
Greater Essex Devolution



What do we know so far?

- 5th February 2025 – Government confirmed they had accepted the request of Essex County Council, Southend on Sea Council & Thurrock Council to be part of the Priority Devolution Programme.
 - The 3 councils will combine as a Strategic Mayoral Authority for Greater Essex. This will initially be a Combined County Authority.
 - Mayoral elections will be held in May 2026.
 - Essex County Council and Thurrock Council elections due this year have been cancelled. Southend was not due to have elections this year.
 - The Government has launched a consultation with regards to this devolution process which will run from 17th February – 13th April 2025. You have a say – but not a vote.
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Mayoral Combined County Authority



The Mayor will be directly elected in May 2025

The Mayor will have powers over strategic functions such as:

- economic development
- housing
- infrastructure
- transport

In Essex the Mayor would also serve as the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

It is expected that the Combined County Authority will become a Strategic Authority.

Devolution is the process of transferring powers, responsibilities and funding from the national government to local or regional government.

Local Government Reorganisation



Alongside the Devolution process the 3 councils have also committed to Local Government Reorganisation.



Reorganisation would see all 15 councils in Greater Essex (12 borough & district councils + Essex County Council, Southend on Sea Council and Thurrock Council) combined into a number of Unitary Councils.



The White paper stipulates approx. 500,000 population per Unitary so in Essex (population 1.9 million) that will probably be 3-4 Unitary Councils.



Interim proposals must be submitted by 21st March 2025 with final proposals due in September 2025.



There will be a separate consultation on the proposals – but again no vote.



Elections to shadow authorities could be expected in 2027 with new Unitaries going live in May 2028.

What does this mean?



- The Government expects the councils to cover the cost of reorganization from their existing budgets
 - The Government has also made clear that they will not bail Thurrock Council out of their debt.
 - This will most likely mean council tax increases over the coming years and possibly a cut in services.
 - Reorganisation will mean the transfer of some assets and responsibilities down to Parish & Town councils, most likely without any funding.
 - Areas which are not parished will be at a disadvantage having effectively no local government representation at all.
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Questions?

The background of the slide is a dense, overlapping collage of numerous small, rectangular sticky notes. These notes are in various colors including yellow, pink, light blue, green, and purple. Each sticky note features a large, bold, black question mark. The notes are scattered across the entire frame, creating a textured and visually busy effect. Two thin white horizontal lines are present: one at the top left, just above the word 'Questions?', and another at the bottom left, just below the word 'Questions?'.
