

Councillor Keith Glazier
Leader

County Hall
St Anne's Crescent
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 1UE

01273 335020
cllr.keith.glazier@eastsussex.gov.uk



Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP
Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local
Government
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

18 September 2024

Dear Deputy Prime Minister,

East Sussex - Devolution

Thank you for the invitation to submit an Expression of Interest in a devolution deal which is attached. We, the leaders of all the Councils in East Sussex and the Group leaders of all the parties on the County Council, welcome the Government's enthusiasm for devolution and the opportunity this gives us to build on existing relationships and strong foundations.

We are proud of the strong collaboration between upper and lower tier councils that this letter reflects and are committed to using all possible vehicles to improve the quality of life of our residents, health of our businesses and vibrancy of our communities. This means we are particularly interested in greater local control to increase good job opportunities, skills, transport and infrastructure to support growth of suitable housing, action on climate change and resilience, our ability to increase the effectiveness of spatial planning and to explore innovative ways to meet the needs of our distinct local population. We await with great interest the Government's framework of powers to be devolved, and associated governance requirements.

East Sussex is our natural geographic unit as we have a proven strong network of partnerships that we have created, sustained and evolved. In seeking to develop our local economy, the longstanding Team East Sussex and its supporting partnerships including Skills East Sussex and Business East Sussex provide strong and well-established broad partnerships with local stakeholders. We have a robust, recently renewed, economic evidence base and the new economic strategy will be agreed in September. We have a proven track record of working at larger geographic scale when the issue makes that the most appropriate level with East Sussex as the building block. Good examples include working across Sussex on health and social care and also the local Visitor Economy and also with Essex and Kent in the South East Local Enterprise Partnership. Our experience and planning as a group of councils about how best to meet the needs of the residents, businesses and communities of East Sussex, all place a huge premium of the strength of the partnerships.

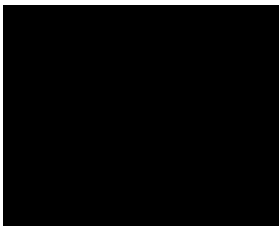
We await your view of "sensible economic geographies" for devolution and for future spatial planning and note the Government's recent decision not to proceed with the existing single local authority option. Locally, we remain open to conversations with a

range of partners about the best geography and will be able to form a view about the appropriate geography once we have seen the framework of powers. In East Sussex we have long adopted a principle of “form following function” so need to be clear what devolution opportunities we are considering before we can conclude on the appropriate partnership geography.

We know you are aware of the high level of pressure currently faced by councils particularly in relation to social care, special needs and homelessness, this means capacity to engage in work that does not have a short-term impact, however valuable in the medium-term, is limited, so needs to be well deployed.

East Sussex provides the strongest platform for devolution to be delivered at pace, with certainty and opportunity for future growth and we look forward to discussing this with you.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Keith Glazier
Leader of East Sussex County Council

Cllr Stephen Holt
Leader of Eastbourne Borough Council

Cllr Zoe Nicholson
Leader of Lewes District Council

Cllr David Tutt
Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group
East Sussex County Council

Cllr Johnny Denis
Leader of the Green Group
East Sussex County Council

Cllr Julia Hilton
Leader of Hastings Borough Council

Cllr Rachel Millward
Leader of Wealden District Council

Cllr Doug Oliver
Leader of Rother District Council

Cllr Chris Collier
Leader of the Labour Group
East Sussex County Council

Cllr Stephen Shing
Leader of the Independent Group
East Sussex County Council