

26 September 2024

OPEN LETTER TO ALL ESSEX MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

DEVOLUTION FOR GREATER ESSEX

As you know, the Deputy Prime Minister has invited Essex to put forward an expression of interest, ahead of negotiating a devolution deal. We understand that the three Upper Tier Local Authorities, Essex County Council, Southend and Thurrock, intend to submit a proposal by 30 September, covering the entire county (Greater Essex).

The Essex Chambers of Commerce represents around 700 businesses, including many with a national or international profile. Our membership was very disappointed last year that the three Essex councils were unable to unite behind a shared ambition for a mayoral deal, and our members continue to show solid backing for this (reflected in the BBC article here: [Essex Chambers of Commerce calls for mayoral devolution - BBC News](#)).

A mayoral deal would involve a directly elected Mayor, with executive powers and accountability to the electorate rather than to a particular political party. This would put Essex on a similar footing to the West Midlands, Greater Manchester or Teesside, where the introduction of mayors has significantly raised the profile of those areas and encouraged investment both public and private and confidence in their ability to determine and deliver on local priorities. We believe sustainable growth in Essex would be best delivered under a similar arrangement, which would command the confidence and support of business, including through the new Greater Essex Business Board.

We also believe it would help to get Essex working better together. Whilst it would not abolish any existing local authority boundaries it would provide a powerful incentive for our local authorities to work together more strategically, efficiently and effectively – as well as bring significant new government funding for investment in transport infrastructure, skills, business support and other areas necessary to underpin economic growth.

There is a risk that Essex, if it does not achieve a mayoral devolution deal, is left behind other places which are prepared to embrace fully the principles of devolution. We therefore urge you to support the effort to secure a mayoral deal and help Essex to build on its considerable existing strengths and achieve its undoubted potential.

I would of course be very happy to discuss this issue with you if helpful.

Thank you and best wishes.



Denise Rossiter
Chief Executive