

**Leader's Executive Statement to Full Council – July 14, 2015
Towards a Greater Essex Devolution Deal**

Mr Chairman,

I want to update you about devolution.

About a vision where partners put aside differences to achieve something bigger.

About an Essex with the powers to further improve the lives of our residents.

About an Essex where decisions that concern local people are made locally.

Mr Chairman, last Thursday, all Leaders and Chief Executives of local councils across Greater Essex met to discuss devolution ambitions.

Ambitions to grow the economy.

Ambitions to create thousands of new jobs.

Ambitions to improve skills and boost wages.

And ambitions to get Essex building the homes and infrastructure we need to succeed.

To do this, local areas must have a greater say in how things are done.

That is why we have been working with all local council partners at the highest level to develop a shared ambition for Greater Essex.

We are also working with NHS England and local health partners on an Essex Success Regime – pursuing a Greater Manchester-style devolution settlement for Essex so that we secure a sustainable future for our health and care system.

By working together we can achieve so much more.

It is still a work in progress and there is much work to be done to secure support – but progress has been made I am pleased to say.

It is a tribute to our district, borough, city and unitary partners that we have got this far. And we will continue to work closely with them and aim to submit our proposal to government before the end of year.

Mr Chairman, the Chancellor said in his budget speech that this was just the start of English devolution.

Among the budget announcements was yet more power for Manchester – this time over the fire service, planning, employment and children services.

Sheffield, Liverpool, and West Yorkshire are all expected to receive more powers in the Spending Review.

And we saw the announcement of the first county devolution deal to Cornwall, which is in the last stages of being finalised.

Mr Chairman, devolution is once in a generation opportunity to transform the face of local government in Greater Essex and in the process transform the lives of Essex residents.

It is an opportunity to take control of our own destiny here in Essex and put power back in local hands.

We've always known that local areas can do things better than the centre. Now it seems that Westminster and Whitehall have finally caught on too.

Faster economic growth.

More and better paid jobs.

New homes for families.

Better public services and a secure health system.

That's what devolution means.

We cannot afford to be left behind. We must seize the day.

Mr Chairman, fellow councillors, I give you this commitment: this administration will work every single day, with local partners and with Government, to make this happen.

And all of us – whatever our political stripes may be – need to play a part and make the case to our communities.

This is bigger than us all. We owe it to this and future generations of Essex residents to secure a devolution deal for Essex.