



Devolution Explained

Partner Toolkit

March 2025

Contents

Introduction2

Key messages4

Audience journey5

Supporting Devolution Explained.....8

Key contacts8

Campaign logo and assets.....9

Social media content10

Newsletter content.....12

Proposed content timeline14

Introduction

On Wednesday 5 February, the UK government confirmed that Essex County Council, Southend-on-Sea City Council and Thurrock Council have had their request to be part of the Devolution Priority Programme accepted. This follows the councils writing to the UK government on Friday 10 January requesting inclusion on the programme and committing to Local Government Reorganisation.

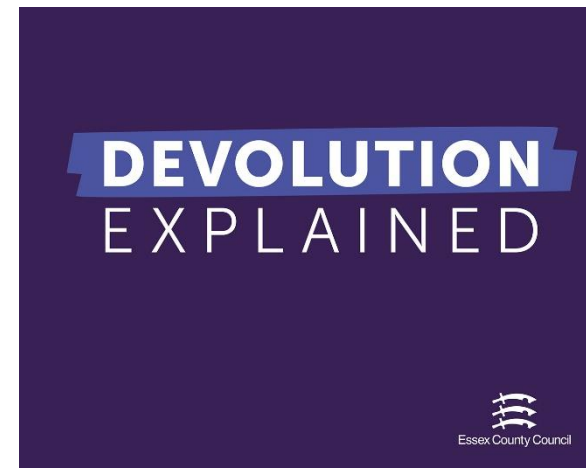
Devolution in Essex is a big opportunity for our county. It will introduce a directly elected Greater Essex Mayor and a new Mayoral Combined County Authority for the entire Greater Essex area, including Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock.

This means that some powers and responsibilities will move from the UK government to local government. Local decisions could be made in important areas, like transport, education, housing, healthcare, and the economy. The exact powers will be decided between the UK government and Essex County Council, Southend-on-Sea City Council and Thurrock Council. Making decisions closer to the people, communities, and businesses they affect, ensuring services better reflect local needs and priorities. Devolution gives us the opportunity to improve public services, boost economic growth, and increase community involvement. As we reach this important moment in our county's history, it is crucial for all residents and businesses to take part in the UK government's consultation and share their views.

There is a need to raise awareness and understanding of devolution and address any misinformation. This will mean Essex residents and

businesses are better informed and able to contribute to the government's consultation.

The primary purpose of the 'Devolution Explained' campaign is to educate and raise awareness of devolution. This includes the opportunity presented, what could change, what the process is, the timeline, and signpost to the consultation. This toolkit is for use by district, borough and city councils and partners.



Key messages

Devolution explained

- Devolution in Essex would mean a directly elected Mayor, and a new Mayoral Combined County Authority, covering the whole of Greater Essex, including Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock
- Devolution is the process of transferring certain powers and responsibilities from the UK government to local or regional government
- Devolved powers can include areas such as transportation, education, housing, healthcare and the economy. The exact powers can vary depending on agreements between UK and local governments
- Devolution means decision-making about these areas can be made closer to the people, communities and businesses they affect. It would mean decisions better reflect local needs and priorities
- This is an exciting point in our county's history and all residents and businesses can have their say through the UK government's consultation

Audience journey

Audience group	Think	Feel	Do
Residents – adults aged 19+ (inclusive)	I know what devolution is and how it would affect Greater Essex	I feel able to meaningfully contribute to the consultation	I am able to take part in the consultation and understand the importance of doing so
Residents – young people aged 13 – 18	I know what devolution is and how it would affect Greater Essex	I feel able to meaningfully contribute to the consultation	I am able to take part in the consultation, as appropriate, and understand the importance of doing so
Seldom heard from groups and those with protected characteristics including faith communities, gypsy and traveller communities, people with SEND/LD	I know what devolution is and how it would affect Greater Essex	I feel able to meaningfully contribute to the consultation	I am able to take part in the consultation and understand the importance of doing so and will encourage others within my community to do the same
Greater Essex MPs	I know how devolution could impact Greater Essex	My constituents have the information they need to meaningfully contribute to the consultation	Share information and encourage their constituents to feedback on consultation
Members of the Business Intermediary Forum (BIF)	I know how devolution could impact Greater Essex and understand how it could contribute towards our	I feel able to contribute to the consultation and enable our clients and members to	I will share clear, consistent messaging with my network and engage meaningfully in the consultation.

	members'/ audience's growth		
Economic Development Officers (EDOs), including North Essex Councils (NEC) and South Essex Councils (SEC)	I understand how devolution could contribute towards local economic growth and impact businesses in my district/city/borough	I feel able and willing to share information with my business audience, confidently answer questions and facilitate their engagement with the consultation	I will share clear, consistent messaging with local businesses and facilitate meaningful engagement with the consultation
Large employers	I understand how devolution could contribute towards the growth of my business and local economy, development of my workforce and strength of the local economy	I feel able to contribute to the consultation	I will engage with council/BIF materials, participate in the consultation and discuss devolution with my wider network
SMEs	I understand how devolution could contribute towards the growth of my business and local economy and know where to find more information	I feel able to contribute the consultation and inspired to learn more about the impacts of devolution for my business.	I will engage with local authority and/or BIF materials/platforms/channels and feedback on devolution proposals via the consultation
Public sector partners – for example, Police Fire & Crime Commissioner (PFCC), Essex Police, health and universities (leadership)	I am aware of the impact devolution could have on Greater Essex	I feel confident on devolution and how it could impact our organisation	I am able to feedback on consultation on behalf of my organisation

