ECC and CCC report October 2026 Meeting

ECC report

Highways
ECC Highways are claiming that there is a 60% increase in pothole repairs on roads across Essex comparing July 2026 with July 2025- Essex Highways | Essex County Council
This follows the claim that overall road repairs for the first full quarter of the financial year rose by 30% year-on-year.
However, I am concerned that official metrics from the Place Scrutiny Board show counter performance to this. The presented metrics MI1 and Mi2 show that the total number of outstanding defects on PR1, PR2, and local roads, was 23,749 in July 2025 compared with 29,006 in July 2026, which is actually a 22% increase in outstanding defects.
I have requested justification of the 60%/30% claim and if it is confirmed, why outstanding defects are increasing over the same period.

On the positive side, my 3 roads that I submitted for the MHI replacement process, have been done (actually 4) – Breeds Road GW, Pleshey Road, Paradise Road Writtle, and St Michaels Drive Roxwell.
On the negative side, with MHI/LHP ceased, ECC Cllrs have no direct means of getting defects/issues resolved and can only escalate existing Track-It references, but generally get referred to the inspection process which focusses on safety – so pavements are low down the list. It means I am having difficulty getting any attention to defects raised by residents.

As part of the "pothole emergency" there is also an intention to replace the maintenance criteria with a 5X5 matrix of Likelihood of an incident caused by a defect (score 1 to 5), times Consequence of an incident (score 1 to 5).
With repair times ranging from 40 days to 2 days for scores of 15 to 25. Below that score repair time is "consideration of repair under planned maintenance" or only if other repairs are going on.
It comes down to a subjective assessment of the likelihood and consequence of an incident caused by a defect. How this works in practice, is not clear,

At the ECC meeting of 13th Oct 26, I supported the adoption of the new Local Transport Plan LTP4, proposed by the Reform administration. But I did point out that LTP$ is focused on the delivery of "agreed outcomes, linked to Everyone's Essex and Government priorities; decarbonisation, levelling up, economic growth and housing." – and it contradicts their cancellation of net-zero - "We have ended our commitment to Net Zero. Following a review, the Council will no longer deliver discretionary net zero and climate action policies, realising a cashable saving of £3 million."
LTP3 was adopted in 2011 and the lack of update will affect ECC's ability to apply for funding for infrastructure, and it is expedient to adopt LTP4. Hene the rush!
The Reform Cabinet's response was that I ought to join the Lib-Dem group!

Roadworks Great Waltham
It annoyed me that the recent roadworks outside the hairdressers had traffic lights but no work actually on the road – so the only reason for having the traffic lights was so you can get round the traffic lights!
I registered a complaint and suggested our permit dept ought to be a bit more questioning (it was a Essex and Suffolk Water permit). I received this response:
Officers have investigated the permit and Essex and Suffolk Water requested the Traffic Management to be changed to two-way lights, but their permit was then changed to no carriageway incursion.
It is unfortunate that we did not have an opportunity to inspect this site before the works were completed as the utility would have been in breach of their conditions.
As this was not evidenced by one of our inspectors it would be difficult to pursue an FPN. However, Officers have passed the complaint on to the permit team.
Thank you for bringing this to our attention.

LGR
LGR is now postponed or cancelled.
Which means that Chelmsford City council elections will go ahead in May 2027, along with Parish Council elections.
I understand that Devolution is still happening at there will be Greater Essex Mayor elections at some point.

Pylons

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NGET have now submitted planning applications for temporary compounds in advance of the decision on the DCO. Closing date for comments is 23rd October 2026:
26/01209/FUL – Land north of Beaumont Otes Chignal Road Chelmsford
26/01210/FUL – Land north of Brittons Hall Farm, Mashbury Road, Chignal St James
26/01194/FUL – Centre of pond 183m from Wits End, Bishops Stortford Road, Roxwell
26/01225/FUL – Land south east of Lowley Farm, Goodmans Lane, Gt Leighs
26/01193/FUL – Land south of Windmill House, Chelmsford Road, Gt Waltham
26/01227/FUL – Land south west of Little Stonage Farm, Essex Regiment Way, Gt Waltham (sic)

The City Council planning system is notoriously slow for viewing documents so I have arranged some direct download links for the associated documents
26/01209/FUL - 26-01209-ful
26/01210/FUL - 26-01210-FUL
26/01194/FUL- 26-01194-FUL
26/01225/FUL - 26-01225-FUL
26/01193/FUL - 26-01193-FUL
26/01227/FUL -
https://chelmsfordcity.sharepoint.com/:f:/s/SustainableCommunities/DM/IgAa2od144VWS5_8N1SBKlR_Af6DSitgn0VctVhn8Aez0yY?e=VL630a

National Scheme of Delegation for Planning Applications: - applies to CCC and ECC
New national planning delegation regulations come into force on 31 October 2026. The Government's intention is that most planning applications should be determined by planning officers, with Planning Committees focusing only on the most significant proposals.

