

Report to:	Leader and Lead Member Strategic Management and Economic Development
Date of meeting:	11 March 2025
Title of Report:	Proposal to seek views from Full Council on proposed response to Government invitation for proposals for a single tier of local government in East Sussex
By:	Chief Executive
Purpose:	To consider seeking the view of Full Council on the proposed Interim Plan for a single tier of Local Government across East Sussex.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Leader and Lead Member is recommended to recommend the Council to:

- 1) Note the contents of Government's letter inviting proposals for a single tier of Local Government across East Sussex;**
 - 2) Note the proposed Interim Plan; and**
 - 3) Express views to Cabinet on the Interim Plan ahead of submission to Government.**
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1. Background

1.1 On 5 February 2025 the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution wrote to all District, Borough and County Councils in two-tier areas and some unitary councils issuing a statutory invitation for proposals for a single tier of government within their respective areas. The area that our invitation related to was the County of East Sussex. A copy of the Minister's letter and the statutory invitation is set out at Appendix 1 of Appendix A.

1.2 The Government is adopting a staged process. As can be seen from the letter and invitation the initial stage is for all areas to submit an interim plan to Government on or before 21 March 2025. This should set out progress on developing proposals in line with the criteria and guidance. The letter at Appendix 1 of Appendix A, sets out what is expected in this interim plan, including of the councils in Sussex as part of the Devolution Priority Programme. The Cabinet is due to consider the Government invitation and proposed interim plan on 20 March 2025, following a meeting of the Full Council. The report to Cabinet, is at Appendix A of this report.

1.3 The proposed Interim Plan document is set out at Appendix 2 of Appendix A and has been put together by the Chief Executives of the District and Borough Councils and the County Council, supported by a cross-councils officer project team established for this purpose.

1.4 The Interim Plan sets out the progress of working towards a proposal for a single tier of local government across East Sussex in the shape of one unitary. This interim plan is predicated on the Councils' understanding of the criteria set out in the statutory invitation. Should the government signal some flexibility in the current criteria the District and Borough Councils' have indicated that they may wish to consult residents on their views about alternative options.

2. Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

2.1 The meeting of Full Council affords an opportunity for all Members to express views on the Interim Plan which sets out progress on developing proposals in line with the criteria and guidance ahead of consideration by Cabinet and submission to Government.

BECKY SHAW
Chief Executive

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Local Members
All

Background Documents
English Devolution White Paper - GOV.UK