

County Councillor report to Hadlow Down Parish Council Dec 2025.

Devolution

The three upper tier authorities. East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton and Hove have all agreed to the publication of the Statutory Instrument which will formalise the creation of the Sussex and Brighton Combined Authority on the 11 May 2026.

The request to authorise the SI could come at any time and councils are normally only given 24 hours to agree to the tabling.

Local Govt Reorganisation

The Government have issued a consultation ending Jan 11th, 2026. A number of choices are included in the consultation including One East Sussex, One West Sussex, Two West Sussex and the more curious Brighton 5 Unitary which goes across current District boundaries and even county boundaries. The Brighton bid does not appear to be compliant with the legislation.

ESCC Budget

Given the budget pressures raised in earlier reports the setting of the budget for 25/26 will be the most challenging yet. I understand over 50% of Upper Tier authorities are considering Exceptional Financial Support. This is not additional grants but permission to raise extra council tax and/or borrowing to balance the budget. Neither are particularly attractive options.

Rws Dec 25