

# Coastal Unitary Model - Business Case

Prepared by Hastings Labour Group – September 2025

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## Foreword

Hastings stands at a historic moment. This Government's ambition to deliver a simplified and more unified model of local government could provide us with the opportunity to put the needs of our residents at the centre of decision making for local Government, within a newly created Unitary Authority. This once in our lifetime opportunity, could enable us to prioritise the unique challenges and strengths that those living in the coastal towns and communities that make up the Coastal strip of East Sussex; Hastings; Eastbourne, Rye, Seaford and Newham face and deliver joined up services that are based on a clear understanding and prioritisation of those needs.

Currently our two-tier model of local government; where some services are delivered by Borough Councils; Hastings, Eastbourne, Rother and others by the County; results in a lack of co-ordination and join up across these services and confusion for residents. It also results in our coastal towns and communities losing out, with the particular deprivation and challenges faced by residents and local business not receiving the additional grant funding and resources that other areas with similar levels of need would receive.

As leaders of the labour group in Hastings and across Sussex, we are committed to deliver a model of local government that places the needs and aspirations of local residents and the unique challenges facing our coastal communities, centre stage.

Our coastal communities face unique challenges as a result of climate change and the health, housing and social care challenges that result from ageing populations and the complex needs arising within communities living with inter-generational poverty, worklessness and the subsequent health inequalities, public health and mental health needs arising from these. They also present unique opportunities for growth and economic development – with vibrant and creative new businesses developing alongside the more traditional economies based within marine based activities, fishing and tourism.

This proposal, for a coastal unitary, provides us with the opportunity to address the particular needs and challenges of our coastal towns and communities. It is rooted in evidence of need, in a robust understanding of what is possible, deliverable and will provide value for money and that is linked, effectively, to wider plans for local government re-organisation that are being developed across Sussex.

Along with other proposals, we do not believe that this proposal alone, is the panacea for the significant financial challenges that are facing local government. We do believe however, that unlike other proposals, this proposal for a unitary coastal authority will enable us to set out a compelling case for the unique challenges that are facing our communities and to ensure recent changes in how

local government is funding will benefit residents living in our coastal towns and neighbourhoods.

### **Our vision for a Coastal Authority.**

The Labour Group in Hastings has worked collaboratively with other Labour Leaders across Sussex and are committed to a shared vision for unitary authorities across Sussex that address the particular needs, aspirations and challenges currently faced by our residents. This vision sees an efficient and effective council which will serve the coastal communities within East Sussex in a comprehensive and inclusive manner.

As with other proposals, we recognise and fully support the economies of scale that a unitary council could bring and the stronger capacity it could have to withstand shocks in the system. We have reviewed the particular challenges that face our coastal strip in respect of adult social care, special educational needs and children's services and homelessness in particular. In our view, a Council that has the expertise and focus, along with the economies of scale, to address the particular challenges that face communities within our coastal strip, is better placed to manage those risks – rather than a Council that is further removed from the issues directly impacting on our communities. We have seen already, the challenges that the current East Sussex County Council poses for residents in Hastings in delivering equitable services across the range of needs of our citizens. Why would a County Council made up of the same footprint be any better placed to deliver these services in a more effective and responsive way?

We are excited by the possibility that a new unitary coastal authority could bring to provide a stronger and more unified voice to help attract investment and promote economic growth. This model has particular strengths when aligned with plans for unitaries of a similar scale being proposed across Sussex and a new Sussex Mayoral Strategic Authority, to which central government could devolve more powers and funding to accelerate infrastructure delivery, tackle climate change and develop the skilled workforce needed to deliver more homes, create skilled jobs and generate growth that all residents can benefit from.

As with other proposals, we would embrace enthusiastically, a vision for the future for the Coastal Unitary which makes best use of technology and transformation to bring services closer to people. Digital solutions which are properly joined up and work for local people will be a strong feature of the new council, with the potential for every town and parish council to have access to the information they need electronically to be able to assist their local residents at point of contact.

Finally, our vision for a Coastal Unitary is for a council that puts the needs of all of our citizen; the strengths and particular challenges that residents living in coastal communities bring and places these centre stage along with the expertise, vision and focus to drive forward creative and innovative solutions to support the economic regeneration and development of sustainable businesses and infrastructure that will enable our coastal authority to thrive.

