

Member Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

This FAQ guide is here to help you providing the most common questions and useful information to support you in your new role.

If you need any extra help along the way, the [Democratic Services team](#) is always here for you.

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County Hall - Access, Policies and Facilities

Are Councillors permitted to invite guests into County Hall and what are the access and sign-in requirements?

Members can accompany visitors around the building using their security ID passes. Visitors need to be signed in to County Hall via the main County Hall reception desk.

Where can I park at county hall?

Member parking is available at County Hall in the Duke Street car park on a first come, first served basis —please clearly display your parking disc. If you don't yet have one please let democratic.services@essex.gov.uk know.

Booking is not required. You may park in any of the available spaces that have not been marked as reserved or for EV charging. Swipe your ID at the barrier to enter the car park. If you don't have your ID pass to hand, press the buzzer and explain who you are and you will be able to park.

Where can I smoke at county hall?

Please note that smoking and vaping are not permitted in the County Hall buildings or enclosed grounds, including the car park.

When is County Hall open?

County Hall (Market Road, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH) is open to the public Monday to Thursday 8:30 am to 5:30 pm, Friday 8:30 am to 5:00 pm. It is open to Members and employees Monday to Friday 06:30 am to 8:00 pm.

Council Processes and Meetings

How are committee seats allocated between political groups, and when is this decided?

Committee seats are allocated in proportion to each group's representation on the Council. This is usually confirmed at the Annual Meeting of Full Council Group Leaders nominate members.

What is the deadline for submitting items to the Annual Council agenda?

Deadlines for submitting items are set in advance of the meeting and are usually several clear working days beforehand. If you have any questions please email full.council@essex.gov.uk

What is a hybrid meeting?

A hybrid meeting is one where some attendees join in person and others join online remotely via Microsoft Teams or Zoom.

Who do I contact to advise I can't attend full council on 28 May?

Email full.council@essex.gov.uk you may wish, if applicable to also let your Group know.

Member Support and Contacts

How do I contact the Information Technology Team?

You can contact IT on 03330 135 953 (Priority Customer Number).

How do I contact the Democracy Team?

democratic.services@essex.gov.uk

How does the Member Enquiries process work?

Members can forward enquiries they receive—such as emails from residents—to the dedicated Member Enquiries team at democratic.services@essex.gov.uk. The team will then:

- review the concern,
- gather the relevant information, and
- prepare an appropriate response for the Member to send back to the resident.
- This helps ensure that enquiries are managed accurately and efficiently.

You can watch the recording from the induction session [here](#).

Pay, Allowances, Tax and Expenses

How are councillor expenses paid?

Expenses are claimed through the MyOracle system. You should submit claims online, including receipts where required, in line with the Council's guidance and deadlines. Approved claims are paid directly to you through Payroll. An induction session is taking place on Tuesday 9 June at 1:30 pm on Teams.

When are councillor allowances paid?

Councillor allowances are usually paid monthly through Payroll, typically around the 23rd of each month. Exact payment dates may vary slightly. You should receive your first payment in June.

How does member tax work?

The basic allowance (and special responsibility allowance) is taxable. New councillors are normally setup on BR tax codes, following the closure of June payroll, your earnings will be reported to HMRC, once HMRC have assessed taxable earnings they may issue a P6 tax code change notification. The new appointed Councillors can also contact HMRC directly regarding this role if they have other taxable pay income. This guide provides more information - [EIM65955 - Tax treatment of Local Government Councillors and civic dignitaries: expenses deductions](#)

Do Essex County Councillors need to complete a self-assessment tax return?

Councillors may need to complete a self-assessment tax return depending on their individual circumstances, including any allowances received. You should seek advice from HMRC or a tax advisor to confirm your personal requirements.

How do I submit my pension form to Payroll?

Further information regarding access to pensions will be provided as soon as possible.

IT and Digital

Can I set up automatic email forwarding?

No, automatic email forwarding is not permitted for security reasons. If you need help managing your emails or believe forwarding is necessary, please contact the [Democracy Team](#) for advice.

Where can I find the ECC email signature template?

The email signature template is available on the Members' Portal under IT and Digital - [Email signature guidance and template](#)

Can I sync calendars with an iPhone calendar please?

Please see this guide on using your mobile phone- [Microsoft Teams for Mobile Users](#). If you need help please contact the Essex Digital Service who will also be around before the Council meeting on 28 May.

How can I order additional equipment needed for my role?

If you require additional equipment to carry out your role effectively, please [complete this form](#) with your requirements and we will organise this for you as soon as possible.

Induction, Training and Development

Where is the full induction timetable?

You can find the induction timetable any links to recordings and slides on the [Member Development](#) part of the portal. Calendar invitations have also been sent to all Members. If you are experiencing issues accessing the timetable, please email democratic.services@essex.gov.uk.

Where are the induction recordings?

These can be found under 'files' in Teams (you need to be logged in to Microsoft Office with your ECC account to access these) direct link is [here](#).

Who do I let know that I have watched an induction session?

Please email democratic.services@essex.gov.uk to confirm that you have viewed the session.

Where can I find out more about member development opportunities?

You can attend the ECC induction sessions, with further training offered based on members' needs. More information is also available on the Members' Portal (Member Development

section). Please contact democratic.services@essex.gov.uk for further information.

Will recorded sessions be emailed?

Yes, most sessions will be recorded and you will receive a link each week and will also be available on the Members' Portal and in the relevant Members' Teams channel.

Highways and Local Information

Who is my highways buddy?

Further information will follow regarding this.

Where can I find information about Highways and related induction sessions?

The Highways Strategy and Management session takes place on 19th June, 11:00 am-12:30 pm (Teams). The members' portal includes a [Highways](#) area with the latest updates, contacts and guidance.

Do you have quality maps for each division?

Yes. The [Essex County Council Divisions Map](#) shows district council boundaries (green), district wards (blue) and ECC divisions (red).