

ESSEX HIGHWAYS ANNUAL PLAN 2025-2026

Contents

Part One: Service Approach

- 4** Foreword
- 5** Introduction
- 6** Building on success
- 7** Vision and Aims
- 8** Health and Safety
- 10** Quality
- 11** Efficiency and Innovation
- 12** Environment, Decarbonisation and Sustainability Management
- 14** Social Value
- 16** Priority One
- 17** Members' Highway Initiative

Part Two: Service Areas

- 19** Asset, Records Management & Inspections
- 23** Bridges, Subways and other Structures
- 25** Commercial
- 26** Communications
- 28** Design Services
- 29** Development Management
- 30** Footways
- 31** Horticulture
- 32** Information Technology
- 34** Local Highway Panels
- 35** Major Projects
- 37** Public Rights of Way
- 38** Red and Green Claims
- 39** Roads
- 40** Road Drainage
- 42** Road Safety
- 44** Streetlights
- 46** Streetworks
- 48** Traffic Management
- 51** Winter Safety

Part One: Service Approach



Foreword

Councillor Tom Cunningham

Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport

In 2012, Essex County Council (ECC) appointed Ringway Jacobs as its strategic partner to manage and maintain the county's highway network and much has been achieved. Asset knowledge supported by accurate data has helped focus our resources to improve our main roads and network assets. Ringway Jacobs was awarded a full, five-year contract extension in February 2020, ensuring continuation of service from 2022 until 2027

Investment in transport infrastructure, services and initiatives is an important aspect of ECC's Everyone's Essex strategy. This sets out 20 commitments divided into four key areas - economy, environment, health and family. A Safer, Greener, Healthier travel and highways network is a desired outcome of ECC's focus on achieving longer-term future economic growth and meeting the technological challenges facing transport in Essex.

Delivering vital highways and transportation services, investing in new and improved transport infrastructure, and leading campaigns and initiatives to encourage people to travel more sustainably helps us do that. ECC's over-arching Safer, Greener, Healthier initiative is in line with recommendations from the Essex Climate Action Commission.

We have been busy introducing, supporting and funding various projects across Essex such as creating new walking and cycle paths as part of the Active Travel Fund and trialling e-scooters. ECC has successfully bid for funding from the Department for Transport, enabling the transformational creation of safe walking and cycling routes in Essex. The aim is to make it as easy as possible for people to travel more much sustainably - walking, cycling, or e-scootering especially for shorter journeys and taking the bus or train.

Our progress has been enhanced by the effectiveness of the award-winning strategic partnership between ECC and Ringway Jacobs, working together as Essex Highways. I am proud to be able to support and steer the partnership with my areas of expertise and experience. My remit covers many areas and includes:

- Rail Strategy and Community Rail
- Park and Ride
- Network Management
- Traffic Regulation
- Cycling
- Walking
- Street lighting
- Public Rights of Way (bridleways, footpaths and byways)
- Road safety
- Maintenance of highways
- Highways Maintenance capital programme
- Local Highways Panels
- Parking Partnerships

- Integrated Transport
- Sustainable Transport Policy
- Active Travel
- E-Scooters
- Travel Planning
- Flood Management
- Flooding
- SUDS
- Passenger Transport, including buses and concessionary fares
- Home to School Transport
- School Transport Awards
- Ports
- Major Infrastructure

Essex Highways has a huge role to play in the way that we support the county's mobility needs. We are delivering Safer, Greener, and Healthier travel options for all.



Introduction



This Annual Plan provides an overview of how Essex Highways delivers works and services as detailed in the individual Service Plans for 2025/26. It also highlights service delivery achievements and priorities for this year

Essex Highways is a strategic partnership, between ECC and Ringway Jacobs, to manage and deliver local highway services.

Essex Highways comprises both ECC and Ringway Jacobs people who are totally integrated throughout all levels of the service. The partnership delivers an integrated service supported by direct-resource and over 100 supply chain partners, the majority being Essex-based.

The Essex Highway assets comprise over 5,100 miles of roads, 1,600 bridges and other structures, 4,000 miles of Public Rights of Way and 132,000 street lights. It is the seventh largest network in the country and has some of the heaviest traffic flows.

Natural deterioration, increased traffic volume and environmental impact, such as extreme weather, means that the asset deterioration is a challenge for the service - a challenge faced by all local authorities.

