

# Greater Essex Local Government Reorganisation

## Appendix: Additional documents for the Three Unitaries Proposal for Greater Essex

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## Greater Essex Resident Engagement Cover Note and Results

To inform the development of proposals for unitary local government, Greater Essex's 15 councils commissioned primary research to help them better understand residents' views on issues relating to local government reorganisation.

The National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) was commissioned to conduct research with residents of Greater Essex, exploring their views on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). This research was co-ordinated by Essex County Council on behalf of the 15 councils.

The two separate reports below highlight key findings from NatCen's quantitative and qualitative research. The research explored:

- residents' views and perceptions of LGR;
- what residents see as the key opportunities and considerations around LGR for themselves, their families, and their communities, in relation to 5 key areas:
  - Services;
  - Transparency and accountability;
  - The economy;
  - Resident engagement;
  - Local identity.
- ultimately, what residents value, and want to see prioritised, in the context of LGR.

This research was not intended to consult on solutions related to LGR, elicit binary views on whether residents want LGR, or gather opinions on specific options.

Instead, it gathered an in-depth understanding of the views of a representative cross-section of Greater Essex residents to inform work on LGR. The research explored how councils could operate in the future, resident priorities, opportunities and concerns, and perceived impacts, and opportunities for stronger community engagement and citizen involvement in decision-making.

NatCen used a multi-method approach, including:

- Survey: representative sample of 1,477 Greater Essex residents;
- Deliberative workshop: with 30 residents across Greater Essex;
- Targeted focus groups: with 22 residents across under-represented groups, young people (18-25); ethnic minority groups and residents living with a disability.

While the work was co-ordinated by Essex County Council, all 15 councils were involved in the shaping of the research scope and materials. Final outputs were delivered on 29 July and were shared with all 15 councils across Greater Essex to inform LGR Proposal.

**The following appendices (A-G) can be found as PDFs on the website - <https://www.essex.gov.uk/three-councils>**

**Appendix A NatCen: Greater Essex Resident Engagement**

**Appendix B: Grant Thornton: public sector reform in Essex**

**Appendix C: Newton Europe: Local Government Reform – Impact on People Services**

**Appendix D: PwC: Greater Essex LGR Financial Analysis**

**Appendix E: PwC: Greater Essex Additional Contextual Analysis**

**Appendix F1: CIPFA: Essex LGR debt and non-current assets (Part 1 and Part 2)**

**Appendix F2: Essex LGR Report on Analysis of Reserves**

**Appendix G: Disaggregation of ECC revenue budget**

## Appendix H: Process for Developing the Proposal

Reforming local government structures is a once in a generation opportunity. Our approach has been guided by a set of key principles, ensuring our proposal is:

- Evidence-led;
- Informed by input from residents and partners;
- Developed in collaboration with other Greater Essex local authorities;
- Reviewed externally through check and challenge processes.

### Evidence-led

Our proposal is based on rigorous engagement with the evidence. We recognised early on that while there is a strong in-principle case for LGR, different configurations of new unitary councils could lead to very different outcomes, especially in a place as large and diverse as Greater Essex. We therefore committed ourselves at the outset of this process to go where the evidence takes us.

It is this commitment to evidence that has led some partners, most notably the county council, to resist any instinct to back a single unitary or two unitary model for Greater Essex – a position often adopted by large county councils working through the LGR process. Careful consideration of the evidence, weighed across the full range of criteria set by the government, has led us to identify a three unitary model as the overall best option for Greater Essex.

The core evidence base we have relied upon to inform this proposal is set out in this appendix document. The following externally supported analysis, all of which is included within the appendices to our proposal, has been either jointly developed, jointly commissioned or widely shared across the across fifteen authorities in the Greater Essex system:

- Greater Essex resident engagement survey and qualitative research
- Grant Thornton: public sector reform in Essex
- Newton Europe: local government reform – impact on people services
- PwC: Greater Essex LGR financial analysis
- PwC: Greater Essex additional contextual analysis
- CIPFA: Essex LGR debt and non-current assets (Part 1 and Part 2)
- CIPFA: Essex LGR report on analysis of reserves
- Disaggregation of ECC revenue budget

This has given us a collective evidence base to work from across the system.

### Informed by input from residents

Our proposal is based on insight on what matters most to our residents, their views on what good local government looks like, and their aspirations for their families and communities.

We have not asked our residents to tell us which LGR configuration they prefer – consulting on options is, rightly, a matter for government at the appropriate time. Rather, we have surveyed residents; undertaken deliberative workshops; and held focus groups, including with groups whose voices are less often heard in public decision making (young people, minority ethnic

groups and people with disabilities), to better understand what they want from their councils, now and in the future. The data and insight gathered from this engagement work has been directly reflected in our proposal. We are therefore confident that it reflects residents' priorities, addresses their concerns about the process of reorganisation, and provides the best possible platform for delivering a system of local government that can meet residents' aspirations for the future.

Further details on the resident engagement exercise and the results are included in this appendix document.

### **Informed by input from partners**

We have engaged with a wide range of partners on the development of our proposal. We have done this through:

- Tabling discussions on LGR at existing partnership board meetings – for example the Health and Wellbeing Board (for health partners) and the Greater Essex Business Board (for businesses);
- Setting up specific meetings with partners to discuss LGR;
- A general survey that was emailed out to a wide range of partners.

While partners have understandably not been able to express specific preferences at this stage, ahead of proposal being submitted, they have given some general feedback about their main LGR priorities. Partner feedback and our response to it is set out in our proposal.

### **Developed in collaboration with other local authorities in Greater Essex**

Although Greater Essex's fifteen local authorities may have different views on the best unitary configuration option for the area, we have sought to work in a way that preserves our track record of effective joint working and collaboration. We see this as vital in enabling our councils to deliver effective business as usual services; advance discussions on devolution; deliver value for the taxpayer; and ultimately enable us to come back together, as a group of fifteen, to implement whatever LGR option the government decides on. The key features of our collaboration have included:

- Regular meetings of the Essex Leaders and Chief Executives (ELCE) forum – bringing all fifteen councils together throughout the LGR process;
- The production of a core common evidence base, including jointly commissioning third-party research and analysis and shared partner engagement;
- The use of a common platform for sharing evidence and data in line with agreed protocols;
- Collective financial analysis and input co-ordinated through the Essex Finance Officers Association, which comprises the S151 officers of the 15 local authorities in Greater Essex;
- The use of a common resident engagement survey agreed and distributed across all authorities to support this proposal;

- The joint appointment of external advisors (Newtrality) to help support collaboration across the proposals on common issues like communications, engagement and evidence sharing.

The collaboration has meant that relationships and communication across all fifteen authorities in Greater Essex has remained strong at both political and officer level. This stands us in good stead for the implementation phase, when we will all need to come back together to collectively implement the Government's chosen model for LGR.

### **Externally checked and challenged**

We have received check and challenge on this proposal from a number of external partners:

- Newtrality – have supported all proposals to ensure joint working, a common evidence base, and collaboration where that has made sense;
- PwC - have provided financial modelling based on a nationally recognised methodology;
- CIPFA – have reviewed the debt of each authority and ensured that there is a common and shared understanding of the debt levels and asset backing in the Essex system;
- 31Ten – have reviewed the work that the County Council has undertaken to disaggregate its budget to ensure the validity of the assumptions and approach;
- Newton Europe – have reviewed social care spend across Essex, Southend and Thurrock to support our understanding of the demand pressures that will be faced by new unitary configurations;
- Impower – have supported work on understanding the transformation potential in the Greater Essex system.

This external check and challenge has significantly enhanced the quality of our proposal, enabling us to ensure that:

- The evidence base is robust;
- The conclusions we have drawn from the evidence are fair and accurate;
- The overall narrative we have constructed in the proposal links back to the evidence base and is grounded firmly in the Government's criteria and in the outcomes we want to see for our residents.

## Process and timeline

The high-level process and timeline for LGR proposals across Greater Essex has been as follows:

### **December 2024:**

The Government's Devolution White Paper was published and places were invited to submit expressions of interest to be part of the Devolution Priority Programme and to be priority areas for LGR.

### **Early 2025:**

In January, the Leaders of Essex, Southend and Thurrock submitted an expression of interest to Government, and in February, Greater Essex was accepted onto the Devolution Priority Programme.

In February, the MHCLG Secretary of State wrote to all councils in Greater Essex inviting them to submit proposals to Government on LGR according to the timetable set out.

### **Spring 2025:**

Greater Essex councils submitted an interim plan for LGR to Government in March. Government provided feedback on the plan in May.

A joint evidence base for LGR was commissioned across all fifteen authorities – as set out earlier. Engagement with partners began and has continued throughout the process.

A group of authorities in Greater Essex, led by Southend, expressed in principle support for a five unitary model and began detailed work on the proposal for that model.

Another group of authorities, led by Essex County Council, undertook a deeper exploration of the evidence around the different options to consider their relative merits against the Government's criteria.

### **Summer 2025:**

Essex County Council expressed in principle support for a three unitary model (as set out in this proposal) and began detailed work on the proposal.

Thurrock and Rochford indicated a preference for their own separate four unitary models and began detailed work on the proposals.

Joint assessment of the financial analysis was carried out, led by S151 officers of all authorities in the Essex Finance Officers Association group.

Joint resident engagement on LGR was carried out on behalf of all fifteen authorities as set out in this appendix document. In addition, Southend-on-Sea Council carried out specific resident engagement just on the five unitary model.

### **September 2025:**

Proposals for all options published and are going through internal governance ahead of the Government's deadline for the submission of proposals on 26<sup>th</sup> September.





## Appendix I: Options Appraisal Methodology

The Options Appraisal has been conducted against the Government's criteria for LGR. These are:

<b>A single tier of local government based on sensible places</b>	<p>A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Proposals should be for sensible economic areas, with an appropriate tax base which does not create an undue advantage or disadvantage for one part of the area.</li> <li>2. Proposals should be for a sensible geography which will help to increase housing supply and meet local needs.</li> </ol>
<b>The right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand shocks</b>	<p>Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.</p> <p>The Government guidance is that new unitaries should cover areas of at least 500,000 people, although local areas can make a case for a smaller size if they consider that this best meets local needs.</p>
<b>Prioritises the delivery of high quality public services</b>	<p>Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to residents. They should avoid unnecessary disaggregation and mitigate risks to critical services.</p>
<b>Reflects joint work and is informed by local views</b>	<p>Proposals should consider issues of local identity and cultural and historic importance. They should reflect an intuitive sense of place.</p> <p>Proposals should be the product of joint work and should reflect the views of partners and residents.</p>
<b>Supports devolution</b>	<p>New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.</p> <p>There should be sensible population size ratios between local authorities and any strategic authority</p>
<b>Strengthens community engagement and neighbourhood empowerment</b>	<p>New unitary structures should deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment. They should enable investment in greater community engagement.</p>

The options appraisal started off with a long list of sixteen potential viable options for LGR models, which were developed with input from all fifteen local government partners. These were independently assessed by Grant Thornton in their report.

The options have been through a thorough assessment, involving joint commissioning of evidence, review, and input from partners and residents. While, as in other places, authorities in Greater Essex have not been able to agree on just one proposal, the collaboration on the evidence across the system has been positive, even if it hasn't prevented authorities from reaching different conclusions.

The evidence base to support the Options Appraisal is set out in the analysis and data included in the overall proposal document, as well as the reports and analysis contained in the appendix document.

Our full options appraisal is focused on the five models below that emerged through the process as the most viable ones. Four of the five models are supported by one or more local authority partners in Greater Essex. The other model – the two unitary one – is not being proposed by any local authority in Greater Essex but is being included as a benchmark because it delivers the most financial savings and the least disaggregation of critical public services.

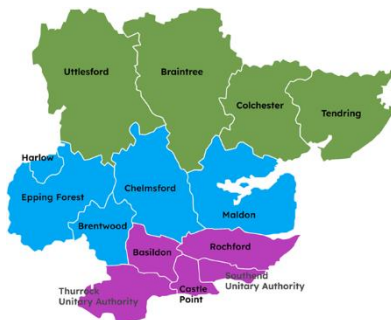
## Models assessed in the full options appraisal



### 2 Unitary Model (no proposal being submitted)

Estimated area population

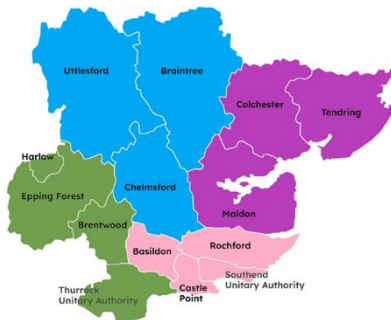
Unitary 1	807,000
Unitary 2	1,089,000



### 3 Unitary Model (Essex County Council led proposal)

Estimated area population

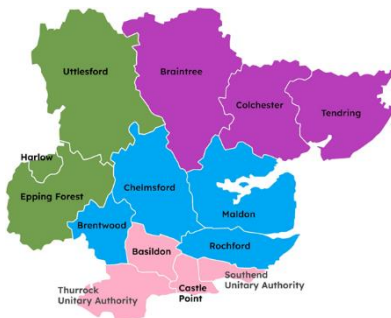
Unitary 1	604,000
Unitary 2	564,000
Unitary 3	729,000



### 4 Unitary Model (Thurrock Council proposal)

Estimated area population

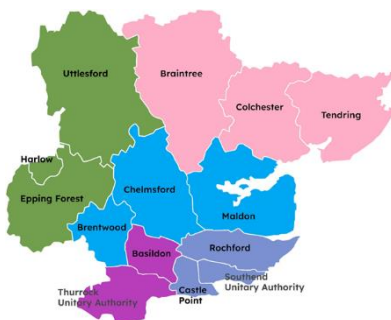
Unitary 1	488,000
Unitary 2	439,000
Unitary 3	419,000
Unitary 4	551,000



### 4 Unitary Model (Rochford District Council Proposal)

Estimated area population

Unitary 1	326,000
Unitary 2	420,000
Unitary 3	510,000
Unitary 4	641,000



### 5 Unitary Model (Southend City Council led Proposal)

Estimated area population

Unitary 1	326,000
Unitary 2	332,000
Unitary 3	369,000
Unitary 4	510,000
Unitary 5	360,000

## Approach to the Options Appraisal evaluation

Key points to note on the evaluation:

- We have taken a **granular approach** to the evaluation, scoring each option against the individual elements of each criterion, not just against the criteria as a whole. This gives a richer and more comprehensive picture, enabling the strengths and weaknesses of each option to come through.
- We have taken an **evidence-based approach** and have set out the evidence we have relied upon in the overall proposal document and in the appendix document. We have sought to make this as objective as possible, and to minimise subjectivity, by the involvement of expert input and review.
- We have given each of the models a score of “**high**”, “**medium**”, “**low**”, or “**none**” against each of the elements of the Government’s LGR criteria. These scores correlate to the level of impact the model is assessed as having against each element of the criteria based on the evidence. We have not shied away from scoring options as “none”, where we feel the most accurate interpretation of the evidence is that an option simply does not meet an element of the Government’s criteria; or that it can only be made to meet the criteria through a heroic set of assumptions upon which it would not be prudent to rely.
- In assessing options, we have looked **not only at the system as a whole, but also at the situation of individual councils**. This is important because residents pay tax to and receive services from individual councils. Therefore if individual councils are likely to fail under particular models, this needs to be highlighted as a key risk even if aggregate data at the system level does not show this so clearly. To assist this, we have included “spotlights” on individual councils in our Options Appraisal.
- The criteria are assessed individually but naturally there is a **strong interdependency between them** that is reflected in the assessment. For example, financial efficiency, sustainability and resilience is a key bedrock, without which it will be very difficult for new councils to create improvements in public services and protect critical services. Equally, improvements in public service delivery and in the sustainability of critical services will feed back into stronger financial sustainability for councils. Similarly, there is an interdependency between financial efficiency/sustainability and investing in economic growth and in community empowerment. There is therefore an inherent virtuous circle between the criteria, if new councils are set up sustainably, and a potential vicious circle if they are not.
- In other cases, there may be some **tensions between the elements of different criteria**. For example, in choosing which places best fit together in new councils, there are a number of factors to consider, including: economic geographies, housing geographies, travel patterns, place identities, balance of affluence and deprivation, and the equitable sharing of financial resources and costs across areas. These factors will not always pull in the same direction and an overall balance has to be struck.

- The methodology below explains the key factors that have been the focus of our assessment for each criterion. These factors take full account of the Government’s criteria and the feedback they have provided on interim plans. The methodology also sets out the basis on which we have given scores of “high”, “medium”, “low”, or “none”.

## Criterion 1: A single tier of local government based on sensible places

### Overall criterion

A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government.

1. Proposals should be for sensible economic areas, with an appropriate tax base which does not create an undue advantage or disadvantage for one part of the area.
2. Proposals should be for a sensible geography which will help to increase housing supply and meet local needs.

### Establishing a single tier of local government

This requires proposals to set up a unitary model of local government that covers the whole of the Greater Essex area and does not cut across other geographical areas. This has been straightforward to establish, and all proposals being put forward meet this condition and hence are rated “high”.

### Sensible economic areas

Among other things, our Options Appraisal has considered evidence around the following issues:

- The areas created should take account of established economic geographies, connections, transport corridors and travel-to-work areas both within Greater Essex and with neighbouring economic areas (for example, with London). LGR should as far as possible avoid putting local government boundaries and barriers in place that would cut across these established connections.
- In addition, proposals should have an eye on the future and understand and reflect where the future growth drivers for Greater Essex are going to be and ensure that the geographies we create support these future growth drivers.
- Existing areas of affluence and deprivation should be balanced as far as possible across areas rather than being concentrated within individual councils, so that all new areas can drive economic growth; there are no “left behind” areas; and new councils will have resources and costs that are in balance.
- There should be a balance of economic assets and growth drivers across the new areas, so that all areas have the opportunity to generate increased growth. Economic assets and growth drivers include: cities and major urban areas; freeports and airports; universities and colleges; high-growth businesses and sectoral strengths; garden communities; and cultural, natural and heritage assets that support the visitor economy.

- LGR should create a simpler and more efficient system of local government for business to work with, making it easier for business to get its voice heard and to get support on the range of issues that will support business growth.
- Councils should have sufficient financial and delivery capacity to enable them to invest in and deliver local growth programmes and projects, in conjunction with the new GECCA, that will unlock Greater Essex's economic potential and help deliver the Government's economic growth ambitions.

With regard to scoring:

- “high” means that proposals will create sensible economic geographies, and we have a high degree of confidence that (with Devolution) they will unlock greater economic growth across all parts of Greater Essex;
- “medium” means that proposals will create sensible economic geographies in part but with some limitations, and we have a medium degree of confidence that (with Devolution) they will unlock greater economic growth across all parts of Greater Essex;
- “low” means that proposals will only create sensible economic geographies to a very limited extent, and we have a low degree of confidence that (with Devolution) they will unlock greater economic growth across all parts of Greater Essex;
- “none” means that proposals will not create sensible economic geographies, and we have no confidence that (with Devolution) they will unlock greater economic growth across all parts of Greater Essex.

### Sensible housing geographies

Among other things, our Options Appraisal has considered evidence around the following issues:

- Housing targets should be spread evenly across the new areas rather than being concentrated in individual councils. This is crucial to enable government housing targets to be met, increase the supply of affordable housing, and avoid setting up individual councils to fail on housing.
- Proposals should acknowledge and address challenges that have constrained house building in recent years in particular geographies.
- New areas should have sufficient scale and flexibility so that new housing can be built not only in the numbers that are needed, but in a way that supports the delivery of the new Greater Essex spatial development strategy and supports overall objectives on economic growth and other strategic priorities.
- New development should enhance local communities and the environment and character of places. This will require new councils to have a governance model and way of working

that is close to local communities but without this way of working becoming a blocker to delivering the housing growth that is needed.

- New councils should have the technical planning capacity and capability to enable the planning system to operate effectively and efficiently, and to ensure that investment in additional infrastructure and community benefits from new developments are captured for residents.
- Proposals should take account of Housing Market Areas, as these reflect how housing decisions are made, taking account of affordability, commuting patterns and other factors.

With regard to scoring:

- “high” means that proposals will create sensible housing geographies, and we have a high degree of confidence that (with Devolution) they will enable housing targets to be met across Greater Essex;
- “medium” means that proposals will create sensible housing geographies in part but with some limitations, and we have a medium degree of confidence that (with Devolution) they will enable housing targets to be met across Greater Essex;
- “low” means proposals will only create sensible housing geographies to a very limited extent, and we have a low degree of confidence that (with Devolution) they will enable housing targets to be met across Greater Essex;
- “none” means that proposals will not create sensible housing geographies, and we have no confidence that (with Devolution) they will enable housing targets to be met across Greater Essex.

## Criterion 2: the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand shocks

### Overall criterion

Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.

The Government guidance is that new unitaries should cover areas of at least 500,000 people, although local areas can make a case for a smaller size if they consider that this best meets local needs.

### Covering at least 500,000 people

This has been a straightforward calculation of population numbers. With regard to scoring:

- “high” means all new councils exceed the 500,000 threshold;



- “medium” means either (a) more than one, but not all, of the councils exceed the threshold, or (b) only one council exceeds the threshold but other ones are very close to the threshold;
- “low” means only one council exceeds the threshold and others are far below the threshold;
- “none” means no council exceeds the threshold or is close to meeting the threshold.

The Government’s criteria does allow proposals to create new councils below the 500,000 threshold as long as a sufficient case is made for why it is necessary to depart from the guideline. Given the population size of Greater Essex (1.9m), we are not clear why it is necessary for any proposal to create councils that fall significantly below the 500,000 threshold (as per the “low” and “none” categories above). We have therefore not included mitigations in the assessments for these scores.

#### Right size to achieve efficiencies

We have used the PwC model and analysis that has calculated the cost of setting up new models, the amount of savings they generate, and the payback period. For this element, we have assessed only the LGR savings, not potential transformation and public service reform benefits – this is because:

- The public have a reasonable expectation that LGR will deliver savings in its own right, through a reduction in the number of councils, rather than savings only coming through in future years from transformation and PSR, which they would expect to happen in any case, and which will be highly contingent on the choices to be made by yet-to-be established councils, rather than arising from structural reforms.
- It is important that proposals and Options Appraisals are transparent about upfront costs, efficiency savings and payback periods as these will impact on future Council tax bills and on the quality of services that new councils will be able to provide, as well as the capacity to invest in future transformation.
- Transformation and PSR savings are important, but they are inevitably longer term and more uncertain, relying on a series of assumptions with a greater margin for error. If councils rely on these future transformation and PSR savings, rather than LGR efficiency savings, to enable them to cover core running costs, then this is creating a significant risk factor for financial sustainability. Therefore while we do take account of transformation and PSR savings in the Options Appraisal, we reflect them in the PSR element not in the efficiencies element.

With regard to scoring:

- “high” means that of all the proposals assessed, this proposal delivers the highest level of net savings with the shortest payback period;

- “medium” means that this proposal delivers a relatively lower level of net savings and a longer payback period than the “high” option, but it delivers more net savings with a shorter payback period than the other options;
- “low” means that this proposal does deliver some net savings but the amount is lower and the payback period is longer than the “high” and “medium” options;
- “none” means that this proposal does not deliver net savings within the short or medium term and would not meet Government or public expectations around LGR efficiency savings, and therefore the criterion is not met.

*Right size to improve capacity and withstand financial shocks*

Among other things, our Options Appraisal has considered evidence around the following issues:

- All individual councils should be set up so that they are financially sustainable from day one and into the future; able to meet current and future demand for their services from their revenues; and capable of withstanding financial shocks, such as inflation or economic recession.
- This has involved detailed financial analysis taking into account:
  - Projected costs and savings from LGR
  - Implementation of LGR and transition to new service models
  - Future revenues and running costs of new councils
  - Inherited debt levels and cost of servicing that debt
  - Future transformation and PSR savings – including capacity to generate savings through more efficient procurement and market shaping
  - Future levels of demand and cost on high-cost people services: adult social care, children’s social care, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and homelessness
  - Position on reserves and ability to use reserves to manage risks
  - Current budget gaps in the MTRS which will need to be closed before vesting day

With regard to scoring:

- “high” means this proposal delivers a high degree of confidence that all new councils will be financially sustainable from day one and into the future; able to meet current and future demand for their services from their revenues; and capable of withstanding financial shocks;
- “medium” means this proposal delivers a good degree of confidence that all new councils will be financially sustainable from day one and into the future; able to meet current and future demand for their services from their revenues; and capable of withstanding financial shocks;

- “low” means that this proposal only delivers a low degree of confidence that all new councils will be financially sustainable from day one and into the future; able to meet current and future demand for their services from their revenues; and capable of withstanding financial shocks;
- “none” means that this proposal is assessed as not establishing new councils all of which will be financially sustainable from day one and into the future; able to meet current and future demand for their services from their revenues; and capable of withstanding financial shocks – and therefore does not meet the criterion.

### Criteria 3: Prioritises the delivery of high quality public services

#### Overall criterion

Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to residents. They should avoid unnecessary disaggregation and mitigate risks to critical services.

#### Improving local service delivery

Among other things, our Options Appraisal has considered evidence around the following issues:

- New LGR models should fully capture the benefits from removing the two-tier system, enabling services to be joined up in one organisation, provided in a more agile and efficient way, without duplication, and with services designed around the needs of users.
- Models should enable councils to have a better joined up view of their customers and enable councils to deliver higher and more consistent standards of customer service.
- The changes should also enable a simpler overall system of public services, facilitating joint working with Health partners, the police and fire services, the voluntary sector and other partners. This will remove bureaucracy in joint working and also enable services to be better joined up across the system to make them more efficient and deliver better outcomes.
- New models should unlock consistent performance and efficiency gains alongside the transformation and public service reform benefits outlined below.
- Service delivery models should be grounded in local places. This should mean: neighbourhood service delivery teams operating where appropriate; services being more accessible to residents in the places where they live; residents and service users having a strong voice in how services are designed and delivered; and services being delivered in a way that empowers communities and is tailored to their needs.
- LGR should enable a safe and efficient transition to new structures, so that there is no disruption to public services during the transition; and the benefits of new service delivery models can start to come through to residents as quickly as possible.

With regard to scoring:

- “high” means that proposals establish a high degree of confidence that LGR will enable public services to be better, more efficient and more local;
- “medium” means that proposals establish confidence that public services will be better in the round but either not as efficient or not as local as they will be under high scoring proposals;
- “low” means that proposals may improve public services but there are significant limitations and delivery risks around this;
- “none” means that proposals are assessed as not improving public services and therefore not meeting the criterion.

