

devolution

and local government reorganisation



Issue 10 20 November 2025

Update on LGR

from Diane Shepherd, Chief Executive of Chichester District Council and Councillor Adrian Moss, Leader of Chichester District Council

The Government has now launched the formal consultation on the proposals to reorganise local government in Sussex at www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-government-reorganisation-in-east-sussex-and-brighton-and-hove-and-west-sussex.

The consultation is open until Sunday 11 January 2026, and welcomes feedback from residents, businesses, and stakeholders on the proposals put forward by councils across the region. Your input will help shape the Government's final decision on the best way forward for Sussex.

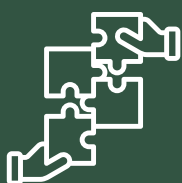
Since the consultation includes proposals from West Sussex, East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, we wanted to take a moment to remind you of the process so far — and what the Government is now seeking your views on.

It's important that as many people as possible have their say — so please encourage friends, family, and colleagues to get involved too!



What were the councils in Sussex asked to do?

Councils were asked to develop proposals that meet key Government criteria:



- **A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government.**

The proposal should create one level of local government for the whole area - bringing services from district, borough and county councils together into one or more unitary council(s). It needs to cover a sensible economic area with a fair tax base, avoid giving any part an unfair advantage, and make sense geographically. It should show how the plan will help provide more housing and meet local needs. The proposal must include clear evidence, explain the expected results, outline costs and benefits, and show that local people have been involved. It should describe the new structure and explain how it will achieve these goals.



- **Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.**

New councils should generally aim for populations of 500,000, with exceptions clearly explained. Proposals must show how they will improve efficiency, manage transition costs, and fund service changes using existing budgets. Areas with financial challenges must demonstrate how reorganisation will strengthen stability. Council debt won't be written off, so plans should explain how finances will be brought together.

What were the councils in Sussex asked to do?

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- **Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.**

Proposals should show how new structures will improve local government and service delivery; identify opportunities for public service reform that deliver better value for money; and, consider impacts on key services such as social care, children's services, SEND, homelessness, and public safety.



- **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.**

Councils must demonstrate local engagement in their proposals, showing how they have involved communities and how concerns will be addressed. Proposals should consider issues of local identity and cultural or historic importance.



- **New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.**

Proposals should explain how existing combined authorities will adapt and confirm their support, or show how the plan will help unlock devolution where none exist. They must also ensure fair population sizes between councils and strategic authorities, with timelines that work for everyone.



- **New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.**

Proposals should explain how communities will be engaged and, where existing arrangements are in place, show how these will support strong community involvement.

The Government also asked councils to think about these points when developing their proposals:



- **Boundary changes**

Proposals should use existing district areas as the foundation, but more complex boundary changes may be considered if there is a strong reason. If any changes affect boundaries or services such as fire and rescue authorities, it must be explained clearly why they will improve public services and be financially sustainable, since these changes can be costly and complicated.



- **Engagement and consultation on reorganisation**

Local leaders should work together to create strong, sustainable proposals that are in the best interest of the whole area. Engagement should be carried out with MPs, residents, businesses, and public sector partners on proposals.

How did the councils in West Sussex work together to develop their proposals?

All eight councils in West Sussex worked closely to develop options based on shared data and information, after the Government invited them to develop proposals for West Sussex. This was a complex process designed to ensure that the proposals met the Government's criteria. It involved reviewing income, costs, and budgets across each council, and rigorously testing every option to confirm financial sustainability and compliance with the population requirements set by the Government. It also created models to assess the demand for some of the major county services, such as Adult Social Care. Sixteen different options were originally tested.

Alongside the joint case, which can be found at www.shapingwestsussex.org, each council shared its preferred option with the Government. Our council, together with all other district and borough councils, unanimously supported the two-unitary model — one authority for Chichester, Arun, Worthing, and Adur, and another for Crawley, Horsham, and Mid Sussex. West Sussex County Council backed a single-unitary option.

