

Essex
Highways



HIGHWAYS HIGHLIGHTS

HHH

INFORMATION FOR LOCAL COUNCILLORS
OCTOBER 2023

SAFER / GREENER / HEALTHIER

WE'RE READY
FOR WINTER



Essex County Council

COMMENT

COUNCILLOR TOM CUNNINGHAM

CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS INFRASTRUCTURE AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

Welcome everyone, to my first edition of Highways Highlights since I became the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport.

It's also the first edition in the winter season - always an exciting time of year for Essex Highways as the gritters and crews wait for the colder weather so they can get out and make Essex's roads safe for everyone in icy conditions. If you want to read more about what this entails, please head over to the Essex Highways website.

My first month or so in my new role has been focused on meeting the team of officers that work across this portfolio and understanding the challenges and opportunities that face the way Essex residents travel across the county now and in the future. What I've seen and learned so far suggests it's an exciting time to be the portfolio holder in this varied and interesting role, and I very much look forward to seeing what it brings.



ROUTINE REPAIRS: SEPTEMBER 2023

COUNTY ROUTES
617

LOCAL ROADS
533

PAVEMENTS
256

DRAINS CLEARED
8764

STREETLIGHTS
1608



WE'RE READY FOR WINTER

WHATEVER IT BRINGS!

Ringway Jacobs' winter maintenance operatives began preparation in the summer, participating in Winter Driving Skid Pan training, provided by R3 Training at Thruxton Race Circuit, Hampshire. The training is considered vital for all winter maintenance operatives as it teaches them new skills and the chance to polish up on current ones.

The course includes a classroom - based presentation as well as practical demonstrations. Attendees participate in fitting the plough, vehicle checks, skid pan control, driving and much more. This year the course has been given Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (DCPC) accreditation.

Aidan Fitzgerald, Assistant Operations Manager, said: "It was good to see several new drivers at the wheel and getting to experience this for the first time. I recommend this to all drivers, not just those within the winter maintenance industry."



Winter Service began on Monday 23 October. In the weeks beforehand, our crews had been familiarising themselves with the routes which are gritted when temperatures drop. New gritters were also added to the fleet last winter, named by members of the public in a social media competition. The new vehicles include ‘Dermot Snow Cleary’, ‘Gritter Thunberg’ and ‘Jennifer’.

The routes the gritters use prioritise main roads, access to emergency facilities and busy bus routes, as well as sites where frost and ice have caused accidents. The 49 gritters, plus two mini gritters in the service, cover approximately 2,000 miles of roads across Essex. This is about 40% of the network. Last winter, around 20,500 tonnes of salt were used on Essex’s roads, with the gritters out on the network approximately 70 times.

Councillor Tom Cunningham, Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport, said: “With British weather being so changeable, it is vital Essex Highways crews are ready and prepared for winter conditions to hit the county so residents can travel across it as safely as possible. The Essex Highways crews work hard to keep priority routes usable, but it’s vital residents also take precautions and make adjustments to how they drive in icy and snowy conditions to prevent the risk of accidents. By working together, we can ensure the roads in Essex stay as safe and accident-free as possible.”

The drivers gritting the roads are the same as those carrying out road and pavement repairs across Essex. When the weather is particularly wintry, gritting the roads and making them safe for people to travel

becomes the priority, not least because it often means crews working overnight.

Town and Parish Councils can sign up to the Essex Highways salt partnership. This is a scheme where participating authorities receive a one-tonne bag of salt to help grit more local roads, pavements and facilities not covered by the main Essex Highways gritting service. Salt bins are also available in local communities for use in public areas.

For more information about Essex Highways’ winter service, [visit our winter service pages](#). The website also includes how to track the gritters, maps of routes and information about driving in winter conditions.



WATCH OUR WINTER SERVICE VIDEO



ARMY AND NAVY ADVANCES AFTER FUNDING SECURED

Plans to transform Chelmsford's Army and Navy junction have taken a huge step forward after Essex County Council (ECC) was conditionally awarded £69 million of Government funding, subject to certain conditions. It will also be part funded by Essex County Council and Chelmsford City Council. The proposed Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package includes a hamburger roundabout (a new roundabout with a road through the centre of it) at the Army and Navy junction in Chelmsford. It also includes 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. Having worked closely with partners and the local community to develop the proposed package of improvements, Essex County Council submitted an outline business case for the project in October 2022. 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.