#### Providing a platform for public service reform

Among other things, our Options Appraisal has considered evidence around the following issues:

- New models should unlock performance and efficiency gains in service delivery through transformation and public service reform. This will require greater innovation, market shaping, collaborative commissioning, and the effective use of data and digital technologies.
- Communities should be at the heart of public service reform – with new service delivery models enabling stronger, more resilient communities and putting the community voice at the heart of service delivery.
- LGR models should enable the shift of public services from a more reactive model to a more preventative model. This will enable the delivery of critical services to be sustained in the face of rising demand pressures and also support local delivery of the NHS Ten-Year Plan.
- Models should support the Government’s overall public service reform agenda and, where appropriate, build on the learning from the Test, Learn, and Grow pilots.
- Models should unlock the transformation and PSR benefits from the abolition of the two-tier system, enabling greater join up of services and a more integrated view of service users and their needs.
- The changes should also enable a simpler overall system of public services, facilitating joint working with Health partners, the police and fire services, the voluntary sector and other partners. This will remove bureaucracy in joint working and also enable services to be better joined up across the system to make them more efficient and to deliver better outcomes.
- For the benefits of PSR to be fully realised, LGR models will need to create the financial headroom and the delivery capacity and capability to invest in and implement PSR alongside the challenges of day-to-day service delivery.
- The PwC report provides a forecast of the quantum of transformation and PSR savings that different unitary models are expected to generate.

With regard to scoring:

- “high” means proposals will realise the potential that LGR creates for public service reform and will deliver a good level of savings as per the PwC model;
- “medium” means that proposals will realise some of the potential that LGR creates for public service reform, but there will be limitations and they will not deliver as many PSR savings as high scoring options;
- “low” means that proposals may realise some of the potential that LGR creates for public service reform, but the savings benefits will be more limited and uncertain than with other options;
- “none” means that proposals are assessed as not delivering public service reform benefits and therefore do not meet the criterion.

#### *Avoiding unnecessary disaggregation and mitigating risks to critical services*

In accordance with the Government’s guidance, we have focused this on adult social care, children’s social care, SEND and homelessness. These are critical services because they protect and support some of the most vulnerable people in society at critical points in their lives. They therefore involve significant statutory responsibilities and close regulatory oversight. In addition, they form the highest cost elements of local councils’ budgets, together comprising a significant majority of local council spend. They also interface closely with other critical public services, including the NHS and the police, and support the wider community safety agenda.

Among other things, our Options Appraisal has considered evidence around the following issues:

- LGR models should minimise the risks around transition, so that critical services are not disrupted in the transition, and the benefits of new service models can start to feed through as soon as possible.
- Models should capture the benefits of removing the two-tier model for critical services, so that there is greater integration of service delivery and insight than there is under the current system.
- Models should avoid creating unnecessary disaggregation risks for critical services. In particular, they should take account of the risks to services that are currently high performing and low cost, where disaggregation could reduce performance and considerably increase costs. Proposals should therefore be open around risks to critical services and be clear how they will be addressed.
- Critical services are highly workforce dependent, so proposals need to be cognisant of the disaggregation risks around workforce: on retention of existing staff, on recruitment of new staff, and on ensuring high quality leadership of these services. This needs to recognise that staff in these areas are a scarce and highly sought after resource.

- Models should seek to secure the optimum balance that captures the benefits both of operating locally and of operating at scale, as both of these are essential to the delivery of critical services.
- LGR models should enable the shift of public services from a more reactive model to a more preventative model. This will enable the delivery of critical services to be sustained in the face of rising demand pressures and also support local delivery of the NHS Ten-Year Plan.
- The changes should also enable a simpler overall system of public services, facilitating joint working with Health partners, the police and fire services, the voluntary sector and other partners. This will remove bureaucracy in joint working and also enable services to be better joined up across the system to make them more efficient and to deliver better outcomes.
- Models should also avoid increasing the complexity and resource burden on the inspection regimes for critical services.
- In order for critical services to be protected, LGR needs to set up all councils so that they are sustainable and able to meet current and future demand pressures. This includes:
  - Setting councils up to be financially sustainable and resilient (see earlier)
  - Ensuring that there is a broadly equitable distribution of demand and cost across new areas and there is a balance between costs and resources to meet them
  - On homelessness, ensuring that demand for and supply of temporary accommodation are broadly in balance in each new area

With regard to scoring:

- “high” means that proposals generate a high degree of confidence that critical services will be protected from unnecessary disaggregation risks; that risks that do exist are understood and able to be managed; that there will be a smooth transition to new models; and that the potential of LGR to strengthen the delivery of critical services and outcomes for vulnerable people will be realised;
- “medium” means that proposals are likely to protect critical services but there will be a higher degree of risk than there will be with high scoring proposals around transition, around the future performance and cost of critical services and around outcomes for vulnerable people;
- “low” means that proposals may generate some benefits for critical services, but overall they create unnecessary risks for critical services around transition, around the future performance and cost for these services, and around outcomes for vulnerable people; and proposals do not put in place sufficient measures to provide reassurance that these risks will be managed;
- “none” means that proposals will not benefit critical services and will expose them to significant and unnecessary risks without any mitigation of those risks – meaning that the criterion is not met.

## Criteria 4: Reflects joint work and is informed by local views

### Overall criterion

Proposals should consider issues of local identity and cultural and historic importance. They should reflect an intuitive sense of place.

Proposals should be the product of joint work and should reflect the views of partners and residents.

### Reflecting residents' sense of local identity

This is about ensuring that LGR enhances people's sense of place at the hyper-local level. Among other things, our Options Appraisal has considered evidence around the following issues:

- While recognising that local government boundaries aren't always a key dimension of people's sense of local identity, the configuration of new councils should reflect and support:
  - The sense of identity that residents have for their local place
  - How people live their daily lives including: commuting to work, shopping, schools, access to healthcare and other services
  - Historic, cultural and other connections
- As the geographical footprint of any new council will be too large to reflect the identity of individual places, new councils should have a robust neighbourhood governance model that will give localities a real say in the decisions that affect them. The Government has indicated that this should include Neighbourhood Area Committees.

With regard to scoring:

- “high” means that proposals – in their configuration and in how new councils will operate – will fully reflect people's hyper-local sense of place identity;
- “medium” means that proposals – in their configuration and in how new councils will operate – will to a reasonable extent reflect people's hyper-local sense of place identity, but there will be some gaps either on particular elements or in particular places;
- “low” means that proposals – in their configuration and in how new councils will operate – will generally not reflect most people's hyper-local sense of place identity, but may do so in some limited elements;
- “none” means that proposals – in their configuration and in how new councils will operate – will not at all address people's hyper-local sense of place identity and therefore do not meet the criterion.

### Reflecting an intuitive understanding of place

This is also looking at the issue of place identity but from a higher level perspective. Among other things, our Options Appraisal has considered evidence around the following issues:

- New areas should, as far as possible, group areas together that belong together. This will reflect:
  - Residents' sense not only of their own place but the places that it "belongs with"
  - Connections that reflect people's daily lives (as above)
  - Sensible economic, housing and transport geographies (as described earlier)
  - Established patterns of joint working between partners on economic growth, strategic planning and housing
- The overall local government map for Greater Essex should make intuitive sense for residents. They should be able to look at the overall map and intuitively understand how it looks and why it is divided as it is.

With regard to scoring:

- "high" means that proposals will create an intuitive sense of place right across Greater Essex with places grouped together that belong together, and a clear rationale for why the new local government map for Greater Essex is the way that it is;
- "medium" means that proposals will create an intuitive sense of place in most areas across Greater Essex, but there will be some areas where proposals cut across an intuitive sense of place;
- "low" means that proposals may create an intuitive sense of place in some parts of Greater Essex, but they will not in others; and the overall map of local government for Greater Essex is unlikely to make intuitive sense for many residents;
- "none" means that proposals will not at all create an intuitive sense of place both in local areas and from the perspective of the overall map of local government for Greater Essex – therefore the criterion is not met.

### Reflecting joint work and informed by local views

Among other things, our Options Appraisal has considered evidence around the following issues:

- Proposals should be based on a core evidence base that has been jointly commissioned by, or at least shared and discussed with, other local authority partners.
- Proposals should have been developed collaboratively with other local authority partners to the extent possible.
- Businesses, other public service partners and local partners should have been engaged during the development of the proposal and their views should be reflected as appropriate in the proposal.



- The public should have been engaged during the development of the proposal and their views should be reflected as appropriate in the proposal. The proposal should also reflect the views of service users as appropriate.

With regard to scoring:

- “high” means that proposals fully meet the following tests: (a) they have been developed with collaborative input from local government partners across the area (not just those supporting the proposal); (b) the core evidence base on which proposals rely has been shared and discussed with local government partners across the area (not just those supporting the proposal); (c) businesses and wider system partners have been engaged and their feedback reflected; and (d) the wider public have been engaged and their feedback reflected;
- “medium” means that the above tests are broadly met in the round, but there may be some limitations on some of the elements;
- “low” means that while some of the tests may be met, overall there is a significant and serious gap in assessing that the proposal reflects joint work and is informed by local views;
- “none” means that none of the above tests are met - for example, because the option has not been developed into a proposal.

## Criterion 5: Supporting Devolution

### Overall criterion

New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.

There should be sensible population size ratios between local authorities and any strategic authority.

### Supporting devolution arrangements

Among other things, our Options Appraisal has considered evidence around the following issues:

- Proposals should create an appropriate number of new unitary councils to form the Greater Essex Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA). At a minimum, this means the creation of at least two authorities. There are examples from across the country of different numbers of constituent authorities within combined authorities that have different lessons for what has worked well and less well.
- New councils should be set up to be effective partners of the Mayor and support the delivery of the strategic plans agreed in the MCA. This links back to elements explored above:
  - Areas should cover sensible economic, housing and transport geographies

- Councils should have the scale and flexibility to be able to deliver effectively on agreed priorities such as economic growth, housing development, skills and transport
- Councils also need to have the financial and delivery capacity to enable delivery on Mayoral strategic priorities. Councils that are struggling to balance their books or to meet the demand on their core statutory services are likely to find it very difficult to find the necessary financial and delivery capacity to support broader strategic priorities.

With regard to scoring:

- “high” means that proposals will fully unlock devolution benefits by setting up an effective Greater Essex MCA and enabling effective delivery of strategic plans agreed in the MCA;
- “medium” means that proposals will broadly unlock devolution benefits but with some limitations that do not apply in higher scoring proposals;
- “low” means that proposals create significant risks around the unlocking of devolution benefits;
- “none” means that proposals will not enable the unlocking of devolution benefits and therefore do not meet the criterion.

#### *Sensible population size ratios between local authorities and a strategic authority*

Among other things, our Options Appraisal has considered evidence around the following issues:

- The MCA will initially represent around 1.9m people. The size of the new unitaries should be within a reasonable subset of this:
  - If new councils are too big in relation to the MCA, there is a risk that they may overlap with or challenge the role of the Mayor and the MCA may therefore be weakened.
  - If new councils are too small in relation to the MCA, there is a risk that there will be a significant gap between the Mayor’s strategic ambitions at the Greater Essex level and the outlook and capacity of the new unitary councils. This would also weaken the Mayor and the MCA.
- The size of new councils in relation to each other. To facilitate effective decision making within the Greater Essex Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA), new councils should be roughly equal size in terms of population and economic weight. This will help ensure that decision making is seen to be fair, representing residents and businesses across Greater Essex in an equal way and building confidence in the new arrangements.

With regard to scoring:

- “high” means all new unitary councils will be of an appropriate size in relation to the MCA and there will be population and economic balance between the new councils;
- “medium” means that broadly councils will be of an appropriate size in relation to the MCA; there may be some population and economic imbalances between new councils but these will not be as significant as with low scoring proposals;
- “low” means that there are significant gaps in the proposal – either because councils are likely to be too big or too small in relation to the MCA, or because there are significant population or economic imbalances between the new councils that may create challenges for the operation of the MCA;
- “none” means that the proposal is so flawed that it does not enable the MCA to be set up in a way that would be functional, and therefore the criterion is not met.

## Criterion 6: Strengthens community engagement and neighbourhood empowerment

### Overall criterion

New unitary structures should deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment. They should enable investment in greater community engagement.

### Enabling investment in stronger community engagement

Among other things, our Options Appraisal has considered evidence around the following issues:

- Proposals should demonstrate how they will realise the financial capacity to increase investment in communities, especially in the context of rising demand pressures on statutory services.
- Proposals should demonstrate how they will work with and integrate local partners, the voluntary sector and communities in enabling greater investment in community engagement through neighbourhood operating models.

With regard to scoring:

- “high” means that proposals generate a high degree of confidence in enabling greater investment in community engagement;
- “medium” means that proposals generate a good level of confidence in enabling greater investment in community engagement;
- “low” means that proposals only generate a low level of confidence in enabling greater investment in community engagement;

- “none” means that proposals are assessed as not enabling greater investment in community engagement and therefore do not meet the criterion.

### *Delivering genuine opportunities for community empowerment*

Among other things, our Options Appraisal has considered evidence around the following issues:

- Proposals should create an appropriate number of new councillors. There are currently 700 county, district and unitary councillors in Greater Essex. As the number of councils will be significantly reduced, the number of councillors will also be significantly reduced. The reduction in the number of councillors will need to go far enough to streamline accountability and reduce cost; but not too far so that democratic leadership and representation is weakened.
- Models should not just focus on the number of councillors but also on how the support to new councillors can be enhanced. This will enable the body of councillors to be more diverse and representative of the demographics of voters; and for the role of councillors to be updated and strengthened to keep pace with changing demands and with the expectations of residents in the modern age.
- To reflect local identities, proposals should put a strong emphasis on neighbourhood governance. This neighbourhood governance model needs to be robust, supported with appropriate resources, and integral to the operating models of future councils.
- Community empowerment should be reflected more broadly in the operating models, ways of working and culture of new councils. This should include collaborative working with local partners, including parish and town councils and local community groups.

With regard to scoring:

- “high” means that proposals in their configuration and ways of working will fully realise opportunities for community empowerment;
- “medium” means that proposals will broadly enable community empowerment but with some limitations around how quickly or how fully it will be achieved;
- “low” means that proposals generate significant risks around the achievement of community empowerment;
- “none” means that proposals will not generate community empowerment and therefore do not meet the criterion.

## Appendix J: Balance Analysis

2 unitary (no proposal being submitted)	3 unitary (Essex County Council led proposal)	4 unitary (Rochford District Council proposal)	4 unitary (Thurrock Council proposal)	5 unitary (Southend City led Council proposal)

Our Balance Analysis establishes how equitable the new unitaries will be. We have applied it to key service areas - including Education, Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, and the Economy.

In Education, our Balance Analysis evaluates access and inclusion across different geographies. In Adult Social Care, the focus is on preventative services, residential care, and community support. Children's Social Care focuses on safeguarding, early help, and long-term support. Performance measures such as referral rates, and outcomes for looked-after children are analysed to ensure that services are proportionate, timely, and focused on improving life chances. Health and Well-being spans homelessness, physical health and, public health interventions. The Strong Economy domain focuses on housing, employment, business growth, and income distribution.

Crucially, Balance Analysis enables cross-cutting insight—highlighting how performance in one area affects others. For example, poor educational outcomes may impact economic participation; climate resilience may influence health and wellbeing. By identifying these interdependencies, public sector leaders can make more informed, joined-up decisions. Balance ratings are calculated by taking the % difference between the minimum and maximum area values of each option and placing the results between the lower and upper thresholds. Our analysis shows that the three unitary option provide better balance and therefore more equitable service outcomes than can be achieved in a four or five unitary model.

Rating	Lower Threshold	Upper Threshold	Comment
Balanced	0.00%	9.99%	No significant/substantial differences
Slight Imbalance	10.00%	19.99%	10%+ minimum difference which is to be noted
Significant Imbalance	20.00%	49.99%	20%+ difference which has a significant impact
Severe Imbalance	50.00%	100.00%	50%+ difference which has the potential for severe impact

## Balance Analysis | Adult Social Care

Option	Area	% new request for support leading to services	ASC Long Term support per 100000	Rate of admissions into residential and nursing care per 100000 18-64	Rate of admissions into residential and nursing care per 100000 65+
2 (no proposal)	North	34.9%	1257.3	13.2	456.9
	South	38.6%	1537.2	7.9	424.0
	Balance	Slight Imbalance	Significant Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	Balanced
3 (Essex County Council proposal)	Central	34.7%	1099.0	4.7	407.4
	North	35.6%	1399.8	21.6	530.5
	South	38.9%	1637.4	8.6	408.0
	Balance	Slight Imbalance	Significant Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	Significant Imbalance
4 (Rochford District Council proposal)	Central	37.3%	1061.0	5.2	342.0
	North	35.0%	1535.3	27.5	570.7
	South	39.1%	1798.5	9.8	462.5
	West	33.4%	1079.0	3.4	423.0
	Balance	Slight Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	Severe Imbalance
4 (Thurrock Council proposal)	East	35.2%	1430.3	22.7	432.7
	North	37.0%	1174.3	10.3	499.3
	South East	37.2%	1671.3	8.0	341.0
	South West	36.3%	1195.5	5.5	509.8
	Balance	Balanced	Significant Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	Significant Imbalance
5 (Southend City Council proposal)	Central	37.0%	1083.7	5.7	392.7
	North	35.0%	1535.3	27.5	570.7
	South East	37.5%	1848.0	6.9	325.7
	South West	41.1%	1321.5	11.3	531.5
	West	33.4%	1079.0	3.4	423.0
	Balance	Significant Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	Severe Imbalance

Key:  
Balance ratings are calculated by taking the % difference between the minimum and maximum area values of each option and placing the results between the lower and upper thresholds:

Rating	Lower Threshold	Upper Threshold	Comment
Balanced	0.00%	9.99%	No significant/substantial differences
Slight Imbalance	10.00%	19.99%	10%+ minimum difference which is to be noted
Significant Imbalance	20.00%	49.99%	20%+ difference which has a significant impact
Severe Imbalance	50.00%	100.00%	50%+ difference which has the potential for severe impact

## Balance Analysis | Children's Social Care

Option	Area	Children known to social care per 10000	Children subject to CIN plans per 10000	Children subject to CP plans per 10000	LAC per 10000
2 (no proposal)	North	139.3	46.9	21.6	31.6
	South	87.1	51.2	17.9	36.4
	Balance	Severe Imbalance	Balanced	Significant Imbalance	Slight Imbalance
3 (Essex County Council proposal)	Central	116.8	39.3	17.9	25.1
	North	147.5	51.0	23.4	34.0
	South	92.6	56.3	19.4	41.9
	Balance	Severe Imbalance	Significant Imbalance	Significant Imbalance	Severe Imbalance
4 (Rochford District Council proposal)	Central	99.7	34.7	15.8	17.1
	North	173.4	56.1	30.8	41.3
	South	93.9	62.6	21.6	49.9
	West	114.1	41.5	12.6	26.3
	Balance	Severe Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	Severe Imbalance
4 (Thurrock Council proposal)	East	167.1	51.5	30.3	36.2
	North	113.6	43.8	14.9	25.7
	South East	99.9	46.0	17.5	36.4
	South West	98.9	53.0	18.5	34.9
	Balance	Severe Imbalance	Significant Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	Significant Imbalance
5 (Southend City Council proposal)	Central	103.9	35.8	17.5	19.6
	North	173.4	56.1	30.8	41.3
	South East	88.0	47.7	16.4	37.8
	South West	99.4	69.2	23.9	48.0
	West	114.1	41.5	12.6	26.3
	Balance	Severe Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	Severe Imbalance

Key:  
Balance ratings are calculated by taking the % difference between the minimum and maximum area values of each option and placing the results between the lower and upper thresholds:

Rating	Lower Threshold	Upper Threshold	Comment
Balanced	0.00%	9.99%	No significant/substantial differences
Slight Imbalance	10.00%	19.99%	10%+ minimum difference which is to be noted
Significant Imbalance	20.00%	49.99%	20%+ difference which has a significant impact
Severe Imbalance	50.00%	100.00%	50%+ difference which has the potential for severe impact

## Balance Analysis | Health & Wellbeing

Option	Area	Homeless - relief duty owed	Initial assessments of stat homelessness	Overweight Prevalence Reception	Overweight Prevalence Yr 6	Threatened with homelessness - prevention duty owed	Key: Balance ratings are calculated by taking the % difference between the minimum and maximum area values of each option and placing the results between the lower and upper thresholds:
							Rating    Lower Threshold    Upper Threshold    Comment
2 (no proposal)	North	1782	3550	21.7%	32.8%	1663	<b>Balanced</b> 0.00% 9.99% No significant/substantial differences <b>Slight Imbalance</b> 10.00% 19.99% 10%+ minimum difference which is to be noted <b>Significant Imbalance</b> 20.00% 49.99% 20%+ difference which has a significant impact <b>Severe Imbalance</b> 50.00% 100.00% 50%+ difference which has the potential for severe impact
	South	1916	3535	20.2%	32.7%	1565	
	Balance	Balanced	Balanced	Balanced	Balanced	Balanced	
3 (Essex County Council proposal)	Central	975	2042	20.7%	32.4%	1003	<b>Significant Imbalance</b> 20.00% 49.99% 20%+ difference which has a significant impact <b>Severe Imbalance</b> 50.00% 100.00% 50%+ difference which has the potential for severe impact
	North	807	1508	21.6%	31.7%	660	
	South	1916	3535	20.8%	33.9%	1565	
	Balance	Severe Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	Balanced	Balanced	Severe Imbalance	
4 (Rochford District Council proposal)	Central	670	1480	19.1%	30.7%	760	<b>Severe Imbalance</b> 50.00% 100.00% 50%+ difference which has the potential for severe impact
	North	678	1316	22.0%	34.0%	597	
	South	1808	3262	21.7%	34.7%	1408	
	West	542	1027	21.7%	31.7%	463	
	Balance	Severe Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	Slight Imbalance	Slight Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	
4 (Thurrock Council proposal)	East	644	1051	22.7%	34.8%	385	<b>Severe Imbalance</b> 50.00% 100.00% 50%+ difference which has the potential for severe impact
	North	725	1664	20.1%	29.3%	878	
	South East	1423	2635	20.7%	32.9%	1173	
	South West	906	1735	20.7%	33.7%	792	
	Balance	Severe Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	Slight Imbalance	Slight Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	
5 (Southend City Council proposal)	Central	562	1207	19.7%	30.6%	603	<b>Severe Imbalance</b> 50.00% 100.00% 50%+ difference which has the potential for severe impact
	North	678	1316	22.0%	34.0%	597	
	South East	899	1858	20.3%	32.5%	934	
	South West	1017	1677	21.6%	36.1%	631	
	West	542	1027	21.7%	31.7%	463	
	Balance	Severe Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	Slight Imbalance	Slight Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	

## Balance Analysis | High Quality Environment / Service Excellence

Option	Area	% Household waste recycled	Kg Household waste collected	% of Council Tax collected during FY	Key: Balance ratings are calculated by taking the % difference between the minimum and maximum area values of each option and placing the results between the lower and upper thresholds:
					Rating    Lower Threshold    Upper Threshold    Comment
2 (no proposal)	North	49.4%	797.4	96.8%	<b>Balanced</b> 0.00% 9.99% No significant/substantial differences <b>Slight Imbalance</b> 10.00% 19.99% 10%+ minimum difference which is to be noted <b>Significant Imbalance</b> 20.00% 49.99% 20%+ difference which has a significant impact <b>Severe Imbalance</b> 50.00% 100.00% 50%+ difference which has the potential for severe impact
	South	42.8%	777.7	97.6%	
	Balance	Slight Imbalance	Balanced	Balanced	
3 (Essex County Council proposal)	Central	48.3%	832.7	96.7%	<b>Significant Imbalance</b> 20.00% 49.99% 20%+ difference which has a significant impact <b>Severe Imbalance</b> 50.00% 100.00% 50%+ difference which has the potential for severe impact
	North	47.7%	762.6	97.0%	
	South	43.9%	766.3	97.7%	
	Balance	Slight Imbalance	Balanced	Balanced	
4 (Rochford District Council proposal)	Central	51.0%	853.7	97.4%	<b>Significant Imbalance</b> 20.00% 49.99% 20%+ difference which has a significant impact <b>Severe Imbalance</b> 50.00% 100.00% 50%+ difference which has the potential for severe impact
	North	47.0%	754.9	96.5%	
	South	40.7%	736.5	97.7%	
	West	48.2%	806.6	96.8%	
	Balance	Significant Imbalance	Slight Imbalance	Balanced	
4 (Thurrock Council proposal)	East	49.6%	753.5	96.7%	<b>Significant Imbalance</b> 20.00% 49.99% 20%+ difference which has a significant impact <b>Severe Imbalance</b> 50.00% 100.00% 50%+ difference which has the potential for severe impact
	North	50.7%	828.2	97.5%	
	South East	47.8%	783.3	97.6%	
	South West	40.1%	791.8	96.8%	
	Balance	Significant Imbalance	Balanced	Balanced	
5 (Southend City Council proposal)	Central	49.0%	843.2	97.2%	<b>Significant Imbalance</b> 20.00% 49.99% 20%+ difference which has a significant impact <b>Severe Imbalance</b> 50.00% 100.00% 50%+ difference which has the potential for severe impact
	North	47.0%	754.9	96.5%	
	South East	48.5%	744.1	97.9%	
	South West	37.0%	799.5	97.5%	
	West	48.2%	806.6	96.8%	
	Balance	Significant Imbalance	Slight Imbalance	Balanced	

## Balance Analysis | Strong Economy

Option	Area	Additional Social and Affordable Housing as a % of Net Additional Housing	Claimants as a proportion of residents 16-64	House Affordability Ratio median house price to median gross annual residence-based earnings	Minimum RQF 4 +	£106 funding
2 (no proposal)	North	17.8%	3.1	9.1	43.4%	14745076
	South	6.1%	3.3	8.6	33.4%	7726325
	Balance	Severe Imbalance	Balanced	Balanced	Significant Imbalance	Severe Imbalance
3 (Essex County Council proposal)	Central	15.1%	3.0	9.8	45.6%	5503914
	North	17.0%	3.0	8.3	40.9%	9787169
	South	7.2%	3.5	8.4	31.2%	7180318
	Balance	Severe Imbalance	Slight Imbalance	Slight Imbalance	Significant Imbalance	Severe Imbalance
4 (Rochford District Council proposal)	Central	15.9%	2.5	9.5	43.2%	8735205
	North	21.5%	3.4	8.0	36.4%	5739930
	South	5.2%	3.8	8.3	32.0%	3540855
	West	10.2%	3.2	9.7	45.9%	4455411
	Balance	Severe Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	Significant Imbalance	Significant Imbalance	Severe Imbalance
4 (Thurrock Council proposal)	East	19.8%	3.3	8.5	37.3%	7138124
	North	18.7%	2.4	9.1	50.7%	7198780
	South East	7.9%	3.3	8.6	30.0%	5626605
	South West	8.0%	3.6	9.3	41.0%	2507892
	Balance	Severe Imbalance	Significant Imbalance	Balanced	Severe Imbalance	Severe Imbalance
5 (Southend City Council proposal)	Central	16.0%	2.6	9.7	48.2%	5095742
	North	21.5%	3.4	8.0	36.4%	5739930
	South East	9.5%	3.1	8.7	33.4%	4357823
	South West	3.7%	4.2	8.1	28.0%	2822495
	West	10.2%	3.2	9.7	45.9%	4455411
	Balance	Severe Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	Significant Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	Severe Imbalance