Our Asset Management approach and strategy is all about planning ahead to maximise the use of our resources, protect the existing infrastructure and prioritise works for the best long-term benefit. Our aims for the service are as follows:

- Deliver a common vision, working collaboratively, seamlessly and with integrity and transparency
- Engage with our transport network users and provide them with the right information to help shape Essex priorities
- Ensure everything we do supports the drive towards a greener Essex, promoting options that have a positive impact on everyone's health
- Prioritise a safe environment for everyone travelling or working on our network, including safe design, delivery and use
- Optimise our resources through efficiency and innovation to deliver the best possible outcomes while continuing to build future service resilience
- Support the economic and social prosperity of Essex through joined up, accessible services

Through these aims we will realise our vision of 'Delivering and enabling Safer, Greener and Healthier travel for current and future users of the transport network in Essex'.

We will maximise the commercial and strategic opportunities available through this partnership. Essex Highways is maintaining and adding to the existing highway network of which the residents of Essex can be proud.

Building on success

Since 2012, the Essex Highways partnership has effectively and innovatively managed the county's biggest and most valuable asset, resulting in the public having a safe, accessible, serviceable and sustainable highway network

In February 2020 ECC awarded Ringway Jacobs the maximum possible five-year Essex Highways contract extension which runs until 31 March 2027.

The contract extension let the partnership build on its successes to deliver an enhanced, innovative, industry-leading service, while making environmental and efficiency improvements for the people of Essex. It has continued to pull-through technological, material and digital innovations and provide high levels of customer service.

The partnership's approach to Asset Management has seen it achieve the BS ISO 55001 standard for Asset Management. This is no easy task given the scale of the challenge, the size of the network and the complexity of the infrastructure in Essex.

This approach to Asset Management has helped Essex Highways consistently achieve Level 3 (the highest possible level) Department for Transport (DfT) Incentive funding over the past four years – in fact, one of the strengths of the contract is that it has been adept in securing much external funding, such as that from the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) announced in 2019. Funding was awarded to local authorities

on a highly competitive basis, providing grant funding for new infrastructure to unlock new homes in the areas of greatest housing demand. Over 50% of the money that was allocated for the first tranche was given to Essex (see Major Projects, page 35).

While continually improving the highway network, the partnership has reduced costs through innovation, delivered efficiencies, along with helping ECC achieve its Strategic Aims. Essex Highways not only directly helps to enable inclusive economic growth, it also helps to create **Safer, Greener, Healthier** places in which to grow up, to live and work.

With a focus on creating a road environment that is safer, more people have been encouraged to cycle or walk, especially for shorter journeys. Sustainable transport solutions are helping to ensure that Essex reduces carbon emissions and delivers long-term greener benefits alongside providing long-term public health benefits so that residents become and stay healthier.

There is much more to do and more challenges to face, but the contract has achieved numerous and significant successes so far and proven its resilience throughout the turbulent times we have all experienced in recent years.



Vision and Aims

The vision articulates the service's ambition, with the six key aims providing the focus for how the vision will be achieved. The aims demonstrate how weaving in particular themes helps to realise this aspiration

Our Vision

The way transport is used, delivered, and experienced by residents across the county is changing and we need to ensure that we have a service that can respond to those changes and demands. People will change how they move, use the network, choose between sustainable transport and traditional forms of transport, re-assess personal car use etc and we will need to adapt to it all while facing the ever growing financial challenges and expectations of the public.

To stay true to the things that are important to us, it's vital that we set out our vision and aims – something we can all subscribe and hold ourselves to account to. Our Vision summarises our ultimate goal for the service:

'Delivering and enabling Safer, Greener and Healthier travel for current and future users of the transport network in Essex'

Our Aims

The Vision for Essex Highways was agreed in 2020. To help us go about achieving the Vision, a set of six Aims for the service was also created. These are:

'Deliver a common vision, working collaboratively, seamlessly and with integrity and transparency'

