

HIGHWAYS HIGHLIGHTS

HHH

INFORMATION FOR LOCAL COUNCILLORS
JANUARY 2024

SAFER / GREENER / HEALTHIER



ESSEX HIGHWAYS
ON HAND AS
STORMS
HENK AND
ISHA HIT
THE COUNTY

COMMENT

COUNCILLOR TOM CUNNINGHAM

CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS INFRASTRUCTURE
AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

I'm in the fortunate position to bring good news in my column this month, which is that thanks to additional funding from Essex County Council last year Essex Highways has delivered almost double the number of pothole repairs in 2023.

This is an excellent achievement, and something I'm sure we'll all be very happy about. The Essex Highways crews have been working hard to deliver this, and will continue to inspect, assess and repair the most dangerous issues across our divisions.

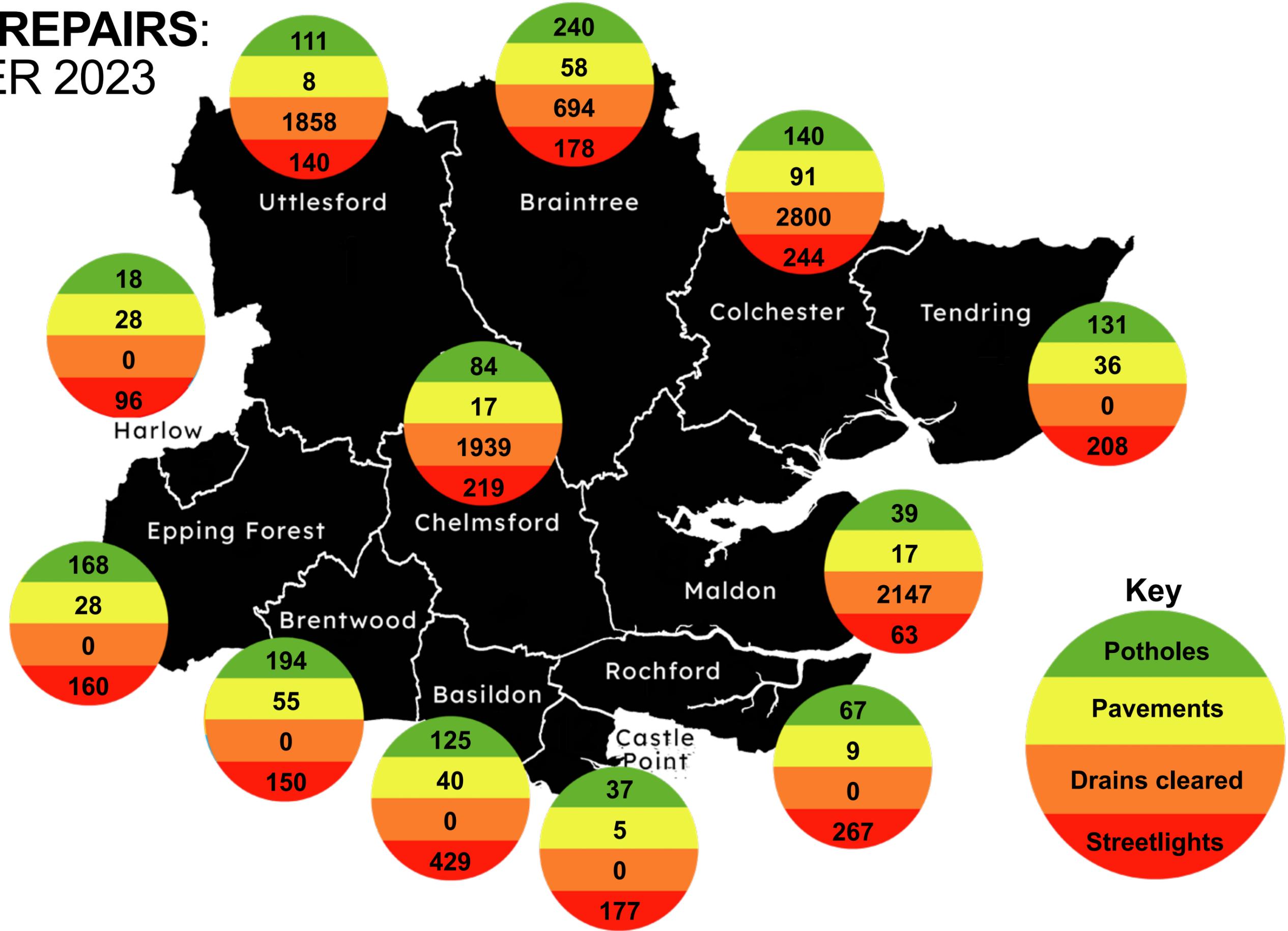
This time of year does pose more of a challenge carrying out repairs, and this January has been no exception, with the wind, flooding and icy conditions. Crews have responded quickly to emergency calls so our roads can be kept safe and clear of debris, and the gritters were out twice a day when temperatures dropped so the roads remained safe to travel on.