The Government has also decided to include a proposal from Brighton & Hove City Council in the consultation, which affects West Sussex. Brighton & Hove's proposal features a five-unitary model covering the whole of Sussex — this was developed without any input from councils in West Sussex. On page four we explain the proposals that are under consideration.



What does the consultation cover?

The consultation covers options for the whole of Sussex. It asks whether the submitted proposals meet the Government's original criteria. There are a number of questions for each proposal, reflecting the points outlined in the section "What were the councils in Sussex asked to do." You can explore each proposal in more detail through the links provided below. People can choose to respond to any of the options presented.



- **West Sussex** - www.shapingwestsussex.org
- **East Sussex** - <https://eastsussexcouncils.org/the-proposal/>
- **Brighton & Hove** - www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/representative-councils-devolved-sussex-five-unitary-proposal

Proposals under consideration for West Sussex

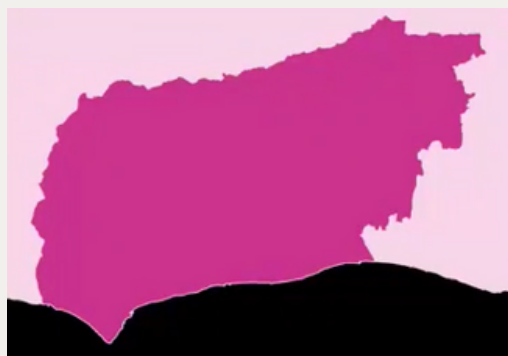
West Sussex

www.shapingwestsussex.org

The business case was prepared and submitted jointly by all West Sussex councils. It was developed collaboratively to meet Government requirements and reflect local needs. This included two proposals:

1- A single unitary authority covering the whole of West Sussex.

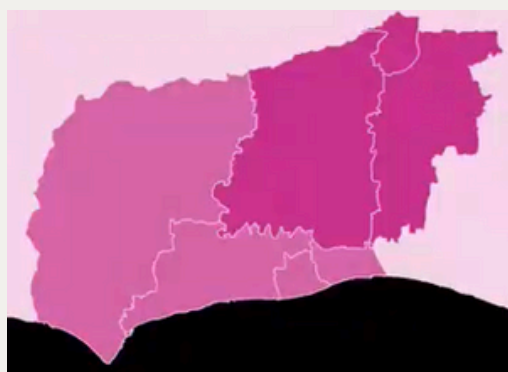
This proposal was supported by West Sussex County Council.



2 - Two unitary authorities:

- Chichester, Arun, Worthing, Adur
- Horsham, Mid Sussex, Crawley

This proposal was supported by all district and borough councils in West Sussex.



Brighton & Hove

www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/representative-councils-devolved-sussex-five-unitary-proposal

Brighton & Hove proposes five unitary councils for the whole of Sussex, including boundary changes.

This proposal was developed independently by Brighton & Hove, without any input from councils in West Sussex.

- Unitary A: Brighton & Hove plus parts of Lewes
- Unitary B: Eastbourne, Hastings, Rother plus parts of Lewes and Wealden
- Unitary C: Mid Sussex plus parts of Wealden and Lewes
- Unitary D: Chichester, Horsham, Crawley
- Unitary E: Arun, Adur, Worthing

Timeline

Key milestones towards Local Government Reorganisation in our area:



Briefings



We will be holding briefings for staff, councillors and parish councils to run you through the consultation process and to explain next steps. We will be in contact with you once dates and times have been put in the diary.

Keep in touch



- You can access the business case at www.shapingwestsussex.org
- View our web pages on devolution and LGR at www.chichester.gov.uk/devolution
- Any questions can be sent to: publicrelations@chichester.gov.uk

How can I have my say?

You can take part in the consultation in the following ways:

- Online:**
Complete the consultation at www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-government-reorganisation-in-east-sussex-and-brighton-and-hove-and-west-sussex
- Paper copies:**
Available at our offices at East Pallant House or a local library.
- By email:**
Send your response to: lgreorganisation@communities.gov.uk
- By post:**
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