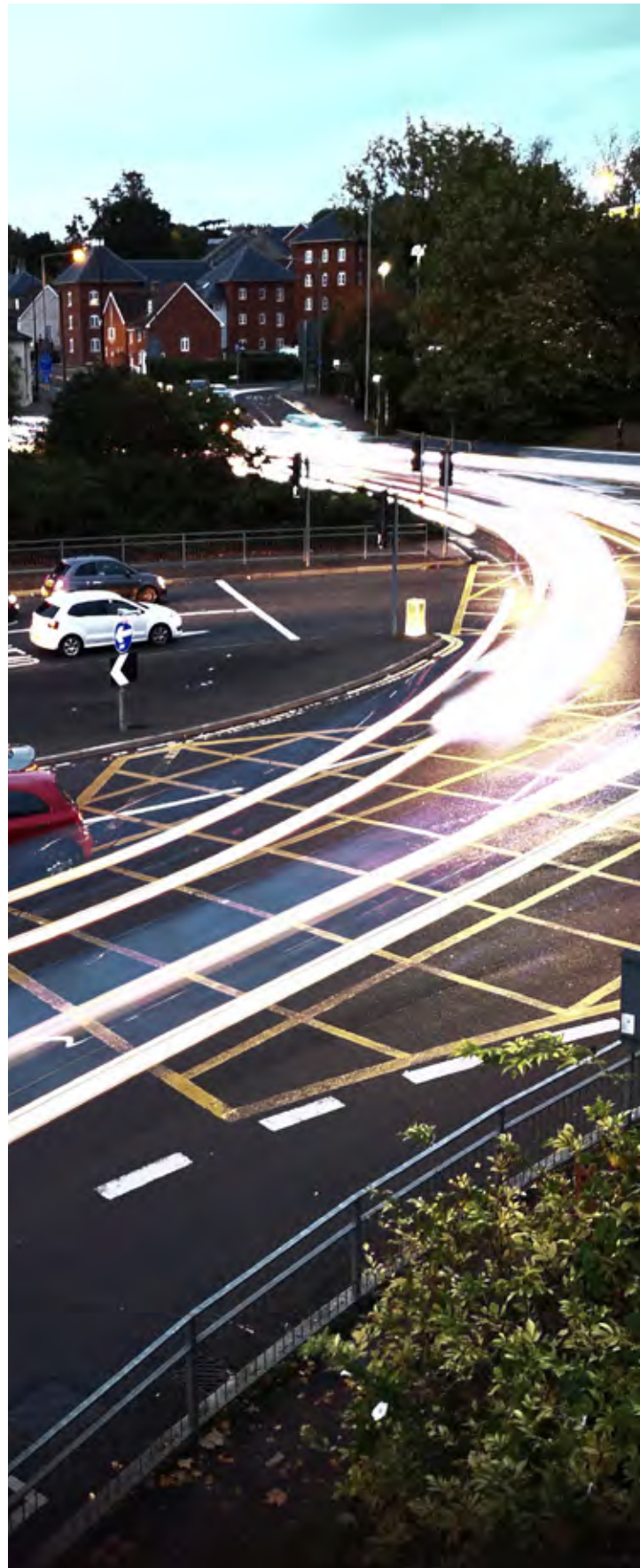
'Engage with our transport network users and provide them with the right information to help shape Essex priorities'

'Ensure everything we do supports the drive towards a greener Essex, promoting options that have a positive impact on everyone's health'

'Prioritise a safe environment for everyone travelling or working on our network, including safe design, delivery and use'


'Optimise our resources through efficiency and innovation to deliver the best possible outcomes while continuing to build future service resilience'

'Support the economic and social prosperity of Essex through joined up, accessible services'



Health and Safety

Ringway Jacobs' 'Think Safe, Home Safe' initiative has been the cornerstone of Essex Highways' culture since its introduction in 2015. It focuses the dedication to providing a safe working environment, ensuring that employees go home safely at the end of each day



52%
Reduction in
service strikes
across the
contract
since 2016

Health, Safety & Wellbeing are at the heart of everything Essex Highways does. Through its strategic partner Ringway Jacobs, the service is recognised for health and safety leadership and management - it operates a comprehensive health and safety management approach which is fully certified to ISO 45001.

Ringway Jacobs partners with organisations including RoSPA, the British Safety Council, Mates in Mind and others to ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff and those who use its services are always at the forefront of the organisation's practices. Ringway Jacobs has held the RoSPA Gold Award for five consecutive years for the safe delivery of its work with its clients.

Ringway Jacobs has extensive experience of undertaking all key health and safety management duties required under the Construction, Design and Management Regulations (2015) including Principal Designer and Principal Contractor. The service proactively drives health and safety performance including mock emergency scenarios, using its Peoplesafe lone working system

and SureCam driving app to keep its people safe wherever they are.

