

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Plans for local government reorganisation fail to meet community needs

CPRE Sussex raises ‘significant concerns’ over loss of local knowledge and lack of consultation.

A charity says plans to reorganise local government across Sussex risk moving decision making further away from communities.

CPRE Sussex says, regardless of which of the current proposals to reconfigure councils in East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton & Hove is ultimately chosen, the overall result will be a loss of local knowledge and nuance in decisions. The charity has also criticised a lack of public engagement in the consultation.

CPRE Sussex director Paul Steedman said: “Few people even know this consultation is taking place. There is no mention of words like ‘countryside’ or ‘nature’, showing a lack of regard for Sussex’s unique qualities, including its rurality and special landscapes. It looks like we will be left with a one-size-fits-all approach that fails to serve the needs of communities and their local areas. With the Sussex mayoral elections delayed until 2028, it is even more important that we get the infrastructure of our new local government right.”

Mr Steedman said the impact of centralisation and ‘efficiency’ had already been felt with police services withdrawn from rural villages after the appointment of Police and Crime Commissioners. However, rather than learning from that experience, central and local government leaders seem destined to repeat it.

Mr Steedman said: “We are especially concerned that planning authorities located in towns and cities away from the rural locations they will serve will lack the local knowledge needed to achieve truly sustainable development. A strengthened role for parish and town councils is critical to ensure local concerns are heard and local knowledge is involved in decision-making. It is therefore deeply disappointing that this consultation has nothing to say on the future role that the most local tier of government should play.”

The consultation on local government reorganisation in Sussex closes on 11 January. CPRE Sussex is urging everyone to have their say by [taking part in the consultation here](https://cpresussex.org.uk).

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For press inquiries and interview opportunities call Nancy Duckels on 07795 551852.

Notes for editors:

About CPRE Sussex

CPRE Sussex is shaping a greener future for Sussex. Our priorities are:

- Beautiful landscapes, rich in nature and greener towns and cities
- Countryside and green spaces which are accessible to all, enriching lives and health
- Sustainable development for thriving communities
- Effective responses to the climate emergency

We engage with decision makers, influencing them and challenging them to protect the Sussex countryside and green spaces. We inform on environmental issues and empower individuals and communities with robust evidence to defend and enhance the green spaces they love. We believe in collaborating with others to ensure a greener future for our county. We research and provide advice on planning issues. Together we can shape a greener future for Sussex.