

James MacCleary MP report August 2025

Brighton's land grab

The Local Government Reorganisation is rapidly becoming a hot topic of discussion in our local communities. It is now confirmed that Brighton and Sussex will form a combined strategic mayoral authority, headed by a Mayor. The first Mayor of Sussex will be elected across Sussex in May 2026.

The next phase of our local government reorganisation is to abolish our District and Borough Councils, reshaping them into single unitary authorities. East Sussex County Council alongside our District, Boroughs and local MP's have already submitted a proposal for a new unitary to be made on the existing geographic footprint of East Sussex.

Brighton and Hove City Council disagree. To say I am furious at their latest proposals is an understatement. Not only was there a lack of engagement from Bella Sankey, the leader of Brighton and Hove City Council ahead of announcing her proposals - not a single option contained any westward expansion.

Separating our local villages from their historic and geographical ties to Lewes and East Sussex makes no sense and amounts to nothing more than a panicked land grab. Bella Sankey claims that there are economic benefits to the move for towns like Newhaven but has so far failed to articulate what they are. Given Brighton & Hove's record at Kendall Court, their recent incompetence on the i360 which wrote off in excess of £50m, missed bin collections and their much lower recycling rate than our own (28% BHCC vs 40% LDC and 45% in WDC), I do not see what benefits joining the city could possibly bring to our area.

I would urge our town and parish councils to encourage residents to participate in both of the consultations that are currently open, closing to submissions on the 25th of August 2025.

South East and Southern Water

I recently spoke on LBC about the appalling water waste we are seeing in South East Waters network, they initiated a hose pipe ban - whilst leaking an average of 97.4 million litres of water a day, the equivalent of 39 olympic sized swimming pools.

I also wrote to Lawrence Godson, CEO of Southern Water, alongside colleagues about the eyewateringly high incentive that he was due to be paid and the 15 serious pollution events he has presided over this year, whilst our bills have increased dramatically.

At last the government earlier this month announced that they are abolishing Ofwat. The Lib Dems have been calling for this since 2022 and are now calling on the government to ensure that the new water regulator is established as soon as possible and to ban water company bonuses until leaks are fixed and sewage dumping ends.

Summer Tour

I have looked forward to my summer tour as a welcome opportunity to spend more time in the constituency away from Westminster, meeting the people that make our part of Sussex special. With visits to local businesses, charities and other organisations planned as well as attempting to get around as many of our parish councils as possible to meet the councillors and residents, hearing your concerns directly.

Remembrance and Christmas Plans

Whilst we are still officially in summer, I would like to take this opportunity to ask our parish and town councils for their remembrance or Christmas plans. Please do contact Helen at helen.spearman@parliament.uk for any diary requests or invitations.