## 1. Executive Summary

Coastal communities across East Sussex face a combination of challenges more acute than almost anywhere else in England. Hastings has one of the highest levels of temporary accommodation use in the country. Eastbourne faces a structural deficit driven by housing and care costs. Rother and Lewes coastal wards are seeing demand for TA and ASC rise steadily. Meanwhile, deprivation levels remain persistently high, and 14,000+ coastal properties are at risk from flooding or erosion.

Against this backdrop, the Coastal Unitary Authority will:

- Serve ~360,000 residents, covering Eastbourne, Hastings, Rother, the Lewes coastal wards (Seaford and Newhaven), and selected South Wealden wards.
- Integrate housing and TA services with ASC and Public Health, tackling demand at source rather than responding only in crisis.
- Deliver recurring reorganisation savings of £58m and transformation benefits of £59m, set against £23m transitional costs and £57m disaggregation costs.
- Provide a balanced option: less remote than a single countywide authority (“One East Sussex”) and more locally grounded than a two-unitary model.
- Empower residents through Area Committees, devolved budgets, participatory budgeting, and a commitment to retain local service hubs.
- Align seamlessly with the Sussex & Brighton Mayoral Strategic Authority, offering a coherent partner for devolved transport, housing, skills, and climate resilience.

The Coastal Unitary is resident-centred, financially prudent, and implementation-ready. Shadow elections will be held in May 2027, with Vesting Day in April 2028. By focusing governance where the greatest challenges and opportunities lie — the coast — this model provides a sustainable future for its footprint.

This proposal should be read in conjunction with the proposal from Brighton and Hove for the 5 unitary authorities for Sussex. The creation of the coastal unitary must be understood and placed within the context of wider plans for re-organisation across Sussex proposed by Brighton and Hove, and in relation to the plans to create a Mid Sussex Unitary Authority that would have required size and financial resilience and that meets the core criteria set out by Government in respect of proposed Unitary Authorities.

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## 2. Context

### 2.1 Demographic and Social Pressures

The coastal authorities face significant socio-economic challenges. Hastings records **child poverty at 28%**, compared to a county average of 20%. Life expectancy varies by up to **7 years** between the most deprived and least deprived wards. The population is ageing faster than the national average, creating additional pressures on ASC. SEND demand is also rising, with EHCP numbers increasing annually across the Coastal footprint.

### 2.2 Housing and Temporary Accommodation

Housing markets along the coast are fragile. Private rented sector supply is constrained, property prices are inflated by external demand, and affordable housing completions lag behind need. As a result, reliance on TA has escalated. Hastings, Eastbourne, and Rother together face costs that are unsustainable, consuming large portions of discretionary spending. Without reform, TA alone could destabilise local budgets within three years.

## 2.3 Health and Care

ASC budgets across the Coastal footprint are under extreme strain. Demographic growth, rising complexity of needs, and provider cost inflation have created a structural deficit. Projections show cumulative ASC/SEND shortfalls growing to **£38.6m by 2028/29**, placing core statutory services at risk. Current fragmented governance arrangements make integration of housing, health, and care difficult.

## 2.4 Economic and Environmental Context

The coast has a distinctive economy. Tourism and the visitor economy are vital, but seasonal. Productivity lags behind the South East average. Unemployment remains above regional levels. At the same time, there are opportunities: further education colleges, skills academies, and universities are investing in coastal skills pipelines, particularly in health, care, and retrofitting.

Environmental pressures are acute. More than **14,000 properties** are at medium or high flood risk. Coastal erosion threatens homes, infrastructure, and transport links. Climate resilience projects, coastal defence schemes, and estate retrofits are critical, but require investment and coordination at scale.

## 2.5 Identity and Governance

The coastal towns — Hastings, Bexhill, Eastbourne, Seaford, Newhaven, and Polegate — form a **polycentric but interdependent system**. They share housing markets, labour flows, visitor demand, and resilience challenges. This makes them the natural footprint for a single authority. Existing shared services (e.g. Eastbourne–Lewes, Joint Waste Partnership) demonstrate that collaboration works, but fragmented structures prevent the full benefits being realised.

## 3. Meeting Government Criteria

The Government requires reorganisation proposals to be assessed against six statutory criteria: scale, service sustainability, financial sustainability, collaboration, devolution, and community engagement. The Coastal Unitary meets — and in some areas exceeds — these tests.

