



Colchester
City Council



Election of a Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex 2024

Essex Police Area Returning Officer Briefing
for Candidates and Agents

8 March 2024

Combination of Elections

Local elections in 9 councils

5 councils all out following electoral review

General Election?

Who's who

- The Police Area Returning Officer (PARO) is the person responsible for the overall conduct of the election. The PARO is Pamela Donnelly Chief Executive of Colchester City Council.
- The PARO is also responsible for liaising with and coordinating the work of Local Returning Officers (LROs) in the police area.
- The Electoral Registration Officers are responsible for maintaining the register of electors and lists of absent voters.
- Contact details are provided later.

PARO Directions

- Notice of Election - 22 March
- Poll cards dispatched between -22 March and 5 April
- Location of count centre and polling stations - 15 March
- Date, time and venue of postal vote opening - 15 March
- Postal votes dispatched by 19 April
- Elector totals – Friday 26 April

Qualifications

- To stand as a candidate for the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner elections you must (on the date you are nominated **and** on polling day):
 - at least 18 years of age
 - British, qualifying Commonwealth citizen (with indefinite leave to remain), national of an EU member state
 - and registered as a local government elector in a local council area that is within the police area

Nominations

- Nominations open Monday 25 March 2024
- 100 subscribers required
- Three nomination papers must be submitted by all candidates by 16.00 on 5 April 2024 together with the deposit £5000:
 - the **nomination form**
 - the **home address form** (option for either home address or address in Essex police area)
 - the **consent to nomination**
- Party candidates will also need to submit, by 16.00 on 5 April:
 - a **certificate** authorising the use of a party name / registered description on the ballot paper
 - a written request to use one of the party's emblems on the ballot paper (optional)

Nominations

Take care when completing your nomination papers, as mistakes may invalidate your nomination

Complete nomination papers early and arrange for us to provide an informal check

The nomination form, home address form and consent to nomination **must be delivered by hand** and cannot be submitted by post, fax, email or other electronic means

Deposit

- Each candidate must deposit £5,000 with the PARO so that the nomination is valid.
- Preference is payment by electronic transfer
- Can be made using legal tender (cash) or a UK banker's draft
- The deposit is returned by electronic transfer if a candidate polls at least 5% of the valid votes cast across the police area

Candidates Election Address

- PARO election address guidance
- Candidates entitled to have election address published on the choosemypcc website – max 300 words
- CMPCC uploader option.
- Election Address must be submitted to PARO by noon on 5 April 2024
- PARO must agree final version by 17.00 on 5 April
- Candidates addresses and a downloadable booklet will be available on 10 April on choosemypcc website

Campaigning

- Do use imprints on all your campaign material, including websites.
- Do comply with planning rules relating to advertising hoardings and large banners.
- Do make sure outdoor posters are removed 2 weeks after the election.
- Do not produce material that looks like a poll card.
- Do not pay people to display your adverts (unless they display adverts as part of their normal business).

Electoral Commission's:

- Tellers guidance [Tellers guidance generic \(electoralcommission.org.uk\)](https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance/tellers-guidance-generic)
- Code of conduct [Code of Conduct](#)
- Digital imprint reporting portal [digital imprint reporting portal](#)

Campaigning

- Campaigners are an essential element of a healthy democracy, but their activities should not bring into question the integrity of the electoral process.
- Postal ballot packs:
 - Never touch a postal ballot paper
 - Never observe electors completing their postal vote.
 - Never handle or take any completed ballot paper or postal ballot pack from voters
- Campaigning outside polling stations:
 - You are allowed to put your messages to voters on polling day, including public spaces outside polling places
 - Keep access to polling places and the pavements around polling places clear to allow voters to enter.

Timing of Verification

Verification – to take place on 2 /3 May

Verification figures must be supplied to PARO by 02.00 on election night or 12.30 on 3 May depending whether local elections also being held

Figures to be agreed before staff are released

Candidates, election agents, counting agents and one other person appointed by the candidate are entitled to attend the verification and local count

Count

- First past the post voting system
- The count will commence at 14.00 on 3 May.
- PARO is responsible for collating the local count totals from across the police area and declaring the result

- Attendance at Count collation :
 - candidates and one person chosen by each candidate
 - election agents (or sub-agent if they are not present)

- Electoral Commissions Guidance for adjudication of doubtful ballot papers

Declaration of Office

- PARO control centre and declaration of result will be at Colchester Leisure World
- Declaration and acceptance of office will be undertaken directly following the count

Contact Details

PARO

Website: www.colchester.gov.uk/elections

Email: essex.paro@colchester.gov.uk

Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners Office

Website: www.essex.pfcc.police.uk

Choose my pcc

www.choosemypcc.org.uk

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