

Brighton & Hove City Council Statement on Local Government Reorganisation

The Government is currently considering proposals for local government reorganisation (LGR) across the boundaries of East Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove. This follows the Government's decision to replace the two-tier system of separate county and district councils with a single tier of local government responsible for delivering all public services in an area.

One of the options being considered by the Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), supported by Brighton & Hove City Council, would see the wards of Peacehaven West, Peacehaven East, Peacehaven North, East Saltdean & Telscombe Cliffs, and Falmer Parish (from Kingston Ward) form part of Brighton & Hove City Council. The Government is due to make a decision in July on whether this change should take place.

As part of the recent Government consultation, residents, stakeholders and local organisations raised a number of questions about what this option could mean for their communities. Whilst the decision rests with Government, it is important to explain the evidence that informed our consultation response, the conclusions reached, and the commitments we would make should Ministers decide to proceed with this proposal.

Understanding how the area functions

In preparing our response to the recent Government consultation, we reviewed evidence relating to transport, employment, housing, education, public services and community connections.

This analysis identified strong links between Brighton & Hove and the wards of Peacehaven West, Peacehaven East, Peacehaven North, East Saltdean & Telscombe Cliffs, and Falmer Parish. Every day, residents travel between these communities for work, education, healthcare, shopping, leisure and cultural activities.

The A259 corridor, frequent bus services and other transport links connect these communities as part of a wider coastal area. Our assessment found that, in many respects, people already live their lives across administrative boundaries, with shared challenges and opportunities that stretch along the coast.

The question is not simply about local government structures, but whether council boundaries reflect how places and communities operate in practice.

Why does this matter?

Both proposals being considered by Government seek to simplify local government arrangements and create unitary authorities. The key difference is how the geography is organised and where decisions are made.

Local government structures should support strong local accountability and give communities a meaningful voice in shaping the decisions that affect them.

Issues such as housing, transport, infrastructure, economic development, environmental resilience and regeneration do not stop at existing local authority boundaries. Decisions taken on these matters can have a direct impact on residents living across Peacehaven, Saltdean, Telscombe, Falmer and Brighton & Hove.

Communities that are part of the same connected coastal area should have a strong voice in shaping decisions that affect their daily lives, their local economy and the future of their neighbourhoods.

Opportunities for a more joined-up approach

The proposal could support more coordinated planning across the coastal corridor, allowing decisions about transport, housing, infrastructure and regeneration to be considered through a single authority covering communities with established connections and shared priorities.

Our review also identified opportunities to align planning for education, skills and economic growth more closely with existing patterns of travel, study and employment. Many residents already access schools, colleges, universities and workplaces across the identified wards and Brighton & Hove, and governance arrangements should reflect those realities.

Building on these existing connections, communities would also benefit from being part of a local authority with a strong track record of delivering services and investing in place.

Brighton & Hove children's services were rated Outstanding by Ofsted in 2024, while the council has worked with local communities and partners to support major projects such as the restoration of Saltdean Lido, helping to secure its future as a valued community asset. The council also funds free swimming for children and young people aged 18 and under and has invested in extending access to local library services.

These strengths, together with the area's shared coastal and South Downs connections, provide a strong foundation for delivering services and shaping the future of communities whose daily lives already extend across existing administrative boundaries.

Protecting local identity

Throughout engagement and consultation, concerns have been raised about local identity, representation and community voice.

This proposal is not about changing the identity of local communities. Peacehaven, Telscombe and Falmer each have their own histories, character and sense of place, which residents rightly value.

The proposal would not remove local community representation. Peacehaven Town Council, Telscombe Town Council and existing parish governance arrangements in Falmer would continue to play an important role in representing local people and advocating for local priorities.

Town and parish councils would continue to have an important role in local democracy and community leadership under any new arrangements. They play a valuable role in representing local priorities and, where appropriate, taking on stewardship of community assets and services that support strong and resilient local communities.

Brighton & Hove City Council has a strong partnership with Rottingdean Parish Council, currently the only parish council within the city boundary, and is committed to building similarly strong partnerships with Peacehaven Town Council, Telscombe Town Council and Falmer Parish Council, recognising their long history of working with and for the residents of their respective areas and the important role they play in supporting and shaping their communities

Local representation and accountability

Residents would continue to elect ward councillors to represent their local area.

Good local government depends on clear accountability, with residents able to understand who is responsible for decisions and how those decisions are made. Aligning governance with a connected coastal area can help strengthen the relationship between decision-makers and the communities affected by those decisions.

Any future electoral arrangements would be reviewed through the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC) process to ensure fair and effective representation.

Our commitment

Residents will hold a range of views about the future of local government in the area.

Should Ministers decide that the identified wards become part of Brighton & Hove City Council, we will work closely with residents, local councils, businesses and community organisations throughout the transition period. We will maintain strong local representation, respect community identity and ensure local voices continue to influence decisions about the future of their area.

What happens next?

The decision now rests with Government Ministers, who will consider consultation responses and supporting evidence before announcing their final decision.