellbeing.
- More broadly, our relationships with the Voluntary and Community Sector extend to over 200 local organisations with network events and collaboration focused on key themes including - older people; young people; cost of living; and community safety
- We have strong relationships with local businesses, including through our support for local business organisations, our Sustainable Business Network, the learning and networking events that we run and our business e-newsletter and social media presence.

In **Crawley**:

- As a compact new town, Crawley has not needed parishing previously, but unitarisation within a larger geographical footprint raises the case for a Town Council and further investigation of this has not been ruled out.
- Designed with the New Town ethos, the town is made up of 14 distinct neighbourhoods, each with its own set of community assets and facilities
- Proactive approach to the disadvantaged neighbourhoods of Broadfield, Bewbush and West Green through the creation of Neighbourhood Action Groups, linking action to wider agendas such as employment and health

- The council supports 16 organisations through its strategic grants programme, totalling more than £375k, and in addition provides a small grants programme
- Over 350 community and voluntary groups, 40 places of worship and 50 languages spoken, with approximately one-fifth of the population born outside of the UK
- Dedicated Community Development Team supporting a wide variety of activity to strengthen communities and delivering corporate priorities
- Significant and strong business and economic partnerships including the Town Deal Board, the Professional Services Network, the Manor Royal Business Improvement District, and strong links into Gatwick Diamond

Future models of community empowerment

As outlined above, there are well established community engagement and empowerment structures already in place.

In planning for, and implementing, unitarisation proposals we would utilise these strong community relationships to ensure that our residents are supported to understand and influence the shape and priorities of the new authority.

The final shape of community engagement and empowerment arrangements will of course be a decision for the new unitary authority; however through the planning and shadow phases of transition we would explore the following models. Engagement with our communities as we do this will be essential. Based on our local knowledge and understanding of our communities, we would explore:

- Formal Community Governance Reviews leading to the establishment of new Parish / Town Councils
- Establishment of other informal but viable forms of community representation, such as area or community forums supported by the new unitary authority; or residents' or community associations.
- The inclusion of Area Committees within the new unitary governance structures with delegated responsibility for decision-making in some areas (for example planning, licencing etc)

In **addition** to this, we believe that unitarisation including our two authorities creates a real opportunity for:

- The development of new models of community participation; building on best practice locally and across the sector, from community development activity to build local community capacity to more participative decision making processes; and
- The continued evolution of neighbourhood engagement forums which bring together communities with a wide range of public sector service providers to provide the genuinely joined up delivery of hyperlocal services and asset-based community development.
- Localised arrangements in areas of need to tackle disadvantage and to take forward agendas around service integration and prevention across the breadth of public services

In Reigate & Banstead we have engaged with our Town and Parish Councils, both of which have added their support to our proposal for a cross boundary unitary authority that brings the Reigate & Banstead and Crawley areas together (Annex 9).

Addressing the concerns raised through resident feedback to date

The Reigate & Banstead Resident Survey asked for views on positive and negative aspects of moving services to larger (unitary) councils. A number of positives were identified, which are summarised in Annex 6.

One of the Government criteria is specifically about how any concerns identified will be addressed, so this section focus on that question.

Concerns identified in the survey – and how those can be addressed – are summarised below:

Concerns identified	How the concern can be addressed
Removed from the community (1334 comments)	By having unitarities of a smaller scale that reflect functional 'on the ground' community geographies (as proposed in Section 3) By implementing (in consultation with local people) a range of formal and informal structures to increase democratic accountability and community empowerment (as proposed in Section 8)
Poorer services (515 comments)	By implementing a robust transition and implementation programme to both properly plan for future service provision and ensure maintenance of BAU services (as proposed in Section 9) Through resident consultation, engagement and service evaluation (as proposed in Section 9) By maximise opportunities for innovation and a holistic approach to preventative and other services (as proposed in Section 5) By close joint working between authorities (as proposed in Section 10)
LGR will not save money and could be more inefficient (348 comments)	By having a carefully phased and managed transition process (As proposed in Section 5) Through the exploration of early opportunities for alignment and consolidation to secure financial efficiencies, and longer term transformation programmes post vesting day to unlock further savings (As proposed in Sections 5 and 6)
Areas will be too big to manage (204 comments)	By having unitarities of a smaller scale that reflect functional 'on the ground' community geographies (as proposed in Section 3) By implementing (in consultation with local people) a range of formal and informal structures to increase democratic accountability and community empowerment (as proposed in Section 8)
Communication with a larger council (125 comments)	By having communications and engagement as a key workstream throughout the planning, shadow and post vesting day phases of implementation (as proposed in Section 9)
Accountability (96 comments)	By implementing (in consultation with local people) a range of formal and informal structures to increase democratic accountability and community empowerment (as proposed in Section 8) By retaining appropriate numbers of elected councillors (as proposed in Section 8)
Loss of local identity (93 comments)	By having unitarities of a smaller scale that reflect functional 'on the ground' community geographies (as proposed in Section 3) By implementing (in consultation with local people) a range of formal and informal structures to increase democratic accountability and community empowerment (as proposed in Section 8)

Bureaucracy (79 comments)	By having governance as a key workstream throughout the planning, shadow and post vesting day phases of implementation (as proposed in Section 9) By implementing (in consultation with local people) a range of formal and informal structures to increase democratic accountability and community empowerment (as proposed in Section 8)
Councillors (53 comments)	By retaining appropriate numbers of elected councillors (as proposed in Section 8)
Staff losses (48 comments)	By having HR as a key workstream throughout the planning, shadow and post vesting day phases of implementation (as proposed in Section 9)

Elected member representation

We believe that opportunities exist for a reduction in the number of elected members across our area while still retaining robust local democratic accountability.

In Reigate & Banstead, a model that uses county divisional boundaries but retains three councillors per division would result in 30 councillors rather than the current 55 councillors. In Crawley, using the same model would result in 27 councillors rather than the current 45 councillors.

There is also potential to consider the future frequency of elections as both Reigate & Banstead and Crawley are elected by thirds. All options would need to be considered by members but by way of example, were a decision to be made to move to 'all out' 4-yearly elections, this could deliver average annual cost savings of approximately £725,000 per year[8]. This example is stated but does not predetermine any final decision that may be made by elected members on this frequency of elections.

[8] Assuming a total reduction in councillor numbers of 43 at a saving of £10k per councillor per year and assuming the cost per elector of a local election to be £3.09.

Section 9: Transition and Implementation process

DELIVERING AGAINST OUTCOMES

Outcome 6 – Ensure continued delivery of high quality services for our residents; and safe and legal services at Vesting Day

This section outlines the proposed approach to transition and implementation, and how robust early planning, relationship building and engagement, and strong programme management and governance can ensure the safe and legal delivery of services at Vesting Day and continued service improvement beyond this date.

Our proposed approach to service delivery is explored more in section 5

We acknowledge that a cross boundary solution introduces a degree of additional complexity that may not have been envisaged by Government in developing its timelines for devolution and local government reorganisation. However, we believe that addressing this complexity can be relatively straightforward, enabling local government reorganisation in Surrey to proceed in line with identified timeframes (with a go live date of 1 April 2027), Sussex devolution in line with DPP timeframes (May 2027) and Surrey devolution to proceed swiftly the year after (May 2027).

The programme for transition to, and then implementation of, new unitary structures would follow that proposed within the Surrey Three Unitary Proposal.

Programme management and phasing:

- A pre-planning phase where preparatory work, relationship and capacity building and data collation takes place
- The planning phase, once geographies are known, where work commences to develop service level transition plans, undertake relevant delivery model options appraisals for upper tier and high risk service areas, commence the alignment and consolidation of lower tier services and systems, and to prepare for the shadow unitary authorities coming into being
- The shadow phase, which sees the establishment of shadow governance structures, appointment of senior staff and the development of detailed target operating models and transition plans for all service areas
- Post vesting day, with the closedown of the precursor councils, the conclusion of service transition and completion of implementation plans, and then the gearing up of transformation and service redesign, including to maximising the opportunities around prevention.

More information is provided at Annex 2 including in relation to workstreams and timeframes, and we would refer Government to the Surrey Three Unitary Proposal which elaborates further and is similar to the one that we would follow.

Central to securing service delivery outcomes will be effective and consistent communications and engagement activity, with residents, businesses, staff, and stakeholders throughout the implementation programme, including awareness raising, consultation on service priorities and seeking and responding to feedback.

Maintaining business as usual activity will also be essential. The resource 'ask' of local government reorganisation is huge; but our authorities are committed to continuing to support

and invest in our staff and operational activities to maintain a high level of service provision over the transition period.

There will be costs associated with transition and implementation, as demonstrated where LGR has already taken place and within the Surrey Three Unitary Proposal.

- Initial shadow unitary election costs
- Redundancy costs
- Programme management costs
- IT/Systems alignment / consolidation costs
- Shadow authority costs (period of duplication of member and senior staffing costs)
- Costs associated with the creation of the new councils
- Costs associated with the closedown of the existing councils
- Communications, engagement and branding costs.

In order to progress LGR at pace, and consistent with the Surrey and West Sussex Interim Plans submitted, we are seeking Government funding to cover the costs of preparing for Vesting Day. This will enable the efficiencies generated through early alignment and consolidation to be used to underpin the financial resilience of the new authority from 'day 1'; and ensure that the new authority is well placed to then take a proactive approach to transformation and service-reform and realise the real financial benefits of unitarisation sooner.

Section 10: Deliverability

Reigate & Banstead and Crawley have shared interests and a positive working relationship; and have worked together to prepare this submission, which has been formally endorsed by both Councils.

Reigate & Banstead Borough Council has also worked collaboratively with authorities across Surrey to prepare the Surrey Three Unitary submission to which it is a joint signatory. Likewise, Crawley continues to work collaboratively with West Sussex authorities towards the submission date of 26 September.

Both the Surrey and West Sussex Interim Plans submitted to Government on 21 March recognised the potential for ongoing exploration of cross boundary geographies.

- The Surrey Interim Submission recognised "we also remain open to conversations with our neighbours about devolution on a wider footprint."
- The West Sussex Interim Submission recognised that prior to the final options for West Sussex, it will need to be resolved "how Crawley best fits both the unitarisation and devolution agendas given the economic links to the north and in particular Reigate and Banstead. This £13.2bn economic functioning area at the heart of the Gatwick Diamond would be divided into two separate MCAs if based on traditional county boundaries. Given Surrey is on a unique trajectory, with its LGR proposals due by May 2025 (shadow elections in 2026), it seems likely this matter will be resolved relatively quickly."

Reigate & Banstead has strong day to day working relationships with the other Surrey districts and boroughs (particularly those in East Surrey), and Surrey County Council, across a range of service delivery areas; and similarly Crawley does with other West Sussex districts and boroughs and West Sussex County Council.

Working together in the future to secure safe, legal, effective and efficient unitarisation: Despite the differing views on unitary geographies that exist between some of the authorities across our area, we are committed to working constructively together to successfully implement whatever unitary solution the Government decides; our priority being to ensure that residents receive not only a safe and legal service at Vesting Day, but also continue to benefit from the many non-statutory and preventative services that local government across the area currently provides.

We will do this by taking a collaborative, phased approach to transition planning and implementation. More detail about this is included in Section 9 and Annex 2 and includes:

- A focus on relationship building, data collation and sharing, and establishing joint programme management, governance and decision making arrangements in the pre-planning and planning phases in the run up to shadow unitary elections. It will be essential that this includes all constituent lower tier authorities and both Surrey and West Sussex County Councils; and then
- Utilising shared programme and delivery team structures to develop detailed service level delivery plans, options appraisals where appropriate and (with the shadow authorities) target operating models for the new unitary authorities.

Section 11: Our evidence base

We have drawn on a range of evidence to inform our submission, which we reference throughout this submission.

Economic evidence: Our proposition is based around the economic benefit that can be secured by bringing our authorities together, and removing the administrative boundary that currently cuts through the heart of the Gatwick Diamond.

Our submission is supported by an economic assessment provided by Coast to Capital (Annex 4), which provides robust evidence of the economic case for bringing our authorities together. This is supplemented by an independent report provided to the authorities by the Gatwick Diamond Initiative (Annex 5), and other information drawn from trusted third party sources, which we reference throughout this submission.

Evidence of local resident engagement: Reigate & Banstead has undertaken a dedicated Resident Survey, exploring local government reorganisation and issues of local identity, connection and democracy. The results of this are summarised at Annex 6. The Residents' Survey was designed to provide a representative sample of local views, and we therefore have confidence in its outputs. Crawley has also undertaken some initial resident engagement, the interim results of which are referenced in Section 2 and Annex 7.

Evidence of stakeholder engagement: Both Reigate & Banstead and Crawley Borough Councils have engaged with a range of local stakeholders to discuss and explore the challenges and opportunities around a cross-boundary geography. This is in addition to the stakeholder engagement undertaken across the wider Surrey area.

Our submission is supported by letters from a number of key partners (Annex 9).

Evidence of estimated costs and benefits: The differing timescales that our authorities are working on for LGR, and lack of flexibility in the Government's process to allow for cross boundary proposals, has limited our ability to undertake in-depth cost/benefits analysis as work in West Sussex has not been sufficiently advanced.

We have provided some comparator and combined information in Annex 8. The nature and type of the costs and benefits from bringing our two authorities together will align with those identified in the Surrey Three Unitaries proposal.

We are firmly of the view that the proceeds of the growth that bringing our two authorities together will generate far outweigh the direct financial benefits that unitarisation will deliver. We also note that elsewhere where unitarisation has proceeded these direct benefits take considerable time to realise, if they are realised at all.

That is why, elsewhere in our submission we explore the wider growth benefits *and* the non-financial benefits of our proposed approach.

Annex 1: Geographic options for bringing together Reigate & Banstead and Crawley into the same unitary authority

The table below sets out different options for bringing together Reigate & Banstead and Crawley into the same unitary; this is inevitably partial given the different timeframes that West Sussex is working to.

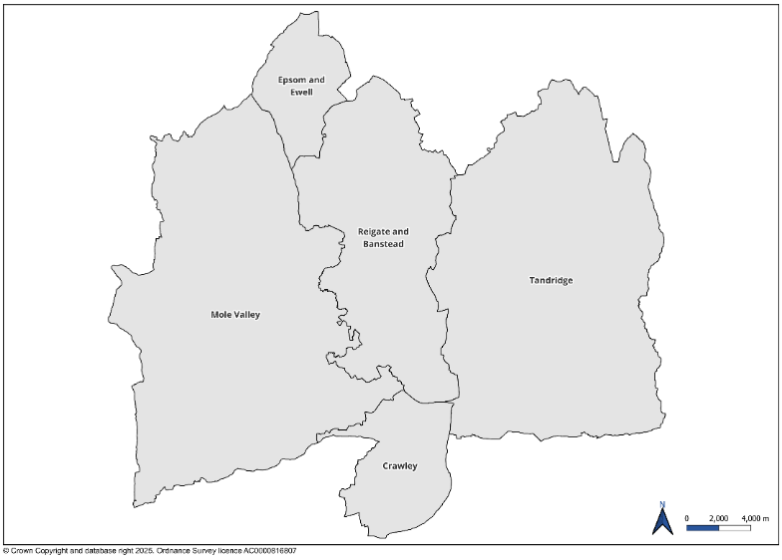
Fundamentally, our case rests on the fact that our identified outcomes – and particularly the economic outcomes - can be achieved solely by bringing together our two authorities, but we recognise that there are other considerations that the Government will wish to take into account in reaching its final view

Comparison with LGR 500,000 'target'

Existing authorities	Total population#	Observations
Reigate & Banstead, Crawley	276,530	Would leave Tandridge as an 'island' (unless joined with Kent authorities).
Reigate & Banstead, Crawley, Tandridge	365,939	Would require an alternative unitary geography to be developed from that in the Surrey Three Unitary proposal
Reigate & Banstead, Crawley, Tandridge, Mole Valley	454,205	Would leave Epsom & Ewell as an 'island' (unless joined with London authorities)
Reigate & Banstead, Crawley, Tandridge, Mole Valley, Epsom & Ewell	536,194	Is consistent with the Surrey Three Unitary proposal with the addition of Crawley
Reigate & Banstead, Crawley, Tandridge, Epsom & Ewell	447,928	Would require an alternative unitary geography to be developed from that in the Surrey Three Unitary proposal
Reigate & Banstead, Crawley, Horsham, Mid Sussex	583,909	Note that work in relation to West Sussex LGR options is still ongoing due to differing submission timescales
Reigate & Banstead, Crawley, Tandridge, Horsham, Mid Sussex	673,318	