An ask from me is that we remind our residents through our communications with them to make sure they are driving to the conditions and are mindful of how the weather can make driving conditions harder. Leaving earlier, checking routes and slowing down in the wet, wind and ice will keep them and others safe in these wintry conditions. Further advice is available on the Essex Highways website.

Best wishes, Tom



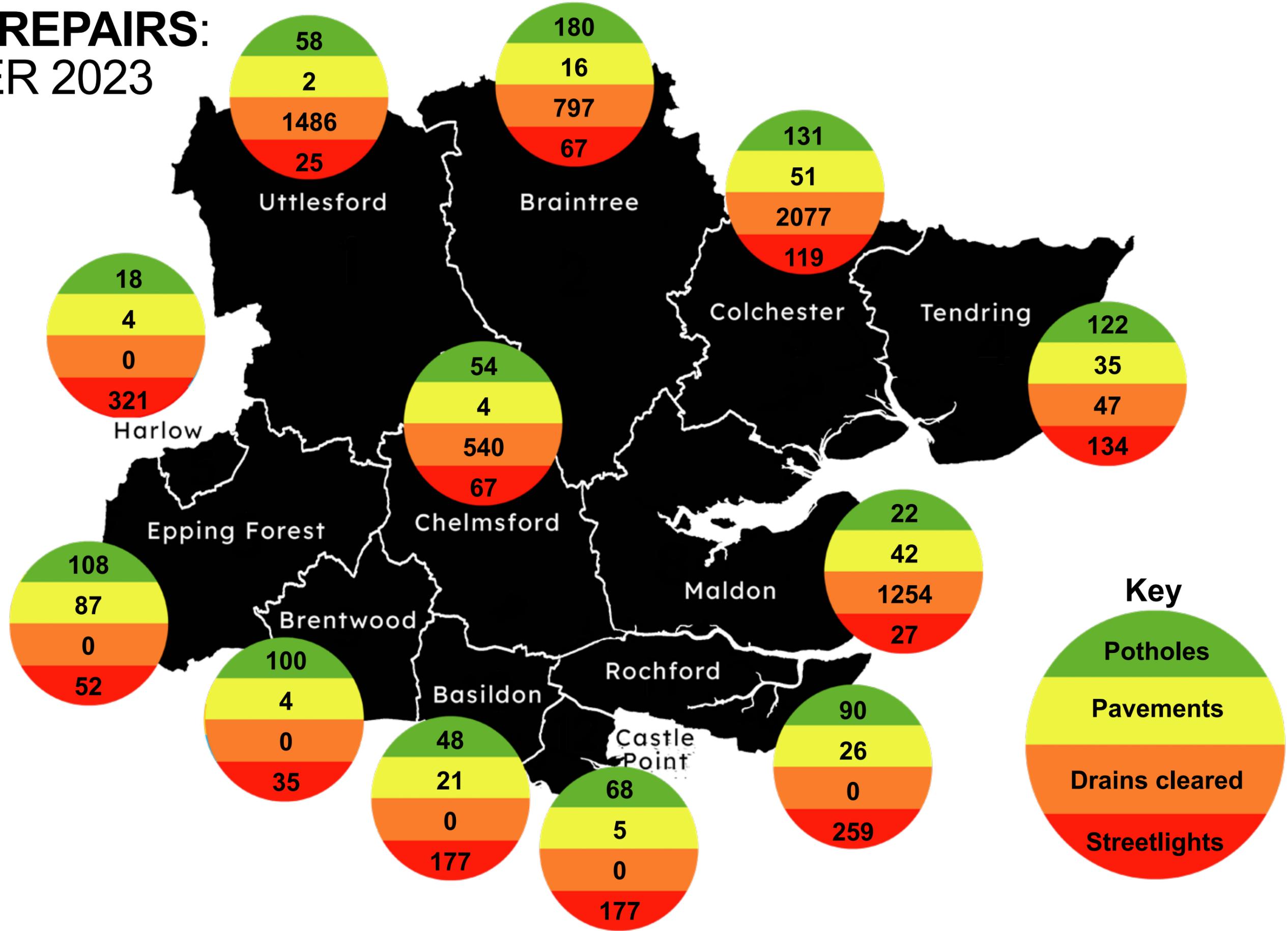
ROUTINE REPAIRS: NOVEMBER 2023



Key

- Potholes
- Pavements
- Drains cleared
- Streetlights

ROUTINE REPAIRS: DECEMBER 2023



Key

- Potholes
- Pavements
- Drains cleared
- Streetlights

ESSEX HIGHWAYS ON HAND AS STORMS HENK AND ISHA HIT THE COUNTY

Just a few hours into the new year, our crews were called into action to help with the response to Storm Henk. During Tuesday 2 January until around midday on Wednesday 3 January, the highway service received in the region of 460 individual weather related enquires regarding flooding, wind damage and fallen trees, alongside a considerable volume of other various highway related concerns.

The total number of highway reports during this period amassed to around 800, or roughly about four times the amount we would usually expect.

Our tree surgeon supply chain partner mobilised 12 crews across the county overnight (2/3 January) and attended in excess of 75 individual fallen tree reports and continued to receive and respond to further reports throughout Wednesday 3 January, with the total attended exceeding 100 sites. Three sites involved trees that ended up resting on overhead power lines, requiring attendance from the network provider, UKPN. Once UKPN advised that the overhead power lines had been either isolated or made safe, our tree surgeons returned to site to clear the fallen trees from the highway.

The week commencing Monday 15 January saw extremely low temperatures across the county, which

required gritting runs twice a day. This meant more hard work for our teams as the gritter drivers are also the same operatives working on our scheduled highways maintenance. Our Ardleigh and Halstead depots alone covered 9500 miles between them, gritting 6100 miles of roads, working 510 man hours. 800 tonnes of road salt used - the equivalent weight of eight blue whales!

