

CHIGWELL PARISH COUNCIL
OFFICER REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY SERVICES AND ASSETS COMMITTEE
RESIDENT REPORTING SYSTEM

Date: 24 September 2026

Member Enquiries, Service Requests and Work Prioritisation

Members will recall that on 6 August 2026 officers advised that a dedicated Member Enquiries email inbox had been established to provide a clear and consistent point of contact for Councillors. Similar arrangements are widely utilised by district and county councils for the management of Member enquiries and service requests.

The purpose of the system is to ensure that requests received from Members are logged, reviewed, prioritised and allocated appropriately, whilst maintaining transparency, consistency and effective use of officer resources.

The inbox is monitored regularly and all enquiries received are reviewed as part of the Council's daily management meeting. At this meeting, requests are assessed, prioritised and allocated to the appropriate officer or operational team. The resulting actions are then tracked through to completion, with updates provided where appropriate.

Members are asked to note that prioritisation is a necessary operational requirement. Whilst all enquiries are important, the Council must ensure that resources are directed first towards matters presenting the greatest risk, legal obligation or operational impact. For example, a burial taking place on a particular day, a health and safety concern, or an urgent governance matter would inevitably take precedence over lower-risk issues such as routine grounds maintenance enquiries.

To support this process, requests are categorised using the following prioritisation framework:

Grade 1: Urgent and Important - Immediate Action Required

These matters require immediate attention due to their potential impact upon public safety, legal compliance, governance or service delivery.

Examples include:

- Health and safety concerns.
- Serious governance matters.
- Statutory or legal deadlines.
- Cemetery administration issues.
- Insurance claims.
- Emergency repairs.
- Significant service interruptions.

Grade 2: Important but Not Urgent - Planned and Scheduled

These matters are important to the Council's long-term objectives but do not require an immediate response.

Examples include:

- Budget preparation and financial planning.
- Christmas lights proposals.
- Asset management programmes.
- Tree management and surveys.
- Community Hub development projects.
- Staff development and training initiatives.

Grade 3: Urgent but Less Critical - Delegated Where Appropriate

These matters often require a prompt response but do not necessarily require direct involvement from senior officers.

Examples include:

- Routine enquiries.
- Appointment arrangements.
- Requests for information.
- Administrative follow-up actions.
- Routine operational coordination.

Grade 4: Lower Priority Matters

These matters may be deferred, incorporated into future work programmes or reviewed when operational capacity permits.

Examples include:

- Non-essential projects.
- Requests with no immediate operational impact.
- Matters already scheduled for future consideration.

Management Process

Following assessment and grading, work sheets are issued to the relevant officers or operational teams. Progress is monitored through the management process, with operational teams reporting completion back to the administration team. Records are updated accordingly and the original enquirer is informed of the outcome where appropriate.

Public Reporting Arrangements

Members are reminded that residents can also report issues directly through the Council's website using the online contact form. These enquiries are reviewed in the same manner as Member enquiries and are assessed against the Council's prioritisation framework to ensure consistency and fairness.

Future Development

Officers are currently developing a Microsoft-based reporting system specifically for Councillors. The intention is to provide a structured reporting mechanism which will improve tracking, reporting and analysis of Member enquiries.

The proposed system will recognise that many Councillors are themselves residents, facility users and community representatives who may legitimately raise operational issues encountered in the course of their duties. It will also provide improved management information, enabling officers to identify trends, recurring issues and resource demands, whilst ensuring that requests are managed consistently.

A further update will be provided once the system is operational.

Accessibility and Communications

Members should note that the Council has significantly improved accessibility for residents and stakeholders through a range of communication channels, including:

- Enhanced telephone handling arrangements.
- Dedicated email contact points.
- Online reporting via the Council website.
- Increased officer visibility within the community.
- Dedicated Member enquiry channels.
- Greater use of Social Media.

Collectively, these measures ensure that residents, service users and Councillors have multiple avenues through which concerns and requests may be raised.

Information Requirements

Members are reminded that, in accordance with the Council's policies and legal obligations, anonymous complaints or reports will not ordinarily be investigated unless there is an overriding health and safety, safeguarding or legal concern.

Similarly, where a resident asks a Councillor to raise an issue on their behalf, sufficient contact details should be provided to allow officers to investigate, verify and resolve the matter appropriately. Information received in connection with Council business forms part of the Council's records and should therefore be forwarded through the appropriate reporting channels.

Summary

The Member Enquiry process has been introduced to provide a consistent, transparent and auditable method of managing requests received from Councillors. The system ensures that matters are considered according to risk, urgency and operational impact, enabling officers to focus resources where they are most needed whilst maintaining appropriate oversight, accountability and service standards across the Council.

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