

HIGHWAYS HIGHLIGHTS

HELPFUL
TIPS AND
INFORMATION
FOR LOCAL
COUNCILLORS

EXTRA POTHOLES TO BE FIXED, LOGGED BY COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Extra money is being invested by the county council to fix more problems nominated by county councillors.

Each of the logged potholes will be inspected and crews will then work to fix them, aiming to complete the repair programme by 31 March next year. This work will take place alongside all the normal safety-priority repairs of the risk-assessed defects found on our roads and pavements.

Not all potholes can be fixed quickly – for example if intensive traffic management, such as three-way lights or a road

closure are needed. For some, on busier roads, we may have to close the road for short periods requiring a permit which can be delayed if a utility company has already booked road space nearby for their own work.

As at 28 October, 1,750 submissions had been made by councillors, many containing multiple defects on the same road.

Of these, 235 have been scheduled for work and 37 already completed.



COMMENT COUNCILLOR KEVIN BENTLEY

DEPUTY LEADER, ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL AND CABINET MEMBER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

This edition of **Highways Highlights** is published as we are all in a second national lockdown because of this awful virus.

However, we have all learnt a great deal since the first national one and that includes Essex Highways. We managed very quickly to ensure our crews could work safely with social distancing and I am pleased to say as a result of that fast action we will still be able to operate our maintenance programme during this current lockdown.

Therefore, all the potholes you sent in via the Member Led Scheme are in the process of being done. Stay Safe!

DRIVING FOR WORK OFFER TO SUPPORT COMPANIES' COMPLIANCE AND BEST PRACTICE

The Safer Essex Roads Partnership's (SERP) mission is "to reduce death and serious injury on our roads to zero, an ambitious vision and one which we cannot tackle alone: each road user plays a part." ECC is a key player and delivers its road safety service through this partnership.

Research and data reveals that around 30% of drivers involved in crashes on our network are 'at work' at the time; and it is not just trucks and vans - these incidents include people like social workers driving between clients or perhaps a manager heading to a meeting.

Highways England (HE) has funded a project to promote the Driving for Better Business brand in Essex. As a result, SERP is working with businesses and organisations across the county

offering free support tailored to meet the organisation's needs in terms of policy review, strategic delivery and communication with staff.

Working with businesses and organisations to promote safer vehicle use in Essex will also help make a significant contribution to SERP's ambitious casualty reduction targets on our roads. SERP invites Councillors to please help promote this offer to local businesses. There are support materials available to help you do just that - please contact:

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INNOVATION >

ROAD CONDITION DATA TRIAL LOOKS PROMISING

Road condition surveys are currently undertaken by expensive purpose-built vehicles which pass sensors over each road to assess its condition. The data is then used to help decide which roads need repair or resurfacing.

However, we've been trialling a new system in Essex using special smart phones on a range of vehicles, which film the road. Intelligent computer software from Vaisala then analyses the visual data to produce detailed condition and defect information for engineers, helping to prioritise those which require attendance. We have now surveyed the entire PR1 and PR2 main road network, with road condition summaries in Figure 1 (top right).

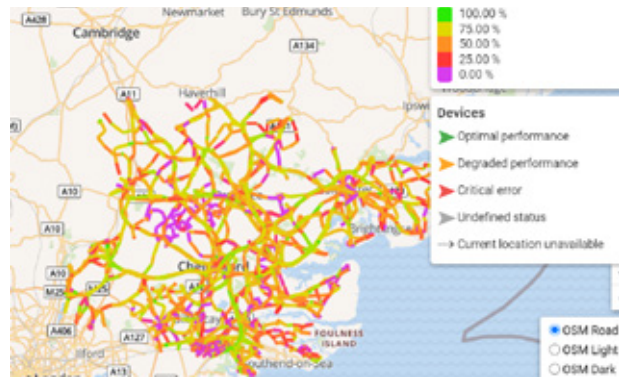


Figure 2 (below, right) shows the video of the road, with any defects shown at the correct location. If the trials are held to be successful, the system may provide much more integrated, detailed and up-to-date information for our engineers to respond more effectively.

ROAD DRAINS CAN ONLY DO SO MUCH...

Although we cleaned 10,908 drains in September both during routine “cyclical” area-by-area cleaning and “ad-hoc” responses to problems, some roads still flood under the heaviest downpours.

Often it just takes a couple of hours or so for the drains to cope with so much water, so please don't call us when the downpour is still happening! What many members of the public don't realise is that road drains, the ones we are responsible for, have to carry the water from the road to somewhere else.

Much of Essex is relatively flat, with many rivers and a long coastline. If the drainage ditches near the road are blocked with silt because they are not cleared by the landowner, the water has nowhere to go. If near the coast there is an exceptionally high tide, the drains may even work in reverse!

If the wider network of drains in a village, maintained by the water

company, aren't working properly or just don't have the capacity to cope with the heaviest, prolonged rain, then it makes no difference clearing the road drains, the water cannot escape.

Our ability to manage the 275,000 gullies, catchpits, channels and pipes we have is increasing. We now have nearly six year's data on flood risks, silt levels found in each drain at what intervals and other reported issues such as tree roots in pipes.

This means we can check and clear some “problem” drains more often. Please take any chance to remind people not to drive through floodwaters, its impossible to tell how deep it is, but if you do drive through water on the road, please go very slowly, for your sake and for that of pedestrians and even staff trying to clear the drains!

Please report drain/flood issues online at www.essex.gov.uk/highways.



POTHOLES, PAVEMENTS DRAINS AND STREETLIGHTS FIXED IN THE MONTH...

Potholes, pavements and streetlights fixed and drains cleared in September 2020 are listed as below.

October sees the start of the cyclical cleansing programme of local roads in Colchester and Basildon and known higher-risk drains on main (PR) roads in Basildon, Epping Forest and

Uttlesford. We also carried out an additional 398 responses to blocked drains and floods in September, on top of the total number of drains cleared as listed below.

DISTRICT	COUNTY ROUTES	LOCAL ROADS	PAVEMENT DEFECTS FIXED	DRAINS CLEARED	STREETLIGHTS FIXED
BASILDON	38	32	187	3143	392
BRAINTREE	41	30	16	0	291
BRENTWOOD	41	30	102	0	161
CASTLE POINT	6	32	23	0	136
CHELMSFORD	22	181	167	0	275
COLCHESTER	55	74	154	3556	272
EPPING FOREST	48	50	28	1947	219
HARLOW	1	20	4	0	169
MALDON	10	110	29	0	55
ROCHFORD	15	52	7	0	124
TENDRING	28	14	107	0	276
UTTLESFORD	15	2	18	1864	79
TOTALS	320	627	842	10510	2449




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