

People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Member induction 2026

July 2026

Welcome! The purpose of today is to



Understanding the
remit of PAF



Get to know each
other



Some considerations
for conducting scrutiny



Talk about work
planning approach
and principles

Introductions

- 2 What the Committee Covers
- 3 Key People
- 4 Context & Insight
- 5 How Scrutiny Works
- 6 Committee Practicalities
- 7 Shaping the Future
- 8 Discussion / Questions

Committee Terms of Reference

Education (other than skills and apprenticeships)

Childrens' Services

Youth Services

Services relating to support for the community safety and the reduction of offending

Adult social care, including the support of and assistance of people with learning or physical disabilities or sensory impairment and older people and the homeless

Sport and physical activity including Active Essex (the Health Overview and Scrutiny committee to be included on healthy lifestyle matters)

Transport services relating to any of the above services

Co-opted members



Scrutiny committees can co-opt members



Legal requirement to have education representatives



Differences between co-opting and having as a witness instead



Healthwatch Essex have a standing 'observer' status on two committees.

Education, SEND and Home to School Transport



Cllr Sam Journet
Cabinet Member for Education, SEND and Skills



Helen Lincoln
Executive Director for Children, Families and Education

Childrens and Youth Services



Cllr Sue Truman
Cabinet Member for Children and Families



Helen Lincoln
Executive Director for Children, Families and Education

Adult Social Care



Cllr Paul Godfrey
Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care



Nick Presmeg
Executive Director, Adult Social Care (DASS)

Services relating to support for the community safety and the reduction of offending and Sport and physical activity including Active Essex



**Cllr Chris Hosack
Cabinet Member for Resident and Community
Services**



**Jason Fergus
Head of Active Essex**

Council budget allocation overview

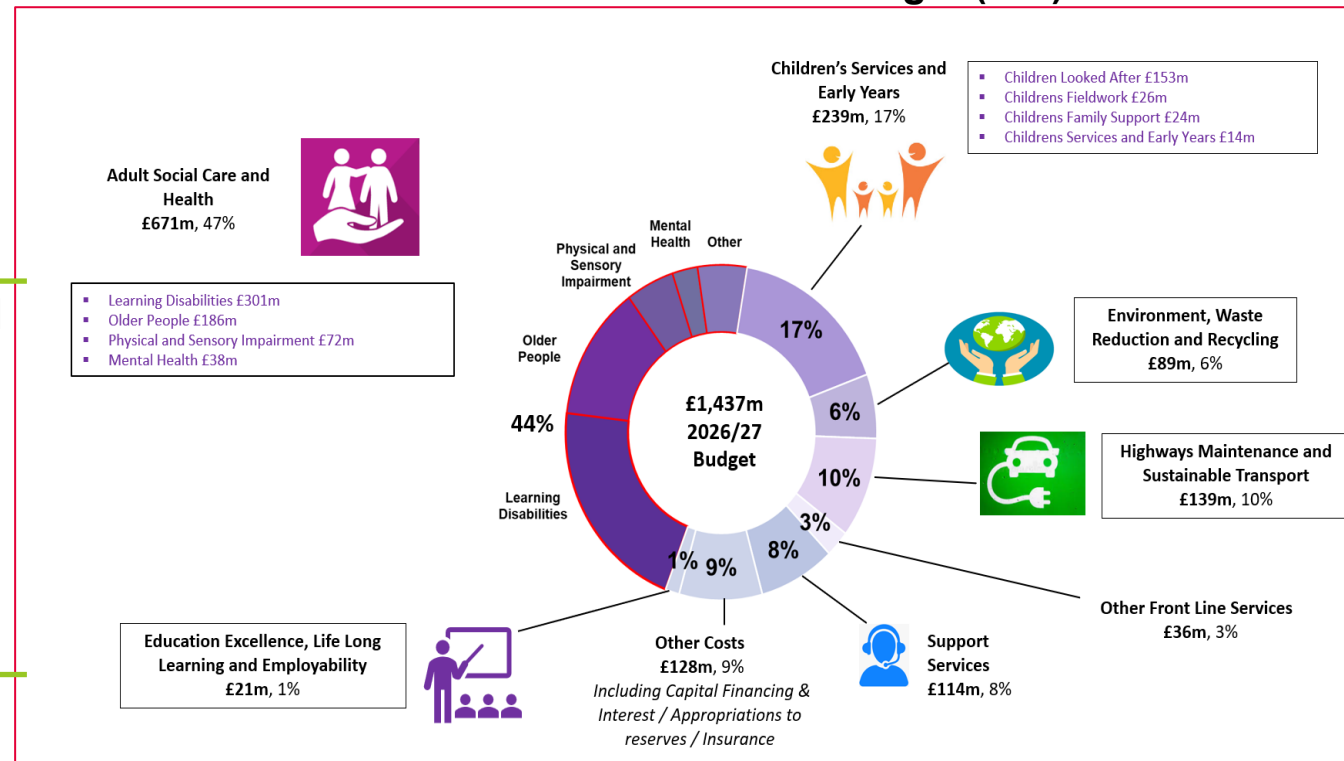
(data based on portfolio)

Adult Social Care is by far our biggest area of spend, at **£671 million, 47%** of the total council budget.