Key:  
Balance ratings are calculated by taking the % difference between the minimum and maximum area values of each option and placing the results between the lower and upper thresholds:

Rating	Lower Threshold	Upper Threshold	Comment
Balanced	0.00%	9.99%	No significant/substantial differences
Slight Imbalance	10.00%	19.99%	10%+ minimum difference which is to be noted
Significant Imbalance	20.00%	49.99%	20%+ difference which has a significant impact
Severe Imbalance	50.00%	100.00%	50%+ difference which has the potential for severe impact

## Balance Analysis | Education

Option	Area	% NEET Unknown	CME	EHE	Overall Absence %
2 (no proposal)	North	6.6%	335	2691	6.5%
	South	5.3%	516	2123	6.4%
	Balance	Significant Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	Significant Imbalance	Balanced
3 (Essex County Council proposal)	Central	5.9%	174	1252	6.2%
	North	7.0%	172	1569	6.7%
	South	5.4%	505	1993	6.5%
	Balance	Significant Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	Balanced
4 (Rochford District Council proposal)	Central	5.6%	97	923	6.1%
	North	7.5%	160	1388	6.8%
	South	5.5%	496	1797	6.5%
	West	5.5%	98	706	6.4%
	Balance	Significant Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	Slight Imbalance
4 (Thurrock Council proposal)	East	7.8%	138	1175	6.8%
	North	5.8%	111	991	6.2%
	South East	5.9%	165	1593	6.6%
	South West	4.9%	437	1055	6.2%
	Balance	Severe Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	Balanced
5 (Southend City Council proposal)	Central	5.9%	88	727	6.0%
	North	7.5%	160	1388	6.8%
	South East	5.1%	64	938	6.3%
	South West	5.6%	441	1055	6.7%
	West	5.5%	98	706	6.4%
	Balance	Significant Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	Severe Imbalance	Slight Imbalance

Key:  
Balance ratings are calculated by taking the % difference between the minimum and maximum area values of each option and placing the results between the lower and upper thresholds:

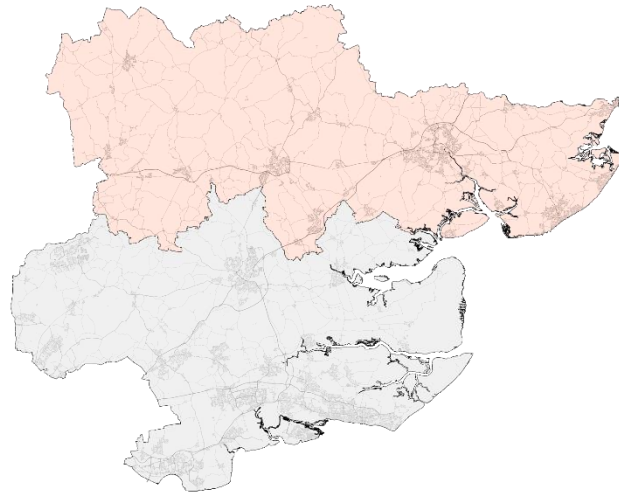
Rating	Lower Threshold	Upper Threshold	Comment
Balanced	0.00%	9.99%	No significant/substantial differences
Slight Imbalance	10.00%	19.99%	10%+ minimum difference which is to be noted
Significant Imbalance	20.00%	49.99%	20%+ difference which has a significant impact
Severe Imbalance	50.00%	100.00%	50%+ difference which has the potential for severe impact



## Appendix K: Three Cities Unitary Local Authority Model – Area Profiles

### North Essex Unitary Area Profile

This profile gives a picture of the social, demographic, and economic characteristics of a new North Essex Unitary Authority (UA). It is the largest of the new Authorities, covering 52% of Greater Essex by area. The profile is designed to help local government and wider public service partners to develop an understanding of their community's needs, so that they can work together to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities.



#### Demographic characteristics

North Essex UA area is home to c.604k residents (c.32% of the Greater Essex population). The population is projected to grow by 10% in the years to 2040, with the fastest growth being seen amongst the 65+ age group. The area is less ethnically diverse than England as a whole and a higher proportion of residents have a disability.

#### Economic performance

The gross value added (GVA) of the North Essex UA area is £14.2bn per year. Unemployment is generally low, although levels of productivity are lower than the England average. Each productive job generates c.£64.1k of output per annum compared to £66.3k across England as a whole. This is reflected in local incomes (lower than the Greater Essex median) and the fact that a lower proportion the workforce has higher value skills (28.0% have level 4 qualifications compared to 33.9% nationally).

An additional c64k homes are needed by 2040. Current housing delivery rates will need to increase by 23% if this these targets are to be achieved.

3,788km of local authority maintained highways are in North Essex, 42.6% of the Greater Essex total.

#### The health of the population

Life expectancy in North Essex UA is 83.4 years for females and 80 years for males, similar to England. Rates of preventable mortality and infant mortality are lower than England.

#### Inequalities

There are large inequalities within the area. Women born in the most deprived parts of North Essex die 6.5 years earlier than in the least deprived areas. For men the gap is 7.2 years. There are pockets of high deprivation – particularly in central Colchester and coastal Tendring. These areas have some of the highest levels of deprivation in the country and may have higher service

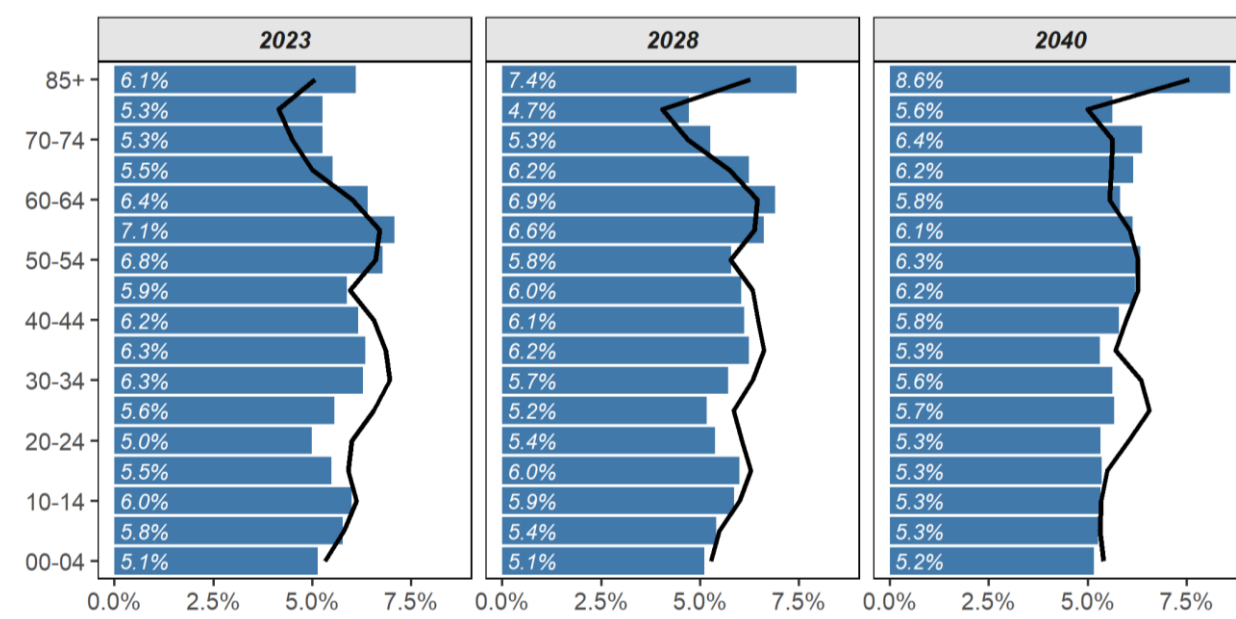
demand compared to other areas. There is a ‘East-West’ split, most health outcomes are worse in Colchester and Tendring compared to Uttlesford and Braintree.

## Demographic characteristics

North Essex has a population of 603,756 according to the latest 2023 ONS population estimates. This is 32% of the Greater Essex population. The population is set to increase to 625,263 and 664,964 in 2028 and 2040.

**Fig. K1: Current and Future Population Structure, ONS population projections**

Black line shows population structure across England



**Fig. K2: Current and Future Population by Broad Age Group, ONS population projections**

	2023		2028		2040	
	North Essex	England %	North Essex	England %	North Essex	England %
<b>0 - 15</b>	109,239 (18.1%)	18.5%	110,017 (17.6%)	18.0%	111,731 (16.8%)	17.1%
<b>16 - 64</b>	360,877 (59.8%)	62.9%	367,309 (58.7%)	61.3%	375,388 (56.5%)	59.1%
<b>65+</b>	133,640 (22.1%)	18.7%	147,937 (23.7%)	20.7%	177,845 (26.7%)	23.8%

North Essex has a higher proportion of residents aged 65+ compared to England, and a lower proportion younger people aged 15 - 45. This gap is projected to remain in 2040. There is a higher proportion of residents aged 85+, and this proportion is projected to increase over time.

According to the 2021 Census, North Essex has higher levels of disability and lower levels of the population who identify as an ethnic minority (any minority other than white British):

Fig. K3: Number and percentage of the population who are disabled, members of ethnic minority groups, Census 2021

	North Essex	England %
<b>Disabled</b>	106,836 (18.2%)	17.3%
<b>Ethnic minority</b>	71,998 (12.3%)	26.5%

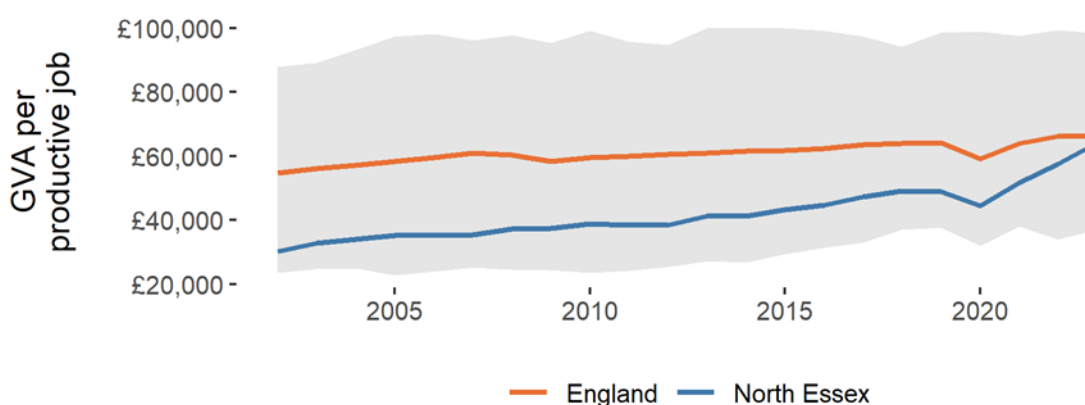
## Economic performance

North Essex is home to 23,110 active businesses, including 115 (0.5%) high growth businesses (businesses with more than 20% average annual growth over the last three years).

The chart below shows the GVA (balanced) per productive job over time:

Fig. K4: Productivity over time, ONS

England & North Essex highlighted. Grey region shows productivity per job for all LTLAs in England



North Essex has a slightly lower proportion of residents working in professional occupations compared to England, a slightly higher proportion of residents with no qualifications, and a lower proportion of residents with level 4 qualifications (such as university degrees).

Fig. K5: Occupations of residents in North Essex and England, Census 2021

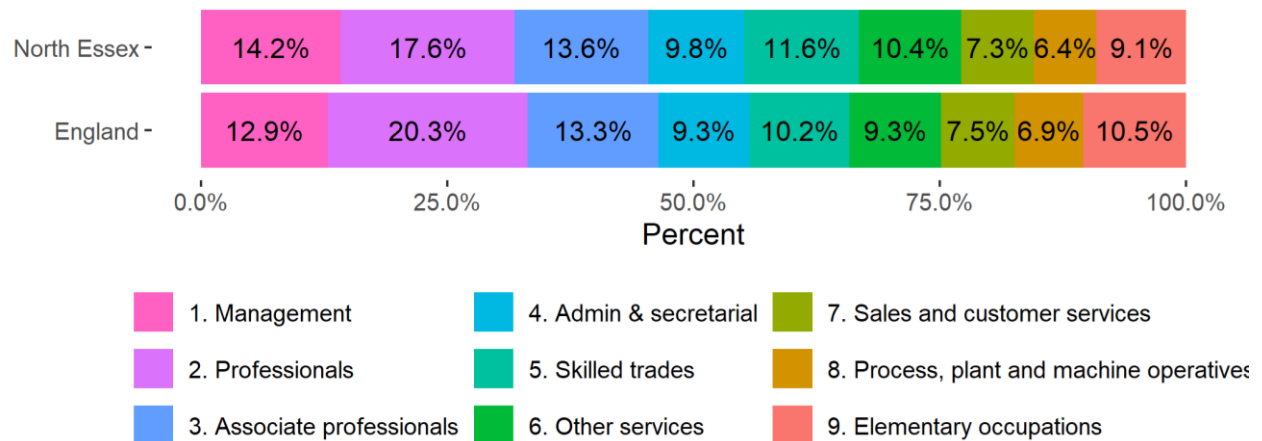


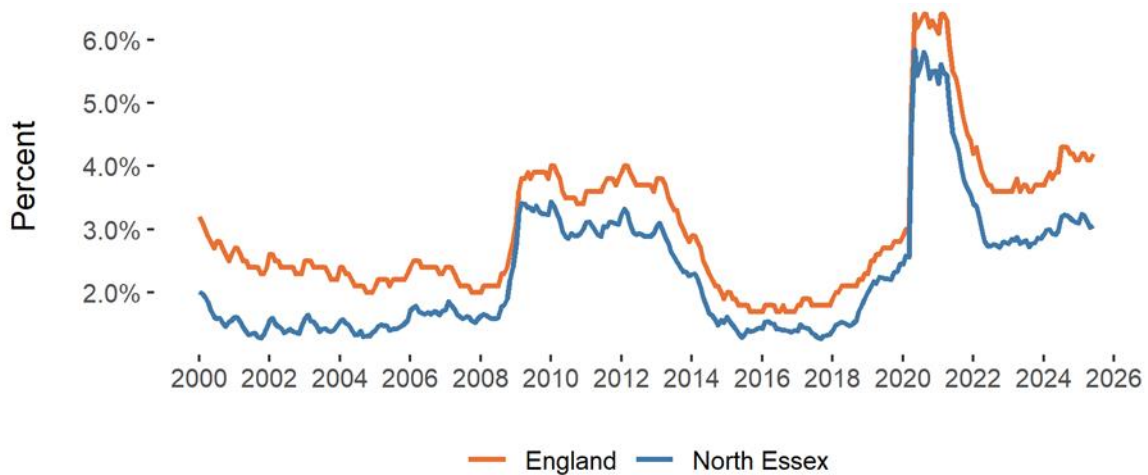
Fig. K6: Highest Level of Qualification, Census 2021

Highest level of qualification	North Essex	England %
<b>Level 1 and entry level</b>	54,830 (11.4%)	9.7%
<b>Level 2</b>	74,804 (15.5%)	13.3%
<b>Level 3</b>	85,633 (17.8%)	16.9%
<b>Level 4</b>	134,812 (28.0%)	33.9%
<b>No qualifications</b>	90,180 (18.7%)	18.1%
<b>Other (e.g. apprentices)</b>	41,062 (8.5%)	8.1%

Residents in North Essex have an average median income of £39,570, slightly higher than the England median of £37,617.

Unemployment in North Essex, as measured by the proportion of residents aged 16-64 claiming unemployment, is consistently lower than England.

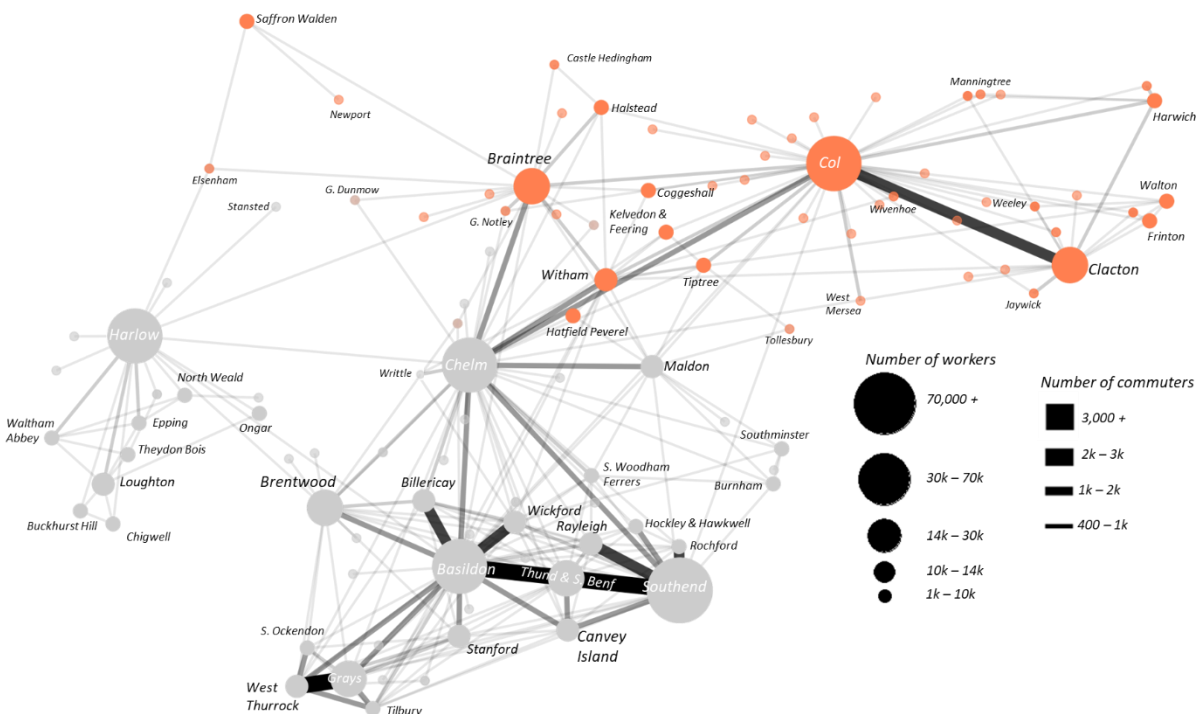
Fig. K7: Claimant rate of residents aged 16-64 in North Essex and England, Nomis



Travel to work patterns show clear clusters of commuters around Colchester, Clacton, and Braintree. The largest flow of workers is between Colchester and Clacton. There are also sizeable worker flows to areas outside of North Essex, particularly Chelmsford.

Chart K8: Commuter patterns within Greater Essex (North Essex areas highlighted), Census 2021

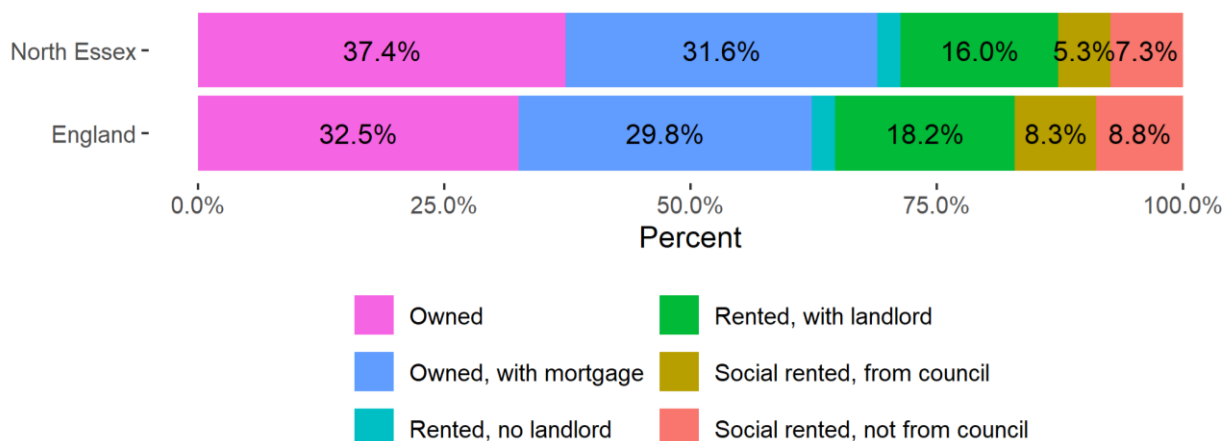
Each dot is a built-up area. The size of the dot & thickness of the lines are based on the number of workers working in the area or travelling between the areas



## Housing

There is a slightly higher level of home ownership in North Essex compared to England.

Fig. K9: Tenure of households in North Essex and England, Census 2021

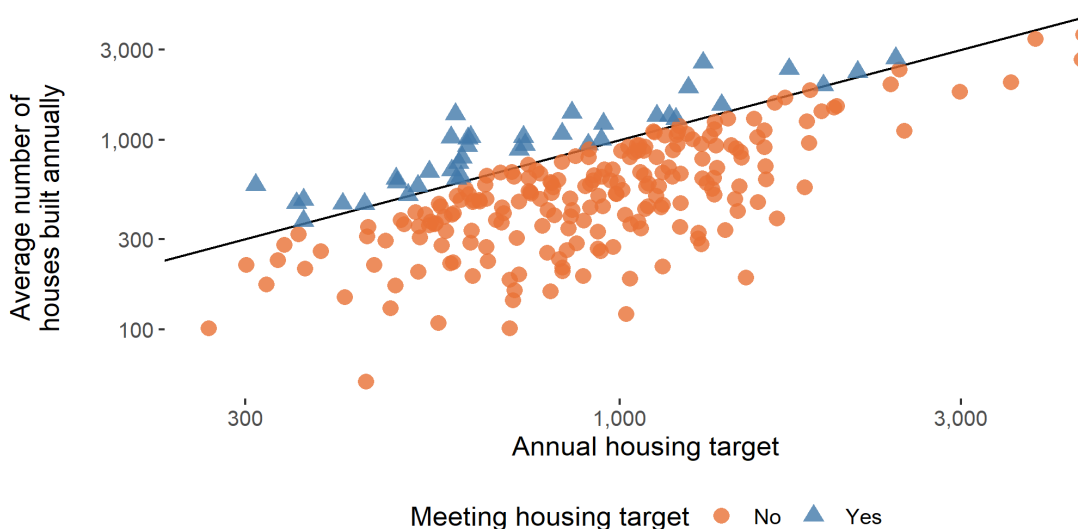


A key priority for this government is housing. All areas have new housing targets based on a standard methodology accounting for current need (calculated using a range of data, including housing affordability ratios and current dwelling stock). The new housing target for North Essex is to build at least 4,252 new homes on average per year for the next 15 years (30% of the Greater Essex total). Over the past three years, North Essex has exceeded *existing* housing delivery targets, delivering 115% of new homes, but accelerated development will be required to meet higher targets.

The vast majority of areas across England are not currently meeting their current housing targets.

Fig. K10: Housing targets across England

LTAs above the line are building enough new homes, areas below are not



Government Housing Delivery Test: 2023 measurement

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-delivery-test-2023-measurement>

The table below shows annual housing need figures under the new adopted standard method. Braintree is closest to meeting the new housing target, but all areas in North Essex will need to accelerate development if they are to deliver in line with new targets.

Fig. K11: Housing Targets and Annual Number of New Homes Built, MCHLG

Area	Target	Avg. new homes built annually 2020-23	Uplift required to meet target
North Essex	4,253	3,456	23%
Braintree	1,115	990	13%
Colchester	1,300	902	44%
Tendring	1,034	781	32%
Uttlesford	804	283	184%

Government Housing Delivery Test: 2023 measurement

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-delivery-test-2023-measurement>

Looking over the period to 2040, North Essex requires 63,795 new homes.

North Essex covers 192,150 hectares of land, 52% of Greater Essex. 2% of North Essex is classed as green belt:

Fig. K12: Land Area and Green Belt Statistics, MCHLG

Area	Area (hectares)	Green Belt (hectares)	New homes per hectare by 2040
North Essex	192,150	3,810 (2%)	0.3
Braintree	61,170	0 (0%)	0.3
Colchester	33,230	0 (0%)	0.6
Tendring	33,630	0 (0%)	0.5
Uttlesford	64,120	3,810 (6%)	0.2

Local authority green belt statistics for England: 2023 to 2024 [Local authority green belt statistics for England: 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

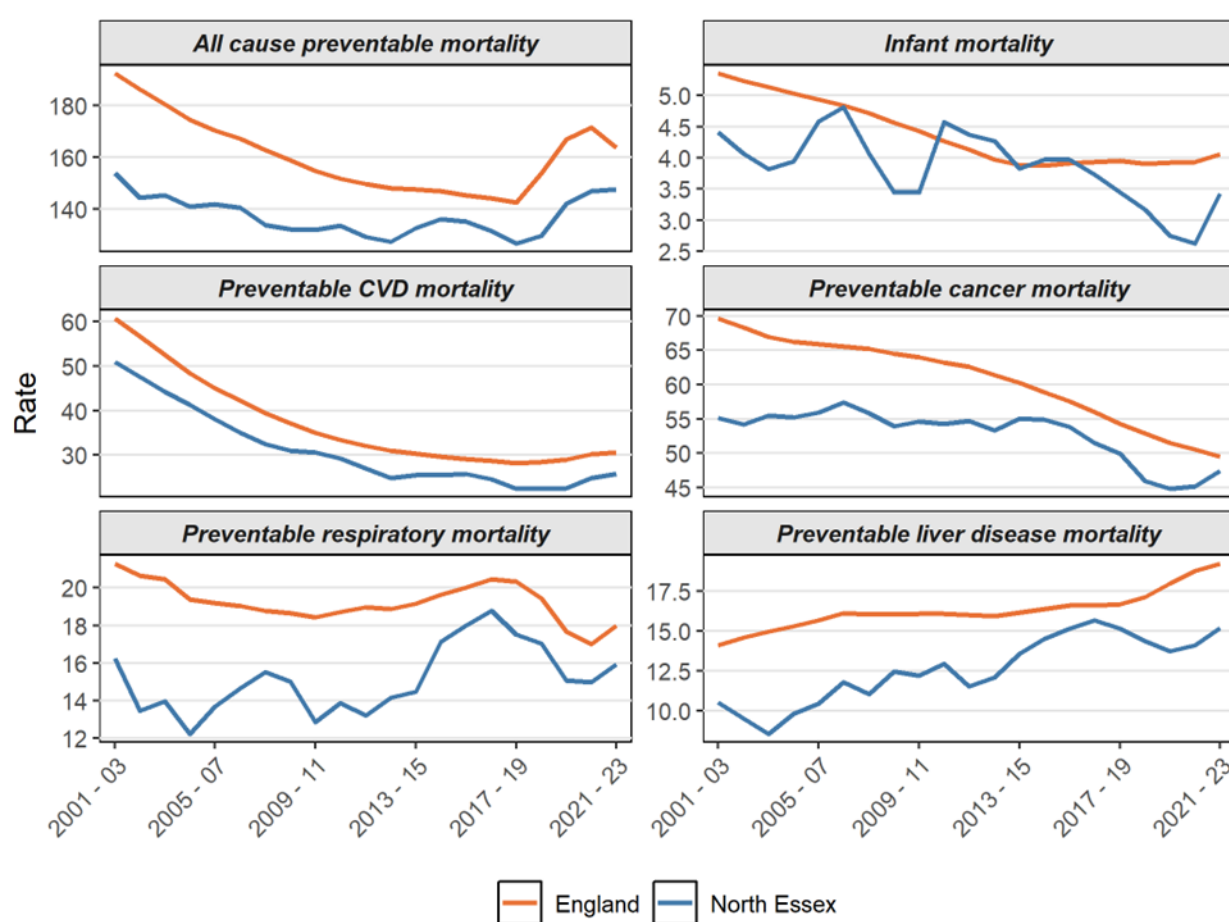
## Health of the population

Life expectancy in North Essex is 83.4 years for females and 80 years for males, broadly similar to the England life expectancy (83 years for females, 79.1 years for males).