### 3.1 Right Size and Scale

The proposed Coastal Unitary will serve approximately 360,000 residents, a population well within the viability threshold established by previous reorganisations. The geography is coherent, following the A259/A27 corridor and encompassing the interdependent towns of Hastings, Eastbourne, Rother, Seaford, Newhaven, and

selected South Wealden wards. Unlike a countywide model, this scale is large enough to achieve efficiencies while small enough to preserve local responsiveness.

As set out above, this proposal should be read in conjunction with the proposal from Brighton and Hove for the 5 unitary authorities for Sussex. The creation of the coastal unitary must be understood and placed within the context of wider plans for re-organisation across Sussex proposed by Brighton and Hove, and in relation to the plans to create a Mid Sussex Unitary Authority that would have required size and financial resilience and that meets the core criteria set out by Government in respect of proposed Unitary Authorities.

### **3.2 High-Quality, Sustainable Services**

Fragmented governance currently hampers effective delivery. The Coastal Unitary will integrate housing, TA, ASC, SEND, and Public Health through local Coastal Service Hubs. These hubs will provide joined-up prevention services, ensuring earlier interventions for families at risk of homelessness, people with care needs, and children requiring additional support.

At county scale, however, the duplication of strategic functions across two authorities is estimated to cost (£44m), the remainder (~£24m) also faces ongoing structural costs.

### **3.3 Financial Sustainability**

Within its footprint, the Coastal Unitary delivers a credible savings package: £58m in recurring reorganisation savings and £59m in transformation benefits, set against £23m transitional costs and £57m disaggregation costs.

There will remain financial challenges facing the new Unitary Authority, due to costs of social care, special educational needs and temporary housing. For the Coastal Unitary these have been estimated, as part of the work carried out for Brighton and Hove's proposal for the 5 Unitaries, as being approximately £55.0m, -6.5% of revenue. This compares to £41.6m for the other proposed Coastal Unitary in West Sussex.

The financial modelling underpinning this has been cautious. It assumes that current funding arrangements continue and that any positive changes from Fair Funding or wider reform (for example multi-year settlements or simplification of grants) will be treated as upside. (See Brighton and Hove's proposal 'Unitary Representative Councils for a Devolved Sussex: A Five Unitary Proposal')

### **3.4 Local Collaboration and Consensus**

The Coastal footprint already benefits from collaboration, such as the Eastbourne–Lewes shared services and the Joint Waste Partnership. By consolidating these arrangements, duplication will be reduced and consistency improved. Engagement evidence has generated more than 5,500 responses countywide and 805 in Hastings, demonstrating strong public input.

At county level, further collaboration would be needed to manage the risks of asymmetry between a large Coastal unit and a smaller residual authority.

### 3.5 Support for Devolution

The Coastal Unitary provides a clear and accountable partner for the proposed Sussex & Brighton Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA). It aligns naturally with devolved priorities — housing, transport, skills, and climate resilience — particularly along the A259/A27 growth corridor and at the ports of Newhaven and Eastbourne.

### 3.6 Community Engagement and Empowerment

Governance proposals include Area Committees with devolved budgets, participatory budgeting, and open financial dashboards. Local hubs will remain, with a digital inclusion pledge ensuring “digital by default but never digital only.” Town and parish councils will be strengthened, giving communities a stronger role in shaping services.

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## 4. Options Considered

Three structural options were assessed against financial viability, service sustainability, and resident engagement.

### Comparative assessment:

- *One East Sussex*: Scale economies but risks loss of identity and local accountability, with high transition complexity.
- *Two Unitaries*: Retains identity but incurs duplication, complexity, and high disaggregation costs.
- *Coastal Unitary*: Balanced and integration-focused within its footprint. It is acknowledged, however, that impacts elsewhere in East Sussex could recreate some of the duplication and disaggregation challenges associated with multi-unitary arrangements. These require further assessment and independent testing.

