

Introductory Session

- Paul Turner, Director: Legal and Assurance
- Joanna Boaler, Assistant Director: Democracy and Transparency

13 May 2026

Agenda

1 **Current Essex Local
Government Structure**

2 **Constitution**

3 **Meetings and Decision
Making**

4 **Committees and Council**

5 **Supporting you**

6 **Section title**

7 **Section title**

8 **Section title**

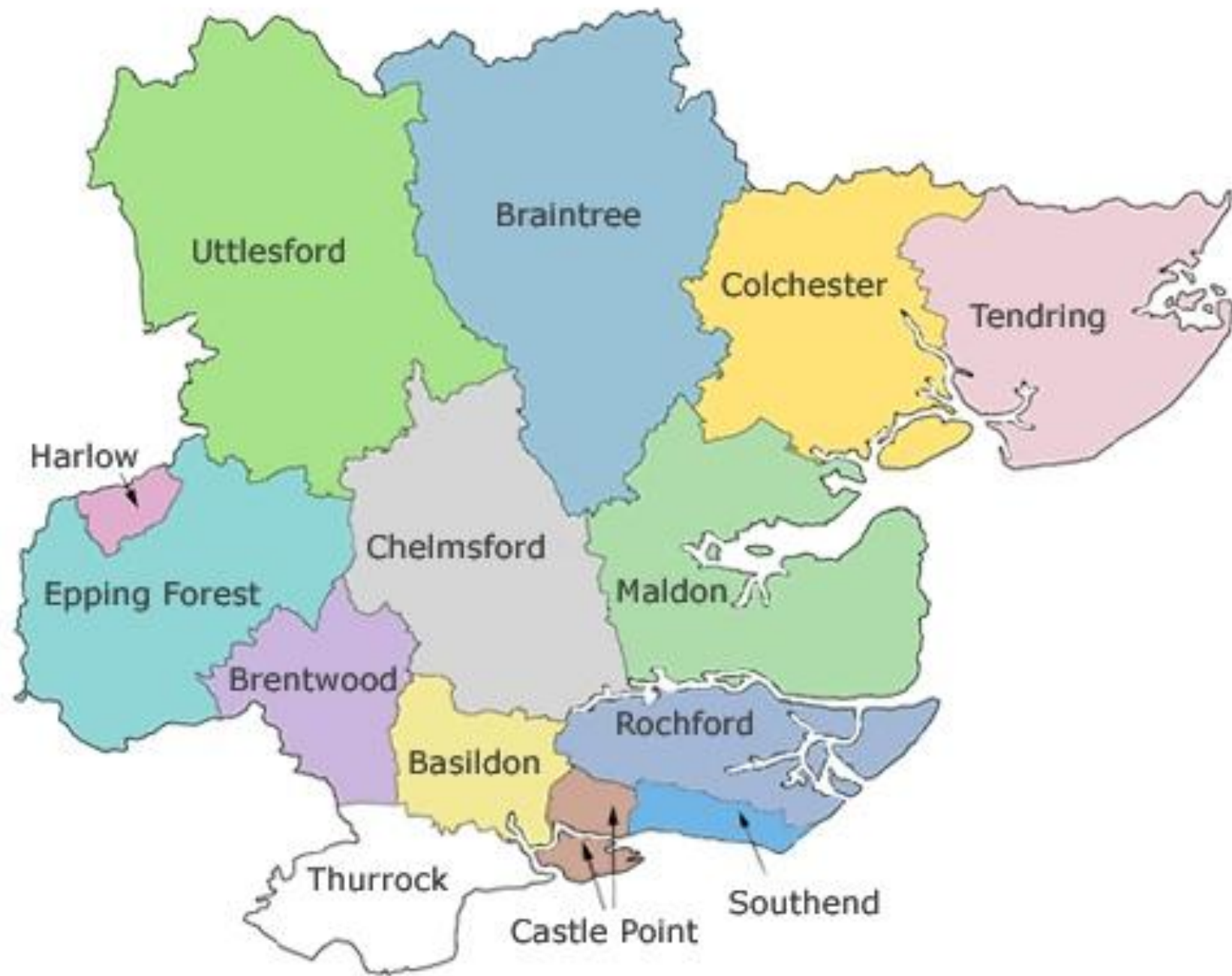
**C300 Parish and Town
Councils – covering
about half of residents**

