

Essex Association of Local Councils

*Supporting Local Town and Parish Councils within
Essex*

Member Enquiry Process and Procedure System



Updated- December 2024



In 2020, the EALC started a new way for you to ask your questions relating to council process and procedure. This form explains the procedure and you are asked to read it before sending your enquiry.

Where to send your enquiry

If you have a question relating to council process or procedure, please forward it to memberenquiries@ealc.gov.uk.

If it is sent to any other member of staff, they will then forward it to memberenquiries@ealc.gov.uk for you. However, some staff only work part time and this may delay a response.

Response times

The EALC aims respond to requests within 7 working days of receipt. Whilst every effort will be made to keep to this level of service, it would help us if you state when you wish to receive the advice.

Written Advice

The EALC will only provide a written response if it receives a written request.

Although many helplines like to boast that they provide verbal advice on the spot, it is important that the EALC is given all details, to ensure that we give good advice on the information we have received. This ensures that the quality of the advice provided is professional and appropriate.

What to send

All requests for legal, process and procedural advice must:

- Provide all the facts, or a summary of the relevant facts;
- Include a chronology of events if appropriate;
- Enclose important and relevant copy documentation;
- Provide an index to attachments if there are more than 3;
- Identify the position of the person requesting the advice;
- If you have sought advice from other organisations, please include that information as it helps us evaluate the guidance you have already received;

- Confirm that the person sending the request if not the Clerk, has the permission of the council to do so.

NALC legal Services

If the EALC needs to seek advice from the NALC for a Council, there is a 15 days response time. Therefore, knowing when you want the advice is imperative, so we can ask the NALC for it by that date.

There are no additional costs for this service.

WorkNest HR Services

The EALC has purchased for the membership of the EALC Member Councils HR professional support in partnership with WorkNest. If the EALC is unable to assist the Council it will provide support through WorkNest. If full representation is required, a paid for referral will be made for WorkNest to be employed directly with the member council.

You will be told there is a referral being made to WorkNest.

The Council must ask for an estimate of costs.

The is not a free service.

Essex Legal Services (ELS)

The EALC working in partnership with Essex County Council has an agreement that the EALC Member Councils can request a solicitor to act on the Council's behalf.

A referral will be made and the Council must ask for an estimate of costs.

This is not a free service.

When not to send an enquiry to the EALC

A Council threatened with or served with a legal claim, should not seek advice from EALC/NALC if they have access to legal advice and representation for defending legal claims available within the legal expenses cover of its insurance policy.

Insurers may withdraw legal expenses cover if a Council fails, in accordance with its policy, to notify the insurer of a threatened or actual legal action against it.

If a Council has solicitors acting for it already, it must provide evidence that the solicitors' consent to EALC/ NALC providing a second legal opinion.

Checklist to use the New Process and Procedures Service

<i>Steps</i>	<i>Tick box</i>
Send enquiry to memberenquiries@ealc.gov.uk	
Response time - Insert date of the advice you would like to receive	
Have you included all relevant information?	