#Source: ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates June 2023

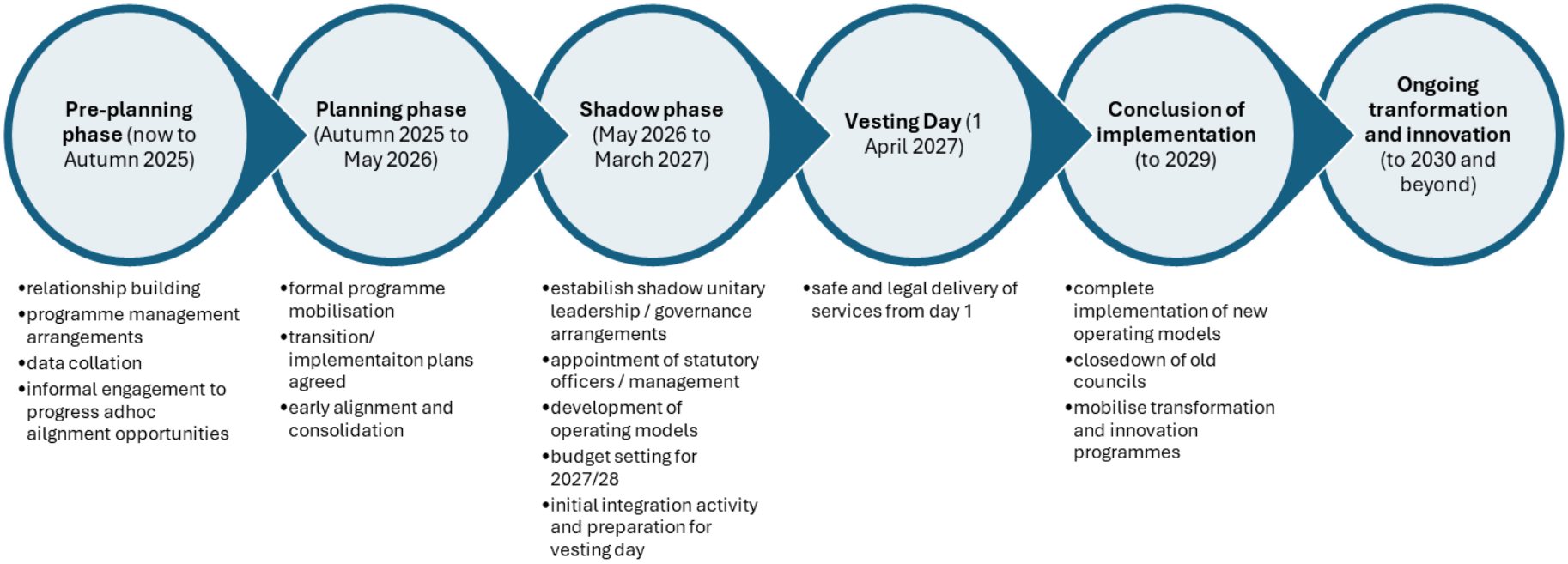
Map showing Reigate & Banstead, Crawley and the relationship with other neighbouring Surrey authorities



Annex 2: Transition and implementation

Transition and implementation phases and key activity

The programme for transition to, and then implementation of, a new unitary structure that brings our authorities together to achieve unitarisation aligned with the Government's timetable for Surrey would follow that proposed within the Surrey Three Unitaries Proposal, and the same principles and considerations apply.

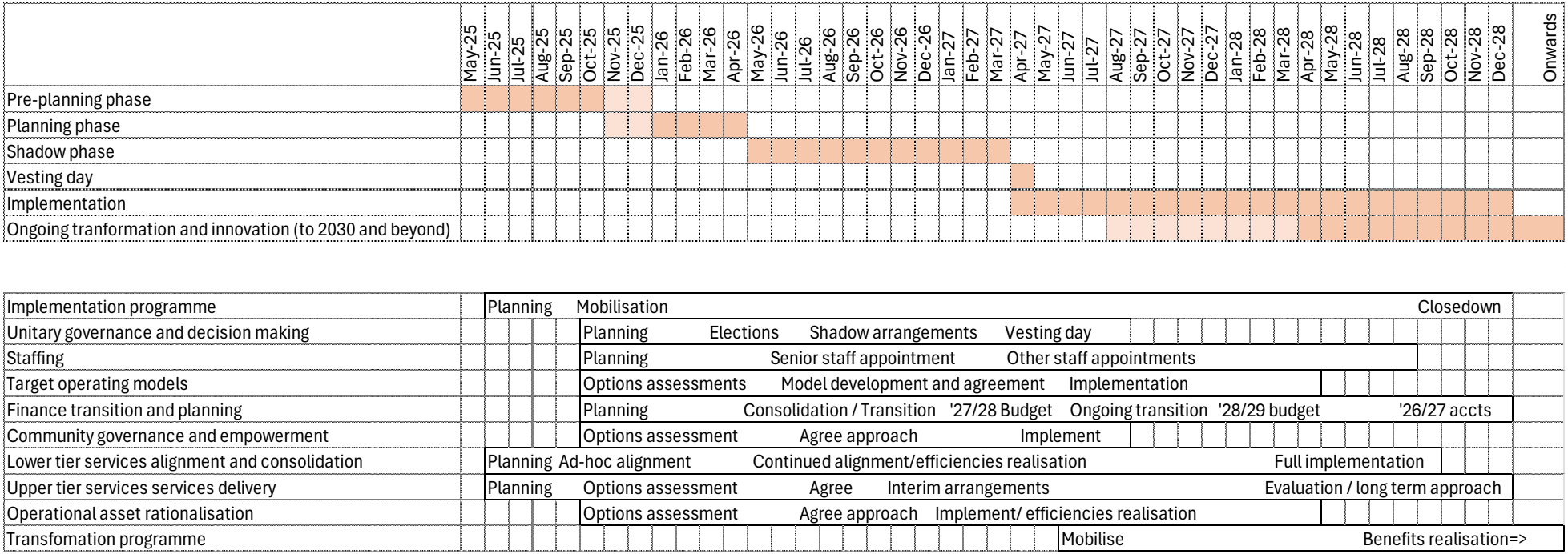


We recognise a cross boundary proposal introduces a degree of additional complexity, which means that effective joint working and collaboration during the Pre-planning and planning phases will be essential. We therefore propose the establishment of joint programme management, governance and decision making arrangements during these phases bringing together the constituent lower tier authorities and Surrey and West Sussex County Councils.

The transition and implementation programme is envisaged to have the following workstreams, coordinated by a joint PMO and shared governance structures overseeing the development of transition/implementation plans for all service areas.

- Communications & engagement
- Legal, governance, & electoral
- Finance and debt
- Human resources & Organisational Development (including Culture Change)
- Data, IT and systems
- Assets
- Contracts, procurement & commercial
- Service delivery and customer contact
- Community governance & neighbourhood empowerment
- Devolution and the move towards creation of a Mayoral Strategic Authority

The image below shows indicative timeframes for key areas of planning, transition and implementation activity.



Annex 3: Letter to the Minister

Crawley Borough Council
Town Hall
The Create Building
The Boulevard
Crawley
RH10 1UZ

Reigate & Banstead Borough Council
Town Hall
Castlefield Road
Reigate
RH2 0SH

The Rt Hon Member Jim McMahon MP
Minister of State for Local Government
and English Devolution
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

21 March 2025

Dear Minister,

Maximising the growth potential of the Gatwick area through Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation

We (Crawley Borough Council and Reigate & Banstead Borough Council) are sending this letter, alongside the Surrey and West Sussex 21 March Interim Reorganisation Plan submissions, to highlight the future growth potential of our combined geographical area.

We do not believe that the current Surrey/West Sussex County boundary provides a sensible geography to maximise the economic growth potential of the successful Gatwick Diamond economic area (with Gatwick airport at its heart). And we are concerned that if future governance structures replicate the current administrative divide between our areas, this will constrain future housing delivery, improved connectivity, and the more efficient delivery of public services across our area.

We therefore request your support to enable us to continue to explore opportunities for a local government and strategic authority geography that is not pre-determined by existing county boundaries, prior to any final decisions on unitary or MSA boundaries being confirmed by Government.

The context for this letter and the Surrey and Sussex 21 March submissions

The Government is currently consulting on a Sussex and Brighton Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA). At the same time, Surrey Local Authorities and Sussex Local Authorities have been invited to prepare proposals for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), Surrey on an expedited timetable.

While both Reigate & Banstead and Crawley support the Government's ambitions as set out in the English Devolution White Paper, we have shared concerns that the differing approach that has been mandated for Surrey and Sussex respectively introduces a risk that the opportunity to secure the most appropriate governance structures for our two areas will be missed. We appreciate that exploring cross-county boundary options may be challenging and more complex; but we consider the benefits for future growth and service delivery makes considering these options worthwhile.

In the rest of the letter, we set out what we see to be the benefits of a Devolution and local government architecture that unites our authorities, rather than separating them along the lines of historic (but now illogical) county boundaries. And we explain how – with the right structures in place – our combined area can make a substantial contribution to the Government's growth ambitions.

A coherent functional economic area

The White Paper is flexible on some aspects of Devolution, but it is clear that strategic authorities **must** cover sensible economic geographies, with a particular focus on functional economic areas, travel to work patterns and local labour markets.

The Gatwick Diamond is a well-recognised and long-established economic geography; with Gatwick Airport – and the major economies of Crawley and Reigate & Banstead (i.e. boroughs in both Sussex and Surrey) at its heart.

Indeed, the Government's current Sussex and Brighton MSA consultation recognises the economic successes of the Gatwick Diamond. We won't repeat here the economic strengths of the area described in your own consultation, but we will elaborate.

Reigate & Banstead is the largest contributor of GVA to the Gatwick Diamond, and Crawley provides one of the largest GVA per capital in the South East of England. Together we represent two largest economies in the Diamond, contributing £13.05bn in GVA, which represents over 50% of the area's total contribution.

Gatwick Airport straddles the current county boundary, with Crawley and Reigate & Banstead residents being the airport's primary source of direct employment, but also our boroughs supporting the greatest amount of indirect and induced jobs and GVA. Manor Royal, adjacent to the airport, is one of the largest business parks in the South East; and the area around the airport is home to international businesses, whose supply

chains, as well as employee catchment areas, extend northwards through East Surrey and into Greater London.

The Government has declared that it is minded to approve expansion at the Airport. As public and private sector partners work together to formalise a strong Gatwick Airport Economic Zone, a MSA and Unitary geography that severs the airport from its catchment and markets to the north seems to us to be counterproductive. On the other hand, a solution that addresses our areas collectively will strengthen the growth opportunity in this area, giving us a stronger collective voice, boosting the substantial contribution that the Gatwick Diamond makes to the Exchequer, and providing a robust and sustainable basis to secure future inward investment in priority sectors in the decades to come.

Innovation and high growth clusters

The Gatwick Diamond is the location of choice for a number of important and high growth sector clusters, which make a major contribution to local economic output and productivity.

Crawley and Reigate & Banstead are together home to a cluster of world-class MedTech and life sciences manufacturing companies (including Elekta, Novo Nordisk, and Pfizer); and the area has also become a hub for aviation and defence manufacturing and training, attracting investment from some of the world's most advanced companies (such as Thales, Rapiscan, and Risbridger). The area's concentration of fulfilment operations extends beyond distribution centres to high-level operational and logistics hubs, supporting manufacturers and a wide technology ecosystem.

Across Crawley and Reigate & Banstead, our Financial, Insurance and Professional services sector is strongly connected to the London economy as well as taking advantage of global connectivity through Gatwick Airport. The Financial Services sector (companies such as Fidelity, Aon, eSure and AXA Insurance) make a substantial contribution to our GVA and employ thousands of people. As new technologies change the way these companies operate, there are opportunities for financial technology companies to leverage the market and grow their footprint in the Gatwick Diamond.

Recognition and optimisation of the scale and potential for growth of these and other clusters requires a collective view, planning and engagement. It is put at risk by the imposition of hard and artificial administrative boundaries, undermining the Government's growth agenda.

Sensible strategic spatial, housing, transport and infrastructure planning

We believe a cross-boundary Devolution and local government boundary also makes sense when it comes to strategic planning and investment.

Key national and regional transport corridors including the M23, and London-Brighton rail line run north-south through Reigate & Banstead and Crawley, connecting (in

Reigate & Banstead) to east-west road and rail corridors (the M25 and North Downs rail line connecting Gatwick to Surrey and the Thames Valley).

Coherent planning and investment around these transport corridors will be essential to support future economic growth and the efficient delivery of public services. Splitting strategic planning responsibility for these corridors will - as a minimum - add complexity and risk and may undermine the ability to unlock further investment.

Any future Gatwick Airport expansion will place significant pressure on the surrounding transport network, with around 80% of vehicles bound for the airport passing through Reigate & Banstead. In our view, Reigate & Banstead and Crawley being in the same strategic transport authority would mean we would be well placed to work with the Airport to ensure the most sustainable passenger travel options.

Both our authorities recognise the benefits of planning for strategic housing delivery across a wider area so that new housing can support economic growth, and benefit from properly planned supporting infrastructure whilst also protecting sensitive areas from over-development.

Crawley and Reigate & Banstead represents a key centre for the future growth referenced in both the West Sussex and Surrey Interim Plan submissions to Government. Basing local and strategic government around functional geography of our two areas has the potential to unlock new opportunities for strategic development opportunities (for both housing and commercial development) supported by the infrastructure investment needed to create genuinely sustainable places.

A local government geography that delivers efficiencies and high quality sustainable public services

Together, we are of the opinion that our two authorities would be able to deliver high quality and sustainable public services and deliver strong efficiency savings.

Direct financial savings would include those in relation to election costs, elected member costs, and senior staff salaries. Other efficiency savings could be secured over the longer term through reduced duplication of both back-office services and delivering front-line services over more coherent functional geographic areas; economies of scale; and digital transformation.

The opportunity for improved service provision arises from the bringing together of upper and lower tier services over a much more coherent functional geographic area while retaining a close local connection to our communities. It is recognised that many aspects of service provision even within social care, benefits (both from the perspective of quality and cost) from collaborative and agile working at the place level. Both Crawley and Reigate & Banstead have strong track records in working this regard.

Crawley and Reigate & Banstead's combined population currently sits at 276,500, with relatively high levels of population growth projected over the next 20 years. This is not large enough to meet the Government's target population of 500,000, and so is unlikely

to succeed on its own merits, despite the fact that there are over 70 unitaries with populations smaller or equivalent to our combined area. Nonetheless, the strength of the economic argument requires this to be considered further.

Supporting local identity, place and public service delivery

The interrelationships between our communities in Crawley and Reigate & Banstead are already strong, reflecting the local labour market, housing markets and transport networks, as well as the settlement structure and complementary roles of the towns within our two boroughs.

Since the White Paper was published and since you invited authorities in both Sussex and Surrey to put forward their proposals, both Crawley and Reigate & Banstead have been in informal discussion with key local partners.

We know that there is interest in a unitary geography that reflects our local area as it actually functions. For example, East Surrey Hospital (the acute regional hospital located in Reigate & Banstead) already operates across county boundaries and has expressed its support for a cross boundary unitary geography; and other health partners recognise the benefits of operating in a way that more closely recognises the communities in our boroughs and linkages between them. Surrey and Sussex Police operate shared back office and specialist crime functions. Businesses in the local area recognise the Gatwick Diamond more than administrative boundaries.

Reigate & Banstead is partially parished, whereas Crawley, as a compact new town with its own borough council, has not required a tertiary layer of local government to date. As part of any new arrangement, we would look to undertake a community governance review across the area to ensure that local community representation under new structures is as effective as possible and consider other mechanisms for place-based working.

In conclusion

The 21 March submission to Government from Surrey County Council notes that “Whilst we explore the opportunity for a Mayoral Strategic Authority on a Surrey footprint, we also remain open to conversations with our neighbours about Devolution on a wider footprint”. The West Sussex submission sets out a route map to arrive at the optimal solution explicitly providing space for discussions between Crawley and Reigate & Banstead, and potentially more widely in Surrey, to take place.

Administrative boundaries across our combined area have changed before. Parts of Crawley have previously been in Surrey, and in the past, there has been discussion about amalgamating parts of Reigate & Banstead within Sussex. The current county boundary between Surrey and West Sussex reflects a decision that was made at a particular point in time.

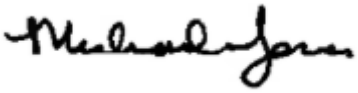
Today, and into the future, we do not believe that the current boundary provides a sensible geography that can best support economic growth around Gatwick Airport,

housing delivery, improved connectivity, and the more efficient delivery of public services.

We seek your support to enable us to continue to explore opportunities to address - rather than perpetuate - the current boundary anomaly; and in doing so maximise the opportunities for one of the strongest economic areas in the South East of England to contribute to your Government's growth ambitions.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Richard Biggs,
Leader of Reigate & Banstead Borough Council and Conservative Party Group Leader



Cllr Michael Jones
Leader of Crawley Borough Council and Labour Party Group Leader

Annex 4: Coast to Capital Economy Spotlight – Reigate & Banstead / Crawley Growth Area (April 2025)

Coast to Capital

ECONOMY SPOTLIGHT

APRIL 2025

REIGATE & BANSTEAD – CRAWLEY GROWTH AREA

In this Economy Spotlight, Coast to Capital looks at the **Reigate & Banstead – Crawley Growth Area.** At the core of an economic zone centred on the nationally significant asset of Gatwick Airport, this interconnected economy is a driver of productivity and growth. We consider the fundamentals which underpin this area, the future opportunities that the right policy could seize, and the imminent threat that damaging constraints are put on its potential.