**District, Borough and
City Councils**

County Council



<https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/election-maps/gb/index.html>



Uttlesford

Braintree

Colchester

Tendring

Harlow

Epping Forest

Chelmsford

Maldon

Brentwood

Basildon

Rochford

Thurrock

Castle Point

Southend

Essex County Council Services

Education

Children's Social Care
and Early Years and
Child Care

Adult Social Care

Transport: highways,
lighting, new roads,
traffic management, on
street parking public
rights of way and buses

Waste Disposal

Public Health – National
Health Service (NHS)
services

Minerals and Waste
Planning

Library Services

Consumer Protection
(Trading Standards)

Emergency Planning

Country Parks

Home to school
transport

Registrar Services
(Births, Deaths and
Marriages)

Coroners Services

Many more!

The Essex County Council Constitution

Part 1 is a summary and explanation.

Part 2 explains the rights of citizens and how the key parts of the council operate.

Part 3 is the responsibility for functions and includes the schemes of delegation to cabinet members and officers.

Part 4 contains Procedure Rules.

Part 5 contains codes of conduct in respect of members and officers and the members allowance scheme.

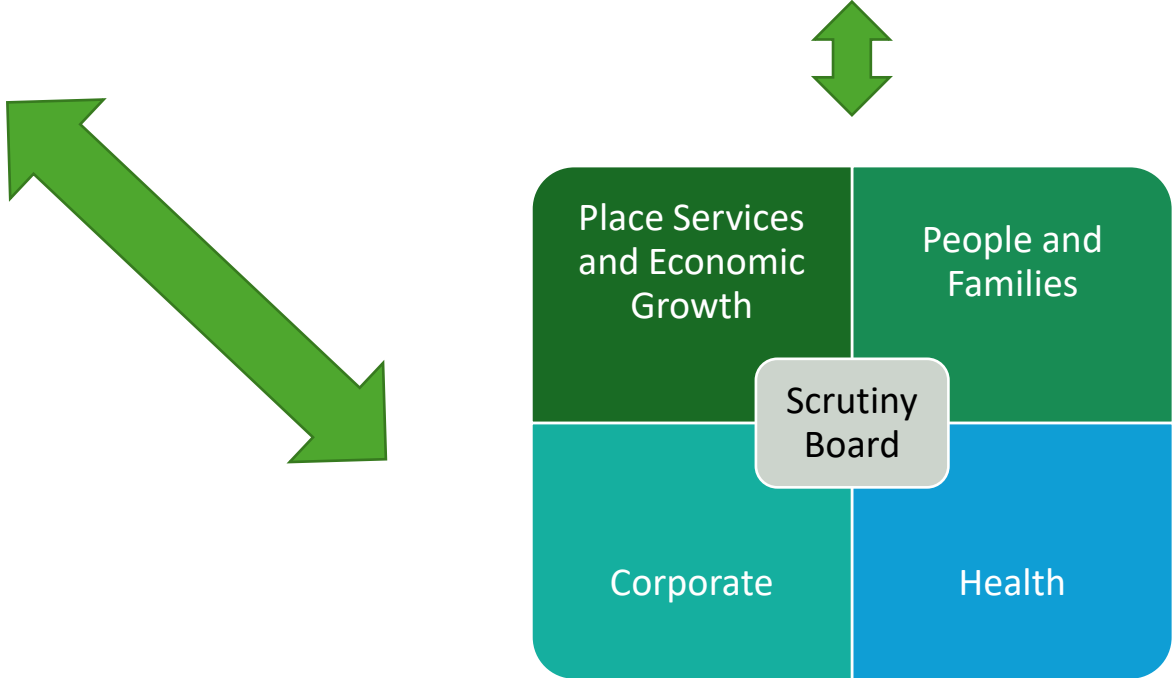
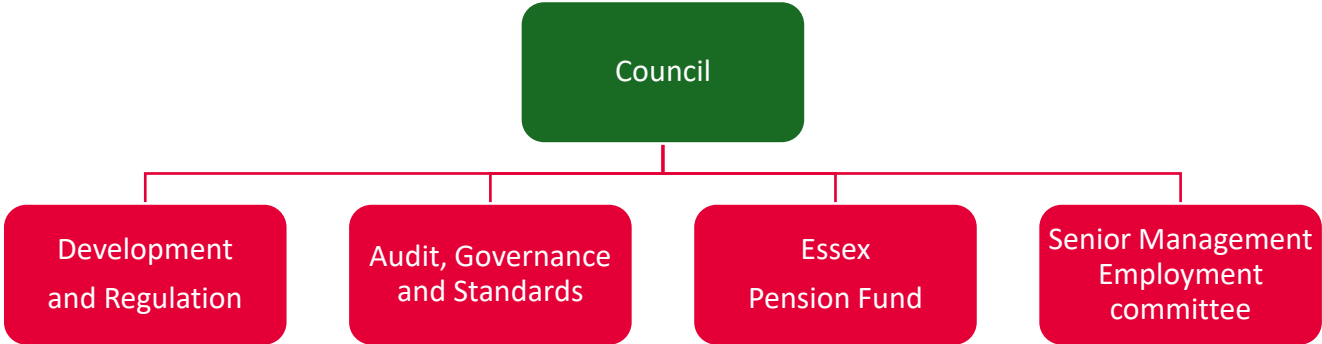
<https://www.essex.gov.uk/about-council/our-constitution>

