

# devolution

## and local government reorganisation



Issue 6 July 2025

## Update for Parish Councils

from Diane Shepherd, Chief Executive of Chichester District Council and Councillor Adrian Moss, Leader of Chichester District Council



In the last newsletter that we sent to you, we explained that we were working closely with the other councils in West Sussex on potential options for local government reorganisation - and we shared some of these with you.

Since then, we have been continuing to assess these options in more detail, using the framework that the government has provided us with. This has involved looking at:

- **Strategic alignment**

How well it would fit with the new devolution plans.

- **Economic and geographic fit**

If it makes sense financially and geographically.

- **Housing and growth**

If it will help meet housing needs.

- **Accelerating reform**

The plans should not delay devolution.

- **Population scale**

Each new council should ideally cover 500,000 plus people.

- **Service integration**

How the plan could improve the delivery of key areas like social care housing and Children's Services.

- **Local identity and culture**

That local identities and histories are considered and respected.



We're now moving towards the next phase of the programme. On 1 July, all councils across West Sussex launched a joint social media campaign to raise awareness of Local Government Reorganisation. As part of this campaign, we will also be letting people know that a public survey is coming soon.

In the second half of July, we'll launch the first phase of external engagement. This will include a public survey inviting residents, businesses and community groups across West Sussex to share their views on the future of local councils. We will also be meeting with some of our key stakeholders to talk about this in more detail. As part of this, we will be shortly inviting you to an all parish meeting.

The survey will ask people about:

- **where they live or work;**
- **the council services they use; and**
- **what matters most to them about how councils are structured.**

## Continued from page 1

This is a joint engagement effort by all councils across West Sussex and the feedback will help shape the proposals that are being developed. The survey content aligns with the evaluation criteria for the business case, which we mentioned at the start of this newsletter.

Once the survey is live, we strongly encourage you to take part to ensure that your views and needs are captured.

This is a significant change that will shape how local services are delivered and how decisions are made in the future. That's why your feedback is so important.

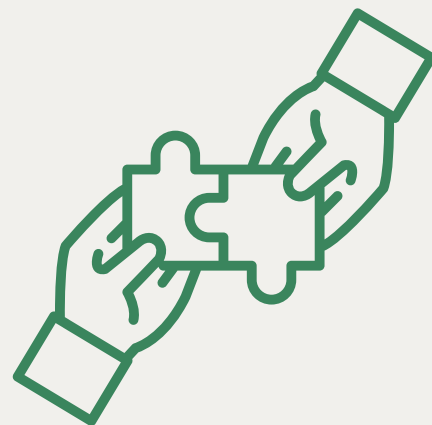
## Take Part

We'll share the survey link with you as soon as it goes live. Please take a few minutes to complete it — and encourage your friends and family to do the same. Your input will help lay the foundation for a new council structure that works for everyone.

## What happens next?

The survey responses will help inform the options we submit to government by 26 September 2025. Following this, the formal consultation will then be launched by the government. The government is then expected to make a decision on the preferred way forward in spring 2026.

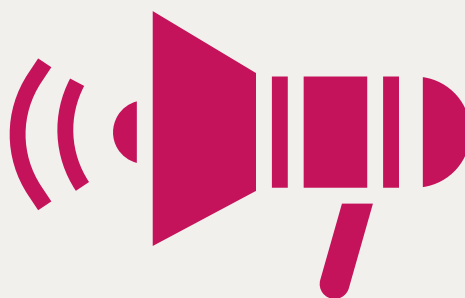
1. We will launch a survey in July to engage with our residents, staff, councillors and businesses.
2. Once the business case has been submitted (by 26 September), the government will begin the formal consultation process.
3. The government is expected to make a decision on the preferred way forward in spring 2026.
4. We will further engage with residents, staff, councillors and businesses on the design of how your new council will look.



## Stay informed

We'll continue to provide regular updates and you can also refer to [www.chichester.gov.uk/devolution](https://www.chichester.gov.uk/devolution).

If you have any questions, please email: [publicrelations@chichester.gov.uk](mailto:publicrelations@chichester.gov.uk) and we will try and support you.





# Background: Why Local Government Reorganisation?

The government has asked councils across the area to submit plans for moving to a unitary model – replacing the current two-tier structure with new unitary councils responsible for all local services. You can find out more about this at: [www.chichester.gov.uk/devolution](http://www.chichester.gov.uk/devolution)

This change is about:

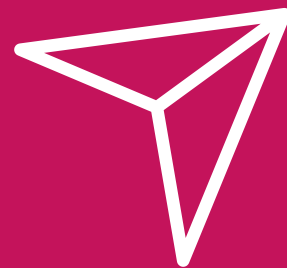
- simplifying access to services.
- the opportunity to create a new council model designed around the needs of today's communities.

All councils in the county are working together to develop proposals for this new model. Business cases must be submitted to government by 26 September 2025. Following this, the government will formally consult with people on the options, with a government decision expected in spring 2026.

## About the survey

The survey asks residents, and local organisations for:

- their views on the area they live in.
- which local council services they use and value most.
- what priorities they believe the future council should focus on.
- what their initial reactions are to the options under consideration.



## Why it is important

- Change is coming, and this is your chance to help shape it.
- The survey will help us design a new council model that reflects what people value and expect from local services.
- Vital services will continue under the new model, and this is an opportunity to make sure they are delivered in a way that really works for local people and communities.
- This is a vital opportunity for residents to shape the thinking behind the new model. Their feedback will help inform the options we put forward and ensure proposals reflect the voices of those who use and rely on local services every day.
- Once we submit the business case (by 26 September), the government will formally consult on the options.
- The government is expected to make a decision on the preferred way forward in spring 2026.

## Next steps

### Survey

We will share the survey link as soon as it goes live. This will be in the second half of the month.

### Business case submission

The councils are due to submit recommendations to government by 26 September 2025. To keep up to date with what is happening, please visit:

[www.chichester.gov.uk/devolution](http://www.chichester.gov.uk/devolution)

### Formal consultation

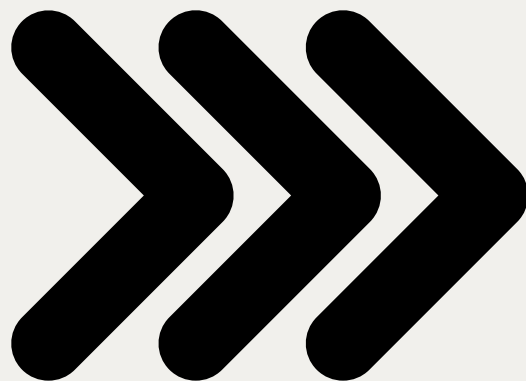
The government will formally consult on the options.

### Government decision

This is expected in spring 2026.

### Further engagement

Once a decision has been made we will further engage with residents, businesses and partners on the design of how your new council will look.



## Your help would be appreciated

We would be really grateful if you could help us by:

- promoting the survey through community networks, newsletters, events and social media.
- encouraging participation from groups who may not usually provide us with their feedback.
- providing us with any insights or common themes from residents and businesses.

This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to influence how local government is designed and delivered. With your support, we can make sure residents are at the heart of that process.

If you have any questions or would like additional materials, please contact:  
[\*\*publicrelations@chichester.gov.uk\*\*](mailto:publicrelations@chichester.gov.uk)