



news release

19 November 2025

Have your say on the future of local government in West Sussex

People in West Sussex can now have their say on the future of local government in the county.

West Sussex County Council is urging interested parties, including residents, businesses and organisations, to take part in government-run consultations open from today.

Views gathered in the consultations will influence ministers' decisions on the way local government in West Sussex is reorganised and structured.

Details of the consultation are on government's website here: [Local government reorganisation in East Sussex and Brighton and Hove, and West Sussex](#)

West Sussex County Council will take part in the consultation to express its own views on the proposals with its preference being for a single unitary authority for the whole of West Sussex.

Councillor Paul Marshall, Leader of West Sussex County Council, said: "This is an opportunity for everyone in West Sussex to have their say on the future of local democracy and the way in which local government will deliver services and effectively represent our diverse places and communities. Whatever your view, your voice matters.

"All councils in West Sussex worked collaboratively to develop a shared business case that presented two options to government, both of which meet government criteria, reflect local needs, and are viable for reorganisation.

"Of the two, West Sussex County Council maintains that a single unitary authority delivers the best outcomes for residents, with less spending on council infrastructure, greater savings to

reinvest in services, stronger financial stability, and continuity for vital services that support our most vulnerable people."

In addition to the proposal for a one unitary option, the district and borough councils have stated a preference for a two unitary council option.

Cllr Marshall added: "While the option of two unitary authorities for the county is viable, I passionately believe that a single authority has the opportunity to engrain within its fabric a commitment to recognise the strength in the variety of different communities within our county and develop bespoke approaches to individual places. In short, one council does not mean a single way of doing things; rather it provides the capacity to work hyper-locally with sufficient resource to adapt delivery.

"Analysis from West Sussex councils shows that a single unitary authority could save around £48million per year, compared with £18.8million per year for two authorities. A single authority therefore means less money spent on overheads and more on services like children's care, highways and community safety as well as waste collection, street cleansing, parks and open spaces.

"Our preferred option will have the resources and capacity to deliver services to local residents effectively and efficiently, while also having the flexibility to ensure local government is connected to local places in a way that responds to the needs of individual places.

"We owe it to our residents to choose a model that delivers services efficiently, keeps council tax as low as possible, and protects those most in need. A single authority does that in a way two or more councils does not."

The options for a single unitary authority and two unitary authorities for West Sussex were presented to government in a shared business case developed by all councils in West Sussex.

Brighton & Hove City Council proposed a further option for five unitary authorities across Sussex that involves boundary changes within West Sussex. This proposal was developed independently and differs significantly from the two options proposed by West Sussex councils.

Cllr Marshall added: "We have concerns about Brighton & Hove City Council's proposal for five unitary authorities across Sussex. It would fragment West Sussex, create duplication, and weaken partnerships with the NHS, police, and fire services. We do not support the proposal because we know from our own analysis that one of the proposed West Sussex councils, from day one, would not be financially viable and we cannot expose our residents to the risk of a failing council."

Full details of the options are provided within the government's consultations, which run until 11.59pm on Sunday 11 January 2026.

Once the consultations close ministers will consider all responses and decide which proposal, any, to implement.

The decision rests entirely with national government and will be subject to Parliamentary approval.

[The government consultation is available online](#) and hard copies can be requested from West Sussex libraries.

[Future of local government in Sussex](#) (information on local government reorganisation and devolution).

[Shaping West Sussex](#) (includes links to the West Sussex shared business case).

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