Councillor Lesley Wagland OBE, Essex County Council's Deputy to the Leader with principal accountabilities on Major Infrastructure Projects and Freeports, said: "A huge amount of hard work has gone into getting to this stage and we are absolutely delighted to have now been conditionally awarded the funding needed to deliver this truly transformational project.

"The Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package will deliver enormous benefits; improving journey times, reducing delays and supporting economic growth in the area. We also need to provide better options for people to travel, especially for shorter journeys where we want walking or cycling to be the natural choice. This project will do just that, helping encourage people to travel in and around the city in safer, greener, and healthier ways."

OPENING OF BEAULIEU PARKWAY BRIDGE MARKS FINAL STAGE OF INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMME

Several Essex Highways teams saw months of hard work come to fruition on Monday 30 October when Beaulieu Parkway Bridge, Chelmsford, was officially opened.

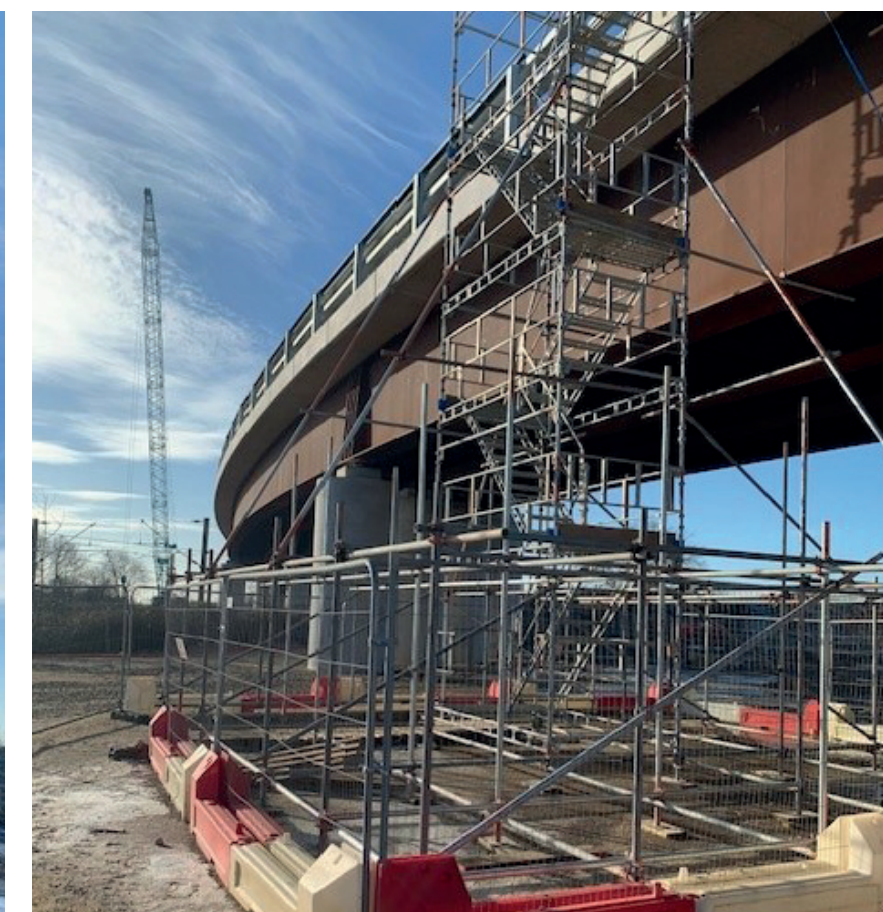
Countryside and L&Q, the developers of Beaulieu in Chelmsford, announced the opening of the new £14m bridge, marking the final stage of the developers' £35 million infrastructure programme to provide a new relief road between the A12 and A130.

Development Management, Structures, Safety Auditors, and Street Lighting all worked collaboratively with National Highways, ECC Network Development, the Developer, Developer's contract administrators, Principal Designer/ Contractor have worked together to provide a connecting link over the A12 and main line railway to form the new A131 in Chelmsford.