The largest areas of spend within this are **learning disabilities (£301m)** and **older people's care (£186m)**, reflecting both long-term, high-cost support and an ageing population.

The council's overall financial sustainability is heavily dependent on managing demand and cost pressures in Adult Social Care.

The 2026/27 ECC Revenue Budget (Net)



Overview of Committee Items Considered from 2025-26

Category (Terms of Reference)	Items (count)	% of total time
Education (incl. SEND, libraries, school-related)	5	29.4%
Children's Services (non-education)	3.5	20.6%
Adult Social Care	3.5	20.6%
Youth Services	1	5.9%
Sport & Physical Activity	1	5.9%
Other (corporate / performance reporting)	3	17.6%
Community Safety / Offending	0	0%
Transport (related to services)	0	0%

Scrutiny skills include...

Questioning
- asking the
right
questions
without
appearing
aggressive

Listening -
actively
listen to the
information
being put
forward

Chairing
skills – for
both formal
committees
and Task
and Finish
Groups

Analytical
skills -
interpreting
and
balancing
information
to reach
conclusions

Team
working –
effectively
working with
Members
from other
political
groups to
achieve a
common
goal

Project
Planning –
selecting
topics
according to
priorities,
resources
and
timescales

Questions



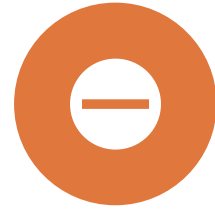
SINGLE OR
MULTIPLE
QUESTIONS?



CLARITY AND
AMBIGUITY



QUESTION OR
STATEMENT?



LENGTH



TONE



OPEN VS
CLOSED?

Listening

Actively listen to the information
being put forward



Follow evidence and be adaptable



Try not to predetermine



Be mindful of tone and body
language

Why do we make recommendations?

- To add value to decision making
- To improve outcomes for residents
- To influence decisions before they are finalised
- To provide a constructive challenge to the Executive
- To identify risks, gaps, unintended consequences
- To promote transparency and accountability
- To encourage new approaches and innovation

Key Considerations

- Is it evidence based?
- Is it within the Council's powers?
- Is it realistic and deliverable?
- Does it add value?
- Is it clearly directed to the right audience?
- Is there committee consensus?

What is a good recommendation?

- Clear and specific
- Action-focused
- Evidence-based
- Realistic and achievable
- Time-bound

Powers and following up

- Not legally binding but highly influential
- Made in public
- Based on evidence and cross-party input
- Can require a formal response
- Can inform Executive Decisions
- Responses and outcomes should be tracked and progress reviewed

Committee Practicalities

Meetings – Monthly in CR1

Pre-Meetings – Online, at least 2 days before the meeting

Vice-Chairmen – will be nominated / agreed at the first formal meeting in September

Agenda publication – 5 clear days prior

What does a typical meeting agenda look like?

Work planning principles



Maintain a transparent Work Programme.



Have regard for capacity and resources.



Reflects the priorities of the Committee



Flexible

Cross-cutting issues and joint working

Issues may cut across more than one scrutiny committee

Avoid duplication of effort and resource

Streamlined scrutiny will benefit the County Council

Opportunity for more strategic and cross cutting approach

Better outcomes

Topic selection — sources

Member suggestions

Cabinet Member referrals

Officer suggestions

Consultations

New legislation

Performance indicators

Audit Reports

From the public/matter of public interest

Reviewing the Forward Plan and Cabinet papers.

Considering issues for potential policy review or development.

Considering issues for in-depth review.

Identifying 'standard' items for scrutiny during the course of the year and programme in at the outset.

Considering areas for external scrutiny where there is significant community interest.

Legacies

SEND

County Lines

Suicide Surveillance – jointly with
HOPSC

Education

Future meeting dates

Date	Time	Venue
10 September 2026	10:30am	Committee Room 1, County Hall
15 October 2026	10:30am	Committee Room 1, County Hall
12 November 2026	10:30am	Committee Room 1, County Hall
10 December 2026	10:30am	Committee Room 1, County Hall
14 January 2027	10:30am	Committee Room 1, County Hall
10 February 2027	10:30am	Committee Room 1, County Hall
11 March 2027	10:30am	Committee Room 1, County Hall
14 April 2027	10:30am	Committee Room 1, County Hall
19 May 2027	10:30am	Committee Room 1, County Hall

Other relevant induction sessions

Children's Services 18 May 2026 - [slides](#) and [recording](#)

Education (including SEND) 29 May 2026 - [slides](#) and [recording](#)

Adult Social Care 3 June 2026 - [slides](#) and [recording](#)

Adult Social Care: Demand and Performance 10 June 2026 -
[slides](#) and [recording](#)

[Essex Children and Families Wellbeing Service 2025](#)

[Early years childcare reforms](#)

[Making a start with Scrutiny – CFGS 30th July](#)