Principles of meetings and decision making



- **Transparency**
- **Decisions based on advice set out in writing**
- **Fairness to all members**
- **A clear way of deciding exactly what has been agreed. Otherwise you can have 78 people who all have a different recollection about what has been decided.**


Decision making





Policy and Scrutiny Committees


Four Policy and Scrutiny Committees:


- Corporate
- Places Services and Economic Growth
- People and Families
- Health Overview


 Meet monthly/six weekly 6-10 times a year

 Public meetings

 Critical friend – improvements, forward thinking and enabling positive outcomes

 Pre decision scrutiny

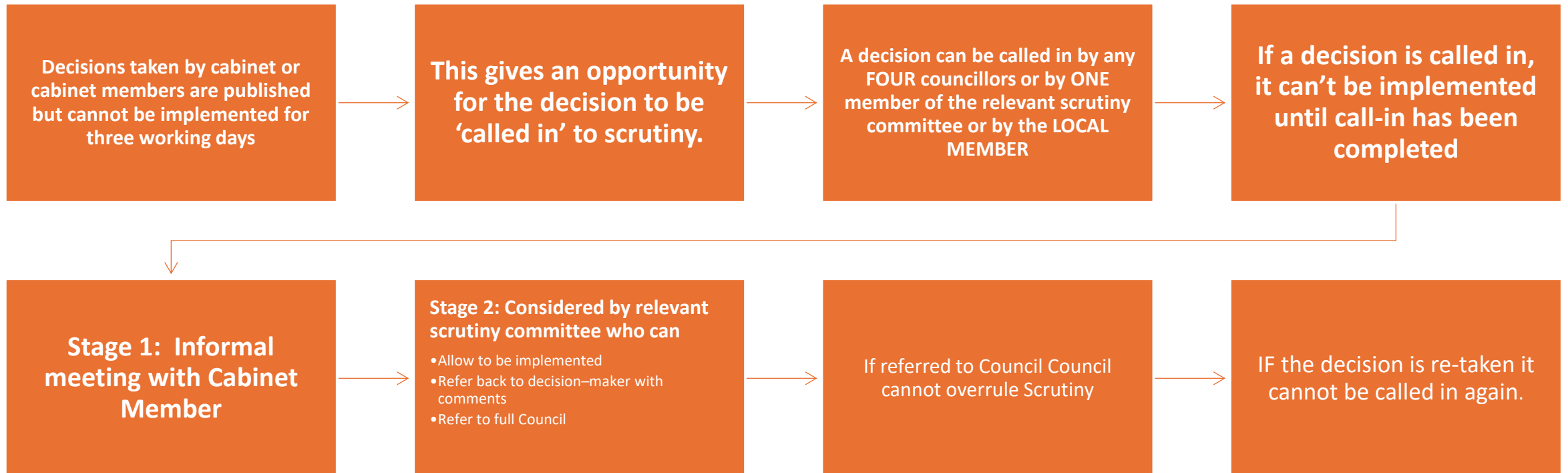
 Post decision scrutiny

 Call-in

 Reviews and work

 Make recommendations

Call-in



Decisions can be exempted from Call in by the Chairman of Corporate Scrutiny Committee

