

A1331 Link Road Phase 1 Contractor Progress

Project Newsletter #3
December 2025



A Year in Progress

Welcome to the third edition of the **A1331 Phase 1 Link Road** newsletter from Octavius Infrastructure, delivering on behalf of our client, Essex County Council. This project commenced in September 2024 and has therefore surpassed a year of progress on the scheme. Owing to the good weather throughout the summer of 2025, we have made great progress since our last newsletter in July.

In September we opened the **main roundabout linking the A133 to the new A1331** on schedule. Final surfacing on this section of the programme was delivered through carefully planned, overnight road closures in August, reducing as far as was practicable the impact on road users during the peak summer season. Successful completion of the roundabout allowed us to turn our focus to the main stretch of the A1331 away from the live highways network, significantly reducing any further impact or disruption to highway users for the remainder of the scheme.

Further progress includes completion of the non-motorised and pedestrian walkway section, the excavation and completion of ponds 2 and 3, completion of the attenuation tank and completion of Allens Farm roundabout to binder level.

Ongoing progress includes earthworks and drainage work across the mainline, the commencement of landscaping and nearly half of all fencing work complete. We continue to work towards a scheme completion date of summer 2026.



A133 roundabout



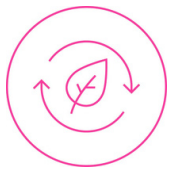
Tye Road roundabout



A1331 Pond 2



Allens Farm roundabout



Social Value A Year in Progress

We are committed to delivering sustainable infrastructure and providing value to society and the communities in which we work. A year on from the start of our project, **we've achieved £5.67m** in social value which equates to over **20% of the project value**. In our commitments, we pledged to focus our efforts on Essex County Council's priorities by:

- spending money with local and small medium enterprise (SME) businesses;
- delivering local skills and employment for the local area; and
- supporting local community initiatives.

So far on this project we have achieved:

- £2.49m social value from spend across Essex and £2.93m social value from spend with small, medium, charity and voluntary enterprises in Essex;
- 46 weeks of apprenticeship training at Level 2, 3 or 4;
- over 150 hours volunteering with local community initiatives and supporting school and college careers programmes; and
- over £1300 worth of equipment, resources and in-kind contributions donated to community projects and VCSEs.

Bat Rescue



Bat Protection



Brown, Long-Eared Bat

In September our site team made an unexpected discovery at the side of our welfare unit in the form of a brown, long-eared bat. Our Senior Environmental Manager Craig made contact with Essex Bat Group to coordinate and arrange collection. As it was a particularly warm day, the team provided it with water and made attempts to shield it from the sun.

Essex Bat Group, a volunteer organisation of over 180 members, advise that urgent assistance should be sought immediately upon discovery of a bat as they can often find themselves in life threatening predicaments. The bat was collected and underwent a thorough health assessment before it was released back into the wild.



Social Value & Sustainability

We've been out and about in the community, working with key local partners, charities and organisations to deliver meaningful engagement.

We visited Colchester Institute, presenting the breadth of careers that exist in construction to second-year T-Level students. This cohort is studying Design, Surveying and Planning for Construction and one local student has successfully secured a 20-week work experience placement with us.

Working with our community partners, we delivered a wide range of conservation and environmental activities across the summer. We supported The Conservation Volunteers at Blythe Pond with pennywort removal. Similarly we helped remove crassula helmsii (New Zealand pygmyweed), another invasive species, from Fordham Village Green. During Marine Week, we joined a large group of volunteers on the beach at Walton-on-the-Naze to support Essex Wildlife Trust with a beach clean. We also attended the Climate Action Planning day at Colchester Zoo, supporting the local community with climate action plans.

In September we provided sponsored football kits to Stanway Rovers Under 10s Wasps – an all-girls youth team with a female coach. Reinforcing our commitment to drive change across our industry, we recognise that gender equality is not just about representation – it's about ensuring equal opportunities, fostering an inclusive culture, and supporting women's advancement at every level. The team will be visiting our site to learn more about careers in construction.



Colchester Institute



Stanway Rovers Wasps



Colchester Zoo



Walton-on-the-Naze



Fordham Village



Blythe Pond



Industry Recognition



In September, the project team were invited to attend the **ICE (Institution of Civil Engineers) East of England Merit Awards** at the University Arms Hotel, Cambridge to celebrate being nominated for an award in the Sustainability category. While the project didn't win, we were proud to be recognised for our innovative and forward-thinking design principles that enhance environmental sustainability and community resilience.

Employability

In September we welcomed **Trainee Engineer Rhys** into the project team. Rhys is a BEng Civil Engineering student, spending the third year of his studies with Octavius. We caught up with Rhys to learn more about how Octavius is supporting his career aspirations.



"My career aims are to become a Site Engineer, which I'm hoping to achieve after completing my studies. With support from the team I'm gaining a fundamental understanding of infrastructure and construction, whilst also enhancing my practical skills and learning how to implement this into real world projects. During my placement with Octavius, I'm developing key practical skills such as surveying and dipping using a variety of instruments. Having the opportunity to understand quality procedures and client feedback are new challenges I never would have encountered at university, giving me wider insight into the construction process.

Working on the A1331 Phase 1 project, I've broadened my understanding of large project schemes, exploring both site-based and office-based opportunities for learning. I'm currently supporting the team with our Considerate Constructors Scheme self-assessment and as two other Octavius projects in the East of England have recently scored 45/45, we're aiming for a hattrick!"

Want to know more?

For any construction or contractor related enquiries, please email LinkRoad@octavius.co.uk

For any wider scheme enquiries, please email A1331@essexhighways.org

For more information about the scheme, please visit www.essexhighways.org/A1331