

Please quote: CGH_LGR2
Your reference:
Date: 26 September 2025
Please ask for: Councillor Glenn Haffenden
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Leader of the Council
Muriel Matters House, Breeds Place
Hastings, East Sussex TN34 3UY

Steve Reed MP
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

Alison McGovern MP
Minister of State for Local Government and Homelessness

Dear Steve Reed and Alison McGovern,

Local Government Reorganisation – East Sussex

I write further to the government's invitation to submit proposals for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in East Sussex as part of the Devolution Priority Programme. This is a central government-led initiative, being carried out at pace and within a very tight timescale, with significant implications for our residents and councils.

At its meeting on 24 September, Hastings Borough Council's Cabinet agreed to submit three proposals for consideration:

1. **One East Sussex – Single Unitary Model**, prepared jointly by the six East Sussex councils, supported by external consultants. This option has the support of Hastings' Green (Cabinet) and Conservative Groups.
2. **Federated District & Borough Model**, developed by the Hastings Independent Group, retaining the five district and borough councils working together in a formal federation.
3. **Coastal Unitary Model**, developed by the Hastings Labour Group, proposing a new unitary covering the coastal strip from Camber to Newhaven.

While Hastings' Cabinet is minded to support the One East Sussex model, we believe it is important that central government also considers the alternative proposals that emerged from our consultation and political groups locally, given Hastings' distinctive circumstances and identity.

To supplement the countywide consultation, Hastings Borough Council undertook its own extensive programme of resident engagement. We received 810 survey responses and held face-to-face engagement sessions. The results showed a significant spread of opinion across the three options, with slightly more

respondents favouring a federated approach over a single East Sussex unitary. This reinforces our view that all three proposals should be properly considered in government's decision-making.

As with our interim submission earlier this year, I must reiterate that any implementation of reorganisation will only succeed if supported by wider reform of local government finance and protection of vital services for our most vulnerable residents.

Finally, and critically, I wish to confirm that – as all Hastings group leaders have previously written – the Borough elections due in 2026 should be formally postponed. This is essential if the proposed timetable for LGR is to be realistic and workable in Hastings as it is the only District and Borough in East Sussex having council elections.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G Haffenden'.

Cllr Glenn Haffenden
Leader of Hastings Borough Council