



news release

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County council and partners preparing next steps in devolution and local government reorganisation

West Sussex County Council and its partners are setting out the next steps in the devolution and local government reorganisation plans for Sussex.

Planning is underway for the two separate processes that will shape the future of local authorities and delivery of services in the county.

- *Devolution* is the transfer of powers and funding from national to local government, specifically strategic authorities led by a mayor.
- *Local government reorganisation* is the process of restructuring local authorities, specifically to move to a single level of government in areas of England where there are currently two (such as West Sussex).

Devolution next steps

A government-run consultation is underway on the proposal for a strategic combined authority with an elected mayor for Sussex & Brighton. The consultation runs until 13 April 2025, and everyone is invited to have their say.

The plan is for elections for a mayor to take place in May 2026.

This follows publication of the government's white paper on devolution in December last year, and approval in February of the bid from West Sussex County Council, East Sussex County Council, and Brighton & Hove City Council to join the fast-track programme.

West Sussex County Council Leader, Cllr Paul Marshall, said: “Establishing a combined authority and elected mayor is a great opportunity for Sussex that will see decisions and funding previously taken at a national government level being made locally instead. It is right the government is consulting on this and I urge everyone to take part in the consultation to ensure their voice is heard.”

Local government reorganisation next steps

The government has asked councils in West Sussex to work collaboratively and come up with options on the future of single-tier local government in the county.

We are discussing these options with our partners in the district and borough councils and will present these to government on Friday 21 March. The options are not a decision but proposals we are working on for an evidence-based decision for a final submission in September 2025.

Cllr Marshall said: “The government has asked us to present options for single-tier unitary local government in the county. I want to be clear that we are presenting options to the government for them to provide guidance on what may or may not be acceptable for the future shape of local government in Sussex.

“The government wanted early sight of our proposed options, but the March submissions do not reflect outcomes as more evidence-based work will need to be done following March.

“There will be a list of various options, discussed and agreed collaboratively with our partners, and not a statement of the county council’s preferred model. We will wait for guidance from government to then work, with partners, on what is the best for the county.

“I can also reassure everyone that we will be consulting with our residents, communities, businesses and other interested parties on our proposals during 2025.”

The deadline of 21 March is the same day the county council will hold a meeting of its Full Council, which will include a discussion on the next steps for local government reorganisation.

[The meeting will be available to watch online on the day, and re-watch afterwards.](#)

It is expected that the government will comment on the options later in 2025.

The county council and its partners will then propose the best model for single-tier government in West Sussex, which will be open for consultation.

A full business case will be submitted to government later this year in September.

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Read more: [Future of local government in Sussex](#)

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