



HIGHWAYS HIGHLIGHTS

HHH

INFORMATION FOR LOCAL COUNCILLORS
OCTOBER 2024

SAFER / GREENER / HEALTHIER



NAME OUR GRITTERS!



Essex County Council

COMMENT

COUNCILLOR TOM CUNNINGHAM

CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS INFRASTRUCTURE
AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

The Essex Highways winter service is now underway, with the service closely monitoring the weather as the temperatures drop to assess whether gritters need to be deployed. This is an important time of year for the service, and in some respects all the work Essex Highways completes - from repairing potholes, clearing drains and cutting back vegetation - is to minimise the impact the cold and wet weather has on our roads. Last year was particularly wet, so the additional works we're carrying out through the Members' Highways Initiative and Priority One will hopefully mean we're well prepared.

As well as this, we have a naming competition for some of the gritters that will be out and about this winter. The competition closes at the end of November, so do visit the Essex Highways Facebook page and complete the form if you have any creative suggestions. The more fun the better!

And it's a timely opportunity to remind you that at the end of each edition of Highways Highlights there is a list of emergency contact details in case of issues such as flooding or fallen trees. Please do keep these to hand and share with your local residents so we can help Essex Highways respond to any issues on the roads this autumn and winter.



ROUTINE REPAIRS: October 2024

Please note: All drains on main roads are cleaned at least once a year over a two-year cycle. Drains on local roads are programmed for cleaning on a district by district basis.



