

HIGHWAYS HIGHLIGHTS

HELPFUL
TIPS AND
INFORMATION
FOR LOCAL
COUNCILLORS



EYES IN THE SKY

DRONES PROVIDING SAFER, MORE COST-EFFECTIVE BRIDGE INSPECTIONS

Camera drones are already being used in industry, but now they are enabling our highway engineers in Essex to carefully inspect critical structures like bridges and culverts in better, safer, and recordable ways.

What are the benefits? Drones can easily get high-definition airborne or waterborne views of hard-to-reach spaces and areas that inspectors can't reach safely or easily, like the undersides or parapets of bridges over busy roads. The equipment can also be configured to take imagery in confined spaces, such as culverts under the road and even underwater – for example for the bridge foundations in a river.

The use of drones does not in any way replace the professional judgement and calculation of a professional structures engineer – drones are simply a more efficient, safer, and sometimes more effective way of making a visual inspection. Professional decisions are then taken using the visual information gathered.

This is more efficient; also means that safety risks for inspectors are greatly reduced; and significant cost savings are made negating the need for or cost of manned boats and safety platforms. The data produced is also far superior and will significantly improve our historic record of the structure, enabling changes to be identified more easily over time.

CONTINUES



COMMENT COUNCILLOR LEE SCOTT

CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

Welcome to Highways Highlights showcasing the activities that the Essex Highways team has delivered to support our Safer, Greener, Healthier ambitions.

Safer: our use of new technologies; Greener: our plans around cycling and sustainable transport corridors; and Healthier: helping children from Little Haven to play in the park.

This edition also includes an update on flooding which is becoming more frequent as a result of climate change and I would also direct you to ECC's website which has more information about their role as the **Flood Authority**

Have a happy, healthy and restful Christmas and New Year.

EYES IN THE SKY

In October Councillor Lee Scott, Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport, attended a demonstration of the drones in action at the bridge crossing the River Wid, located on A414 Greenbury Way, Chelmsford.

Councillor Scott explains, "Use of advanced drone technology to help us inspect and maintain bridges much more efficiently is a huge benefit to road users in Essex."

"We have around 1,500 bridges and culverts across the county and if we have to close them for inspections, residents, businesses, local services, and other road users all suffer. Essex County Council is completely committed to bringing

this and other innovations forward to help us manage all our structural assets to help us get the maximum value from highways budgets.

"This drone technology, along with the introduction of Artificial Intelligence to identify road defects shows that Essex Highways is at the leading edge of highway maintenance.

"Our strategic partnership with Ringway Jacobs continues to deliver major improvements just like this one, for everyone in Essex."

**WATCH
THE
VIDEO** 



FLOODING YOU - WITH INFORMATION

Winter months bring heavy and prolonged rainfall with snow also adding significant water. This combination can then lead to highway flooding, which is potentially dangerous, inconvenient, and damaging. Water draining off fields and gardens also carries debris, stones, and soil, which will block drains and pipes.

Essex Highways is responsible for over 300,000 known drains and related assets and we move around the county during routine “cyclical” cleaning area by area, as well as mounting “ad-hoc” responses to problems, in order to alleviate the effects that rainfall has on flooding. With the resources we have, last month alone we cleared 9288 roadside drains. While this does help, some roads will still flood under the heaviest downpours, either due to the sheer volume of water, or because there is a local low-point or slope.

After a heavy downpour or prolonged build-up, it can take several hours for our highway drains to evacuate a large volume of water. This is because road drains have to carry the water from the road to somewhere else such as ditches, utility-owned water systems or rivers. So, after heavy rain, please wait a few hours before you report flooding on the highway to us.

If the drainage ditches near the road are blocked with silt, the water has nowhere to go. Equally, if you live near the coast or tidal river and there is a high tide, the drains may even work in reverse. It is the responsibility of the landowner to clean out any ditches on their private property. Parish Councillors can often help liaise with landowners

to bring about resolution when local flooding issues are identified. We are only responsible for our own road drains around the county, so if the wider network of private and utility drainage in a village isn’t working properly or doesn’t have the capacity to cope with heavy, prolonged water flows, then it will make no difference if the road drains are cleared, as the water cannot escape.

Our ability to manage our gullies, catchpits, channels, and pipes is increasing. We now have gathered nearly seven years data on flood risks, including silt levels found in each drain at intervals and other reported issues such as tree roots growing through pipes. This means we can check and clear some of the more problematic drains more often.

