Please see ECC report

**Chelmsford North East Bypass construction to begin early next year**

The first phase of the Chelmsford North East Bypass will be constructed by Octavius Infrastructure Limited. Works are scheduled to begin in early 2025 and finish by spring 2026.The bypass, along with the new Beaulieu Park Station, will provide vital transport links to support planned housing and economic growth in the north of Chelmsford.

The first section of the bypass, known as 1A, will connect to Beaulieu Parkway in the south. This will provide access to the A12 at Boreham Interchange via the Beaulieu Parkway Bridge. 1A will also join a new link road to the north – being built as part of the Chelmsford Garden Community – and Wheelers Hill roundabout on A131 Essex Regiment Way.

The first section of the bypass is mostly funded by the government through the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF). Funding is also being provided by Essex County Council, alongside developer contributions through Chelmsford City Council.

The HIF was secured as a result of plans for the Chelmsford Garden Community. When complete, the garden community is expected to provide over 10,000 new homes and 5,000 sq m of employment space. This is in addition to green space, schools and other facilities. The HIF also includes commissioning Network Rail to build the new Beaulieu Park Station, which is due to be completed next year.

The benefit of the CNEB, to local residents, should be that the CNEB becomes the main access to Chelmsford, from the north, and with a new station reducing the need to get to central Chelmsford, the B1008 Main Road Broomfield, becomes the last resort (after Essex Regiment Way)! Of course there will still be traffic to the Hospital.  To help with that, ECC have relaunched the Park & Ride shuttle service which  runs every half-hour from 6:30am to 8:00pm, Monday to Friday.

**Highways Issues and Road Defects**

So far, I have submitted 59 separate defects to the member Led scheme, which will keep the extra team busy until next year. I can try adding more, but I believe I have probably used up my quota

An additional £37M was budgeted for the above Members Highways scheme (£12M) and the “Priority One” initiative (£25M) over and above the standard £110M highways maintenance budget. The Priority one Initiative is addressing over 30 road resurfacing projects.

In Oct, routine repairs across Essex amounted to 2,734 potholes, 1,236 pavement repairs, 12,089 drains cleared, 1,140 streetlights fixed.

We are now approaching the season when roads get icy, and people often tell me they haven’t seen the gritters out or they went by too fast. Their speeds are strictly controlled to lay down the salt/grit to the optimum level! You can track the gritting trucks here <https://www.essexhighways.org/roads-and-pavements/winter-travel/track-the-gritting-lorries>

And follow the named trucks - Monster Meltdown, PLOWIE, Gritty Gordon, Dermot Snow Cleary, Volder Grit, Grit Dunsnow, Gritty McGrit Face, Frosty, Maldon Salt, Colchester Gritty, Rupert Grit, Grit Expectations, Salty Snowflake, Gritty Gritty Bang Bang, Grit Notley, Jennifer, Gritta Thunberg, Weeley Salty, Gustav, Edward, Big\_G, Slush Puppy, Dawn Raider, The Grit Gatsby and Spreddie Mercury.

**Keep Essex Car Tax for Essex Roads**

The most number of complaints, by far, are in relation to highway defects. Whilst highways (roads, pavements, overgrown verges and hedges, flooding, PROW maintenance, etc), affect everyone, it is allocated around 5% of the gross ECC budget.

Over three quarters of ECC budget goes on the mandatory Adult Social Care, Children’s services and Education. Not everyone currently benefits from those services, but people need to be reassured that when they do need them, they will be able to access them!

As the demand for Adult Social Care, Children’s services and Education services grow at a significant rate, the funds left for other services becomes less. It should be noted that the demand for SEN assessments has nearly doubled in the last 5 years, outstripping the availability of child psychologists to carry out the assessments.

It is not generally understood that Vehicle Excise Duty goes to Central Govt, whilst County Councils have responsibility for highways maintenance and the County Councils do not see the income. We often hear people saying “*I pay my road tax and expect the roads to be fixed*”. Well, it doesn’t work like that! Vehicle Excise Duty collects £7.3Bn pa in the UK, which equates to about £300M from Essex vehicle owners, none of this gets returned to Essex. So, we have to do the best we can with the limited funds, which means prioritising according to safety, etc.

The ECC Conservative Group proposed a motion at County council meeting 10th Dec 24, to Keep Essex Car Tax for Essex Roads and calling on the Govt to add the amount paid by Essex residents to ECC’s budget settlement for 2025/26 onwards and for it to be ringfenced for road maintenance. The motion was successfully passed and the request will be sent to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretary of State for Transport and all Essex MPs.

