

UK Government’s Consultation on Proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock

19 November 2025 – 11 January 2026

Questions	Possible Answers	Consultation on the Proposal from Southend-on-Sea City Council, Chelmsford City Council, Basildon Borough Council, Brentwood Borough Council, Castle Point Borough Council, Colchester City Council, Harlow District Council, Maldon District Council, Tendring District Council and Uttlesford District Council Consultation for 5 unitary councils:	Consultation on the Proposal from Essex County Council, Braintree District Council and Epping Forest District Council Consultation for 3 unitary councils:	Consultation on the Proposal from Rochford District Council Consultation for 4 unitary councils:	Consultation on the Proposal from Thurrock Council Consultation for 4 unitary councils:	Consultation on Proposal from Suffolk County Council: Consultation for 1 unitary council	Consultation on Proposal from Babergh District Council; Mid Suffolk District Council; West Suffolk Council; East Suffolk Council; and Ipswich Borough Council Consultation for 3 unitary councils.
<i>[There are also some initial questions to capture who is responding and their standing in respect of the subject matter]</i>		West: Uttlesford, Harlow, Epping Forest North East: Braintree, Colchester, Tendring Mid: Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon South West: Thurrock, Basildon South East: Castle Point, Southend, Rochford	North: Braintree, Colchester, Tendring, Uttlesford Mid: Harlow, Epping Forest, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon South: Thurrock, Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend	North: Braintree, Colchester, Tendring West: Epping Forest, Harlow, Uttlesford Central: Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon, Rochford South: Basildon, Castle Point, Southend, Thurrock	West: Harlow, Epping Forest, Brentwood, Thurrock North: Uttlesford, Braintree, Chelmsford East: Maldon, Colchester, Tendring South: Basildon, Castle Point, Southend, Rochford	One: Babergh, East Suffolk, Ipswich, Mid Suffolk, and West Suffolk	Western Suffolk: West Suffolk plus 21 parishes from Mid Suffolk, and Babergh less 31 parishes. Central and Eastern: Mid Suffolk less 29 parishes, and East Suffolk less 25 parishes Ipswich and Southern Suffolk: Ipswich plus 31 parishes from Babergh, 8 parishes Mid Suffolk, and 25 parishes from East Suffolk
1. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal suggests councils that are based on sensible geographies and economic areas?	Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree Don't Know	Strongly agree	Strongly disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree
2. To what extent do you agree or disagree that	Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree	Strongly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly agree

the proposed councils will be able to deliver the outcomes they describe in the proposal?	Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree Don't Know						
3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils are the right size to be efficient, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks?	Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree Don't Know	Strongly agree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly agree
4. To what extent do you agree or disagree that this proposal will put local government in the area as a whole on a firmer footing, particularly given that some councils in the area are in Best Value Intervention and in receipt of Exceptional Financial Support? [More information – references Thurrock]	Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree Don't Know	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly agree
5. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will deliver high	Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree	Strongly agree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly agree

quality, sustainable public services?	Don't Know						
6. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal has been informed by local views and will meet local needs?	Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree Don't Know	Strongly agree	Strongly disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly agree
7. To what extent do you agree or disagree that establishing the councils in this proposal will support devolution arrangements, for example, the establishment of a strategic authority?	Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree Don't Know	Strongly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly agree
8. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal enables stronger community engagement and gives the opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment?	Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree Don't Know	Strongly agree	Strongly disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree
9. If you would like to, please use the free text box to explain the answers you have provided to questions 1-8 referring to the	Free text box	The support for this option over others is based upon Key Principles for Tendring as expressed by elected Members:- Keeping local government as local as possible and	This option, particularly the division of West Essex authorities, does not take into consideration the geographical linkages and economic growth corridor around the M11 and West Anglia railway line, with its	We note from the response from Maldon District Council its concerns over being placed with Rochford, due to a lack of cohesiveness.	The combination of coastal areas into a single authority and the division of that area from remaining areas of existing economic corridors will put economic strain on the	Combining all the authorities in Suffolk into one council creates an authority serving 787,000 people. This does not keep local government as local as possible and creates an	The support for this option over the one Suffolk model is based on applying the key principles expressed by elected Members:- Keeping local government as local as possible and