Along with life expectancy, mortality is another key public health measure. Two of the most informative mortality metrics are infant mortality and preventable mortality. Both of these are strongly influenced by public health. These are both shown in the chart:

**Fig. K13: Mortality rates, OHID**

Note: each chart has a different y-axis scale. Preventable mortality rates are age-standardised rates for residents aged under 70, infant mortality rate is the proportion of live births which die before their first birthday



Values for North Essex are the average value of the districts within the new unitary authority

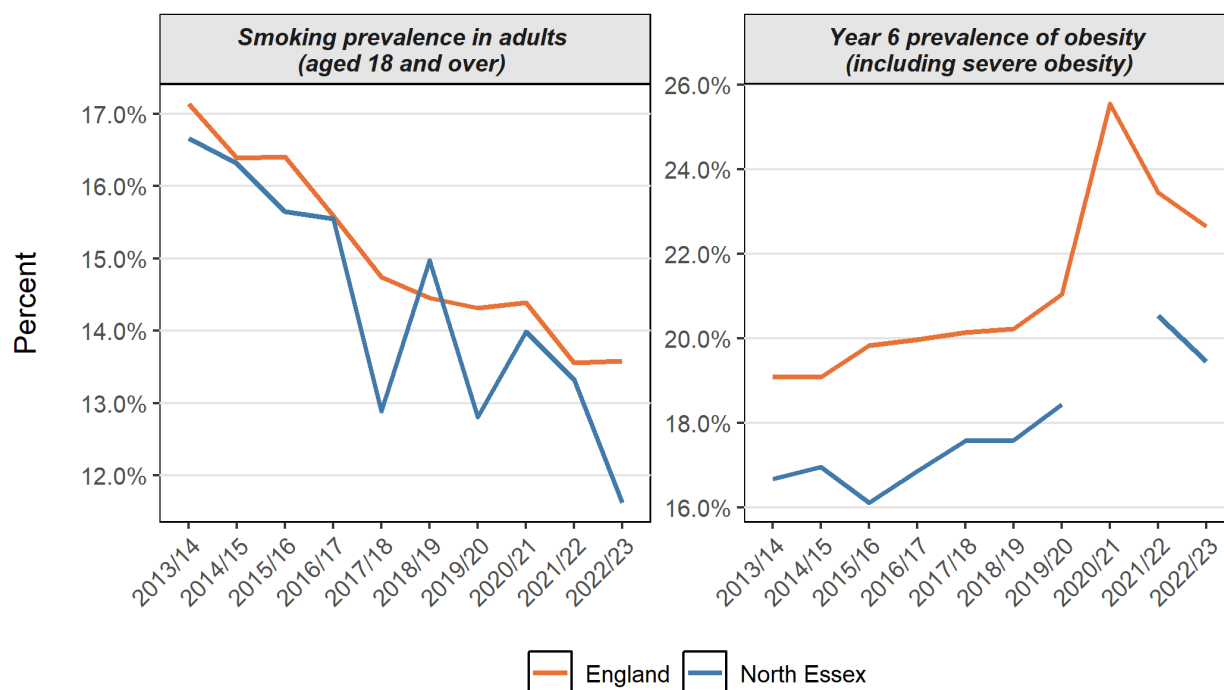
Preventable mortality and infant mortality rates are lower than for England as a whole, and following the same broad trend as observed across England.

Smoking and obesity are two modifiable risk factors which have an impact on a range of health outcomes. The levels of smoking in North Essex are decreasing, but current prevalence is higher compared to England.



Fig. K14: Smoking and childhood obesity prevalence, OHID

Note: each chart has a different y-axis scale



Note: Parts of the child measurement program were paused over covid

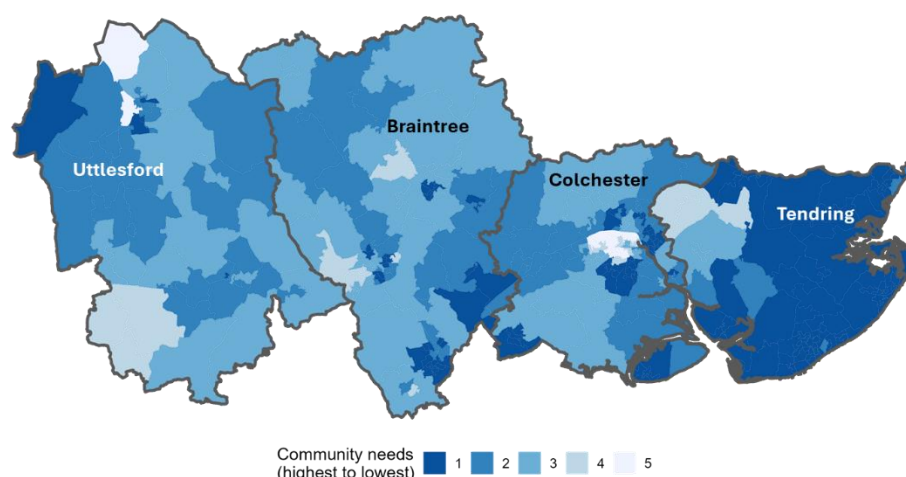
The early years of life can have a large impact on a person's future. More than 90% of schools in North Essex are rated as Good or Outstanding, and the levels of child poverty are lower compared to England. 14.5% of North Essex children are living in (absolute) child poverty, compared to 22.7% of children in England.

## Communities

For a more detailed look at community needs across Greater Essex, please see the recent [Greater Essex Community Needs Index report](#).

The maps below show the community needs index in North Essex. This index ranks areas based on the level of civic assets (universities, green spaces, libraries etc.), how connected people feel to their neighbours and community, and how engaged people are with their local community.

Fig. K15: Community Needs Index (darker colours indicate higher need), OCSI



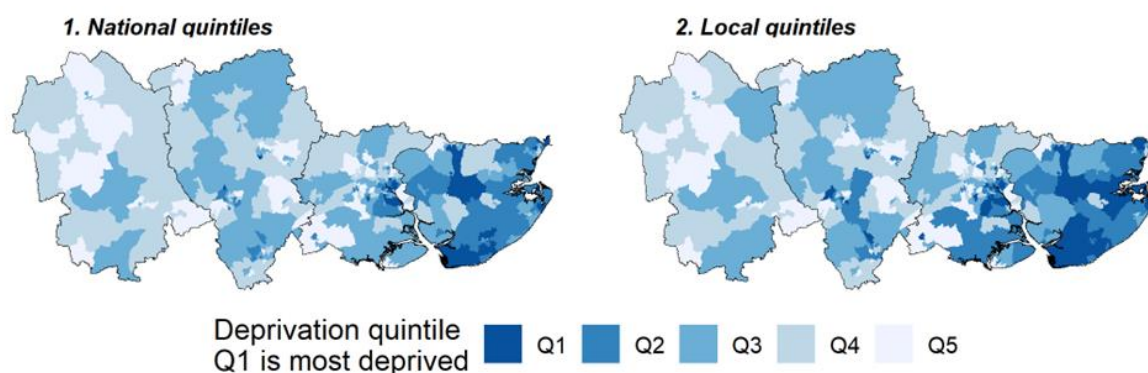
North Essex has the highest levels of community need out of the three new Unitary Authorities. Need is particularly acute in Tendring, along with parts of Braintree and Colchester. Tendring has the highest level of connectedness needs. Tendring has the lowest density of sports and leisure assets out of all Greater Essex districts and the greatest need for improving digital connectivity.

## Inequalities

65,393 (11.6%) of North Essex live in areas of high deprivation, defined as any area with deprivation levels in the top 20% of deprivation nationally. The level of deprivation in an area is a good proxy for need – areas with higher levels of deprivation typically have higher proportions of residents living in poor health and financial difficulty.

The map below shows deprivation within North Essex. The left chart shows national deprivation quintiles, areas which are in quintile 1 (Q1) are in the 20% most deprived areas nationally. The right chart splits the area into local quintiles, which shows the most & least deprived areas *within* the area:

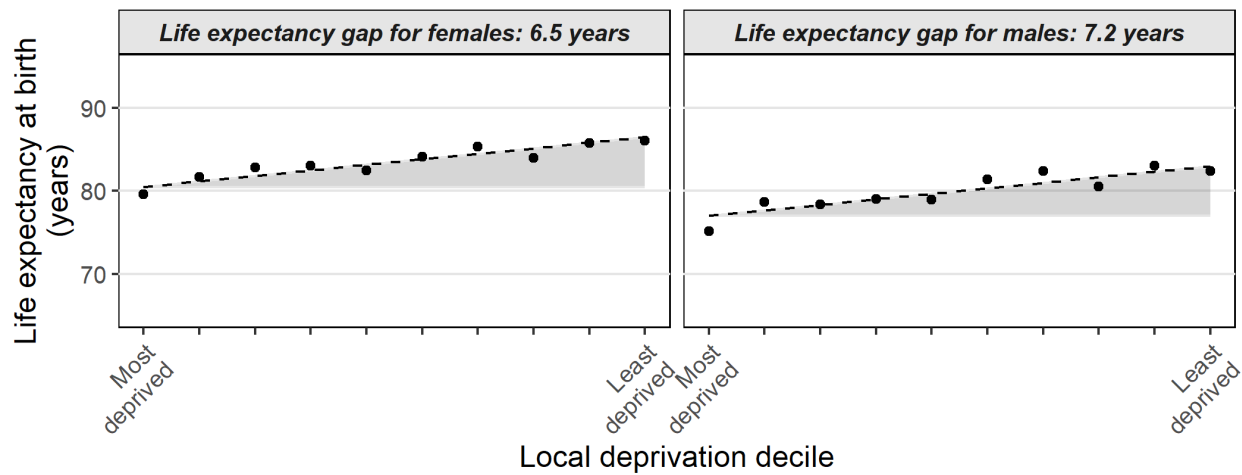
Fig. K16: Deprivation in North Essex, Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019



The chart below shows inequality in life expectancy within the area. North Essex is split into 10 local deprivation deciles and the average life expectancy is calculated for each decile. If there is

no inequality in life expectancy, the dotted line in the chart will be flat. Life expectancy is higher in the least deprived areas:

Fig. K17: Inequality in life expectancy in North Essex, ECC analysis



There are pockets of high deprivation in central Colchester and coastal Clacton. Parts of Clacton Central, Clacton Rush Green, an Jaywick & St Osyth have very high levels of community need and very high levels of deprivation.

## Single page summary: North Essex

The charts in the table below are spine charts. They show how North Essex compares against England and all other districts in England for each indicator. The light grey area shows the range of values across all LTLAs, and 50% of all local authorities fall inside the dark grey area. Greater Essex and England values are shown with the white diamond and triangle respectively.

Fig. K18: Spine Chart for North Essex

	North Essex	Greater Essex	England	Spine chart
Residents aged 0 – 15	18.1%	19.1%	18.5%	
Residents aged 16 – 64	59.8%	60.9%	62.9%	
Residents aged 65+	22.1%	20.0%	18.7%	
Residents living with a disability	18.2%	16.6%	17.3%	
Residents identify as ethnic minority	12.3%	17.0%	26.5%	
GVA per productive job	£64,125	£68,806	£66,288	
No qualifications	18.7%	19.2%	18.1%	
Level 4 qualifications	28.0%	27.6%	33.9%	
Unemployment claimant rate	3.1%	3.4%	4.1%	
Median income	£39,570	£40,548	£37,617	
Average houses built per year compared to housing target	81.3%	53.0%	62.1%	
Average attainment 8 score (higher is better)	45.0	45.9	46.2	
Life expectancy – female	83.4	83.5	83.1	
Life expectancy – male	80.0	79.9	79.1	
Premature mortality rate - all causes	147.6	149.3	163.7	
Infant mortality rate	3.4	3.0	4.1	
Smoking prevalence	11.6%	12.5%	13.6%	
Childhood obesity prevalence	19.2%	20.0%	22.1%	
Children living in (absolute) poverty	14.5%	14.8%	22.7%	
Residents living in areas of high deprivation	11.6%	10.2%	20.0%	

## Sources

Childhood obesity – [Fingertips](#)

Life expectancy – [Fingertips](#)

Inequality in life expectancy – Calculated by ECC, using [MSOA level data from fingertips](#)

Preventable mortality – [Fingertips](#)

Deprivation – [IMD 2019](#)

Businesses – [ONS business demography](#)

Census demographics – [Census 2021](#)

Population figures – [NOMIS](#)

Claimant count – [NOMIS](#)

Income – [NOMIS](#)

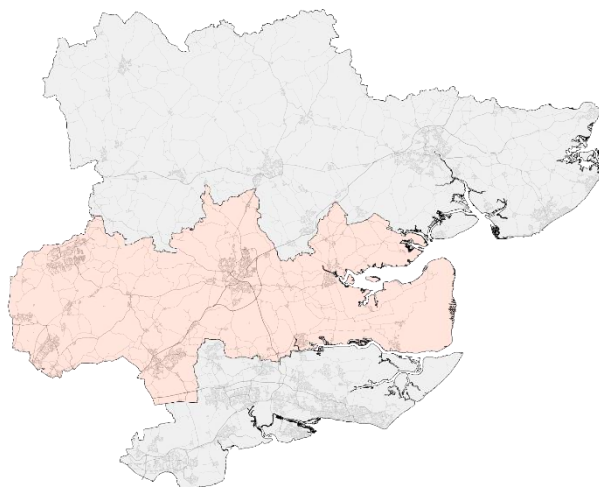
GVA estimates – [NOMIS](#)

Productive jobs – [ONS](#)

Housing need – [MCHLG](#)

## Mid Essex Unitary Area Profile

This profile gives a picture of the social, demographic, and economic characteristics of a new Mid Essex Unitary Authority (UA), made up of the current Harlow, Epping Forest, Brentwood, Chelmsford, and Maldon districts. It is the second largest of the new Authorities, covering 33% of Greater Essex by area. The profile is designed to help local government and wider public service partners to develop an understanding of their community's needs, so that they can work together to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities.



### Demographic characteristics

Mid Essex UA area is home to c.563k residents (c.30% of the Greater Essex population). The population is projected to grow by 4% in the years to 2040, with the fastest growth being seen amongst the 65+ age group. The area is less ethnically diverse than England as a whole and a lower proportion of residents have a disability compared with England.

### Economic performance

The gross value added (GVA) of the Mid Essex UA area is £17.6bn per year. Unemployment is low, and levels of productivity are similar to the England average. Each productive job generates c.£73.4k of output per annum compared to £66.3k across England as a whole. This is reflected in local incomes that are higher than the England median.

An additional c.67k homes are needed by 2040. Current housing delivery rates will need to increase by 95% if these targets are to be achieved.

2,820 km of local authority maintained highways are in Mid Essex, 31.7% of the Greater Essex total.

### The health of the population

Life expectancy in Mid Essex UA is 84 years for females and 80.4 years for males, slightly higher than figures for England. Rates of preventable mortality and infant mortality are lower than England.

### Inequalities

There are large inequalities within the area. Women born in the most deprived parts of Mid Essex die 3.2 years earlier than in the least deprived areas. For men the gap is 4.7 years. Levels of deprivation are low in Mid Essex, with only c1% of the population living in the most deprived areas nationally. Within Mid Essex the areas with the highest levels of deprivation are located in Harlow, Epping Forest, and Central Chelmsford.

Preventable mortality rates are notably higher in Harlow compared to other parts of Mid Essex.

## Demographic characteristics

Mid Essex has a population of 563,772 according to the latest 2023 ONS population estimates. This is 29.7% of the Greater Essex population. The population is projected to be 561,172 and 585,408 in 2028 and 2040:

Fig. K19: Current and Future Population Structure, ONS population projections

Black line shows population structure across England

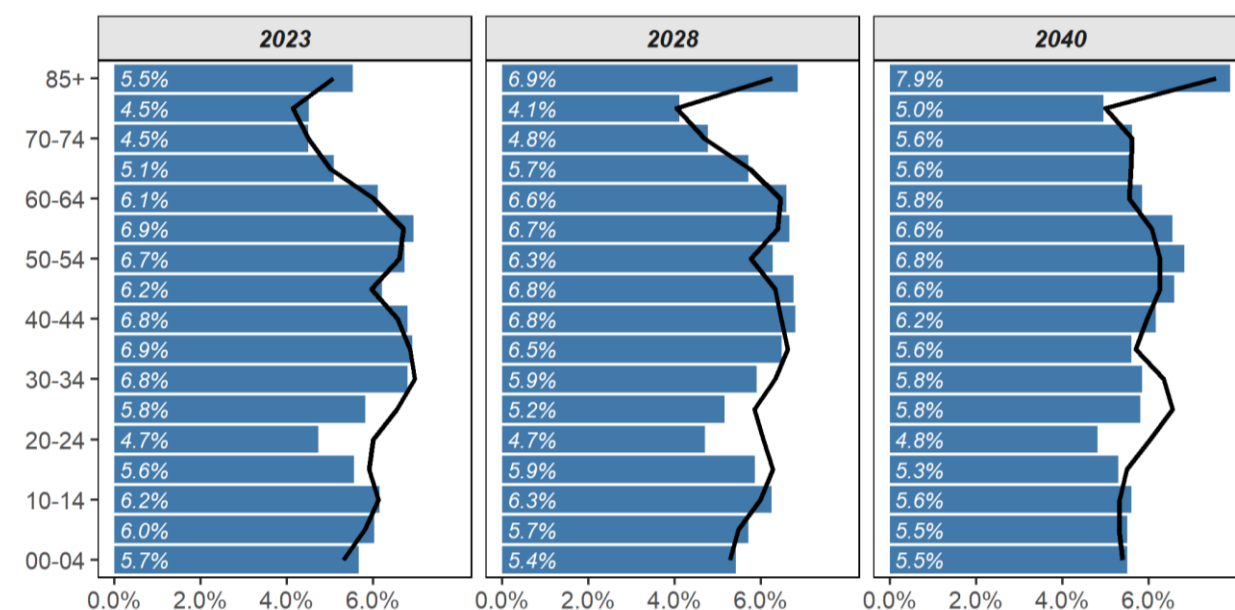


Fig. K20: Current and Future Population by Broad Age Group, ONS population projections

	2023		2028		2040	
	Mid Essex	England %	Mid Essex	England %	Mid Essex	England %
<b>0 - 15</b>	107,557 (19.1%)	18.5%	104,775 (18.7%)	18.0%	103,832 (17.7%)	17.1%
<b>16 - 64</b>	345,700 (61.3%)	62.9%	336,005 (59.9%)	61.3%	340,667 (58.2%)	59.1%
<b>65+</b>	110,515 (19.6%)	18.7%	120,392 (21.5%)	20.7%	140,909 (24.1%)	23.8%

The age structure of Mid Essex is broadly similar to England. Mid Essex has a lower proportion of the population aged between 15-34. This continues to be the case in 2040. By 2040 there will also be a slight excess of people aged 45-64 compared to England, primarily due to the population ageing and people moving into the area.

According to the 2021 census, Mid Essex has lower levels of disability and people living in poor health compared to England. There is also a smaller proportion of the population who identify as an ethnic minority (any minority other than white British):

Fig. K21: Number and percentage of the population who are disabled, members of ethnic minority groups, Census 2021

	Mid Essex	England %
<b>Disabled</b>	82,758 (15.0%)	17.3%
<b>Ethnic minority groups</b>	106,383 (19.2%)	26.5%

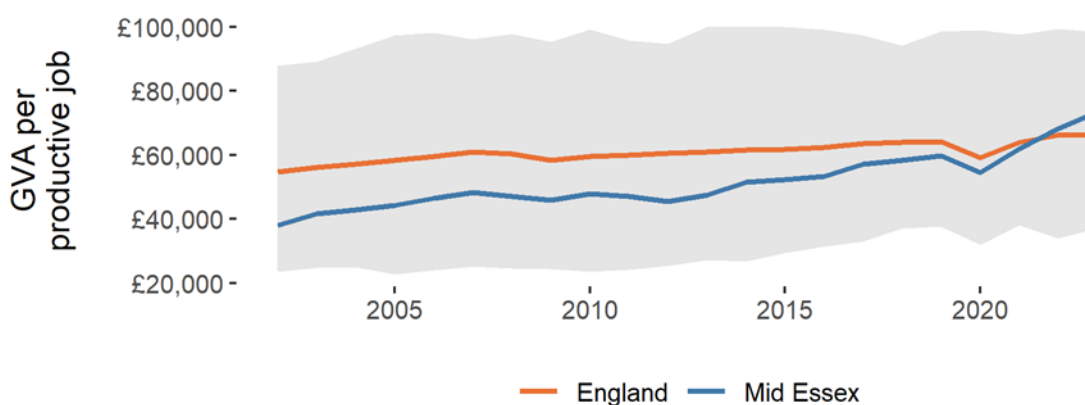
## Economic performance

Mid Essex is home to 27,880 active businesses, including 100 (0.4%) high growth businesses (with more than 20% average annual growth over the last three years).

The chart below shows GVA (balanced) per productive job over time:

Fig. K22: Productivity over time, ONS

England & Mid Essex highlighted. Grey region shows productivity per job for all LTLAs in England



Mid Essex has a slightly higher proportion of residents working in managerial jobs, and lower proportions of residents with level 4 qualifications (such as university degrees) and with no qualifications.



Fig. K23: Occupations of residents in Mid Essex and England, Census 2021

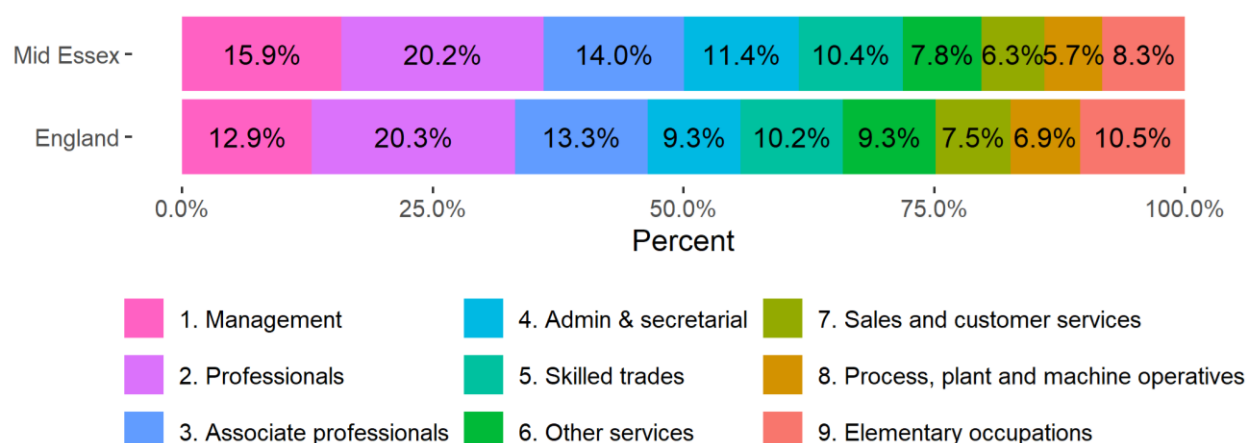


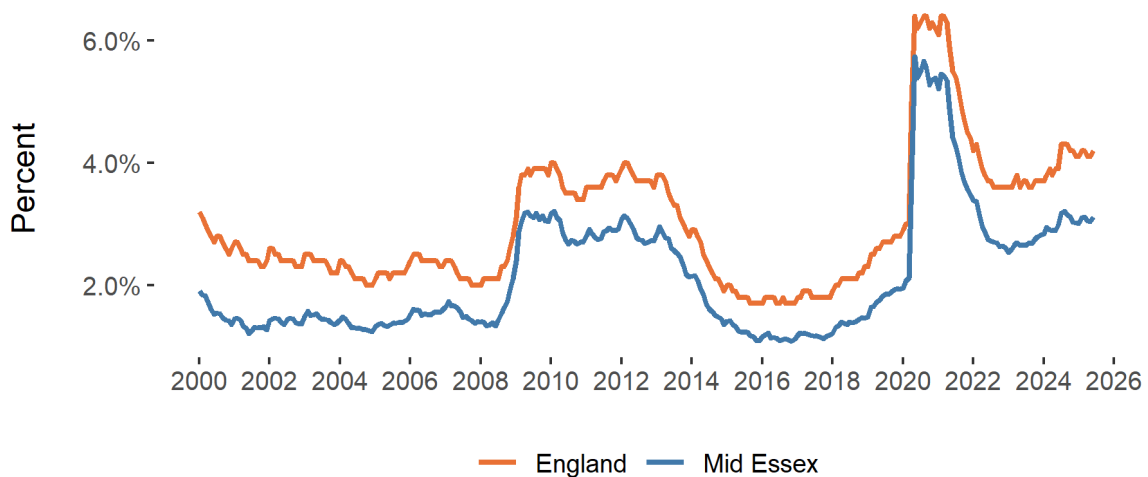
Fig. K24: Highest Level of Qualification, Census 2021

Highest level of qualification	Mid Essex	England %
<b>Level 1 and entry level</b>	49,323 (11.0%)	9.7%
<b>Level 2</b>	68,834 (15.3%)	13.3%
<b>Level 3</b>	76,212 (17.0%)	16.9%
<b>Level 4</b>	139,910 (31.2%)	33.9%
<b>No qualifications</b>	78,655 (17.5%)	18.1%
<b>Other (e.g. apprentices)</b>	36,130 (8.0%)	8.1%

Residents in Mid Essex have an average median income of £39,708, slightly higher than the England median of £37,617.

