

HIGHWAYS HIGHLIGHTS

INFORMATION FOR LOCAL COUNCILLORS | MARCH 2023



WHY WE USE BUS LANES AND GATES

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SAFER/GREENER/HEALTHIER

COMMENT

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CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

As we come out of the extremely busy Winter Service period we are now looking at ways that we can effectively, efficiently and quickly repair the damage to our network caused by the extreme weather events we have faced.

Following recent announcements for additional investment into highways maintenance, we are currently working with our supply chain to have more teams working every day so that we have more 'boots on the ground' to carry out the much needed repairs, as well as finalising a Member Led pothole scheme for this year and focusing on repairing the network, including the carriageways and footways.

We always endeavour to carry our permanent repairs where possible, but where we can't there will be 'make safes' or temporary repairs completed to ensure safety - please bear this in mind when you see repairs that do not look 'complete'.

Where a defect is known to us and we need to make it immediately safe for users of the network, you might find that we have to barricade it off, or put a cone there to alert users to the danger.

We will always come back to do the repair as soon as we are able to - we know that these 'make safes' aren't always what our residents are expecting and that they can cause concerns, so I am keen to share the message about these measures.



WHY WE USE BUS LANES AND GATES

What is the difference between a bus gate and a bus lane?

A 'bus gate' is usually a very short length of road, sometimes physically restricted, through which only schedules buses and other authorised vehicles are allowed to pass through. A 'bus lane' is usually a longer stretch of road, which is segregated into a separated and marked lane for buses and one or more parallel lanes for all other traffic.

Bus gates and bus lanes are enforceable. Before entering a bus lane or bus gate, motorists should check the approach signs as the exempted classes of vehicle will vary from location to location and will be signed appropriately.

Why do we operate bus lanes and bus gates?

Bus lanes and gates were introduced over the years to improve bus service punctuality and journey time reliability as we seek to reduce over-reliance on cars, provide greater choice over journeys and minimise congestion.

Bus lanes also improve safety, as they reduce the likelihood of accidents between cars and pedestrians by removing cars and many pedestrians crossing the road to make their way between a bus stop and the station.

For bus users, confidence in their services comes from improved reliability as buses suffer fewer delays at pinch points – in turn, this encourages more people to use buses, which makes the whole bus network more sustainable for the long-term and reduces congestion caused by cars.

In some locations, bus lanes are also used to stop rat-running and inappropriate short-cuts being used, giving residents quieter, safer roads. The aim is to maintain the reliability and attractiveness of the bus network, encourage more sustainable travel and help wider road network management and traffic flow.

Who is the enforcing authority?

Essex County Council. People who have infringed a bus gate or lane will be sent a letter which is a Penalty Charge Notice.

For Essex County Council, bus gates/lanes are about safety, reducing traffic volume in busy interchanges which also helps with air quality, as well as reducing the temptation of people creating cut-throughs.

Bus gates are not about income - success for the Council would be to issue no fines at all, because that would be an indication that people were being more thoughtful about their journeys and the routes they take. All money generated by PCNs for bus gate misuse in Essex is ring-fenced and reinvested to help improve public transport, roads, and the transport network across the county.

Where are the bus gate/lane locations in Essex?

- Channels Drive, Chelmsford
- Duke Street, Chelmsford
- Ghyllgrove, Basildon
- Gunson Gate, Chelmsford
- High Street, Colchester
- Hythe Hill, Colchester
- Hythe Station Road, Colchester
- Laindon Link, Basildon
- Long Riding, Basildon
- Maldon Road, Colchester
- Mill Road, Maldon
- Nayland Road, Colchester
- North Hill, Colchester
- North Station Road, Colchester
- Southernhay, Basildon
- Velizy Avenue, Harlow

[More information about each of these bus gates/lanes can be found online.](#)



SPEED OF LIGHT



Essex County Council is moving at the speed of light to upgrade 82,000 old-style streetlights, mainly in residential roads, with LED ('light-emitting diode') streetlight technology.