Essex Highways has been proactive and innovative in the way it works to keep service strikes to a minimum by embedding its safe digging culture into daily operations. This approach has, for some years now, been enhanced by the work of dedicated Utilities Service Technicians (USTs), trained specialists in locating underground services.

Capability in this area has recently taken another step forward as two of our key Utilities Services personnel have become Lantra accredited trainers, having also created a bespoke course in underground services location.

Despite the use of Utility Service drawings, safe digging techniques and a wide range of precautionary measures, during the course of works on the network, accidents can happen. Service strikes are bad news for everyone. Apart from the disruption caused by damaging mains pipes, electricity and telecoms cables, such incidents have a high potential to cause significant injury to operatives.



**Think Safe
Home Safe**



Essex Highways is working to keep service strikes to a minimum by embedding its safe digging culture into daily operations. New innovations are helping this to happen such as the 'safe dig' area in Chelmsford. A multi-functional 'street scene' training facility set at the Springfield Depot comprises two footways and a carriageway construction complete with utility covers, kerbs, tactiles, ramp kerbs, street signs, a mini feeder pillar, lamp column and pedestrian guard rail.

The area is used to train safe digging techniques (operatives can excavate down to and around ducts in a safe manner in a controlled environment), tracing and locating utilities using the Cable Avoidance Tool (CAT) and Signal Generator (Genny), hints and tips, false readings), visual clues on site and Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) training. The site has also a number of deliberate anomalies built in. This offers the opportunity to use the area for interviews so as to test a candidate's knowledge and skills.

Positive Mental Health is a key aspect of the well-being of staff and is part of the service's ongoing cultural change journey to improve health and safety standards. 'Open Minds, Healthy Minds' is the vehicle used to embed and implement awareness of positive mental health into its culture. As a result, Ringway Jacobs has 19 positive Mental Health champions and 11 Wellbeing champions meeting once every quarter and every six weeks respectively.

A key risk area for Ringway Jacobs is Roadworker Abuse. Here in Essex, our roadworkers have experienced being threatened with baseball bats, knives, had bottles of urine thrown at them and have been both physically and verbally assaulted just for doing their jobs.

In one incident TM operatives had to restrain someone until police arrived. Perhaps most chillingly, five years ago, Essex Highways operatives were threatened with a gun at Brook Street, Brentwood. Following that incident, Essex Highways held a couple of meetings with Essex Police to discuss ideas to reduce roadworker abuse. Consequently, Essex Police support our road workers by patrolling hot spot areas and attending whenever necessary. Road-users will see signs displayed at road closure sites, which will act as a reminder that police officers are in the area and will act in the event of abusive behaviour.

Two years ago Essex Highways presented to the Stamp It Out summit at the House of Lords, providing the service's perspective on the issue and supported by some interesting incident data and hard hitting video footage of the type of abuse our workers regularly face. Our operatives are urged to report every incident of this type and submit their body-worn footage to

the Police if they've captured an incident. The Police will investigate thoroughly in all instances and consider these for prosecution to help to reinforce the clear message that abuse of any kind against our staff will not be tolerated. It may take some time to effect any change, but efforts will continue through 2025/26 to ensure that our operatives get more protection from members of the public who cause this problem.



Quality

Quality is about ensuring that service delivery is of the highest standard. The aim is not only to maintain this but to continually improve it. Quality is measured externally through accreditation to various BS ISO standards



Quality is managed through site inspections / audits carried out by supervisors, managers, internal and external auditors. The audits assess the quality of works as well as Health, Safety and Environmental compliance. Quality is also assessed through 'Right First Time' audits carried out by a varied selection of supervisors, engineers and highway inspectors.

Essex Highways is certified to the following standards:

- BS ISO 9001 – Quality Management Systems
- BS ISO 14001 – Environmental Management
- BS ISO 44001 – Collaborative Working
- BS ISO 45001 – Occupational Health & Safety
- BS ISO 55001 – Asset Management

Essex Highways was one of the first organisations in the country to be accredited to BS ISO 55001 Asset Management.

The service has retained certification to BS ISO 55001 for four years and its performance has remained consistently high. This status re-assures other external bodies, including the Department for Transport when assessing Essex Highways for a variety of initiatives, helping to secure additional funding.