Storm Isha battered Britain overnight between Sunday 21 January and Monday 22. Although not as badly affected as other parts of the country, Essex suffered from very strong winds which brought down trees and fences. The busiest time for the service was between 19.00-00.00 with 16 calls taken, the majority of them being for trees down.

Councillor Tom Cunningham, Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport, said: "I want to pay tribute to Essex Highways staff, who worked very hard in difficult conditions to help keep our county's roads moving safely following a month of difficult weather. I would also like to thank the residents of Essex for their patience while we dealt with many incidents and obstructions on the roads. While we remain in Winter and the current cold conditions, it is important residents take care when travelling on the roads in wet, windy or icy conditions."



90% INCREASE IN POTHOLES REPAIRED IN 2023 COMPARED TO PREVIOUS YEAR

Last year Essex Highways repaired almost double the number of potholes it repaired in the previous year.

11,949 potholes were transformed from road hazards to smooth surfaces, a 90 per cent increase on the year prior when 6,280 repairs were carried out.

The increase was thanks to the additional investment in the Essex Highways budget last year. Essex County Council invested £12 million, which included hiring additional crews to carry out the extra works, and the Department for Transport an extra £5.4 million.

Councillor Tom Cunningham, Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure, and Sustainable Transport said: “This is an excellent achievement, and Essex Highways has worked hard to deliver these additional repairs.

“The extra financial support from Essex County Council has made a real difference in the number of repairs carried out. Tackling the number of repairs needed across Essex is a big challenge and something residents want us to prioritise. Last year’s achievement shows that we’re committed to improving the highways and making travel safer, greener and healthier for everyone.



