

Great Waltham Parish Council Response to Consultation on Proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock

Tell us about yourself

1. What is your name?

[William Adshead-Grant](#)

2. Are you responding as an individual or providing an official response on behalf of an organisation?
(Required)

Individual

[Official response on behalf of an organisation](#)

Member of Parliament

3. Have you been invited to respond as a named consultee?

(Required)

[Yes](#)

No

4. In which council area is your address? (if you are responding as an individual this is your home address. If you are responding as an organisation this is your organisation address.)

(Required)

[Essex County Council](#)

Southend-on-Sea City Council

Thurrock Council

Not in Essex, Southend-on-Sea or Thurrock

Not sure?

5. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please let us know the organisation's name:

[Great Waltham Parish Council](#)

6. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please let us know your position within the organisation:

[Parish Clerk](#)

7. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please select the type of organisation from the options below:

Business

Education

Health

Local government - principal council within the invitation area

Local government - neighbouring council

[Local government - parish/town council](#)

Local government - other

Other public sector

National body

Police and Fire

Voluntary sector

Other

8. What is your email address?

clerk@greatwalthamparishcouncil.co.uk

Personal Data

1. Please read and tick the box before proceeding with the consultation

The sections for each proposal in this consultation include free text boxes where you can explain your answers. Please tick this box to confirm that you will not include information which may identify an individual in these boxes

[Tick](#)

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:

West: Uttlesford, Harlow, Epping Forest

North East: Braintree, Colchester, Tendring

Mid: Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon

South West: Thurrock, Basildon

South East: Castle Point, Southend, Rochford

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

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will be able to deliver the outcomes they describe in the proposal?

Strongly agree

Somewhat agree

Neither agree nor disagree

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

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?

Strongly agree

Somewhat agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

5. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will deliver high quality, sustainable public services?

Strongly agree

Somewhat agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat disagree

Strongly disagree
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

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

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

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 question numbers as part of your answer. You may also use the box to provide any other comments you have on this proposal.

Question 1 – We 'strongly agree' this model is based on sensible geographies and economic areas. Its principal advantage over the other models is the more rational way the current councils have been grouped.

For us, the grouping of Chelmsford with Brentwood and Maldon is more intuitive, natural, practical, and reasonable than the alternatives proposed in the other models. This is not to say that this and the other models do not suffer from a level of 'de-localisation' given that each creates a wider gap between residents (and their town and parish councils) and the next tier of local government. We are concerned that this increased remoteness will translate into a poorer understanding of local demands and needs (and therefore ultimately services), exacerbated by a reduction of meaningful access to higher-tier councillors whose unitary authority ward will contain more residents and lower-tier councils, and that the new UA councillors will have to spread themselves too thinly and will not be able to properly represent their constituents.

All of the models offer the opportunity to increase the involvement of town and parish councils in higher authorities' decision-making as it impacts locally. We understand the concept of neighbourhood delivery committees involving town and parish councils has been mooted, and we welcome such an initiative, provided it means their having a real voice and influence (potentially including veto powers).

Question 2 – We 'somewhat agree' that all the models will deliver the outcomes they proffer, but our concern with all of them is whether they can deliver services of an acceptable or improved standard. For all of them, Greater Essex residents are being asked to accept a leap of faith.

Question 3 – We ‘somewhat agree’ all the models should be able to improve capacity and withstand financial shocks, but that this is particularly not dependant on the size of the new UAs, more on their professional governance and on astute political decision-making (of which the former is probably being more likely than the latter).

Question 4 – We believe all the models are neither more nor less likely to put local government in the area as a whole on a firmer footing, and that it has been more the lack of political will and adequate funding which has created the sense that the current framework is not fit for purpose. Unless these deficiencies are remedied by whatever model is settled upon, the outcomes for Greater Essex residents will not improve.

Question 5 – We believe all the models are neither more nor less likely to deliver high quality, sustainable public services. There is no reason each of them should not, but the cake will be in the eating. Again, Greater Essex residents are being asked to accept a leap of faith.

Question 6 – On this question we ‘somewhat agree’ this model has been informed by local views (by the online survey promoted by its sponsors), and is more likely than other models to meet local needs (see also our answers to Questions 1 and 8, in particular our reference to the setting-up of neighbourhood delivery committees in Question 1).