- **Financial Implications at County Level (Illustrative)**

Item	Coastal footprint only	Residual East Sussex	Whole-county (Coastal + Residual)
<b>One-off disaggregation</b>	£57m	£315m (base) / £129m (stretch)	£372m (base) / £186m (stretch)
<b>Recurring duplication (by 2032/33)</b>	~£44m p.a.	~£24m p.a.	~£68m p.a.
<b>Recurring reorganisation savings</b>	£58m	Limited (to be modelled)	Unclear – offset by duplication
<b>Transformation benefits</b>	£59m	Limited (to be modelled)	Unclear – offset by duplication

- *Note: Figures for the residual East Sussex area are inferred from county-wide two-unitary modelling. They highlight that, while Coastal is favourable within its footprint, system-wide impacts are more complex and require independent verification by MHCLG.*

- *Note. These figures were developed, prior to the Brighton and Hove proposal 'Representative Councils for a Devolved Sussex: A Five Unitary Proposal' – which sets out in more detail the financial implications for the 5 Unitary Council Model which incorporates this Coastal Unitary Proposal.*
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## 5. Financial Case

Reorganisation must provide financial resilience while recognising unavoidable upfront costs. The Coastal model delivers a balanced package of **transition, savings, transformation, and transparency about systemic pressures**.

### 5.1 Transitional and Disaggregation Costs

- **Transitional costs – £23m:** Programme mobilisation, ICT integration, legal restructuring, and election logistics.
- **Disaggregation costs – £57m:** Separation of shared services, reallocation of assets/liabilities, and transitional staffing arrangements.

### 5.2 Reorganisation and Transformation Benefits

- **Reorganisation savings – £58m (recurring):** Member rationalisation, senior management layering, shared service consolidation, and estate rationalisation.
- **Transformation benefits – £59m:** Dependent on digital enablement, CRM integration, TA reduction, and neighbourhood prevention programmes.

### 5.3 Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

Modelling across all constituent authorities shows a consolidated **structural shortfall of ~£73.8m by 2029/30**, equivalent to **–9% of revenue**. The main drivers are:

- Escalating **Temporary Accommodation costs** in Hastings, Eastbourne, and Rother.
- **ASC/SEND pressures**, with deficits rising year-on-year:
  - £10.8m (2025/26)
  - £24.6m (2026/27)
  - £29.5m (2027/28)
  - £38.6m (2028/29)

These pressures cannot be resolved by structural reform alone. However, the Coastal model enables better integration and prevention, positioning the authority to work with government on long-term funding reform.

#### **5.4 Council Tax Harmonisation**

Council tax rates will be harmonised over **7–10 years**, within referendum limits. A unified **Council Tax Support scheme** will protect low-income households.

#### **5.5 System-Wide Implications of Adopting Coastal**

While the Coastal financial model demonstrates transitional costs of £23m, disaggregation of £57m, recurring reorganisation savings of £58m, and transformation benefits of £59m, these figures only reflect the Coastal footprint (~360,000 population).

The system wide implications of adopting the Coastal Unitary model, have been set out in the Brighton and Hove 'Representative Councils for a Devolved Sussex: A Five Unitary Proposal'

### **6. Implementation**

Successful reorganisation requires careful phasing, strong governance, and transparent benefits management. The Coastal Unitary model proposes a structured pathway from mobilisation to vesting and consolidation.

#### **6.1 Key Milestones**

- **Q4 2025 – Q1 2026: Mobilisation**  
Programme team established; draft Structural Change Order (SCO) prepared; geography and ward apportionments confirmed.
- **Q2 2026 – Q2 2027: Transition Preparation**  
TUPE workforce transfers mapped; organisational development package launched; baseline of ICT and systems completed; early CRM and digital projects commissioned.
- **May 2027: Shadow Authority Elections**  
Members elected to the new authority; shadow governance arrangements in place; budget preparation and constitution drafted.
- **April 2028: Vesting Day**  
The Coastal Unitary Authority formally established, assuming all statutory functions. Services maintained with safe and legal continuity.
- **2028–30: Integration and Benefits Realisation**  
Systems integration completed; contracts consolidated; estates rationalised; benefits tracked and reported.



## 6.2 Governance Structure

- **LGR Programme Board** – chaired by Chief Executive Designate (SRO), with workstream leads for Finance, ICT, HR/OD, Legal/Governance, and Service Integration.
- **Member Oversight Group** – provides democratic accountability during transition.
- **Staff Transition Forum** – engagement with workforce representatives.
- **Transformation Advisory Panel** – input from VCSE, NHS, and business partners.

## 6.3 Benefits Management

An open **Benefits Realisation Dashboard** will publish quarterly progress on savings, transformation benefits, and service quality, ensuring transparency for residents and stakeholders.

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## 7. Risks & Mitigations

Reorganisation carries inherent risks. These have been assessed and will be managed through robust governance, dual running, and clear communication.

