

Devolution & LGR

What does it mean for ECC?

Devolution & LGR – Background

On 16th December 2024, an English Devolution White Paper was published by the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government.

The white paper outline the ambition for both devolution and local government reform

Local government bodies were asked to submit applications to be part of the “Devolution Priority Programme” by 10th January 2025.

This programme commits local bodies to pursuing both a mayoral devolution arrangement and local government reform.

ECC Held an extraordinary council meeting on 10th January and confirmed it would be applying to join this programme. Southend and Thurrock Unitary councils also submitted applications.

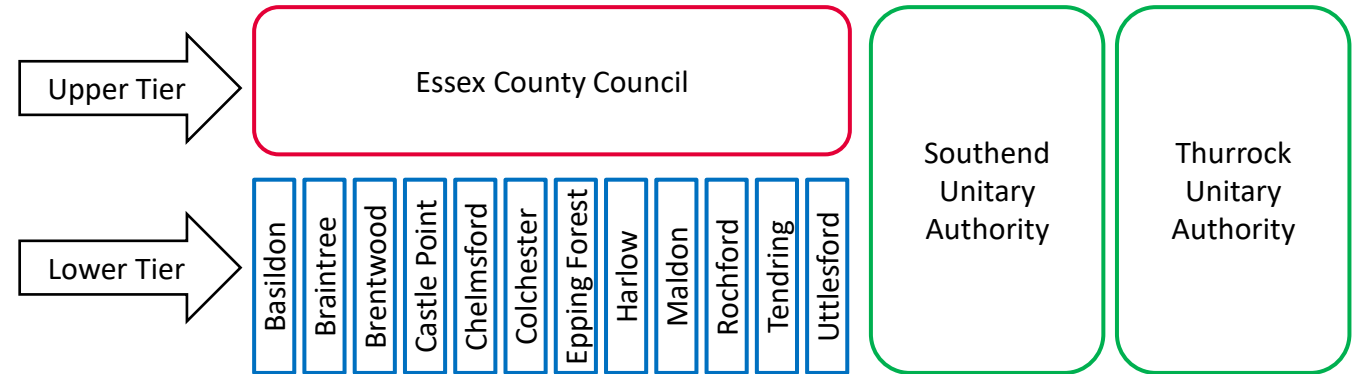
If accepted onto the priority programme ECC will go through a 2-step transformation -

- first Devolution and the creation of a strategic authority,
- then Local Government reform dissolving the current 2 tier system and replacing all existing district, borough, County and Unitary Authorities to be replaced with large unitary councils serving a minimum of 500,000 residents each.

- [White Paper on English Devolution](#)

Essex Current Local Government Structure

Currently Essex local government structure is made up of 15 authorities. These are a mixture of District, borough, City, County and Unitary Authorities. Each has different responsibilities which can make navigating the local government landscape confusing for residents of Essex.



Upper Tier Authority Responsibilities

Education: Managing schools and educational services.

Transport: Overseeing public transportation and road maintenance.

Planning: Handling strategic planning and development.

Social Care: Offering social services for children and adults.

Libraries: Managing public libraries.

Waste Management: Coordinating waste disposal and recycling.

Lower Tier Authority Responsibilities

Rubbish Collection: Managing waste collection and recycling.

Council Tax Collections: Collecting local taxes.

Housing: Providing and managing public housing.

Planning Applications: Handling local planning and building control.

Environmental Health: Ensuring local environmental health standards

Unitary Authority Responsibilities

Unitary Councils carry out responsibilities for both upper and lower tier bodies for their geographical area

Step 1 : Devolution

What is Devolution?

Devolution is the transfer of powers and funding from central government to local authority level.

Devolution will see the creation of a new Strategic authority that covers the entire geographic area of Essex. This authority will be responsible for setting the strategic direction for certain areas of responsibility.