Unemployment in Mid Essex, as measured by the proportion of residents aged 16-64 claiming unemployment, has consistently been lower than England.

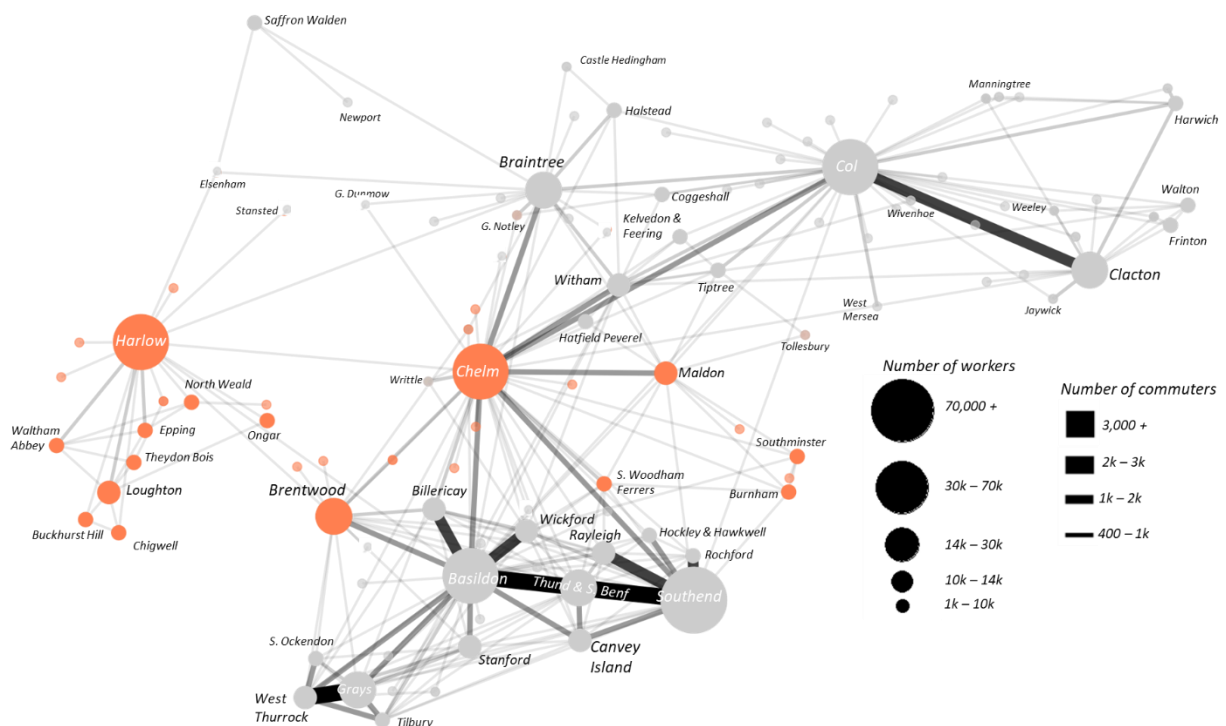
Fig. K25: Claimant rates of residents aged 16-64 in Mid Essex and England, Nomis



Travel to work patterns show clusters of worker flows between built up areas in Epping & Harlow. There is also a large flow of workers between Maldon and Chelmsford, and a smaller flow of workers between Chelmsford and Harlow. A significant proportion of workers commute to areas outside of Mid Essex – most notably between Chelmsford and Basildon, Southend, Braintree, and Colchester.

Fig. K26: Commuter patterns within Greater Essex (Mid Essex areas highlighted), Census 2021

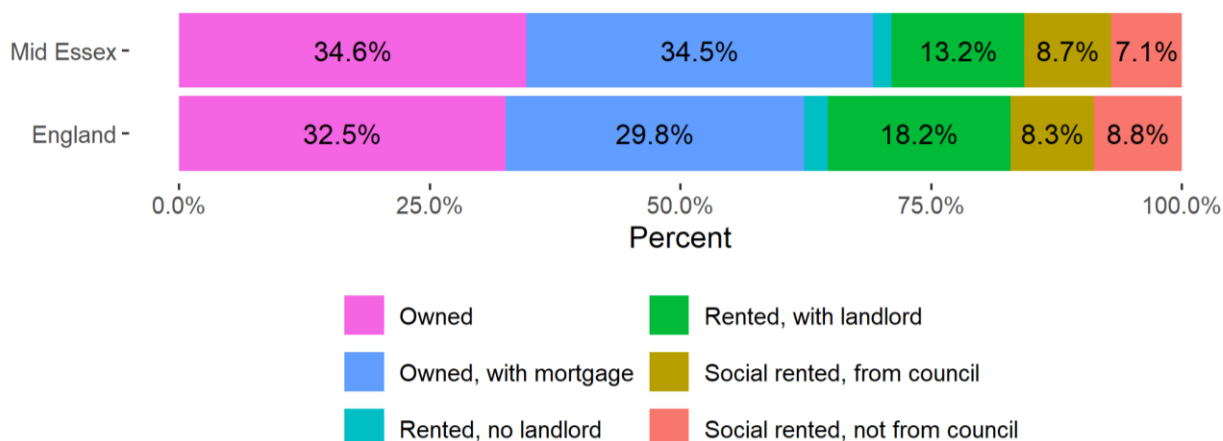
Each dot is a built-up area. The size of the dot & thickness of the lines are based on the number of workers working in the area or travelling between the areas



## Housing

There is a higher proportion of home ownership in Mid Essex compared to England.

Fig. K27: Tenure of households in Mid Essex and England, Census 2021

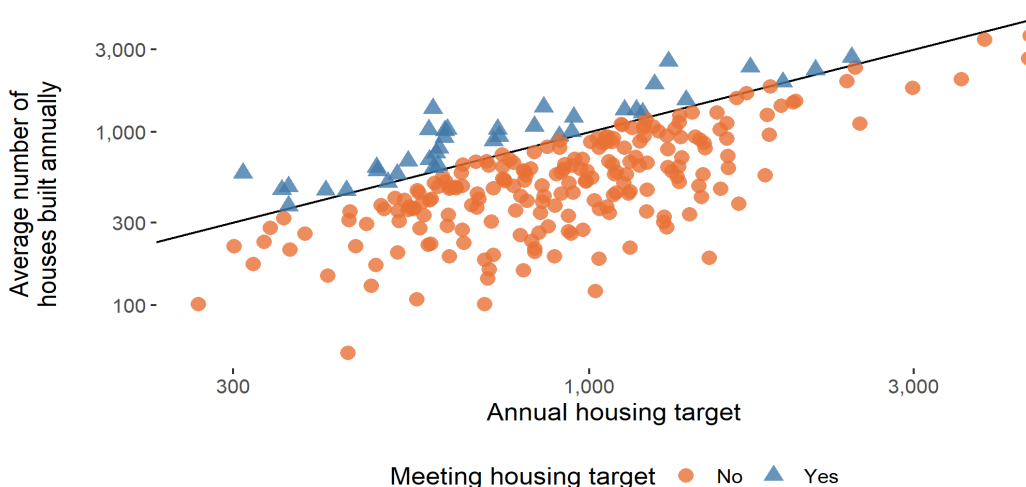


A key priority for this government is housing. All areas have new housing targets based on a standard methodology accounting for current need (calculated using a range of data, including housing affordability ratios and current dwelling stock). The new housing target for Mid Essex is to build at least 4,439 new homes on average per year for the next 15 years (33% of the Greater Essex total). Over the past three years, Mid Essex has exceeded *existing* housing delivery targets, delivering 120% of new homes, but accelerated development will be required to meet higher targets.

The vast majority of areas across England are not currently meeting their current housing targets.

Fig. K28: Housing targets across England, MCHLG

Areas above the line are building enough new homes, areas below are not



Government Housing Delivery Test: 2023 measurement

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-delivery-test-2023-measurement>

The table below shows the new housing targets for Mid Essex. All areas are delivering new homes at rates that fall below new housing targets.

Fig. K29: Housing Targets and Annual Number of New Homes Built, MCHLG

Area	Target	Avg. new homes built annually (2020-23)	Uplift required to meet target
Mid Essex	4,439	2,279	95%
Harlow	637	501	27%
Brentwood	724	345	110%
Epping Forest	1299	212	513%
Chelmsford	1210	834	45%
Maldon	569	387	47%

Government Housing Delivery Test: 2023 measurement

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-delivery-test-2023-measurement>

Projecting these figures forward to 2040, Mid Essex requires 66,585 new homes.

Mid Essex covers 122,260 hectares of land, 33% of Greater Essex. 47% is classed as green belt:

Fig. K30: Land Area and Green Belt Statistics, MCHLG

Area	Area (hectares)	Green Belt (hectares)	New homes per hectare by 2040
Mid Essex	122,260	57,410 (47%)	0.6
Brentwood	15,310	13,290 (87%)	0.7
Chelmsford	34,220	12,830 (38%)	0.6
Epping Forest	33,900	30,830 (91%)	0.6
Harlow	3,050	460 (15%)	3.1
Maldon	35,780	0 (0%)	0.2

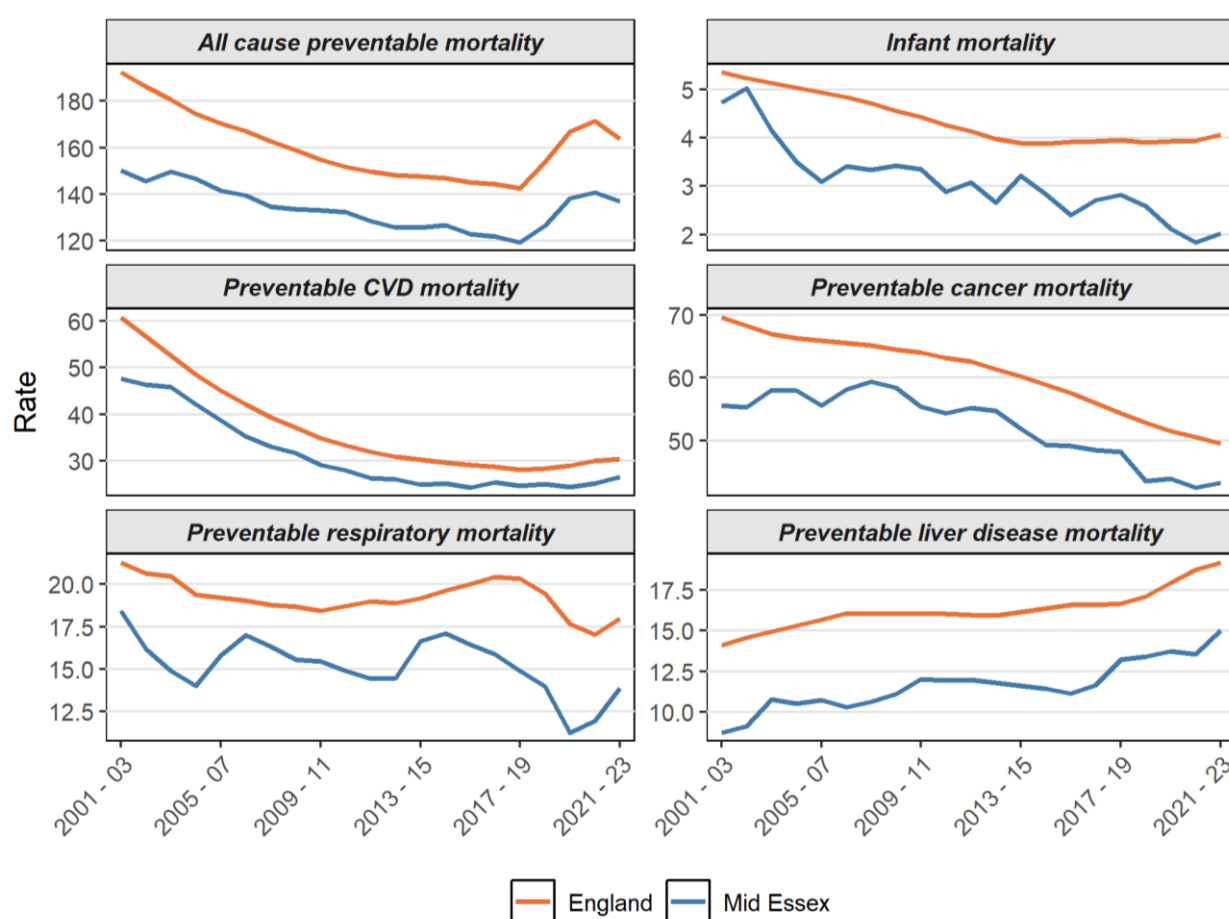
## Health of the population

Life expectancy in Mid Essex is 84 years for females and 80.4 years for males, slightly higher than England average life expectancy (83 years for females, 79.1 years for males).

Along with life expectancy, mortality is another key public health measure. Two of the most informative mortality metrics are infant mortality and preventable mortality. Both of these are strongly influenced by public health. These are both shown in the chart:

Fig. K31: Mortality rates, OHID

Note: each chart has a different y-axis scale. Preventable mortality rates are age-standardised rates for residents aged under 70, infant mortality rate is the proportion of live births which die before their first birthday



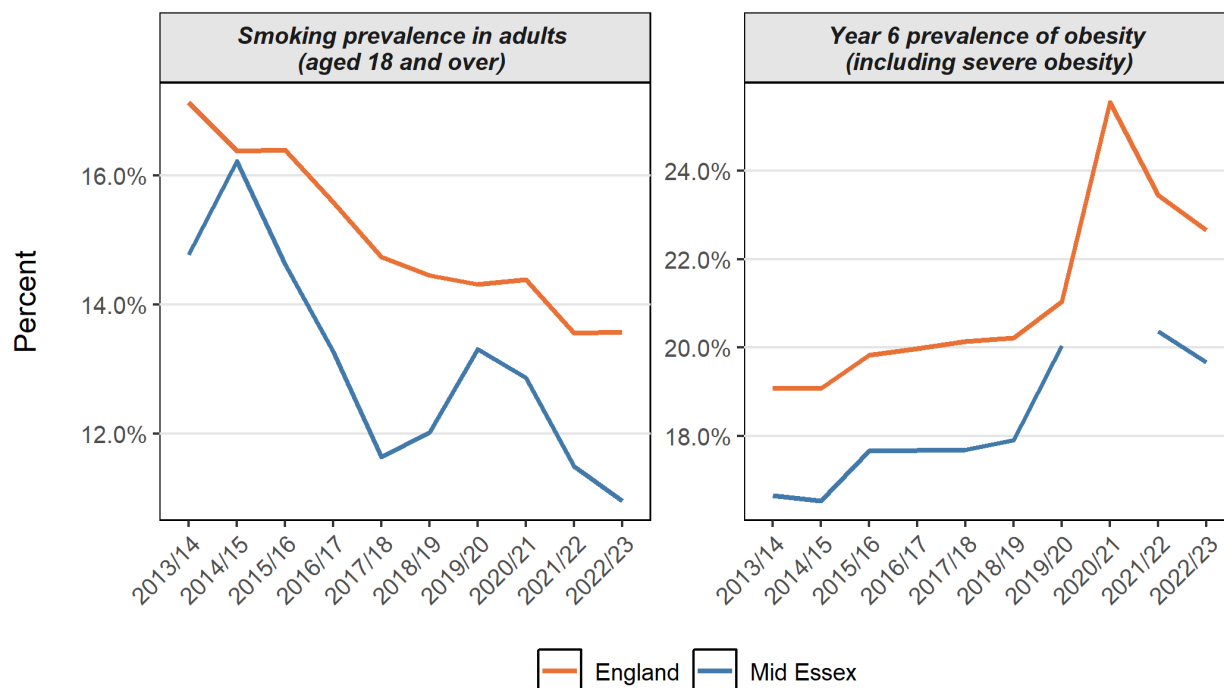
Values for Mid Essex are the average value of the districts within the new unitary authority

Preventable mortality and infant mortality rates are lower than England.

Smoking and obesity are two modifiable risk factors which have an impact on a range of health outcomes. Both smoking and childhood obesity prevalence is lower in Mid Essex compared to England.

Fig. K32: Smoking and childhood obesity prevalence, OHID

Note: each chart has a different y-axis scale



Note: Parts of the child measurement program were paused over covid

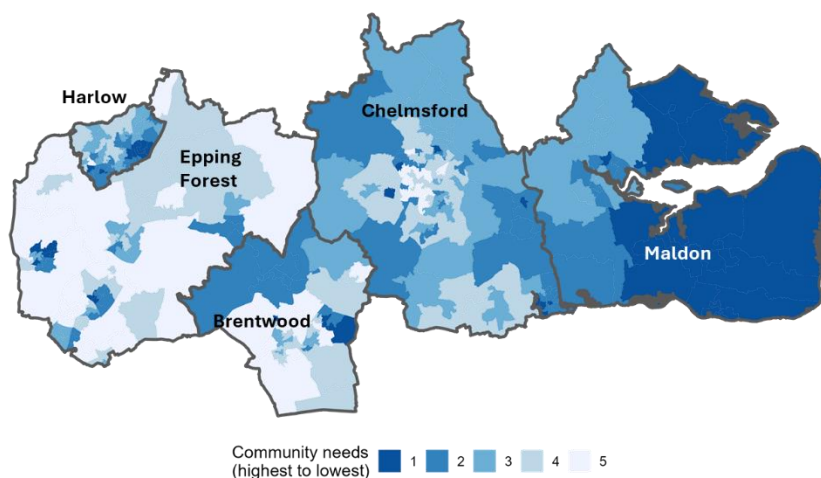
The early years of life can have a large impact on a persons future. More than 90% of schools in Mid Essex are rated as Good or Outstanding, and the levels of child poverty are lower compared to England. 12.9% of Mid Essex children are living in (absolute) child poverty, compared to 22.7% of children in England.

## Communities

For a more detailed look at community needs across Greater Essex, please see the recent [Greater Essex Community Needs Index report](#).

The maps below show the community needs index in Mid Essex. This index ranks areas based on the level of civic assets (universities, green spaces, libraries etc), how connected people feel to their neighbours and community, and how engaged people are with their local community.

Fig. K33: Community Needs Index (darker colours indicate higher need), OCSI

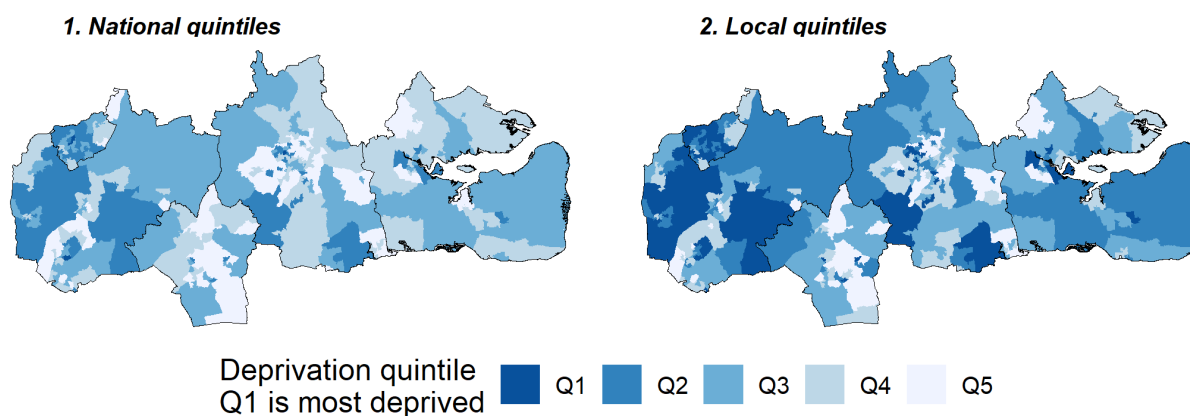


There are high levels of community need in Maldon, along with pockets in Harlow. Maldon has lower levels of community assets compared to other areas, particularly in the Burnham-on-Crouch and Southminster areas. Harlow residents reported the lowest ‘sense of belonging’ score across Greater Essex and are less likely to chat with neighbours compared to other areas.

## Inequalities

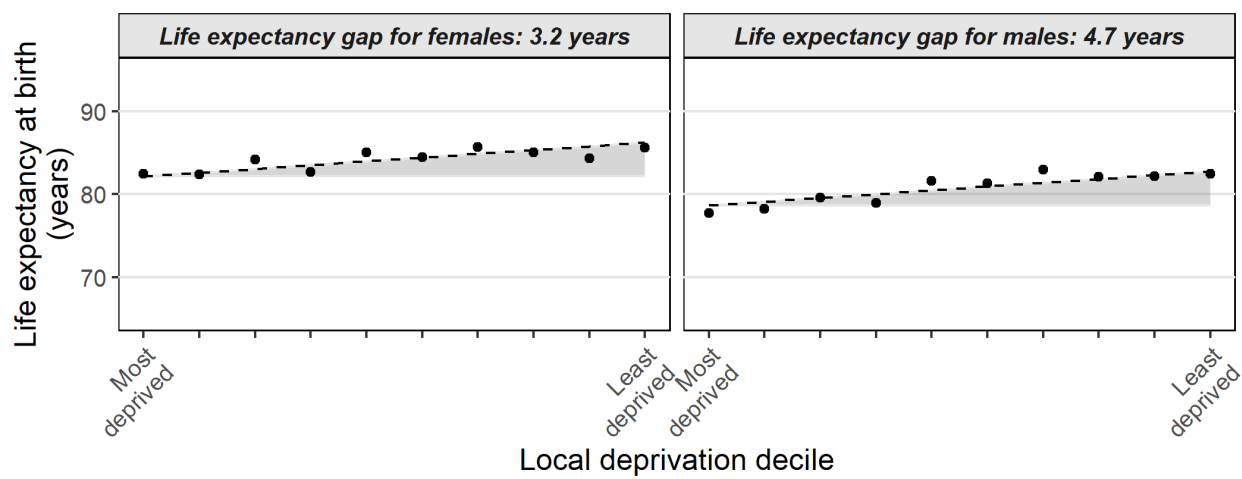
5,544 (1.1%) of Mid Essex live in areas of high deprivation, defined as any area with deprivation levels in the top 20% of deprivation nationally. The level of deprivation in an area is a good proxy for need – areas with higher levels of deprivation typically have higher proportions of residents living in poor health and financial difficulty. The map below shows deprivation within Mid Essex. The left chart shows national deprivation quintiles, areas which are in quintile 1 (Q1) are in the 20% most deprived areas nationally. The right chart splits the area into local quintiles, which shows the most & least deprived areas *within* the area:

Fig. K34: Deprivation in Mid Essex, Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019



The chart below shows inequality in life expectancy within the area. Mid Essex is split into 10 local deprivation deciles and the average life expectancy is calculated for each decile. If there is no inequality in life expectancy, the dotted line in the chart will be flat. Life expectancy is higher in the least deprived areas:

Fig. K35: Inequality in life expectancy in Mid Essex, ECC analysis





## Single page summary: Mid Essex

The charts in the table below are *spine charts*. They show how Mid Essex compares against England and all other districts in England for each indicator. The light grey area shows the range of values across all LTLAs, and 50% of all local authorities fall inside the dark grey area. Greater Essex and England values are shown with the white diamond and triangle respectively.

Fig. K36: Spine Chart for Mid Essex

	Mid Essex	Greater Essex	England	Spine chart
Residents aged 0 - 15	19.1%	19.1%	18.5%	
Residents aged 16 - 64	61.3%	60.9%	62.9%	
Residents aged 65+	19.6%	20.0%	18.7%	
Residents living with a disability	15.0%	16.6%	17.3%	
Residents identify as ethnic minority	19.2%	17.0%	26.5%	
GVA per productive job	£73,436	£68,806	£66,288	
No qualifications	17.5%	19.2%	18.1%	
Level 4 qualifications	31.2%	27.6%	33.9%	
Unemployment claimant rate	3.1%	3.4%	4.1%	
Median income	£39,708	£40,548	£37,617	
Average attainment 8 score (higher is better)	46.8	45.9	46.2	
Life expectancy - female	84.0	83.5	83.1	
Life expectancy - male	80.4	79.9	79.1	
Premature mortality rate - all causes	136.9	149.3	163.7	
Infant mortality rate	2.0	3.0	4.1	
Smoking prevalence	11.0%	12.5%	13.6%	
Childhood obesity prevalence	18.7%	20.0%	22.1%	
Children living in (absolute) poverty	12.9%	14.8%	22.7%	
Residents living in areas of high deprivation	1.1%	10.2%	20.0%	

## Sources

Childhood obesity – [Fingertips](#)

Life expectancy – [Fingertips](#)

Inequality in life expectancy – Calculated by ECC, using [MSOA level data from fingertips](#)

Preventable mortality – [Fingertips](#)

Deprivation – [IMD 2019](#)

Businesses – [ONS business demography](#)

Census demographics – [Census 2021](#)

Population figures – [NOMIS](#)

Claimant count – [NOMIS](#)

Income – [NOMIS](#)

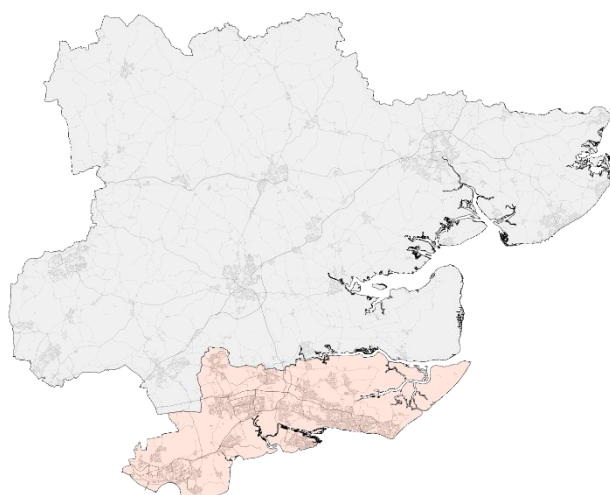
GVA estimates – [NOMIS](#)

Productive jobs – [ONS](#)

Housing need – [MCHLG](#)

## South Essex Unitary Area Profile

This profile gives a picture of the social, demographic, and economic characteristics of a new South Essex Unitary Authority, made up of the current Basildon, Thurrock, Castle Point, Rochford, and Southend districts. It is the smallest of the new Authorities, covering 14% of Greater Essex by area. The profile is designed to help local government and wider public service partners to develop an understanding of their community's needs, so that they can work together to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities.



