



All Colleagues' Briefing May 2025

Lorna Ford

Agenda

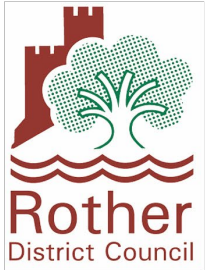


Number	Item
1	Welcome
2	Update on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and Devolution
3	People Programme update
4	Feedback, questions and answers

Update on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and Devolution

Timeline for Devolution and LGR

Our next milestones are highlighted in the yellow box



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13th March:
Government
consultation
closed

Spring 25: Results
of the consultation,
then a Ministerial
decision on whether
to proceed

May 26:
Elections
for Mayor

Spring 25

Summer 25

Autumn 25

**End of 25 /
early 26**

2026

2027

2028

L
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19th March:
Extraordinary
Council signed
off Interim Plan

21st March:
Interim Plan
submitted to
govt.

Development
of business
case and
stakeholder
engagement

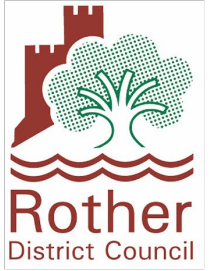
26th
September:
Deadline for
final
proposal
(Cabinet to
sign off)

Ministers
consider
final
proposal and
provide
feedback

April
2027:
Shadow
unitary
in place

April 2028:
Unitary
council(s)
go-live

Feedback from Government on the Interim Plan



- The government has now responded to our interim plan for LGR in East Sussex.
- The feedback letter is addressed to all seven councils in ceremonial East Sussex (East Sussex County Council, Rother DC, Wealden DC, Hastings BC, Lewes BC, Eastbourne BC, Brighton and Hove City Council).
- There are no plans for a unitary council in East Sussex to include the area of Brighton & Hove however we will consider any impact on other authorities. Regular meetings are taking place between all councils.

Feedback from Government on the Interim Plan – summary of main points

Focus should be on how to create Councils for the future

Proposal must cover the whole of the area covered in the invitation letter

If proposals expand into another area, need to explain the impact and how that fits with proposals for the rest of that area

Would like a joint evidence base for all submissions

Each local authority can submit one proposal

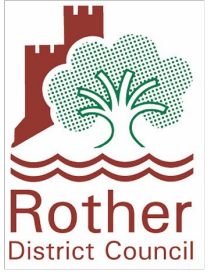
Must explain how new structures will help deliver devolution across the Mayoral Combined Authority

Proposals must address financial sustainability, governance, and public service delivery

Cost of re-organising should be addressed. Further information on the funding for LGR will follow.

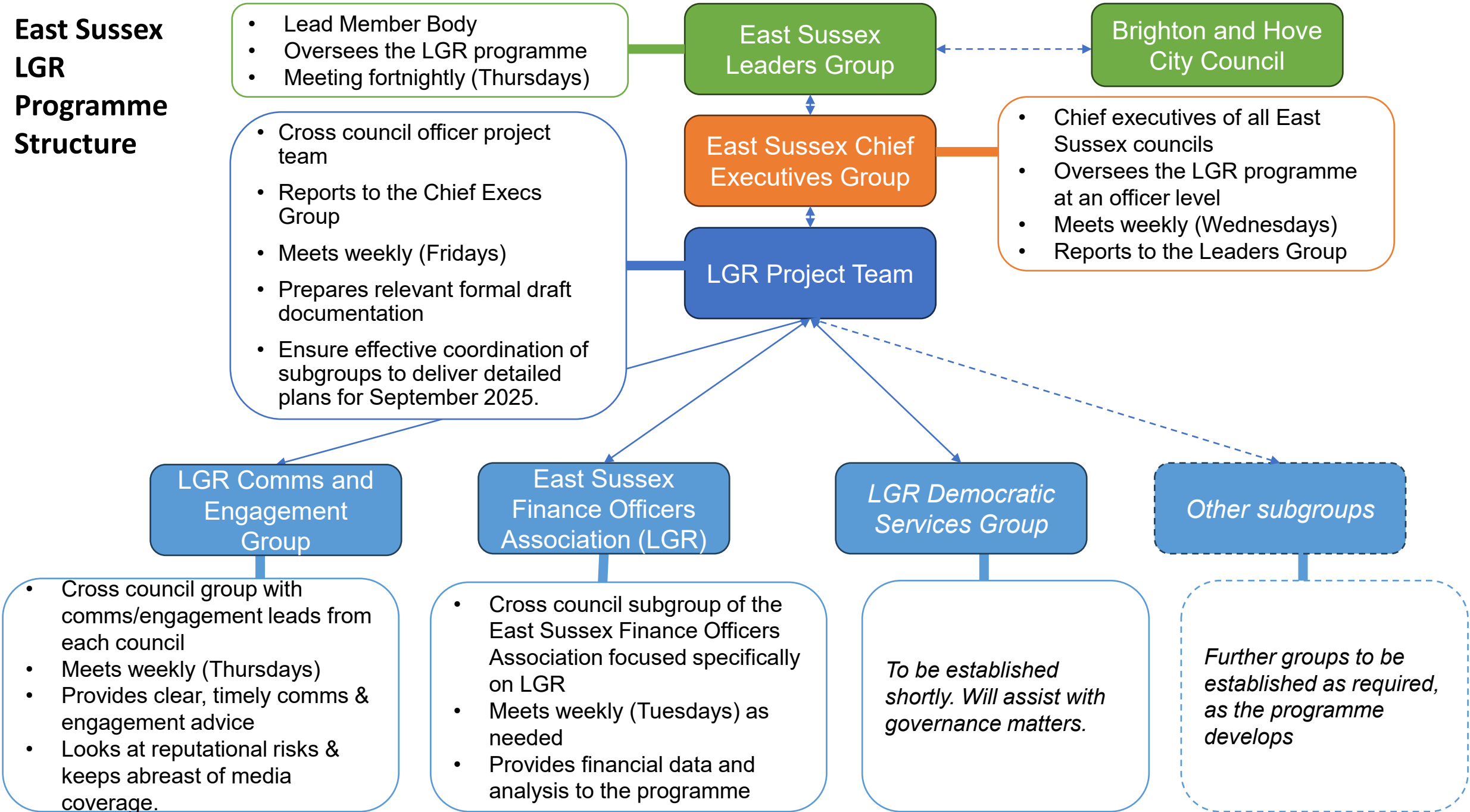
500,000 population size is a guiding principle, not a hard target and proposals should set out their rationale clearly

