Essex County Council, Southend-on-Sea City Council and Thurrock Council will continue work to establish a Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA).

The Government has confirmed that Greater Essex has ‘passed the legal tests’ and that devolution and work towards establishing a Mayoral Combined County Authority can proceed.

The decision follows an eight-week consultation held between February and April, which saw a total of 4,070 responses from residents, business and partner organisations. A [report on the consultation](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/greater-essex-devolution) was published today (Thursday 17 July).

Respondents saw potential benefits in strategic planning and economic growth, particularly through improved adult skills funding and collaborative economic initiatives. They highlighted the importance of strategic planning for housing, infrastructure and transport.

Some expressed concerns about the risk of fragmented support and slow investment and wanted reassurance an MCCA would deliver regional benefits rather than more bureaucratic obstacles.

Welcoming the decision, Councillor Kevin Bentley, Leader of Essex County Council, said: “This is a momentous day for Greater Essex, and I welcome the decision from Government that devolution will go ahead in our county. “Devolution will provide us with the greatest opportunity to transform our county in more than a generation and help transfer more power into the hands of local people across Greater Essex. “Our hard work will continue as we work with the Government to grasp the opportunities created by devolution which will help our residents, businesses and our whole county flourish.”

Councillor Daniel Cowan, Leader of the Southend-on-Sea City Council, said: “This is another major milestone in our devolution journey, and an important step forward for Greater Essex to be able to represent and lobby for greater powers from Central Government. "Complementing this, our proposal for local government reorganisation for five unitary councils is the only option that will ensure that local people are properly represented on the new Combined County Mayoral Authority, so that there is no missed opportunity for real devolution across the whole of Greater Essex.”

Councillor Lynn Worrall, Leader of Thurrock Council, said: “The news today that the Secretary of State has given devolution in Greater Essex the green light is warmly welcomed. “Our focus in Thurrock is on delivering value-for-money services for residents, with decision-making kept as close to communities as possible. We want local people to be able to hold local leaders to account for what they do. We also want to see places thrive, with jobs, investment and housing all given the priority we know they need.

“Devolution provides a real opportunity to turbo-charge the economy and opportunities of Greater Essex for all who live, work and learn here.”

The Government’s English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill is set for a second reading in the House of Commons in September. Separate legislation to create the MCCA with then go through Parliament in in the autumn/winter.

The MCCA is set to be legally established in early 2026, with a Mayoral election scheduled to take place on Thursday 7 May.

Find out more about devolution in Greater Essex at: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/about-council/plans-and-strategies/our-vision-essex/devolution-and-local-government-reorganisation>.