Population of 276,000

180,000 jobs

10,000 businesses

Clusters in advanced manufacturing, life sciences and financial services

GDP growth rate of 10.3% in 2022

Combined GVA of £13bn

9th highest pay of a travel to work area outside London

1. VISUALISING THE GROWTH AREA

The Reigate & Banstead – Crawley Growth Area (RBCGA) forms a contiguous economic area around Gatwick Airport, defined by a strategic corridor of road and rail infrastructure, commuting patterns this enables, and complementary sectoral compositions. It can be considered a standalone functional economic area, albeit within a broader zone with the airport at its core – often referred to as the Gatwick Diamond.

Though set across two local authority districts, each in a different county, the local labour market shows firms and workers operating across these boundaries and according to the actual economic realities that give the RBCGA its identity. Commuting flows modelled by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) illustrate the north-south patterns that characterise the area, particularly between Reigate & Banstead and Crawley. Figure 1 below shows the two authorities (in black) within the broader travel to work area (red) as understood by the ONS.

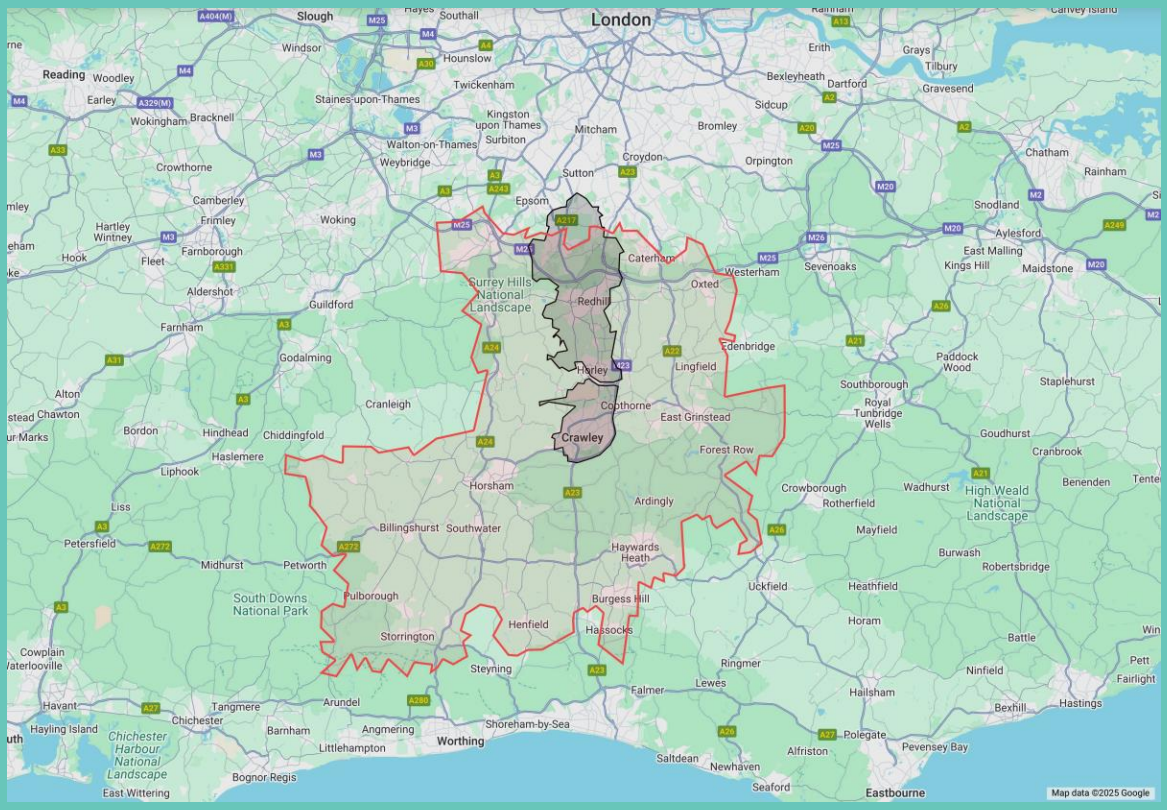


Figure 1: Reigate & Banstead – Crawley Travel to Work Area, ONS overlayed on Google Maps (2025)

Economic geography is rooted in the assets an area possesses. Underpinning the RBCGA is its transport infrastructure. This facilitates the labour market we see, as well as attracting the businesses which give it high-value clusters in areas like advanced manufacturing, life sciences and financial services. Figure 2 below visualises the RBCGA as it is understood by firms and workers: an integrated economic area that benefits from excellent north-south connectivity and strong east-west links to neighbouring areas.

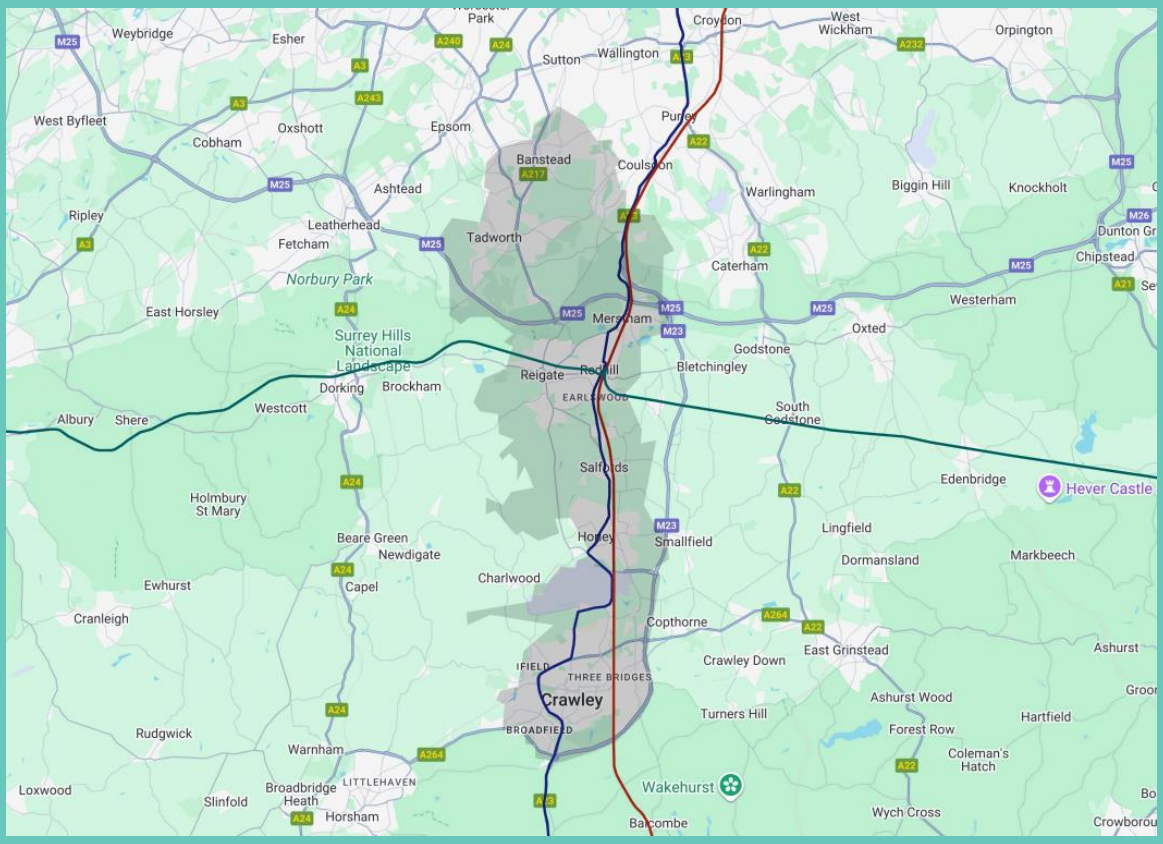


Figure 2: Reigate & Banstead – Crawley Growth Area, Google Maps (2025)

The A23 (highlighted in blue) and M23 form the spine of the road corridor through the area and onwards north and south to London and Brighton respectively. The Brighton Main Line railway (highlighted in red) functions in a similar manner, linking together the urban centres of Redhill, Horley and Three Bridges (and by extension Reigate and Crawley). Gatwick Airport's railway station provides direct access to all these local urban centres and the cities beyond them. These north-south routes also intersect with key east-west corridors. Access to the M25 is provided in the north of the area, linking it to Heathrow in the west and towards Kent and its ports in the east. The North Downs Line and Redhill-Tonbridge Line (highlighted in green) provides east-west rail connectivity to centres such as Guildford and Reading.

2. UNLOCKING THE FUTURE

The RBCGA is already a productive and well-connected part of the South East economy, contributing over £2.8 billion annually to the public purse via business rates, VAT and income tax. But its future potential, especially in the context of Gatwick Airport's expansion, is what makes it nationally significant. With strategic coordination, the area has the right fundamentals to become one of the UK's most important economic corridors: delivering growth, high-quality jobs, new housing, and even greater fiscal returns to the exchequer.

The catalyst is the £2.2 billion privately-funded expansion of Gatwick Airport, which the government have said they are 'minded to approve'. Subject to final confirmation, plans to bring the airport's second runway into regular use are expected to create up to 14,000 new jobs and unlock an additional £1 billion a year in economic benefits – on top of the 76,000 jobs and £5.5 billion in GVA each year the airport already generates. It will substantially increase capacity to 75 million passengers per year, boosting connectivity and strengthening the airport's role as a gateway for international trade and investment.

Land to the east and west of the airport is predominantly rural in character, constraining development. Growth further south beyond Crawley is limited due to the nearby High Weald National Landscape. Beyond that the South Downs form a natural barrier to Sussex's coastal towns and cities. Similarly, the Metropolitan Green Belt and Surrey Hills National Landscape complicates development near the border with London. Opportunities to capitalise on Gatwick's expansion are hence overwhelming to the immediate north and south of its perimeter – the area covered by the RBCGA.

Established employment sites within the area have capacity to grow and are linked by rail and road to the airport, with further enhancements due to be delivered to manage increased demand. In Reigate & Banstead new employment land has been allocated in Horley, directly north of the airport. Currently safeguarded land south of the airport in Crawley will be due for release should the northern runway scheme go ahead, providing new supply of over 200 hectares adjacent to Gatwick. Planned developments such as Gatwick Green are already demonstrating the kind of impact possible: 2,000 new jobs, £79 million in annual GVA, and £16 million in corporation tax each year.

Figure 3: New development sites, Google Maps (2025)

The presence of these new development sites bring into focus the primary barrier to unlocking the full potential of the RBCGA. Dividing the most important land around the airport into two different planning authorities prevents a more strategic approach. This is not just a matter of providing new employment space. Crawley's 2019 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) shows a functional relationship with parts of Surrey, with the strongest link (in price and commuting terms) being with Horley.

New economic growth must be accompanied by an expanded housing supply to accommodate the needs of employers. The RBCGA and its periphery (such as West of Ifield on Crawley's border, a priority Homes England site with potential to deliver 10,000 homes) makes a sensible geography to plan new supply on. Crawley's SMHA acknowledges that growth of the economic hub around Gatwick could influence housing market geography, changing it over time – particularly with airport expansion. Crawley's strategic housing site supply is severely restricted due the constraints to the south outlined above, and it already relies on development in neighbouring areas to meet its need. Reigate & Banstead is also unable to meet its housing needs without a more strategic framework for long-term development planning.

Rationalising planning powers across the functional economic area would permit a more holistic approach to delivery of new housing and employment space. Both constituent authorities are prescient of this fact and have leadership teams which recognise the benefits of the local plan process taking place over a wider area so new supply supports growth. Such arrangements would also make possible the pooling of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and other devolved budgets for the area – delivering better planned and integrated supporting infrastructure. Local government reorganisation (LGR) presents opportunities in this regard.

The most practical way of achieving this would be the creation of a unitary authority which included both Reigate & Banstead and Crawley. Combining the boroughs would meet government objectives for LGR to cover sensible economic areas and make possible a simplified and uniform land-use policy across the area most appropriate to accommodate the proceeds (and mitigate the impacts) of growth from airport expansion. On the contrary, creation of a hard devolution boundary between the most productive land in the sub-region, either side of an international airport, would be ill-advised and hamstring the potential of expansion before it has even got going. Rather than allowing businesses and investors to capitalise on new opportunities it would tie up planning issues in inter-authority consultation, deterring new economic activity.

The RBCGA has excelled despite the inherent constraints that being spread across two planning authorities, in two different counties, places on it. In many ways this is a demonstration of its integrity as a cohesive economic area. New opportunities created through expansion of the UK's second (and Europe's eighth) busiest airport demands a fresh look at how best to capture the benefits. Aligning local policy to actual economic geography represents the forward-looking, ambitious approach. The government should take it.

3. IMMINENT CONSTRAINTS

Published at the end of last year, the English Devolution White Paper states 'strategic authorities must cover sensible economic geographies with a particular focus on functional economic areas, reflecting current and potential travel-to-work patterns and local labour markets'. The government also says its enhanced devolution framework will allow strategic authorities and mayors to develop local growth plans, support easier commutes, provide employment provision relevant to local jobs, and strategically plan housing growth.

Such changes are to be welcomed. Done in the right way they provide local areas with more tools to support the private sector in delivering growth. However, there is a very real and imminent risk that the current proposals for devolution and LGR in Surrey and Sussex have the unintentional effect of constraining growth in a fundamental part of the regional economy: the RBCGA. Plans for a Surrey strategic authority along existing county boundaries and a Sussex & Brighton equivalent will entrench already inefficient local governance arrangements around Gatwick Airport.

This Economy Spotlight has highlighted the economic interdependence the RBCGA exhibits. Labour markets and commuting flows show deep integration, enabled by strong transport links and sectoral makeups that complement each other. Devolution and LGR plans in the area therefore run contrary to the sensible characteristics the government states strategic authorities should have, as well as bringing into question how the enhanced devolution framework would be delivered locally.

Local growth plans produced by each strategic authority would omit key parts of the functional economic geography that exists. Work to improve commutes would be divided as a critical north-south commuting corridor sits within two different authorities. Likewise, the degree to which relevant employment support could be provided to a labour market split either side of a devolution boundary is dubious. And as has been discussed at length in the previous section, the strategic planning of housing growth would be seriously hobbled in these arrangements. Not only does this make little sense when assessing the current nature of the economy in the area, it makes even less when considering the possibilities that expansion of Gatwick Airport could provide if done right.

These concerns are of immediate relevance. Surrey's final proposal is due for submission by 9th May and a government-led consultation on a Sussex & Brighton strategic authority concluded on 13th April, with results to be released in late spring. Figure 3 below illustrates the solidifying of boundaries between the RBCGA (outlined in black on the map) that will occur if current proposals are enacted by the government.

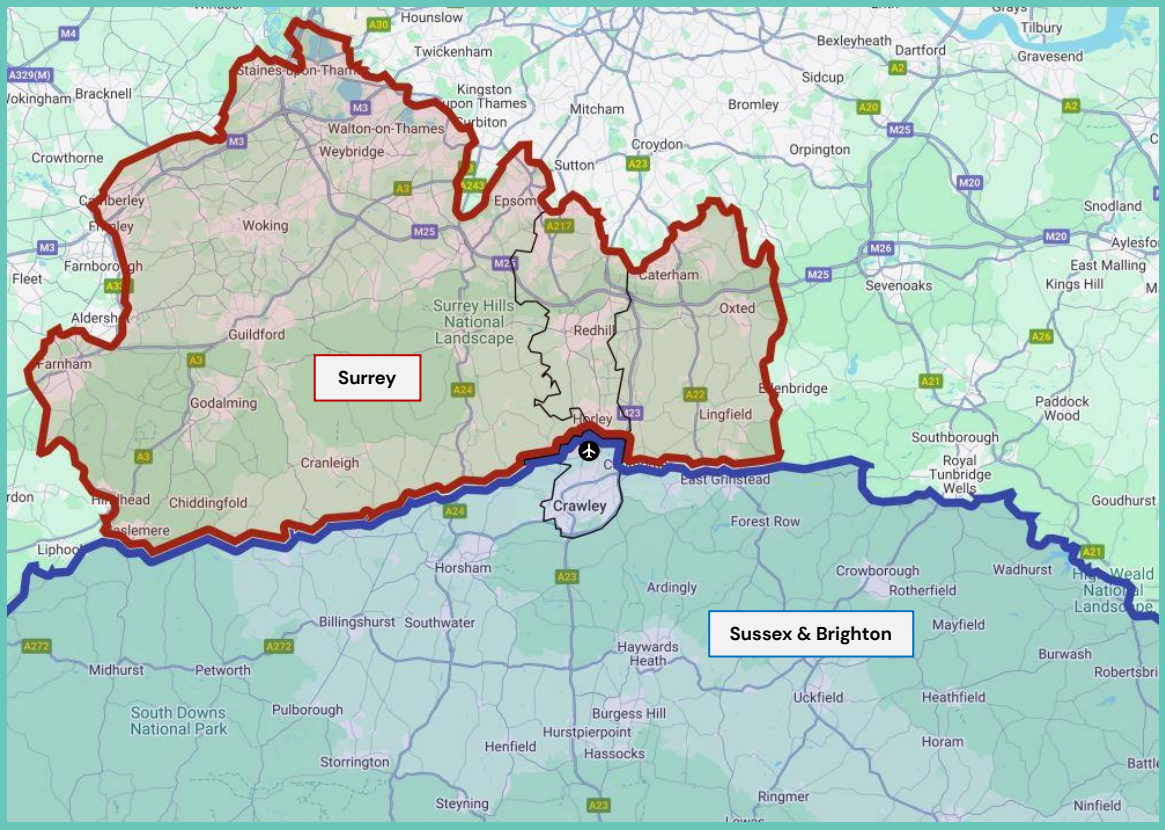


Figure 4: Proposed strategic authority boundaries, Google Maps (2025)

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) are currently classifying any changes to the treatment of Reigate & Banstead and Crawley as part of the Surrey proposal. Were the Surrey strategic authority boundary to include Gatwick Airport (which it did before reorganisation in 1974) and Crawley, the population would rise from 1.2 to 1.3 million – closer to the 1.5 million ideal set by government. The population in Sussex & Brighton would stay comfortably above the 1.5 million figure in that scenario too.