Potholes: 2734



**Pavements:
1236**



**Drains cleared:
12089**

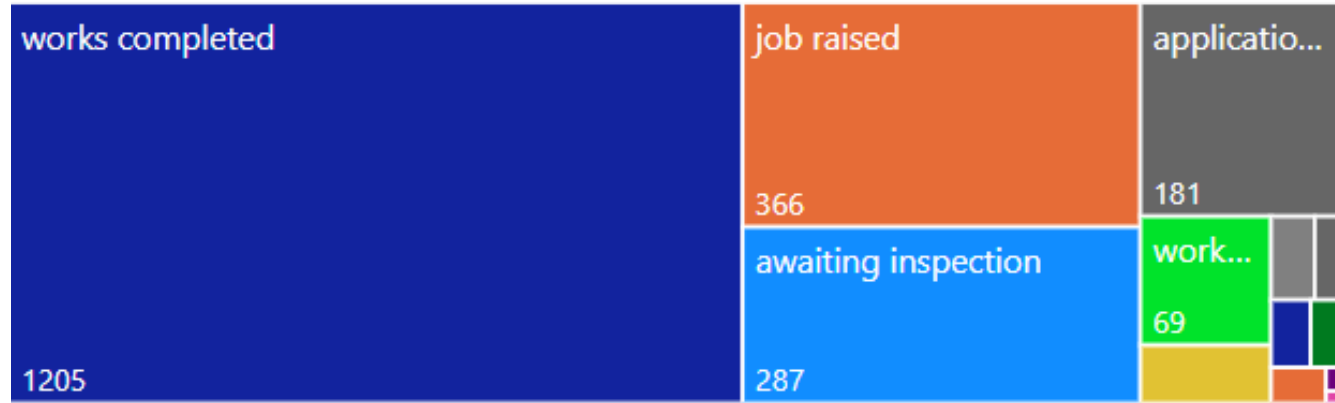


**Streetlights:
1140**

MEMBER HIGHWAY INITIATIVE

High Level Report: November 4 2024

Request Status



Triage Result

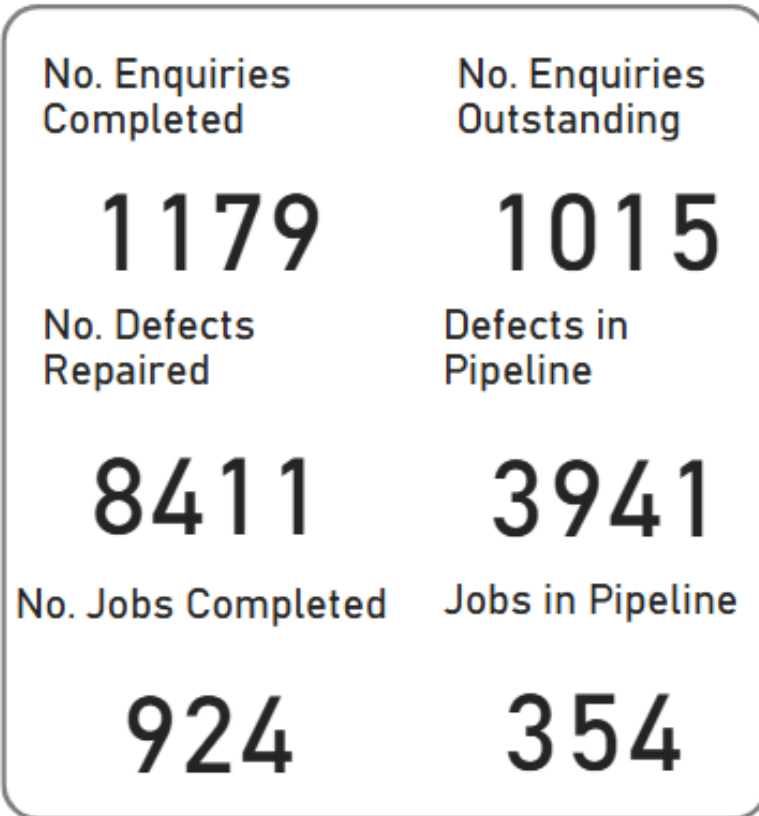
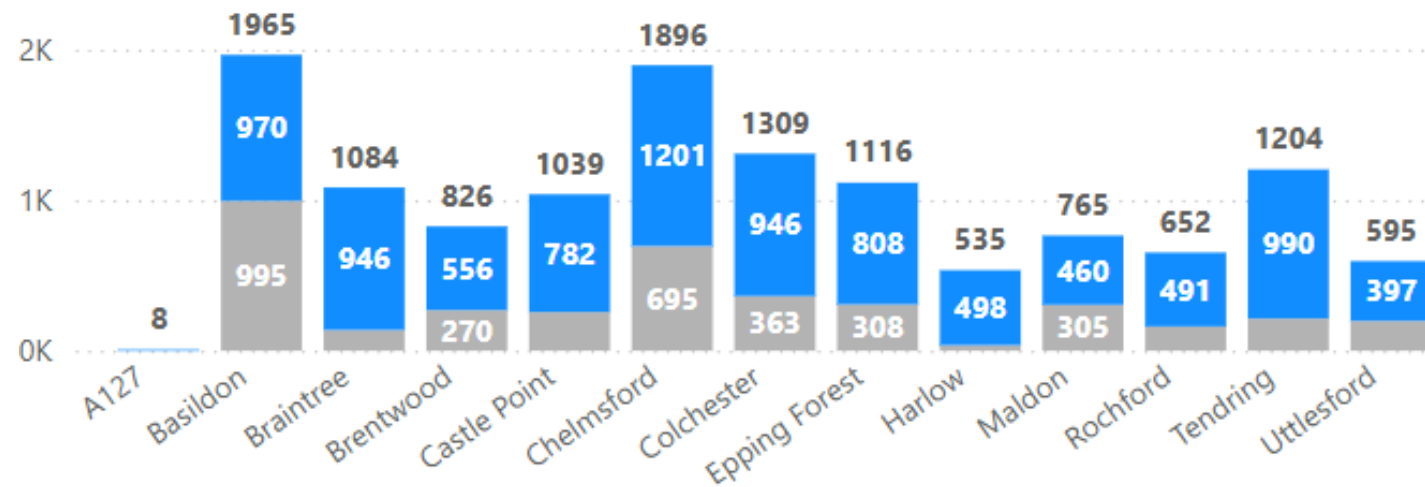
RAG assessment of difficulty of scheduling Member request.



