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Sent: 04 September 2025 17:59

Subject: ECC -Essential - Safety - Landowners urged to cut vegetation now bird nesting season is over.

Landowners are being reminded that trees, hedges, ditches and other vegetation close to highways needs to be maintained with summer drawing to a close.

Overgrown vegetation can prevent roads and paths from being safe when wetter weather and shorter days draw near, blocking paths and restricting clear view of the highway.

Grass cut in wet conditions can also lead to clumps being deposited by lawnmowers onto highways. Therefore, grass cutting is ideally carried out when the weather is drier.

Landowners are responsible for maintaining foliage on their land, even if it is close to a road or pavement. They have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to prevent risk.

Overgrown vegetation can restrict paths, reduce sight, and cause floods when ditches and drains become clogged.

Now bird nesting season is over, landowners should carry out work such as:

- removing overhanging branches that obscure the view of the road
- removing overhanging branches that lower the road's clearance for tall vehicles, such as double-decker school buses
- trimming or removing trees that are in danger of falling onto the pavement or road
- removing overgrown shrubs that block lighting or traffic signs
- removing trenches on private property to prevent flooding when it rains

Most trees and hedges by roads are on privately owned land. Owners can include district councils, parish councils, housing associations, farmers and homeowners.

Essex Highways' £25 million Priority One programme of highways maintenance included 582 vegetation clearances during the summer.

Councillor Tom Cunningham, Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport, said: "It is paramount that landowners maintain vegetation on their own properties to help ensure clear visibility on our roads and footpaths for pedestrians and road users alike.

"We appreciate the cooperation of landowners in carrying out these essential maintenance tasks. They play a crucial role in creating a safer, greener and healthier Essex, while helping to enhance the pride we all have in our great county."

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