



19th January 2026

Mole Valley District Council – Community Governance Review

Chairman's Update: Additional Questions

What if I want to comment further to Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) on its Community Governance Review (CGR)?

You will be able to express views directly to MVDC, but they will not form a part of a vote in Stage 2. It would require a separate Stage 2 Review and programme for the Bookhams for there to be a vote locally. The latter would run most likely into the transition period making it a matter for the new East Surrey Unitary Authority.

How will votes be cast in the wards affected by Stage 2?

Our understanding is that electors will have the choice of returning a postal vote or submitting electronically, both of which will be explained in MVDC's outgoing communication.

Within the wards where there is a vote on setting up a Parish Council or changing the boundary, how many votes will be required for a change?

No definitive number or percentage of the electorate has been quoted, nor was one discussed at the Extraordinary Meeting of 13/1/26. Some Councillors considered the 0.8% response to Stage 1 as being adequate and sufficient, whilst others questioned it. Cllr Kendrick (Council Leader) was clear that Stage 2 needs to evidence "sufficient support", leaving sufficiency to be determined.

Why does the accelerated timetable only allow four weeks for residents to think about the proposed changes?

The background to the accelerated timing of Stage 2 of the CGR is the transition to new Surrey Unitary Authorities. Mole Valley will come under the East Surrey Unitary Authority and MVDC will cease to exist.

The Council became aware from another Council progressing its CGR that the original timetable could impact implementation of or changes to Parish Councils, were they to be supported:

- If MVDC's CGR was concluded after March 2026, then this would be outside the period during which MVDC could unilaterally determine the outcome of future community governance.
- Were any changes to be enacted during the transition period to the new Unitary Authority, the legislation allows the new incoming authority to overturn or ignore any such enactment by the outgoing authority. This provision is to prevent predecessor councils from setting up Parish Councils without the input of successor councils.

The relevant Surrey (Structural Changes) Order 2026 to implement the transition to the new Surrey Unitary Authorities was laid before both houses of Parliament on 14th January 2026, the day after the Extraordinary Council Meeting. Such an order is a legal instrument to:

- Abolish existing councils
- Create new local authorities.
- Transfer the services, staff budgets and assets.
- Set out the election and transition arrangements.

The Order must be debated and approved by both Houses of Parliament before it becomes law.

So, it is now as a two-horse race between Stage 2 of the CGR being concluded and the Surrey (Structural Changes) Order 2026 being enacted; if the latter concludes first, then MVDC may lose its power to establish Parish Councils without consulting the new Unitary Authority.

What are the risks for other wards in this accelerated timetable?

The Officer's report to Council noted the following risks in progressing with Stage 2 on the accelerated programme:

- Creating new Parish Councils may be seen as an action contrary to the Government's intention to create simpler structures.
- It may not be value for money given the long-term financial implications for residents.
- And it may not be in line with the Council's Best Value Duty.

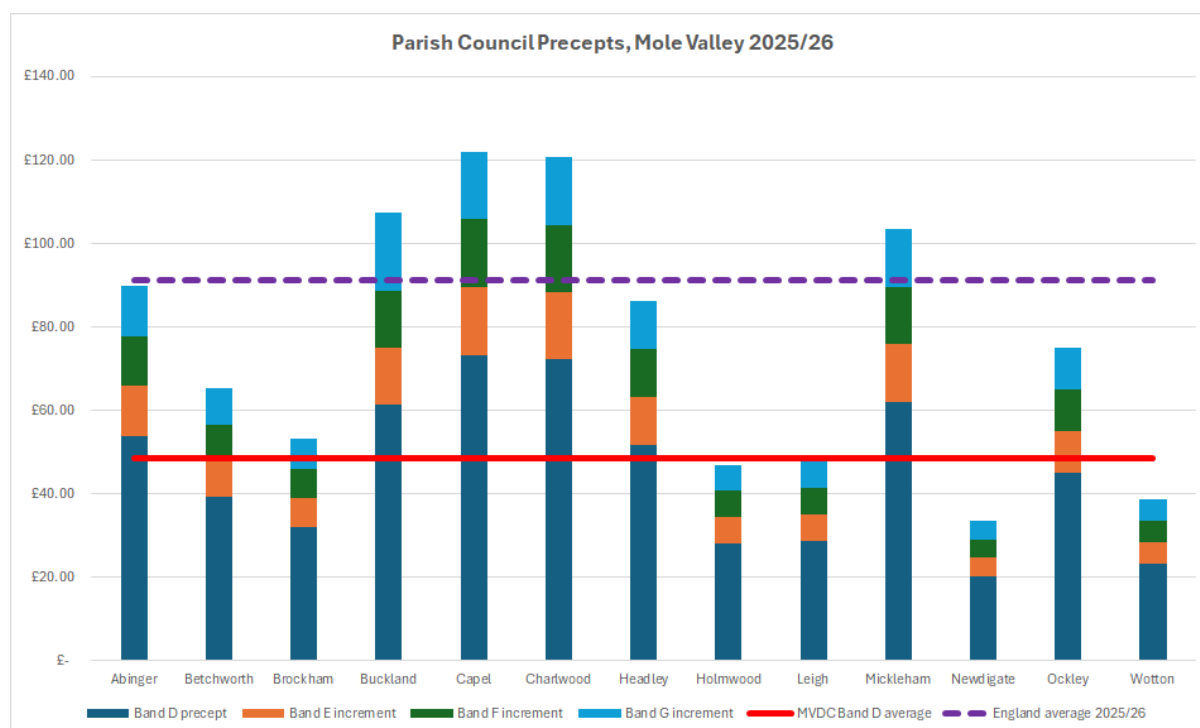
How many Parish Councils are there already in Mole Valley and what are their Council Tax charges?