### Demographic characteristics

South Essex UA area is home to c.730k residents (c.38% of the Greater Essex population). The population is projected to grow by 5% in the years to 2040, with the fastest growth being seen amongst the 65+ age group. The area is less ethnically diverse than England as a whole and a lower proportion of residents have a disability.

### Economic performance

The gross value added (GVA) of the South Essex UA area is £19.1bn per year. Unemployment is generally low, and levels of productivity are similar to the England average. Each productive job generates c.£68.7k of output per annum compared to £66.3k across England as a whole. The average income is lower than the Greater Essex median and there are lower skills levels in the local workforce (20.9% have no qualifications compared to 18% nationally).

Like most parts of the country, not enough houses are being built to meet projected future need. c77k new homes are needed by 2040. If housing development continues at the current pace, by 2040 there will be c22k new homes, an uplift of 246% is required to meet the housing target.

2,282km of local authority maintained highways are in South Essex, 25.7% of the Greater Essex total.

### The health of the population

Life expectancy in South Essex UA is 83 years for females and 79.3 years for males, broadly similar to figures for England as a whole. Rates of preventable mortality and infant mortality are broadly similar to England.

### Inequalities

There are large inequalities within the area. Women born in the most deprived parts of South Essex die 6.5 years earlier than in the least deprived areas. For men the gap is 7.2 years. There are pockets of high deprivation – particularly in Basildon, Thurrock, and Southend. These areas have some of the highest levels of deprivation in the country and may have higher service demand compared to other areas.

## Demographic characteristics

South Essex has a population of 729,062 according to the latest 2023 ONS population estimates. This is 38.4% of the Greater Essex population. The population is set to increase to 762,208 and 802,933 in 2028 and 2040.

Fig. K37: Current and Future Population Structure, ONS population projections

Black line shows population structure across England

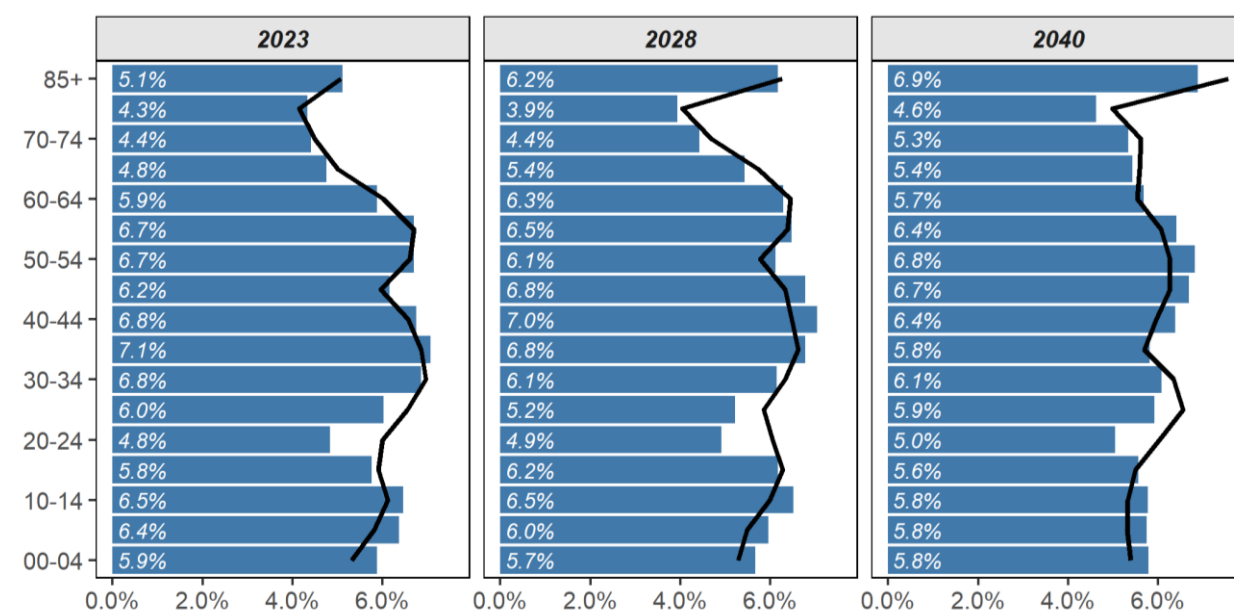


Fig. K38: Current and Future Population by Broad Age Group, ONS population projections

	2023		2028		2040	
	South Essex	England %	South Essex	England %	South Essex	England %
<b>0 – 15</b>	145,739 (20.0%)	18.5%	148,326 (19.5%)	18.0%	148,467 (18.5%)	17.1%
<b>16 – 64</b>	447,667 (61.4%)	62.9%	461,738 (60.6%)	61.3%	475,528 (59.2%)	59.1%
<b>65+</b>	135,656 (18.6%)	18.7%	152,144 (20.0%)	20.7%	178,938 (22.3%)	23.8%

The age structure of South Essex is broadly similar to England. South Essex has a lower proportion of the population aged between 10-29 and a slightly higher proportion of people aged 30-44. By 2040 this translates into a slightly larger proportion of people aged 44-59, due to ageing and people migrating into the area.

According to the 2021 census, South Essex has lower levels of disability and people living in poor health compared to England. There is also a smaller proportion of the population who identify as an ethnic minority (any minority other than white British):

**Fig. K39: Number and percentage of the population who are disabled, members of ethnic minority groups, Census 2021**

	South Essex	England %
<b>Disabled</b>	119,507 (16.6%)	17.3%
<b>Ethnic minority</b>	138,236 (19.2%)	26.5%

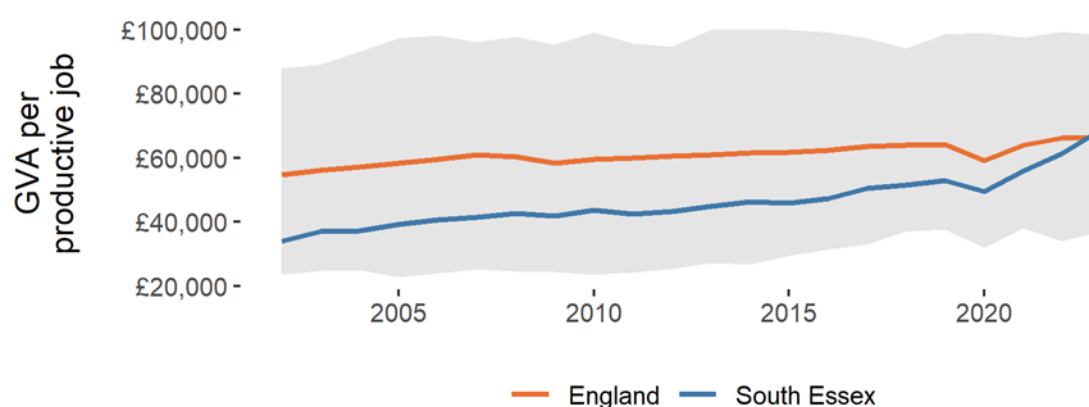
performance

South Essex is home to 29,800 active businesses, including 115 (0.4%) high growth businesses (with more than 20% average annual growth over the last three years).

The chart below shows GVA (balanced) per productive job over time:

**Fig. K40: Productivity over time, ONS**

England & South Essex highlighted. Grey region shows productivity per job for all LTLAs in England



South Essex has a slightly lower proportion of residents working in managerial or professional roles, a higher proportion of residents with no qualifications, and a lower proportion of residents with level 4 qualifications (such as university degrees) compared to England.

Fig. K41: Occupations of residents in South Essex and England, Census 2021

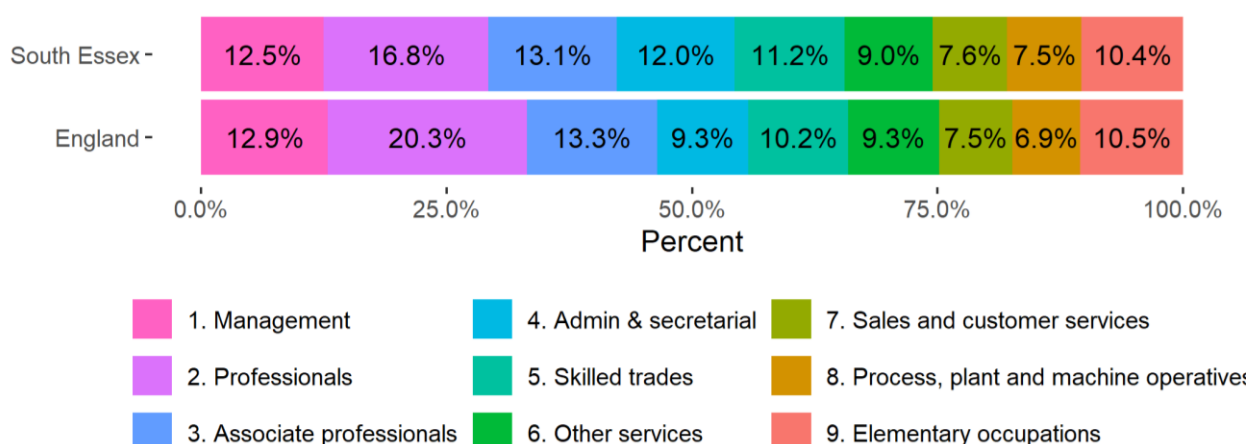


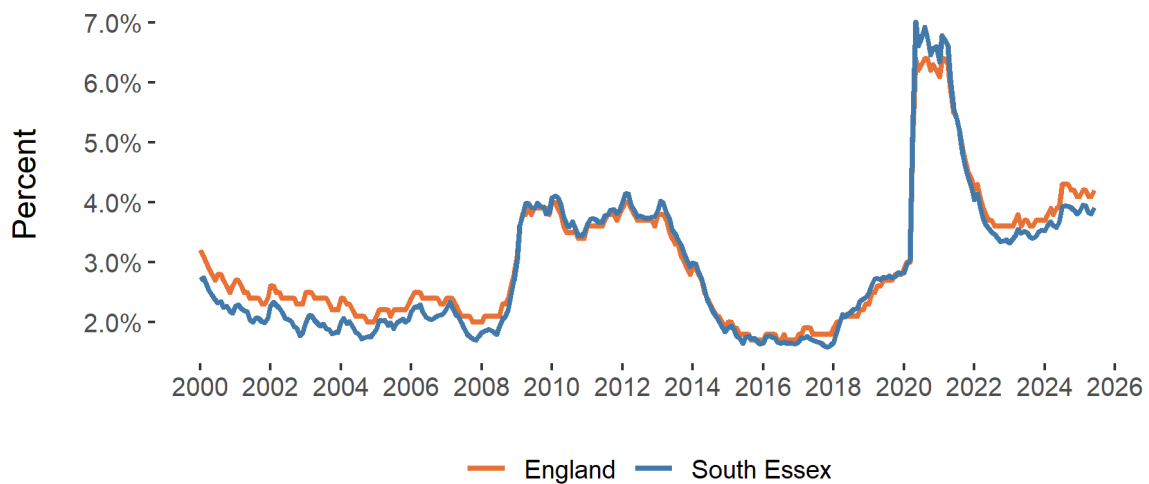
Fig. K42: Highest Level of Qualification, Census 2021

Highest level of qualification	South Essex	England %
<b>Level 1 and entry level</b>	72,910 (12.6%)	9.7%
<b>Level 2</b>	93,881 (16.3%)	13.3%
<b>Level 3</b>	98,514 (17.1%)	16.9%
<b>Level 4</b>	141,938 (24.6%)	33.9%
<b>No qualifications</b>	120,402 (20.9%)	18.1%
<b>Other (e.g. apprentices)</b>	48,913 (8.5%)	8.1%

Residents in South Essex have an average median income of £40,747, higher than the England median of £37,617.

Unemployment in South Essex, as measured by the proportion of residents aged 16-64 claiming unemployment, is slightly lower than England.

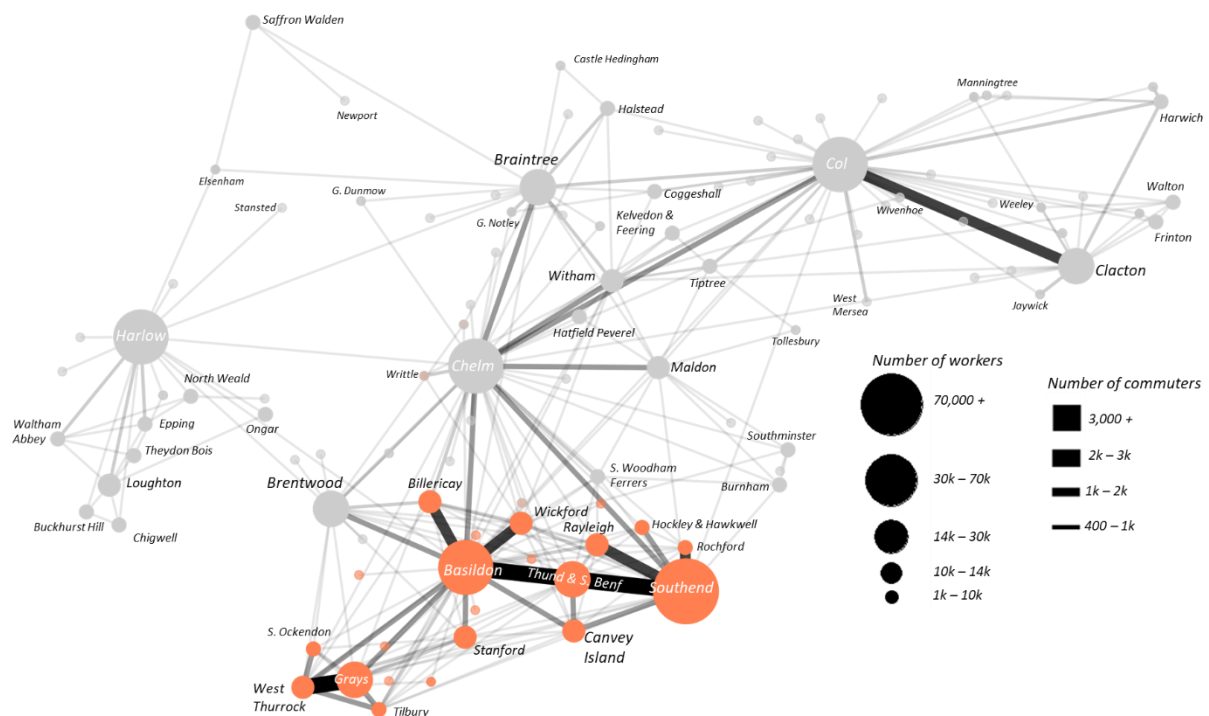
Fig. K43: Claimant rates of residents aged 16-64 in South Essex and England, Nomis



Travel to work patterns that the majority of commuter flows in South Essex are between Southend and Basildon. There is also a smaller cluster of built-up areas in Thurrock which residents work in. The majority of South Essex work commutes are to areas within South Essex, though there are also relatively large levels of commuting between South Essex and Brentwood and Chelmsford. Relatively few people commute between South Essex and Colchester.

Fig. K44: Commuter patterns within Greater Essex (South Essex areas highlighted), Census 2021

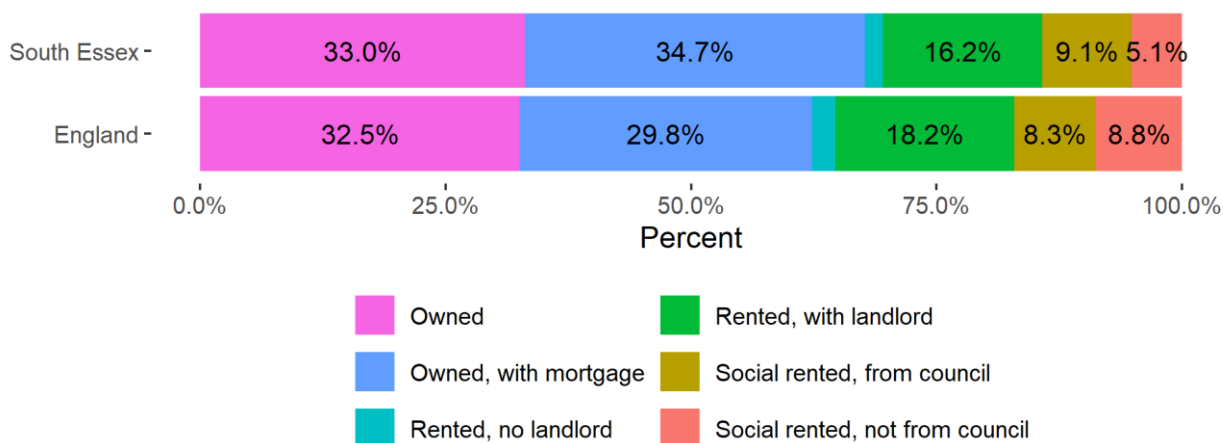
Each dot is a built-up area. The size of the dot & thickness of the lines are based on the number of workers working in the area or travelling between the areas



## Housing

There is a higher level of home ownership in South Essex compared to England.

Fig. K45: Tenure of households in South Essex and England, Census 2021



A key priority for this government is housing. All areas have new housing targets based on a standard methodology accounting for current need (calculated using a range of data, including housing affordability ratios and current dwelling stock). The new housing target for South Essex is to build at least 5,153 new homes on average per year. Between 2020 and 2023 there was an average of 1,659 new homes built per year, just 29% of the annual rate required by this new target.

This shortfall isn't unique to South Essex. The vast majority of areas are not currently meeting their housing targets.

Fig. K46: Housing targets across England

Areas above the line are building enough new homes, areas below are not



Government Housing Delivery Test: 2023 measurement

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-delivery-test-2023-measurement>



The table below shows the new housing targets for South Essex. All areas in South Essex are delivering new homes at a rate below the new target.

Fig. K47: Housing Targets and Annual Number of New Homes Built, MCHLG

Area	Target	Avg. new homes built annually (2020-23)	Uplift required to meet target
<b>South Essex</b>	5,153	1,659	211%
<b>Basildon</b>	1,287	317	306%
<b>Castle Point</b>	701	168	317%
<b>Rochford</b>	689	433	59%
<b>Southend-on-Sea</b>	1,405	386	264%
<b>Thurrock</b>	1,071	355	202%

Government Housing Delivery Test: 2023 measurement

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-delivery-test-2023-measurement>

Projecting these figures forward to 2040, South Essex requires 77,295 new homes and – if housing development continues at the current pace – there will be only 24,885 new homes by 2040. A shortfall of 68%.

South Essex covers 52,730 hectares of land, 14% of Greater Essex. 63% of South Essex is classed as green belt:

Fig. K48: Land Area and Green Belt Statistics, MCHLG

Area	Area (hectares)	Green Belt (hectares)	New homes per hectare by 2040
<b>South Essex</b>	52,730	57,410 (47%)	1.5
<b>Basildon</b>	11,000	6,900 (63%)	1.8
<b>Castle Point</b>	4,470	2,500 (56%)	2.4
<b>Rochford</b>	16,710	11,820 (71%)	0.6
<b>Southend-on-Sea</b>	4,170	580 (14%)	5.1
<b>Thurrock</b>	16,380	11,670 (71%)	1

Local authority green belt statistics for England: 2023 to 2024 [Local authority green belt statistics for England: 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

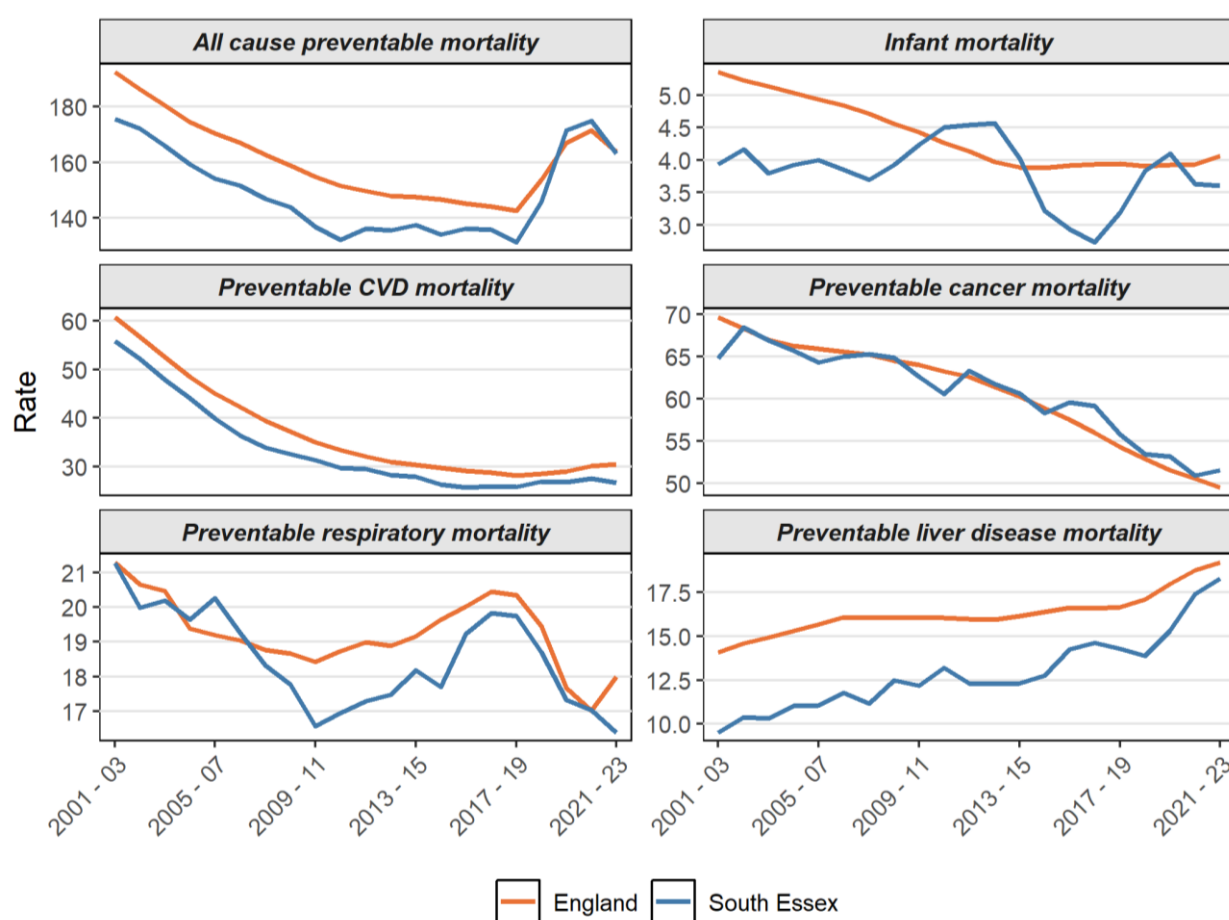
## Health of the population

Life expectancy in South Essex is 83 years for females and 79.3 years for males, broadly similar England life expectancy (83 years for females, 79.1 years for males).

Along with life expectancy, mortality is another key public health measure. Two of the most informative mortality metrics are infant mortality and preventable mortality. Both of these are strongly influenced by public health. These are both shown in the chart:

Fig. K49: Mortality rates, OHID

Note: each chart has a different y-axis scale. Preventable mortality rates are age-standardised rates for residents aged under 70, infant mortality rate is the proportion of live births which die before their first birthday



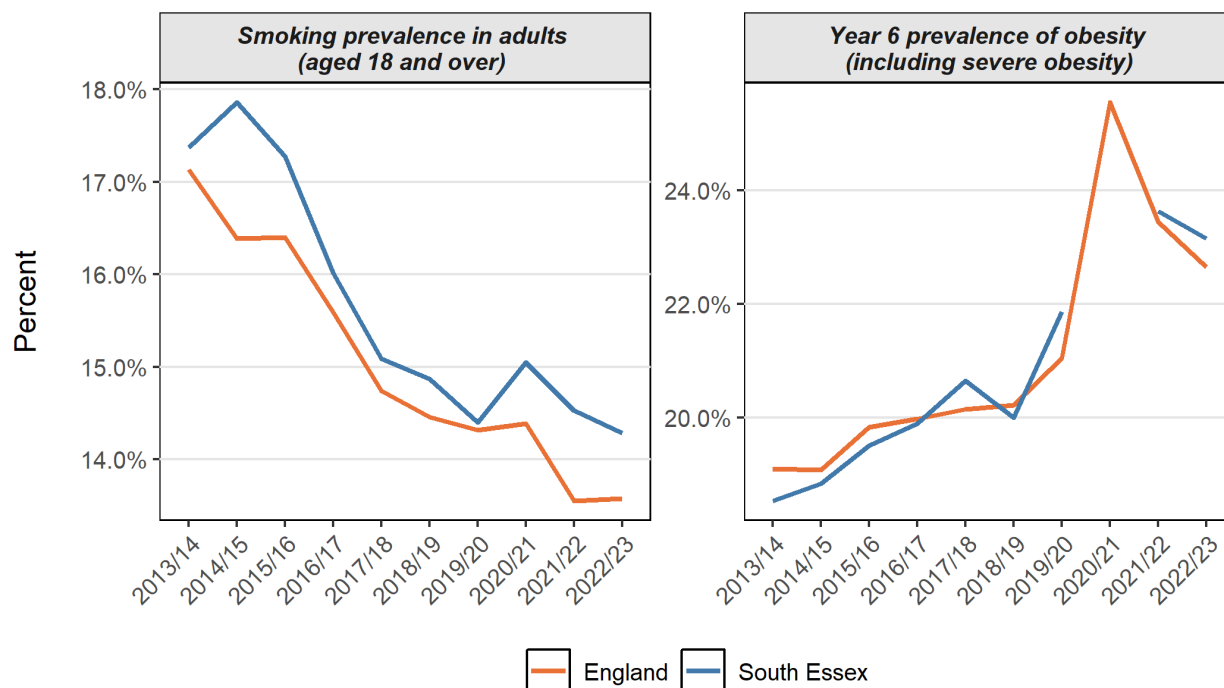
Values for South Essex are the average value of the districts within the new unitary authority

Preventable mortality and infant mortality rates are broadly similar to those seen across England. South Essex has a slightly lower level of preventable deaths due to cardiovascular disease and liver disease.