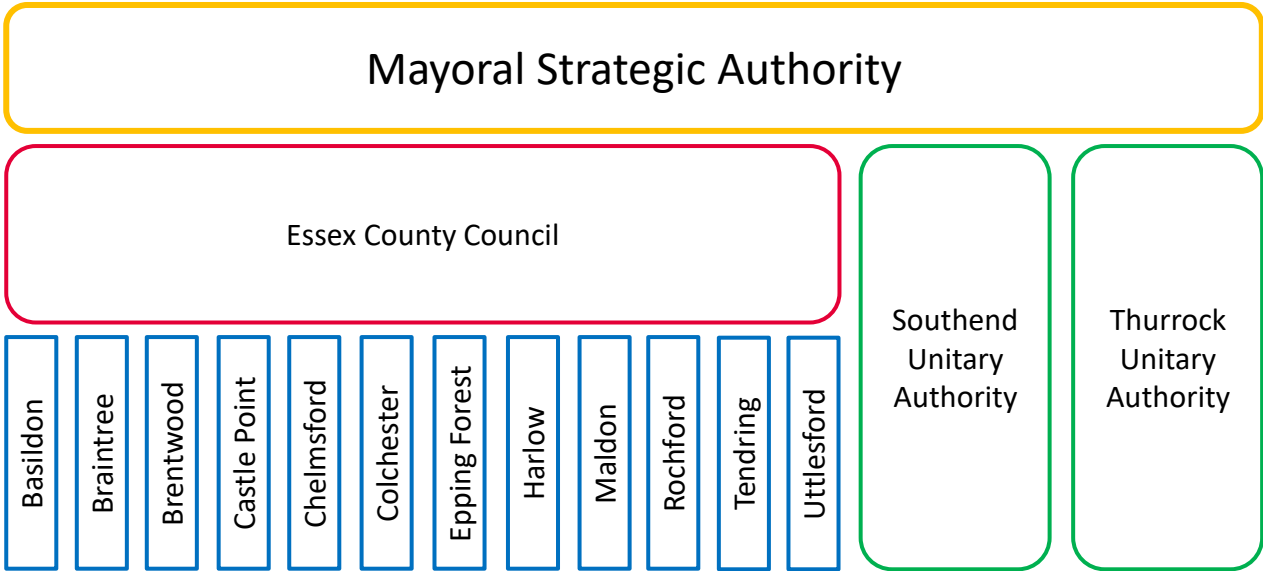
Funding will be transferred from central government to this body to fund these key areas. Funding formulas will be long-term, allowing strategic authorities to plan further ahead with more surety than the current short term grant funding structure.

When might Devolution happen?

If approved for the priority programme the Mayoral Strategic Authority will for in shadow in May 25. In May 2026 mayoral elections will take place, and the new authority will be fully functional

What are the Strategic Authorities responsibilities:

- Transport and local infrastructure
- Skills and employment support
- Housing and strategic planning
- Economic development and regeneration
- Environment and climate change
- Health, wellbeing and public service reform
- Public safety



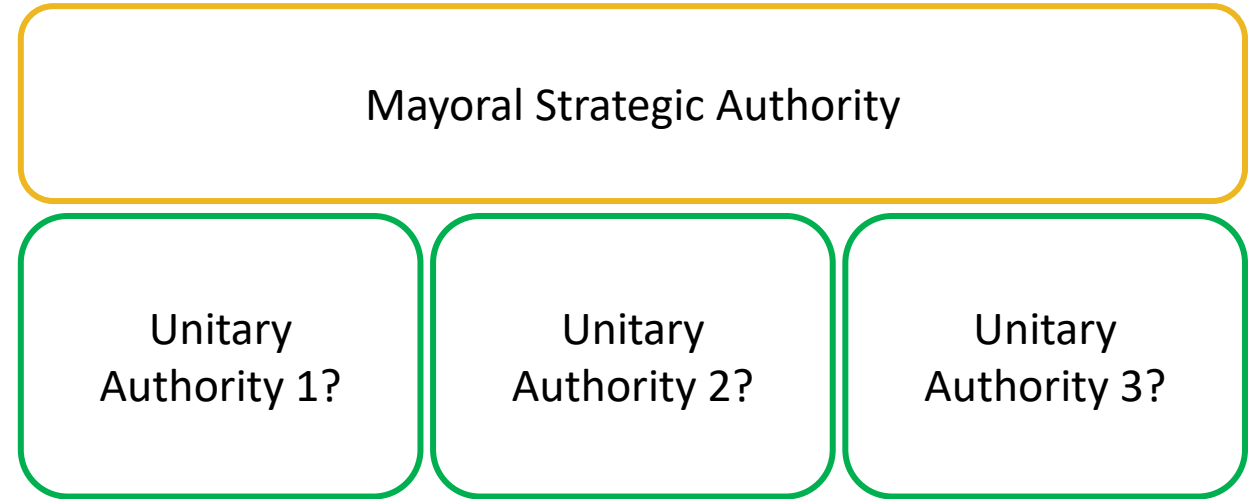
Step 2: Local Government Reform

What is the purpose of LGR?

- To simplify council structures, which make it clear who is responsible for services.
- To create efficiencies and save money
- To make strategic collaboration across the local government landscape easier.

What will the Strategic Authority Do?

The duties of the strategic Authority will not change from those allocated at the point of inception. Over time more responsibilities may be devolved from central government, this is likely as we progress from Mayoral Strategic Authority, to an Established Strategic Mayoral Authority that has a proven track record of delivering services successfully



What will the Unitary Authorities do?

Everything Else! The Unitary will deliver services currently provided by the Tier 1, 2 and Unitary Authorities that currently serve Essex excluding the strategic duties allocated to the Strategic Authority.

Timeline for Devolution and LGR

