



22nd August 2025

Mr J McMahon, OBE, MP
Minister of State for Local Government & English Devolution
Parliamentary Office
House of Commons
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

Dear Mr McMahon

Re: Proposed Local Government Reorganisation – Opposition to the Inclusion of Telscombe & East Saltdean within Brighton and Hove City Council

I am writing on behalf of Telscombe Town Council and the residents of Telscombe and East Saltdean to formally object to the proposal that Telscombe Town Council's administrative area be incorporated into Brighton and Hove City Council as part of the ongoing Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) discussions.

We believe that the inclusion of Telscombe Cliffs and East Saltdean in these proposals fails to meet the Government's core criteria for Local Government Reorganisation, as outlined by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). Below, we outline our concerns and the reasoning behind our position.

Telscombe Cliffs is a semi-rural coastal town with a distinct identity, culture, and geography. It does not share the urban characteristics or planning needs of Brighton and Hove. Its inclusion in a city-based authority does not represent a coherent, functional geography and would ignore the clear differences in character, land use, and governance needs between Telscombe Cliffs, East Saltdean and the Brighton and Hove urban area.

Telscombe Cliffs includes a rural historical village and Telscombe Tye, a 211 acre area of registered common land with specific management and protection needs. The area does not naturally align with the urban travel-to-work patterns or economic focus of Brighton and Hove. It would be more appropriate and effective to remain aligned with other rural and semi-rural communities in East Sussex under a Unitary Authority.

The proposal clearly fails the criteria requiring a good deal of local support as Telscombe Town Council opposes the inclusion in Brighton and Hove and residents have expressed their clear desire to remain under East Sussex governance through existing channels. The current governance model reflects the will of the local community and any attempt to forcibly shift governance would erode democratic legitimacy.

Telscombe Cliffs and East Saltdean, along with Peacehaven and Newhaven, already benefits from a strong, locally effective governance model that is aligned with East Sussex's rural governance structure. This includes a Joint Neighbourhood Plan between Telscombe and Peacehaven Town Councils, developed to reflect local priorities and planning needs.

There is also a 3-Towns Community Bus, a shared and locally managed transport service that connects Telscombe Cliffs, East Saltdean, Peacehaven, and Newhaven, enabling mobility and access to essential services for many residents.

These services and planning frameworks would face disruption or even dissolution if Telscombe Cliffs and East Saltdean were moved into an urban council structure that does not share the same priorities or funding mechanisms. Such a change would reduce service quality, increase administrative confusion, and distance decision-making from those it directly affects.

Telscombe Tye is a unique and protected area of registered common land within the South Downs National Park that plays a vital role in the character, environment, and recreational life of the local area. It is rich in archaeological importance, highlighting prehistoric and historic human activity. The Tye has Bronze Age Barrows, a Cross Dyke and an old funeral track which is now a registered restricted byway which was historically used by funeral processions heading to St Laurence Church. The track also has associations with highwaymen and smugglers and links Telscombe Village across the Tye and down to the sea. Its continued stewardship requires an authority with experience managing rural and environmental assets, and a governance structure that recognises commoners' rights, heritage protections, and community involvement.

Based on the Government's own criteria, it is clear that Telscombe Cliffs and East Saltdean does not represent a credible geography for inclusion in a city-based authority, there is a lack of local support for the proposal, and the change would undermine effective governance and disrupt vital community infrastructure.

We therefore respectfully urge the Department and any other relevant authorities to remove Telscombe Cliffs and East Saltdean from any proposal to include it within Brighton and Hove City Council, and we steadfastly affirm our continued position within the East Sussex Unitary Authority structure.

Yours faithfully



Stella Newman
Town Clerk & RFO
On behalf of Telscombe Town Council
stella.newman@telscombetowncouncil.gov.uk