

Brighton & Hove City Council

Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda Item 10

Subject: Devolution Update

Date of meeting: 22nd July 2026

Report of: Chair of Place Overview & Scrutiny

Contact Officer: Name: Interim Head of Cabinet Office

Email: Tom Cottam Tom.cottam@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

Key Decision: No

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1** This report informs and updates members on the progress that has been made to establish the Sussex and Brighton Strategic Authority (SBSA).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee to note the update to members on Devolution.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1** The Sussex and Brighton Strategic Authority (SBSA) was formally vested on the 26th March 2026. The Inaugural Board meeting took place on the 15th April 2026. Following local elections in East Sussex and West Sussex in May 2026, SBSA held its AGM on the 1st July 2026.

- 3.2** The SBSA Board took a range of decisions at the Inaugural Board meeting and AGM required to establish the Authority, agree pre-mayoral governance arrangements and establish a Strategic Framework. Decisions have been taken in the following areas:

- Appointment of Board Members
- Approach to the Pre-Mayoral Period and the Appointment of the Chair and the Vice-Chair(s)
- 2026/27 Budget

- Strategic Framework plan for Prosperity Strategy
- Functional transition arrangements
- Pay and Grading Framework
- The appointment of statutory officers
- A Constitution and Local Assurance Framework

3.3 The background to these decisions is set out in full in papers published by SBSA for the inaugural Board meeting on 15th April 2026 (appendix 1) and the AGM (appendix 2) on 1st July 2026.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

4.1 The Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee is invited to note the update report.

5. Community engagement and consultation

5.1 The Government ran a public consultation in areas chosen for the Devolution Priority Programme which closed on 13 April 2025. The consultation sought views on the proposal to form a Mayoral Combined County Authority for the local government areas of East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council and Brighton and Hove City Council.

5.2 The SBSA intend to run a non-statutory consultation and other engagement exercises in Autumn 2026 on a draft Prosperity Strategy.

6. Financial implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. However, the creation of the mayoral strategic authority for Sussex and Brighton will have a range of financial implications for Brighton and Hove. These have been previously set out in reports to Full Council and Cabinet (Appendix 3).

6.2 SBSA has agreed a budget for 2026/27, which is set out in the published papers for the inaugural SBSA Board meeting on the 15th April. Revisions to the 2026/27 budget alongside an emerging medium term financial plan were set out in the papers for the SBSA AGM on the 1st July 2026.

Name of finance officer consulted:

Date consulted (dd/mm/yy):

7. Legal implications

7.1 The SBSA was established as a Combined County Authority by the Sussex and Brighton Combined County Authority Regulations 2026 which came into effect on 26 March 2026. These regulations included governance arrangements for the new authority and some specific functions to be exercised by it. Further functions given to Combined County Authorities were included in the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026 when the provisions came into force in April 2026. These include

transport, skills and employment, housing, economic regeneration, health and well-being and culture functions.

- 7.2 The initial Constitution of the SBSA was considered and agreed at the inaugural meeting of the Authority on 15 April 2026.

Name of lawyer consulted: Allan Wells Date consulted (30/06/2026)

8. Risk implications

- 8.1 While this report is for information only, it is important that members are kept informed on the ongoing process of devolution as the SBSA continues to evolve. Ensuring regular updates supports effective oversight and helps mitigate the risks associated with emerging governance, financial and service delivery arrangements. The last update was provided to Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 31/07/2025.

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 As part of the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010, the council must seek to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 9.2 It is not anticipated that the recommendations in this report will result in disproportionate impacts for any specific group sharing any of the legally protected characteristics.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 Environment and Climate Change is one of the areas of competence for the new Strategic Authorities and includes statutory functions relating to Heat Network Zoning coordination. A new regional Prosperity Strategy will set out the ambitions for SBSA in this space.

11. Health and Wellbeing Implications:

- 11.1 Health and wellbeing is one of the areas of competence for the new Strategic Authority and it is subject to a new statutory health improvement and health inequalities duty when discharging any of its powers or functions, which requires SBSA to have regard to the need to improve the health of people in their area and the need to reduce health inequalities. A new regional Prosperity Strategy will set out the ambitions for SBSA in this space.

12. Conclusion

- 12.1 Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee is being asked to note the update to members on Devolution and to make any comment on progress.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendices

1. SBSA Inaugural Board meeting papers: [Agenda for Sussex and Brighton Strategic Authority Board on Wednesday, 15th April, 2026, 11.00 am | East Sussex County Council](#)
2. SBSA AGM papers: [Agenda for Sussex and Brighton Strategic Authority Board on Wednesday, 1st July, 2026, 10.30 am | East Sussex County Council](#)
3. Devolution Report to BHCC Cabinet, October 2025 [Devolution for Sussex Brighton.pdf](#)