### 7.1 Key Risks

- **Service Disruption** – risk of interrupted delivery during cutover.
- **Savings Shortfall** – risk that savings are overestimated or delayed.
- **Workforce Attrition** – staff leaving due to uncertainty or reduced morale.
- **ICT/Cyber Risks** – vulnerabilities during system migrations.
- **Financial Shocks** – ASC, SEND, and TA pressures exceeding forecasts.
- **Political Risk** – opposition or resident resistance slowing implementation.
- **Residual disaggregation/duplication:** risk that creating two authorities weakens overall county-wide sustainability. *Mitigation:* independent financial verification by MHCLG and transitional funding support.

### 7.2 Risk Register

Table D1 – Risk Register (Updated Extract)

Risk	Cause	Impact	Likelihood	Severity	Mitigation	Residual
Service disruption	Complexity of cutover	Service interrupti	Med	High	Dual running;	Low

Risk	Cause	Impact	Likelihood	Severity	Mitigation	Residual
		on for residents			rehearsals; statutory continuity plans	
Savings shortfall	Over-optimistic assumptions	Gap in MTFS	Med	Med	Conservative profiling; external assurance; phased benefits tracking	Low
Workforce attrition	Staff uncertainty	Loss of skills and knowledge	Med	High	Retention incentives; OD package; clear communications	Med
Cyber incident	Legacy system vulnerabilities	Service outage; data breach	Low	High	SOC monitoring; MFA; phased migration; accreditation	Low
Financial shocks	ASC/SEND/TA demand escalation	Exceptional support required	High	High	Govt transitional funding; alignment with devolution deal	Med
Political risk	Resident or member opposition	Reputational damage; delays	Med	Med	Engagement plan; Area Committees; Low transparent comms	Low
<b>Residual disaggregation/duplication</b>	Creation of Coastal leaves smaller residual ES authority	Significant one-off costs (£129m–£315m) and ongoing duplication (~£68m p.a.)	High	High	Independent MHCLG verification; transitional funding support; consider alternative structures	Med

## 8. Devolution Alignment

The Coastal Unitary provides a clear and accountable partner for the **Sussex & Brighton Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA)**. It is strategically aligned with devolved responsibilities in transport, housing, skills, and climate resilience.

### 8.1 Transport

- Delivery of **A259/A27 corridor improvements** including bus priority and active travel schemes.
- Coordination of transport planning with the ports of Newhaven and Eastbourne.

### 8.2 Housing and TA

- Integration of housing delivery with TA prevention.
- Development of a **supported accommodation pipeline** for vulnerable households.

### 8.3 Climate and Resilience

- Joint delivery of **coastal defence schemes**, flood resilience projects, and estate retrofits.
- Contribution to **net zero pathways** through building retrofit and sustainable transport.

### 8.4 Skills and Economy

- Creation of a **Coastal Health & Care Academy** to support NHS and care workforce pipelines.
- Partnership with FE colleges and universities on retrofit and digital skills training.

The Coastal Unitary provides the right geographic and governance partner for devolution, enabling delivery of national levelling-up objectives in some of the country's most disadvantaged communities.

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## 9. Conclusion

The case for a Coastal Unitary Authority is strong within its footprint. Current governance structures cannot cope with the combined pressures of TA, ASC, SEND, deprivation, and climate risk. Without reform, the financial sustainability of councils along the coast is in jeopardy.

The Coastal model offers a balanced solution for its area:

- Big enough to achieve £58m reorganisation savings and £59m transformation benefits.
- Small enough to preserve local identity and accountability.
- Transparent about £23m transitional and £57m disaggregation costs.
- Honest about systemic pressures, with TA and ASC/SEND deficits openly highlighted.
- Rooted in resident voice, with Area Committees and participatory budgeting.
- Aligned with the Sussex & Brighton MSA to deliver housing, transport, skills, and climate resilience at scale.

The creation of the coastal unitary must be understood and placed within the context of wider plans for re-organisation across Sussex proposed by Brighton and Hove, and in relation to the plans to create a Mid Sussex Unitary Authority that would have required size and financial resilience and that meets the core criteria set out by Government in respect of proposed Unitary Authorities.

The Coastal Unitary demonstrates viability and coherence for its footprint. Whether it represents the overall best option for East Sussex cannot be determined from this case alone. The relative merits of all three models — Single Unitary, Coastal, and District & Borough — should therefore be tested and validated independently by MHCLG as part of the reorganisation process.