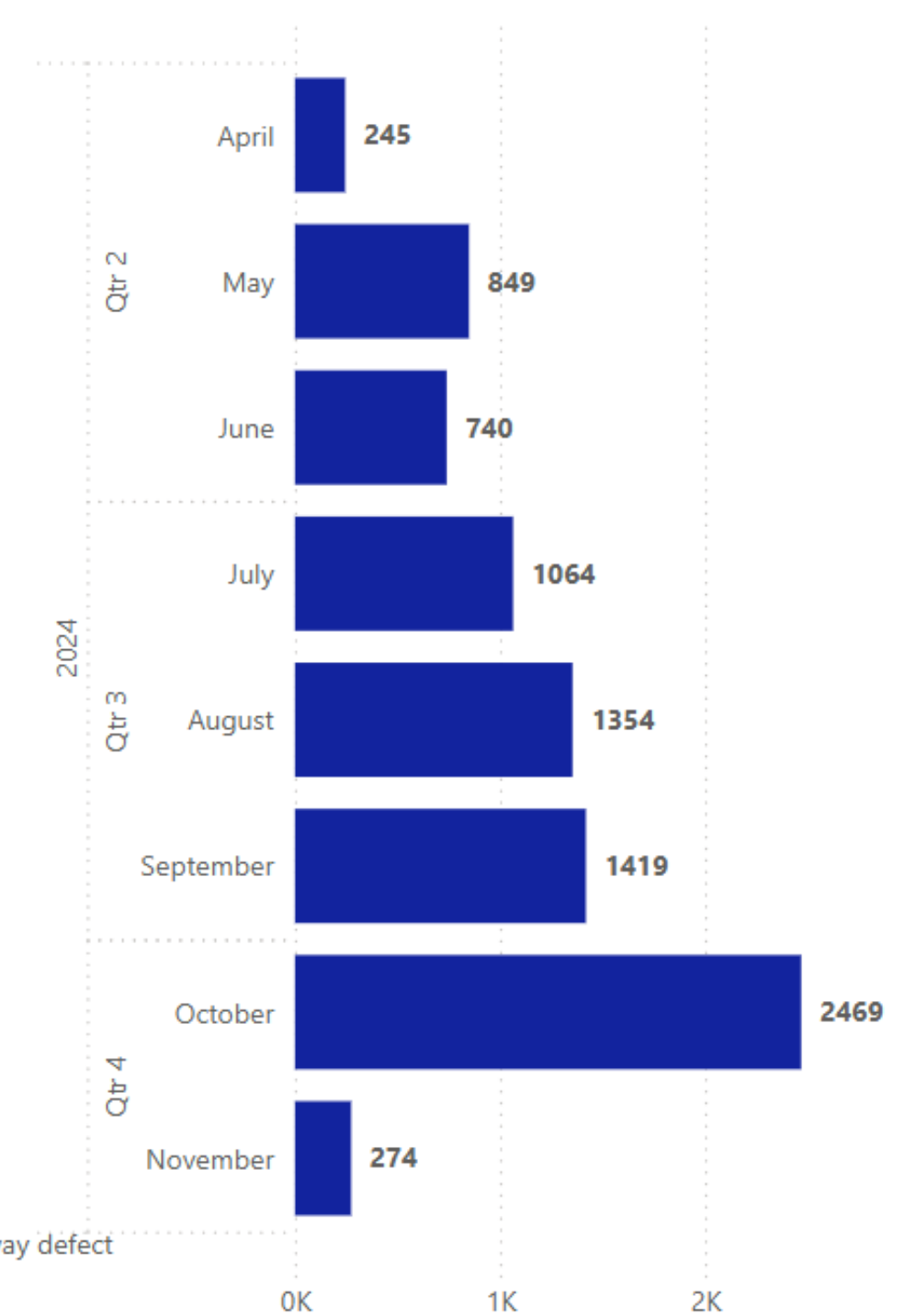
Defects by District

Shows defects that have been repaired and those programmed for repair.