Given the potential for growth if devolution and LGR are done right in this area, it would be reasonable for the government to take pause and consider the situation of the RBCGA in greater detail. What is clear is that the current proposals – though expedient – represent a constraint of the future of the most successful economy in this sub-region.

4. SUMMARY

- Despite inefficiencies created by an undesirable local government geography, the Reigate & Banstead – Crawley Growth Area is a contiguous functional economic area. Highly integrated and centred on an international airport, it is founded on strong transport links, commuting patterns, and correlative industries. These assets inform the behaviour of both firms and workers in the area. Travel to work areas and commuting flows show a distinctive north-south corridor covering the two authorities. With high growth and pay, the area contributes over £2.8 billion a year in taxation through business rates, VAT and income tax – all while receiving comparatively small amounts of public funding, both current and capital.

- Privately-funded expansion of Gatwick Airport, which the UK government is 'minded to approve', represents a generational opportunity to leverage these existing strengths and create long-term growth. The best way to unlock this would be for common governance across the Growth Area through a unitary authority which includes the boroughs of Reigate & Banstead and Crawley. Doing so would allow for a strategic approach to the planning of new housing, employment space and transport. It would capitalise on the growth increased international connectivity can provide and make investment more attractive and easier. Both authorities share a similar attitude to growth and are serious about working together to capture the benefits of airport expansion, as well as mitigating the impacts.

- Concerningly, current devolution and local government reorganisation proposals risk doing the opposite of this. Plans being considered would further entrench and solidify the illogical local authority boundaries that divide the productive land to the north and south of Gatwick Airport. As well as sitting within different unitary authorities, Reigate & Banstead and Crawley are likely to be covered by different Mayoral Strategic Authorities. Devolution and local government reorganisation can be powerful levers to boost local growth, bringing together functional economic areas with the necessary tools to act. In the case of the RBCGA, a devolution geography that replicates current county boundaries risks unnecessarily doubling-down on an existing framework which does not reflect how the area functions and will exacerbates the existing inefficiencies.

Coast to Capital

Annex 5: Gatwick Diamond Initiative: The Northern Gatwick Diamond - A UK Gateway for Global Connectivity and Growth (April 2025)

The Northern Gatwick Diamond
A UK Gateway for Global Connectivity and Growth

A Report

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1. Executive Summary

The northern Gatwick Diamond region, encompassing East Surrey, Crawley Borough, Reigate & Banstead, and Gatwick Airport, is a pivotal economic zone in the UK. Anchored by Gatwick Airport, a global connectivity hub with access to over 220 destinations, the region drives significant international trade and investment. Manor Royal Business District, a major industrial and commercial centre, hosts leading firms like Thales and Elekta, fostering innovation in advanced manufacturing, aerospace, and life sciences.

The region's strategic rail and road infrastructure, including direct links to London and the OXCAM ARC, enhances its appeal as a prime business location. Crawley and Reigate & Banstead contribute substantially to UK GDP, which is supported by a skilled workforce and robust economic diversification. The Gatwick Diamond Initiative (GDi) actively promotes inward investment, aligning with UK government priorities such as promoting growth investment, global Britain and promoting net-zero goals.

Case studies, such as Elekta's export growth in Asia and Manor Royal's post-COVID resilience, highlight the region's dynamic economic landscape. Cubic in Redhill, an international software and hardware transportation business with global growth is a major employer locally, driving skills development and proving the region’s potential to scale tech businesses globally. An example of how the UK digital economy is thriving beyond London.

With ongoing investment in infrastructure and innovation, the Gatwick Diamond is poised for continued growth and global competitiveness.

2. Introduction: Gatwick Diamond Region Overview

The Gatwick Diamond region is one of the UK’s most dynamic and strategically connected economic zones. It comprises East and West Sussex, Northern Kent, and the focus of this paper, East Surrey, Crawley Borough, Reigate & Banstead. Gatwick Airport is central to the strength of this northern £13bn economic zone. Gatwick serves as a crucial gateway for global connectivity growth.

Anchored by Gatwick Airport — the UK's second busiest and the world’s busiest single-runway airport — the region offers excellent air connectivity. Gatwick Airport facilitates seamless international business, tourism and trade with over 220 global destinations across Europe, the Middle East, North America, Asia, and China. Strong surface transport links support Gatwick’s accessibility.

Beyond aviation, the region benefits from integration into the national transport network. Direct rail services provide access to Central London, the City of London and major financial and legal districts in under 30 minutes, enhancing access to global capital markets. This

connectivity extends to the Oxford-Cambridge OXCAM ARC, fostering innovation and enterprise partnerships across the UK's premier knowledge corridor. International Roll on Roll off and deepwater container ports within 90 - 120 minutes travel supplement the cargo opportunities at Gatwick airport which leverages logistics expertise centred on the adjacent Manor Royal Business District.

At the region's heart lies Manor Royal Business District, more than just a logistics hub. It's one of the UK's largest industrial and commercial areas. Home to major international employers such as Thales, Elekta, Boeing and CAE. Manor Royal is also a powerhouse of advanced manufacturing, defence, aerospace, life sciences and tech innovation. Robust supply chains and export capacity make it a critical node in the UK's industrial strategy.

Reigate & Banstead is a strategic location for corporate and global headquarters, essential public services, professional services and high-value high tech employment clusters. Its emerging digital and high tech cluster has evolved into a major service export driver into Asia Pacific and the US promoting upskilling and acting as an incubator for high tech proving that there is high tech growth outside of just greater London.

Kimberly-Clark significantly contributes to exports and advanced manufacturing employment, while Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust provides vital health infrastructure and regional resilience. Financial powerhouses like AXA and Santander Consumer UK Plc strengthen the area's financial services sector. Engineering and infrastructure leaders, such as Balfour Beatty Rail Construction and Cubic Transportation Systems, drive national projects and export smart solutions. Additionally, emerging digital and tech employers, are fostering growth in the region's modern economy.

Crawley Borough Council, governing one of the region's principal urban and economic centres, contributes disproportionately to UK GVA. Crawley, recognised by the Centre for Cities as one of the UK's most productive cities, offers a resilient economy built upon Gatwick Airport and Manor Royal Business District.

Gatwick Diamond a Global Gateway, Regional Powerhouse - Gatwick Diamond Initiative and Gatwick Airport: Driving Inward Investment

The Gatwick Diamond Initiative and Gatwick Airport in 2021 signed a strategic partnership to position the Gatwick Diamond region as a leading destination for inward and foreign direct investment. Leveraging Gatwick's world-class connectivity and the Diamond's thriving business ecosystem included showcasing the region at UK Real Estate Investment & Infrastructure Forum (UKREiiF) the UK's leading annual forum dedicated to connecting investors, developers, local and regional authorities with policy makers to unlock sustainable, inclusive growth.

The Gatwick Diamond Initiative (GDi) promotes high-impact investment opportunities, international trade, investment and sustainable growth projects — reinforcing the Gatwick Diamond as the South East's powerhouse for enterprise and expansion. From global boardrooms, to wealth funds and regional breakthroughs, GDi looks to connect local opportunity with capital.

To date the partnership has attracted inward investment, valued at £39 million, creating and securing 400 plus jobs 2022-2026. Pivotal in national economic growth and the government's ambitions to drive growth in regional economies. A proactive approach to infrastructure, innovation and sustainability ensures the Gatwick Diamond remains at the forefront of the UK's global competitiveness.

3. Strategic Alignment with UK Government Priorities

The Gatwick Diamond region aligns closely with the UK Government's strategic priorities, contributing significantly to national economic goals:

- **Growth:**
  - High productivity growth in Crawley and Reigate & Banstead, supporting regional and national prosperity.
  - Job creation across sectors: advanced manufacturing, aerospace, emerging digital and life sciences.
  - Manor Royal as an employment hub supports inclusive growth and skilled employment pathways.
  - Reigate is a growth centre and incubator for digital and future tech businesses.

- **Global Britain & Export Growth:**
  - Gatwick Airport is a globally connected hub with access to 220+ destinations.
  - Manor Royal hosts major exporters like Thales and Elekta, which have strong local supply chains.
  - Regionally businesses form multi-nationals to SME's are deeply export-oriented, supporting the UK's trade goals in markets as diverse as North America and Asia.

- **Innovation & Science Superpower:**
  - Presence of high-tech industries: aviation tech, life sciences, AI, avionics, advanced manufacturing.
  - Proximity and links to the OxCam Arc, leveraging R&D ecosystems.
  - Corporate R&D centres and SMEs driving tech innovation, automation and AI

- **Net Zero & Clean Growth:**
  - Gatwick Airport's commitment to net-zero operations and sustainable aviation.

  - Green technologies and sustainable infrastructure within Manor Royal.
  - Regional leadership in sustainable logistics and energy-efficient industrial estates.

- Infrastructure & Connectivity:
  - Direct rail access to London, the City, and global financial centres.
  - Air connectivity to Europe, the Middle East, North America, Asia, and China.
  - Road connection to the ports of Newhaven (up to 90 mins), Shoreham (up to 75 mins) Southampton (up to 90 mins) and the Thames London Gateway.
  - Proximity to strategic transport corridors, including M23, M25 and direct rail links to the OXCAM ARC
  - A market catchment of 18-20 million consumers in 90 minutes' travel time.

- Resilience & Economic Security:
  - Diversified economy largely resilient to global shocks: aviation, professional services, med tech, green manufacturing, green tech, high tech engineering, AI and Quantum computing.
  - The establishment of an Airport Economic Zone will further enhance regional resilience and facilitate global supply chain integration.
  - Skilled workforce and strong education pipeline in engineering, digital, and services.

- Investment & Inward Investment Promotion:
  - Active inward investment promotion via the Gatwick Diamond Initiative (GDi), £39m and 400 plus jobs up to 2026.
  - Business-friendly environment with established enterprise support structures.
  - Strong narrative as a critical UK investment location, supporting the HMG's Investment Strategy.
  - GDi and Gatwick Airport strategic partnership sponsoring local authority and private partners' representation at the UKREiiF UK investment and infrastructure show.

- Skills & Workforce Development:
  - Access to skilled labour markets in Surrey, Crawley, Reigate, and London.
  - Partnership with local colleges and universities to develop the next-generation workforce.
  - Employment opportunities across all levels, supporting the UK skills agenda.

4. Northern Gatwick Diamond: A Case Library

4.1. Levelling Up & Skills Development

- Crawley Borough Council — Skills and Employment Programme:
  - Actively working with local colleges and employers to reskill and upskill residents, especially post-COVID impacts on aviation and hospitality. Programmes in engineering, logistics, and green skills development. Crawley's strategic location and economic activity generate demand for a skilled workforce, driving initiatives to align local talent with industry needs.

- Reigate & Banstead — Skills and Employment Programme:
  - Reigate and Banstead support focuses on employer engagement, apprenticeships and community programmes, aligned with Surrey-wide priorities on green skills, digital, and healthcare. Multiply Programme boost skills access.

- Reigate, East Surrey and Crawley Colleges:
  - A strong education pipeline delivers vocational apprenticeships in engineering, digital, construction, digital green skills, aviation, health, and social care sectors. This supports social mobility and future-proofs the local economy. These institutions provide a steady flow of qualified individuals, which is crucial for sustaining the region's economic growth and attracting further investment.

4.2. Global Britain & Export Growth

- Thales UK (Manor Royal):
  - An advanced defence systems manufacturer exporting globally, Thales supports the UK's defence export strategy and is a critical part of the aerospace and cyber security export drive. Thales's presence in Manor Royal highlights the region's significance in supporting national security and technological advancement.

- Elekta (Manor Royal):
  - World-leading medical technology firm, exporting radiation cancer treatment solutions worldwide, including emerging markets in Asia and the Middle East. Elekta's activities underscore the region's contribution to healthcare innovation and its role in improving global health outcomes.

- Gatwick Airport Cargo Operations:
  - Growing freight capacity, supporting UK exports and imports, particularly high-

value goods like pharmaceuticals and aerospace parts. The airport's cargo operations are vital for facilitating the movement of goods, enhancing the UK's trade capabilities.

4.3. Innovation & Science

- Thales Digital Innovation Centre:
  - Driving R&D in advanced digital systems, cybersecurity, and autonomous technologies and contributing to the UK's goal to be a science superpower. This centre exemplifies the region's focus on cutting-edge research and development, fostering an innovation environment.

- CAE UK (Manor Royal):
  - Innovation in pilot training and aviation simulation technologies, supporting global aviation sectors. CAE's work in Manor Royal is crucial for advancing aviation safety and efficiency and it has international implications.

- Collaboration with OXCAM ARC:
  - Proximity and developing partnerships with Oxford-Cambridge innovators to scale tech and science-based enterprises. Especially the MedTech, advanced manufacturing, science and defence sectors.

4.4. Net Zero & Clean Growth

- Gatwick Airport Net Zero Plan:
  - The ambitious target is to achieve net-zero airport emissions by 2030, including the electrification of the ground fleet and the use of sustainable aviation fuels (SAF). Gatwick's commitment to sustainability sets the standard for sustainable growth in the aviation sector.

- Manor Royal BID Sustainability Strategy:
  - Green infrastructure development, promoting energy efficiency and sustainable business practices within the business district. Manor Royal's strategy demonstrates a proactive approach to integrating sustainability into business operations.

- Local Solar Initiatives:
  - Adoption of renewable energy solutions by local businesses across business parks to reduce their carbon footprint.

4.5. Infrastructure & Connectivity

- **Gatwick Express, Southern, Eurostar & Thameslink Services:**
  - Rapid connections to London, the City and international Eurostar and European rail services to France (Paris), Belgium (Brussels) and Amsterdam, plus onward connections to Germany and Austria. These rail links are important for the region's connectivity, supporting business and tourist passenger movement.

- **Proximity to Strategic Roads (M23/M25):**
  - Essential for freight and logistics movements, connecting businesses to the UK-wide supply chain, the Lower Thames crossing announcement would speed up connections to global container routes on the Thames Gateway. The road network is crucial for the efficient distribution of goods, supporting the region's businesses and the wider UK economy.

- **Direct connections to the OXCAN ARC:**
  - The strong medtech, green energy and defence sectors are leveraging direct rail connections to the centre of the OXCAM ARC, which is enhancing research, talent flow, and business collaborations between the South East's most dynamic economic zones.

4.6. Resilience & Economic Security

- **Airport Economic Zone Status:** Gatwick Airport's current promotion of an airport economic zone, the Gatwick Region Airport Economic Zone, would transform Crawley, Reigate, Banstead and its surroundings into the UK's most significant airport economic zone, building resilience through diversification, inward investment and a high-growth sector focus.

- **Diversification from Aviation Dependency**: During the pandemic there was concern that the region needed to diversify from aviation dependency. It became apparent that the business community and the region's Post-pandemic resilience strategies to broaden the economy beyond aviation, focusing on digital, health tech, and green industries. However, aviation is also a business enabler and any retardation of its growth and development or significant disruption will always impact the region.

- **Reigate a Digital Growth Hub:** In recent years, Reigate's digital economy has rapidly developed, with strengths in fintech, cyber security and creative industries. It is built around strong public-private collaboration, with local colleges, universities and employers aligning on digital skills and apprenticeships.

4.7. Investment & Inward Investment Promotion

- **Gatwick Diamond Initiative (GDi):** A strategic partner of Gatwick Airport, GDi is the dedicated inward investment body actively promoting the region globally. A facilitator of local authority and business bodies in a public private partnership to promote the region at the UKREiiF. GDi focuses on attracting FDI and UK direct investment into advanced manufacturing, life sciences, Viticulture, leisure and tech sectors.

- **Manor Royal BID (Business Improvement District):** Proactive business-led organisation supporting improvements, infrastructure and business growth, making the area investment-ready

- **Gatwick Diamond Business (gdb):** A 70-year-old business group and the South East UK's largest and only cross-county, cross-sector business group representing and supporting 400 businesses, networking, advocacy and support ranging from sole traders, SMEs and international businesses. It is one of the UK's longest-established business communities that welcomes and networks education and businesses. gdb is a valuable for offering investing businesses regional networking, support and business community involvement.