Question 7 – We ‘somewhat agree’ that all the models will support devolution arrangements, but would observe that the same could probably be said now of all the councils under the existing framework.

Question 8 – Our response here is linked to that given for Question 1 in that here we ‘somewhat agree’ that this proposal enables stronger community engagement and gives the opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment. That is, the reduced level of ‘de-localisation’ in this model makes it more likely that these outcomes will be achieved, although even then ‘stronger’ community engagement may well manifest itself as only being ‘less weak’ when compared to the other models.

10. I confirm that I have not included any information that identifies an individual in the free text box.

Yes

Consultation on the Proposal from Essex County Council, Braintree District Council and Epping Forest District Council

Consultation for 3 unitary councils:

North: Braintree, Colchester, Tendring, Uttlesford

Mid: Harlow, Epping Forest, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon

South: Thurrock, Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend

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

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will be able to deliver the outcomes they describe in the proposal?

Strongly agree

Somewhat agree

Neither agree nor disagree

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?
dropdown answers

Strongly agree

Somewhat agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

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?

Strongly agree

Somewhat agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

5. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will deliver high quality, sustainable public services?

Strongly agree

Somewhat agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat disagree

Strongly disagree

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

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

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

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 question numbers as part of your answer. You may also use the box to provide any other comments you have on this proposal.

[Question 1 – We ‘strongly disagree’ that this model is based on sensible geographies and economic areas – we believe it is the weakest of the models in this respect.](#)

[For us, the grouping of Chelmsford with Brentwood, Maldon, Harlow and Epping Forest lacks intuition, does not fit naturally, and is likely to prove impractical. We would suggest that communities in Chelmsford \(let alone Maldon\) have no particular affinity with Harlow or Epping Forest. The model has the greatest potential for ‘de-localisation’ by having the widest gulf between residents and town and parish councils. Of course, this does not mean that other models do not suffer from ‘de-localisation’, just that it would be greater here. With all the models we are concerned that this increased remoteness will translate into a poorer understanding of local demands and needs \(and therefore ultimately services\), exacerbated by a reduction of meaningful access to higher-tier councillors whose unitary authority ward will contain more residents and lower-tier councils, and that the new UA councillors will have to spread themselves too thinly and will not be able to properly represent their constituents.](#)

[All of the models offer the opportunity to increase the involvement of town and parish councils in higher authorities’ decision-making as it impacts locally. We understand the concept of neighbourhood delivery committees involving town and parish councils has been mooted, and we welcome such an initiative, provided it means their having a real voice and influence \(potentially including veto powers\).](#)

[Question 2 – We ‘somewhat agree’ that all the models will deliver the outcomes they proffer, but our concern with all of them is whether they can deliver services of an acceptable or improved standard. For all of them, Greater Essex residents are being asked to accept a leap of faith.](#)

Question 3 – We ‘somewhat agree’ all the models should be able to improve capacity and withstand financial shocks, but that this is particularly not dependant on the size of the new UAs, more on their professional governance and on astute political decision-making (of which the former is probably being more likely than the latter).

Question 4 – We believe all the models are neither more nor less likely to put local government in the area as a whole on a firmer footing, and that it has been more the lack of political will and adequate funding which has created the sense that the current framework is not fit for purpose. Unless these deficiencies are remedied by whatever model is settled upon, the outcomes for Greater Essex residents will not improve.

Question 5 – We believe all the models are neither more nor less likely to deliver high quality, sustainable public services. There is no reason each of them should not, but the cake will be in the eating. Again, Greater Essex residents are being asked to accept a leap of faith.

Question 6 – On this question we ‘neither agree or disagree’ this model has been informed by local views (we are aware of a closed consultation, but feel a wider consultation should have taken place), and is less likely that the 5-council model and no more likely than the 4-council models to meet local needs (see also our answers to Questions 1 and 8, in particular our reference to the setting-up of neighbourhood delivery committees in Question 1).

Question 7 – We ‘somewhat agree’ that all the models will support devolution arrangements, but would observe that the same could probably be said now of all the councils under the existing framework.