Planning Applications will be dealt with as 2 Categories

Schedule 1: Always Delegated to Officers
These applications cannot be referred to Planning Committee and must be decided by officers. Examples include: Householder applications (extensions, fences, etc.)

- Minor commercial developments
- Minor residential schemes (fewer than 9 dwellings or under 0.5ha)
- Permission in Principle applications
- Non-material amendments
- Certificates of Lawfulness
- Discharge of Conditions
- Prior Approval applications
- Most Reserved Matters applications (except very large schemes)

Schedule 2: Presumed Delegated, but May Go to Committee

- Listed Building Consents
- Applications linked to Listed Buildings
- Larger planning applications
- Retrospective applications
- Large Reserved Matters applications (500+ dwellings)
- Advertisement consents
- Tree Preservation Order (TPO) works
- Variations of conditions on Schedule 2 permissions

The decision on whether a Schedule 2 application can be considered by committee is made by a Gateway meeting which comprises the Planning Committee Chair, and the Chief Planning Officer
An application will only go to committee if it raises: Significant economic, social or environmental issues for the local area; or
Significant planning matters having regard to the development plan and material considerations.
The biggest change is that a Cllr's request alone will no longer be enough to bring an applications before Planning Committee. For Schedule 2 applications, City/ECC Cllrs will need to demonstrate to the Gateway Members, that the application raises significant local issues or significant planning policy matters capable of passing the new Gateway test.

The likely effect is that fewer applications go to committee and Cllrs feel that they have less control over the decision process.
In my opinion, where there is a strong link between policy, and Cllr views, (like at Chelmsford City Council), I cannot see that it will be a major issue. Where there is frequent disagreement, it may cause some contention.
The 31st Oct date applies to the date of determination – so the Pylons temporary compounds will likely have to follow it.
I have made a formal request that this goes in front of Cllrs for determination under the National Scheme of Delegation for Planning Applications, and is not delegated to officers. It is being considered.

CCC report

Wheelers Farm Licence
2 applications: - LDN Wild Ltd - Wheelers Farm, Little Waltham, Chelmsford, CM3 3LZ – One is to increase the 5,000 people events to 2 per year– there are currently limitations on the number of 3,000 and 5,000 events. The second application is to have an event at 7,500.
I registered objections, specifically to the 7,5000 licence, and in particular about the Traffic Management (TM) arrangements. Consequently, the application went to committee on 2nd October and I spoke about my objections and concerns. Also speaking were LWPC, CGC, and local resident/
Prior to the meeting I did:

1. Contact Essex Highways and reviewed their comments on the TM requirements – they had no objections but did outline their requirements which would be implemented through SAG meetings.
2. Meet with LDN Wild (along with my fellow City Cllr Seena Shah) – 21st Sept 26

Highways listed the recent events at this location and assured me that they review the outcomes of every event and work with organisers and partner agencies to continually refine and improve traffic management arrangements. Highways state that the organisers have demonstrated a positive and proactive approach throughout this process, engaging constructively with Essex Highways and SAG partners and implementing enhancements where required.
The organisers indicated that the proposed 7,500-capacity licence would not be utilised for a Boat Club-style event (I understand this to be the younger demography – and the type that caused most issues). They have also confirmed that engagement with the organisers will continue at an early-stage next year, bringing forward their traffic management proposals for review. This will allow \Highways to assess the arrangements against anticipated attendance levels and incorporate the lessons learned from this year's events.
The meeting with LDN wild was constructive and helpful.
They also stated that the 7,500 event would not be for a Boat Club style event.
Also, that one licence is to make the 5,000 capacity permanent, and the 7,500 licence is temporary licence for a one-off “test” event to demonstrate that they are capable of managing such larger events.
They also stated that they would ensure that Domsey lane was closed for each event going forward.

As my major concerns were around Traffic Management, I went into the Licence meeting with a reduced concerns of traffic and safety disruption. However, as I said at the meeting, the issue of noise for close by residents, seems impossible to mitigate, other than not having the events at all.

The meeting lasted 2 ½ hours! Mostly presentation by LDN Wild Ltd, and by solicitors for local resident. As per all licence meetings, the committee retires to a separate meeting *in-camera* and we only get to know the decision and reasoning when the minutes are released. My expectation was that the licence would be agreed but there may be a restriction on frequency.
However, the decision by the licencing committee was to allow the licence requests in full.