

HIGHWAY HIGHLIGHT

Why aren't they digging yet?

It looks a straightforward job - re-building a footway (pavement) or putting up speed limit signs in the pavement, so why the delay on-site? Statutory (Stats) or utility services, are the pipes and cables delivering services to homes and businesses. As they are usually buried under pavements and roads we rely on drawings from gas, water, electricity and phone companies, but these are sometimes inaccurate or non-existent!

Our crews use electronic detectors to double-check as the consequences of a "service strike" can be terrible – electrocution, gas explosion, floods or cutting off thousands of people's phones and internet. Often, these cables and pipes are shallower than they should be – crews take nothing for granted!

Even straightforward road improvements, as at Colchester A133 or Harlow's Edinburgh Way, need prolonged work to divert these cables and pipes. Almost every bridge we work on carries these "stats" too. We are developing new virtual reality tools that, once you have reliable information, can show 3-D real-time stats as crews dig. This is surely the future, but "always check before digging" will remain vital.



These markings show the location and depth of underground utilities cables and pipes



The future of stats avoidance? 2-D version of future 3-D virtual reality mapping tool



Comment Councillor Kevin Bentley

**Deputy Leader,
Essex County Council
and Cabinet Member
for Infrastructure**

Welcome to this latest edition of Highways Highlights and I do hope you find all the information in here useful.

We are now in the middle of winter and although it has been mild so far, with our gritting teams heading out only a few times, this is about to change.

As I write, the temperatures are set to fall and snow is expected. Our teams are dedicated to ensuring the roads are gritted and made safe and I am sure you will join me in sending them our thanks as they head out in all weathers to protect us.

Essex bucks national pothole trend



**COUNTY COUNCILLORS -
LOG YOUR LOCAL POTHOLES!**

We've fixed over 170 of the potholes you've logged as locally important, even if they're not a safety priority for us. If you haven't logged your full 20 yet, please do so by end of Feb so we can use the extra money to get them fixed.

**WE FIXED
18,894
POTHOLES
IN 2018**

The county's pothole situation is much better than national trends, as revealed in the recent survey conducted by the RAC, as reported in the [Colchester Gazette](#):

Kevin Bentley, County Hall's infrastructure boss, said: "This is fantastic news for Essex and testament to the hard work of our highways crews over the past few years.

"The report shows that Essex has bucked the national trend with a 45 per cent decrease over the last two years in the number of potholes reported. The numbers speak for themselves and I'm proud of the progress we've made. We are not complacent however, we know there is more work to be done. This year we welcomed an additional £11million funding from

the Government and are using this to trial new approaches to fix even more potholes across the network. "We've already seen an extra 3,000 potholes fixed since the end of October and 250 miles of Essex roads resurfaced this year as a result.

"While budget constraints on road maintenance will remain very tight, the work carried out this year means we are in a favourable position heading into 2019 and I feel confident that the network will be able to cope should we be faced with more extreme weather like we experienced earlier this year.

"I'd like to encourage local people to help us improve our roads even further, by continuing to [report potholes in their area online via our website](#)."

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

DISTRICT	COUNTY ROUTES	LOCAL ROADS	PAVEMENT DEFECTS FIXED	DRAINS CLEARED
BASILDON	44	69	177	2825
BRAINTREE	22	73	35	573
BRENTWOOD	16	21	23	0
CASTLE POINT	5	139	26	6456
CHELMSFORD	16	26	70	51
COLCHESTER	28	65	80	62
EPPING FOREST	44	63	236	36
HARLOW	5	41	57	575
MALDON	10	25	16	1042
ROCHFORD	8	53	208	1181
TENDRING	13	32	105	686
UTTLESFORD	11	15	24	5428
A127				
Essex TOTALS	223	622	1057	18,915



DRAIN CLEARING PROGRAMME UPDATE

Drains are cleared on a continuous annual cycle, to include all areas within each year. Maldon District work just completed with Basildon, Braintree and Uttlesford to come in January.

