

Response ID ANON-RGCP-GNAG-9

Submitted to Sussex and Brighton Devolution Consultation
Submitted on 2025-04-13 20:35:38

About You

1 What best describes your response?

I am responding on behalf of, or as a representative of, a business or organisation

Business or Organisation Respondee

8 What best describes your organisation?

Town Council

If you selected the option 'Other', please use this text box to provide more details:

9 What is the first part of the postcode where your business or organisation is based?(For example if your postcode is AB1 2CD, you would write AB1 - We ask this so that we can identify what Local Authority you live in and understand a bit more about the area where you live. We do not use this information to identify you.)

Please use this text box to provide us with the first three or four characters of your postcode, e.g. AB1 or CD21.:

TN22

Proposed Geography

10 To what extent do you agree or disagree that establishing a Mayoral Combined County Authority over the proposed geography will deliver benefits to the area?

Neither agree nor disagree

Please use this text box to explain your answer:

The main benefit is having more of a handle on strategic decision-making - transport, the economy, and emergency services. With TfSE and Sussex Police already operating at a regional level, there are frameworks for the MCCA to be established. The disadvantages of setting such a broad geographical area - it may be too broad to reflect the differences, needs and characteristics of East, West Sussex, and Brighton. Would the MCCA fully understand varying levels of deprivation, differing economies of the coast, rural and urban. The transport networks are very different from West to East. In terms of governance, BHCC is already an established unitary, and politically the districts hold quite different standpoints to that of the Counties. Members of the public don't have enough information. The proposed changes will cost the taxpayer-upfront costs of establishing the MCCA, as well as LGR will be extensive. And how will the Mayoral and Deputy Mayoral roles sit alongside local MPs.

Proposed Governance

11 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed governance arrangements for the Mayoral Combined County Authority?

Neither agree nor disagree

Please use this text box to explain your answer:

The main concern is the lack of accountability. The current proposals appear weak. Members don't feel it would be sufficient to have only six elected members representing such a vast area. It would not represent the political balance, nor would it reflect the differences, needs and characteristics of the region - in terms of deprivation, the needs of the local communities, and the economies in these rural, urban, and coastal areas.

The London Assembly has a far greater level of representation for the London Boroughs. Sussex is diverse, with large settlements such as Hastings, Eastbourne, Brighton and Chichester, compared with small market towns and tourist villages, alongside Gatwick Airport and Newhaven Port. Greater representation is required, and a committee structure which is transparent, and reflects the themes of the MCCA's responsibilities with regard to transport, climate change and biodiversity, and spatial planning. We would support other bodies joining the table.

Supporting The Economy

12 To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across the proposed geography through the Mayoral Combined County Authority will support the economy of the area?

Neither agree nor disagree

Please use this text box to explain your answer:

At this regional level, overall the MCCA is likely to encourage more joined-up thinking in terms of economic growth for the South East, and hopefully attract more targeted investment to a region that is lacking funding to drive forward road and rail network improvements. The South East has to find a delicate balance of supporting economic growth and the tourist industry, whilst preserving important open spaces such as the South Downs and Ashdown Forest, and key heritage sites such as Arundel Castle.

The consultation references TR Fastening as a key large business, but they have in fact moved their main warehouse up to Walsall, and only have their HQ now in Uckfield. The main issue in this area is the average minimum wage, which results in many qualified employees commuting further afield, for work, thus having an impact on the local economy back here in Sussex.

Improving Social Outcomes

13 To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across the proposed geography through the Mayoral Combined County Authority will improve social outcomes in the area?

Neither agree nor disagree

Please use this text box to explain your answer:

This will ultimately depend on the finances devolved to the MCCA, and fiscal rules surrounding the governance and set up of the MCCA and LGR. If successfully combined and streamlined, there is potential to improve social outcomes, but once again, we need enough representation appointed to challenge through the governance arrangements the needs of East and West Sussex, and Brighton region. We have deprived coastal communities, rural communities who are isolated with barriers to public services, we have affluent rural areas which sit cheek by jowl by poverty, and we have growing businesses both small start up and larger worldwide distributors requiring varying unit sizes, which development isn't meeting. Sussex is a region with limited rail and road networks. To improve social outcomes, we need to see improvements to transport, improvements to the average wage, and more affordable options for home and travel. A holistic view will be required to address the housing crisis, and inequality.

Local Government Services

14 To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across the proposed geography through a Mayoral Combined County Authority will improve local government services in the area?

Neither agree nor disagree

Please use this text box to explain your answer:

It's far too early to say, with such limited information at this stage on the proposals for LGR. The proposed MCCA could assist with supporting the delivery of critical services, to where its required across the region. But, the set up of the unitary councils will see the lower level layer of local government removed (i.e. districts) and therefore the knowledge and expertise of those staff who know the needs of those residents best. The process needs to provide accountability and transparency. In short, it's creating just a different layer of administration. The main concern is the cost to the taxpayer to undertake this exercise, as a number of the district/borough authorities do not have the funds to progress the reorganisation.

Improving The Local Natural Environment

15 To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across the proposed geography through a Mayoral Combined County Authority will improve the local natural environment and overall national environment?

Neither agree nor disagree

Please use this text box to explain your answer:

The establishment of the MCCA may lead to more effective oversight of important local green, blue and heritage assets such as the South Downs and Ashdown Forest, and would therefore be positive.

The lower level management of these sites however causes some concern.

A regional high-level helicopter view, could see the important variations of the landscapes, lost, and missed in important conversations when considering spatial planning, sustainable transport options and growth.

Important green corridors (Weald to Waves) could be placed at risk. We would therefore expect the MCCA to focus on the policies needed for Sussex and Brighton, to preserve and protect these important areas. With specific biodiversity net gain targets, climate change pledges, and central government guidance around watercourses and ancient woodlands, we would expect the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to lead on strengthening environmental policies for Sussex and retain what makes Sussex, Sussex.

Supporting Needs of Local Communities

16 To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across the proposed geography through the Mayoral Combined County Authority will support the interests and needs of local communities and reflect local identities?

Neither agree nor disagree

Please use this text box to explain your answer:

It's important that the election process for the new role of Mayor and Deputy Mayor, seeks nominations from those living in Sussex. They need to understand first-hand what it's like to live here, and the variation in the rural, urban and coastal communities both living and working here. The establishment of the MCCA will cost the taxpayer, and it is vital that this department delivers, it establishes and adapts policies for the region which reflect the variations within the counties and Brighton. They need to understand the difference in the needs and characteristics between West Sussex, Brighton and East Sussex. We have already stated the importance of accountability, and ensuring that adequate governance arrangements are established and adequate representation is put in place for the full region. Some residents have questioned the role of the Police & Crime Commissioner offices in the past. We need more assurance of adequate representation and governance, before we can support.

Referral source

17 Please tell us how you found out about this consultation?

Email

If you selected the option 'Other', please use this text box to provide more details: