Local government reorganisation in West Sussex - consultation now closed

Dear Stakeholder,

We are writing to provide an update on the government's consultation regarding local government reorganisation in West Sussex, which formally closed on 11 January 2026. Thank you to all who contributed views and added local voices for consideration during this stage.

All West Sussex councils continue to work in close partnership as we navigate this important process. Our collective focus remains clear: to advocate for the best possible outcome for our residents and the services they rely on.

The government will now review all business cases and representations received for the area. Ministers will decide, subject to Parliamentary approval, which proposal, if any, will be implemented, with or without modification. They have stated that these decisions will be made in the round against the published criteria and taking in consultation feedback.

We expect a decision for our area by the end of March 2026. Following this, the Department will prepare the necessary legislation (a Structural Change Order) for Parliamentary approval. This Order will establish the new single tier of local government in the relevant area, and set arrangements for the first elections, councillor numbers, transitional functions, and governance. Typically, this process takes six to nine months, depending on complexity and parliamentary scheduling.

At present, elections for the new (shadow) unitary authority or authorities for West Sussex are anticipated in May 2027, with the formal vesting day for the new authority or authorities on 1 April 2028.

Further details on the reorganisation process and timelines can be found in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government summary here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-government-reorganisation-letter-to-areas-invited-to-submitted-final-proposals/summary-of-the-local-government-reorganisation-process and on our hub at www.shapingwestsussex.org

You can find more details about the government defined criteria which proposals are being assessed against here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-government-reorganisation-invitation-to-local-authorities-in-two-tier-areas/letter-east-sussex-and-brighton

Our shared commitment is to ensure that reorganisation delivers simpler access to services, fair and balanced outcomes for every community, and a structure that strengthens local identity and economic prosperity.

It is important to note that there will be no immediate changes. All eight West Sussex councils will continue to operate and deliver services until the handover in 2028. Residents and businesses should continue to contact their local councils as usual for any services or support needed.

Our priority continues to be the people and communities we serve. We will challenge any elements of proposals that do not deliver strong value for taxpayers, protect local voices, or support the long-term economic wellbeing of West Sussex as a whole.

We will continue to keep you informed as this process progresses. Thank you for your continued partnership and support.

Yours sincerely,

Dawn Hudd, Chief Executive Officer,
Arun District Council, on behalf of all West Sussex Councils.