
COUNCIL

BULLETIN

Issued Week Ending Friday, 18 December 2020

Epping Forest District Council
www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Compiled, designed and produced by
Member Services

Contact: Kim Partridge
Telephone: 01992 564443



PART A - FORWARD DIARY

Key to abbreviations:

CC	Council Chamber	Cab Off	Cabinet Office
CR1	Committee Room 1	CONF	Conference Room (1st floor)
CR2	Committee Room 2	CH OFF	Chairman of Council's Office
MR	Members' Room	TR RM	Training Room
TBD	To be decided	HEM	Hemnall Street Offices.
TBN	To be noted	HH	Homefield House
TBC	To be confirmed	VM	Virtual Meeting
DPCC	Debden Park Community Centre	NWA	North Weald Airfield

Other venues are shown in full.

Currently meetings are subject to change, postponement or cancellation.

Many meetings will be held virtually but Democratic Services will advise arrangements for individual meetings.

Week One: 21 December 2020 – 27 December 2020

Monday 21 December	7.00pm	District Development Management Committee	
Tuesday 22 December	7.00pm	Cabinet	
Wednesday 23 December			
Thursday 24 December		Civic Offices to close at midday	
Friday 25 December		Civic Office Closed	
Saturday 26 December			
Sunday 27 December			

Week Two: 28 December 2020 – 3 January 2021

Monday 28 December		Civic Office Closed	
Tuesday 29 December		Civic Office Closed	
Wednesday 30 December		Civic Office Closed	
Thursday 31 December		Civic Office Closed	
Friday 1 January		Civic Office Closed	
Saturday 2 January			
Sunday 3 January			

Week Three: 4 January 2021 – 10 January 2021

Monday 4 January			
Tuesday 5 January	10.00am	Licensing Sub-Committee	
Wednesday 6 January	7.00pm	Area Planning Sub-Committee West	
Thursday 7 January			
Friday 8 January			
Saturday 9 January			
Sunday 10 January			

Week Four: 11 January 2021 – 17 January 2021

Monday 11 January	6.00pm 7.00pm	Executive Briefing Meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Chairman & Vice Chairman	
Tuesday 12 January	7.00pm	Stronger Place Select Committee	
Wednesday 13 January	7.00pm	Area Planning Sub-Committee West	
Thursday 14 January	7.00pm	Stronger Communities Select Committee	
Friday 15 January			
Saturday 16 January			
Sunday 17 January			

PART B - ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Committee Management System

The members' extranet facility for the Modern.Gov system is available at:

<https://eppingforestextranet.moderngov.co.uk/extranet>

Members may wish to save this link on their computer or mobile devices. Queries concerning login and password details for the extranet should be addressed to the Democratic Services Manager.

Constitution

The Council's Constitution is available at:

<https://rds.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=638&Info=1>

Queries concerning the Constitution should be addressed to the Democratic Services Manager

ECC Highways Portal

Up to date details of all Highways work is available at:

<https://www.essexhighways.org/Transport-and-Roads.aspx>

Member Contact

Please be aware that all Member queries should be addressed to membercontact@eppingforestdc.gov.uk as this will ensure that your query or question is properly logged and chased up if you have not received a response within 5 days.

PART C - GENERAL INFORMATION

1. LAST BULLETIN OF 2020

This is the last Bulletin of 2020. The next edition will be published week ending 8 January 2021.

We would like to wish you a very relaxing break and a peaceful New Year.

2. CLLR BROOKES COVID EXPERIENCE (Pages 15 - 16)

Almost six weeks since being hospitalised with Covid-19 Councillor Rose Brookes is still struggling to recover.

“People say it’s just like a bad flu, but it is not like flu at all,” she says. Rose spent two weeks on a Covid ward at Princess Alexandra Hospital, receiving oxygen for 12 days.

Although she was released with a prescription for steroids she’s finding it hard to concentrate and gets breathless walking up and down stairs or to the post box, 100m from her home.

Rose has always been healthy and active as a keen swimmer and cyclist but a bout of flu seven years ago left her with late onset asthma.

A week after an enjoyable holiday in Cornwall with her sister in October she began to feel unwell.

“My energy was low and I just didn’t feel right, but I didn’t think it was Covid. I went about my normal activities but on the day of the October Council meeting I didn’t feel up to joining the Zoom meeting so gave my apologies.”

That was Thursday 29 October and by Sunday Rose was in hospital and feeling extremely poorly.

“Apparently I had high infection markers. It felt like a sumo wrestler was sitting on my chest.”

By the following weekend she’d started to feel better, but it was another week before she was allowed to leave hospital to convalesce with her brother.

“This virus makes you feel so very vulnerable,” she said. “I’d had my flu vaccination, take Vitamin D, have been washing my hands, always wear a mask and socially distancing, but I still got it.

“I’m very concerned that people just aren’t taking this dreadful pandemic seriously. So many people are asymptomatic or taking the attitude that they are not going to get it so don’t bother wearing a mask...and it’s spreading fast.

“I realise we are all very weary of restrictions but I feel quite passionately that the mantra Hands, Face, Space is still critical if we are going to beat this pandemic and halt the spread and rising death toll not only across Essex, but the whole of the UK.

