

## **ECC Report**

### **Improvements to the Highways Tell Us tool**

Improvements have been made to the Essex Highways Tell Us tool to make it easier for residents to report issues on the county's roads.

The improvements made to the Report It tool in recent weeks include:

- ability to report some urgent issues such as large potholes, fallen trees or flooded roads online
- an option to tell us that a known issue has got worse
- the ability to sign up to updates on an issue, allowing Essex Highways to make the reporting map clearer
- defect photos so residents can decide if the issue they wish to report is an existing one, or something new

A successful trial of reporting urgent issues online took place between February and April. During the trial, 242 online enquiries were received with 58% requiring emergency action.

The number of emergency issues reported during the trial increased by 84%, highlighting the effectiveness of the new online reporting option.

Other positive outcomes from the trial included a significant reduction in the average time taken to make issues safe, with response times reduced by more than half.

The number of highways-related calls also reduced, saving approximately 23 hours of call centre agent time in March alone.

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### **Ford End Village Green**

Update from County Council on their enforcement actions – following more questions on the land, ECC enforcement have replied clarifying some points and requesting the posts and planting is removed by the beginning of October. If there is no compliance a decision on whether to proceed by directly to serving a S143 notice, will be made, which includes one month to comply.

If it goes that way, ECC are empowered to remove and recharge their costs (including legal and officer costs)

### **RideLondon**

RideLondon will not occur in May 2025.

The published reasons are:

- Organisers will take the opportunity to work on new concept for the event for future years
- Classique already cancelled due to UCI WorldTour date change

The route includes a few of my parishes.

Whilst I can't say that I wasn't entirely enthusiastic when it was first introduced (due to the impact of businesses that rely heavily on Sunday trade), it has been popular with residents and participants. Over the last few years, the organisers have improved in their management of the event, but there were still issues in the 2024 event. I made sure that I was on the County Council steering group to best represent residents' and business's concerns. We have also had the benefit of improved maintenance on the route.

I understand that it is still planned for the event to take place in May 2026, but I do not know if it will take a different format.

### **Bus Shelters**

Essex County Council is launching a scheme to upgrade, maintain, and expand bus shelter infrastructure across Essex.

From what I can see, this has little impact on my rural parishes, where bus shelters tend to be owned by the Parish Councils (with some exceptions).

The most useful part of this exercise is interactive map which shows ECC ownership and plans.

<https://www.travelessex.co.uk/about-timetables-maps/essex-bus-shelters>

## **City Council**

### **Reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Proposed Consultation Responses**

Chelmsford City council considered its response to the NPPF at the Cabinet meeting of 10th Sept

We, the opposition, are generally querying whether the response is strong enough, especially in terms of the need to build infrastructure in a timely way.

Also, the new targets are stated as build rates, and councils do not have control over this,

There is a 54% increase for Chelmsford compared to the existing formula - existing Standard Method 917 pa, New Standard Method 1,406 pa – but such targets are in the control of the developers, not the City Council.

Other districts in Essex are seeing similar increases and all are concerned about infrastructure not matching the increases – highways, education, surgeries.

There is also a steer to building on the green belt (grey belt reclassification). The green belt is an expanse between London and surrounding areas and is designated to halt the urban expanse of London.

It seems to me that if green belts (grey), become potential developments, it might mean that there is the opportunity to build south of Chelmsford, rather than cramming more houses on the north side, near us.

**23/01787/FUL Field North Of Montpelier Farm Main Road Little Waltham Chelmsford Essex**

Erection of an Integrated Retirement Community (Use Class C2) comprising; a Village Care Centre, 58 bedroom care home, 45 care suites (comprising one and two bedrooms), 100 care apartments (comprising one and two bedrooms), wellness spa, open space and associated works including car parking, access, hard and soft landscaping and associated engineering works

Please note that this has gone to appeal.

It was originally refused in Feb 24 for 11 separate reasons!

The planning website still shows this as appeal pending.