**Highways:**

**Update on the Member Led pothole scheme** - I have submitted 38 of my 36 allowance – 24 have been completed, In terms of Great Waltham – Completed are Bridge Croft, Ford End, opposite Garnetts Farm. Awaiting date on South Street.

**Ford End Average Speed Camera (ASC)** – I have asked the Design Manager (who replaced David Gollop) for a revalidation/recalculation of the costings. He has responded with a high level view that the original estimate would now be around £180K but he also said that no provision for the surveys (geotechnical, GPR and topographical) was made. He puts these in the region of £60k but it is dependent upon the extent required.

I have also asked for a comparison with the recently DfT funded ASC in Epping (£1.3M) – comparison with number of cameras, entry/exit points, etc.

I have also pushed the new Highways Cabinet member on a decision on whether he would endorse the previous Cabinet member override on policy for an ASC on this route and what proportion of funding would Highways consider to contribute.

**Ford End Wig Wags**

It was brought to my attention in November, that the wig wags stopped working outside the school in Ford End from early summer. I have asked for them to be dealt with ASAP

**LHP Budgets**

Due to a shortfall a number of schemes were not completed in 22/23. Assurances were given that unspent 22/23 budget would be carried over to 23/24 to complete these schemes, so it was decided by the LHP members to carry on with these schemes. However, subsequently, the budget was not carried over, and the carried over schemes have to be funded from this year’s 23/24 budget.

This means that the new schemes that were provisionally allocated to the 23/24 funding, will need to be relooked at again. With the 22/23 carry over schemes using most of the 23/24 budget, it leaves only £32K to allocate, instead of the expected £250K. The LHP sub-committee will need to reconsider the list of schemes to see which of the schemes will be done this year, and which will now need to be done in 24/25.

Broomfield and Writtle schemes that I was expecting to be funded in 23/24 and will now be part of the consideration, are:

* Writtle – restriction on parking outside Drs surgery – although I managed to get SEPP to put something in place
* Broomfield – School Lane – addition of wig wags
* Great Waltham – footway handrail on steep slope
* Chignal  - Gateways in Chignal Smealey

This does mean that new proposed schemes end up at the back of a very long queue. Parish Councils can fund schemes themselves to shortcut the queue – but the schemes still need to comply with Highways policy and be validated. Contact me if you want to sue this route.

**GP Surgery provisions**

I have been contacted by LW Patient Participation group (PPG), raising concerns about the worsening situation around GP surgery provision in the area.

I have contacted all the agencies involved in City Council Planning, County Council and NHS provision. It would seem that there isn’t a shortage of funds/locations available via S106 and CIL but plans with the NHS are not progressing in line with original timescales. The Beulieu Park surgery building has now started but the winning surgery bidder did not progress (I don’t know why). I now have an appointment with Daniel Doherty Alliance Director for Mid Essex, who should have the overall strategy for the area.

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**ECC Draft waste Strategy**

The draft Waste Strategy for Essex sets out the vision, targets and priorities of the Essex Waste Partnership (EWP). The strategy covers how we will manage waste from homes and businesses in the county for the next 30 years. Let us know what you think by completing our consultation. The consultation is open until Wednesday 22 November 2023.

[**https://www.essex.gov.uk/wastestrategy**](https://www.essex.gov.uk/wastestrategy)

**General’s Bridge**

With the bridge now in place, it will be interesting to get feedback on the traffic around the area.

Theoretically, there should be a reduction in quarry traffic using ERW/White Hart Lane route as well as lighter vehicles accessing the A12 from ERW, with an expected increase in cars along the RDR.

Previous complaints to me have been mainly around the noise of HGVs along RDR, This should get better, although the total amount of traffic along RDR will increase.

**Proposed Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package also includes walking, cycling, bus and Park and Ride improvements to encourage safer, greener and healthier travel.**

Plans to transform a vital gateway in Chelmsford have taken a step forward after Essex County Council was conditionally awarded £69 million of Government funding. This includes a hamburger roundabout (a new roundabout with a road through the centre of it), bus priority measures and walking and cycling improvements at the junction itself and on the approaches to and from the roundabout. The package will also see a 350-space expansion of Sandon Park and Ride and a 500-space expansion of Chelmer Valley Park and Ride.

The £81 million project will also be part funded by Essex County Council and Chelmsford City Council. It can now move forward after the Department for Transport approved the outline business case and agreed to contribute £68.75million of Major Road Network (MRN) funding, subject to certain conditions. The funding is dependent on planning consent and other processes, as well as a full business case.

Work continued in developing the proposals further while the funding bid was being considered and planning applications are due to be submitted before the end of the year.

Based on the current programme, construction is scheduled to start in Spring 2025 and be completed in 2028. This will be subject to planning approval and acquiring the required land.

Construction will be carefully sequenced to minimise disruption, with early expansion of Sandon Park and Ride to meet the anticipated increase in demand during works at the Army and Navy junction and provide an alternative means of travel into the city centre.

For more information about the Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package and to sign up for the project e-newsletter, please visit [www.essex.gov.uk/armyandnavy](https://www.essex.gov.uk/armyandnavy).

