

HIGHWAYS HIGHLIGHTS

HELPFUL
TIPS AND
INFORMATION
FOR LOCAL
COUNCILLORS

A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM COUNCILLOR KEVIN BENTLEY

I don't think many of us have ever seen or lived through such an extraordinary time where the vast majority of the population is being asked to stay at home and our very social fabric is in lockdown. I thought it important that in this issue we keep you updated on how this is affecting Essex Highways and what we are doing to ensure we adhere to the Government advice yet keep our roads safe.

We are now working to adjust our activities, plans and how we do things. Keeping the main road network in good repair is critical especially for emergency services, key workers and distribution of essential supplies. We are currently continuing with most repair work, but we are assessing daily our planned programme of more extensive improvements in the light of many unknowns including likely availability of workers, materials, equipment and the need to maintain social distancing even within the workforce. We are also working with utility companies and developers to see what changes need to be made, if any. At this point, existing roadworks will generally remain in place.

This is moving very fast and we are continually monitoring Government advice. I shall ensure you are kept up to date about how Essex Highways is adapting to these extraordinary times and the quickest way to do this is via the ECC website and our social media channels. Please do keep reporting things on-line. We are maintaining a log of defects and will get them repaired just as soon as we are able. This is uncharted territory and like all public employees our teams right across Essex Highways are performing in amazing ways to benefit our community. They are an incredible and dedicated team and I am proud to be their Cabinet Member.

Please bear with us and of course you can contact me if you need any further information.

Best wishes
Kevin

ROAD REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENTS DON'T STOP FOR WINTER



No snow this winter (so far), but gritters have been out many times as road surfaces hit freezing. Damage leading to extra potholes is caused by the heavy rain and standing water which has then often frozen in small cracks in the surface. Despite having to divert our crews to gritter driving and drain/flood work, we fixed 731 potholes in January and 762 in February. During those months we had around 50 work crews and 45 roads and public footway inspectors out on roads and paths in Essex each working day.

Our priority is to keep numbers of potholes on main roads low, as so many drivers depend on these, not least now emergency services, NHS and grocery supplies. Cllr Bentley recently shifted more crews to repairs on local roads, where people live and work. Essex County Council's Cabinet has allocated £5 million extra for road repairs this year. Work continued too on our major improvement projects county-wide. There were 49 other, smaller, "capital" investment schemes on Essex roads in January, 88 in February and 94 planned for March, before coronavirus hit.

We resurfaced 334 roads in 2019 and had planned to resurface around 160 miles of road in 2020. We fixed 18,414 potholes in 2018-19. Our Inspectors report regularly on the condition of every public road in Essex, but we also ask people to report any issue they find on the roads in between inspections and we have made it much easier and quicker to do that online. Even if, in current circumstances, we can't fix every problem quickly, we still log all reports for future repair.

A LANDMARK DISAPPEARS AS PART OF COUNTY-WIDE IMPROVEMENTS

After 40 years as an easily identifiable Chelmsford landmark, the Army and Navy Flyover has now been dismantled.

The steel and concrete structure was removed section by section by specialist company Clarke Demolition, using heavy-capacity cranes to lift out each span having cut it free using oxy-acetylene torches. The sections were then moved off-site for steel recycling.

You can follow the work of the Taskforce looking to secure government investment for the future of the junction here and watch videos on the Essex Highways Youtube page.

As a key traffic node not just in Chelmsford but for many journeys in the county, removal of the flyover is a vital step towards enabling long-term improvements to the junction. County-wide, the flyover removal and planning for the junction's future is just one

of the major projects Essex County Council are investing in to improve county connectivity and growth.

The works in Chelmsford join major urban highway improvements at Colchester's A133/Ipswich Rd/Harwich Rd widening, where piling progress has allowed some recent traffic management alleviation, and improvements on the Braintree-Chelmsford route, at Sheepcotes Roundabout.

Contractors have also been appointed to construct the M11's new Junction 7A starting later this year which, once open, will alleviate congestion in Harlow and support economic growth in west Essex.

[CLICK TO VIEW VIDEO](#)



CABINET APPROVES MAJOR BUS SHELTER IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME, WHILE SAVING MONEY

All City, Borough and District Councils in Essex have agreed with ECC to put all 1,300 bus shelters owned between them into one county-wide contract. This will shortly be tendered for bus shelter providers/advertisers to bid for.

The winning provider will then replace old shelters with new, improved advertising shelters over ten years. Better seats, lighting, space for wheelchairs and better bus service info will be provided. Cleaning and maintenance costs will then move from the councils to the company. Win, win, win – three coming along at once!

