

This document is not exhaustive; it is intended as a quick overview and was produced for our SEND events in March 2026 where we talked about the issues in more detail.

At a glance...

March 2026

Local government reorganisation & devolution in East Sussex

What is it

Local government reorganisation

Local government reorganisation changes the structure of councils.

Devolution

This is the transfer of powers and funding from national government to local government.

A unitary authority provides all the local services which are currently delivered by county, city, district, and borough councils

What we know

Local government reorganisation

- In December 2024, the government set out plans to create 'single-tier' unitary authorities in places in England where a two-tier system, e.g. a county council and district or borough councils, still operated. East Sussex is one of these places.
- A single authority will deliver all local services, for example: education, transport, planning, fire and public safety, social care, libraries, waste management, trading standards (currently delivered by county councils); rubbish collection, recycling, council tax collections, housing, planning applications (currently delivered by district, borough, and city councils).
- The six current councils in East Sussex have submitted a proposal to the national government called 'One East Sussex', bringing the six current councils together.
- Other proposals have been submitted by Brighton & Hove City Council and West Sussex councils.

Devolution

- In December 2024, the government also published plans to transfer more powers from central government to local government, along with the creation of a Mayoral Combined County Authority.
- The election for the mayor is due to be 4th May 2028, to give time for the new unitary authorities to be established.

What we don't know

- Which of the proposals for new unitary authorities will be taken forward. *This should be known by the end of March 2026.*
- How any of the changes might affect SEND services.

What do you think?

Share your views, concerns, and hopes here