## Appendices

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### Appendix A – Ward Apportionment

The Coastal Unitary footprint includes Eastbourne, Hastings, Rother, Lewes coastal wards (Seaford and Newhaven), and selected South Wealden wards (Polegate, Willington, Herstmonceux, Pevensey Bay/Levels, Stone Cross, South Downs).

#### Methodology:

Apportionment was calculated using a weighted composite index:

- **Population (50%)** – ONS 2023 mid-year estimates.
- **Temporary Accommodation caseload (25%)** – based on Housing Returns and MHCLG live tables.
- **ASC/SEND demand (15%)** – referrals and EHCP data.
- **Waste and environmental costs (10%)** – Joint Waste Partnership allocations.

This approach ensures that resource distribution reflects both resident numbers and the unique demand pressures of coastal wards.

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### Appendix B – Savings Taxonomy and Pipeline

Savings are categorised into **Quick Wins**, **Medium-Term Efficiencies**, and **Transformation Benefits**.

**Table B1 – Savings Pipeline**

Stage	Examples	Estimated Value (£m)	Timescale
Quick Wins (Yr1)	Member rationalisation, contract rationalisation, licensing	5	Year 1
Medium-Term (Yrs1–3)	Senior management delayering, corporate services consolidation, fleet and FM aggregation	25	Years 1–3
Transformation (Yrs2–5)	Digital CRM, TA prevention programmes, neighbourhood services, estate rationalisation	29	Years 2–5

These are deliberately conservative estimates, benchmarked against previous unitarisations.

## Appendix C – Council Tax Harmonisation Scenarios

Council tax harmonisation is essential for equity across residents. Three scenarios were modelled.

**Table C1 – Harmonisation Scenarios**

Scenario	Years	Method	Impact on Residents	Notes
Scenario 1	7	Linear convergence to mean	Faster equalisation; some higher bills early	Within referendum limits, steeper adjustment
Scenario 2	8	Revenue neutral	Balanced; moderate equalisation pace	Preferred scenario – stability + fairness
Scenario 3	10	Gradual convergence	Smoothest; protects low-income groups	Longer period before equalisation complete

A single **Council Tax Support (CTS)** scheme will be introduced to mitigate impacts on vulnerable households.

## Appendix D – Expanded Risk Register

**Table D1 – Risk Register (Extract)**

Risk	Cause	Impact	Likelihood	Severity	Mitigation	Residual
Service disruption	Complexity of cutover	Service interruption for residents	Med	High	Dual running; rehearsals; statutory continuity plans	Low
Savings shortfall	Over-optimistic assumptions	Gap in MTFS	Med	Med	Conservative profiling; external assurance; phased benefits tracking	Low

Risk	Cause	Impact	Likelihood	Severity	Mitigation	Residual
Workforce attrition	Staff uncertainty	Loss of skills and knowledge	Med	High	Retention incentives; OD package; clear communications	Med
Cyber incident	Legacy system vulnerabilities	Service outage; data breach	Low	High	SOC monitoring; MFA; phased migration; accreditation	Low
Financial shocks	ASC/SEND/TA demand escalation	Exceptional support required	High	High	Govt transitional funding; alignment with devolution deal	Med
Political risk	Resident or member opposition	Reputational damage; delays	Med	Med	Engagement plan; Area Committees; transparent comms	Low

## Appendix E – Engagement Evidence

Engagement has been extensive:

- **Countywide survey (5,500+ responses)** – covering all five districts.
- **Hastings-specific survey (805 responses)** – demonstrating strong resident interest.
- **Focus groups** with residents, parish councils, and VCSE organisations.
- **Stakeholder interviews** with NHS, police, education, and business leaders.

### Themes emerging:

- Strong local identity and support for local decision-making.
- Concern over rising TA and housing pressures.
- Desire for transparency, accountability, and community involvement.
- Support for participatory budgeting and local service hubs.

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## Appendix F – Financial Model Data Dictionary

The financial model draws on multiple sources:

- **Population data** – ONS mid-year estimates.
- **TA demand** – MHCLG live tables, local Housing Returns.
- **ASC/SEND demand** – Council caseloads, EHCP statistics.
- **Budget baselines** – Medium-Term Financial Strategies of constituent councils.
- **Waste/environment** – Joint Waste Partnership costs.

**Model parameters include:** transitional costs, disaggregation allocations, recurring savings profiles, transformation benefits assumptions, and council tax harmonisation scenarios.