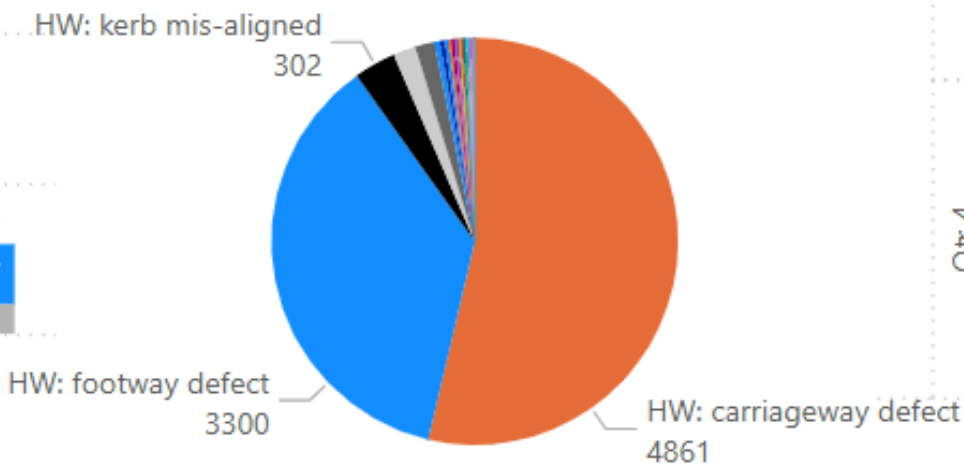
Defect repaired ● N ● Y



Defects Repaired by Month



Repaired Defect Types



NAME OUR GRITTERS!



A naming competition has been launched for 25 gritting vehicles in time for Essex Highways' winter service. The gritters will be based at Springfield depot and the new Dunmow depot to help keep Essex roads free of ice as the days get colder.

They join 34 other gritters named by Essex residents in previous years,

including Dermot Snow Cleary, Volder Grit, Gritty McGrit Face, PLOWIE and Spreddie Mercury.

This year's competition, 'Name our Winter Heroes', will be held on Essex Highways' social media channels until 30 November. To enter, you need to:

- Follow Essex Highways on **Facebook** and **X**

- **Check the names of current gritters**
- Suggest names for the new gritters via **Microsoft Forms** by 30 November

Suggestions should be related to Essex, winter and/or a local celebrity. They will be shortlisted based on their suitability before a vote is carried out on social media.

Creative names help residents track each gritter and their routes on [Essex Highways' live map](#). Essex Highways closely monitors weather and road temperatures during winter service to see when roads need gritting.

Highways crews readied themselves for winter by conducting trial runs to familiarise themselves with gritting routes. These are the same teams who work year-round on road and pavement repairs in Essex, with more repairs carried out in summer to prepare for severe weather.

The teams carried out 39 gritting runs last winter, using over 10,000

tonnes of salt across 2,000 miles. This covered 51 gritting routes in the county. Dunmow depot, which opened earlier this year, will be operational for the first time. It provides an additional 3,000 tonnes of salt to help Essex Highways respond to adverse conditions. Salt bins in local communities have also been filled in preparation for the cold months.





Councillor Tom Cunningham, Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure, and Sustainable Transport at Essex County Council, said: “I look forward to seeing what creative names the people of Essex will come up with for this year’s gritters. I think it will be tough to top Spreddie Mercury. Residents can see what vehicle is on which route via Essex Highway’s live map.

I encourage residents to use this when planning their journeys as the days and nights get colder.