Smoking and obesity are two modifiable risk factors which have an impact on a range of health outcomes. The levels of smoking in South Essex are decreasing, but current prevalence is higher compared to England.

Fig. K50: Smoking and childhood obesity prevalence, OHID

Note: each chart has a different y-axis scale



Note: Parts of the child measurement program were paused over covid

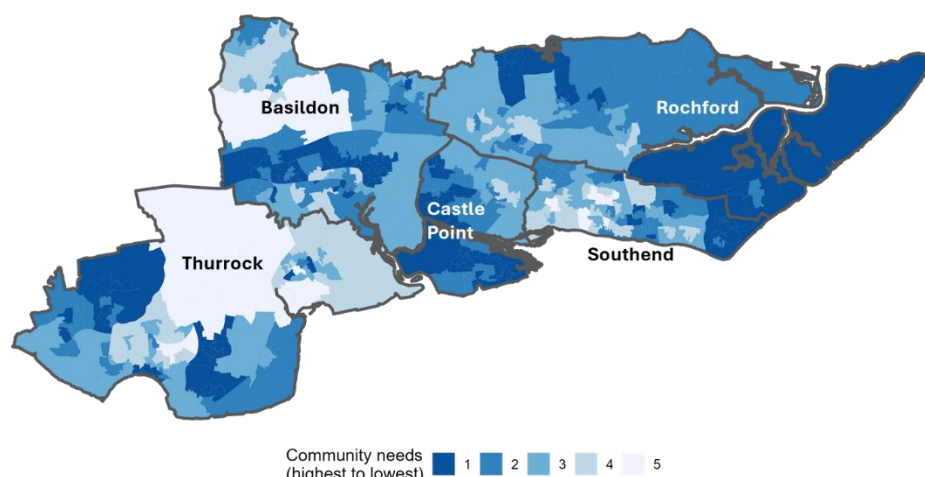
The early years of life can have a large impact on a persons future. More than 90% of schools in South Essex are rated as Good or Outstanding, and the levels of child poverty are lower compared to England. 16.7% of South Essex children are living in (absolute) child poverty, compared to 22.7% of children in England.

## Communities

For a more detailed look at community needs across Greater Essex, please see the recent [Greater Essex Community Needs Index report](#).

The maps below show the community needs index in South Essex. This index ranks areas based on the level of civic assets (universities, green spaces, libraries etc), how connected people feel to their neighbours and community, and how engaged people are with their local community.

Fig K51: Community Needs Index (darker colours indicate higher need), OCSI

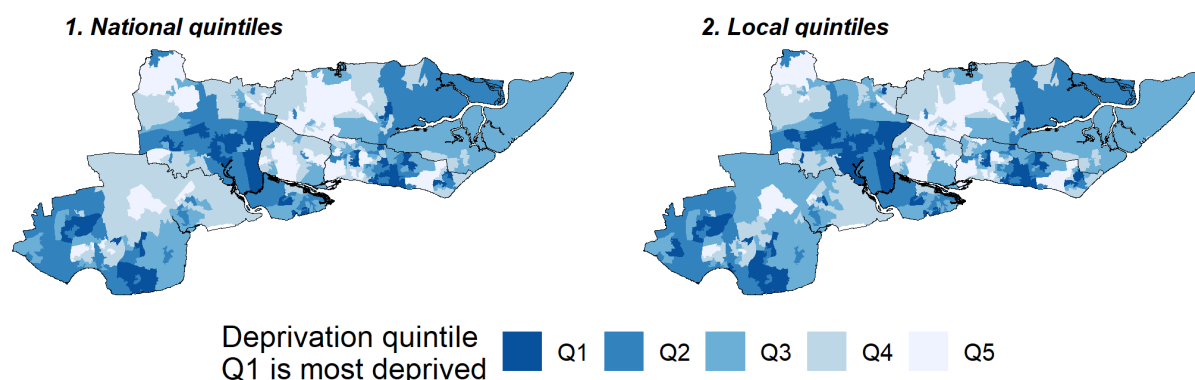


There are particularly high levels of community need in Rochford, along with pockets of high community need in Basildon and Thurrock. Thurrock residents reported the lowest ‘sense of belonging’ score across Greater Essex and are less likely to chat with neighbours compared to other parts of Greater Essex.

## Inequalities

111,602 (15.9%) of South Essex live in areas of high deprivation, defined as any area with deprivation levels in the top 20% of deprivation nationally. The level of deprivation in an area is a good proxy for need – areas with higher levels of deprivation typically have higher proportions of residents living in poor health and financial difficulty. The map below shows deprivation within South Essex. The left chart shows national deprivation quintiles, areas which are in quintile 1 (Q1) are in the 20% most deprived areas nationally. The right chart splits the area into local quintiles, which shows the most & least deprived areas within the area:

Fig. K52: Deprivation in South Essex, Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019



The chart below shows inequality in life expectancy within the area. South Essex is split into 10 local deprivation deciles and the average life expectancy is calculated for each decile. If there is no inequality in life expectancy, the dotted line in the chart will be flat. Life expectancy is higher in the least deprived areas:

Fig. K53: Inequality in life expectancy in South Essex, ECC analysis



## Single page summary: South Essex

The charts in the table below are spine charts. They show how South Essex compares against England and all other districts in England for each indicator. The light grey area shows the range of values across all LTLAs, and 50% of all local authorities fall inside the dark grey area. Greater Essex and England values are shown with the white diamond and triangle respectively.

Fig. K54: Spine Chart for South Essex

	South Essex	Greater Essex	England	Spine chart
Residents aged 0 - 15	20.0%	19.1%	18.5%	
Residents aged 16 - 64	61.4%	60.9%	62.9%	
Residents aged 65+	18.6%	20.0%	18.7%	
Residents living with a disability	16.6%	16.6%	17.3%	
Residents identify as ethnic minority	19.2%	17.0%	26.5%	
GVA per productive job	£68,738	£68,806	£66,288	
No qualifications	20.9%	19.2%	18.1%	
Level 4 qualifications	24.6%	27.6%	33.9%	
Unemployment claimant rate	3.8%	3.4%	4.1%	
Median income	£40,747	£40,548	£37,617	
Average houses built per year compared to housing target	28.9%	53.0%	62.1%	
Average attainment 8 score (higher is better)	45.8	45.9	46.2	
Life expectancy - female	83.0	83.5	83.1	
Life expectancy - male	79.3	79.9	79.1	
Premature mortality rate - all causes	163.1	149.3	163.7	
Infant mortality rate	3.6	3.0	4.1	
Smoking prevalence	14.3%	12.5%	13.6%	
Childhood obesity prevalence	21.6%	20.0%	22.1%	
Children living in (absolute) poverty	16.2%	14.8%	22.7%	
Residents living in areas of high deprivation	15.9%	10.2%	20.0%	

## Sources

Childhood obesity – [Fingertips](#)

Life expectancy – [Fingertips](#)

Inequality in life expectancy – Calculated by ECC, using [MSOA level data from fingertips](#)

Preventable mortality – [Fingertips](#)

Deprivation – [IMD 2019](#)

Businesses – [ONS business demography](#)

Census demographics – [Census 2021](#)

Population figures – [NOMIS](#)

Claimant count – [NOMIS](#)

Income – [NOMIS](#)

GVA estimates – [NOMIS](#)

Productive jobs – [ONS](#)

Housing need – [MCHLG](#)

## Appendix L: Electoral geography and representation

This appendix provides a full description of the electoral geography we propose for new UAs in Greater Essex, and the rationale for determining member numbers in each UA area.

The first part of this appendix provides background to our proposals on electoral geography, while the second provides more detail on our specific proposals on councillor numbers.

### Electoral geography

Our proposal is that new UA Members should be elected to new divisions based on:

- the latest electoral divisions developed for the area of Essex County Council as part of the 2024 Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) Boundary Review;
- groupings of the latest electoral wards agreed for the area of Thurrock as part of the 2024 Boundary Review for Thurrock<sup>1</sup>; and
- groupings of existing electoral wards in Southend-on-Sea.

This would see a total of 95 electoral areas which, for the purpose of this document we are referring to as divisions, created across the Greater Essex area.

We have developed our proposals so as to:

- ensure “electoral equality” between divisions – ensuring that, within each new UA area, the number of electors per councillor is as even as possible across each division/ward (divisions which have a number of electors per councillor within 10% of the UA average are considered as having good levels of electoral equality);
- ensure that future UAs in Greater Essex conform to established benchmarks in measures of council size (total number of councillors) and electoral ratios (number of councillors per 10,000 electors).

We have used the Boundary Commission’s recent electoral reviews for [Essex](#) and [Thurrock](#) as a starting point. The Boundary Commission recently undertook electoral review exercises in Essex and Thurrock and developed proposals for these areas’ electoral geography that secured good levels of electoral equality in the majority of divisions/ wards. Although the recommendations were yet to be implemented when the LGR process was initiated in Greater Essex, the published results provide the most pragmatic starting point in defining an electoral geography for new UAs.

The Boundary Commission recommended 78 councillors across 78 divisions in Essex and 49 Councillors across 20 wards in Thurrock. Tables summarising the LGBCE’s proposals on council numbers in Essex and Thurrock are set out below.

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<sup>1</sup> Local Government Boundary Commission for England (2024), Boundary Review for Thurrock, accessed at <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/thurrock> and Boundary Review for Essex, accessed at <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/essex> on 28th May 2025.



Fig. L1: LGBCE Recommendations for Essex

	2022	2029
Electorate of Essex	1,116,845	1,236,124
Number of councillors	78	78
Average number of electors per councillor	14,319	15,848

NB. When the number of electors per councillor in a division is within 10% of the average for the authority, we refer to the division as having 'good electoral equality'. Seventy-one of the LGBCE's proposed divisions for Essex are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2029.

A table and map summarizing these divisions (78 in total) is set out below.

Fig. L2: Proposed (78) Electoral Divisions for new UAs in Essex

Proposed UA Area	Current District Area	Division name	Current Electorate (2029)	Variance from average (%)
Mid Essex	Brentwood	Brentwood Hutton	17,192	8%
Mid Essex	Brentwood	Brentwood North	17,064	8%
Mid Essex	Brentwood	Brentwood Rural	15,916	0%
Mid Essex	Brentwood	Brentwood South	17,731	12%
Mid Essex	Chelmsford	Broomfield & Writtle	16,926	7%
Mid Essex	Chelmsford	Chelmer	17,290	9%
Mid Essex	Chelmsford	Chelmsford Central	15,158	-4%
Mid Essex	Chelmsford	Chelmsford North	15,972	1%
Mid Essex	Chelmsford	Chelmsford Springfield	16,359	3%
Mid Essex	Chelmsford	Chelmsford West	14,364	-9%
Mid Essex	Chelmsford	Danbury & The Hanningfields	16,856	6%
Mid Essex	Chelmsford	Great Baddow & Galleywood	16,649	5%
Mid Essex	Chelmsford	Woodham Ferrers	15,215	-4%
Mid Essex	Epping Forest	Chigwell & Buckhurst Hill East	17,452	10%
Mid Essex	Epping Forest	Epping & Theydon Bois	15,520	-2%
Mid Essex	Epping Forest	Loughton North	16,041	1%
Mid Essex	Epping Forest	Loughton South & Buckhurst Hill West	15,126	-5%
Mid Essex	Epping Forest	North Weald & Nazeing	14,492	-9%
Mid Essex	Epping Forest	Ongar & Rural	14,241	-10%
Mid Essex	Epping Forest	Waltham Abbey	15,390	-3%
Mid Essex	Harlow	Harlow Common & Church Langley	16,545	4%
Mid Essex	Harlow	Harlow Nettlewell	16,335	3%
Mid Essex	Harlow	Harlow Parndon & Toddbrook	14,571	-8%
Mid Essex	Harlow	Harlow South West	15,413	-3%
Mid Essex	Harlow	Old Harlow	14,775	-7%
Mid Essex	Maldon	Burnham & Southminster	14,258	-10%
Mid Essex	Maldon	Maldon Rural North	14,332	-10%

Mid Essex	Maldon	Maldon Rural South	14,373	-9%
Mid Essex	Maldon	Maldon Town & Heybridge	15,060	-5%
North Essex	Braintree	Bocking	16,675	5%
North Essex	Braintree	Braintree Eastern	14,510	-8%
North Essex	Braintree	Braintree Town	15,645	-1%
North Essex	Braintree	Halstead	16,989	7%
North Essex	Braintree	Hedingham	14,896	-6%
North Essex	Braintree	Three Fields & Great Notley	15,386	-3%
North Essex	Braintree	Witham Town	16,192	2%
North Essex	Braintree	Witham West & Rural West	15,879	0%
North Essex	Colchester	Colchester Abbey	17,158	8%
North Essex	Colchester	Colchester Lexden	15,464	-2%
North Essex	Colchester	Colchester Maypole	16,585	5%
North Essex	Colchester	Colchester North	17,114	8%
North Essex	Colchester	Colchester St Johns	16,659	5%
North Essex	Colchester	Constable	16,481	4%
North Essex	Colchester	Mersea & Tiptree	17,312	9%
North Essex	Colchester	Stanway & Marks Tey	15,626	-1%
North Essex	Colchester	Wivenhoe St Andrew	17,458	10%
North Essex	Tendring	Brightlingsea	15,859	0%
North Essex	Tendring	Clacton North	17,090	8%
North Essex	Tendring	Clacton South	17,735	12%
North Essex	Tendring	Clacton West & St Osyth	17,456	10%
North Essex	Tendring	Frinton & Walton	14,771	-7%
North Essex	Tendring	Harwich	15,598	-2%
North Essex	Tendring	Tendring Rural East	14,594	-8%
North Essex	Tendring	Tendring Rural West	14,825	-6%
North Essex	Uttlesford	Dunmow	15,786	0%
North Essex	Uttlesford	Saffron Walden	16,708	5%
North Essex	Uttlesford	Stansted	16,078	1%
North Essex	Uttlesford	Takeley	14,831	-6%
North Essex	Uttlesford	Thaxted	15,064	-5%
South Essex	Basildon	Billericay North	17,183	8%
South Essex	Basildon	Burstead	17,560	11%
South Essex	Basildon	Castledon & Crouch	15,766	-1%
South Essex	Basildon	Gloucester Park	17,206	9%
South Essex	Basildon	Laindon Town	16,813	6%
South Essex	Basildon	Pitsea	16,488	4%
South Essex	Basildon	Vange	17,040	8%
South Essex	Basildon	Westley Heights	16,565	5%
South Essex	Basildon	Wickford East & Bowers Gifford	16,926	7%
South Essex	Castle Point	Canvey Island East	15,840	0%

South Essex	Castle Point	Canvey Island West	14,681	-7%
South Essex	Castle Point	Hadleigh	13,664	-14%
South Essex	Castle Point	South Benfleet	14,063	-11%
South Essex	Castle Point	Thundersley	14,406	-9%
South Essex	Rochford	Rayleigh South	14,128	-11%
South Essex	Rochford	Rayleigh West	13,999	-12%
South Essex	Rochford	Rochford East	14,425	-9%
South Essex	Rochford	Rochford North	15,208	-4%
South Essex	Rochford	Rochford South	15,118	-5%

Fig. L3: Proposed (78) electoral divisions for new UAs in Essex

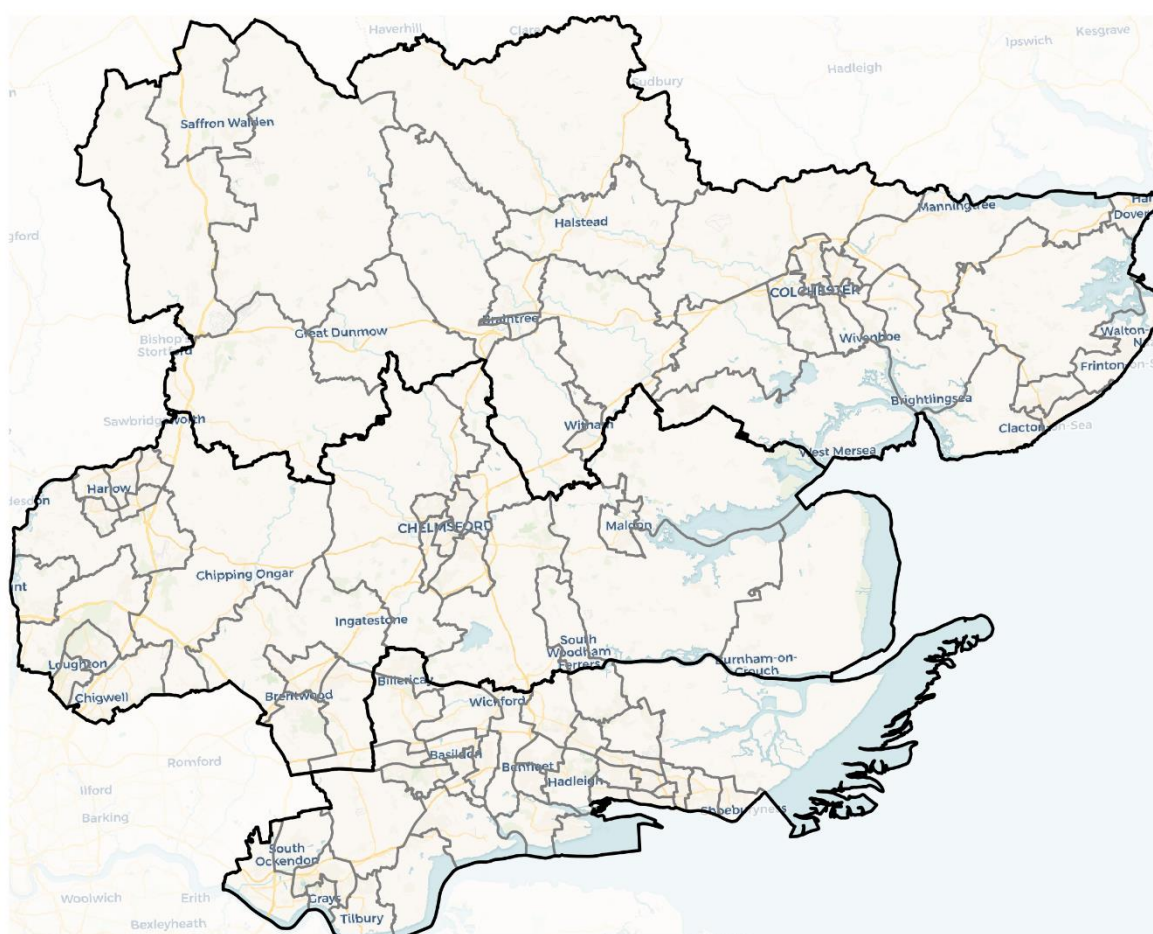


Fig L4: LGBCE Recommendations for Thurrock

	2023	2029
Electorate of Thurrock	122,803	132,604
Number of councillors	49	49
Average number of electors per councillor	2,506	2,706

All but two of the LGBCE's proposed wards for Thurrock were forecast to have good electoral equality by 2029.

Although the LGBCE's recommendations sought to secure electoral equality within both Essex and Thurrock areas, they did not seek to achieve equality across these areas. Our next step in defining a new geography, therefore, was to group the 20 wards proposed for Thurrock to create new divisions that would have broadly the same number of electors per councillor as those recommended for Essex (c. 15,848). The grouping achieves a good level of electoral equality in all but two divisions.

A table and map summarizing these new divisions (8 in total), based on current wards, and their estimated electorate, is set out below.

**Fig. L5: Proposed (9) Electoral Divisions for new UAs in Thurrock**

*All divisions will be located in the new South Essex UA area*

Current Ward	Electors (2029)	Proposed division	Electors per division	Variance from to Essex avg (%)
The Homesteads & Stanford-le-Hope North	7763	1	16194	2%
Corringham & Fobbing	8431			
East Tilbury, Linford & West Tilbury	5296	2	13941	-12%
Stanford-le-Hope South	8645			
Little Thurrock Rectory	5473	3	17159	8%
Little Thurrock Blackshots	5778			
Orsett, Horndon & Bulphan	5908			
Tilbury Riverside	4738	4	17448	10%
Tilbury St Chads	4754			
Chadwell St Mary	7956			
Grays Riverside	7368	5	15607	-2%
Grays Town	8239			
Chafford Hundred West	5448	6	16930	7%
Chafford Hundred East	5743			
Stifford	5739			
Purfleet-on-Thames	5084	7	18203	15%
West Thurrock & South Stifford	5707			
Aveley	7412			
Belhus	8199	8	17122	8%
Ockendon	8923			

Fig. L6: Proposed (8) electoral divisions for new UAs in the Thurrock area



There has been no recent Boundary Review in Southend-On-Sea and we have therefore been unable to use LGBCE outputs as a basis for defining new electoral divisions in this area. Our approach has therefore been to group the 20 existing wards that make up the City Council area to create new divisions that would have broadly the same number of electors per councillor as those recommended for Essex. Because there has been no recent LGBCE process which has generated projections of electorate numbers to 2029, we have used 2023 figures to benchmark measures of electoral equality.

The grouping exercise secures a good level of electoral equality in all but one of the proposed new divisions. There was no possible configuration of the Southend wards which would improve levels of electoral equality by grouping the Victoria ward with others. We are confident, however, that levels of electoral equality can be assured by managing the number of councillors elected to each new division (see below).

A table and map summarizing these new divisions (9 in total), based on current wards, and their estimated electorate as at 2023, is set out below.

**Table L7: Proposed (9) Electoral Divisions for new UAs in Southend-On-Sea**

*All divisions will be located in the new South Essex UA area*

Current Ward	Electors (2024)	Proposed division	Electors per division	Variance from Essex avg
Shoeburyness	8,616	1	16,019	1%
West Shoebury	7,403			
Southchurch	7,470	2	14,724	-7%
Thorpe	7,254			
Kursaal	8,048	3	16,112	2%
St Lukes	8,064			
Victoria	9,254	4	9,254	-42%
Chalkwell	7,212	5	15,623	-1%
Milton	8,411			
Prittlewell	7,909	6	15,669	-1%
Westborough	7,760			
Leigh	7,416	7	14,618	-8%
West Leigh	7,202			
Eastwood Park	7,334	8	15,257	-4%
St Laurence	7,923			
Belfairs	7,389	9	15,538	-2%
Blenheim Park	8,149			

**Fig. L8: Proposed (9) electoral divisions for new UAs in Southend-On-Sea**



### Elected councillor numbers

Having established a credible electoral geography for the new UA authorities we have applied a series of benchmarks and criteria to identify the appropriate number of elected councillors for each new UA. These criteria were as follows:

- the number of councillors should support moves to secure electoral inequality between divisions within each new UA area;

- the latest electorate data suggests that councillors in single-tier areas across England typically represent between 2,000 and 5,000 electors. Each new UA in Greater Essex should have enough elected councillors to fall within this range;
- councils in England typically have between c.40 and c.100 elected councillors (although the largest councils in England have had to 126 in recent years). Given the reduction in councillors that will result from LGR – we should expect the number of councillors in Essex’s new UAs to be towards the higher end of this range. This will be essential to ensure that the various executive, committee, scrutiny and representative roles of councillors can be played effectively and in full;
- there should be no more than three councillors representing any division.

The application of these criteria across North Essex, Mid-Essex and South Essex UAs is set out below.

### North Essex

**Electoral equality:** The electoral geography for North Essex UA comprises 30 divisions with an average of 14,636 electors in each (based on current electorate data). Analysis undertaken as part of the Boundary Commission’s review suggest that, by 2029, all 30 divisions will have number of electors that is +/- 10% of the average (a key benchmark for ‘good elector equality’).

**Councillors per division:** With a good level electoral equality between these divisions suggests, any North Essex UA would be best served by having an equal number of councillors in each division. Three councillors in each division would result in a total of 90 members (each representing an average of c.4,876 electors). This is comfortably within benchmarks for overall council size and electors per councillor.

### Mid Essex

**Electoral equality:** The electoral geography for Mid Essex UA comprises 29 divisions with an average of 14,034 electors in each (based on current electorate data). Analysis undertaken as part of the Boundary Commission’s review suggest that, by 2029, all but two divisions will have an electorate that is +/- 10% of the average. The expected level of deviation in these divisions is very small and does not present a barrier to implementing our approach (Brentwood South has forecast to have electorate that is 12.8% above the average for Mid-Essex divisions, while Chigwell and Buckhurst Hill is forecast to have an electorate that is 11% above this average).

**Councillors per division:** Given the good level electoral equality across Mid-Essex divisions, any Mid-Essex UA would be best served by having an equal number of councillors in each division. Three councillors in each division would result in a total of 87 members (each representing an average of c.4,678 electors). Again, this is comfortably within benchmarks for overall council size and electors per councillor.



## South Essex

**Electoral equality:** The electoral geography for the South Essex UA comprises 36 divisions with an average of 14,672 electors in each. Analysis undertaken as part of the Boundary Commission's review suggest that, by 2029, the vast majority of the 36 divisions will have an electorate that is within +/- 10% of the average but that eight divisions will have an electorate outside this range. Where deviations exist, they are relatively small and do not present a barrier to implementing our approach, for example:

- the combined wards of East Tilbury, Linford and West Tilbury and Stanford-le-Hope South will have an electorate that is 10.9% greater than the average;
- Burstead will have an electorate of 11% above the average; and
- the combined areas of Purfleet-on-Thames and West Thurrock & South Stifford will have an electorate that is 16.4% greater than the average.

However, one of the divisions proposed for central Southend – currently the City Council's Victoria ward – will have an electorate that is 40.8% lower than the South Essex average.

**Councillors per division:** Given the challenge in with securing electoral equality for the Victoria ward in Southend, we need to look at the number of members in each division. Varying this parameter provides an opportunity to address any imbalance.

We propose therefore, in all divisions other than Victoria, South Essex UA would be best served by having an equal number of councillors in each division. Three councillors in each of these 35 divisions would result in 105 councillors in total. Victoria will be more equal if it has only two elected members for this division bringing the total to 107.

This change in member numbers will ensure electoral equality. Across the South Essex UA as a whole there will be an average of one elected councillor for every 4,936 electors, and in Victoria, there will be one councillor for every 4,627 (some 6% below the South Essex UA average).

Again, overall councillor numbers and electoral ratios are consistent with national benchmarks.

The table below shows the current and proposed member numbers, and electoral ratios across proposed new UAs.