question numbers as part of your answer. You may also use the box to provide any other comments you have on this proposal.		embedding local accountability; • Sense of place and recognising the geographical linkages; • The structures of existing partnerships within North-East Essex and joined up decision making; • Ensuring on-going delivery of high-quality services; and • The option is financially sustainable. The 5UA model outperforms alternatives on critical areas such as social care, service resilience, and strategic potential. It provides the right sizes, giving economies of scale while maintaining strong resident and community representation; while reducing the number of Councils being aggregated to a minimum, supporting a smoother transition. Each authority is centred around recognisable communities, helping sustain pride and engagement. Financially a smaller authority is more agile and better able to withstand financial shocks, with fewer layers between the 'frontline' and the 'centre'. More widely this model in previous consultation was described as "about the right size," - it is supported by the majority of local authorities within Essex and is supported by the largest cross-party collective of local authorities within the Essex area. The five unitary plan is based on independent analysis, including from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and	situation between London and Cambridge. The size of the proposed authorities is also significant, making a sense of place and embedding local accountability a real challenge for new authorities in this configuration; for example with 604,000 residents in the proposed 'north' unitary which would include Tendring; this is counter to recent research from the District Councils' Network which found that bigger does not equate to better. For these reasons it does not meet the principles backed by elected Members, specifically 'keeping local government as local as possible and embedding local accountability', and 'sense of place and recognising the geographical linkages'; nor does it, in our opinion, appear to meet the government's own criterion of "new unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment" (<i>feedback on interim proposals for Local Government Reorganisation</i>). Arguments around financial sustainability with reference to deprivation are also flawed; as the local authority is home to the most and 11th most deprived LSOAs in England (and the 25th most deprived local authority based on average score), what is needed is investment and access to skills, jobs and health improvements (with the ability to focus funding applications on deprivation) – not a wider or more diverse council tax base with which to 'balance out'	Otherwise, the geographies generally closely align with our preferred five unitary model, and, after the five-model, are the next best to keeping local government as local as possible and embedding local accountability. It has not been possible to verify some of the statements made in the proposal, without seeing the detailed supporting evidence sitting behind the submission.	new unitary for East Essex (when considering the specific challenges coastal authorities face in terms of both sea defence maintenance, flood and pollution risks, and wider deprivation) and hamper the drive for growth. It also ignores existing working groupings of councils in Greater Essex, such as Maldon's close working relationship with Chelmsford, and does not factor in some economic growth corridors (such as the A120, A12 and M11); there are no strong transport links between Maldon and Colchester, and certainly Tendring. It has not been possible to verify some of the statements made in the proposal, without seeing the detailed supporting evidence sitting behind the submission.	authority the covers a wide range of very different places that do not map to travel to work areas, from Lowestoft to Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds. A single council also does not create an effective system overall: if the result was a single council for Suffolk and a one council for Norfolk, then the mayoral authority would have only two constituent council members, creating competition at the strategic level of government, and not enough local level local government.	embedding local accountability - Sense of place and recognising the geographical linkages; - Ensuring on going delivery of high quality services The model provides balanced populations across the three authorities and creates councils that will reflect a strong sense of place, delivering services tailored to their communities. Tendring District Council's current joint work with the Port Health Authority will be able to continue effectively under three council model in Suffolk, as will our strong partnership with Freeport East. There are currently five council members of Freeport East, which will be rationalised to three through reorganisation on a three Council model.
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		Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), whose analysis showed that authorities that serve a population of around 326,000 to 510,000 people are large enough to sustain specialist services but small enough to keep decision making and commissioning close to local need. The response to question 4, is tempered reflecting that Local Government Finances will be strained whatever configuration proceeds, due to matters such as temporary accommodation, SEND, and inflation costs in large statutory contracts, such as in Waste Collection & Recycling. While requiring a modestly higher upfront investment, the 5UA model maximises the long-term benefits of local government reorganisation, offering more resilient public services, clearer leadership, and a strong foundation for sustainable growth across Greater Essex. This model best meets all six government criteria and enjoys strong support from councils and residents alike. Drawing upon research from Grant Thornton, CIPFA, Peopletoo, SCIE, and 31ten it also represents the biggest ongoing savings opportunity of the proposals.	deprivation. This is achieved through close working with the new County Combined Authority and Devolution to Greater Essex, not by creating larger unitaries which will have bigger, competing priorities with a danger that local pockets of deprivation will be missed out.				
10. I confirm that I have not included any information that identifies an individual in the free text box.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

