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## **Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation**

### **Devolution to Sussex**

- 1** Devolution is the transfer of powers and associated funding from national to local government, specifically, under current proposals, to strategic 'combined' authorities (upper tier authorities working together) led by a mayor.
- 2** A government [consultation](#) is underway on a proposal for a strategic combined authority with an elected mayor for Sussex and runs until 13 April 2025. Everyone is invited to comment. The plan is for elections for a mayor to take place in May 2026 and for a combined authority to function in shadow form from May 2027.
- 3** 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 for devolution.
- 4** Once the Government's consultation is concluded, Ministers will take the decision about creating a Mayoral Combined Authority for Sussex. Only once the plans are confirmed can work begin on the governance and arrangements for the Combined Authority ahead of the expected mayoral election in May 2026.

### **Local Government Reorganisation**

- 5** 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. Initial proposals need to be sent to the Government by 21 March 2025. We are discussing options with district and borough councils and will provide members with a copy of the submission which is settled.
- 6** The letter from all Leaders in West Sussex will present a list of options to the Government and will not include an indication of the County Council's, or any district or borough council's preferred model. We expect that Ministers will then provide guidance on what may or may not be acceptable for the future shape of local government in Sussex to inform further work on options.
- 7** The County Council and the district and borough councils will then undertake work to arrive at the most suitable model for single-tier government for the area, which will then be open for consultation. A full business case will be submitted to the Government for consideration by the end of September.
- 8** A cross-party member working group will be established to support the work. We will be consulting residents, communities, businesses and other interested parties on the proposals that emerge. Members will be engaged at a series of Member Days starting in April, with regular updates at Cabinet and Council meetings, and will have an opportunity to comment on the County Council's preferred option for local government reorganisation at the full Council meeting on 23 September 2025, ahead of the Cabinet meeting that day where the decision will be taken on the final proposal to submit to the Government.

### **Recommended**

That the County Council notes progress and next steps, including resident and member engagement on local government reorganisation.

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**Cllr Paul Marshall**  
Leader

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**Background papers**

[English Devolution White Paper](#)

[Ministerial invitation to West Sussex Leaders inviting proposals for a single tier of local government](#)