



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Miatta Fahnbulleh MP

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**Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government**

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Cllr Bella Sankey
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4th December 2025

Update on the Devolution Priority Programme

Thank you for speaking with me on 3 December. I am grateful to you for finding time at short notice.

As discussed, this Government is committed to extending and deepening devolution across England. For too long decisions have been made centrally in Whitehall, away from the places and communities those decisions impact.

Today, I issued a written ministerial statement reconfirming our commitment to the Devolution Priority Programme, including investment funds and next steps towards the establishment of the Sussex and Brighton Mayoral Strategic Authority

Following our appointments earlier in the autumn, the Secretary of State, Minister for Local Government and I have taken the opportunity consider the most effective way to ensure Mayoral Strategic Authorities are best placed to deliver. We believe that devolution works best when it is built on strong foundations, and so moving forward, I intend to align mayoral devolution in the Devolution Priority Programme areas with the establishment of new unitary authorities following local government reorganisation.

I have therefore informed Parliament today that we are minded to hold inaugural Mayoral election in Sussex and Brighton in May 2028, in order to complete the reorganisation process before Mayors take office. I recognise that this will be disappointing news and I am grateful for the work you have put into this Programme to date. I want to assure you the Government's intention is firmly to preserve this progress and ensure your area can still benefit from devolution as soon as possible, including in advance of the Mayoral election.

While recognising that you will need time to consider today's announcements, we are keen to move as quickly as possible to ensure that you can continue to make progress on building the new institution, and start delivering on our shared priority: driving growth across Sussex and Brighton. Consequently, today's announcement confirmed that we will ensure the new institution is able to start investing in local growth priorities in the years prior to the election of the Mayor,

including through the government providing one third of the annual value of your Investment Funds in 2026-27 and 2027-28.

Prior to the election of the Mayor, you will also be able to make use of a range of devolved powers to drive your priorities, including around the development of Local Growth Plans, transport and adult skills. Following the Mayor's election, as previously committed, you will then receive £38 million per year, split equally between resource and capital.

In addition – in order to support you to develop your institution's capacity to develop and deliver growth in your region – today's announcement confirms that we will provide £3 million as a minimum flat payment over the next three financial years, in addition to an initial payment of £1 million when the statutory instruments are laid in Parliament. This funding is intended to help with the costs of establishing your new Mayoral Strategic Authority and ensuring your area can benefit from devolution as soon as possible.

In order to unlock your ability to set up the new institution and begin delivering for your area, we of course need to lay the statutory instrument setting up the new Strategic Authority. The government stands ready to progress this as quickly as possible over the coming weeks, subject to your consent and local processes.

I suggest we arrange a further meeting next week, with you all collectively, to discuss how we can maintain momentum on establishing the Sussex and Brighton Mayoral Strategic Authority and driving growth for your region, and in particular the timing of laying the statutory instruments.

I am copying this letter to the Members of Parliament, District Council leaders and Police and Crime Commissioner in your area.

Yours sincerely



MIATTA FAHNBULLEH MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Devolution, Faith and Communities