The A131 is a new prime route between Boreham Interchange and Essex regiment way and in due course will also provide access to Beaulieu Park train station when it is opened (around 2026).



JOHN FORD, CLERK OF WORKS, ESSEX HIGHWAYS, TAKES IN THE VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE





HARLOW WALKING AND CYCLING SCHEME PROGRESSES

Following a successful funding bid for walking and cycling schemes across the county, Harlow Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan Route 9 is one of a number of routes being progressed in the town and has now gone through a period of public engagement.

The proposals for the route, include new surfacing, improved signage and lighting, and upgraded crossing points. **A storymap website was created**, detailing all the

improvements planned along the route, including major changes at two crossing locations.

This was demonstrated by two artist impressions, including the one above. The scheme was launched to the public through a press release and a number of social media posts across Essex Highways and Harlow and Gilston Garden Town accounts.

An in-person drop in engagement event, held in the Harvey Centre in

Harlow at the Harlow Hub, was well attended with interested members of the public as well as representatives of both local Sustrans and Ramblers groups. The project was well received with attendees acknowledging the current issues with the route and welcoming the improvements that were presented.

The scheme will shortly go to TRO consultation on the crossing points and look to start construction in the new year.

FLICKING THE SWITCH ON UPGRADED STREETLIGHTS IN ROCHFORD, CASTLE POINT AND MALDON

MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT LIGHTS COMING TO REMAINING PARTS OF ESSEX TO HELP REDUCE MAINTENANCE COSTS

Rochford, Castle Point and Maldon are the next Essex towns to have their streetlights upgraded as part of the programme being rolled out by Essex Highways.

So far 115,000 older style lights have been replaced with LED ones, which is around 87% of all the lights in Essex. The new units save around 75% of energy compared to the previous lights and are more efficient as they are expected to last up to 20 years, reducing the cost on taxpayers to replace the bulbs more frequently.

Essex Highways crews have been replacing around 600 lights a week - mostly in residential areas. The lights also include a sensor which allows them to be monitored and dimmed

remotely and any issues are reported automatically. The roll out of the upgrade programme was previously delayed due to a shortage in parts caused in part by the Ukraine war. However, fitting the new lights is now back on track to be substantially completed by March 2024.

The remaining areas are expected to have their lights upgrading at the following times:

- Brentwood - currently underway, expected to be completed by mid-November
- Uttlesford - currently underway, expected to be completed by mid-December
- Rochford - mid-December to end of January
- Maldon - end of January - end of March



Cllr Tom Cunningham, Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport said:

“The rollout of the LED upgrade programme across Essex has been very impressive, and I’m pleased to see it’s in its final phase.

“The Essex Highways team has worked very hard to remain on track despite delays out of our control, and the benefits of more energy efficient

and longer-lasting lights will mean reduced costs for taxpayers.”

Cllr Lauren Shaw, deputy Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport, and county councillor for Rochford North said:

“The streetlight upgrade programme is a real success story for Essex Highways and I’m pleased the residents of Rochford North and neighbouring districts, which will have

their lights upgraded over the coming weeks are among the next to benefit.”

95% of the lights are working as expected, with the remaining 3% waiting for repairs. Residents are still able to report issues with street lights through the Essex Highways ‘tell us’ tool on the website.

[More information about the LED upgrade programme](#)



USEFUL CONTACTS

With Winter now approaching, the likelihood of fallen trees, power outages and flooding following weather events increases. Help and support can be found below:

FALLEN TREES

To report a fallen tree that is obstructing a highway please contact Essex Highways:

<https://www.essexhighways.org/tell-us/trees-hedges-and-weeds>

To report a fallen tree on a highway that is a risk to public safety call:
0345 603 7631

POWER CUTS

In the event of a power cut in your area, report to UK Power Networks by calling 0800 31 63 105 or simply 105. You can also report and check power cuts in your area at ukpowernetworks.co.uk/powercut

FLOODING

You can keep an eye on flood warnings here;

<https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/>

Essex County Council is the local flooding authority:

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/floods-emergency-planning>