

Essex County Council and Brentwood Borough Council

The first County and District Council merger in the country is taking place between Essex County Council and Brentwood Borough Council. The County Chief Executive will be the head of paid service for both Councils. Little detail is known on the exact governance arrangements for this new model, but it would make sense to share corporate services like information and communications technology, human resources, payroll, audit and finance.

Braintree District Council and Colchester Borough Council

Braintree District Council and Colchester Borough Council have also been exploring ways of working closer together to help improve efficiency and make best use of tax payers' money. Over the coming months the two Councils will be looking at all of the options for greater efficiency, which could range from the combining of different services or the whole organisation, over a phased period.

Each Council would continue to have a separate political structure and cabinet.

By working closely together, it should be possible to achieve greater efficiency through economies of scale.

The Councils have agreed to explore the opportunities joint working can offer to help both Councils improve services further and to make the best use of resources. As neighbouring authorities, they have also recognised the many benefits that could be gained from joining together for work such as planning future development. Although further work is needed to investigate all the options, it is anticipated that any programme of improvement would take place over a couple of years and during this period, changes would be made in a phased approach and through natural wastage.

Darlington Borough Council and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

Darlington and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Councils have informally discussed the joint delivery of corporate services and believe that such an arrangement provides the opportunity to further improve service delivery and service efficiency. A full business case is being developed.

Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council

The two neighbouring Councils have recently appointed a joint Chief Executive. The Councils will eventually have a joint workforce.

They established a single service depot for refuse and recycling some time ago. They have since developed shared tourism, coastal defence and human resources services.

The first stage in the merger is the establishment of a single officer structure involving directors and heads of service for both Councils. The next stage will be the development of shared service blocks. Completion is estimated by March 2010.

There are governance issues to overcome and it is proposed that Adur will eventually move to a cabinet committee structure. Work is currently underway to align the corporate priorities of both councils.

Both Councils will be represented on joint committees for strategy, delivery, overview and scrutiny and staff. Adur will be the employing authority for all staff.

It is recognised that a major challenge is the finance and cost allocations for both Councils. Each will be a separate entity and there will be separate sets of accounts with individual budgets for Adur and Worthing.