N.B. (Please note, Town and Parish Councils will continue to manage their own shelters.)



Above: Cllr Robert Mitchell, Deputy Cabinet Member for Infrastructure

COUNTY MEMBERS FIND HIGHWAYS 'BUDDIES' HELPFUL

In Autumn 2018 each County Member was offered a named highways relationship lead (or 'buddy') for support when delving into and resolving some of the more technically complex highways issues that crop up in Member's case work, and which have already been through the Member Enquiries process.

Since then, many County Members have benefited from the working relationship fostered with their senior highways officer, which often usefully supplements the work of the county Members Enquiries team.

If you are a County Member, please remember that your highways 'relationship lead' is there to help you – please contact county Member Enquiries team in the usual way if you want your highways 'buddy's' name.

Where possible, please supply your buddy with your Member Enquiries reference number.

Please remember that the buddy service is for complex and existing highway enquiries. New enquiries should be reported online or submitted to the Member Enquiries team in the first instance.

DIGGER ON A CHARGE

Essex Highways has been trialling an electric-powered JCB mini excavator, the construction industry's first, which is proving itself to be just as robust and capable as its fossil-fuel powered counterparts.

The machine shares the same structure, canopy, dig end, hydraulics and controls as the diesel model and performs in exactly the same way. It is able to do a full day's work on a single charge, the power supplied by a solar-powered generator.

Being electric brings with it several advantages over traditional diesel powered plant. Electricity is cheaper than fossil fuel and there are no engine liquid checks, reducing time on daily vehicle checks.

With zero emissions and low noise levels, the digger is environmentally friendly and well suited to sites located in built up urban areas.

It's comparative quietness enables work to be undertaken at times of the day that are usually 'out-of-hours', providing increased flexibility for scheme completion.

As technology advances, construction sites are becoming greener, with

Ringway Jacobs and its Supply Chain Partners making positive operational changes which benefit both our operatives and the communities we serve in a variety of ways - part of Essex Highways' commitment to pulling through innovation into daily operations throughout the county.



RUBBER KERBS OFFER IMPROVED DURABILITY



Essex Highways is trialling bolt-down high quality rubber kerbing made from recycled truck tyres.

The 'Harlow' kerbs, so called because of where they were originally used, are replacing 'stick-on' kerbs which are widely used, particularly on concrete roads.

However, years of weathering and impact from vehicles eventually take their toll and stick-on kerbs become loose, easily dislodged and potentially dangerous.

The Harlow kerbs are bolted into the road surface which means very small amounts of waste are generated, compared with the full digging-out of reinforced concrete that would be required to replace fully dug-in concrete kerbs.

Another advantage is that if utilities need to dig up the road and/or footway to lay pipes or cables, the kerbs can be unbolted and then

re-bolted into place with comparative ease. As they are made from recycled rubber, they help reduce waste material that might otherwise be sent to landfill, while the manufacturing process is low carbon - manufacturing concrete kerbs generates significant CO².

Harlow kerbs also have a significant weight advantage over their concrete counterparts, falling within manual handling limits.

This makes them easy to move on site and means that there is less likelihood of injuries being sustained by operatives installing them.

Although slightly more expensive than concrete kerbstones, costs may reduce through bulk production and are offset by the rapid installation and extreme durability, saving repeat maintenance cost over many years. Trials continue.

POTHOLES, PAVEMENTS AND DRAINS FIXED IN THE MONTH...

Potholes fixed per district/city/borough in January and February are as listed below: When considering these numbers, remember that there are many more miles of road in Uttlesford than in Harlow, for example, and the balance of types of road (main, secondary, local) are different too, so a direct comparison is misleading.

In addition to these numbers, 639 other drains county-wide were repaired under capital schemes. The risk-based cleaning of drains we know are higher risk is complete in Brentwood and Uttlesford and continuing in Braintree, Chelmsford and Epping Forest. Cleaning of local roads and known risk drains continues in Chelmsford and Colchester.

DISTRICT	COUNTY ROUTES	LOCAL ROADS	PAVEMENT DEFECTS FIXED	DRAINS CLEARED
BASILDON	149	14	83	260
BRAINTREE	64	72	55	2810
BRENTWOOD	78	54	38	0
CASTLE POINT	31	25	127	0
CHELMSFORD	68	53	38	8098
COLCHESTER	56	65	114	4955
EPPING FOREST	254	75	39	4105
HARLOW	28	49	36	0
MALDON	68	30	11	0
ROCHFORD	32	15	10	0
TENDRING	50	48	57	0
UTTLESFORD	74	41	5	0
TOTALS	952	541	613	20228

