

**From:** Cllr Martin Foley - Member CC  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 4, 2024 4:36 PM  
**To:** Clerk <clerk@littlebardfield-pc.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** Cllr Foley Report 1.

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES**

Residents may have seen some speculative articles in the press arising out of the recent Budget, suggesting that councils in Essex might be under consideration for merger into new unitary councils.

The Chancellor did indicate that in general terms, the government thinks unitary councils are a more sensible structure to provide for local government to be provided rather than by way of separate district and county councils. The Government is going to publish later in the year a White Paper about Local Government and the degree of possible devolution of powers from central government and it will not be until then that we shall get any better idea as to what the Government actually has in mind.

Meanwhile, along with the other 12 district and 2 unitary (Southend and Thurrock) councils in Essex, UDC will undertake research and data gathering to be better prepared to respond to that White Paper. It is the case meanwhile however, that active conversations are going on between Essex councils and the

Government as to whether there would be a benefit to the County would from having a Mayoral System

put in place, as has occurred elsewhere in the country. This is not a remote possibility (either with or

without a directly elected Mayor) but the powers and duties of such a new Combined Authority would sit on top of the current two-tier set-up and not instead of the District Council structures that presently exist.

If therefore, a new Combined Authority of this type were created, it would take powers and draw money

“down” (i.e. devolution in the proper sense of the word) from central Government in Whitehall, such as for

skills and transport funding, but it would not take existing powers or monies away from district councils.

Accordingly, we thought it important to dispel any misapprehensions that might have come into residents’ minds arising out of recent press comment. I shall report in detail in coming months if, how and when these possible concepts progress.

*Martin*

**Cllr Martin Foley**

***Member for Thaxted Division- Essex County Council  
Covering the Parishes of .....***

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