

James MacCleary MP report October 2025

Update on Local Government Reorganisation

Following your responses to last month's consultations on the upcoming Local Government Reorganisation, I am pleased to confirm that Brighton and Hove City Council have reconsidered their plans to absorb Newhaven, Kingston and our villages along the C7. I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed towards what I hear was the biggest response to a consultation that East Sussex County Council have ever seen.

However, our work here is not done. Brighton and Hove City Council have now made alternative plans to submit to the Secretary of State alongside our own [One East Sussex proposal](#). These plans would still see areas of our community divided into different Unitary Authorities, and do not meet the government's own criteria. I will continue to advocate for the One East Sussex proposal on county borders, [as I did recently](#) at the East Sussex County Council.

Health Hub for Willingdon and Polegate

Last week I visited the Hindsland site on the Eastbourne Road, where a new housing development is being built. This includes a new health hub. A third of the units on this site will become available for local social housing, with the rest sold into the private market. Rumours that housing has been sold off to local authorities in London are completely false.

I am pleased to report steady progress on the new health hub, which will include two GP surgeries, an on site pharmacy, step-free access, 85 parking spaces, and will be built with solar panels to keep costs down. This is an important step towards stronger healthcare for local communities, and will decrease pressure on our NHS.

I would like to extend my gratitude to Wealden District Council, Polegate Town Council and Willingdon Parish Council alongside NHS Sussex for their hard and crucial work on this project.

I am also thankful to Lewes District Council, Seaford & Newhaven Town Councils, for their collaborative effort on further health hubs for Seaford and Newhaven. The former is in very early planning stages but progressing at speed, while the latter looks set for completion next year. I have also raised the issue of improving the provision of satellite surgeries for our more rural communities with the local ICB and will report back on any progress. The Newhaven Hub is on schedule to open its doors in 2026.

Update on water and the Arlington Reservoir

Recently I visited the Arlington Reservoir, where I spoke with the CEO at South East Water. I toured the water treatment plant and discussed recent bursts in Willingdon, Polegate and villages across the South Downs. We also discussed the impact of climate change on local

water infrastructure. I must note here the distinction between South East Water, who only supply drinking water, and Southern Water, who dispose of wastewater.

South East Water plans to expand capacity at Arlington reservoir. It is imperative that we ensure our supply of treated drinking water can meet the needs of our growing local communities and withstand unpredictable weather. Whilst I know that dry weather conditions have played a significant part in pipes bursting throughout Sussex this summer, I have made it clear that local water networks must urgently become more resilient. It is unacceptable that our families and communities have been left without water for hours or even days in the event of bursts.

South East Water are in the early planning stages of constructing a new reservoir nearby the existing one in Arlington to help meet the needs of our local communities. I encourage local councillors and residents to report any leaks online, as I continue pressuring South East Water to get this under control.

Local flag displays

I have received alarming numbers of complaints from local residents about St George's or Union flags being put up as part of the 'Raise the Colours' protests provoked by convicted criminal Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (Tommy Robinson). Constituents being made to feel uncomfortable going about their everyday lives or intimidated by those raising flags is unacceptable and appalling.

It is time now for the flags to come down to allow a more constructive dialogue to occur. County Council workers attempted to remove some of them, but were met by abuse and threats and ultimately had to stop. It is an offence to attach items to a lamp post without permission, and abusing someone for doing their job is abhorrent, and thoroughly unpatriotic.

Our flag will fly from public buildings, as it always has, and those who wish to hang flags on their own property should do so. I believe the flag belongs to all of us, and should be a symbol of unity, not division and intimidation for a select few trying to make a political point.

First Mayoral Election

The first Mayor is due to be elected next May as part of the local government reorganisation. The Lib Dems have announced Ben Dempsey as candidate for Mayor of Sussex, who will be standing alongside Katy Bourne (Conservative) and Martin Webb (Independent) announced so far. The new Mayor will hold substantial power over areas like local transport and planning. No matter who is elected, I will continue to campaign for local causes and ensure our area is not forgotten.