The certification is currently for carriageways and footways, however, the ambition is to expand this to cover all highway assets in the future. Essex Highways has set up Action Groups to develop its approach to reducing its carbon footprint and improve the biodiversity of its works. Accreditation to these standards recognises that industry leading processes and a supporting culture to deliver services to the highest levels are in place.

However, the real measure of quality lies in continuous improvement and innovation and this is monitored and reflected in Essex through the contract Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Key objectives this year include:

- Management of Essex Highways elements of the RJMS (Ringway Jacobs Management System).
- Maintain accreditation to ISO 9001, 14001, 44001, and 45001.
- Maintain accreditation to ISO 55001 standards - Asset Management, the scope of which currently includes carriageways and footways.
- To support the organisation's long-term objective to work towards extending the scope of ISO 55001 to include the additional disciplines of Intelligent Traffic Systems (ITS), Street Lighting and Structures.
- Manage the audit programme against BSI standards and internal processes.
- Maintain the EH / ECC joint audit programme and ensure consistent reporting and actioning of outcomes through Business Improvement Actions.
- Manage the Business Improvement Actions (BIAs) process to ensure that they are closed in a timely manner and the corrective and preventative actions are clearly and accurately identified.
- Joint development of the KPI Framework and reaching timely agreement.
- Collection of Performance Indicator results from the various sources and collating into the summary report.
- Production of monthly KPI Dashboard report.
- Production of monthly Essex Highways Board (EHB) Dashboard report.
- Attendance at the monthly Performance Management Meeting (PMM).
- Attendance at the Contract Review Meeting (CRM).
- Attendance at the Joint Audit Tracker Meeting (JAT).
- Maintain the Business Continuity Plan and liaison with ECC to ensure contractual compliance.
- Production of the monthly SHE reports and reporting of contract hours.
- Coordinate, record, and report on the activities relating to Social Value.
- Coordinate the review of Contract processes and procedures.
- Maintain and use the Social Value TOMs (Themes, Outcomes and Measures) calculator for reporting of social value activities.

Efficiencies and Innovation

Doing something new or in a different way to improve the business and provide an excellent customer experience



Efficiencies and innovations from all areas of the contract are managed through this team. In agreement with ECC Commissioning, all efficiencies are required to deliver cashable savings. The team is responsible for:

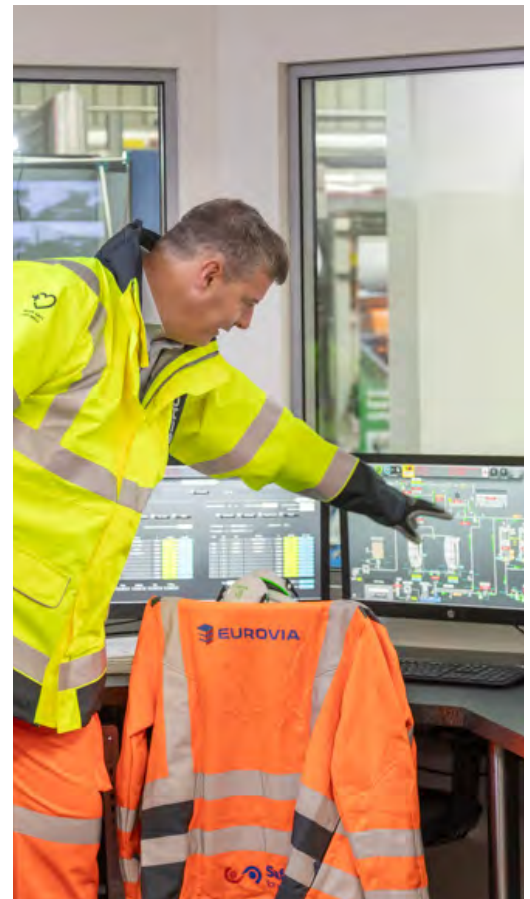
- Identification, development and reporting of innovations and efficiencies within Essex Highways.
- Supporting the Efficiencies Working Group.

The focus here is on delivering cashable efficiencies where budget reductions can be made. These can either be one-off cost reductions (such as a change of material or process for an individual project) or the renegotiation of supply chain contracts. System developments are key drivers for service improvements. A focus on the electronic handling of information has helped the service to become data/intelligence led. Essex Highways is continually introducing new innovations and new technology on the network to improve efficiency, drive quality and exploit sustainable energy.