5. Regional Case Study Portfolio: Investor Perspective

5.1. Strategic Benefit of Gatwick Connectivity for Exporting Businesses

Headline: *"From runway to world markets — The Gatwick Diamond is the growth engine for exporters."*

Key Points:

- **Gatwick Airport:** The Proximity of Gatwick provides significant employment locally in the retail, construction, services sector, aviation, logistics, travel, tourism and customer service sectors, which are all significant local employers, due to the proximity to Gatwick.

- **Global Reach:** Gatwick connects to over 220 destinations worldwide, including Europe, the Middle East, North America, Asia, and China — ensuring fast, reliable access to new customers, suppliers and markets for UK goods and services..

- **Air Freight Capacity:** Critical for high-value, time-sensitive exports (pharmaceuticals, advanced manufacturing parts, electronics). Gatwick Cargo Centre supports fast exports globally and is currently predicted with the Northern Runway project approval to grow to 161,500 tonnes by 2038, which is more than double the 2019 levels.

- **Supply Chain Efficiency:** Proximity to port connections (Southampton, London Gateway) and major road networks (M23, M25) ensures seamless intermodal logistics.

- **Business Travel Access:** Exporting firms (like Thales, Elekta, Cubic, Kimberly Clark) benefit from frequent, direct flights for customer visits, technical support and sales missions globally.

- **Location:** Situated at the heart of the Gatwick Diamond East Surrey, Reigate and Banstead and Crawley has access to a market of up to 18m consumers within 90 minutes. Connectivity to London, Gatwick, the south coast, the midlands and OXCAM ARC, European connections via sea container freight, rail, ferries and airfreight onto global markets.

- **Talen**t: Access to a highly educated workforce, supporting high-value sectors and future growth industries with clusters of high and emerging tech in Reigate Banstead and medtech, defence, avionics, high tech engineering and cyber security in Crawley.

- **Global Connections:** A strong international business base, complementing Crawley, Manor Royal, Reigate and Banstead and the wider Gatwick Diamond and South East UK region.

- **Trade Shows & Networks:** Proximity and public transport connections to London mean easy access to global trade expos, financial services and export support events.

"Gatwick puts the world at the doorstep of our exporters — from precision medical devices to defence technologies, Manor Royal businesses connect globally, faster and more efficiently."
Brett North – Chief Executive Officer – Gatwick Diamond Initiative

5.2. Economic Benefit of Airport Density of Economic Activity

Headline: "*Airport Regions: Growth Hubs of the Global Economy*"

Key Concepts:

- **Agglomeration Effect:** Businesses cluster near airports to reduce time to market,

attract talent, capitalise on the science and engineering skills attracted to aviation hubs and benefit from fast-moving logistics. In Crawley 26% of Sussex's GVA is generated by less than 2% of its landmass.

- **Productivity Boost:** Research shows economies built around airports increase regional productivity by 15–20% due to connectivity and high-skill employment concentration.
- **Airport Economic Zone:** Crawley, Reigate and Banstead with Manor Royal form the heart of Gatwick's airport economy, supporting over 24,000 direct jobs and thousands more in the supply chain.
- **Investment Magnet:** Due to streamlined global operations, international firms favour well-connected airport regions for HQs and logistics bases.
- **Innovation Ecosystem:** Easy access to global partners and supply chains accelerates R&D, export growth, and market responsiveness.
- **Global connectivity fuels growth:** Gatwick Diamond businesses benefit from extensive direct flights and cargo capacity.
- **Talent and client flow:** Airports are people and talent enablers.
- **International positioning:** Their proximity to the UK's second major airport reinforces their status as outward-facing, globally competitive organisations.

Examples:

- **Elekta,** a world leader in Linear Accelerators, exports precision cancer treatment technologies from Crawley to Asia and beyond, using Gatwick's connectivity to service hospitals worldwide.
- **Thales** exports advanced defence and cyber solutions globally, supported by Gatwick's cargo and executive travel network.
- **Naked Energy:** Championing British clean tech exports from its Crawley base, exporting patented solar solutions worldwide, opening new markets and supporting the UK's ambitions as a global leader in green technology.
- **Kimberly-Clark: Global:** Exporting sustainable consumer goods, delivering essential hygiene and personal care products to global markets. A pioneer of sustainable

materials and circular economy principles, advancing the UK's ambitions to lead in sustainable and responsible exports.

6. Full Regional Case Study Portfolio: Northern Gatwick Diamond

Region Overview

The northern Gatwick Diamond region—spanning East Surrey, Crawley, Reigate and Banstead, with Gatwick Airport at its beating heart—is one of the UK's most globally connected and economically vital areas.

- £24bn+ regional economy
- £13bn+ Northern Gatwick Diamond
- Over 45,000 businesses across the wider Gatwick Diamond
- Manor Royal: One of the UK's largest business parks (home to Thales, Elekta, Boeing)
- Strategic transport hub (Gatwick, M23, M25, Thameslink to London & City)
- Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust: Major public sector employer, supporting health infrastructure and regional resilience.

Case Study 1: Elekta — Health Tech Exports to Asia

- Exports cancer treatment systems globally, focusing on Asia-Pacific.
- Uses Gatwick for cargo and technical team travel.
- Benefits from a skilled workforce and supply chain in Manor Royal.

Case Study 2: Thales — Global Defence & Cyber Exports

- Defence and aerospace exporter with Crawley HQ.
- Uses Gatwick for rapid customer engagement worldwide.
- High-skill job creator and contributor to UK export goals.

Case Study 3: Manor Royal — Post-COVID Resilience

- Adapted by diversifying into logistics, green tech, and cyber sectors.
- Benefited from local talent redeployment and BID-led recovery efforts.
- Attracting new businesses seeking connected, sustainable locations.

Case Study 4: Crawley — Airport Economic Zone Powerhouse

- Crawley contributes over £5bn GVA, with Gatwick Airport as a central driver.
- High concentration of export-focused, global businesses.
- Skills programmes supporting growth sectors (aviation tech, logistics).

Case Study 5: Strategic Connectivity & the OxCam Arc

- Gatwick Airport connects to the UK's other leading innovation corridor through the

Thameslink rail connection.
- Rail links support talent and research exchange.
- Drives regional collaboration in science, tech and clean growth sectors.

Case Study 6: Cubic Transportation System: Technology Solutions in defence and transportation

- Cubic Transportation System is a world-leading provider of intelligent transportation systems with offices globally.
- Major employer, driving skills and innovation.

Case Study 7: Naked Energy: Clean, advanced solar technologies

- Strengthening UK Energy Security, Naked Energy reduces dependence on imported fossil fuels
- Exporting patented solar solutions worldwide, opening new markets for UK green exports.
- Driving the UK's ambitions as a global leader in green technology.

Case Study 8: Kimberly-Clark:

- Sustainable manufacturing exports of low-carbon, sustainable hygiene products, supporting the UK's Net Zero and circular economy goals.
- Green jobs and climate leadership driving climate-responsible trade, reinforcing the UK's position in sustainable consumer goods.

Case Study 9: Manor Royal: Robust logistics ecosystem

- Notable occupiers include Amazon, DPD, Hermes, Parcelforce, Royal Mail, UPS, Yodel, Ocado, and Tesco.
- Regionally significant as a last-mile distribution hub.

Key Investor Perceptions:

- **Global Gateway:** Gatwick's connectivity delivers instant access to global markets for exporters and

- **Economic Density:** Clustering of high-value businesses and skills clusters maximises productivity and regional resilience.

- **Resilient Growth:** Manor Royal, Reigate and Bansted and Crawley have adapted post-COVID with strong diversification.

- **Future Ready:** Aligned with UK priorities — net zero, science superpower, global Britain,

and infrastructure growth focus.

7. Gatwick Diamond Data Annex

Indicator	Value	Source
Number of Direct Destinations from Gatwick	220+ destinations	Gatwick Airport
Regional Export Growth Rate (Annual)	6.5%	ONS Regional Trade Statistics
Manor Royal Business Count	600+ businesses	Manor Royal BID
Estimated Economic Output of Airport Economic Zone	£5.5 billion	Airport Economic Impact Study

8. Custom Speaking Points for Investors

- **The Gatwick Diamond** is an established 70-plus-year business region and a globally connected growth engine. Gatwick Airport—the UK's second busiest airport—directly links to 220+ destinations worldwide.

- **Why the Gatwick Diamond** is a dynamic business powerhouse in the South East UK, strategically positioned between London and the coast with excellent transport links, a thriving enterprise culture and an exceptional quality of life that attracts talent and investment alike.

- **Manor Royal Business District**, one of the UK's largest, is home to over 600 firms and supports over 24,000 jobs in advanced manufacturing, logistics, life sciences, and defence exports.

- **Exporters**, Thales, Cubic, Kimberly-Clark, Naked Energy and Elekta depend on Gatwick's connectivity, which enables high-value, high-skill exports to Asia, the Middle East, and North America.

- **Crawley**, at the core of the region's Airport Economic Zone, contributes over £5 billion GVA annually, making it a national asset for productivity and growth.

- **Reigate & Banstead**, boasts a diverse economy spanning professional services, creative industries, advanced manufacturing and green technology continue to drive growth with a track record for fostering ambitious businesses ready to scale.

- **Strong rail and road links** integrate the region with London, the City and the OXCAM ARC, connecting businesses to global financial centers and innovation corridors and logistics hubs and European capitals.

- **Post-COVID,** the region has rapidly diversified, strengthening resilience through green technology, cyber, logistics, AI, last mile logistics, Data Centres and advanced manufacturing sectors.

- **Sustainability** is at the forefront, with Gatwick Airport, Manor Royal, Reigate, and Banstead businesses increasingly committing to net zero, green infrastructure and sustainable circular supply chains.

- **A highly skilled local workforce**, backed by proactive training and reskilling initiatives, supports high-growth sectors critical to the UK economy.

- **The Gatwick Diamond** exemplifies the UK's growth ambitions, driving South East prosperity and complementing national economic goals.

- **A magnet for investment**, with active promotion through the Gatwick Diamond Initiative, attracting domestic and global investors alike.

9. Investment Wins and Pipeline Projects: Gatwick Diamond Region

Recent Investment Wins (2023–2025)

1. **CAE Aviation Training Expansion — Manor Royal**
    - Investment: £25 million+
    - Project: Expansion of CAE's aviation academy to accommodate next-gen flight simulators and increase pilot training capacity.
    - Impact: Strengthens Manor Royal's role as a global centre for aviation skills; supports exportable training services.

2. **Thales UK Cyber Security Hub Expansion — Crawley**
    - Investment: £15 million
    - Project: Enhancement of Thales's R&D and cybersecurity operations, focusing on aerospace and defence resilience.
    - Impact: 100+ high-skill jobs created, aligns with UK cyber strategy and exports.

3. **Elekta Global Logistics and Distribution Centre — Crawley**
    - Investment: £10 million

- Project: Consolidated logistics centre to streamline exports to Asia-Pacific, North America, and Europe.
- Impact: Increases efficiency and capacity for global health tech exports.

4. LG Electronics — Logistics Hub for UK & Ireland
   - Investment: Multi-million-pound facility
   - Location: Manor Royal
   - Impact: Enhances the region's strength in consumer electronics and e-commerce logistics.

Active Pipeline Projects (In Progress / Announced)

5. Gatwick Airport Northern Runway Project
   - Investment: Privately financed £2.2 billion+, 14,000 new jobs, air cargo growth to 161,000 tonnes by 2038
   - Status: DCO process, 'minded to grant' by SoS Transport, subject to public transport and noise mitigation measures and with strong regional business backing.
   - Impact: Increased capacity for passengers and cargo, future-proofing Gatwick's global competitiveness and the development of new routes and markets.

6. Manor Royal Green Energy Infrastructure
   - Investment: £Multi-million (BID-led initiative)
   - Project: Solar energy deployment, EV charging network, and green logistics solutions.
   - Impact: Supports UK Net Zero Strategy, attracts green tech investors.

7. Innovation Campus — Crawley
   - Concept: Regional innovation and enterprise hub, linked to Crawley and OxCam Arc initiatives.
   - Status: Opened March '25 supported by local and regional stakeholders.
   - Naked Energy, Sweetinburgh and Windsor IP lawyers (first two tenants).
   - Focus: Advanced manufacturing, life sciences and digital industries.

8. Rail Connectivity Enhancements (Gatwick to City & OxCam Arc)
   - Investment: Part of £Multi-billion national transport strategy, including the Brighton line proposal and GWR line electric train upgrade to Reading.
   - Impact: Faster, greener links to London, financial districts and knowledge corridors.

9. Panattoni Park Crawley

- A 10-acre logistics development in the Manor Royal Business District, totalling nearly 200,000 sq ft.
- Sustainability focus: Targeting BREEAM 'Excellent' and EPC 'A' ratings, with solar panels, rainwater harvesting, EV charging points, and enhanced natural daylight.

10. Manor Royal Business District Intensification
    - Economic Impact Study identified opportunities for intensifying development within the Manor Royal Business District.
    - Potential redevelopment sites are highlighted to accommodate new industrial and logistics facilities, aiming to enhance the area's economic contribution.
    - Specific projects are subject to further planning and development processes.

Future Opportunity Areas

- Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) Supply Chain
  - Gatwick is actively exploring partnerships to establish a UK-first SAF hub.

- Defence Export Growth (Crawley / Manor Royal)
  - Growth in defence orders globally, with Manor Royal companies poised to expand.

- Digital Health & MedTech Exports
  - Crawley's health tech cluster, led by Elekta, positions the region for future global health demand.

- Financial and Insurance
  - Re onshoring of financial and insurance services built around AXA — a Global insurer with a significant presence in Redhill.
  - Santander Consumer UK Plc — International financial services provider.
  - Fidelity International – Investment Management and large employer in Tadworth.

- Engineering and Infrastructure
  - Balfour Beatty Rail Construction — Contributing to infrastructure exports and national rail projects.
  - Cubic Transportation Systems — Smart pay transportation solutions with global applications.

- Emerging Digital and Tech Employers:
  - The region is seeing growth is tech and digital in a range of sectors

- Green Logistics and Automated Warehousing
    - Pipeline interest from international logistics firms and automation specialists.

- AI & Quantum Computing
    - Leveraging Quantum computing, work being undertaken by local universities, and global investment, a future hub for AI and Quantum computing.

Key Messages Investors:

"Gatwick Diamond is already delivering on the UK's investment ambitions, with £2.2 billion of active projects and a growing pipeline in green infrastructure, innovation, and global logistics. It is a live, investable region driving high-skilled jobs, export growth, and future-proofed connectivity."
Brett North – Chief Executive Officer – Gatwick Diamond Initiative

Data Sources

Data sources: ONS Mid-Year Estimates 2023, Department for Transport Accessibility Statistics 2023, National Rail Travel Data 2023, Highways England Network Analysis 2023.

- NS Mid-2023 Population Estimates — released November 2023
- Department for Transport (DfT) Travel Time Metrics — updated 2023 (latest revision)
- National Rail Journey Planner Data — modelling from late 2023 schedules
- Highways England strategic road network analysis — as of 2023 traffic flow and modelling
- "Gatwick Diamond Growth and Investment Briefing" – October 2024
- "Infrastructure Priorities for South East England" – January 2025, prepared ahead of the UKREiiF submissions
- "Gatwick Northern Runway: Economic Potential Report" – March 2025, prepared for DLUHC and BEIS
- Plus, a summary note from the Gatwick Diamond Strategy Workshop held in February 2025
- Crawley Borough Council planning portal
- Reigate & Banstead Borough Council development control
- Gatwick Diamond Initiative development listings
- Commercial developers' announcements (SEGRO, Prologis, St. Modwen, etc.)
- Source: Centre for Cities - Crawley Economy Report
- Gatwick Airport Annual Reports (Pre-pandemic and 2023 Recovery Data)
- Sources: Crawley Borough Council & Reigate & Banstead Borough Council Economic Plans
- Levelling Up White Paper, UK Innovation Strategy, UK Net Zero Strategy (Gov.uk)
- Latest data points as of April 2025 - Combination of direct sources (websites, annual reports), sector updates, and economic development plans

Annex 6: Reigate & Banstead Resident Survey findings (May 2025)

Future of your Council Residents' Survey – Final results

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About

Context

1. The Data & Insight Team were commissioned in March 2025 to conduct a rapid piece of engagement work to capture resident's views on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).
2. This engagement piece was designed to be accessible to all (regardless of LGR background knowledge) and focused on local identity, local democracy, local economy and priorities for LGR.
3. The purpose of this engagement is to inform proposals for LGR, which will be submitted to the UK government on the 9th May.
4. This engagement piece was conducted under extremely compressed timelines, with a fieldwork period of 3 weeks (31st March – 21st April).
5. A detailed breakdown is available in an interactive **PowerBI report.** This report allows authorised users to 'drill down' by demographics.