Public sector partners (employees)	I know what devolution is and how it could impact the wider system in Greater Essex	I feel able to articulate my thoughts on devolution in the consultation	I am able to take part in the consultation and can express an informed view
District, borough and city members	I have a good understanding of devolution and how it could affect my district	I feel confident about devolution and can respond in an informed way to the consultation	I will feedback on the consultation and share information with residents
District, borough and city employees	I understand what devolution is and how it could impact our council	I feel like I can meaningfully contribute to the consultation	I am confident I know what devolution is and can respond to the consultation

Supporting Devolution Explained

You can support in maximising the campaign's reach and engagement by:

- Co-ordinating social media posts on your own channels
- Sharing and engaging with our social media posts
- Using the **#GreaterEssexDevolution** hashtag on social media
- Advocating within your local communities
- Sharing this toolkit with partners and colleagues
- Using the example content and assets provided in this toolkit on your own channels to ensure consistency

Key contacts

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Campaign logo and assets

Using a visual 'highlight' to pull out key words and information from the facts and messaging about devolution and how it could affect people. The idea being that people could almost just read the highlighted parts of any messaging and understand. This concept uses a sophisticated and striking colour palette which is contemporary, authoritative and trustworthy.

With this concept the approach to copywriting is to be quite matter of fact. We haven't asked questions here but simply stating either in a generic way or around particular topics, what devolution could mean. Keeping neutral, factual, professional and direct, a tone which resonates with our audience.

These assets can be used across social media, newsletters, and websites, including content on:

- What is devolution?
- What does devolution look like?
- What could devolution mean for Greater Essex?
- What is a Mayoral Combined County Authority?
- What would a Mayor do for Greater Essex?

Example assets for the Devolution Explained campaign below. We have provided ECC branded and unbranded versions of all assets. If you require branded assets with your own logos, please contact us. A full set of ECC branded assets can be found here: <https://we.tl/t-htRgdIzJ7S> and unbranded assets here: <https://we.tl/t-Xy8l2kR8qk>



Social media content

The purpose of the social media content is to educate residents about devolution, its opportunities, and what it could mean for the community. The content is informative and explains the concept of devolution, the role of a Mayoral Combined County Authority, and the changes Devolution might bring to Greater Essex.

Similar messaging, tailored to a business audience, will be shared throughout the campaign through the councils' business-focused channels – Ambitious Essex, Business-on-Sea and Thurrock Business.

To effectively reach as many segmented groups as possible, use various channels such as social media, email newsletters, and community forums, ensuring that the content is tailored to each platform and audience to maximise engagement and impact, using appropriate provided content.

Posts

- With devolution, the government intends for Greater Essex to have a directly elected Mayor.

The Mayor of Greater Essex would be directly elected by residents and would have the power to speak directly to government ministers, secure funding for local projects, make strategic decisions, attract investment, and improve infrastructure.

Under a new Mayoral Combined County Authority, a directly elected Mayor would oversee decisions on transport, jobs, housing, education, healthcare and the environment.

The Mayor would have the power to speak directly to government ministers, secure funding for local projects, make strategic decisions, attract investment, and improve infrastructure.

The Mayor would take on the current role of Police, Fire, and Crime Commissioner for Greater Essex.

Find out more by visiting: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/devolution>

#GreaterEssexDevolution

- What is devolution? Devolution means that the UK government gives more control and money to local councils, so they can make decisions and manage services closer to residents.

To learn more about the opportunities, visit: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/devolution>

#GreaterEssexDevolution

- Curious about what devolution really means? To discover how devolution could improve local decision-making and create opportunities for our communities, visit: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/devolution>

#GreaterEssexDevolution

- Devolution could bring many opportunities to Greater Essex, including improved local services, better transport links, and more tailored economic growth strategies.

Decisions for Greater Essex could be made closer to home, impacting you and your community. Discover what devolution could mean for you, visit: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/devolution>

#GreaterEssexDevolution

- Now that Greater Essex is part of the Devolution Priority Programme, a new Mayoral Combined County Authority could be formed.

A Mayoral Combined County Authority is a legal body set up using national legislation, with its own board and governance arrangements. This enables councils to collaborate and make collective decisions across boundaries. Learn more about the Mayoral Combined County Authority here: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/devolution>

#GreaterEssexDevolution

- The introduction of a directly elected Mayor in Greater Essex would mean more direct communication with UK government ministers.