**National Grid – Pylons**

Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk  [County Councils remain united against Norwich to Tilbury onshore option | Essex County Council](https://www.essex.gov.uk/news/2023/county-councils-remain-united-against-norwich-tilbury-onshore-option)

The 3 councils jointly commissioned an [independent report](https://www.essex.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-11/Final%20Hiorns%20report%20-%20East%20Anglia%20Transmission%20Network%20Reinforcements.pdf)  and the leaders of all 3 are asking National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) and the electricity system planner, National Grid Electricity System Operator (NGESO) to consider the findings of the report.

The independent report questions the timings of the projects and this uncertainty brings into question the need case for NGET’s preferred option, of a land-based pylon line. All 3 county councils have said that this option will harm the local economy, environment and the health and wellbeing of their communities. The Independent report also challenges the delivery date of 2030, and suggests that the need for additional transmission capacity would be closer to 2035. Such a delay is likely to reduce the cost of NGET developing an integrated offshore alternative, but it does accept that the most economical option probably still remains onshore overhead lines, and pylons. However, it makes a clear statement “*To ensure the UK's energy security, our clear preference is for a coordinated, offshore centred approach, delivered at pace to minimise onshore works”*

So the preferred choice of all three host county councils (Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk) remains an integrated offshore option, but only if it can be delivered within an appropriate timescale and without significant adverse impacts on sensitive coastal communities.

In addition, our MP Kemi Badenoch, is writing to the Minister for Nuclear and Networks at the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero to share this report and make it clear that the three councils: [County Councils remain united against Norwich to Tilbury onshore option](https://www.essex.gov.uk/news/2023/county-councils-remain-united-against-norwich-tilbury-onshore-option).

I recently hosted Kemi at the Great Waltham/Little Waltham “pinch point” to emphasise just how close the pylon route is to the residential area and know heritage sites.

**Update on Schools impacted by Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC)**

It’s been 9 weeks since the DfE policy change on RAAC which resulted in significant impact to a number of school buildings across the county.

We have moved into a programme management response phase to the situation rather than the crisis / emergency phases that we had been in throughout September.

Our priorities during September included:

* support schools  to put immediate plans in place to enable face to face learning either on site or at alternative locations, or to support them put hybrid learning in place
* work with schools to put in mitigations in place – either structural mitigations or temporary accommodation in order to get pupils back on school sites as quickly as possible
* ensure all maintained schools have had intrusive RAAC surveys
* support academies with commissioning survey work if required

All Essex schools are open and offering either face to face or hybrid learning. We record and publish [the list of schools impacted](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/6ey9C8246CY14BunO2qk) weekly on the ECC website. As of this week all Essex schools are either open, are using alternative accommodation of site or are providing a hybrid learning offer while they wait for temporary accommodation to come on site. We are pleased to confirm that there are approved plans for all schools, with only five schools now having to provide a hybrid learning offer.

Our current focus is now:

* Continued focus on enabling those schools using alternative locations to move back on to the school site
* Coordinating financial reimbursement requests to the DfE.
* Visits to schools to discuss progress on projects as well as assessing the impact on staff, pupils and families of remote learning and any temporary measures.
* Focus on progress of mitigation works to ensure that temporary accommodation is required for as short a time as possible, maintaining momentum to have pupils and staff back in their permanent buildings with access to all their usual facilities.

**City Council Issues**

**Chelmsford Local Plan update**

Last week the City Council's Policy Board reviewed the 'Local Development Scheme' (LDS) and recommended it for approval at Cabinet. The LDS is the Council’s timetable for preparing and revising local development documents relating to the development and use of land in its area (in this case the review of the Local Plan which was adopted in 2020). It also includes details of other supporting documents including the Council’s Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule and Supplementary Planning Documents. Chelmsford has a Local Plan in place up until 2036 and this current review would extend the life of the Local Plan until 2041. The Council is proposing to submit the revised Local Plan by 30 June 2025 and, if approved, it will be adopted by 31 December 2026.

The next stage - the Preferred Options Local Plan Consultation (Regulation 18) - will happen during quarter 1/quarter 2 2024.

**Chelmsford City Council calls for new Gypsy and Traveller sites**

The Essex-wide Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment is being updated, which will include an updated assessment of need for pitches across Chelmsford. The numbers required are likely to increase due to changes to the methodology arising from a recent Court of Appeal decision. As part of this, the City Council conducted a ‘call for sites’ during October and November. Any sites submitted will be assessed to check their suitability, availability, and achievability for use. If a site is submitted through this process, it does not mean that it will be allocated for development. Once assessed, sites will then be considered as part of the ongoing review of the Local Plan.

**Chelmsford’s ‘Food Plan’**

Chelmsford City Council recently approved a ‘Food Plan’ which emphasises the need for sustainable and healthy diets, whilst acknowledging the challenges posed by cost pressures. The Plan is centred around improving health and wellbeing, recognising the impact of food choices on individuals and the environment. Lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic have shaped its development, reinforcing the commitment to a thriving and sustainable local economy. There are few details on the implementation of the Plan and I am seeking further information on how it will affect Writtle residents.