Sample

1. The total sample number is 1461 completed survey returns.
2. The survey was advertised through:
    a. A mailshot of invitation to participate postcards that were distributed to a random selection of 15,000 households across the borough (using the multistage cluster sampling technique)
    b. Social media advertising (including boosted promotions)
    c. Targeted online advertising
    d. Posters and hardcopy questionnaires in community centres
    e. Emails to stakeholders
3. Respondents were also able to request a paper copy, which was posted out to them and can be returned via FREEPOST.
4. To encourage participation, three £50 Love2Shop vouchers are available in a prize draw. The prize draw will take place after the survey has closed.
5. It is not yet possible to confirm the level of demographic representation within the sample. Whilst the mix of respondents is diverse, and the distribution method aimed to achieve a demographically (and statistically) representative sample, this was not fully achieved. For example, 37% of respondents in the final results are retired, whereas 21% of the borough population are retired (as per Census 2021). There was no time available to do adjustments to the sample (e.g. weighting) to achieve full demographic representation.
6. All best efforts and distribution methods were deployed to maximise participation of various demographic groups. The sample in general has achieved a good mix of ages (including younger groups) and other demographic characteristics. This is the best possible outcome given time constraints (e.g. a compressed fieldwork period).

Analysis Methods

1. *Closed questions:* these were analysed by dividing answer choices by the total number of responses. *Please note,* some questions allow respondents to select more than one option. **The questions with multiple answers reflect the proportion of all answers given (and not % of respondents).** These figures are best interpreted as an indication of the popularity of an answer.
2. *Free text:* these questions were run through a topic modelling AI algorithm to achieve a quick analysis of the data. A deeper manual thematic analysis then took place to identify and refine topics, and to provide the number of comments each topic received.

Limitations

1. A target sample size of 780 was selected in order to achieve a +/-3.5% margin of error at the 95% confidence level. Although this target sample size was greatly exceeded, and there is a good demographic mix of respondents, the final results are not fully demographically representative. Timelines did not allow for corrective analysis for results to reflect full demographic representation. Given the timescales, the best possible outcome has been achieved.

Headline findings

Local identity

Resident's local identity

Respondents were asked to select *one* statement that best describes what they consider is their local identity. Of all answers given, the top 5 answers were:

1. I feel part of my local area[1] (55%).
2. I feel part of the borough of Reigate & Banstead (21%).
3. I feel part of Surrey (9%).
4. I feel part of East Surrey (4%).
5. I feel part of South-East England (3%).

Why residents value their local area

Respondents were asked to select statements that describe why they value their local area (select all that apply). Of all answers given, the top 5 answers were:

1. Natural Environment (20%).
2. Transport links – road/rail (15%).
3. Proximity to London (14%).
4. Transport links – proximity to airport (13%).
5. Proximity to family (10%) and proximity to friends (10%).

What ties residents' local community together

Respondents were asked to select statements that describe factors that ties their local community together (select up to 5 options). Of all answers given, the top 5 answers were:

1. Natural Environment (18%).
2. Places where people can meet together (12%).
3. How people interact with each other (11%) and accessibility of local services (11%).
4. Willingness to help others (10%) and common interests (10%).
5. Variety of local services (8%).

Local democracy

Engagement with demographic processes

Respondents were asked to indicate that, if they wanted to raise an issue about their local area, how they would go about it (select up to 3 options). Of all answers given, the top 5 answers were:

1. Borough councillor (29%).
2. Raise with my Council - Town/Parish, Borough or County (22%).
3. MP (18%).
4. Raise with a resident association or my housing association (10%).
5. County councillor (9%).

[1] Please note, in the online version of the survey, the area respondents live in (drop-down list) pulled through into this option. For example, "I feel part of [respondent's local area].

Getting involved in decision making

Respondents were asked if they would like to get involved in decision making.

1. 76% selected yes.
2. 22% selected no.

Respondents who selected yes were asked to indicate how they would like to get more involved in local council decision making (select all that apply). Of all answers given, the top 5 answers were:

1. Take part in public consultations (30%).
2. Know more about my councillors and how to contact them (25%).
3. Take part in focus groups or resident panels (25%).
4. Attend or watch council meetings (12%).
5. None of the above (3%).

Local economy

Travel to work

Respondents were asked to indicate the distance they travelled to work (or if they entirely work from home, are retired, in education or not in employment).
Of all answers given, the top 5 answers were:

1. I am retired (37%).
2. Travel 1 – 5 miles to work (12%).
3. Travel over 20 miles to work (9%).
4. Travel 5 – 10 miles to work (8%).
5. I work from home on all my working days (8%), and I am not in employment (7%).

Town centres visited in the last 12 months

Respondents were asked to indicate 5 town centres they have visited the most in the last 12 months (select up to 5 options). Of all answers given, the top 6 answers were:

1. Reigate (25%).
2. Redhill (18%).
3. Banstead (11%).
4. Horley (9%) and Epsom (9%).
5. Dorking (8%).
6. Crawley (6%)

Reasons for visiting town centres

Respondents were asked to select reasons for why they visited each town centres (select all that apply).
The top 5 reasons for visiting:

Reigate:

1. Shopping (28%).
2. Dining (23%).
3. Sports, recreation and outdoor spaces (12%).
4. Entertainment (10%) and visiting friends or family (10%).
5. Public services (7%).

Redhill:

1. Shopping (35%).
2. Entertainment (16%).
3. Dining (12%).
4. Public services (11%).
5. Sports, recreation and outdoor spaces (9%).

Banstead:

1. Shopping (32%).
2. Dining (22%).
3. Public services (11%).
4. Visiting friends or family (10%).
5. Sports, recreation and outdoor spaces (9%).

Horley:

1. Shopping (36%).
2. Dining (14%).
3. Public services (14%).
4. Visiting friends or family (13%).
5. Entertainment (6%).

Epsom:

1. Shopping (36%).
2. Dining (17%).
3. Entertainment (15%).
4. Visiting friends or family (8%) and public services (9%).
5. Sports, recreation and outdoor spaces (6%).

Dorking:

1. Shopping (34%).
2. Dining (17%).
3. Entertainment (15%).
4. Sports, recreation and outdoor spaces (11%).
5. Visiting friends or family (10%).

Crawley:

3. Shopping (47%).
4. Entertainment (16%).
5. Dining (11%).
6. Visiting friends or family (8%).
7. Sports, recreation and outdoor spaces (7%).

Transport links

Respondents were asked to rate the transport links (combined road and public) between their home and the town centres they visit the most. The table below shows respondents' transport connection ratings of the most frequently visited towns.

	Very poor or poor	Satisfactory	Good or very good	Don't know
Reigate	20%	30%	**44%**	7%
Redhill	13%	24%	**59%**	4%
Banstead	29%	28%	**36%**	8%
Horley	10%	26%	**56%**	7%
Epsom	32%	**32%**	29%	7%
Dorking	24%	30%	**37%**	8%
Crawley	11%	31%	**51%**	8%

Priorities for Local Government Reorganisation

What resident's value about RBBC

Respondents were asked to select statements that indicate what they value about their local borough Council (select all that apply). Of all answers given, the top 5 answers were:

1. Communication from the council (19%) and good knowledge of the local area (19%).
2. A source of information and advice (17%).
3. Knowing my local councillor (12%) and a trusted organisation (12%).
4. Council buildings close to where I live (9%).
5. Nothing at all (6%).

Moving RBBC services to a larger council

Residents were presented with a list of RBBC services, and asked to indicate if they support, do not support (or don't know) the delivery of these services by a larger Council. Across the board, all services received a majority 'do not support' responses[2].

Of all answers given, the 5 services areas that received the most 'do not support' responses were:

1. Local plan and planning applications (60% do not support).
2. Community development (56% do not support).
3. Parks and greenspaces (55% do not support).
4. Community safety (50% do not support).
5. Street cleaning and Waste and recycling collection (49% do not support).

Positives and negatives of moving RBBC services to a larger council

Respondents were asked to provide up to 5 positives and 5 negatives of moving RBBC services to a larger council (free text).

[2] Business support received 39% 'do not support' and 39% 'don't know' responses.

Positives

Cost savings (592 comments)

1. The economies of scale and reduction of duplicated work provided through LGR will make delivering services more cost effective and efficient. (514 comments)

"More cost effective"

"Cost saving for county wide initiatives & activities"

"Possible efficiency gain"

2. Joining up with other Local Authorities will provide a greater pool of resources for services to draw from. (78 comments)

"More resources available"

"Opportunity to use best resources from a larger area"

"Possible increased funding for improving services"

Improved services by joining with other councils (145 comments)

1. Services could be improved due to joining with other councils (55 comments)

"Enhanced Services"

"Streamlining services"

2. Greater strategic vision and co-ordination of services (80 comments)

"More strategic approach to service delivery"

"Potential for more joined up thinking"

3. Having a single council to contact may make it easier for residents to 'get in touch' and resolve any issues (53 comments)

"There will be one council and we will know who to contact - no more is it borough or is it county"

4. The sharing of best practices and innovative ideas (50 comments)

"Better placed to share best practice across the area"
"Opportunity to share knowledge and learn from what works well elsewhere"

5. Reduced bureaucracy (43 comments)

"Reduction in bureaucracy"

"Able to get things done"

Consistency (82 comments)

1. LGR may lead to a more consistent coverage of services available across areas, alongside consistency in the quality of services. (82 comments).

"Fairness across the Borough"

"Common standards"

"More unified experience across the county"

Accountability (31 comments)

1. One larger council will make it clear as to who is responsible for delivering services, and therefore make it easier for residents to hold them accountable. (31 comments)

"Less passing the buck"

"Clearer Accountability - With just one council in charge of all local government services, it's easier for residents to know who is responsible for what. This simplifies public engagement and can enhance democratic accountability"

Staff (26 comments)

1. A larger council may attract more higher skilled and specialist staff, alongside giving existing staff more experience. (26 comments)

"Able to attract the best people"

"More specialist expertise"

"More experienced staff by reason of exposure to greater issues across a greater area"

Influence (24 comments)

1. A larger council is likely to have more external influence. (24 comments).

"Closer ties to central government"

"Might have greater power to make things happen"

"More influence for the council externally"

Council Tax (19 comments)

1. Some residents hope Council Tax will be reduced as a result of LGR. (19 comments).

"Hopefully reduce council tax"

Councillors (9 comments)

1. A larger council may attract more experienced councillors. It will be easier to raise an issue as only one councillor would need to be contacted. (9 comments).

"Easier access using one Councillor for everything"

"Possible greater experienced councillors with more relevant skills as there will be fewer of them selected from the same pool"

Negatives

Removed from the community (1334 comments)

1. A larger council would be removed from the community (275 comments)

"Little connection with local needs and communities"

2. A one size fits all approach will be given to services and policies, meaning services will not be tailored to the specific needs of each community. (561 comments)

"Smaller boroughs or districts may feel overlooked or underrepresented in a larger authority, especially rural or distinct communities. Local nuances can be lost when decision-making is centralised"

"Potential loss of attention to local matters"

3. Decisions will be made by people who do not have local knowledge of the Reigate & Banstead area. (365 comments)

"Blanket decisions made that impact negatively due to lack of local understanding"

"Do the people dealing with thing know what is going on in my area/road?"

4. Residents will be less able to influence decisions or have their views represented (133 comments)

"Feeling more detached from decisions made on our behalf."

"Loss of voice for local communities when part of a larger authority".

Poorer services (515 comments)

1. A larger council will mean resources are spread over a wider area, meaning the types of services available to residents will decrease (311 comments)

"Poor service delivery"

"Services will be worse"

"Loss of services"

2. There will be inconsistency in the type and quality of services delivered over a larger area, and some areas may get preferential treatment and priority for services and the investment of council funds. (123 comments)

"Funding & services might not be distributed fairly"

"There will inevitably be even more prioritisation of certain areas to the detriment of others"

"Too much being focussed on the bigger towns e.g. Guildford or Woking"

3. Face to face services may be located further away from residents', requiring further travel and therefore making services harder to access (48 comments)

"Council Hubs likely to move to larger towns meaning less accessibility for people outside those towns"

"Older, disabled and those who do not drive will be unable to attend appointments easily"

4. The transition period to a larger council will disrupt services that are currently being delivered. (33 comments)

"Possible interim disruption to services"

"Unable to maintain continuity of service"

"Change is always disruptive and unsettling"

LGR will not save money and could be inefficient (348 comments)

1. A larger council may be more expensive to run and may not save money. (129 comments)

"Centralisation doesn't equal efficiency normally the opposite"

"Less prudent way in spending our council tax money"

"Wastage on cancelled contracts as joined-up Councils' contracts terminate at different times for same purpose"

2. Reigate & Banstead residents will need to absorb the debt of other financially struggling councils in Surrey. (132 comments)

"Inheriting large debts from fiscally irresponsible councils"

"Boroughs monetary surplus will be absorbed"

3. LGR may result in higher council tax bills for Reigate & Banstead residents. (48 comments)

"Council tax will go up"

4. The high financial cost of merging with other councils. (39 comments)

"It will cost a fortune and be a waste"

"Initial cost of moving services take long time to recoup"

"Money wasted on re-organising"

Too big to manage (204 comments)

1. A unitary council that delivers services over a large area will be too big to effectively manage. (150 comments)

"A larger unlocal council will not cope with all the duties that the existing councils can"

"Too large a population and area"

2. The priorities of the different joined councils may differ, resulting in conflicts and difficulties in decision making. (54 comments)

"Potential disagreements amongst councils made up of multiple political parties"

"A larger council's funding priorities may not align with local priorities"

"Vulnerable to unwelcome compromises"

Communications with a larger council (125 comments)

1. A larger council may not provide clear communications, be less responsive and will be harder for residents to contact to resolve their queries (125 comments).

"Communication standards may decline"

"Longer waiting time for an answer"

"Even more difficult to speak to someone"

"Harder to find local info"

Accountability (96 comments)

1. A larger council will be less accountable to its residents. (96 comments)

"More pass the buck type culture"

"Will be too big and not accountable"

Loss of local identity (93 comments)

1. Local areas will lose their identity and sense of community by joining with other borough councils. (93 comments)

"Lose our village identity under a larger council"

"Breakdown of Community identity"

"Loss of identity. Proud to be part of the borough of Reigate & Banstead"

Bureaucracy (79 comments)

1. A larger council will cause increased bureaucracy for residents and make decision making processes longer. (79 comments)

"Additional unnecessary complexity/bureaucracy for residents/ services"

"More lengthy decision making processes"

Councillors (53 comments)

1. A larger council will mean that there are less councillors and therefore less opportunity for residents to raise their views and concerns to councillors. These councillors may not be aware of the specific needs of communities in the areas they represent. (53 comments).

"Fewer councillors who will have more work"

"Councillors making decisions about an area they don't know"

"Loss of local connection between residents and councillors"

"Less influence for ward-level councillors"

Staff losses (48 comments)

1. The possible redundancies for some Reigate & Banstead Borough Council staff will cause a loss of local jobs, alongside the loss of experience, skills and local knowledge needed to deliver effective services. (48 comments).

"Current staff at town hall are excellent, fear this being watered down"

"Local people losing their jobs"
"Loss of a large number of knowledgeable staff"

Number of unitary councils

Respondents were asked to indicate how many unitary councils should cover Surrey (select one option only). In order of the highest percentage of responses:

1. Support for 3 unitary councils (37%).
2. None of the above (28%).
3. Don't know (23%).

4. Support for 2 unitary councils (12%).

Area groupings

Respondents were asked to indicate the areas that RBBC should be grouped with (select all that apply). *Of all answers given,* the top 5 answers were:

1. Mole Valley (24%).
2. Epsom & Ewell (20%).
3. Tandridge (18%).
4. None of the above (12%).
5. Crawley (9%).

Priorities for Local Government Reorganisation

Respondents were asked to select what RBBC should prioritise for Local Government Reorganisation (select up to 3 options). *Of all answers given*, the top 5 answers were:

1. Service quality (31%).
2. Value for money (25%).
3. Accountability (24%).
4. Representation (13%).
5. Access (6%).

Views and concerns for Local Government Reorganisation

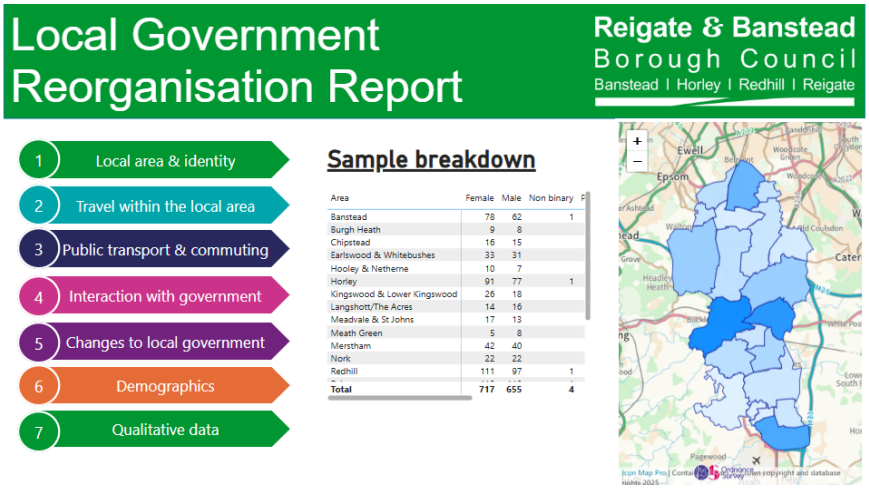
Respondents were asked to indicate any views or concerns they have about Local Government Reorganisation (free text).