The Mayor would play a crucial role in securing funding, making strategic decisions, and improving our infrastructure. Find out more by visiting: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/devolution>

#GreaterEssexDevolution

Newsletter content

The newsletter content aims to educate residents about devolution and its impact on the community. The copy provides information on devolution, what this means for Greater Essex and explains the role of a Mayor and a Mayoral Combined County Authority.

This content can be lifted directly from the toolkit or tailored for your own newsletter. Similar messaging, tailored to a business audience, will be shared throughout the campaign through the councils' business-focused channels – Ambitious Essex, Business-on-Sea and Thurrock Business.

Newsletter copy

What is devolution?

Devolution is the transfer of powers and funding from UK government to local authority level. It is important because decisions are made closer to local people, communities and businesses they affect. Devolution would provide greater freedoms and flexibilities for councils to work more effectively. This would improve public services and outcomes for residents and businesses. [Read more about Devolution.](#)

With devolution the UK government intends for Greater Essex to have a directly elected Mayor. The Mayor would have the ability to speak directly to government ministers, ensuring local concerns are heard, and secure funding for local projects.

What would a Mayor do for Greater Essex?

With devolution the UK government intends for Greater Essex to have a directly elected Mayor. The Mayor would be elected by the people of Essex. They would have the power to speak directly to government ministers, secure funding for local projects, make strategic decisions, attract investment, and improve infrastructure.

The Mayor would also take on the current role of Police, Fire, and Crime Commissioner for Essex, ensuring our safety and well-being. [Find more information about the role of a Mayor](#) online.

Discover what devolution could mean for you

Devolution could bring many opportunities to Greater Essex, including improved local services, better transport links, and more tailored economic growth strategies. Decisions for Greater Essex could be made closer to home, impacting you and your community. Find more [information about what devolution could mean for you](#).

What could devolution for Greater Essex look like?

Now that Greater Essex is part of the Devolution Priority Programme, the UK government is looking to create a Mayoral Combined County Authority for Greater Essex. A Mayoral Combined County Authority is a legal body set up using national legislation, with its own board and governance arrangements. This enables councils to collaborate and make collective decisions across boundaries.

There are different levels of Strategic Authorities, these vary depending on the form of devolution. [Read about the different levels of Strategic Authority](#) and how they can benefit our community.

What would devolution mean for Greater Essex?

Devolution could bring many opportunities to Greater Essex. Devolution could mean:

- better co-ordination of transport across the whole county
- better skills because money is spent locally rather than by the UK government
- better jobs because this will be co-ordinated by a Mayor
- a stronger voice for Essex with the UK government

- more strategic control over planning and housing

Find more information about [what devolution could mean for Essex](#).

A new Mayoral Combined County Authority for Greater Essex

Now that Greater Essex is part of the Devolution Priority Programme, a new Mayoral Combined County Authority could be formed. The UK government is looking to create a Mayoral Combined County Authority for Greater Essex by May 2026.

A Mayoral Combined County Authority is a legal body set up using national legislation, with its own board and governance arrangements. This will enable a group of two or more councils to collaborate and make collective decisions across council boundaries. [Read more about Devolution](#).

Proposed content timeline

The following table outlines the proposed timeline for Essex County Council's content release on their public-facing channels, aimed at informing residents about devolution and its benefits. We hope to foster a greater understanding of devolution. When engaging with responses, you can direct people to the [FAQs on the essex.gov.uk](#) website.

Dates are subject to change, but we will adhere to the week commencing dates as much as possible. Any new content will be promptly shared with teams to ensure timely updates. External content will be in the main reactive. You can also follow the #GreaterEssexDevolution hashtag to amplify content from our channels.

WC Date	Content and activity	Channels
5 February 2025	Devolution Priority Programme announcement, with video from the leader of Essex County Council	Joint three council media release, external content and ECC social media

10 to 12 February	Window for user testing of assets and messaging	User test group
10.00am Monday 17 February	Launch of UK Government lead consultation on devolution	External blog, media statement and ECC social media
WC 17 February	ECG Briefing	Briefing
	Devolution Consultation	ECC social media
WC 24 February	Devolution Consultation	ECC social media
WC 3 March	Devolution Explained campaign launch with details on Essex Mayor	ECC social media
	Devolution Consultation	ECC social media
	Devolution Explained	ECC social media
WC 10 March	What is a Strategic Authority	ECC social media
	Devolution consultation	ECC social media
	Live animation for devolution explained	ECC social media and website
	March issue of Your Essex with an article on the consultation	Newsletter
WC 17 March	What could a Mayor do for Greater Essex?	ECC social media
	Devolution consultation	ECC social media
	What could devolution mean for Essex	ECC social media

WC 24 March	Devolution explained	ECC social media
	Devolution consultation	ECC social media
WC 31 March	Devolution FAQs	ECC social media
	Devolution consultation	ECC social media
WC 7 April	Last chance to have your say on devolution consultation	ECC social media

DEVOLUTION EXPLAINED

This information is issued by:
Essex County Council

Published March 2025