“Essex Highways has worked hard to ensure we’re well equipped for whatever the weather throws at us this winter. I’d like to thank all the teams involved for their dedication and wish residents the best of luck in the competition.”

Robbie Jamieson, Essex Highways Winter Service Manager, said: “We’re fully prepared for this year’s winter season. Our teams have been out familiarising themselves with the routes, and with the addition of the Dunmow depot, we’re in a stronger position than ever to keep Essex moving through the colder months.”

PRIORITY ONE ALREADY MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Over 30 road resurfacing projects and 100 vegetation clearance works have been completed since the launch of Essex County Council's £25 million Priority One investment.

Announced in August, the Priority One investment is enabling additional crews and resources to be pumped into highways maintenance across the county.

Tackling road surfacing, vegetation clearance, drainage, signs and lining, works have been taking place in every district/ borough.

The £25 million investment comes after £12 million of extra investment was announced earlier this year for highways. £8 million of this supports the Members' Highways Initiative, where County Council Members prioritise the issues they want Essex Highways crews to repair. A separate £39 million was also set aside this year for the county's annual resurfacing programme.



Councillor Mark Platt, Lead for the Priority One project, said: “I want to send a really clear message to Essex residents that we are listening, and we understand the importance of feeling proud about the places we live.

“How our local area looks and feels matters and this campaign is called Priority One, because we recognise our road network is central to our local environment, and this impacts us all.

“Over the coming weeks and months, we be announcing further works, with teams out in every borough, district and city area helping to make travel in Essex safer, greener and healthier.”

