



REPORT of CHIEF EXECUTIVE

**to
COUNCIL
11 DECEMBER 2025**

DEVOLUTION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION UPDATE

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update on Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) activity in Greater Essex

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the current update of devolution and LGR, and possible resource implications as the activity to progress LGR now develops.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The Greater Essex Combined County Authority (GECCA) is in the process of being established and a directly elected mayor for the GECCA area is anticipated to be in place by May 2026. More mayoral candidates are currently coming forward and an interim Chief Executive is currently being recruited.
- 3.2 As previously updated, the business cases for LGR were submitted to government on 26 September 2025. The four proposals from councils in Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock were:
- Braintree District Council, Essex County Council and Epping Forest District Council submitted a proposal for three unitary councils.
 - Thurrock Council submitted a proposal for four unitary councils.
 - Rochford District Council submitted a proposal for four unitary councils.
 - Basildon Borough Council, Brentwood Borough Council, Castle Point Borough Council, Chelmsford City Council, Colchester City Council, Harlow District Council, Maldon District Council (MDC), Southend-on-Sea City Council, Tendring District Council and Uttlesford District Council submitted a proposal for five unitary councils.
- 3.3 At the extraordinary Council meeting on 25 September 2025 MDC agreed to support the Five Unitary Authorities (5UA) proposal.
- 3.4 The Government Consultation to seek views on the proposals for Greater Essex has launched and will run from 19 November 2025 to 11 January 2026. [Proposals for local government reorganisation in Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock - GOV.UK.](#)

- 3.5 Key Stakeholders have been alerted to the Consultation, and it has been shared across all MDC communication channels, additionally Members are encouraged to promote the consultation and benefits of the 5UA model.
- 3.6 Alongside this work, officers have also been working with colleagues across Essex on programme structures for delivery of LGR, and particularly focussing on gathering information as set out by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) as best practice during the 'pre-minded to' decision time.
- 3.7 An internal officer group, to co-ordinate Essex-wide workstream activity input has been established, and this group will also provide updates to the Member Devolution and LGR Working Group and the Council as required.
- 3.8 As part of the budget setting process, officers have also identified areas where Business as Usual (BAU) resource is likely to be impacted as a result of LGR and are considering where additional resources to support this process may be required. This will be included as part of the annual budget setting process and will be placed before the meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee on 29 January 2026. At present, all work is being managed within BAU resource.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The update is provided to keep Members informed and aware of the Council's input to Devolution and LGR

5. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – Not applicable (N/A)
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – N/A
- (iii) **Impact on Risk (including Fraud implications)** – N/A
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – N/A
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – LGR activity currently draws from existing staff resource and may have delivery implications.
- (vi) **Impact on Devolution / Local Government Reorganisation** – the report shows how we are engaging with devolution and LGR.

Background Papers:

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