Before and after photos attached.

3. ECC HIGHWAYS HIGHLIGHTS (Pages 17 - 22)

Please see attached.

4. PROSECUTION FOR FLYTIPPING

Fly tipping of wooden units in June 2019 lead to £3891 costs shared between two Enfield residents after a hearing at Chelmsford Magistrates Court on 1 December 2020.

Evidence gathered by the Council’s Environmental Enforcement Officers, part of the Community Resilience Team led to a prosecution for fly tipping against Mr Mohsen Azizi and an additional prosecution against Mr Reza Sava for aiding and abetting the fly tipping which occurred in June 2019. Both gentlemen live in Enfield

Mr Azizi pleaded guilty to the offence in December 2019, but Mr Savar pleaded not guilty. The sentencing of Mr Azizi was adjourned pending the trial of Mr Savar, which was delayed until 1st December 2020 due to COVID 19.

Neither defendant attended at the hearing on 1st December 2020 and the trial of Mr Savar took place in his absence.

The Magistrates stated that they were sure that Mr Savar had aided and abetted Mr Azizi in the fly tipping and had acted as his lookout.

Mr Savar was ordered to pay a fine of £480. He was also ordered to pay a contribution towards the Council’s prosecution costs of £1411.50 together with a Victim Surcharge £48

Mr Azizi was given credit for his guilty plea and was ordered to pay a fine of £1173. He was also ordered to pay a contribution towards the Council’s prosecution costs of £661.50 together with a Victim Surcharge £117

(Further information: Michael Richardson ext 4422)

5. HOUSING OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINT HANDLING CODE

As a landlord, we are required to comply with the [Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code](#), ensuring we have good processes in place to respond swiftly and effectively to complaints. We have been asked to self-assess against the Code and publish the results on our website.

The Complaint Handling Code asks us to demonstrate that we comply in the following areas:

- Definition of a complaint;
- Accessibility and awareness;
- Complaints team, procedure, timeliness and responsiveness;
- Fairness in complaint handling;
- Putting things right; and
- Continuous learning and improvement.

Our self-assessment against the Code has led us to make some small changes, such as communicating details of our complaints process in all our tenant newsletters and standard correspondence. We have also added more details and inter-page links on our website.

In order to ensure ongoing full compliance with the Code we will be considering some amendments to the Complaints Policy in its review, due early 2021.

Click [here](#) for link to the webpage with our completed self-assessment form.

For more information about the complaint handling code self-assessment contact our Complaints and Customer Satisfaction Team Manager tscott@eppingforestdc.gov.uk or for housing queries contact our Housing Information, Strategy and Policy Team Manager hpradun@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

6. Q&A FROM ESSEX MEMBER COVID-19 BRIEFING (Pages 23 - 32)

We have been asked to circulate the Q&As from the Member COVID-19 briefing. ECC have asked that you note the following;

“This is obviously a fast moving situation and the answers were correct at the date of the session. They are circulated ‘for the record’, but haven’t been updated or changed to reflect the situation unless indicated.”

7. UPDATE REGARDING IMPROVEMENT WORKS AT LIMES FARM

Installation of football goal in Limes Farm Estate.

New goal post installed to bring a dis-used football pitch back to life for the community.

The installation was a request by Limes Farm residents who worked with Epping Forest District Council to organise the new goal post. Plans are also being developed to fully reinstate the pitch in the future.

The post was installed on Thursday 26 November 2020 on the football pitch at the Limes Farm estate, Chigwell and will benefit the whole Limes Farms community. A celebratory opening event is due take place once lockdown restrictions are eased.

Tree and Shrub Planting

Plans for planting new trees and shrubs around the Limes Farm Estate are underway. EFDC is working with Limes Farm residents to agree plans for improving the estate.

Limes Farm residents recently suggested the planting of new trees. This is now being expanded to include large planting areas of different types such as planting new trees, shrubs and wildflower meadows. Plans are in the early stages but it is hoped that some works will commence in 2021.

8. CHAIRMAN'S DIARY

None this week

LICENSING ACT 2003

Please be advised that the Licensing Unit has received the following applications to vary a Premises Licence made under the Licensing Act 2003 for the premises below:

Applicant name: Tesco Stores Ltd

Address of Premises: Tesco, Sewardstone Road, Waltham Abbey, Essex, EN9 1JH

Brief details of the nature of the application:

The proposed application is to vary the Premises Licence to include within the ambit of the Premises Licence the kiosk and shop area from the Petrol Filling Station and to have specific hours and conditions applicable to that area.

The application also seeks to vary the existing premise licence to permit sales of alcohol from 00:00 – 23:59 from Monday to Sunday, off-sales only. However, the licensing hours in relation to the kiosk and shop will be limited to 06:00 to 22:00 with added specific conditions and safeguards in place for that area alone.

Consultation Period From: 11th December 2020 to 7th January 2021

Officer in charge: Ms Hannah Gould

Please ensure that any comments/objections are received by the Licensing team on or before the consultation end date.