More information on the Priority One campaign

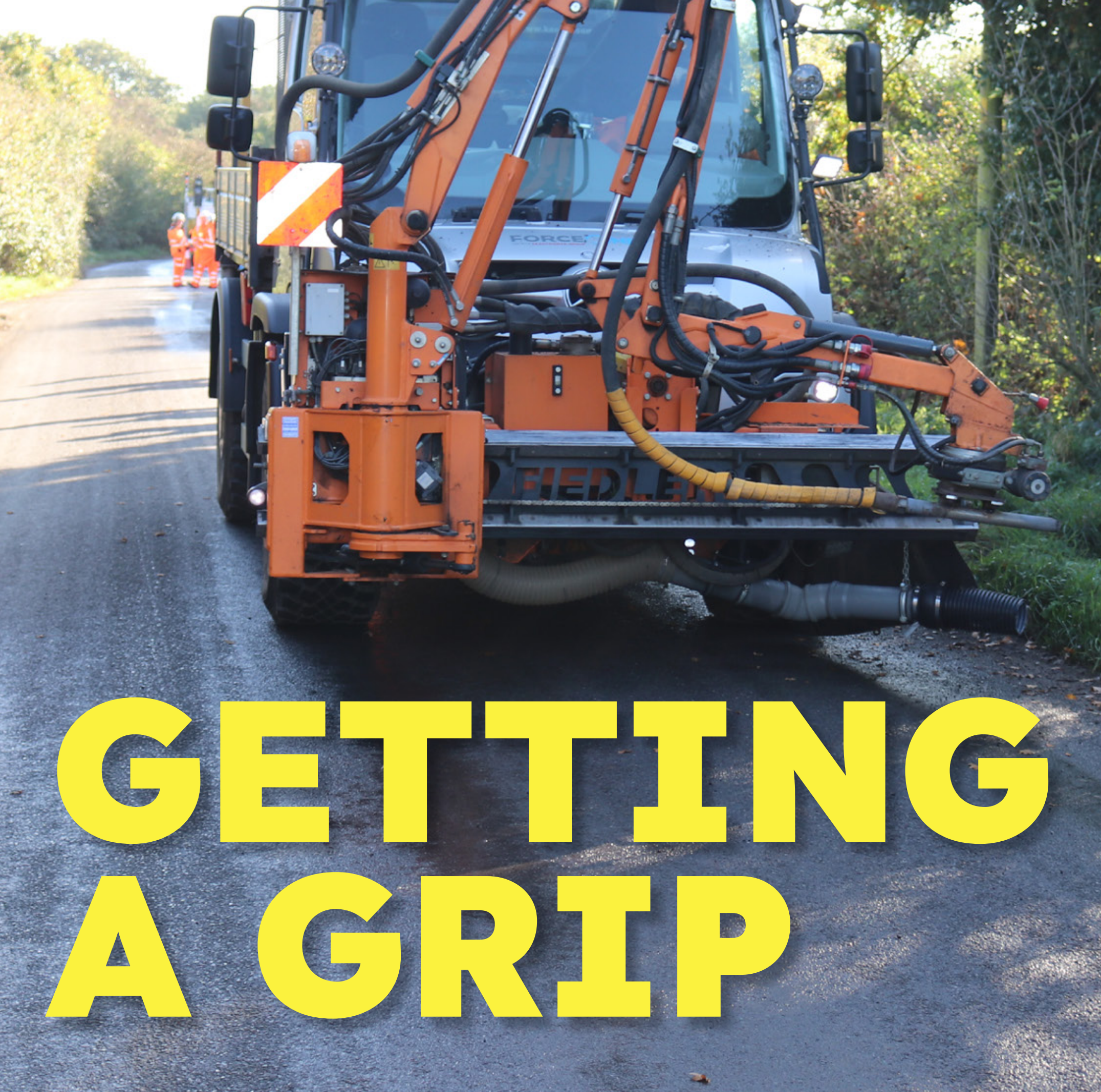


BENFLEET HIGH ROAD BEFORE



BENFLEET HIGH ROAD AFTER

COUNCILLOR PLATT ON PRIORITY ONE



GETTING A GRIP

With Winter coming up and the probability of worsening weather, Essex Highways has been trialling a new Grip cutting Vehicle in Ardleigh, near Colchester.

Rural roads and lanes can often be affected by concentrations of surface water due to a combination of poor drainage, badly maintained or neglected ditches and the volumes water that accumulate during periods of bad weather.

Essex Highways has been identifying rural locations that are notorious for seasonal flooding with a view to carry out Grip (or drainage channels) cutting in verges which will help high waters levels naturally disperse into ditches, drains and surrounding landscape where it can be absorbed.

Historically, the issue with Grip cutting has been the occurrences of service strikes by the machinery used to create the channels.



Utility cables for broadband and other services are often laid and buried unfortunately close to the surface of verges and easily ripped out. This can cause all manner of inconvenience, expense and potential personal harm should gas or electric cabling or pipework be present.

The new, and currently one-off vehicle, as trialled by Essex Highways, removes the risks by cutting Grips via the use of intense jets of compressed air. This effective method clears a path in the verge to allow the egress of water but doesn't damage or remove any utility cables buried in the verge if they are present.

Following the trial, Essex Highways will evaluate whether to bring the vehicle into regular service, presenting another example of innovation being made available to improve the highways network for Essex residents.





AROUND THE COUNTY



RAYLEIGH PAVEMENT REPAIRS UNDERWAY

Essential footpath maintenance is improving local pavements in Rayleigh. Concentrating on Uplands Park Road and surrounding areas, we're addressing defects and surface irregularities.

Work began in September and continues to February 2025 and involve construction works to repair the surface and kerb defects before a final slurry sealing treatment which provides a weather protection barrier, preserving the surface and improving skid resistance.

Areas for improvement include:

Uplands Park Road, Broadlands Avenue, Upway, Link Road, Beech Avenue, Elm Drive, Chiltern Close, Mendip Close, Highmead, Spring Gardens and Poyntens. These works will be carried out in stages during the daytime, to minimise local inconvenience.



USEFUL CONTACTS

Whatever the weather, you never know when the unexpected might occur. Should there be instances of fallen trees, power outages, flooding etc, 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>