There are 13 Parish Councils already in Mole Valley. Precepts (the taxes that a Parish Council can levy on residents) are compared in terms of the level for a home within the Band D rateable value. The graph below compares the 2025/26 precepts of the Parish Councils within Mole Valley – individually (the columns), the average (the red line) and contrasts against the average for England (the purple dashed line).

Whilst Mole Valley has quoted an average Band D precept of £48.56 (the red line), the Band D precept rises to **£73.26** in two parishes which provide more services at parish level. These band D levels of precept are shown in dark blue in the graph.

However, many homes in the Bookhams fall into higher bands; the effect of higher banding in these Parish Councils is:

- A Council Taxpayer in a Band E property in 7 of the 13 existing parishes will be paying more than the Band D average of £48.56; the highest level is 84% more at £89.54. The supplement for properties in this band is shown in orange.
- A Council Taxpayer in a Band F property in 8 of the 13 existing parishes will be paying more than the Band D average; the highest level is 118% more at £105.82. The further supplement for properties in this band is shown in green.
- And a Council Taxpayer in a Band G property in 9 of the 13 existing parishes will be paying more than the Band D average; the highest level is 151% more at £122.10. The further supplement for properties in this band is shown in light blue.



How high can a Parish Council Tax demand go?

The amount of Council Tax a Parish Council can charge (the precept) is not capped. The levels of precept relate to the services being provided and any other sources of income available to the Parish Council:

- The Parish Councils which provide the broadest range of services have the higher levels of precept, such as Capel and Charlwood. This may be mitigated to some extent where the Parish Council has other revenue earning opportunities, such as from venue hire.
- The Parish Councils with the lowest levels of precept provide the narrowest range of services, such as Newdigate which manages allotments and undertakes some land management.

Whilst the average Band D precept in Mole Valley is currently 53% of the English average of £91.22 (the purple line) for 2025/26 [source: National Association of Local Councils], there is no guarantee that it will stay at this level as Mole Valley is disbanded and subsumed into the East Surrey Unitary Authority.

Who will set the budgets for any new Parish Councils?

Our understanding is that the outgoing District Council will set the initial budgets for any new Parish Councils. There has been no suggestion yet of input from the new East Surrey Unitary Authority, which will be establishing itself, nor by the new Parish Councils themselves.

Can there be another CGR?

It was noted at the Extraordinary Council Meeting that further opportunities to consider Parish Councils would arise, irrespective of Stage 2. The guidance is for a CGR to be conducted every 10-15 years, with there being certain conditions. However, a petition by residents can trigger one at any time:

- For an electorate the size of the Bookhams, over 2,500, a petition signed by a minimum of 10% of the electorate is required.
- But, notwithstanding this, a CGR need not be repeated within two years of a previous one under certain conditions.

Is this happening only in Mole Valley?

No, CGRs are being run elsewhere. Some like-minded councils are working to accelerated programmes also.

END.