Manager

Licensing Compliance Officer

Kim Tuckey 01992 564034

Debbie Houghton 01992 564336

Handan Ibrahim 01992 564153

Denise Bastick 01992 564334

Hannah Gould 01992 564721

Peter Jones 01992 564166

PLANNING

1. None this week. Appeals Lodged

EPF/0019/20 Land adj. to Forest House, Vicarage Lane Chigwell IG7 6NA - Proposed construction of new detached dwelling, a single garage & new access off of Vicarage Lane – Ian Ansell – ext. 4481 Written reps

EPF/0251/20 – 38 Queens Road Buckhurst Hill IG9 5BY - Alterations and extension to create 5no. one bedroom flats, with amended retail space to front – Ian Ansell ext 4481 – Written reps

EPF/0294/20 – 1 Theydon Hall Cottages Abridge Road Theydon Bois CM16 7NP- Temporary permission for a period of 2 years for the stationing of a mobile home and ancillary decking, fencing & small outbuilding in relation to ongoing renovation & extensions planned for No.1 Theydon Hall Cottages & retrospective planning permission for the installation of a replacement septic tank – Marie-Claire Tovey et. 4414 – Written reps

EPF/1673/20 – Taw Lodge Epping Lane Stapleford Tawney RM4 1ST - Demolition of existing buildings; and erection of 6 residential dwellings and associated landscaping and infrastructure.(Revised application to EPF/0511/20) – Ian Ansell ext. 4481 – Written reps

EPF/1909/19 – 18 Russell Road Buckhurst Hill OG9 5QJ - Proposed erection of x 4no. dwellings with associated infrastructure and landscaping – Mo Rahman ext. 4415 – Written reps

EPF/2371/19 – Bush Grove Farm Mount Grove Theydon Mount CM16 7QQ - Conversion of a barn into three x 4 bed houses – Mo Rahman ext. 4415 – Written reps

EPF/3087/18 – Sarnia Nursery Avey Lane Waltham Abbey EN9 3QH - Erection of a single storey new Warehouse including on site parking – Written reps

2. Forthcoming Planning Inquiries/Hearings -

EPF/1649/17 – White Rose Curtis Mill Lane Stapleford Abbots RM3 1HS – Re determination appeal by new Inspector- date to be arranged.

EPF/2708/18 – High House Farm Stapleford Road Stapleford Abbots RM4 1EG - Construction of 27 new dwellings, including 7 affordable dwellings, with associated infrastructure, parking, public open space and landscaping – Virtual Hearing 3rd February 2020

3. Enforcement Appeals

ENF/0034/20 Oakleigh House Hamlet Hill Roydon CM19 5JZ - Without planning permission the erection of a retaining wall with gates and piers along the northern and western boundaries of the land, the wall being over 1m in height where adjacent to the highway (between the points marked B & C on the plan. and over 2 metres in height between the points marked A & B on the plan – Clare Munday ext. 4114 – Written reps

ENF/0034/20 Oakleigh House Hamlet Hill Roydon CM19 5JZ - Without planning permission the construction of a vehicular access from the highway on to the land including the erection of gates and fencing and the laying of hardstanding – Clare Munday ext. 4114 – Written reps

ENF/0150/20 Oakleigh House Hamlet Hill Roydon CM19 5JZ - Without planning permission the erection on the land of a retaining wall and the laying of hardstanding – Clare Munday ext. 4114 – Written reps

4. Appeal Decisions

EPF/1537/19 Carisbrook Farm Kiln Road North Weald CM16 6AD - Outline Planning Permission for the redevelopment of the site to provide x10 no. dwellings with gardens & car parking – Dismissed

EPF/3030/19 11 Station Road Chigwell IG7 6QT - Proposed two storey side extension & a single storey rear extension – Allowed with Conditions

5. Tree Preservation Orders

None this week

6. S106 Agreements

None this week

7. Changes to Planning Systems

None this week

PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISIONS

The notification of decisions taken by individual Portfolio Holders is no longer included in the Council Bulletin.

All members of the Council receive automatic email notification of the publication of each individual Portfolio Holder decision and the call-in period for each decision commences immediately. Members wishing to call-in a decision should complete the attached call-in form and return it to Democratic Services before the expiry of five working days following the publication date of the decision. Members should refer to the Constitution (Article 6 - Overview and Scrutiny) for the rules of call-in.

