



**REPORT of
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**to
COUNCIL
12 FEBRUARY 2026**

DEVOLUTION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

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

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the current update on Devolution and LGR, and any resource implications as the activity to progress LGR now develops.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

3.1 Devolution

- 3.1.1 Since the last devolution update the Greater Essex Combined County Authority (GECCA) has appointed Tom Walker as the Interim Chief Executive Officer for the GECCA.
- 3.1.2 On 4 December 2025, Government announced its decision to delay the inaugural Mayoral elections to May 2028. The governments statement on this can be found here: [Written statements - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#).
- 3.1.3 Despite the delay to mayoral elections work by officers and Leaders continues. Terms of reference have been drafted and all Leaders across the district authorities are setting up a Nominating Body to agree which representation for District Authorities on the GECCA (the Combined Authority), or any other committee, sub-working group or scrutiny committee established by the Combined Authority. All Leaders of District Authorities will be members of the Nominating Body. The Leader of the Council will be a representative on this group in line with the decision of Council on 25 February 2025.
- 3.1.4 Ministers have announced they will provide each devolution priority programme area with a proportion of their investment funds to ensure they can start delivering on key local priorities and deliver the benefits of devolution ahead of the mayors taking office in 2028. Greater Essex will receive a third of its annual investment fund of £41.5 million in both 2026 / 27 and 2027 / 28.

3.2 LGR

- 3.2.1 On 18 December 2025, the Minister of State for Local Government and Homelessness, Alison McGovern MP, wrote to council leaders in LGR areas with elections in May 2026. The letter invited councils to set their views on the potential postponement of their local election in May 2026 and whether doing this would allow them to better deliver LGR.
- 3.2.2 [Essex County Council wrote to the minister on the 14 January 2026](#) stating that it will not be delaying elections.
- 3.2.3 The Government Consultation to seek views on LGR proposals for Greater Essex closed on 11 January 2026. Local authorities in Essex await government's decision on which option they are minded to take forward, this announcement is expected in March.
- 3.2.4 Government has asked local authorities to consider a series of questions to inform the Secretary of States prior to their minded too decision to assist in the drafting of the Structural Changes Order ("SCO"). These questions focus on the make up of the current structure of the district, how elections to the new authorities will be managed, the format of joint committees and the membership of any implementation team. The Council were provided with two weeks to respond.
- 3.2.5 Officers continue to work 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.
- 3.2.6 An internal officer group and a Member working continue to meet. Essex-wide workstream activity input has been established, progress and updates from all workstreams will continue to be shared with the Devolution and LGR Working Group.

4. CONCLUSION

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

5. IMPACT ON PRIORITIES AS SET OUT IN THE CORPORATE PLAN 2025 - 2028

- 5.1 The Council will continue to deliver the priorities in the Corporate Plan throughout this stage of LGR. There will not be any impact until the transition phase.

6. 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)** – The Council has allocated reserves to resource LGR.

- (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: As detailed in this report.

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