Essex Highways has been using drone technology to inspect more than 1,600 bridges and culverts in the county which saves money, avoids road closures and improves repair programmes. Originally just camera drones were used but advances in technology mean that the capability now exists to enable Essex Highway engineers to carry out 'impact echo' inspections with drones, using vibration to calculate material thickness thereby increasing the integrity of data obtained.

Route Reports creates a real-time view of asset conditions across our network. A digital route view allows re-inspection of the network without re-visiting the site. All historical data is accessible, so asset conditions can be referenced from any point in time. The use of BridgeStation has also been implemented, an advanced bridge management system to assist in the effective management of bridges and associated data.

2025/26 will see the continued realisation of efficiencies through improving processes, removing both duplicity of effort and methodology that isn't working. Once assessed for viability and in terms of cost savings, new methods are implemented across the service. A good example of this has been the Route Optimisation work to help make the Winter Service more efficient.



Environment, Decarbonisation and Sustainability Management



Essex Highways, through Ringway Jacobs, is accredited to ISO 14001 - Environmental Management. As a requirement of this standard, the company's commitment to the environment is detailed in its Environmental Policy. It is also certified to PAS2080 - Carbon Management in Buildings and Infrastructure for Designer and Constructor

All staff working for and on behalf of Essex Highways are expected to take personal responsibility for the environmental impact of their actions.

Formal responsibility within the service is maintained by the dedicated Health, Safety, Environment, Quality (HSEQ) team supported by the Business Improvement & Planning (BI&P) team. This involves the carrying out of internal audits and the management of any corrective actions.

Environmental Management is included within the Service Plans and during the development of these, the BI&P team ensures that due consideration is given to this aspect.

Waste disposal is a significant cost, both for the contract and the environment. Waste management is addressed by each of the Service Area owners within their Service Plans, working with Ringway Jacobs' Sustainability Business Partner to further develop measuring and reporting the generation of greenhouse gas emissions.

This is being extended from the current Scope 1 and 2 to include Scope 3 emissions. Ringway Jacobs has set a target for a CO₂ reduction of 5% per year to 2025 but is imperative that current emissions are baselined to enable measurement of future reductions. However, there are

also other factors that affect climate change and air quality needs to be measured and monitored for particles and ozone. Biodiversity is a measure of variation at the genetic, species, and ecosystem. It is essential for human existence and the environment to deliver key services including clean air and water.

To understand where Essex Highways' activities have an impact on Biodiversity and the impact on Carbon, a work stream review has been undertaken.

chain. This will help to deliver continued process digitisation improvements and report on the benefits delivered from the allocated / ringfenced innovation budget.

Ringway Jacobs' Carbon Management System was recently externally certified to PAS 2080:2023 Carbon Management in Buildings and Infrastructure for designer and constructor. This was the result of a huge amount of work from across the business.

The company's Carbon Management System will ensure PAS 2080 principles are integrated into its organisation and whole-life carbon is considered in all decision-making processes, embedding a low carbon culture throughout the business and the work done with both its clients and supply chain.

Alignment to PAS 2080 principles provides opportunities to lower whole life carbon emissions, and to lower project costs through increasing resource efficiency.

It has the potential to extend the life of new and existing assets through the use of more durable products and innovative construction techniques. In addition, Hybrid working for staff has significantly reduced the amount of travelling for staff across the network, thus reducing CO₂ emissions.



Work has taken place with Ringway Jacob's Sustainability Business Partner to further develop the measuring and reporting of Biodiversity which will lead to guidance on the impact of future works. This has identified activities which may have an impact and whether that impact can be measured.

Measurement is the first step and undertaking this has a cost impact, i.e., a resource will be required to provide, record, and collate data from our direct works and from the supply



Social Value encompasses the broad concept of adding value by incorporating social, environmental, and economic costs and benefits of an organisation's activities within the communities it operates.

This means that as well as considering the direct effects of interventions, the wider effects on individuals, communities and the economy should also be considered.

The Social Value Act 2012 requires organisations to consider how they contribute to improving the quality of life of people and the environment around their business.

The strategy for driving social value in Ringway Jacobs is led by the Social Value Management Board and managed by the Performance and Quality Manager, whose team is responsible for collating the data and providing the monthly Social Value report (See more, page 14).