The below answers are the headline topics highlighted in the comments. The themes identified were broadly similar to those identified in the "positives and negatives of LGR" free text question. In order to achieve an analysis in compressed time scales, a deeper and manual analysis of this free text question was not possible.

The below topics are in no particular order:

- There is a potential for savings and service improvements if Local Government Reorganisation is managed properly. However, increased financial costs and poorer services could happen if Local Government Reorganisation is mismanaged
- Larger geographical areas means less influence of smaller communities.
- Unfair that RBBC residents would have to take on debt of other councils, and that residents have no say in this.
- Local knowledge and an understanding of local issues will be lost.
- Worry of potential council tax increases and concern that those who managed the finances of councils in debt will manage the finances of the new unitary council.

Interactive PowerBI report



An [interactive PowerBI report] for the "future of your council" engagement is available for authorised users. Officers are encouraged to use this report in order to drill down by demographic groups, which will enable the engagement data to be fully utilised.

Annex 7: Crawley Resident Survey findings (May 2025)

Crawley Connections Survey (Local Government Devolution)

Total responses: 422

Overall:

- Willingness to travel for work, leisure, and retail is highly localised with the highest engagement being within Crawley itself (87–94%) with Horsham and Horley also being key. Brighton is a strong regional draw, receiving high levels of engagement for leisure and retail shopping.
- Healthcare, transport links, and green spaces are viewed as the most important services, with a strong preference for local access within 30 minutes' travel time.

Work:

- Respondents showed a strong willingness to travel to work locally in Crawley (94%) or in nearby towns. Excluding Crawley, Horsham is the most preferred destination (74%), followed by Horley (72%) and Crawley Down (66%).
- Areas with the least willingness to travel for work were for distant or less-connected areas such as Littlehampton (7.5%), Chichester (10.8%), and Lewes (12.2%).

Leisure activities:

- Within Crawley (93%) remains the top choice, followed by Horsham (81%) with Horley (70%) and Brighton (67%) also being popular.
- The least attractive areas for travelling for leisure activities were Caterham (16%), Leatherhead (16%), and Epsom (18%).

Retail shopping:

- Crawley (88%) and Horsham (86%) are the preferred local options, however there is high willingness to travel to Brighton for retail options (76%)
- Rarely considered areas for retail shopping were Caterham (9%), Leatherhead (10%), and Littlehampton (14%).

Important Services:

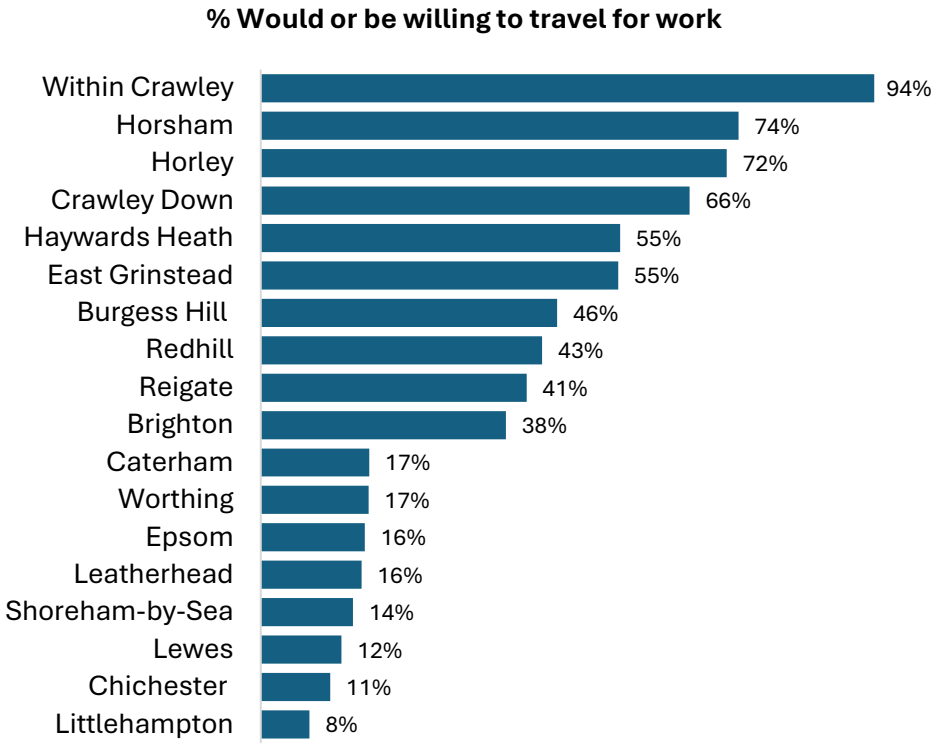
- All services were regarded as generally important, with Healthcare being the most frequently mentioned essential service (20%).

Travel Time Preferences for Services:

- 10-30 minutes was the most common acceptable travel time for accessing services (57%), followed by Under 10 minutes (33%).

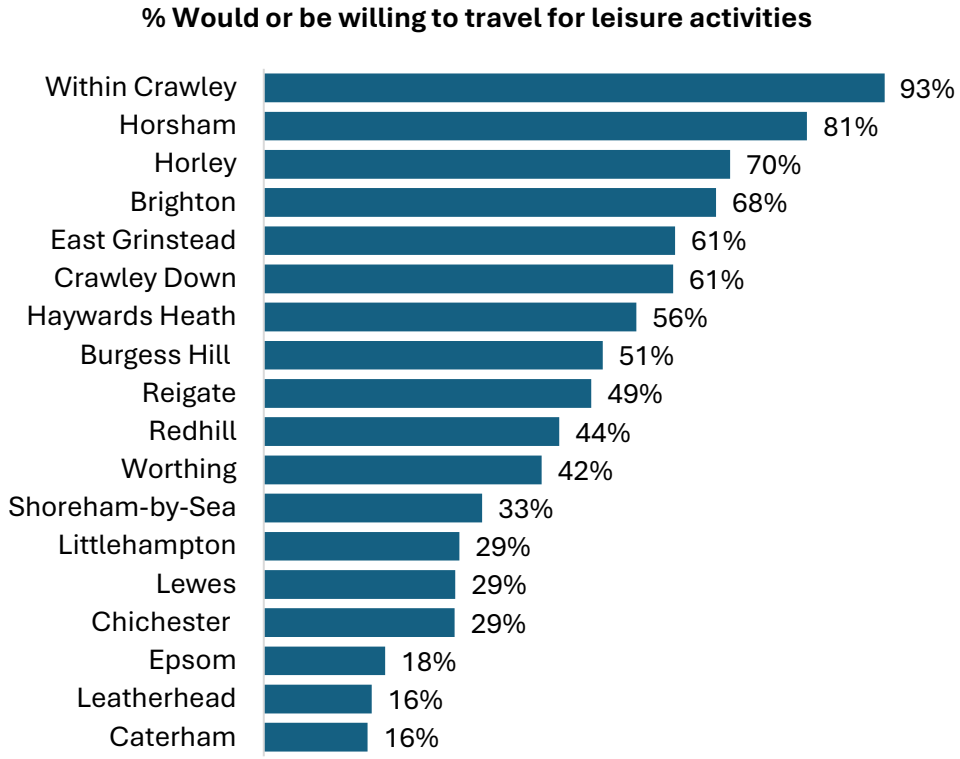
Section 1: Work Destinations (Q1)

Question: Which areas would you travel or be willing to travel for work?



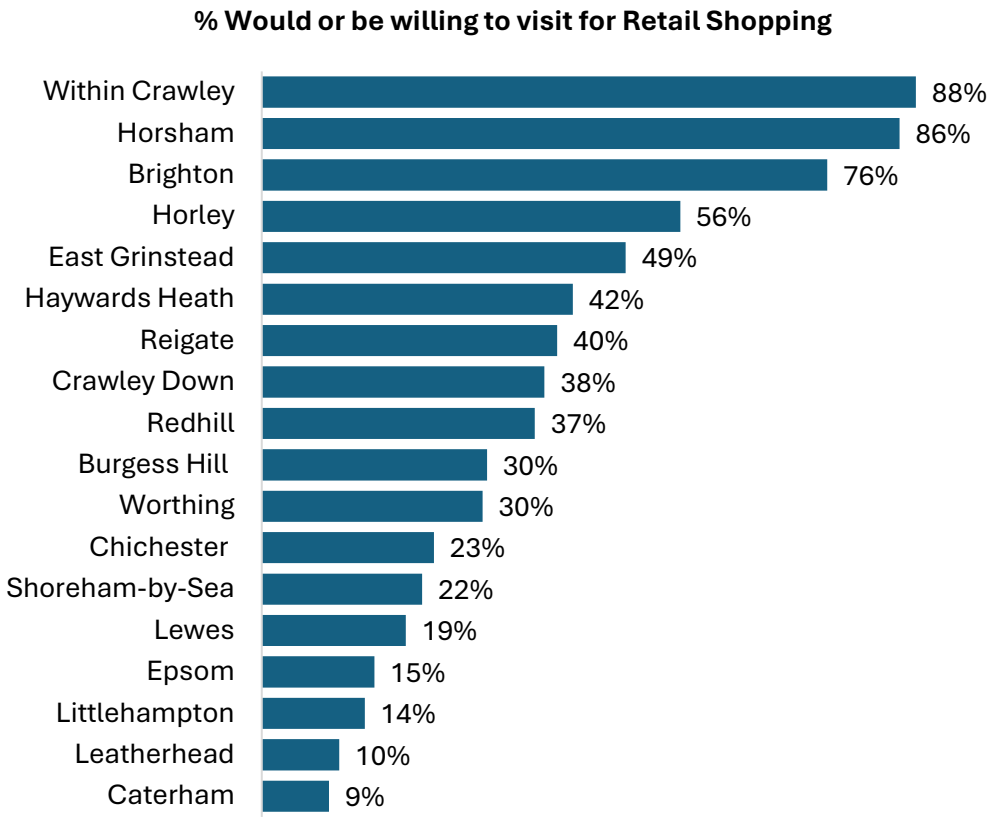
Section 2: Leisure Activities (Q2)

Question: Which areas would you go or be willing to go for leisure activities?



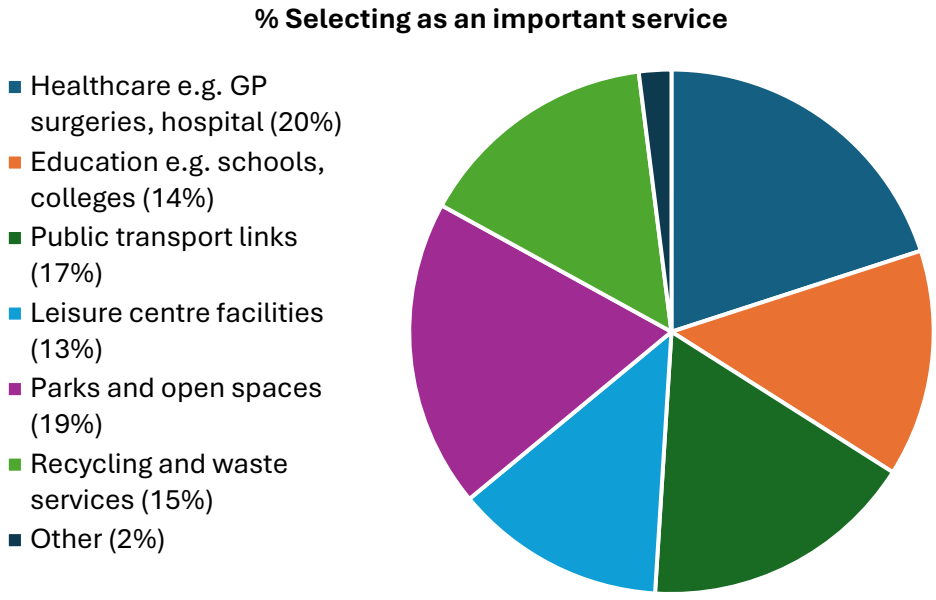
Section 3: Shopping (Q3)

Question: Which areas would you visit or be willing to visit for retail shopping?



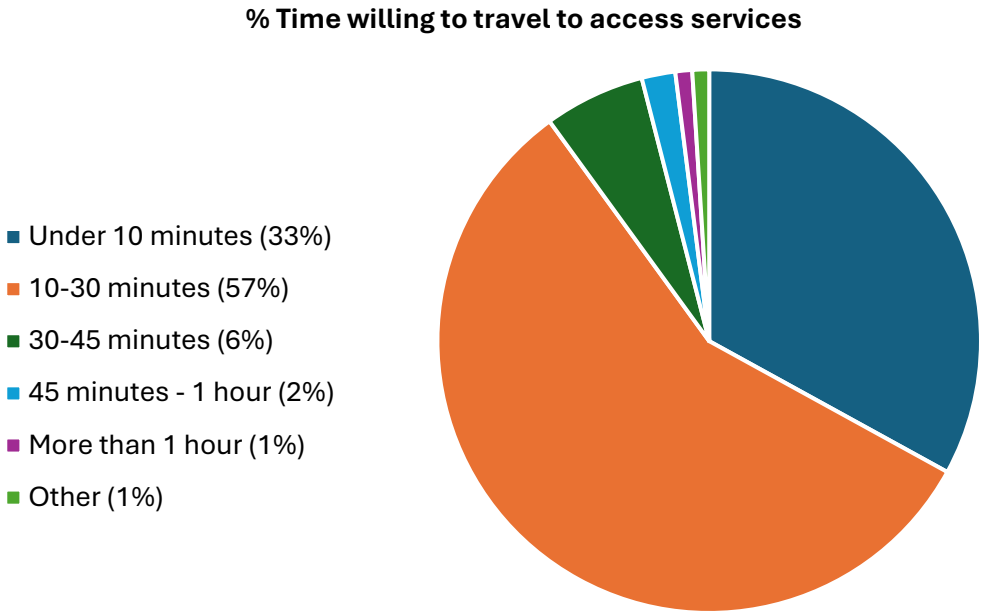
Section 4: Service Use (Q4)

Question: Which of the following services is it important to have close to where you live?



Section 5: Willingness to Travel for Services

Question: How far would you be willing to travel to access the services you selected?



Annex 8: Financial information

Collective Debt

Borrowing type £	GF	HRA	Non-specific
Long term borrowing	-	**224,325,000**	-
ST borrowing with other Local Authorities	5,000,000	0	0
ST borrowing with other organisations	0	0	0
Total short-term borrowing	**5,000,000**	-	-
Total external borrowing	**5,000,000**	**224,325,000**	**229,325,000**

Cost of Finance £	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Budgeted interest payable	300,000	300,000	300,000
Total budgeted MRP	1,352,102	1,381,108	1,403,940
Total finance cost	**1,652,102**	**1,681,108**	**1,703,940**

Capital Financing Requirement (£)	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
GF	107,783,000	113,439,000	119,868,000
HRA	226,519,000	231,519,000	234,519,000
Total CFR	**334,302,000**	**344,958,000**	**354,387,000**

Total Reserve Position at 31 March 2024

	Crawley	Reigate and Banstead	Total
Usable Reserves	£68,844	£74,601	**£143,445**
Unusable Reserves	£909,236	£137,375	**£1,046,611**
Total Reserves	£978,080	£211,976	**£1,190,056**

Breakdown of Usable Reserves:			
General Fund Balances	£3,810	£3,500	**£7,310**
Earmarked General Fund Reserves	£11,170	£29,450	**£40,620**
Housing Revenue Account Reserves	£26,776		**£26,776**
Capital Receipts Reserve	£17,741	£9,179	**£26,920**
Capital Grants Unapplied Account	£9,347	£32,472	**£41,819**
Total Usable Reserves	£68,844	£74,601	**£143,445**

Funding Analysis

	Crawley	Reigate and Banstead	TOTAL
Baselines, Top-ups/ tariffs, and Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA)			
District BFL	4,058,144	2,620,988	6,679,132
County BFL	19,405,245	18,168,383	37,573,627
Total Baseline Funding Level (BFL)	23,463,389	20,789,371	**44,252,759**
District RSG	280,918	188,216	469,134
County RSG	665,512	547,659	1,213,171
Total Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	946,430	735,875	**1,682,305**
District SFA	4,339,062	2,809,205	7,148,266
County SFA	20,070,757	18,716,042	38,786,798
Settlement Funding Assessment	24,409,819	21,525,246	**45,935,065**
District BRB	54,503,184	24,763,314	79,266,497
County tier split (fire 1% not included)	9%	9%	
County BRB	12,263,216	5,571,746	17,834,962
Business Rate Baseline	66,766,400	30,335,059	**97,101,459**
Top-up (+) or tariff (-)	-43,303,011	-9,545,689	**-52,848,700**
Business Rate Retention System			
Tier split			
Levy rate			**50.0%**
Non-Domestic Rating Income + Section 31 grants	71,684,628	31,689,667	103,374,295
Top-up/ (Tariff)	-43,303,011	-9,545,689	-52,848,700
Retained rates (including TT)	28,381,617	22,143,978	50,525,595
Retained rates above BFL	4,918,228	1,354,607	6,272,836
	21.0%	6.5%	14.2%
Levy	-2,459,114	-426,261	-2,885,375
S.31 - cap compensation for adj Non-Domestic Rating Income	12,830,139	6,238,644	19,068,783
S.31 - Multiplier Cap (Adj to Tariff or Top-up)	-7,750,388	-1,879,229	-9,629,617
Compensation for under-indexing the multiplier	5,079,752	4,359,414	**9,439,166**
Renewables			
Designated areas			
Shale Gas			
Cost of Collection			
TOTAL BUSINESS RATE INCOME	**31,002,254**	**26,077,131**	**57,079,385**

