

Report to: Place Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 27 November 2025

By: Deputy Chief Executive

Title: Call-in: decision made by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment regarding the proposed relocation of Hastings Register Office

Purpose: To allow the committee to consider the call-in in relation to the decision by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment regarding the proposed relocation of Hastings Register Office.

RECOMMENDATION: The Place Scrutiny Committee is recommended to consider the call-in in relation to the decision taken by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment on 10 November 2025 regarding the proposed relocation of Hastings Register Office and decide what action, if any, to take.

1 Background

1.1 The decision made by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment on 10 November 2025 in relation to the proposed relocation of Hastings Register Office was called in by four Members of the Place Scrutiny Committee - Councillors Julia Hilton, Steve Murphy, David Tutt and Brett Wright - on 14 November 2025. A copy of the call-in request, specifying the grounds of concern requiring consideration by scrutiny, is at Appendix 1.

1.2 The Monitoring Officer and Scrutiny Manager reviewed the call-in request and considered that it was in accordance with the requirements of the call-in process set out in the East Sussex County Council Constitution.

2 Supporting information

2.1 The report regarding proposed relocation of Hastings Register Office, considered by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment on 10 November 2025, is attached at Appendix 2.

2.2 The draft minute outlining the Lead Member's decision is contained in Appendix 3.

2.3 In summary, the call-in request was based on the following areas of concern in relation to the decision:

- the accessibility of the proposed new location, and that an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) was not presented to the Lead Member at their meeting;
- the level of public and staff consultation and the reasons given for why these had not taken place;
- the capacity of the proposed new location to adequately provide the same level of service as is delivered at the current location; and
- whether the impact of the decision on Hastings Borough Council and the future unitary council had been sufficiently considered.

2.4 The Place Scrutiny Committee has therefore been requested to consider these issues through the call-in process before a final decision is taken.

2.5 The Director of Communities, Economy and Transport (CET) has provided information to the committee in relation to the points raised in the call-in request (Appendix 4). This includes the Equality Impact Assessment that was completed for the proposal (Appendix 5).

2.6 The role of the Place Scrutiny Committee is to consider the call-in in relation to the decision taken by the Lead Member, and the additional information provided in response to the concerns raised, and decide whether to:

- take no further action – in which case the original decision will take effect; or
- refer the decision back to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment setting out in writing the nature of its concerns. On receipt of a response from scrutiny, the Lead Member may then decide to proceed with the original decision or make an amended decision; or
- refer the matter to Full Council setting out in writing the reasons for the referral. On receipt of a referral, Council may decide to take no further action, in which case the original decision will take effect, or to refer the matter back to the Lead Member, setting out its views. The Lead Member may then decide to proceed with the original decision or make an amended decision.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The scrutiny committee cannot change the decision which, as an executive decision, rests with the Lead Member. The committee's role is to consider the points raised in the call-in request and decide what action, if any, it wishes to take.

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LOCAL MEMBERS

Councillor Godfrey Daniel