

County of Essex Policy and Procedures Manual

CAO Performance Appraisal Policy

Policy Number:	2025-015
Policy Type:	Corporate Policy
Approval Authority:	Essex County Council
Office of Responsibility:	Human Resources
Issuance Date:	2025-11-05 (Subject to Council approval)
Revised on Date:	N/A
Scheduled Review Date:	2026-11-15
Replaces Policy:	N/A

1.0 Introduction

This Policy establishes a formalized framework for the performance appraisal of the CAO. It is directly aligned with the County's Strategic Plan and supports the goal of "*Growing as Leaders in Public Service Excellence.*"

Specifically, this Policy advances the following strategic directions:

- Creating a people and culture strategy that strengthens the County's approach to strategic management across the employee lifecycle; and
- Developing a performance management framework for the County and its departments to support data-informed strategic and business planning and decision-making.

By setting out a transparent and constructive approach to evaluating the CAO's performance, Council ensures accountability, promotes leadership development, and strengthens the working relationship between Council and its CAO.

2.0 Scope

This Policy applies exclusively to the position of CAO of the County of Essex. The performance appraisal process is administered by County Council, with

the Warden holding primary responsibility for oversight and facilitation. Council may engage external legal counsel or a third-party consultant to provide independent advice or facilitation support as required.

3.0 Definitions

“CAO” means the Chief Administrative Officer of the County of Essex.

“Council” or **“County Council”** means the elected officials governing the County, consisting of the Warden, Deputy Warden, and Councillors.

“County of Essex” means the Corporation of the County of Essex, and may be used interchangeably with the terms the ‘County’, the ‘Corporation’ or ‘County of Essex’.

“Deputy Warden” means the individual elected into the role of Deputy Warden of the County of Essex.

“Performance Appraisal” means the structured, cyclical process through which the CAO’s performance is assessed, documented, and used to inform measurable action plans and goals.

“Policy” means this CAO Performance Appraisal Policy.

“Self-Appraisal” means the CAO Performance Appraisal Form, as completed by the CAO, that outlines their perspective on achievements, challenges, and development areas for the previous appraisal period.

“Warden” means the individual elected into the role of Warden of the County of Essex.

“Wardens” for the purposes of this Policy, means the Warden and Deputy Warden of the County.

4.0 Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to provide a structured process to support the direction and professional development of the CAO, enable ongoing feedback on the CAO’s performance, and foster a positive and collaborative relationship between County Council and its CAO.

5.0 Policy

5.1 Overview

- 5.1.1 This Policy sets out the process involved in conducting a formal annual Performance Appraisal of the CAO. The formal Performance Appraisal process should be complemented by regularly scheduled update meetings, which provide opportunities for informal dialogue and ongoing feedback.
- 5.1.2 The CAO Performance Appraisal process is cyclical in nature and, where possible, is aligned with the County's fiscal cycle.

5.2 Steps in the Performance Appraisal Process

5.2.1 CAO Self-Appraisal

- 5.2.1.1 The CAO completes a Self-Appraisal using the CAO Performance Appraisal Form, based on the agreed-upon goals and criteria as outlined in their Job Description and as captured on the current CAO Performance Appraisal Form.
- 5.2.1.2 In completing the Self-Appraisal, the CAO should identify areas for growth and propose goals for the upcoming period.
- 5.2.1.3 The CAO may suggest new objectives that align with the County's strategic priorities, areas of improvement from the current evaluation, and any new challenges they foresee.
- 5.2.1.4 The CAO should not assign a numerical value to themselves when completing this form.

5.2.2 Council Input

- 5.2.2.1 Council members review the CAO's Self-Appraisal and provide written input through their own CAO Performance Appraisal form.
- 5.2.2.2 Members should provide specific examples and observations of accomplishments and/or any concerns, but should not assign numeric rankings.

5.2.2.3 The Wardens compile Council's input, identify themes, and prepare a draft appraisal.

5.2.2.4 The Wardens may choose to review the CAO's Self-Appraisal document before or after they complete their draft of the Performance Appraisal.

5.2.3 **Formal Evaluation Meeting**

5.2.3.1 The Warden and Deputy Warden meet privately with the CAO to present the draft Performance Appraisal.

5.2.3.2 The CAO may respond to the feedback immediately or request a follow-up discussion after reflection.

5.2.3.3 Differences in assessment between the CAO and Wardens should be addressed through open dialogue, and the Wardens may choose to revise ratings based on CAO feedback or retain the original assessment ratings.

5.2.4 **Finalization of the Performance Appraisal**

5.2.4.1 Following the discussion(s), the Wardens finalize the Performance Appraisal, incorporating an action plan and measurable goals for the next evaluation cycle.

5.2.4.2 The finalized Performance Appraisal is documented, shared with the CAO and Council, retained for future reference, and used as a baseline for the next performance appraisal cycle.

5.2.5 **Ongoing Update Meetings**

5.2.5.1 Regular quarterly update meetings between the CAO and the Wardens should be scheduled to monitor progress.

5.2.5.2 These meetings provide an opportunity to have open discussion, review objectives, adjust goals, and maintain alignment with County priorities.

5.2.5.3 In circumstances of concern or where a CAO is newly hired, update meetings may be scheduled more frequently at the request of the CAO and/or at the discretion of the Wardens.

6.0 Responsibility

6.1 The Warden is responsible for:

- 6.1.1 Overseeing and facilitating the CAO Performance Appraisal Process;
- 6.1.2 Coordinating the collection and collation of Council's written input;
- 6.1.3 Ensuring the process is conducted fairly, respectfully, and in alignment with this Policy;
- 6.1.4 Leading the formal and informal meetings with the CAO, with the Deputy Warden present; and
- 6.1.5 Reviewing this Policy, the CAO Performance Appraisal Form, and the Guidelines for Completing the CAO Performance Appraisal Form on an annual basis to ensure it is up-to-date and reflective of the purpose and goals of this Policy.

6.2 The Deputy Warden is responsible for:

- 6.2.1 Supporting the Warden in facilitating the Performance Appraisal process; and
- 6.2.2 Attending all formal meetings with the CAO along with the Warden.

6.3 County Council is responsible for:

- 6.3.1 Providing written input as part of the CAO Performance Appraisal Process;
- 6.3.2 Ensuring feedback is constructive and evidence-based; and
- 6.3.3 Consulting with external legal council and/or a third-party consultant (as opposed to any internal County employee) in the event that guidance or support through the Performance Appraisal Process is required.

CAO Performance Appraisal Policy

Number: 2025-015

6.4 The CAO is responsible for:

6.4.1 Completing a Self-Appraisal each year;

6.4.2 Participating in formal and informal discussions with the Warden and Deputy Warden; and

6.4.3 Participating in the development of agreed-upon performance goals and action plans and working toward those goals.

7.0 Related Documents/Legislation

- CAO Performance Appraisal Form
- Guidelines for completing the CAO Performance Appraisal Form

8.0 Summary of Amendments

Date	Amendments
2025-11-05	Policy approved by County Council (subject to Council review and approval).

Appendices

- None.