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HIGHWAYS HIGHLIGHTS

HELPFUL
TIPS AND
INFORMATION
FOR LOCAL
COUNCILLORS

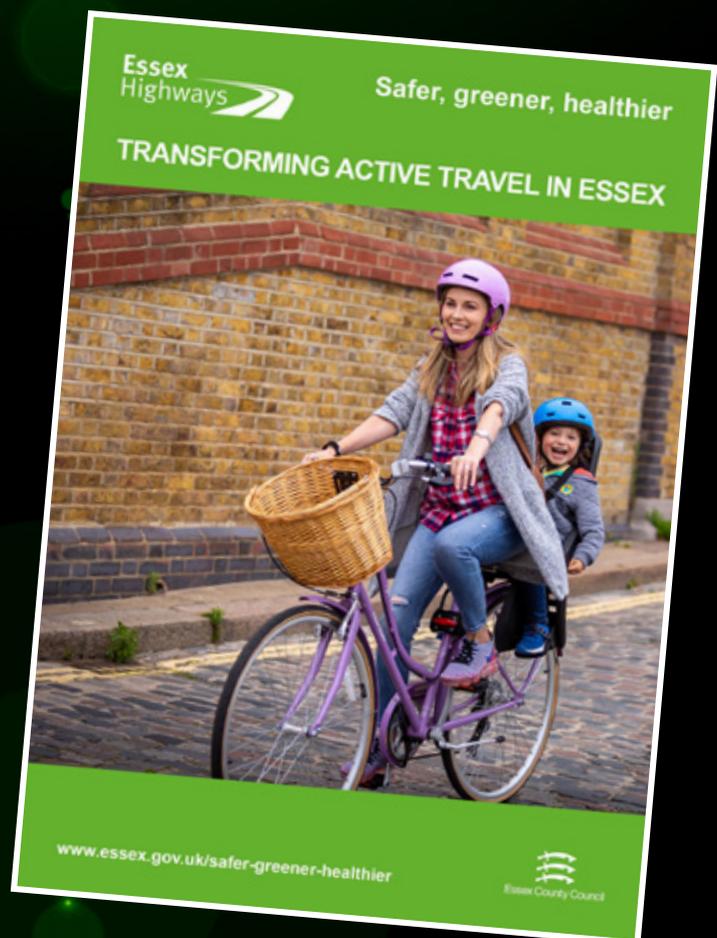
TRANSFORMATIONAL DFT FUNDING SECURED TO FURTHER DEVELOP SAFER, GREENER, HEALTHIER TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT IN ESSEX

Essex County Council recently secured government funding of almost £7.4 million (the highest of any English county) for transformational active travel schemes in five Essex locations to encourage more cycling and walking.

We will now develop the schemes, for Basildon (Wickford), Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford and Colchester, in detail with input from public consultations, local councils, councillors, businesses, cycling, access and other key groups.

The overall aim is to encourage Essex residents to explore new ways to travel, offering people choice, so they can consider leaving their cars at home for short journeys, bringing health, environmental and congestion benefits and inspiring more sustainable ways to travel locally.

Essex County Council is investing in specific resources to ensure effective communications and engagement with affected groups over the coming months. Outline proposals with maps are on our website. **For more information see Safer, Greener, Healthier**





COMMENT COUNCILLOR KEVIN BENTLEY

DEPUTY LEADER, ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL AND CABINET MEMBER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

Welcome to our festive Highways Highlights and you will see that a great deal is going on in the Infrastructure Portfolio, from how we are introducing alternative sustainable transport to help beat congestion and improve health and the environment, major projects that will keep the county moving, how we are changing our ways and trialling eco friendly vehicles as well as the enhanced maintenance work on our roads.

Where Essex leads others follow! Have a peaceful and relaxing Christmas and here's to 2021 when we all hope daily life returns to normal with road travel improvements ready for all.

ELECTRIC SCOOTER TRIALS GET GO-AHEAD IN ESSEX!

One important part of the Safer, Greener, Healthier agenda is to provide alternative socially distanced, sustainable, and affordable travel options.

As part of this, six Essex urban areas will trial the use of e-scooters - hired from SPIN, a commercial provider, starting first in Basildon and then Braintree, Brentwood, Clacton, Chelmsford & Colchester.

Although private e-scooters are illegal to ride on the public highway or on footways, the Essex trials will provide legal, defined areas where it will be lawful to ride SPIN e-scooters, provided that all the hiring conditions are met.

Private scooters will remain illegal to ride in Essex, except on private land. The trials will make it easier to understand the advantages and disadvantages of this clean, cheap form of personal mobility.

Only people over the age of 18 with a driving licence will be eligible to take part in the SPIN scheme specific training.

E-scooters will run in defined zones at up to 15.5 mph and can be ridden on roads with up to 30mph speed limits as well as on cycleways. **More details about the trial, rules, safety and enforcement is available on our website.**

SPIN

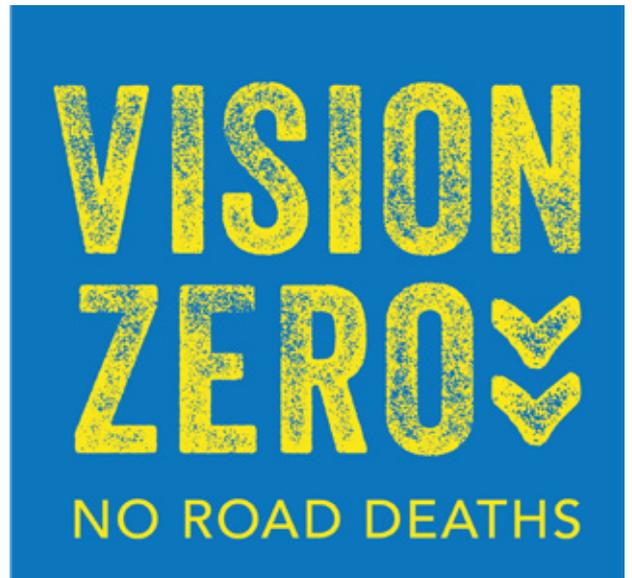


SAFER ESSEX ROADS PARTNERSHIP (SERP) LAUNCHES DRIVE TO VISION ZERO

42 people died on Essex roads last year. 830 were seriously injured. This represents many appalling family tragedies, totally unacceptable to all if it was another sort of event leading to these deaths and injuries.