Question 8 – Our response here is linked to that given for Question 1 in that here we ‘somewhat disagree’ that this proposal enables stronger community engagement and gives the opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment. Basically, we believe the sizes of the UAs will be too large to encourage community engagement or introduce meaningful neighbourhood empowerment.

10. I confirm that I have not included any information that identifies an individual in the free text box.

Yes

Consultation on the Proposal from Rochford District Council

Consultation for 4 unitary councils:

North: Braintree, Colchester, Tendring

West: Epping Forest, Harlow, Uttlesford

Central: Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon, Rochford

South: Basildon, Castle Point, Southend, Thurrock

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

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will be able to deliver the outcomes they describe in the proposal?

Strongly agree

[Somewhat agree](#)

Neither agree nor disagree

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

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?

Strongly agree

Somewhat agree

[Neither agree nor disagree](#)

Somewhat disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

5. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will deliver high quality, sustainable public services?

Strongly agree

Somewhat agree

[Neither agree nor disagree](#)

Somewhat disagree

Strongly disagree

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

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

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

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 question numbers as part of your answer. You may also use the box to provide any other comments you have on this proposal.

[Question 1 – We ‘somewhat disagree’ that this model is based on sensible geographies and economic areas – we believe it is less weak than the 3-council model, but weaker than the 5-council model.](#)

[For us, the grouping of Chelmsford with Brentwood, Maldon, and Rochford lacks intuition, does not fit naturally, and is likely to prove impractical. We would suggest that communities in Chelmsford and Brentwood have no particular affinity with Rochford. The model has considerable potential for ‘de-localisation’ by having a wide gulf between residents and town and parish councils. Of course, this does not mean that other models do not suffer from ‘de-localisation’, just that it would be greater here than with the 5-council model. With all the models we are concerned that this increased remoteness will translate into a poorer understanding of local demands and needs \(and therefore ultimately services\), exacerbated by a reduction of meaningful access to higher-tier councillors whose unitary authority ward will contain more residents and lower-tier councils, and that the new UA councillors will have to spread themselves too thinly and will not be able to properly represent their constituents.](#)

[All of the models offer the opportunity to increase the involvement of town and parish councils in higher authorities’ decision-making as it impacts locally. We understand the concept of neighbourhood delivery committees involving town and parish councils has been mooted, and we welcome such an initiative, provided it means their having a real voice and influence \(potentially including veto powers\).](#)

[Question 2 – We ‘somewhat agree’ that all the models will deliver the outcomes they proffer, but our concern with all of them is whether they can deliver services of an acceptable or improved standard. For all of them, Greater Essex residents are being asked to accept a leap of faith.](#)

Question 3 – We ‘somewhat agree’ all the models should be able to improve capacity and withstand financial shocks, but that this is particularly not dependant on the size of the new UAs, more on their professional governance and on astute political decision-making (of which the former is probably being more likely than the latter).

Question 4 – We believe all the models are neither more nor less likely to put local government in the area as a whole on a firmer footing, and that it has been more the lack of political will and adequate funding which has created the sense that the current framework is not fit for purpose. Unless these deficiencies are remedied by whatever model is settled upon, the outcomes for Greater Essex residents will not improve.

Question 5 – We believe all the models are neither more nor less likely to deliver high quality, sustainable public services. There is no reason each of them should not, but the cake will be in the eating. Again, Greater Essex residents are being asked to accept a leap of faith.

Question 6 – On this question we ‘neither agree or disagree’ this model has been informed by local views (we are not aware of any public consultation), and is therefore less likely than the 5-council model and no more likely than the 3-council model and other 4-council model to meet local needs (see also our answers to Questions 1 and 8, in particular our reference to the setting-up of neighbourhood delivery committees in Question 1).

Question 7 – We ‘somewhat agree’ that all the models will support devolution arrangements, but would observe that the same could probably be said now of all the councils under the existing framework.

Question 8 – Our response here is linked to that given for Question 1 in that here we ‘neither agree nor disagree’ that this proposal enables stronger community engagement and gives the opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment. Basically, we believe, like the 3-council model (albeit to a lesser extent) that the sizes of the UAs will be too large to encourage community engagement or introduce meaningful neighbourhood empowerment.