In 2022, Essex was the first Highways service in the world to trial the addition of Graphene to Hot Rolled Asphalt. Graphene is a technically advanced, sustainable additive that significantly enhances the performance of asphalt used for road surfacing.

This potentially means a longer road surface life of around 2.5 times that of a normal treatment. This would mean less maintenance costs and less related carbon emissions as a result. We are now waiting on trial results to decide next steps.



Social Value

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires that public bodies procuring services ensure that contracts achieve social, economical and environmental benefits beyond just the primary goals. Ringway Jacobs is fully focussed upon the delivery of positive social and environmental initiatives



Social Value is about long-term, sustainable improvements for society, generated by promoting positive social, economic, and environmental impacts. Ringway Jacobs (RJ) is committed to working with its employees, supply chain, customers, shareholders and wider networks to drive positive change and long-term benefit to society so as to leave a positive legacy in the communities where it works.

What is social impact and social value?

The terms 'social value' and 'social impact' are widely used but what do we mean by them?

Social impact – Is the impact (both positive and negative) that an organisation (and supply chain) has on people and communities because of an action or inaction relating to an activity, project, programme, or policy.

Social value – The financial/non-financial value to society that an organisation's social impact makes.

Social Value Policy

Ringway Jacobs (RJ) is committed to maintaining and enhancing its capability to work collaboratively with clients, customers and its supply chain to create social value not normally achieved by working independently. This policy is supported by the company's sustainability strategy and policy. It covers the following areas:

People

- Engaging with its people, RJ trusts them to work openly and ethically at every level
- Offering its people long term development and training programmes ensuring a two-way commitment
- Use the expertise of its people to provide effective, efficient, innovative and sustainable solutions to deliver excellence to clients.

Local Business and Economy

- Promote respect, honesty and transparency throughout the business. Build a positive reputation within the industry.
- Work in partnership with all to share knowledge and best practice to achieve common goals.
- Strive to deliver technical, professional, operational and safety excellence.

Community Engagement

- Carry out volunteering activities that deliver benefits to local communities.
- Work with local charities on key themes to deliver additional benefits to the communities in which RJ works.
- Work with education and training providers, industry bodies and charities to offer curriculum support and work experience opportunities.

Environment

- Strive to be a resilient business, while having a

positive impact on people, the planet and economy.

- Manage and reduce the impact of RJ's activities on the planet.
- Manage the business economically and sustainably.

Governance, Measuring and Reporting

- Maintain clear accountability for delivering this policy
- Monitor and report RJ's social value impact by using recognised independent tools.
- Continuously improve standards, efficiency and effectiveness

Key Social Value Objectives

- Create locally focused sustainable solutions resulting in economic, social, and environmental benefits.

Community

- Create employment, re-training and other return to work initiatives which will also include the use of government schemes such as Kickstart.
- Grow and diversify the supply chain by providing the same opportunities to Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Voluntary Community and Social Enterprises (VCSEs) as larger companies, to tender for, and win contracts.
- Support the physical and mental health of staff and local communities.
- Continue to embrace sustainable travel solutions and ways of working.

Create new jobs and skills to tackle economic inequality

Through partnerships, skills, and development opportunities which will lead to career routes into highways and construction:

- Inspire people to continually develop their skills and embrace opportunities within the highways and construction industry.
- Create training and employment opportunities particularly for those who face barriers to employment and/or who reside in deprived areas.
- Encourage people to gain the skills and qualifications required for the current and future needs of the industry and address skills gaps.
- Encourage people within RJ to continuously develop their skills and gain recognised qualifications.

Positive Environmental

Have a positive impact on people and the environment through all RJ's activities:

- Reduce RJ's carbon footprint.
- Influence staff, suppliers, customers and communities to support environmental protection and improvement.
- Promote and use materials and products from sustainable sources.
- Create cleaner and greener places in which to live and work.

RJ's Sustainability Plan plays an active role in tackling climate change, ensuring RJ is an effective steward of the environment within the communities it works.

Improve Health and Wellbeing

RJ cares about the wellbeing, happiness and development of its people:

- It provides activities to support the improvement of health and wellbeing, including physical and mental health for its workforce.
- It supports its partners and clients to improve the health and wellbeing of their workforce.
- RJ looks for opportunities to raise awareness and support the health and wellbeing of its staff, suppliers and those within the communities it works.