This powerful video makes the point. SERP recognises that no family should face a loved one never coming home as the result of a mistake on the roads.

All the SERP partners, including Police, Fire, Ambulance, Highways and councils are committed to **Vision Zero** using a variety of improvements, cooperation and public behaviour change to get to zero deaths and serious injuries across Essex by the year 2040. If you'd like to know more or want to contribute please contact us at saferessexroads.



INNOVATION >

BATTERY/ HYBRID WORK VAN ON TRIAL

Essex Highways recently carried out a three-week trial of the LEVC VN5 2.5T van, made by the company that produces modern black taxis.

Based on the new taxi chassis and built in the UK, the van is a plug-in hybrid and runs through an electric motor giving it a range of 60 electric miles.

It also features a 'range extender' petrol engine, which extends its range to 300 electric miles with a full tank of fuel. It can fully charge from zero in 30 minutes.

The trial aimed to see how this technology could work in practice for day-to-day business use as we explore alternative fuel options as part of the ongoing Essex Highways fleet replacement programme.



WATCH THE VIDEO 

MAJOR PROJECTS CONTINUE ROUND THE COUNTY

Around the county, we continue to push ahead with a number of major projects as we approach the end of the year:

- Working with Colchester Borough Council, ECC have been seeking public views on the **Colchester Future Transport Strategy** which proposes transforming Colchester into a place prioritising active and safe sustainable travel to bring about health, environmental and economic benefits. You can take part online, at the innovative **'virtual village hall'** exhibition.
- In Basildon, until 13 December, ECC and Basildon Councils are inviting public comment on a **proposed new pedestrian/cyclist crossing scheme on East Mayne** to reduce people's exposure to poor air quality & to complement wider efforts to encourage Safer, Greener, Healthier travel in Basildon. **More information on the web.**

- A final shortlist of options for a sustainable **Army and Navy junction in Chelmsford** is set to be confirmed early next year. The Army and Navy Taskforce overseeing the development of the project were updated on the latest progress in early December; the decision of a final shortlist of options is expected to be made in early 2021. Work is continuing to assess and refine four options for the junction - a hamburger roundabout, enlarged roundabout, two-way flyover and separate T-junctions.
- The much-needed upgrade to the critical **east-west A120 route between Braintree and Colchester** moves closer. Earlier this year the Government announced funding to progress the project and plans are being taken forward by Highways England. A recent top-level meeting of MPs, local politicians, business and community representatives heard a preferred route for the dual

carriageway could be announced at the end of next year (2021). **More A120 information is online.**

- Work continues on the additional **new Harlow junction on the M11, 'junction 7A'**. **Gilden Way** is being widened, and piling for the new bridge abutments has started. Work is scheduled to start at Churchgate Roundabout in December. **You can get further updates online.** ECC is also investing **£200,000 to make key cycleways in Harlow safer, greener and healthier.** After taking advice from all four Harlow County Councillors and town cycling enthusiasts, the money will be spent on key cycle routes in the town. Further money is set to be invested by Harlow Council, reflecting the smaller proportion of town cycleways owned by Harlow Council.
- Essex County Council has signed the final contract to secure almost £100m from the Government's Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) **for new transport infrastructure in Colchester and Tendring.** The funding will support the design and delivery of the new Colchester Rapid Transit System (RTS) and a new Link Road between the A120 and A133.
- Essex County Council is to receive £2.4 million, from the Government's Getting Building Fund, managed by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) and Essex Physical Activity Local Delivery Pilot (LDP), towards a **new cycling project in Clacton and Jaywick Sands.** Essex Pedal Power is a community-based project, which provides residents with a free, high-quality bike to get them more active and provide travel for work, school, college, shopping and leisure. Qualifying residents will benefit from improved access to employment, education opportunities and public services.

"TIS THE SEASON TO BE JOLLY... CAREFUL" WINTER SERVICE GRITTING PLAYING ITS PART

Our gritters have been out a handful of times in November.

Although the weather has so far been unseasonably mild, anything could happen through December and the new year. We're fully stocked with salt, very local forecasting is more precise and we have rotas for drivers planned, so we can mitigate any Covid-related absences as far as possible.

To find out more about our gritting service, including routes we cover and what the public can do to help, just visit our **Winter Gritting pages** and follow us on **Twitter** to get daily gritting decisions.



UPDATE: COUNTY COUNCILLOR-LED POTHOLE REPAIR SCHEME: FOCUS ON 1800 AREAS

As part of the current county councillor-led repair scheme, we are now looking at 1800 specific problems or areas that Councillors have highlighted.