Council Tax (2024/25)			
Council taxbase (for council tax setting purposes) (£)	36,637	64,252	100,889
Band D (district) (£)	232	257	
Band D (county) (£)	1,715	1,759	
Deduct fire element of county Band D	-100	-100	
TOTAL Band D (incl ASC precept, excl local precepts)	1,847	1,916	
Band D (district) (£) 2025-26	239	265	
Band D (county) (£) 2025-26	1,696	1,741	
TOTAL Band D (incl ASC precept, excl local precepts) 2025-26	1,935	2,006	
Council Tax	70,877,053	128,905,137	199,782,191
Second home premium			
TOTAL COUNCIL TAX	**70,877,053**	**128,905,137**	**199,782,191**
Grant Funding			
Revenue Support Grant	946,430	735,875	1,682,305
New Homes Bonus	24,850	540,966	565,816
Public Health Grant	5,299,811	5,449,674	10,749,485
Minimum Funding Guarantee/ Funding Floor	381,173	1,161,573	1,542,746
Employers' National Insurance Contributions Grant	1,492,930	1,104,600	2,597,530
Social care grants	13,028,424	14,114,739	27,143,164
Children's Social Care Prevention Grant	381,861	309,767	691,628
Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Grant	249,553	346,744	596,297
TOTAL GRANT FUNDING	**21,805,032**	**23,763,940**	**45,568,972**
TOTAL RESOURCES	**123,684,339**	**178,746,209**	**302,430,548**
Total population	110,190	141,348	251,538
TOTAL BUSINESS RATE INCOME (per head)	281.35	184.49	226.92
TOTAL BUSINESS RATE INCOME (share %)	100%	100%	100%
TOTAL COUNCIL TAX (per head)	643.23	911.97	794.24
TOTAL COUNCIL TAX (share %)	100%	100%	100%
TOTAL GRANT FUNDING (per head)	197.89	168.12	181.16
TOTAL GRANT FUNDING (share %)	100%	100%	100%
TOTAL RESOURCES (per head)	1,122.46	1,264.58	1,202.33
TOTAL RESOURCES (share %)	100%	100%	100%

Annex 9: Letters of support

Surrey and Sussex Healthcare
NHS Trust

Please reply to:
Name: Angela Stevenson
Title: Chief Executive
☎ : 01737 768511 Ex 6191
Email: angela.stevenson4@nhs.net

Trust Headquarters
East Surrey Hospital
Canada Avenue
Redhill
RH1 5RH

Tel: 01737 768 511
www.surreyandsussex.nhs.uk

8 May 2025

Mari Roberts-Wood
Chief Executive
Reigate and Banstead Council

Ian Duke
Chief Executive
Crawley Borough Council

Via email: mari.roberts-wood@reigate-banstead.gov.uk
ian.duke@crawley.gov.uk

Dear Mari and Ian,

RE: Maximising the growth potential of the Gatwick area through Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation

Thank you for sharing with our Trust Board your aspirations to combine the geographical areas of Crawley and Reigate and Banstead Borough Councils with a view to developing a new local government and strategic authority geography. We recognise that such a new organisation might have a role in commissioning health and care services for the population that we serve and that bringing these Borough Councils together could support our collective approach to addressing health inequalities and improving health outcomes.

Surrey and Sussex Healthcare Trust provides acute health services to the populations of East Surrey and North West Sussex. The impact of caring for patients across two county boundaries is significant due to services for health and social care being commissioned differently; there are also different strategic approaches to developing a neighbourhood approach to prevention and overall health improvement. The differences not only affect the quality of care that individuals receive, but also contribute to the widening gap in health outcomes. Standardising our approach to health and care and prevention within the geographies that we

support would ensure that resources are distributed more equitably, and would streamline communication and collaboration between various healthcare providers, local government and third sector providers.

There are differing population health needs and inequalities throughout our geography and the complexities associated with existing boundaries and commissioning do not necessarily support our collective approach to addressing these. The outcomes associated with the disparity in healthcare provision and our approach to prevention within the area that we serve can be seen in the following ways:

- The Crawley population are more likely to have their cancer diagnosis as a result of an Emergency Department attendance
- Patients awaiting care packages to support their discharge are likely to have a longer length of stay in hospital once they are ready to be discharged, depending upon where they live
- A patient's postcode will determine the length of time that a patient will have to wait to access their onward care/ assessment and the care to which they are entitled.

Our approach to improving the health of the population we serve lies ultimately in our community-based approach to wellness and prevention continuing development of our neighbourhoods. This must be undertaken jointly with our local government partners; a streamlined approach to how we do this, the outcomes that we want to achieve, and the way we utilise BCF will all contribute to a better way of working and improved health and care for our local population.

Yours sincerely,

Angela Stevenson

Chief Executive
Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust

CC: Karen McDowell, Chief Executive, Surrey Heartlands ICS
Mark Smith Acting, Chief Executive, NHS Sussex ICS

Brett North
Chief Executive Officer
Gatwick Diamond Initiative
Astral Towers,
Betts Way,
Crawley RH10 9XA

30th April 2025

Councillor Richard Biggs
Leader of Reigate and Banstead Borough Council
Town Hall,
Castlefield Rd,
Reigate RH2 0SH.

Dear Councillor Biggs,

Support for Cross-Boundary Devolution Proposals

I am writing on behalf of the Gatwick Diamond Initiative (GDi) to confirm our support for the joint proposals being developed by Reigate and Banstead Borough Council and Crawley Borough Council to secure cross-boundary devolution.

We strongly believe that the functional economic area around Gatwick Airport, including Reigate, Banstead, Crawley and East Surrey, would benefit from a governance model that reflects its true economic strengths and growth potential. The historic county boundaries between Surrey and West Sussex no longer match the needs of the modern economy. Devolution provides a vital opportunity to align decision-making with real-world economic geography and drive sustainable prosperity for the area and for the wider South East and the wider UK.

We fully endorse the case for cross-boundary devolution, which will:

- Enable coherent strategic planning for housing, skills and infrastructure across the economic area.
- Strengthen inward investment opportunities by presenting a clear, unified investment proposition to global markets.
- Support transport-led growth through integrated planning along key national corridors (M23, London–Brighton rail line, M25) and further afield to the OXCAM ARC and potentially to Scotland.
- Empower local leaders to drive faster, locally relevant decisions that directly support businesses and communities.

- Enhance the Gatwick Diamond's contribution to national priorities, including Global Britain, infrastructure led growth and net zero growth.

At GDi, we have seen first-hand the success that collaboration across council boundaries can achieve, particularly through our joint inward investment work. The devolution proposals will significantly strengthen our ability to further attract global investors and ensure that investment is better aligned to the needs of the Gatwick Diamond's high-growth sectors in aviation, digital, life sciences, AI, quantum computing, advanced manufacturing and clean technology.

GDi are supportive of your proposals and we look forward to working closely with yourselves, other business groups, regional stakeholders and strategic partners such as Gatwick Airport to deliver a shared ambition for growth, investment and opportunity across the region.

Yours sincerely,

Brett North
Chief Executive Officer
Gatwick Diamond Initiative

HORLEY TOWN COUNCIL

Joan Walsh
Chief Executive Officer
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Cath Rose
Corporate Policy Team / Local Government Reorganisation
Reigate & Banstead Borough Council
Town Hall, Castlefield Road
Reigate
RH2 0SH
Sent by Email: Catherine.Rose@reigate-banstead.gov.uk 30 April 2025

Dear Cath

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) – Joint Proposal by Reigate & Banstead Borough Council and Crawley Borough Council

Horley Town Council (HTC) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the LGR submission, communicated by Reigate & Banstead Borough Council (RBBC) to explore options with Crawley Borough Council (CBC) as a unitary council and the future growth potential of both geographical areas combined.

Our comments are set out in detail below, with reference to the final proposals published on 29 April 2025, which we understand are to be considered by the RBBC Executive and Full Council next week and supersede the Interim Plans.

In our view, the joint proposal from RBBC and CBC to form a unitary council makes sound economic and business sense. The Gatwick Diamond region is a well-recognised and long-established area of substantial economic success. Given that Gatwick and the surrounding environment are closely intertwined, cross-boundary alignment will enable consistent environmental standards to be applied across The Diamond, to benefit residents and visitors as well as local ecosystems. In your joint letter to Government of 21 March 2025, it further states that the estimates for the regional Gross Value Added (GVA) show that, together, RBBC and CBC made a contribution of £13.05bn and this figure represents 50% of the entire Gatwick Diamond economic area.

CBC and RBBC jointly represent a key centre for future growth. By basing local and strategic development around the two adjoining areas, will have the potential to unlock new opportunities in both housing and commercial development. We are however concerned that the current shortfall with housing targets in Crawley due to shortage of development sites, which we gather is not presently the case in East Surrey, may constrain future housing delivery through this union. Measures to mitigate this risk should therefore be given very careful consideration.

From Surrey's Interim Proposal for LGR and Devolution, we understand that the Borough and District Councils collectively share a vision to split the county into two or three unitary councils, with RBBC expressing a preference for a three-unitary model.

We have noted the associated financial estimates for each option. We are supportive of the three-unitary model, as we believe it provides a better balance in service delivery for residents, while preserving stronger local connections and community identities compared to the two-unitary model.

The overall costs should, however be further weighted on efficiency and performance criteria and not just the broad cost savings calculated in the early years of reorganisation. It seems that the difference in costs between two or three authorities seems quite modest, noting that two unitary authorities will save roughly £15million more per year than the three unitary-model and additionally, where costs will be repaid and savings achieved from 2029-30 for two authorities; and by 2030-31 for three authorities. All of these estimates will however require much greater examination as all the elements (and unintended consequences) of reorganisation and devolution are assessed.

On another point, the government is 'minded' to approve the Gatwick Airport expansion. The Northern Runway project is projected to create 14,000 new jobs and generate an additional £1billion annually for the UK economy. This includes both direct jobs at the airport and indirectly related jobs in the supply chain and related industries. It is estimated that at the earliest, the runway will be operational by 2030. The application submitted to the Development Consent Order states that passenger traffic, currently 46 mppa, is estimated to reach 75 mppa by 2038.

For these reasons, any newly formed authority must encompass closely aligned economic areas, taking into account travel-to-work patterns and local labour markets. As new technologies continue to grow and evolve, there will be increased opportunities for companies and associated growth, particularly those in niche sectors such as financial and technological services. Aligning the authority in this way would also support the establishment of a more coherent and sensible devolution boundary.

The potential for growth in the Reigate & Banstead and Crawley areas highlights the need for a collective approach to strategic planning and investment. The joint area identified is likely to experience substantial growth over the next 10 to 40 years and a newly aligned boundary should be established to support and manage this expansion effectively.

In conclusion, we are supportive of the proposal for RBBC to align with Crawley as part of local government reform. We are further encouraged that RBBC continues to work with the other Borough and District councils to explore additional cross-boundary options, including with Crawley. Such collaboration should be pursued to maximise future growth potential across these combined geographical areas and to achieve the best possible outcomes in all respects.

We also note that the LGR implementation in Surrey is being pursued within a very tight timescale. This appears highly challenging, given the wide-ranging nature of the changes proposed. Such reorganisation will inevitably have long-lasting impacts on residents and businesses for many years to come. The decision to create significantly larger entities must therefore be approached with great caution, particularly given the risk of diminishing the voices of local towns and villages. It is essential that thorough public consultation is carried out at each stage of the process and not when it is too late to meaningfully influence outcomes.

We remain committed to supporting our residents throughout the ongoing process and will continue to represent their views through our established consultative networks. We look forward to learning more about the Devolution Programme at a later stage, in the interests of local democracy and to ensure that local communities are appropriately represented with due recognition of the important role that Town and Parish Councils have to play, now and in the future.

We look forward to hearing from you further on this matter following the submission of your full proposal to the Government on 9 May 2025 and to continuing our engagement throughout the process.

Yours sincerely

Joan Walsh
Chief Executive Officer
Horley Town Council

cc: Cllr Richard Biggs, Leader - Salfords and Sidlow Parish Council
Mari-Roberts Wood, Chief Executive – Reigate & Banstead Borough Council
Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council

LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME QUALITY

Via email only Catherine.Rose@reigate-banstead.gov.uk

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Cath Rose
Head of Corporate Policy / Local Government Reorganisation
Reigate & Banstead Borough Council
Town Hall, Castlefield Road
Reigate, Surrey
RH2 0SH

25 April 2025

Dear Cath

Local Government Reorganisation

I am writing to you on behalf of Salfords and Sidlow Parish Council. As you know, Salfords and Sidlow is a civil parish within the borough of Reigate and Banstead. The parish occupies most of the rural area between Reigate/Redhill and Horley. Salfords village lies approximately 3 miles south of Redhill astride the A23. Sidlow Village lies to the west of Salfords and south of Reigate on the A217. Gatwick Airport is about 3 miles south from both villages. The Parish Council represents a population of about 3,500 of which 2,700 are electors.

The Parish Council supports Reigate and Banstead Borough Council's three-unitary model recommendation. We believe it offers better delivery efficiency and maintains local connections better than a two-unitary model.

The proposal for the East Surrey unitary model suggests merging Reigate and Banstead with Mole Valley, Tandridge, and Epsom and Ewell, resulting in a population of approximately 416,000. This arrangement aligns more closely with Surrey's functional operations. While it is acknowledged that the costs associated with a three unitary model may be slightly higher than those for a two unitary model, the Parish Council believes this approach would enable local service delivery that reflects logical groupings.

The local knowledge, existing working relationships and expertise are benefits of the three unitary approach. The four boroughs of East Surrey demonstrate good corporate relationships with each other which will be critical to the future success of the authority. We have no connectivity with any of the other boroughs identified by Surrey in the two unitary model and have genuine concerns as to the extent of liabilities Surrey might seek to pass to the future unitary in East Surrey.

Planning and development for the unitary model must manage the impact of Gatwick airport and economic growth on our community, including its effect on East Surrey Hospital. Reigate and

Banstead Borough Council should work with Crawley Borough Council to propose cross-boundary solutions to the Government that benefit this area's demographics. Though complex, this approach is vital as our parish is within the Gatwick Diamond economic area. Coordinated efforts are necessary to ensure public services, transport, and housing meet local needs.

This more sensible devolution boundary would facilitate strategic economic, transport, and spatial planning across the area, supporting the growth goals outlined in the Government's White Paper. Co-operation and very close working relationships around Gatwick Airport will be critical for Government growth aims and targets. We'd urge Reigate and Banstead and Crawley Councils to come together to achieve this with a united purpose.

Community engagement and empowerment

The Parish Council proposes the establishment of new town and parish councils within the new unitary authority. These councils are considered necessary for providing a local democratic voice, especially as elected officials in the new Unitary Authorities may have less direct engagement with constituents. Although resident-formed groups and associations contribute to community spirit and advocacy, they do not possess the authority and resources needed to implement changes effectively. A Town/Parish Council functions as a formal mechanism for local governance, offering stronger democratic representation and a greater ability to influence decisions and deliver services that meet residents' needs.

We thank you for allowing us to comment on your proposals and hope that you will seriously consider our recommendations.

Yours sincerely

Claire Minter
Clerks to Salfords and Sidlow Parish Council

Cc: Horley Town Council

From: Mathieson, Dee <dee.mathieson@elekta.com>
Sent: 08 May 2025 09:34
To: Cllr Biggs <Cllr.Biggs@reigate-banstead.gov.uk>
Cc: Sally Brown <sally@gatwickdiamondbusiness.com>
Subject: Support for Cross-Boundary Unitary Around Gatwick

Sent by Dee Mathieson, Director and Chair of the gdb Board on behalf of Sally Brown, Director and GM of gdb

Dear Cllr Biggs

Support for Cross-Boundary Unitary Around Gatwick

I am pleased to express my support for the Cross-Boundary Unitary proposal being developed by Reigate and Banstead Borough Council and Crawley Borough Council.

Gatwick Diamond Business is a business membership organisation and has been supporting our region's business community with networking and development opportunities across the Gatwick Diamond economic region for over 70 years.

We strongly believe Devolution provides a unique opportunity to move away from historic county boundaries and modernise to a cross-boundary geography. With Gatwick Airport at the core of the Diamond, this particular proposal will strengthen integrated planning for the two local authorities bordering the biggest economic force in the south of England, maximising the economic growth potential of the already successful Gatwick Diamond economic area, and would be a strong reflection of the operational needs of businesses in our region.

Whilst we have not fully canvassed our members on their individual views and we are aware that there are a number of different proposals, given our geography and functioning economic area, I would like to formally note my support as General Manager and a Director of gdb.

I look forward to hearing news from the application,

Best regards

Sally Brown
Director & General Manager

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