



# Three new councils One bright future

The Proposal for Greater Essex

## Summary



# A better future for Greater Essex

## What's changing - and why

**Greater Essex is a great place with a bright future.**

Our county is growing, and our communities are changing. It's clear the way we deliver local services needs to change too.

Right now, Greater Essex has 15 different councils. Some areas have two layers of local government - county and district - while others have just one - unitary. These services are delivered alongside parish and town councils.

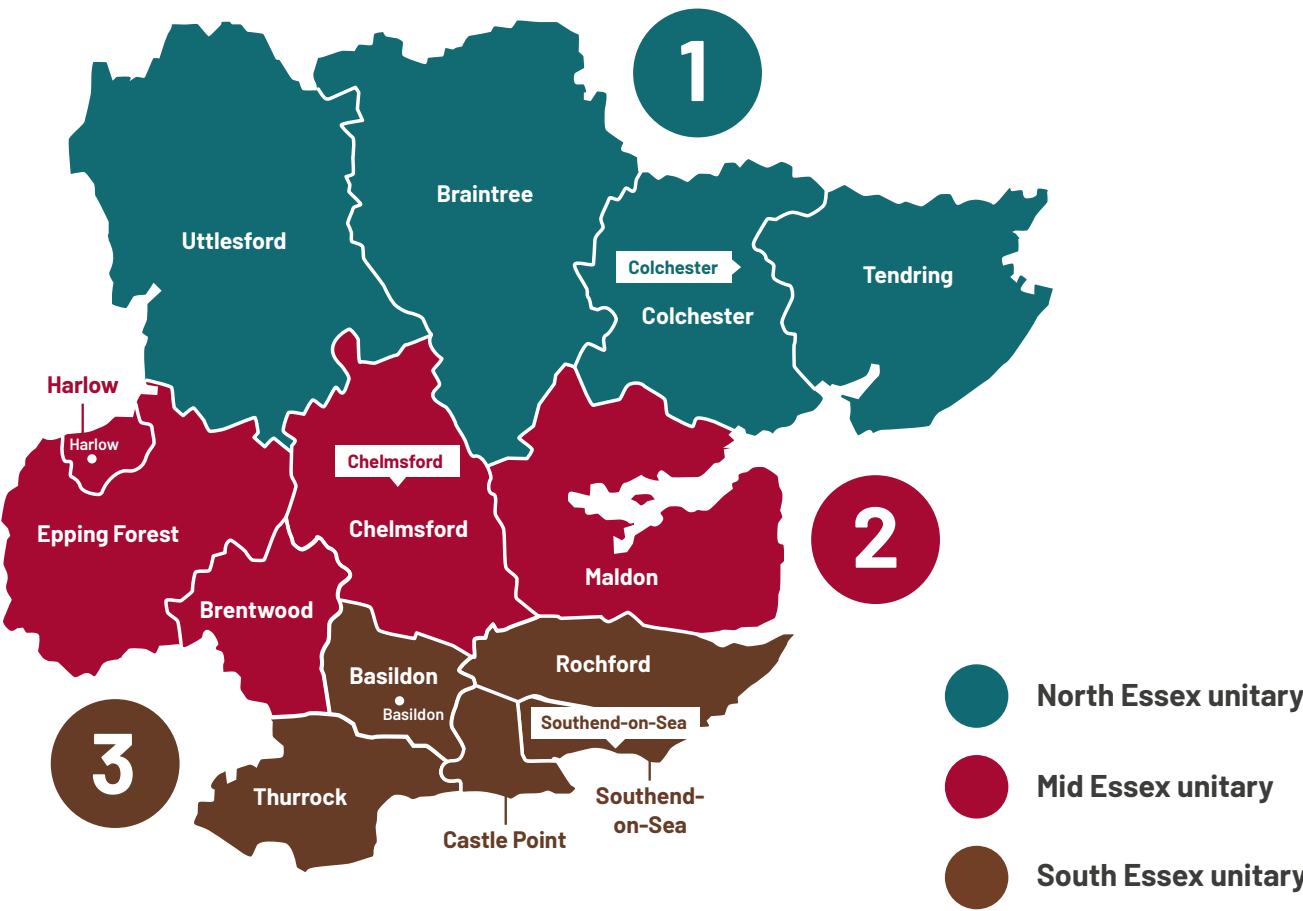
It's a complicated system which can be confusing and sometimes inefficient. Residents often don't know who does what, and services can feel disconnected.

We think Essex deserves better. That's why we are proposing a new, simpler model: **three new unitary councils**, each responsible for all local services in their area.

These new councils would be:

- **North Essex** - Colchester, Tendring, Braintree, and Uttlesford
- **Mid Essex** - Chelmsford, Brentwood, Epping Forest, Harlow, and Maldon
- **South Essex** - Southend-on-Sea, Thurrock, Basildon, Castle Point, and Rochford

Our proposal reflects how people live, work and travel across Essex and is built around our three cities: Colchester, Chelmsford and Southend-on-Sea.



## Why this matters

We've spoken to residents, experts and local partners. They told us:

- people want **better services** - especially in areas like social care, housing, and waste
- they want clear **accountability** - knowing who is in charge and how decisions are made
- they want **value for money** - less spent on bureaucracy, more on frontline support
- people want **local decision making** - and to feel involved in shaping their communities



## Why three councils is right for Greater Essex

### Better services, delivered more efficiently

This isn't just about changing boundaries on a map. It's about changing lives.

**Social care:** Our proposal protects the strong services we already have and minimises disruption.

**Housing:** New councils will have the scale and tools to tackle homelessness and meet local housing needs.

**Economic growth:** Aligning councils with key growth areas will mean better planning, stronger infrastructure and more opportunities.

**Children and young people:** Building on strong foundations, a more joined-up system will help deliver better outcomes for children and young people.

And by reducing duplication, savings can be reinvested back into the services people rely on.

### Simple, local, and built to last

We're not proposing change for the sake of it. We're building a system that:

- is **easy to understand** - North, Mid and South Essex make sense to people
- is **financially resilient** - saving over **£380 million** by 2040
- is **future proof** - utilising digital innovation and strengthened partnerships

We're also making **£30 million** available to local neighbourhoods to spend on **things that are important to them.**

# What happens next

There are a number of proposals outlining preferences for different numbers of unitary councils in Greater Essex. These were submitted to the government on 26 September.

The government will consider all of the proposals before deciding which will go forward to public consultation this autumn.



Following this consultation, new councils could be up and running in **April 2028**.

Once the number of unitary councils is confirmed, we'll make sure the transition is smooth, protecting services and providing regular updates for residents throughout the process.

This is a **once-in-a-generation opportunity** to reshape local government for the better. We believe three new councils will help Essex thrive – now and for decades to come.

## Three new councils. **One bright future.**

Learn more at [www.essex.gov.uk/three-councils](http://www.essex.gov.uk/three-councils)