As at 30 November, we had created 366 'jobs' involving some degree of technical assessment and prioritisation and we have fixed 139 jobs containing numbers of defects with more planned, weather- and coronavirus-permitting, all the way through to the end of March. Some people have asked why some repairs get done in a street, but then others seem to get left that are close by. This can be for a number of reasons, including:



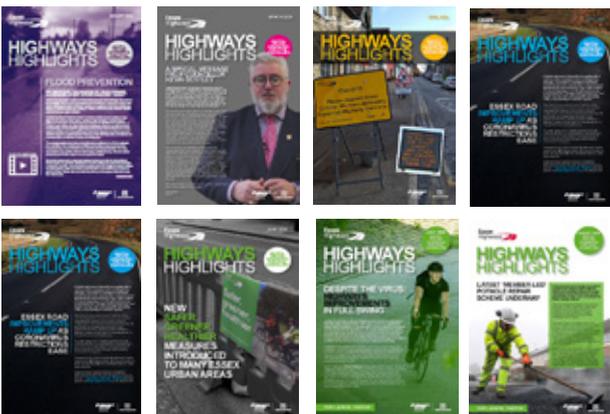
- Some repairs may need urgent 'make safe' work done quickly, necessitating a second visit at another time
- A lower-speed road may need different permit conditions and traffic management arrangements made, compared to a road with a higher speed limit
- Sometimes we need a road closure; this takes longer to organise.
- Different repairs that need different techniques and, possibly, different materials and equipment

The aim is to do the overall work as efficiently as possible, maximising the total budget.

DFT HIGHLIGHTS TRAVEL BEHAVIOUR CHANGE CAMPAIGN AS 'BEST PRACTICE'

Development of Safer, Greener, Healthier ways of travelling is crucial to longer-term goals ECC has for improving congestion, the environment and public health. In a recent bulletin issued by The Department for Transport Essex County Council's recent 'Stop, Swop, Go' campaign, encouraging people to consider swapping to walking or cycling locally particularly for shorter or school journeys, was highlighted as a 'best practice' case study.

WHAT A YEAR!



Recently, Cllr Kevin Bentley, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, and his two Deputies, Cllrs Robert Mitchell and Lesley Wagland, looked back over the unique and very challenging year that has been 2020, from a highways perspective.

[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)



MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM ALL OF US AT ESSEX HIGHWAYS!



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

The numbers of potholes, pavement defects and streetlights fixed and drains cleared in October and November 2020 combined are shown below.

We have completed local roads drain-cleaning in Colchester and will return to clean known higher-risk drains in the area. We are continuing the regular cleaning of local roads drains in Basildon and

the known higher-risk drains on main roads in Basildon, Braintree, Brentwood, Epping Forest and Harlow areas.

DISTRICT	COUNTY ROUTES	LOCAL ROADS	PAVEMENT DEFECTS FIXED	DRAINS CLEARED	STREETLIGHTS FIXED
BASILDON	45	105	198	5988	1196
BRAINTREE	67	78	70	1915	794
BRENTWOOD	29	53	21	1927	243
CASTLE POINT	19	55	50	0	466
CHELMSFORD	28	70	146	0	703
COLCHESTER	59	76	226	2542	744
EPPING FOREST	71	114	90	4118	381
HARLOW	10	86	128	1526	336
MALDON	19	40	62	0	213
ROCHFORD	20	23	192	0	400
TENDRING	36	49	190	0	712
UTTLESFORD	33	39	22	1674	232
TOTALS	436	788	1395	19690	6420




Get winter updates on Twitter
follow @essexhighways
#EssexGritters

All Councillor COVID-19 Webinar – 17.11.20

Q & A

The answers in this Q&A document were correct as of 17 November 2020. They are given 'for the record' but unless otherwise indicated they have not been updated or changed to reflect information which has changed since the time of publication.

- **With test and trace in place is there any evidence of second infections?**

Answer:

We are not aware of this locally although there are published examples of likely cases or reinfection

- **The support to prisons, particularly on PPE was welcomed by their medical team in the first lockdown. What are our arrangements for them in the current one?**

Answer:

The Prison are now in a better position to manage their own PPE needs in partnership with NHSE (the commissioners of Prison Healthcare) and there are no reported issues in relation to the provision of PPE supplies for staff. We continue to attend Prison Health and Social Care Partnership Boards and will assist should there be any issues.

- **When you measure cases are false positives included in the cases count?**

Answer: Yes, but we look at trend more than just numbers, and compare them with data from elsewhere.

- **When will T-cell tests become available, as they are the most accurate to establish immunity?**

Answer: We are unaware of plans for these.

- **Are private care homes being contacted to check they have everything that they need as well as those care homes which come under ECC?**

Answer: Yes.

- **What is the "R" number in Essex, there seems to be a difference of opinion between 1.2, 1.4 and over 2? Thank you**

Answer:

The R number varies over time, current likely just below 1 in most areas but likely 1.1 in Basildon.

- **The lateral flow test has shown more false positives than the PCR test which is also prone to errors. How will you deal with those errors?**

Answer:

Anyone receiving a positive lateral flow test result will be asked to have a PCR test to confirm. The false positive issue is recognised, but there is no reason why the rate of increase in positives would have been because of false positives.

