

James MacCleary MP report December 2025

Local Government Reorganisation

The government is now consulting on the proposed unitary options for Sussex with a decision on the new unitary authorities due in January, to then allow for the relevant legislation to be laid in Parliament. You can access [the consultation online](#) at the [gov.uk](#) website.

I have been clear from the outset that I do not believe this reorganisation will deliver the change that our residents and local councils need, but as the process is being done regardless, I once again urge our local town and parish councils to engage with the consultation.

East Sussex County Council submitted a proposal that would keep the existing boundaries of the county, abolishing all 5 current district and borough councils amalgamating them into one East Sussex unitary. Brighton & Hove City Council have proposed a 5 unitary mode for Sussex, which I do not believe has been well thought through. Whilst they have backed off from their initial proposals that would have absorbed Newhaven, Kingston and villages along the C7 into the city, their new proposal would see an expansion up to Peacehaven and Falmer - carving up the rest of Sussex as they see fit, from Hove Town Hall.

This includes the separation of South Highton from Newhaven into different authorities; Newhaven and Seaford being decoupled from their historic links to Lewes and essentially segregating our towns and villages in rural Sussex from our coastline ones. I do not believe this will be financially viable, nor does it meet the government's own criteria.

Separately to the reorganisation of councils, the new Mayor of Sussex election has now been postponed until 2028.

The Budget

This must have been one of the most chaotic budget's, with ideas and plans consistently leaked to the press and then withdrawn or changed all the way up to its delivery, leaving the country to speculate for months.

Ahead of the budget I wrote to the chancellor, calling for the treasury to unlock road funding for the South East. Last year's budget included only one reference to investment in the South East, and that was the Lower Thames Crossing scheme with the same scheme repeated this year!

We urgently need investment in the Bishopstone junction and the A259. It is not fair that we are always lumped in with London, when our communities' needs for investment are incredibly different. I also called for a 5% VAT cut for our hospitality businesses; a reversal to the damaging NIC increases and scrapping the family farm tax that impacts many of our communities.

Summer Tour 2026

Last year it was a pleasure and privilege to visit so many of our wonderful villages and hear directly from you. My team will begin planning 2026's tour of our towns and parishes in the new year and would welcome any suggestions or ideas for a visit to your area to meet your councillors and residents. Please contact Helen at helen.spearman@parliament.uk if you would like to register interest or host an event.

Christmas and New Years

On a final note, I'd like to thank you all for the incredible dedication and commitment to our area that you have made in 2025. I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New year!