Other Bodies

Member
Development
Steering Group

Constitution
Working Group

Corporate
Parenting
Panel

Scrutiny Board

Time limited
groups

External /Joint Bodies

Lea Valley
Regional Park
Authority

Essex Police, Fire
and Crime Panel

Garden
Communities
Joint Committees

Essex County
Traveller Unit
Joint Committee

Essex Flood
Partnership
Board

Parking
Partnerships
Joint Committees

Sea Fisheries
Joint Committees

Regional Flood
and Coastal
Committees

Outside bodies



The list is constantly changing – listed in scheme of allowances



Bodies where we have a right to nominate a member/director:

Freeport East

Active Essex Foundation Charitable Incorporated Organisation

ECC owned companies



Bodies where we are sometimes asked to nominate a member but have no legal right. (eg Firstsite Limited in Colchester)



Need to manage conflicts of interests – company directors have a duty to act in the interests of the company, which may not be aligned to the interests of the Council

Member Enquiries

Small team that manage all County Councillor and MP enquiries

Single point of contact

Avoids duplication

Records and investigate issues you raise to enable you to reply to your resident

10 day service level agreement for responding (faster than Freedom of Information (FOI))

Member.enquiries@essex.gov.uk

For further information about the Member Enquiries Service a session will take place on **Thursday 21 May**

Correspondence and complaints

Correspondence via post, email and telephone

<http://members.essex.gov.uk/>

Members' Portal

Meetings calendar, papers and
Forward Plan

Email

ECC Local Funds 2026/27

Highways issues and Member
Initiative

Member Development

Guidance, resources and key
documents

My Oracle

Key contacts

Scrutiny

Member Allowances and Expenses

Key information:

- Induction session taking place: **Tuesday 9 June 1:30-2:30pm** 🎬
- Members Allowances Scheme – **part 26 of constitution, page 195**
- Basic Allowance - **£14,471** per annum (monthly payments)
- **Special Responsibility Allowances** for certain roles
- Some expenses payable, **keep receipts and tickets and record of mileage and activities – including fuel receipts**
- Expenses claims only payable for **approved duties**
- Claim must be made **within four months** of event/expenditure
- Subsistence (ie food and drink) only **outside of Essex for approved duties** at approved times. No alcohol can be claimed for.
- Dependent carers allowance available
- Expenses and payroll information **My Oracle**



Full Council

Meets five times a year – May, July, October, December, February

Formal, structured meeting, recorded and streamed on YouTube

Chaired by the Chairman of the Council

Approval of reports by show of hands/ assent, occasional named votes

Some procedural – approval of minutes and reports

Some more interactive – debates on motions and questions

Public questions, usually response from relevant cabinet member

Opportunity to present petitions

Speak through the Chairman

Can stand or sit to speak - microphones

Prayers at the start of the meeting

Duration dependent on business and how much members want to say

Full Council – Annual Meeting – 10am 28 May 2026



Agenda and summons published on 19 May



Elect Chairman of Council, Appoint Vice Chairman



Elect Leader of Council



Approve appointments to Committees and other positions and bodies



Report on members returned and political proportionality



Approval of annual reports



Notices of Motion



Oral Questions

Personal Safety –practical advice

- Tell someone where you are going
- Think about your family and friends and anyone who lives with you
- Avoid visiting residents at home – seek advice if you plan to do this
- Do not tell the world if you are going to be away and think about what you post on social media about your personal movements
- Consider your venue, parking arrangements etc. when going somewhere new
- Seek advice if you have concerns - [Safety and Risk - Members' Portal](#)
- Attend/watch the personal safety induction session on 9 July
- Speak to us urgently if you have any concerns.



Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults – role as the corporate parent of looked after children

All members asked to undergo an enhanced DBS (formally CRB) check within three months of election

ECC will support you in completing the application and verifying your identity and will pay the fee

You will receive notification, if the check discloses anything, we will be notified but not what is on the certificate

If there is a disclosure, it will be referred to the Safeguarding Service and a confidential process will follow

Asking questions as a councillor



Just ask!



Use Member Enquiries – for case work and anything else you want to know



Oral questions at council meetings [five times a year] (time limit of up to 20 minutes)



Written questions process

Member funds

Funds due to **open for nominations on Friday 12 June**

Induction session on Friday 5 June 11am–12noon Online (Teams)

Locality Fund - £5,000 to nominate towards projects within your community – not for profit organisations

Local Community Fund - £5,000 to allocate on specific areas (Youth Provision, Levelling Up in the Community, Community Safety, Improving the Environment, Supporting Community events with over 2000 attendees)