10. I confirm that I have not included any information that identifies an individual in the free text box.

Yes

Consultation on the Proposal from Thurrock Council

Consultation for 4 unitary councils:

West: Harlow, Epping Forest, Brentwood, Thurrock

North: Uttlesford, Braintree, Chelmsford

East: Maldon, Colchester, Tendring

South: Basildon, Castle Point, Southend, Rochford

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

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will be able to deliver the outcomes they describe in the proposal?

Strongly agree

[Somewhat agree](#)

Neither agree nor disagree

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

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?

Strongly agree

Somewhat agree

[Neither agree nor disagree](#)

Somewhat disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

5. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will deliver high quality, sustainable public services?

Strongly agree

Somewhat agree

[Neither agree nor disagree](#)

Somewhat disagree

Strongly disagree

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

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

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

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 question numbers as part of your answer. You may also use the box to provide any other comments you have on this proposal.

[Question 1 – We ‘somewhat disagree’ that this model is based on sensible geographies and economic areas – we believe it is less weak than the 3-council model, but weaker than the 5-council model.](#)

[For us, the grouping of Chelmsford with Uttlesford and Braintree lacks intuition, does not fit naturally, and is likely to prove impractical. We would suggest that communities in Chelmsford no particular affinity with the northern sections of Uttlesford and Braintree. We feel the two proposed north Essex UAs in the model are more the makeweights which emerge from trying to rationalise the existing councils in south Essex, and give little thought to how residents in Chelmsford see themselves. The model has considerable potential for ‘de-localisation’ by having a wide gulf between residents and town and parish councils. Of course, this does not mean that other models do not suffer from ‘de-localisation’, just that it would be greater here than with the 5-council model. With all the models we are concerned that this increased remoteness will translate into a poorer understanding of local demands and needs \(and therefore ultimately services\), exacerbated by a reduction of meaningful access to higher-tier councillors whose unitary authority ward will contain more residents and lower-tier councils, and that the new UA councillors will have to spread themselves too thinly and will not be able to properly represent their constituents.](#)

[All of the models offer the opportunity to increase the involvement of town and parish councils in higher authorities’ decision-making as it impacts locally. We understand the concept of neighbourhood delivery committees involving town and parish councils has been mooted, and we welcome such an initiative, provided it means their having a real voice and influence \(potentially including veto powers\).](#)

Question 2 – We ‘somewhat agree’ that all the models will deliver the outcomes they proffer, but our concern with all of them is whether they can deliver services of an acceptable or improved standard. For all of them, Greater Essex residents are being asked to accept a leap of faith.

Question 3 – We ‘somewhat agree’ all the models should be able to improve capacity and withstand financial shocks, but that this is particularly not dependant on the size of the new UAs, more on their professional governance and on astute political decision-making (of which the former is probably being more likely than the latter).

Question 4 – We believe all the models are neither more nor less likely to put local government in the area as a whole on a firmer footing, and that it has been more the lack of political will and adequate funding which has created the sense that the current framework is not fit for purpose. Unless these deficiencies are remedied by whatever model is settled upon, the outcomes for Greater Essex residents will not improve.

Question 5 – We believe all the models are neither more nor less likely to deliver high quality, sustainable public services. There is no reason each of them should not, but the cake will be in the eating. Again, Greater Essex residents are being asked to accept a leap of faith.

Question 6 – On this question we ‘neither agree or disagree’ this model has been informed by local views (we are not aware of any public consultation), and is therefore less likely that the 5-council model and no more likely than the 3-council model and other 4-council model to meet local needs (see also our answers to Questions 1 and 8, in particular our reference to the setting-up of neighbourhood delivery committees in Question 1).

Question 7 – We ‘somewhat agree’ that all the models will support devolution arrangements, but would observe that the same could probably be said now of all the councils under the existing framework.

Question 8 – Our response here is linked to that given for Question 1 in that here we ‘neither agree nor disagree’ that this proposal enables stronger community engagement and gives the opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment. Basically, we believe, like the 3-council model (albeit to a lesser extent) that the sizes of the UAs will be too large to encourage community engagement or introduce meaningful neighbourhood empowerment.

10. I confirm that I have not included any information that identifies an individual in the free text box.

Yes