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## Appendix G – Programme Governance and Responsibility Arrangement Matrix (RACI)

**Governance Structure:**

- **Programme Board** – accountable for delivery.
- **Programme Director** – responsible day-to-day.
- **Workstream Leads** – responsible/supporting.
- **Members and Staff Forums** – consulted.
- **Residents, partners, and government** – informed.

**RACI Matrix (simplified):**

Function	SRO	Prog Dir	Workstream Members		Staff Forum	Residents/Govt
SCO drafting	A	R	S	C	I	I
TUPE workforce plan	A	R	R	C	C	I
ICT integration	A	R	R	I	I	I
Benefits tracking	A	R	R	C	C	I

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## Appendix H – Legal Compliance Route

The Coastal proposal complies with the **Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007**.

Key steps:

- Draft and consult on the **Structural Change Order (SCO)**.
  - Fulfil all **Equality Act duties**.
  - Manage staff transfers in line with **TUPE**.
  - Secure **Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE)** warding arrangements.
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## Appendix I – Devolution Alignment Pipeline

### Transport

- A259/A27 active travel and bus priority schemes.
- Newhaven Port access improvements.

### Housing & TA

- Expansion of supported accommodation stock.
- Private Rented Sector (PRS) access schemes.

### Climate & Resilience

- Coastal defence and flood risk schemes.
- Retrofit programme for council and private housing stock.

### Skills

- Coastal Health & Care Academy.
  - Retrofit skills training pipeline.
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## Appendix J – Case Studies

### Case Study 1 – Hastings: TA Pressures

Hastings has over 1 in 100 households in TA. This absorbs a disproportionate share of the council's discretionary budget, crowding out investment in prevention. A Coastal Unitary model provides the scale and integration needed to shift resources upstream.

## Case Study 2 – Eastbourne & Lewes: Shared Services Success

The Eastbourne–Lewes partnership demonstrates the viability of shared services, achieving millions in savings while protecting service quality. The Coastal Unitary can extend and deepen this model.

## Case Study 3 – Joint Waste Partnership

The Joint Waste Partnership shows the benefits of pooled procurement and service delivery, delivering cost efficiencies and service improvements across district boundaries.

### MTFS Projections (Illustrative)

This shows the consolidated position across the Coastal footprint, highlighting the structural deficit driven by ASC/SEND and TA.

**Table A1 – Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Projection**

Year	Revenue Budget (£m)	Pressures (£m)	Savings/Benefits (£m)	Net Position (£m)	Notes
2025/26	835	35.4	12.0	–23.4	Early transition, TA & ASC growth
2026/27	850	47.8	28.0	–19.8	ASC/SEND demand, partial savings
2027/28	870	54.0	44.5	–9.5	Full reorganisation savings in effect
2028/29	890	63.5	50.5	–13.0	Systemic ASC/SEND deficit escalates
2029/30	915	73.8	54.0	–19.8	Structural shortfall –9% of revenue

## Council Tax Harmonisation Scenarios

**Table A2 – Council Tax Harmonisation Scenarios**

Scenario	Duration (Years)	Annual Impact on Band D (£)	Distributional Impact	Notes
Scenario 1	7	+32 to –28	Faster equalisation	Steeper increases for some areas; quicker fairness
Scenario 2	8	+28 to –24	Balanced	Preferred: balances fiscal stability and fairness
Scenario 3	10	+20 to –18	Smoother adjustment	Protects low-income households; slower convergence

All scenarios remain within referendum limits, with mitigation through a unified Council Tax Support scheme.

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## ASC/SEND Deficit Growth

**Table A3 – ASC/SEND Projected Deficits**

Year	ASC/SEND Deficit (£m)	% of Net Budget	Notes
2025/26	10.8	1.3%	Demographic growth, provider inflation
2026/27	24.6	2.9%	Rising EHCP demand, ageing population
2027/28	29.5	3.4%	Escalating statutory pressures
2028/29	38.6	4.3%	Structural deficit without reform

## Savings Pipeline

**Table A4 – Savings and Transformation Benefits**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Estimated Value (£m)</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Quick Wins	Member rationalisation, contract tidy-up	5	Year 1
Medium-Term Savings	Senior management delayering, shared services	25	Yrs 1–3
Transformation	Digital CRM, TA prevention, estates rational.	29	Yrs 2–5
<b>Total Savings</b>		<b>59</b>	By Yr 5