Essex County Council also received £121 million from central Government last November to carry out road repairs over the next 10 years.

Essex County Council already receives funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) each year, including the £5.4 million additional funding the Chancellor announced in March in the Budget for pothole repairs, which is available this financial year and next. The new funding announced will ensure there is financial support for road repairs until 2034.

It will allow Essex Highways to deliver repairs and resurfacing for priority routes and defects, remaining in line with the current strategy to target repairing the most unsafe issues.

Residents are encouraged to report potholes on the roads to Essex Highways online, where all reports are inspected. Or where there is risk to public safety, calling 0345 603 763.



COLCHESTER RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM MAKES GOOD PROGRESS

Work is progressing well on the first stages of the new Colchester Rapid Transit System which started on Northern Approach last year.

Around 70% of the preparation works for the new rapid transit lane are now complete. Works so far have covered vegetation removal and site clearance, preparation of the transit lane footprint and diversion of existing utility cables.

Traffic islands at the junctions with Wallace Road and Dickenson Road have also been removed, while a 30-mph speed limit has been introduced to the Northern Approach Road. Over the next couple of months

works will focus on ducting and road crossing activities, installation of a new drainage system, continuation of the transit lane footprint and the installation of a new footway/cycleway.

On the other side of the city, advanced works are due to get underway on Clingoe Hill this month. This will see vegetation cleared and utilities diverted ahead of the start of the main works later this summer.

Find out more about the **Colchester Rapid Transit System** and how this will help improve journeys around Colchester. **Contact us with any enquires on the scheme**





ESSEX HIGHWAYS ON A CHARGE WITH ELECTRIC FLEET ADDITIONS

Essex Highways crews will be using more electric vehicles as they carry out inspections and repairs across the county thanks to ongoing investment to make the service more sustainable.

The new vehicles, funded by Ringway Jacobs (part of the Essex Highways strategic partnership delivering road repairs and maintenance), will help reduce the impact the service has on the environment and will help the council achieve its environmental ambitions set out in Everyone's Essex – the council's ambitious vision for the county. The addition of ten all-electric vans

annually marks a commitment to safer, greener, and healthier road maintenance practices. The vans produce zero carbon emissions, have a 171-mile range per charge, and should remain operational for longer, increasing the long-term cost-effectiveness of the service.

Simon Butt, Operations Director at Essex Highways, said: "This investment reflects our determination to operate a greener and safer fleet for Essex. Our focus extends beyond the present and we want our vehicles to last as the way we travel shifts towards more sustainable types of transport."

Councillor Tom Cunningham, Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport, said: "It is crucial that we continue to invest in our fleet to ensure that our vehicles benefit from the latest safety and technology innovations while being more efficient and kinder to the environment.

"I welcome Essex Highways' commitment to introducing and using new low carbon innovations and technologies across the organisation and the operational benefits and efficiencies that these bring."

'DERMOT SNOW CLEARY' RAISES A SMILE AS BBC BREAKFAST HIGHLIGHTS OUR ONLINE GRITTER TRACKER

Many of us woke up to a nice surprise on Tuesday 16 January with BBC Breakfast featuring our Gritter Tracker. Presenters Jon Kay and Sally Nugent introduced the nation to our online tracker following the weather bulletin, showing the tracker in action and going through their favourite gritter names.

Jon and Sally chuckled over some of our gritter's names, such as Spready Mercury and the Grit Gatsby but Dermot O'Cleary was their favourite. BBC Breakfast is the nation's most watched morning TV programme, viewed by five million people per day.

