



THE UCKFIELD VOICE

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION PROPOSALS

BY CLLR. PETER SELBY

The UK Government has put forward draft proposals to reorganise the local government system.

The new scheme would enable governance via three elected levels - as opposed to the four currently in place. In East Sussex, there are two different proposals from local authorities, which were open to public consultation between November 2025 and January 2026.

The new system - expected to be one of the two proposals - is set to be in place for April 2028. The changes will coincide with the introduction of a Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA), with a new role of Sussex & Brighton Mayor. Locally, we as Uckfield Town Council sit at the lowest level of governance. Central government, East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and Wealden District Council (WDC) sit above us, and it is these second and third tiers - namely ESCC and WDC in our area - which central government has proposed be reformed.

Here are our updates on what we know right now about the plans.

What impact will LGR have on Uckfield Town Council?

This is hard to say, until we hear more. The government's English Devolution White Paper in December 2024 only makes a brief mention of town or parish councils. They outlined that they intend to "...rewire the relationship between town and parish councils and principal Local Authorities, strengthening expectations on engagement and community voice."



Photo: Flickr

What changes will take place to services?

Local councils have said that services will continue as normal in the transition. We await news of the plans beyond 2028.

What form will LGR take in Sussex?

The four proposals across Sussex can be found here: <https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation/east-sussex-brighton-and-hove-west-sussex/>. Wealden District Council did not outline their support for any of the proposals prior to the consultation.

When will my next elections be?

After the postponement of May 2025 elections for East Sussex County Council, the next scheduled date was May 2026. However, after central government asked councils to outline their intentions regarding 2026 elections, ESCC have requested to postpone to May 2027.

Contact us through:



admin@uckfieldtc.gov.uk

@uckfieldtowncouncil

WHAT'S INSIDE

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ESTATES AND OPEN SPACES UPDATE

BY THOMAS WOOLLARD, ESTATES MANAGER

Uckfield Town Council's estates team oversees the management and maintenance of various valuable resources for our town.

As of February 2026, this includes 17 open spaces, eight play areas, seven recreation grounds, one cemetery, four woodlands (three being ancient woodlands), two Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), six allotment sites and 72 litter bins.

With one estates manager, one head groundsman, four groundsman and one countryside ranger, this is a big task. Over the last year, the team has been busy ensuring our open spaces remain safe, usable, and presentable. In total, they have marked around 124.2 miles of lines on our football pitches - the equivalent of walking to the Peak District or the Jurassic Coast. They have collected circa 7,000 bags of litter throughout the town, planted 400 trees, 40 fruit trees and 70 metres of hedging, and cut acre after acre of grass whilst ensuring wild flora and fauna are preserved and protected, amongst a variety of other tasks.

Playgrounds and Recreation Grounds

A rigorous inspection process has been rolled out for playgrounds, consisting of a weekly in-house inspection followed by a quarterly and annual external inspection. The renovation of Victoria Play Area has been carried out after a public consultation, and has been a success, with much positive feedback.

We are currently still seeing high levels of vandalism and anti-social behaviour within some of the play areas, however. This not only means the closure of some equipment, but also costly repairs. Our football pitches underwent an end-of-season renovation, which included re-seeding and decompaction works.



These renovations will occur seasonally to ensure the pitches can be fully utilised all season.

Woodlands, Trees, and Nature Reserves

All boundary trees and trees with a target area are surveyed by an external professional tree inspector to ensure the safety of residents and properties. This allows us to direct services and funds where required.

The Town Council is keen to preserve as many of our natural assets as possible. Ecological surveys have been commissioned for the Nature Reserves - West Park and Hempstead Meadows - and Boothland Wood, with other areas to be considered next year.

The Town Council has pledged to contribute to the Weald to Waves project, which is looking at creating a 100-mile wildlife corridor from coast to countryside. This is something that anyone with a garden can join here: <https://www.wealdtowaves.co.uk/join-the-corridor/> And finally, should you want to get involved in the works we carry out across our woodlands and nature reserves, please do contact Uckfield Town Council to discuss volunteering opportunities at admin@uckfieldtc.gov.uk

COMMUNITY SAFETY IN UCKFIELD

Community safety is about more than just opposing antisocial behaviour and reducing risks.