IT’S WORTH REMEMBERING THAT...

Drivers should not attempt to drive through significant floods as it is likely water will enter air intakes and stall engines leading to dangerous situations requiring rescue by stretched emergency services. Even when the water is not deep, drivers should proceed very slowly to avoid aquaplaning collisions and to prevent soaking pedestrians and properties.

Pedestrians too should not enter floodwater, as there may be hidden obstacles or even holes such as manhole covers that have ‘popped out’ due to water pressure.





13,000 tonnes of CO2 could be saved each year if every car owner in Essex did just one less one-mile journey by car.

With this in mind, the Sustainable Transport Team are working with the Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP) to offer free adult cycling training to encourage more Essex residents to get on their bikes.

Running up until the end of March 2022 across the county and delivered by qualified cycling instructors, the beginners' course comprises four 45-minute sessions and the confidence-boosting/advanced training comprises one two-hour session.

Cycling offers an excellent low carbon transport solution as well as being a great form of exercise, improving both physical and mental health. Please help us reach more people by sharing these details with your networks.

Sign up here or email SaferEssexRoads@essexhighways.org for more information.



SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT CORRIDOR PLANS ON DISPLAY


How people travel in Harlow is set to change, following the launch of plans for the first in a series of new sustainable transport corridors within the town.

Led by Essex County Council, the 'North to Centre Sustainable Transport Corridor' will see the creation of new and improved walking, cycling and rapid bus transit routes between Burnt Mill Roundabout and Harlow Town Centre, helping create safer, greener and healthier ways to travel.

Part of £172 million of funding granted by Homes England to support the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town programme, the route will connect into the Gilston development in the north and Harlow town centre in the south

With dedicated segregated walking and cycling routes and the creation of bus lanes to enable high-frequency rapid bus services, the aim is to create easy connections for key destinations in the town and areas of new development, specifically including the planned Gilston development.

The corridor will also see substantial landscaping with shrubs, low-level planting and trees, with the aim of increasing biodiversity along the route and enhancing the local environment linking to the adjoining Harlow Town Park.

 [See details and comment on the proposals for the North to Centre STC here](#)

 [Contact the project team here](#)



Typical illustration showing Hub near Gladwin Way looking south



Typical illustration showing segregated pedestrian and cycle crossing at Vellizy Roundabout looking south towards the town centre



Typical illustration showing segregated cycle and walking route at Hub near Gladwin Way looking north



NEW PATH LEADS TO OUTDOOR FUN

Ringway Jacobs teams had a great time volunteering at Little Havens children's hospice in Rayleigh during the w/c 8 November.

Over two days, the Essex Highways crews took on the task of renewing the footpath leading to the play area at the hospice. The work was badly needed as the old footpath was hard to use for wheelchair users. However, thanks to the efforts of Charlie Ellison, Eleanor Ford, Stephen Glenn, Steve Havis, Michael Kirby, Andy Light, Susanne Moreton,

Charlie Morris, Daniel Morris, Adam Patchett, Sean Purcell, Matthew Reeve, David Treadgold and Joanne Woolford, the play area is much more easily accessible, which will make a huge difference to the children.

Little Havens staff were delighted with the result: "Your efforts were really appreciated, and we're very happy with the work you did as the new path and the small repairs will go along way in helping the children and staff enjoy the gardens."

ROUTINE REPAIRS DURING OCTOBER 2021

In October, we continued to clear out drains on local roads. Road drains are cleansed on an annual cycle, district by district. Streetlights-fixed totals don't include the work being carried out in the LED upgrade programme and are listed here as an addition.

DISTRICT	COUNTY ROUTES	LOCAL ROADS	PAVEMENT DEFECTS FIXED	DRAINS CLEARED	STREETLIGHTS FIXED
BASILDON	24	36	32	2290	334
BRAINTREE	36	19	27	1330	281
BRENTWOOD	8	9	3	856	68
CASTLE POINT	4	16	7	299	124
CHELMSFORD	12	8	12	0	716
COLCHESTER	34	32	20	0	274
EPPING FOREST	17	21	18	0	125
HARLOW	2	14	39	2619	353
MALDON	10	17	7	0	127
ROCHFORD	18	4	3	0	260
TENDRING	30	20	13	548	237
UTTLESFORD	15	12	11	1346	54
TOTALS	210	208	192	9288	2953