- **How accurate are the tests and are they COVID specific?**

Answer:

Specificity is very good. Lateral flow tests are not as good but are still generally good.

- **Care Homes - We have over 500 care homes across the county - Can you please give an update with reference to the strategy for regular contact and support offered to those homes?**

Answer:

Care homes are supported via the local, multi-agency care home hubs, which provide wrap-around support, advice and guidance. There are regular webinars for providers, any extra money, from the government via an Infection Control Fund has been made available to providers to cover additional costs such as PPE.

- **What is the best guess about the next moves in lockdown changes from, say, the second week in December?**

Answer:

New tiers now announced to take effect from 2nd December.

- **Can you confirm that the figures being given are for COVID 19 infections and not for the wider corona virus which includes other illnesses.**

Answer:

Yes.

- **Have you taken into account seasonal respiratory diseases prevalent at this time of year, and have you taken into account the 5-year average of respiratory deaths?**

Answer:

Neither of those will impact on the COVID results. With the COVID restrictions in place, there should be a knock-on impact on seasonal illnesses, with fewer of them this year.

- **You show the cases in Essex based NHS Trusts. What about out county hospitals? In my area COVID cases would go to Whipps Cross?**

Answer:

We don't get the numbers for out-of-county hospitals. It would be difficult to understand the difference that Essex residents made to those numbers.

- **How can we encourage/insist that people who are told to isolate comply? The national figures indicate that the vast majority do not comply**

Answer:

We have an on-going communications campaign all about educating and encouraging. The key thing is reminding people of the incentive – following social distancing / mask-wearing etc now will enable us to get out of restrictions sooner. The use of the lateral flow tests will also help speed up the whole process for contacts, which might persuade more to isolate.

- **Age range incidences seem to point to school student - parental age range. The drop off around half term also seems to point to schools being a transmission point. Do we have evidence to back this up? Several reports of incidences in Brentwood schools, Junior and senior?**

Answer:

We have no evidence of greater outbreaks in Brentwood schools compared to elsewhere. Some recent data suggests that the impact of schools going back was greater than thought, but the position in Brentwood can't be explained by schools.

- **Aren't the Rapid testing kits proving to be only 50% accurate?**

Answer:

The tests will add value in allowing us to get hold of contacts easily and get on to their contacts. It will help people be able to isolate for a shorter period and allow people to visit nursing homes and get university students home safely.

- **What support is being provided to Universities with regards students returning home for Christmas and then coming back again in the new year?**

Answer:

They might be able to use the lateral flow tests before they go back home. In terms of coming back after Christmas, we will need to look at the national position and expectations at the time. [advice has now been issued formally]

- **Do we plan to engage anyway to repel the anti-vaxers who are gaining momentum?**

Answer:

We have no current plans to do this.

- **Why does there appear to be such a differing model in care homes regarding family visits?**

Answer:

We understand how important it is to stay in touch with loved ones. We have worked to ensure we've done all we can to enable access. All care homes are different in size and design, and each provider has to take responsibility for how they manage visits.

- **What are the guidelines re COVID free timing in care homes? To admit visitors do they need to be COVID free for 14 or 28 days?**

Answer:

As above, given the great differences in care homes across the county, each has to take responsibility for how they manage visits safely.

- **When it comes to people with a disability, how are you supporting them to be tested if required?**

Answer:

For those in a care home, that can be covered easily. Otherwise, we will be looking at postal options, or, if not, only testing them if they were at a high risk of being cases. If so, we'd arrange transport, and are looking generally at a range of options. We have also been lobbying to put people with learning disabilities to the top of the list.

- **We had a dreadful situation regarding deaths at a Harlow Care home at the start of this, we have come a long way but there are recent example of a similar situation. Why are we still seeing deaths in Care Homes and infections at scale?**

Answer:

Essentially via the staff, who mix with other people, perhaps in their household with children at school. With dementia patients, it is then harder to enforce social distancing. So very difficult to avoid completely, but we have seen far fewer serious outbreaks at this point than in wave one – and we have much clearer infection control processes in place.

- **Emerging from the national lockdown, would you assume high-incidence districts, e.g. Epping Forest and Brentwood would go to a higher tier than say Maldon?**

Answer:

No, we wouldn't assume that, it would depend on the data at the time

With a vaccine likely by early next year, can you confirm that preparations are being made to ensure the smooth distribution of vaccine and outline ECC's involvement? What steps are being taken to ensure countywide cold chain logistics will be sufficient?

Answer:

Plans are currently being worked up – we are totally joined up with the NHS on this. They are leading but we are working in a unified way.

- **BBC are reporting this morning that Clacton Hospitals are close to being 75% full. What is the position for other Essex hospitals please?**

Answer:

No Essex hospitals are under pressure. Not currently seeing high pressure in the acute hospitals (answer at the time of the Webinar).

- **If the trajectory has flattened and then reduces as a result of restrictions, presumably the expectation is that it will rise again if the restrictions are lifted over Christmas and then when schools go back afterwards. Is there an expectation that restrictions will need to be reintroduced in the New Year?**

Answer:

We will have to wait and see. Ultimately, unless the R value goes below one, cases will go up again – the issue is timing.

