

Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation Scrutiny Member Reference Group – views to Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development

1.1 The cross Place and People Scrutiny Committees' Member Reference Group (MRG) met on 17 February 2026 and agreed the following comments to be put to the Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development for consideration of his response to the Government's request for views in regarding any Structural Change Order required for Local Government Reorganisation on 18 February 2026.

1.2 The MRG agreed with all the draft responses to the questions posed by the Government on the East Sussex Structural Changes Order, and that a Preparing Council with an Implementation Executive would be the best model for establishing the new council. Some members of the MRG held differing views on question 8, the preferred name for the new council, and suggested the word 'Unitary' could be added to the proposed name to make it a clear departure from the current arrangements, while other Members preferred the suggested name East Sussex Council, with the recollection of previous arrangements fading over time.

1.3 The MRG agreed on the importance of joint scrutiny arrangements between the County Council and the district and borough councils to provide appropriate oversight of the Implementation Executive, but agreed that these arrangements should be decided locally.

1.4 In light of the Government's decision to proceed with elections for East Sussex County Council in May 2026, the MRG expressed concern about the capacity of staff to deliver both LGR and Devolution on the current timeline set out by Government. The MRG agreed that the response to the questions should reflect the fact that a newly elected council will need to have the opportunity to review and amend the submitted responses.