Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

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Sent by email to: Councillor Adrian Moss, Leader of Chichester District Council; Councillor Jeremy Gardner, Leader of Adur District Council; Councillor Martin Boffey, Leader of Horsham District Council; Councillor Martin Lury, Leader of Arun District Council; Councillor Michael Jones, Leader of Crawley Borough Council; Councillor Paul Marshall, Leader of West Sussex County Council; Councillor Robert Eggleston, Leader of Mid-Sussex District Council; and Councillor Sophie Cox, Leader of Worthing Borough Council

19 November 2025

Dear Leaders,

Thank you for your continued work and collaboration to bring forward proposals for unitary local government.

For the next stage of local government reorganisation, our approach is to consult on all submissions that seek to meet the terms of the 5 February 2025 statutory invitation. My officials have carried out a preliminary review of the submissions received on 26 September to ensure that they address the statutory requirements under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the 2007 Act). Specifically, that the submission contains one option for the whole of the invitation area, that each principal authority has only made (or co-signed) one proposal, and that there is sufficient evidence provided to make a judgement in due course against each criterion. Where submissions request a boundary change together with structural change, we have also looked at whether a justification has been provided.

While a preliminary assessment of all submissions has been conducted, we have not yet made any formal assessment against the invitation criteria. This will be completed once the consultation process has concluded, so that all evidence can be considered. This approach is consistent with that for Surrey where we consulted on all proposals that met the statutory requirements and were accompanied by sufficient information that would enable a decision.

I am today launching statutory consultations on the 17 proposals I received on 26 September. I appreciate that you may have views on proposals other than your own, and indeed some have already written to me to express those views. Please be assured that before taking decisions on which proposal, if any, to implement, the Secretary of State will consider these proposals carefully, alongside the responses to the consultation, all representations and all other relevant information, assessing the proposals against the criteria before reaching a judgement in the round.

The consultation on the two proposals received from your invitation area will be available at https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/west-sussex-local-government-reorganisation

until 11 January 2026. Responses to the consultation should be submitted through the department's platform 'Citizen Space' in the first instance, though responses can also be made by email and post. Artificial Intelligence will be used to assist officials to analyse the responses received, as set out in the consultation documentation.

Named consultees are listed in the consultation documentation, but I would like to hear the views of all those interested in these proposals, including local residents, town and parish councils, residents' associations, businesses and the voluntary and community sector. As such, I would also ask that you use your existing networks to bring the consultation to the attention of local people and organisations. In doing so you should ensure your actions are compliant with the Recommended Code of Practice for Local Authority Publicity. Please also make sure that consultation documents meet accessibility standards when hosted on your website, and take measures to ensure that digitally excluded groups can access consultation documents, including proposals, in hard copy where appropriate.

The proposals for local government reorganisation are being grouped for the purposes of the consultation. This is because of the breadth of the proposals, and the fact that new unitary councils must support wider devolution structures.

Our timetable is ambitious, but it is also the right thing to do. Local government reorganisation will simplify local government and deliver councils who are equipped to drive economic growth, improve local public services, and lead and empower their communities. I look forward to working with you over the coming months to deliver on our ambitions.

I am copying this letter to your Chief Executives and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Sussex.

Yours sincerely

Alison McGovern

Minister for Local Government and Homelessness