- **What is the current thinking about changes in R number and does this vary significantly across the county?**

Answer:

It is clear that case rates across Essex vary, with some districts showing much higher rates than others.

- **How vigorously is enforcement being undertaken and supported?**

Answer:

The Chief Constable has been working closely with Environmental Health Officers - the aim has been to seek and educate, and then, if needed, enforce. Local teams have been fantastic. Businesses have been dealt with firmly, and Environmental health officers will get further resource to help with their work.

- **Are the lateral flow tests going to be undertaken at nominated sites within a district or are they just collection sites and tests conducted back in the home? If it is the latter how will we ensure the results are recorded to allow follow up action?**

Answer:

We are working through the logistics at the moment. [Update: they are being undertaken on site]

- **Are there any extra measures being taken for the BAME community as they are twice as likely to get COVID?**

Answer:

Not specifically based on ethnic group – but the same interventions for everyone. The key is to minimise exposure through social distancing etc. Also, there is the issue of serious complications if they do get it, so important to optimise social distancing.

- **Is there any likelihood that there will be a more imaginative approach to schools which, looking at the rise in cases at the beginning of September and continuing since, are the breeding ground for the virus rather than leisure and hospitality venues. Suggestions have been made to rotate classes e.g. week on week off. From the case data from earlier in the year, fewer children in schools led to lower rates.**

Answer:

It is true that schools being open contributes to an increase in the infection rate. But ultimately, we have to make difficult decisions about balancing the control of the virus with the need to educate and reduce inequalities. These are the challenges being considered and weighed up.

- **You have spoken about staff at care homes mixing with others, but what is the situation with carers who visit residents' homes? My wife has had a care package from Social services and a variety of carers have come to our house. They are the only people who can come to us but although wearing masks/gloves etc when asked have said they are not being tested. Given they visit up to 20 homes daily is this not a high risk?**

Answer:

The domiciliary care sector will receive over £14m allocated on a per-service-user basis for infection control purposes. PPE is available to them through the Portal, regular webinars available for the sector. We have regular contacts with the main providers and use Essex Care Association as our route in – getting messages out etc. Again, there is a balance of risk – ultimately people need to have care and support.

- **How is social distancing being enforced? Residents are asking who to contact with to report gatherings?**

Answer:

We have an on-going communications campaign all about educating and encouraging. The key thing is reminding people of the incentive – following social distancing / mask-wearing etc now will enable us to get out of restrictions sooner. The use of the lateral flow tests will also help speed up the whole process for contacts, which might persuade more to isolate. Illegal gatherings should normally be reported to the police

- **If we have a no deal Brexit, will we struggle to get the vaccines into the country?**

Answer:

No.

- **Anecdotally, treatment seems to be improving what evidence do we have about that? What do we know so far about long COVID?**

Answer:

Our understanding is growing and development all the time. Long covid is certainly very real and seems to affect younger people.

- **What measures can be taken to make people comply when told to isolate in order to keep down the rate of infection? Statistics show that the majority of people do NOT comply which is not helpful**

Answer:

We have an on-going communications campaign all about educating and encouraging. The key thing is reminding people of the incentive – following social distancing / mask-wearing etc now will enable us to get out of restrictions sooner. The use of the lateral flow tests will also help speed up the whole process for contacts, which might persuade more to isolate.

- **What statistics support the continued closure of Leisure Centres and Gyms given their importance for mental health?**

Answer:

None of the restrictions are easy. But there is clear evidence that gyms and leisure centres being open has contributed to the increase in the R value, so when you are looking at things that contribute, that would be on the list.

- **Disappointed to hear that gyms/leisure centres contribute 0.1 to R. Gyms in my area have had no cases (I think) and do undertake onerous cleaning regime. Is it gyms or leisure centres and is there evidence? Isn't there a positive to opening them from a health point of view?**

Answer:

As mentioned above, yes, of course, there are benefits, but there are also downsides, and their contribution to the increase in the R rate is clear, and this is something that has to be weighed in the balance.

- **When we exit lockdown, will we be back in tier 2 or are we waiting for more clarification from the govt on steps moving forward?**

Answer:

This has now been announced by the government.

- **Does that include swimming pools? Some disabled children are missing out because pools are closed.**

Answer:

Yes, public swimming pools are closed under the national lockdown.

- **Will you consider mobile sites for vaccinations?**

Answer:

The NHS are leading on the vaccination programme, but we will work very closely with them and will support them in any way we can. Distribution of the vaccine will depend on the type of vaccine and storage required.

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EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Notification of Call-In of Portfolio Holder Decision under Paragraphs 45-52 of Article 6 (Overview & Scrutiny) of the Constitution

This form must be signed and completed and the original returned to the Proper Officer in person no later than the fifth working day following the publication of the decision to be called-in

Decision to be called-in:
Decision reference:
Portfolio:
Description of decision:
Reason for call-in

Members requesting call-in
(3 members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or 5 other members)

Members Name:	Signed:
Lead member:	
Office Use Only: Date Received:	

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