Last year, as part of continued investment in our fleet, 15 new

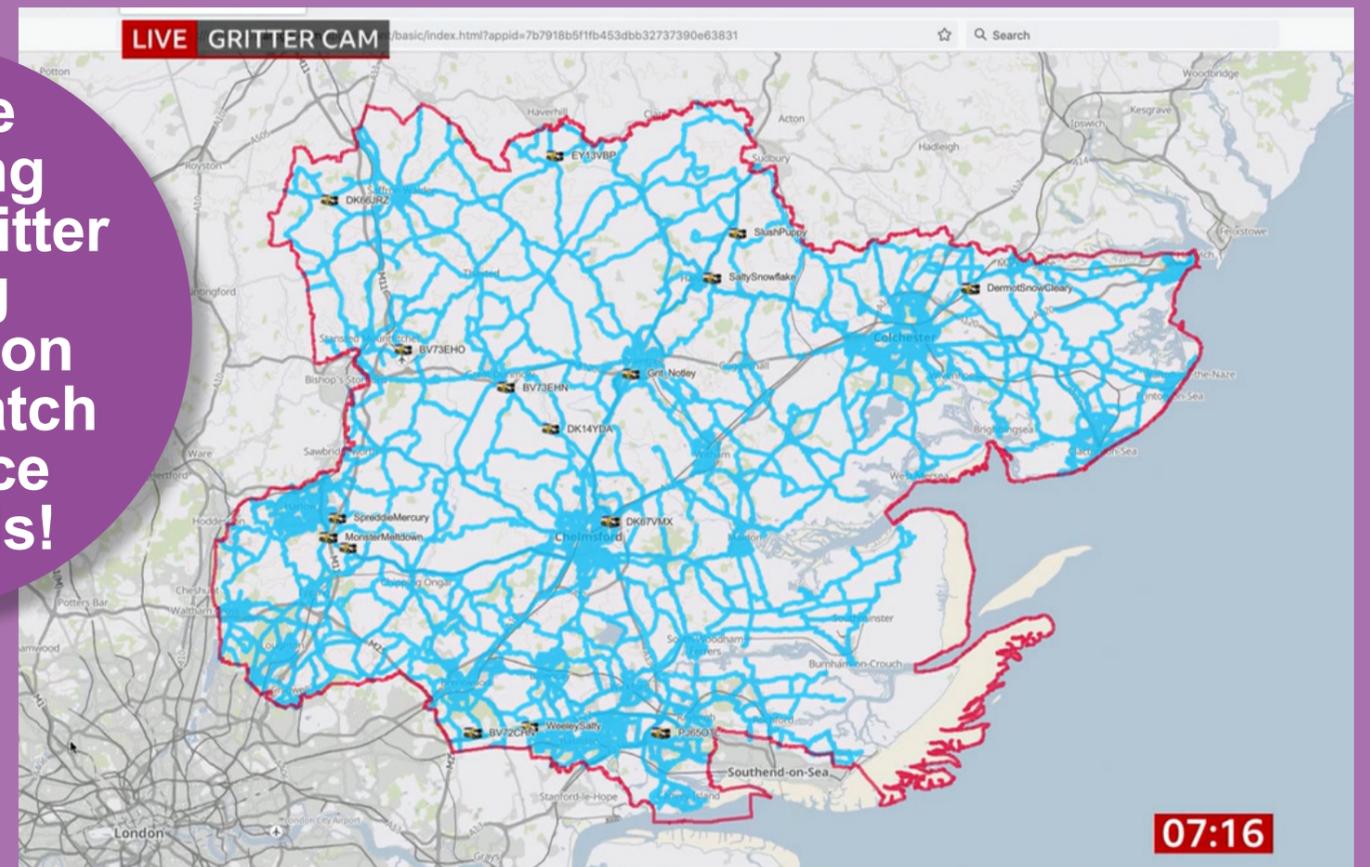
gritters joined the service, each named by the public in an online competition. The new gritters were named:

- Billericay Grittie
- Colchester Gritty
- Dermot Snow Cleary
- Grit Dunsnow
- Gritter Thunberg
- Jennifer
- Maldon salt
- PLOWIE
- Rupert Grit
- Weeley Salty
- Monster Meltdown
- Grit Expectations
- Spready Mercury
- The Grit Gatsby
- Slush Puppy

If you want to see where all our gritters are on the network you can track them in real time here



We'll be launching another gritter naming competition soon... Watch this space for details!



USEFUL CONTACTS

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

IN AN EMERGENCY

If you think there's a risk to public safety, do not report it online, please call us immediately on 0345 603 7631 or if you have hearing problems you can use our text phone service on 0345 758 5592.

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>