It's about instilling a culture of care and vigilance, where every resident has a role to play and no one feels isolated. This responsibility is not solely on the shoulders of the police; it's a shared commitment that includes local councils, residents, and community groups. Parish and town councils are frontline champions of this cause. By working closely with emergency services and key stakeholders, councils highlight the areas that need attention and push for the necessary funding and support to address them.

Partnership approach to community safety

The responsibility for handling matters of community safety typically sits with the three emergency services in our area - namely East Sussex Fire & Rescue, South East Ambulance Service and Sussex Police.

But it's the work they carry out in partnership with local organisations and community groups on the ground, such as ourselves, that makes community safety efforts much more effective.

How to report an incident

If a crime is underway or there is an immediate danger to life, you should report it to 999.

If a crime has already occurred and you wish to record the details of the incident, please visit:

<https://www.sussex.police.uk/ro/report/>
Alternatively, for non-emergency enquiries, please call 101.

If you're on a train or at a train station, and need to report a non-emergency crime, you can discreetly text 61016 to report it to the British Transport Police.

Town Centre CCTV

Uckfield Town Council and the Uckfield Chamber of Commerce have ensured that Town Centre CCTV cameras are maintained within Uckfield, with footage accessible by Sussex Police. There's CCTV on, and around, many key public buildings within the town, as well as that utilised by retailers and businesses to monitor their own property.



Photo: Hustvedt via Wikipedia

A further CCTV camera has been installed within the town centre, in a key hotspot for anti-social behaviour, to further ensure the safety of our residents and assist with the reduction of vandalism.

Safe Space Scheme

The Civic Centre Uckfield plays a key role within the town, as a community hub, but now also registered as a safe space. 23 sites in Wealden, including four other businesses in Uckfield, have signed up to the scheme, which was started by the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner. Safe Spaces enable people to seek help, make a phone call or simply wait in a safe environment until they feel comfortable. Organisations that have signed up can provide access to a private area, as well as a phone, toilet and drinking water. Details of your local Safe Spaces can be found here:

<https://www.safespacesussex.org.uk>

WEALDEN LOCAL PLAN - HAVE YOUR SAY!

BY HOLLY GORING, TOWN CLERK



Wealden District Council (WDC) are the local planning authority, and they are required to prepare and adopt a Local Plan.

This plan sets out a long-term spatial vision for the district. It's developed within a legal and policy framework of national planning policy and guides where development should go, including both residential and commercial.

The plan also focuses on key themes such as housing, climate change, natural environment, historic environment, economy, infrastructure and design. This is an important document which shapes the future of the district's growth.

The revised draft plan will be placed out for public consultation during the first two weeks of February for a period of six weeks.

Once the consultation is launched, the full documentation will be able to view from their consultation webpage:

<https://letstalk.wealden.gov.uk/>

Hard copies of the consultation will be available to view at the Civic Centre and Uckfield Library. Consultation events will also be hosted by Wealden District Council, and will be announced in due course.

OUR PLANS FOR 2026-27

At Full Council on 12 January 2026, Uckfield Town Council members resolved to adopt a suite of business planning documents for our work over the next year and beyond.

These documents help explain our duties and ambitions as a local authority, and are a fundamental way of engaging with residents every year.

We have recently published the following documents:

- Strategic Plan 2026-31
- Annual Plan 2026/27
- Annual Budget 2026/27
- Asset Management Plan 2026-31

You can take a look at these documents on the Town Council website here:

<https://www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk/your-council/plans-and-budgets/>

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Agendas and minutes can be viewed on the Town Council website at <https://www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk/agendas-and-minutes/>. Meetings are held in

person in the Council Chamber at The Civic Centre and all start at 7pm. All questions should be sent to the Town Clerk at: admin@uckfieldtc.gov.uk

MON 9 FEB	- GENERAL PURPOSES
MON 16 FEB	- PLANS
WED 25 FEB	- FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE
MON 2 MAR	- ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE
MON 9 MAR	- PLANS

COMING NEXT MONTH

- Councillor Soapbox
- Your Precept in 2026-27
- Annual Priorities
- Annual Town Meeting Notice