In addition, a petition has been initiated to support this:

<https://www.essexconservatives.uk/campaigns/petition-keep-essex-car-tax-essex-roads?fbclid=IwY2xjawHJUlhleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHS2t8QLwxs3a6LC1fioyDnc5K4FWzZjBzPg_EYT6KTVQE_MwLJ2X0m_L_Q_aem_8Fv0wd7eZkRTy5RIYSBV2Q>

**Bus Transport**

We want more people to use public transport, and we need to improve the services. ECC aren’t in charge of the bus franchises (although this could change as a result of “devolution”). But ECC supplement services where bus companies don’t serve, usually because the number of passengers make it unviable. ECC try to fill these gaps, and Digigo has been very successful as an on demand service. Many people use the on-line app, but for those that are not able to do so, they can phone up. The phone lines have now been extended and are available from 9.00am - 5.00pm, Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays). Our new phone line number is: 0345 603 7633 [**www.digigo.uk**](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.digigo.uk%2F%3Ffbclid%3DIwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAAR01a4W0aw1vJFin4KibKEoGDS0H1tdTvFiSwp0Mdmfen7H470ldo-daFpM_aem_ZkbOwFrXKi6WCwvmLvhkZg&h=AT1eRSXFjtt_4U6kBrDmIeFQvhUYA7FFRohCwNcZ8-f3BAi2rOH_krmE3ji75lfzYcbfYGl6WMNjiJUXMmSjwBSQveFVD8xqgmcpgsuYooCY3-Kxj6PdSqbKL_BzHk87bQ&__tn__=-UK-y-R&c%5b0%5d=AT10KlP6pckjJwNowTJyqimoyafOvnPq1Rvc5QFQh12S7LusxD63T2FqGU-EJ5aw1L0KRjItFqjRJWqjoMamZ-Wb54OCTTIISjbJQuj-EDC75KjJbFICrLGiJMKxibZl8pGYPBB0FKYm92z2B2RkLyIpfOCW94S7nYWuf26GgmJWVNC-YQhtSZQN-3MKioZSqI9jTo9KD_QmWC_pwz_69MrWIoTb1-U-kXuimnND_TOT3lHpASpqGmy3GNL3zhcjHFfpu1sZsWMx5GhG7dlj7huK01EfWuuPqqfpyC0)

**Pylons**

Whilst our MP has been elevated to leader of the opposition, I wanted to make sure that she is still supporting local issues as our MP.

So, Kemi joined me on a cold and windy Friday (22nd Nov), and landowner in the” Waltham Gap” along with one of the farmers for that area. We jointly continue to oppose the proposition of pylons spoiling our countryside, along with Essex County Council. We are pushing for alternatives but recognise that the most viable would be underground AC through the Waltham gap and continuing to the West of Chelmsford. Whilst this might cause much disruption in the short term, it would be better in the long term.

**VG150**

My last update from ECC Highways Enforcement lead is that they last corresponded with the party who erected the fence on the highway, on 23 October, clarifying a few points and answering questions and ended with a date of 18 November to remove the planting and fence off the highway. As they remain in place this will now be passed over to Essex Legal Service for service of a S143 Highways Act 1980 notice, requiring them to remove them and on default of the notice the Highway Authority is empowered to remove them and recharge the cost of doing so to them.

**Traffic Committee:**

Your traffic committee placed a number of requests on me as the County Cllr. I have responded to those and repeat below in red.

* LHP scheme: LCHE223011
* Great Waltham Primary School, South Street, Great Waltham - Signage improvements

This was a request to change the signs from SCP to pedestrians. The scheme has passed validation and is on the “awaiting funding” list at £6,500. This will be considered for future budget years, but has to have the consensus of all members of the panel

* LHP scheme: LCHE203002
* Barrack Lane j/w Cherry Garden Road, Great Waltham - Footway Improvements

A new and extended handrail – funded and planned Q4

***Resolution:     Cllr Bradley to report the condition of the faded South Street pedestrian signs.***

I have escalated these replacements through the standard maintenance process.

I have also added them to my Member Initiative

***Resolution:      Requests that the hedges around adjacent properties are cut back to improve visibility and ease of pedestrian movement.***

I have been working with the school, and our School Liaison Officer. The visibility splay from Hatchfields is below recommendation due to the encroachment of the Old School House hedge on to the highways. I have spoken to the owner and he has committed to reduce it to the regulation 45cm from the highway. He has had an estimate of £1,000 and needs to find the funds!

I have looked at the White House hedge, and it is debatable whether it is below 45cm from the highway, so highways are unlikely to act. It would be possible and beneficial if the hedge could be cut back to increase the verge. I suggest the PC kindly ask the owner to cut it beyond the regulation requirement.

***Resolution:      Clerk to request the number of highways defects in Great Waltham Parish from Essex County Councillor Steel.***

This information is available on Track-It. I do not have any other source of data other than using Track-It myself.

Track It contains Enquiry References and Defect Numbers. The former are faults raised by residents and are awaiting inspection, before they are turned into a logged defect. Hence, there are multiple Enquiries for the same fault, which then get rationalized into 1 defect.

If you need a full list, you will need to submit an FOI.