



RODMELL PARISH COUNCIL

Conifers,
Green Road,
Wivelsfield Green,
RH17 7QL
22nd August 2025

Jim McMahon OBE MP
Minister of State for Local Government
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Mr McMahon

Rodmell Parish Council Response to Proposed Unitary Authority Expansion

Executive Summary

Rodmell Parish Council (RPC) strongly opposes Brighton & Hove City Council's proposed annexation of Kingston Ward, arguing it is driven by financial expedience rather than community benefit. The Council stresses that Rodmell's services, identity, and geography are firmly rooted in East Sussex, and that governance from Brighton would reduce efficiency, neglect rural needs, and burden residents with Brighton's higher debt. RPC supports East Sussex Council's proposal for a unitary authority based on existing county boundaries.

Précis

- Context: Rodmell Parish Council (RPC) responds to Brighton & Hove City Council (B&H CC) proposals to expand into East Sussex and annex Rodmell Ward.
- Main Objection: Expansion is for B&H CC's expedience, not residents' benefit; Rodmell is geographically and culturally distinct from Brighton.

- Geography: South Downs form a natural barrier; Rodmell looks eastward to Lewes and East Sussex, only 2 miles away, versus 11 miles to Hove Town Hall.
- Services: Current services from East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and Lewes District Council (LDC) work well and are accessible; incorporation into Brighton would degrade access and efficiency.
- Population Argument: Expansion eastwards adds little to population size (~500 in Rodmell); better case would be to expand westward into West Sussex to meet UA size criteria.
- Transport Issues: East–West road links between Brighton and East Sussex are heavily congested; links westward are stronger and more practical.
- Financial Motives: RPC suspects B&H CC is targeting Rodmell for its higher-value housing and council tax revenue; highlights Brighton’s higher debt (£1,350 per resident vs £470 Lewes, £396 East Sussex).
- Community Identity: Rodmell is rural, with services, culture, and health provision rooted in Lewes and East Sussex. Residents value the South Downs landscape as part of their identity.
- Public Resistance: Strong opposition across East Sussex communities to governance from a large city; fear rural needs would be overlooked in favour of urban priorities.
- Preferred Solution: RPC supports East Sussex Council’s proposal for a unitary authority based on existing county boundaries.

Yours Sincerely

Rodmell Parish Council