

HIGHWAYS HIGHLIGHTS

Highways Devolution Pilot with Parish and Town Councils gets underway

Since a launch event in mid-November, Cllr Kevin Bentley, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Deputy Leader, Essex County Council (ECC), is pleased to have created an exceptional opportunity to work collaboratively with local communities and promote engagement between two tiers of local government.

Each parish and town council plays a hugely important role within their local community. Together with the Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC), ECC is working with a number of parish and town councils to pilot a shift in power towards local communities. Lasting for 12 months, the pilot offers each participating parish and town council the option to support the delivery of highway services locally, such as grass cutting, weed control and minor footway repairs, in line with their own local priorities. Their involvement will seek to increase local satisfaction with delivery of these services, generate greater community pride in local areas and help focus resources where they will add most value, county-wide.

The pilot, which starts from 1 March 2019, will jointly give around 20 parish and town councils a chance to work with their communities to deliver its benefits and assess its challenges. An in-depth advisory briefing was held at EALC's offices at the beginning of February as the pilot picks up speed. We will publish a list of the participating parishes once all are signed up by March and as parish-led work gets under way we will report back, so watch this space.



View
devolution
video



Comment Councillor Kevin Bentley

Deputy Leader, Essex County Council
and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure

It's tremendous that our devolution pilot for Parish Councils is now underway. I am greatly committed to ensuring that decision making takes place as close to our residents as possible and this is a very good example. I will now be starting similar discussions with our District/Borough/City council colleagues where there are no parishes to ensure a lot more work can take place at the local level.

After the pilot it is my intention to roll this out across the county. I hope you find this electronic magazine helpful and please pass it on to as many people as possible.



Today and Tomorrow - Essex Highways Conference looks to the the future

Wednesday 30 January saw all the key partners in Essex Highways convene at Stock Brook Country Club for a conference themed 'Today and Tomorrow'.

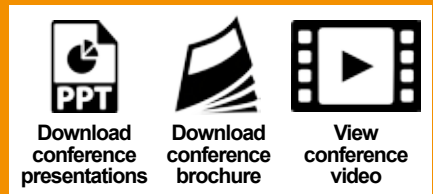
The day was led by Councillor Kevin Bentley, Essex County Council's Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, with Andrew Cook, Director, Highways and Transportation and Simon Butt, Operations Director for Essex Highways facilitating the event.

Attendees included a large number of County Members, plus many senior representatives from Ringway Jacobs and its shareholders, Eurovia and Jacobs. Presentations were followed

by discussions about the current and future focus of the service, including the challenges, options and opportunities that Essex has over the coming decades.

Speakers included Mike O'Neill, Managing Director, Ringway Jacobs describing our huge impact on Social Value; Andrew Cook considered the scale, scope and challenges facing Essex Highways.

Adam Lent from the New Local Government Network discussed future challenges facing local government; and Simon Wilson from the Future Highways Research Club looked at how we benchmark value for money.



The morning's main focus was on the current issues associated with delivering one of the UK's largest highway networks "today". The afternoon was given to exploring how road use will change and the future challenges of "tomorrow".

The day concluded with a panel discussion giving a chance for the audience to ask questions. Councillor Bentley closed by expressing the benefits from the day and his aspiration that there will be a follow-up event next year. Many of the attendees reported afterwards that they had found it beneficial to understand the innovation and technology being rolled out across Essex.



Potholes, pavements and drains fixed in the month...

DISTRICT	COUNTY ROUTES	LOCAL ROADS	PAVEMENT DEFECTS FIXED	DRAINS CLEARED
BASILDON	22	53	173	5063
BRAINTREE	20	250	51	3046
BRENTWOOD	23	51	24	Completed Nov
CASTLE POINT	7	109	83	4592
CHELMSFORD	7	23	67	Started Feb
COLCHESTER	16	52	61	31
EPPING FOREST	28	89	104	212
HARLOW	6	99	160	3437
MALDON	22	18	18	23
ROCHFORD	9	34	135	Completed Dec
TENDRING	15	94	87	Completed July
UTTLESFORD	25	17	16	2907
TOTALS	200	889	979	19311



Over 4000 potholes fixed

The good news is that, using the £2.5 million extra funding announced in May 2018, the additional crews employed have now fixed over 4,000 extra potholes since they started in late October.

Thank you again to all County Councillors who have logged locally-important potholes to be fixed. We are addressing these but some require planning and road closures because they are on busy or fast roads. We have requested that any remaining Member defects be sent over to us as soon as possible. In addition, some councillors have logged faults other than potholes, which may take more time for us to get around to.

£700,000 extra for footways promised by Council Leader

Councillor Finch announced at full Council budget setting meeting in February that the Council is to invest a further £700,000 to maintain footways (pavements) in the new financial year. Plans are now being drawn up to use this money most efficiently, on top of existing planned footway spending, including local input from County Councillors.



Have we dodged snow for this winter?

Winter Service Manager Robbie Jamieson reports that our winter season arrived in earnest on Thursday 17 January and continued cold for nearly three weeks, with gritters out every night, sometimes twice or three times. Gritters have been out 32 times in the Blackwater domain around Maldon and 53 times in Three Valleys (west Essex) to date, overnight road surface temperatures occasionally down to -7C.

Salt barns at our depots are still almost full. We have been able to change decisions during the night as very local forecasts come in. Our forecasters suggest we are in a milder spell, perhaps until mid March. Winter Service is scheduled to finish in April - depending on the weather!

Local Highway Panels Members Guides, keep up to date!

Did you know you can click on your area on the [Local Highway Panel web pages](#) to see all the Guides, including the latest updates: Winter, Quiet Lanes and Rangers Service. Guides are constantly being updated.



Missed an issue? Highways Highlights back issues can be found here