

Government delays decision on local government reorganisation for West Sussex

The Government has today (16 July 2026) announced a further delay to its decision on local government reorganisation in West Sussex.

The announcement follows two separate Government consultations on proposals for the future structure of local government across the area. A decision had been expected this month, but councils in West Sussex have now been advised that no preferred option has yet been selected. The details of all of the options under consideration and the process to date can be found at:

www.chichester.gov.uk/devolution and www.shapingwestsussex.org

The Government wants to replace the current two-tier system of district and county councils with new unitary authorities that will deliver all local government services within a single area. This is referred to as local government reorganisation.

"We are incredibly disappointed that the Government has still not yet made a decision on the future of local government in West Sussex. We had hoped for greater clarity by now," says Cllr Adrian Moss, Leader of Chichester District Council.

"Our priority is to secure the best possible outcome for our communities. We have been working closely with the councils across West Sussex to prepare for local government reorganisation, and that work is continuing at pace. Whatever decision is ultimately made, we want to ensure we are in the strongest possible position to move forward and represent the interests of our residents, businesses, communities and staff.

"The Government has confirmed that it remains committed to the current timetable and expects to make a final decision by October. In the meantime, it is very much business as usual. We will continue to keep our communities informed as soon as further information becomes available."

Elections for the new authorities are still expected to take place in 2027. The elected councillors will form what is known as a shadow authority for one year, ahead of the formal launch of the new authority in 2028. During this period, the shadow authority will operate alongside existing councils to prepare for the transition.

The Government's statement can be found at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2026-07-16/hcws286>. Further information about local government reorganisation can be found at www.chichester.gov.uk/devolution and www.shapingwestsussex.org