We have 131,000 street lights in total and this is the last 82,000 in this phase. With only 29,000 left to change, Essex Highways crews have been upgrading 1000 lights a week. Councillor Lee Scott, Essex County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport, said: "I am thrilled with the progress that has been made with the LED rollout. I would like to thank the crews for all their hard work.

"LED lights bring many benefits for both residents and the environment as they save on average around 75% energy usage and 1700 tons of carbon emissions involved in generating electricity. The replacement will also mean a better service and more effective use of taxpayer's money, as the LEDs are expected to last 20 years, whereas 20% of all sodium lamps fail after four years and must be replaced."

The phase 4 programme was significantly impacted by the global

shortage of components for the telecells that are used to control the streetlights. This was due to major events out of our control such as the effects of the pandemic lockdowns and the war in Ukraine.

We mitigated this risk for the most part by ordering a surplus of stock before the shortage hit but we were still slightly behind our target programme. Despite this, a recovery programme has been agreed with our contractors to ensure works are completed by the end of the financial year 2023/24.

You may have noticed that some streetlights in areas haven't yet been replaced and you may be concerned that they have been missed entirely. There are many reasons why this could be, such as operatives being unable to gain safe access to equipment due to foliage or parked cars, to concerns about the column structure. We will get back to them. We are continuing to work until all unfinished units are completed.

With replacements in Braintree and Epping Forest almost complete our crews will be moving on to the Castle Point and Harlow areas very soon.

SAFER GREENER HEALTHIER

Transforming travel in Essex

ESSEX RESIDENTS WALK FOUR TIMES AROUND THE EARTH



Essex residents walked over 213 million steps in safer, greener, healthier 3k steps-a-day challenge.

The second ECC annual walking challenge run in collaboration with walking app Go Jauntly has been a great success. 872 participants signed up to the 3k steps a day challenge, up from 628 participants last year.

During the six-week challenge, participants logged over 213 million steps which is the equivalent of 162,550 km (or walking the circumference of the Earth four times!)

The challenge, part of our ambition to make Essex safer, greener and healthier, saw 170 participants fully complete the challenge. 34% had never participated in a walking challenge before.

The challenge had broad appeal across the county with Corringham having the most participants sign-up. 63% of participants agreed that the challenge encouraged them to walk more.





JCB DEMONSTRATES NEW POTHOLE REPAIR MACHINE

Essex Highways is always interested to find out about new technology and innovations that will help us achieve a safer, greener, healthier approach to our operations in Essex.

On 27 March, JCB demonstrated its Pothole Pro machine in Essex, patching some defects on Winters Road in Colchester. The machine is described as a unique 3 in 1 solution specifically designed to sort out

any pothole repair in just eight minutes. It uses a planer to cut the pothole out, a cropping tool that provides a uniform hole to fill and a wide sweeper that collects any chippings and debris with ease. JCB describes the machine's capability with the succinct 'cut, crop and clean with one machine' slogan. It appeared to do exactly that. The Pothole Pro will now be considered in a business case against other machines and methods.



ROUTINE REPAIRS: FEBRUARY 2023

In February we continued to repair carriageway and footway defects. When looking at these numbers, it is important to remember that repairs are prioritised by severity not by district, so numbers can vary considerably. Streetlights-fixed totals don't include the work being carried out in the LED upgrade programme. Please note: Our gully clearing service has been severely impacted this month by the winter weather as most of our Essex Highways gully operatives are also winter service drivers.

DISTRICT	COUNTY ROUTES	LOCAL ROADS	PAVEMENT DEFECTS FIXED	DRAINS CLEARED	STREETLIGHTS FIXED
BASILDON	43	24	186	0	83
BRAINTREE	92	101	288	5172	25
BRENTWOOD	35	48	89	0	143
CASTLE POINT	18	24	52	0	161
CHELMSFORD	51	46	110	0	141
COLCHESTER	32	53	111	170	21
EPPING FOREST	96	27	153	0	115
HARLOW	8	24	35	0	59
MALDON	32	19	92	0	9
ROCHFORD	30	8	101	0	174
TENDRING	21	87	136	0	41
UTTLESFORD	82	37	126	2247	3
TOTALS	540	498	1479	7589	975