Extra systematic cleaning has been completed in Tendring (urban) and Rochford, with work well underway in Castle Point and just started in Harlow.

Will the Beast be back?

Winter Service Manager Robbie Jamieson reports that our winter season arrived in earnest on Thursday 17 Jan. We've now seen 17 gritting actions so far in the "Blackwater domain" around Maldon and 31 in "Three Valleys" (west Essex) to date with recent overnight road surface temperatures as low as nearly -6C and some dusting of snow.

Our salt barns at the depots are full. The value of continually updated, detailed local forecasts and road temperature readings is evident as we are now agile enough to change decisions during the night.

Our forecasters advise us that we are settling in to a colder spell, which may last well into February or even in to March – perhaps the Beast from the East is just waking up?

What's in a name?

Andy Flurry's not retiring yet! Track the gritters, with their new names, (joining those named by schools in recent years) as they go out – live [Did you know you can follow each gritter live on our map as they follow their salting routes?](#)

Councillor Bentley selected the winning names for some of the gritters put forward by the Young Essex Assembly. Names and depots where they're based are:

Ardleigh Depot: Andy Flurry; Frosty

Childerditch Depot: Ice Caramba; Ice Transformer; The Only way is Gritty

Hastingwood Depot: Grittendor; Gritting Queen

Springfield Depot: Gritty Gritty Bang Bang; Gritty McGrit Face; Gritt Notley; Voldegrit

Stansted Depot: Gritty Gordon



New arrangement for furniture

County Councillors are being asked to approve (or not) new licence applications for highway tree planting/street furniture installation by third parties.

This will ensure that County Councillors are aware of and agree with any applications submitted by residents and councils (tables and chairs for cafes etc are done by boroughs/districts under delegated powers).

This is part of the project to ensure the correct ownership record of all assets placed on the publicly maintainable highway is maintained. It will help ensure that should any damage or theft occur the relevant authority is identified in order to repair/replace the asset.

All "street furniture" (signs, benches, bins etc) that is not the responsibility

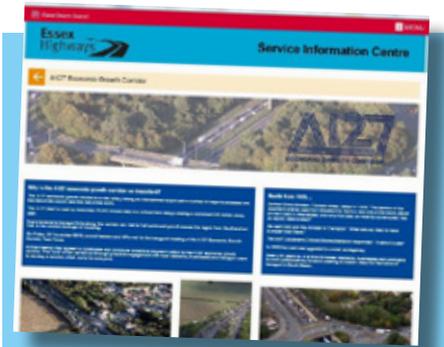
of Essex County Council requires a licence and although it will be added to our asset register, the register will have a link stating that it is not owned or maintained by ECC and that the relevant authority will be responsible for the maintenance. Thank you for your support in this new process.



Roadworks - permit required?

Did you know that Essex Highways Permits team has to approve all planned roadworks, including those by gas, water, electricity, telecoms and cable TV?

Emergencies, like a leaking gas main, only have to be notified to us after the repair crew arrive and fix the problem, so some congestion is unpredictable. All planned and notified emergency works can be found at www.essex.gov.uk/traffic. To see planned works, please change box at top right from "Today" to "Next two weeks" or 3 or 12 months.



Our website - a valuable information resource

Got a new tablet, computer or smartphone for Christmas? Why not use the holiday period to check out our Essex Highways website?

Beyond the Report It and Check a Query tools, it contains hundreds of pages of useful background information on most highways topics.

We update and add pages regularly – for instance, recently we have added information about the [A127 Economic Growth Corridor](#), one of the many major initiatives that Essex County Council are involved in.

There are videos, downloads and various maps available, as well as [Local Highway Panel information](#) and lots more information, so check it out!

And if you have ideas for other topics you'd like to see in future, let us know so we can consider it.

Follow the feed!

Follow us on twitter for winter gritting updates and other useful highways info. To read all our winter service information, visit our winter webpages, at: www.essexhighways.org/Roads-and-Pavements/winter-travel.aspx