Next steps for LGR

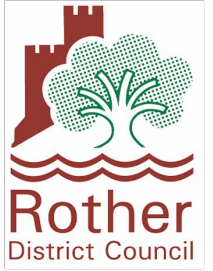


- We will continue to develop a detailed proposal for a single council for East Sussex
- We also recognise that other options could be suggested for development with strong public support and if the Government's guidance changes
- An extraordinary Cabinet meeting will be organised to sign off the proposal, which is due for submission by 26 September
- Workstreams and groups will be established as and when needed- the current programme structure is outlined on the next slide

East Sussex
LGR
Programme
Structure

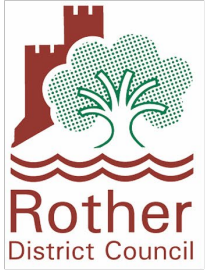


Survey on LGR in East Sussex



- We have worked with other councils in East Sussex to launch a survey on LGR and how services should be run in the future: [East Sussex Councils](#)
- The survey runs until Monday 23 June
- The views of colleagues, Members, stakeholders and residents are invaluable – please have your say
- The outcome of the survey will be reported as part of the final proposal in September

Government Consultation on Mayoral Authority



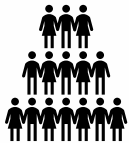
- The government recently held a consultation on views for the proposed Mayoral Combined County Authority for the local government areas of East Sussex, West Sussex, and Brighton.
- The outcome will inform Ministerial decision on whether to proceed – expected Spring 25
- Following engagement with our stakeholders, RDC's response highlighted:



Need for a broader review of local government funding



Importance of balancing representation, including in proposed names for the new authority



Importance of local identities and knowledge, particularly in rural areas



Opportunities for investments, funding, and better coordination of strategies and infrastructure projects



Support for town and parish councils in delivering effective public services



Potential to create efficiencies

People Programme update

What's been done

- Renovation of the villas – making good progress on the new kitchen and break out area
- Service Planning – final plans being received – thanks for all of your involvement
- Appraisals – we've made good progress but still some to do
- Training needs analysis – we're using the appraisals and service plans to understand our training needs including preparing for LGR
- Moving forward with the Colleague Engagement Group
- Reviewing policies – lots to do but we've already introduced flexible retirement options

Colleague Engagement Group objectives

- Build trust and confidence between colleagues and leaders
- Determine what matters most to us
- Understand the views of colleagues across Rother (develop regular short surveys on key topics)
- Safeguard wellbeing (develop a colleague wellbeing survey with Unison and an action plan)
- Act on concerns about current issues such as LGR and inform our response to external changes
- Review staff benefits and improve policies – improve communication about these and understand where our gaps are

The group will review these objectives and agree the final version. Aim to meet every six weeks.

Colleague Engagement Group Members

Ilona Hollands – Finance

Sarah Shepherd – Unison

Susie Thomas – Audit

Aaron Sams – Planning Policy

Jonathan Hampson – Environmental Health

Oscar Turner – IT

Sam Shwalbe – HR

Caroline Betts – Revenues and Benefits

Louise Hollingsworth – Democratic Services

Amy Belcher – Revenue and Benefits

Matt Worsley – Planning Development

Aron Hicks – Housing

Feedback, questions & answers