Fig. L9: Current and proposed member numbers and elector ratios

	Member numbers	Electors per member
(a) Current arrangements	700	1,963
(b) Proposed arrangements	284	4,839
<i>Based on:</i>		
<i>North Essex</i>	90	4,876
<i>Mid Essex</i>	87	4,678
<i>South Essex</i>	107	4,936
<b><i>Proposed change (a - b)</i></b>	<b>416 fewer councillors</b>	<b>2,876 more electors per councillor</b>

## Appendix M: Proposal note on finance

### The LGR Financial Model

Since submission of the interim plan County Council finance colleagues have worked in collaboration with finance partners across Greater Essex to create a shared data repository to support as far as possible a core set of information to be used across all proposals. The County Council have worked with PwC to develop and refine financial modelling for 2UA up to 5UA configuration options.

### External Assessment to support the case for change

In addition to working with PwC and Impower, through the CCN we have worked closely with Newton, to inform understanding on future demand for social care and SEND across Greater Essex and different unitary options, and with Pixel Financial Management to support the disaggregation of the County Council's key government grant funding to district level. Given the high levels of debt across Greater Essex and the potential implications for unitary options, CIPFA were commissioned across Greater Essex partners to undertake an assessment of the level of debt and non-operational assets in Greater Essex, to provide an independent view of the position and potential risks that will need further work as part of transition and implementation.

### Key Reports supporting the financial case:

- PwC Greater Essex Financial Analysis
- PwC Greater Essex Contextual Analysis
- CIPFA Greater Essex Debt and Assets Analysis
- Greater Essex Reserves Analysis

The key analysis supporting our proposal and the 3UA option is included in the main proposal. The remainder of these appendices sets out details on the workings and rationale for elements around transformation and public service reform, and council tax harmonisation not included in the main case.

## Profiling of benefits and costs for transformation and PSR

In modelling the impact of both costs and benefits, assumptions have been made as to the relative phasing, similar to the phasing approach applied for reorganisation benefits set out in Table 28 (in the proposal for Greater Essex) This allows the impact of ‘one-off’ costs to be incorporated, along with ongoing longer term costs which occur in the 2UA, 3UA and 4UA models. The following table sets out the assumed phasing of the costs and benefits of transformation and PSR for each model, plus the scaling applied to allow for changes in the value of costs or benefits realised depending on the number of unitary authorities.

Table M1: Phasing summary of implementation costs and benefit realisation

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Complexity/ Capacity scaling
<b>Transformation Net Benefits</b>										
<b>2UA</b>	-	50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	<b>1</b>
<b>3UA</b>	-	50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	<b>0.8</b>
<b>4UA</b>	-	50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	<b>0.6</b>
<b>5UA</b>	-	50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	<b>0.4</b>
<b>Transformation Costs</b>										
<b>2UA</b>	-	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>1</b>
<b>3UA</b>	-	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>1.1</b>
<b>4UA</b>	-	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>1.2</b>
<b>5UA</b>	-	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>1.3</b>
<b>Public Service Reform Net Benefits</b>										
<b>2UA</b>	-	-	25%	50%	75%	100%	100%	100%	100%	<b>1</b>
<b>3UA</b>	-	-	-	25%	50%	75%	100%	100%	100%	<b>0.9</b>
<b>4UA</b>	-	-	-	-	25%	50%	75%	100%	100%	<b>0.8</b>
<b>5UA</b>	-	-	-	-	-	25%	50%	75%	100%	<b>0.7</b>
<b>Public Service Reform Costs</b>										
<b>2UA</b>	-	-	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>1</b>
<b>3UA</b>	-	-	-	100%	-	-	-	-	-	<b>1</b>
<b>4UA</b>	-	-	-	-	100%	-	-	-	-	<b>1</b>
<b>5UA</b>	-	-	-	-	-	100%	-	-	-	<b>1</b>

<b>Rationale for scaling:</b>	
PSR benefits	As the number of UA increases, the risk increases that individual factors will dissolve the potential benefits - therefore 2UA will deliver max benefit, reducing by 10% as the UA increase.
PSR costs	Given there will be a greater complexity to deliver the benefits as the number of UA increases, and more structures to enable delivery, as 5% per UA scaling has been included.
Transformation benefits	As the number of UA increases, the risk increases that individual factors will dissolve the potential benefits. Scale provides greater potential for larger benefits realisation - 2UA = max benefit, reducing by 10% for every extra UA.
Transformation costs	Flat cost across all UA, on the basis more structures needed to deliver across more UA, offset by likely reduced redundancy costs as UA increases given reduction in benefit being delivered.

## Sensitivity Analysis

The following table sets out the impact on costs and benefits of a plus or minus 10% in assumed costs and benefits. Any change in the assumed costs or benefits will impact on the calculated payback for each unitary option. Increased costs or delay or reduced

benefit realisation will also impact on the cashflow position for the authority; this may result in a delay in the delivery of some transformation or public service reform initiatives until sufficient funding is available to meet the required implementation costs.

**Table M2: Impact of a + / - 10% change in costs and benefits including Transformation and Public Service Reform savings**

	Number of Unitaries			
	Two £m	Three £m	Four £m	Five £m
Annual reorganisation benefits	5	4	3	3
Annual transformation benefits	3	3	2	2
Annual public service reform benefits	4	3	2	1
Annual net disaggregation costs	0	0	(1)	(3)
<b>10% of total ongoing annual net benefits/ (costs) after seven years</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>10% of total implementation costs</b>	<b>(17)</b>	<b>(19)</b>	<b>(21)</b>	<b>(24)</b>

A sensitivity analysis was undertaken to understand the impact on payback of amending the cost and benefit assumptions by plus or minus 10%; the impact of this is set out in Table G3 below. This position assumes that the phasing of delivery remains the same as set out in Table x; it should be noted that should delivery of reorganisation, transformation or PSR changes be extended over a longer period, then the payback will extend commensurately.

**Table M3: Payback Sensitivity Analysis**

Payback sensitivity analysis	Number of Unitaries			
	Two (Years)	Three (Years)	Four (Years)	Five (Years)
<b>Payback excluding Transformation and PSR benefits</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>53.6</b>
Payback excluding Transformation and PSR benefits + 10% costs	2.0	2.9	6.6	Does not Payback
Payback excluding Transformation and PSR benefits - 10% costs	1.7	2.5	5.7	23.6
Payback excluding Transformation and PSR benefits +10% benefits	1.7	2.5	5.7	24.9
Payback excluding Transformation and PSR benefits - 10% benefits	2.0	2.9	6.7	Does not Payback
Approx 10% movement impact	+/- 0.2	+/- 0.2	+/- 0.5	+/- >50%
<b>Payback including Transformation and PSR benefits</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>9.9</b>
Payback including Transformation and PSR benefits + 10% costs	3.1	4.1	6.5	11.2
Payback including Transformation and PSR benefits - 10% costs	2.0	3.6	5.4	8.7
Payback including Transformation and PSR benefits +10% benefits	2.0	3.6	5.5	8.8
Payback including Transformation and PSR benefits - 10% benefits	3.1	4.1	6.5	11.4
Approx 10% movement impact	+/- 0.5	+/- 0.2	+/- 0.5	+/- 1.3

## Council Tax Harmonisation

At this stage the concept of council tax harmonisation has been modelled to look at the range of council tax income that would be available using 2 scenarios – Maximising harmonisation benefits from year 1, using the council tax rate weighted average for each new unitary, and a secondary scenario also harmonising in year 1, but using the lowest existing council tax rate across councils within the new unitaries. To do this it has been assumed:

- council tax rates will be increased at the maximum permissible rate for the next 2 years (4.99% for councils providing upper tier services, and 2.99% for lower tier councils)
- taxbases will grow based on historical growth rates. Tax rates and Tax bases used are as follows:

## Assumed Council Tax Rates, Taxbase, and Total Tax Requirement

Table M4 – Assumed Greater Essex Council Tax Base and Tax Rates for the period 2025/26 to 2028/29

Authority	Council Tax Band D Rate				Taxbase (Band D Equivalent)				Council Tax Requirement			
	2025/26 Band D	2026/27 Band D	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	2025/26 Band D	2026/27 Band D	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	2025/26 CTR £'000	2026/27 CTR £'000	2027/28 CTR £'000	2028/29 CTR £'000
Southend-on-Sea	£1,798.74	£1,888.50	£1,982.73	£2,081.67	60,861	61,176	61,493	61,811	109,472	115,530	121,924	128,671
Thurrock	£1,797.12	£1,886.80	£1,980.95	£2,079.80	54,114	54,618	55,126	55,639	97,249	103,053	109,202	115,719
Basildon	£1,884.15	£1,972.11	£2,064.27	£2,160.85	61,608	61,886	62,165	62,445	116,079	122,045	128,325	134,934
Braintree	£1,785.60	£1,870.60	£1,959.72	£2,053.16	58,079	59,183	60,307	61,453	103,706	110,707	118,185	126,173
Brentwood	£1,796.59	£1,881.92	£1,971.38	£2,065.17	34,512	34,834	35,159	35,488	62,003	65,555	69,313	73,289
Castle Point	£1,869.75	£1,957.28	£2,049.00	£2,145.12	31,257	31,408	31,559	31,711	58,443	61,474	64,665	68,024
Chelmsford	£1,807.66	£1,893.32	£1,983.13	£2,077.27	72,078	73,106	74,147	75,204	130,293	138,413	147,044	156,219
Colchester	£1,804.03	£1,889.58	£1,979.27	£2,073.30	67,201	67,837	68,480	69,129	121,232	128,184	135,541	143,324
Epping Forest	£1,751.58	£1,835.56	£1,923.63	£2,015.99	55,945	56,274	56,606	56,939	97,992	103,295	108,888	114,788
Harlow	£1,868.49	£1,955.98	£2,047.66	£2,143.74	29,298	29,803	30,318	30,841	54,742	58,295	62,081	66,116
Maldon	£1,811.60	£1,897.38	£1,987.31	£2,081.57	26,854	27,267	27,685	28,110	48,649	51,735	55,019	58,513
Rochford	£1,847.25	£1,934.10	£2,025.13	£2,120.53	33,582	33,955	34,331	34,712	62,034	65,672	69,526	73,609
Tendring	£1,779.11	£1,863.92	£1,952.84	£2,046.07	53,497	54,466	55,453	56,458	95,177	101,520	108,291	115,517
Uttlesford	£1,761.61	£1,845.89	£1,934.27	£2,026.95	40,552	41,185	41,828	42,481	71,437	76,023	80,907	86,107
<b>Total</b>					<b>679,438</b>	<b>686,997</b>	<b>694,658</b>	<b>702,421</b>	<b>1,228,510</b>	<b>1,301,501</b>	<b>1,378,908</b>	<b>1,461,001</b>

The results for our 2 scenarios using our recommended 3UA option are:

Table M5 – Potential Impact of Council Tax Harmonisation for Greater Essex for High and Low case

Unitary Model	CT Rate Harmonisation	Council Tax Income Forecast 2028/29 £	Difference compared to current status quo 2028/29 £
3 Unitaries	High Case (UA weighted average)	£1,461,001,457	£0
3 Unitaries	Low (lowest CT rate per unitary)	£1,434,306,345	(£26,695,111)

Therefore this demonstrates the material council tax income that will be at stake once unitary configurations are agreed. Ultimately the chosen method of harmonisation, and the resulting financial impact will be the decision of the new unitary councils. As set out in the main proposal Greater Essex has a strong tax base, in part driven by the strength of collection rates, with some of the highest rates in the country. Therefore alongside harmonisation, there will be opportunities to improve effectiveness and efficiency further through unitarisation.

Table M6 – 2024/25 Greater Essex Council Tax Collection Rates

<b>Authority</b>	<b>In-year Collection Rate for 2024-25 (%)</b>
Basildon	96.62%
Braintree	97.55%
Brentwood	97.72%
Castle Point	97.38%
Chelmsford	96.69%
Colchester	97.61%
Epping Forest	97.04%
Harlow	94.69%
Maldon	97.90%
Rochford	98.36%
Southend-on-Sea	97.21%
Tendring	94.76%
Thurrock	97.55%
Uttlesford	98.66%
<b>Greater Essex Average</b>	<b>97.12%</b>

## Appendix N: Proposal note on Information and Communication Technology

### Technology and Digital cost assumptions for LGR

Across the Greater Essex local authorities, the annual spend on technology is estimated to exceed £80m, supporting several hundred unique software systems (in some instances, supporting multiple versions of each, which adds further complexity) and less than ten systems that match across multiple authorities, all of which could be configured differently.

This creates a complex landscape and presents a challenge to align solutions and processes as part of the establishment of the new unitary authorities, but may also provide opportunities to consolidate and simplify to support delivery of future transformation and public service reform benefits.

Within Essex County Council alone, c£30m is spent annually (of which £14m is staffing and £16m is third party spend) on the Essex Digital Service. Additionally, across wider Council functions, a further circa £4m was spent on ICT supplies and service contracts in 2024/25, plus a further £12m spent on delivery of technology programmes in that year, with a further £25m planned across the following two years.

Estimates of the ICT costs required to implement the new unitary authorities are set out in table N1 and are included in the estimated costs to reorganise each unitary model set out in the proposal. The costs are to support all requirements for the design, procurement (where required) and implementation of all processes supported by an ICT solution required for the effective operation of the new unitaries from vesting day – these will be impacted by the available opportunities to re-use and standardise existing systems, where this makes sense to do so. Costs will also be impacted by scale and availability of the required resources to support implementation, and critically, timely access to support from key suppliers to develop and implement any solution or configuration changes required – both of these represent a key risk given the likely competing demands from other authorities also undergoing LGR across similar timescales.

**Table N1: ICT cost assumptions to support implementation of LGR (excluding wider transformation and Public Service Reform opportunities)**

Option	ICT Reorganisation Cost Assumption
2UA	£30m
3UA	£40m
4UA	£50m
5UA	£60m



These costs will be influenced by the chosen operating model for digital (eg hosted, shared, sovereign whether in part or entirely) and then by the number of teams being setup, the scale of process change required and system aggregations/ disaggregations needed.

Some of these investment costs will be determined by broader operating model decisions (eg if any services were to be outsourced, for example, then there may be minimal investment costs needed for those systems, and implementation costs will largely be focused on data aggregation/ disaggregation and migration, informed by decisions around retention).

The costs will also be impacted by whether there is opportunity to transform as the new unitaries are implemented, which may assist in reducing costs and releasing benefits earlier; however, as there is greater risk in this approach due to the scale of changes required, the proposal has assumed that transformation and reform will follow the establishment of stable core solutions for, and within, the first year from vesting day.

It is assumed that the cost of reorganisation will increase depending on the number of new unitaries required; this is due to the assumption that each additional unitary will require the same core systems to be operational for vesting day (with no new shared service arrangements being implemented).

In addition, ensuring correct management of data and assets, the ICT costs to transition to each new unitary, will be influenced both by the baseline of inherited systems and infrastructure, and the scale of process and system development and re-design required. Costs will likely be lower where opportunities for standardisation and adoption rather than adaption of solutions can be implemented. It will therefore be key to undertake a full baseline assessment of existing systems, processes and operational requirements to understand the investment requirements and opportunities to establish the systems needed from vesting day for the new unitaries.

The costs have been benchmarked against other LGR proposals and also reflect lessons learnt from elsewhere which have indicated a tendency to underestimate the cost, time and resource implications for the full transition to the new unitaries in a 'safe and legal' way. Additionally, in reviewing the current and recent experience of Essex CC in implementing upgrades or replacements of core solutions, the costs suggest a conservative, but reasonable assessment compared to those experienced, as follows:

**Table N2: Investment cost to implement current and past corporate ICT solutions within Essex CC**

Approximate investment cost of delivery of large scale IT projects within ECC:	Estimated Implementation timescale	£m
Implementation of Corporate ERP solution	18 months	10
Implementation of Social Care Case Management solution	12 - 20 months	8
Implementation of Network and Voice solutions	12 - 24 months	14

It is acknowledged that there may be a requirement for further investment to support wider transformational and public service reform benefits that may be sought post establishment of the new unitary authorities, but this is currently unquantified and will be subject to the scale of opportunity and ambition sought by the new unitaries.

A key risk with respect to the ICT requirements, with the exception of sufficient investment funding, is ensuring that sufficient time and capacity across the 15 councils and respective solution suppliers is available to support the implementation of the necessary changes required for vesting day. This may require running some solutions concurrently, which will also form part of the overall implementation costs set out above.

## Appendix O: Housing Revenue Account financial summary position

<b>HRA Revenue Budget</b>	<b>Basildon £'000</b>	<b>Brentwood £'000</b>	<b>Castle Point £'000</b>	<b>Colchester £'000</b>	<b>Epping Forest £'000</b>	<b>Harlow £'000</b>	<b>Southend £'000</b>	<b>Tendring £'000</b>	<b>Thurrock £'000</b>	<b>Uttlesford £'000</b>	<b>Total £'000</b>
<b>Income</b>											
Gross Rents	(60,409)	(14,621)	(8,556)	(34,222)	(42,856)	(54,311)	(34,998)	(16,129)	(55,626)	(18,707)	(340,435)
Services and Facilities	(7,936)	(1,371)	(914)	(3,275)	(3,111)	(4,358)	(382)	(600)	(5,456)	(1,329)	(28,732)
Other	(430)	0	0	(1,800)	(402)	(1,991)	(2,285)	(784)	(3,007)	0	(10,699)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(68,775)</b>	<b>(15,992)</b>	<b>(9,470)</b>	<b>(39,297)</b>	<b>(46,369)</b>	<b>(60,660)</b>	<b>(37,665)</b>	<b>(17,513)</b>	<b>(64,089)</b>	<b>(20,036)</b>	<b>(379,866)</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>											
Supervision & Management	25,495	5,201	4,328	13,723	15,128	24,170	8,482	2,980	24,470	1,329	125,306
Repairs and Maintenance	12,946	3,526	2,410	9,900	12,053	13,638	8,242	5,897	15,807	5,623	90,042
Depreciation/Revaluation/Impairment	16,389	3,522	2,478	6,250	11,226	13,827	8,735	3,556	11,572	4,302	81,857
Other	429	439	295	273	180	533	7,426	820	561	530	11,486
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>55,259</b>	<b>12,688</b>	<b>9,511</b>	<b>30,146</b>	<b>38,587</b>	<b>52,168</b>	<b>32,885</b>	<b>13,253</b>	<b>52,410</b>	<b>11,784</b>	<b>308,691</b>
<b>Net (Surplus)/Deficit on HRA Services</b>	<b>(13,516)</b>	<b>(3,304)</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>(9,151)</b>	<b>(7,782)</b>	<b>(8,492)</b>	<b>(4,780)</b>	<b>(4,260)</b>	<b>(11,679)</b>	<b>(8,252)</b>	<b>(71,175)</b>
<b>Other operating income &amp; expenditure</b>	11,905	2,729	418	9,151	8,059	7,882	7,237	5,339	11,468	8,502	72,690
<b>Planned transfers to/(from) reserves</b>	1,611	575	0	0	0	858	(2,457)	(1,079)	211	(250)	(531)
<b>Overall (Surplus)/Deficit</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>459</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>984</b>
<b>Reserves</b>											
<b>Main/General HRA Reserve</b>											
1st April	4,000	1,500	1,078	4,379	8,438	11,833	3,502	3,726	5,720	1,661	45,837
Movement	0	0	(385)	0	(2,853)	(248)	0	(1,043)	211	0	(4,318)
<b>31st March</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>693</b>	<b>4,379</b>	<b>5,585</b>	<b>11,585</b>	<b>3,502</b>	<b>2,683</b>	<b>5,931</b>	<b>1,661</b>	<b>41,519</b>
<b>Major Repairs Reserve</b>											
1st April	0	0	0	0	2,699	0	11,444	4,442	0	1,106	19,691
Movement	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,498	0	0	(274)	1,224
<b>31st March</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,699</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12,942</b>	<b>4,442</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>832</b>	<b>20,915</b>
<b>Other Reserves</b>											
1st April	4,699	4,451	784	0	0	10,716	25,185	42	4,093	718	50,688
Movement	0	575	(75)	0	0	288	(2,457)	(36)	0	(168)	(1,873)
<b>31st March</b>	<b>4,699</b>	<b>5,026</b>	<b>709</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11,004</b>	<b>22,728</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4,093</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>48,815</b>
<b>Total Reserves</b>											
1st April	8,699	5,951	1,862	4,379	11,137	22,549	40,131	8,210	9,813	3,485	116,216
Movement	0	575	(460)	0	(2,853)	40	(959)	(1,079)	211	(442)	(4,967)
<b>31st March</b>	<b>8,699</b>	<b>6,526</b>	<b>1,402</b>	<b>4,379</b>	<b>8,284</b>	<b>22,589</b>	<b>39,172</b>	<b>7,131</b>	<b>10,024</b>	<b>3,043</b>	<b>111,249</b>
<b>Arrears</b>											
Current level of debt*	3,142	-	750	1,093	1,091	3,204	1,917	-	3,291	5,322	19,810

\* Note: this is a total of the data provided, but not all Districts have returned the data as at the same date, so they are not directly comparable

## Appendix P: Key risks for Implementation and Transition

We recognise that Local Government Reorganisation in Greater Essex will be more complex than many LGRs that have gone before us, with disaggregation of the County Council and aggregation of Councils across the tiers of local government. In all the proposals for LGR in Greater Essex there is a need to aggregate services across multiple existing authorities, with differing practise models and performance levels. There are a range of risks that must be managed through the implementation to preserve and where appropriate improve levels of service during transition to avoid financial consequences.

Risk	Mitigation
<p><b>Scale and complexity of change</b></p> <p>LGR is a significant change in any setting, but Greater Essex represents the most complex landscape ever undertaken. In addition to that we are implementing Devolution to create a Mayoral Combined Authority at the same time.</p> <p>County elections in 2026 will create additional uncertainty in the year before unitary elections. It needs to be noted that we will also have the Mayoral election in May'26 which should the County elections go ahead as well will put increased pressure on the system</p>	<p>Agree a lead authority approach to managing transition that is grounded in collaboration. Building on the existing capability and capacity in change delivery and Transformation across the current local authorities, particularly Essex County Council's Transformation Team. Ensuring there are robust programme management and governance arrangements established throughout the phases.</p> <p>Continue to work with MHCLG on an effective proposal.</p>
<p><b>Disaggregation of high performing services, while maintaining service delivery</b></p> <p>The existing authorities deliver many vital services, often to vulnerable people. If transition and implementation does not minimise disruption, it may prevent the effective delivery of services and put further financial burdens on LAs as performance is impacted and harm public confidence in the new authorities.</p> <p>The act of disaggregation will be particularly challenging for services which are provided on a countywide rather than geographical basis.</p>	<p>This proposal is based around maximising service continuity and minimising disruption by proposing the 3 unitary model.</p> <p>Proposals for delivering change in key service areas will be considered in early pre-implementation (transition) to ensure adequate, planning, safeguarding and risks can be mitigated</p> <p>We will keep laser focus on the day-one requirements and our prioritised outcomes, rather than being distracted by all the possibilities.</p> <p>Our implementation plan differentiates between enabling workstreams such as finance and HR and public facing services</p>

	such as social care to ensure the correct focus.
<p><b>Aggregation of services</b></p> <p>While aggregation aims to streamline service delivery and improve efficiency, its implementation introduces several significant challenges, such as, integration of practice methods, systems &amp; processes, cultural &amp; organisational alignment, governance &amp; representation, service harmonisation, financial reconciliation and strategic planning and identity.</p>	<p>Aggregation demands strategic oversight, strong leadership, careful planning and robust, experienced change and programme management to overcome the challenges. This will ensure not only effective change put will safeguard existing services throughout transition.</p>
<p><b>Workforce Capacity &amp; Morale</b></p> <p>The proposal will lead to significant changes for people across the many different organisations. Whilst we believe the future offers significant opportunities, we recognise that if change is not managed effectively and the workforce not sufficiently engaged, this may damage staff morale, disrupt services and limit retention of the skills and roles for the new organisations.</p> <p>Across the local authorities in Greater Essex this risk is particularly high given the relative pull of London, the significant reduction in the number of local authorities after LGR and the creation of the mayor's office occurring mid-implementation for LGR in Greater Essex.</p>	<p>The workforce across all existing organisations will be involved in informing and co-designing our future arrangements from the beginning. While recognising our differences, it is critical that all our people contribute to shaping the purpose, identity and culture of the new organisation. While some uncertainty for staff is unavoidable, the dedicated People and Culture workstream to be included as part of the overall programme will ensure all concerns and issues are proactively addressed.</p>
<p><b>Decision Making and Governance</b></p> <p>Over the course of our LGR journey there will be changes to decision making powers and responsibilities, if there is a lack of clarity on the leadership and decision-making arrangements during the transition process this may delay implementation activities, and increase costs, and without due care there could be risk to current service delivery and delays to implementation of LGR.</p> <p>Complexities include the election of the Mayor in May 2026, Shadow running of emerging councils alongside existing councils from 2027 and the role of Thurrock Commissioners.</p>	<p>Governance needs to be established early in pre-implementation be clear, effective and agreed in collaboration. It will need to adapt throughout the process as we move between phases, and we have planned 'Pause and Reflect' moments to assess what is working well and what needs to change for the next phase.</p>

## **Finances**

While we have estimated the implementation costs for LGR in Greater Essex there is a significant level of uncertainty in the detail of what needs to be delivered, meaning this may be insufficient.

Additionally, there are known existing and future financial risks and challenges impacting local authorities within Greater Essex currently, which need to be addressed prior to vesting day; inheriting unplanned structural deficits would impact their ability to invest in the transition opportunities to realise the anticipated benefits associated with LGR. A Financial Risk assessment is set out in the proposal and should be reviewed alongside this risk summary; key areas of concern for transition include:

- i. the risk of councils running down reserves or accruing additional debt beyond existing Medium Term Resource Strategy (MTRS) plans.
- ii. the impact of following the structural change order which may result in additional investment or delay realisation of savings opportunities
- iii. the requirement to continue business as usual operations, including securing sustainable savings alongside preparing for the transition to the new unitary arrangements

Close monitoring of costs will be conducted throughout the entire plan, so any escalation is addressed promptly.

Three unitaries are expected to offer sufficient scale to manage the implementation financial risk effectively and secure necessary upfront investment in people and resources.

Additionally, we will seek continuing discussions with Government about how key risks such as the residual Thurrock debt and the DSG deficit may be supported between now and vesting day in order to reduce the on-going risk to the new unitary authorities' financial resilience.

## **Appendix Q: Greater Essex Trends**

[Greater Essex Trends](#)

## **Appendix R: Greater Essex Community Needs Index (Caring Communities Commission)**

[Greater Essex Community Needs Index Report 2025](#)

## **Appendix S: Essex Caring Communities Commission report**

[Essex Caring Communities Commission Report](#)