Support Community Involvement and Development

To improve its environment and well-being RJ aims to understand the communities where it works. The company will:

- Align delivery plans with local needs and partner with local organisations to deliver on its priorities.
- Encourage its people to volunteer in their local communities and commit to two days volunteering.
- Raise money for local causes and support local charities.
- Provide engagement opportunities for the local community e.g. school site visits

Support sustainable long-term economic development for clients and communities

RJ works with its partners to create sustainable communities, maximising community and business growth by:

- Understanding roads and

streets – maximising business growth and active travel through fit-for purpose infrastructure.

- Minimising waste as much as possible by refusing to have unnecessary and unsustainable products, re-thinking designs with a focus on reducing their environmental impact.
- Maximising modern methods of construction and their impact on areas of deprivation.
- Strategic Asset Planning to maximise the social Return on Investment for central and local government partners.

How is Social Value managed?

The strategy for driving social value in RJ is led by the Social Value Management Board and managed by the Performance and Quality Manager.

The approach is based on collaboration at all levels to drive the biggest impact within the business and communities where RJ works. It works in partnership with:

- HR Business Partners
- Sustainability Business Partners
- Health and Safety Business Partners
- Working Well Champions
- Mental Health Champions
- Heads of Service
- Communication Team
- Clients and customers
- Supply Chain Partners



Priority One

The Priority One programme enabled the resurfacing of those areas that need it, rather than simply repair defects, providing a more robust long-term solution

The £25m Priority One was ECC's single largest additional investment into highways maintenance, with up to 128 resurfacing schemes taking place across the county and more crews deployed out on our roads.

Across the 5,000 miles of road network in Essex, these crews were mobilised at impressively short notice and were out every day working to tackle critical maintenance projects, such as tackling potholes.

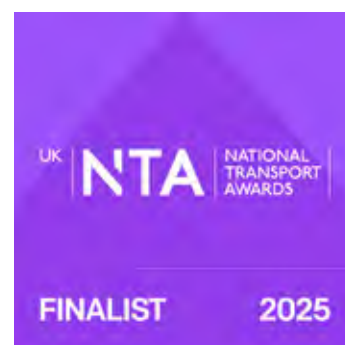
The eight-month Priority One programme let Essex Highways do more, focusing on road resurfacing, drain cleaning, repainting white lines, cutting

back vegetation and repairing signs. Schemes took place in every district and borough across the county. In 2024, ECC budgeted £39 million for its annual resurfacing programme and then in the February announced that £12 million of additional funding would be spent.

This included £8 million for extra crews to prioritise repairs raised by local councillors (see page 17) and £2 million for Local Highways Panels to deliver large schemes, freeing up existing budgets for small schemes. Strong financial management was highlighted by the £25 million Priority One campaign.

128
additional roads
resurfaced in
2024/25 thanks
to Priority
One

Additional investment in road maintenance will continue in 2025/26, on top of the usual highways repair programme carried out over the course of the year.



Epping New Road, Buckhurst Hill



High Street, Burnham-On-Crouch



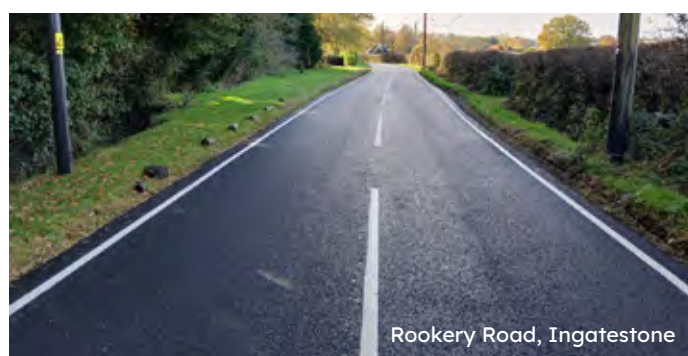
High Road, South Benfleet



Gardiners Lane, Basildon



High Road, Laindon



Rookery Road, Ingatestone



15,104
repairs completed
through the Members'
Highway Initiative
in 2024/25

Member's Highways Initiative

Essex Highways is working with Members across the county to prioritise repairs in their divisions

More road and pavement repairs are being carried out thanks to Essex County Councillors working with Essex Highways to identify issues in their divisions.

The Members' Highways Initiative (MHI) is funded by £8 million of the £12 million that was announced for highways repairs in February 2024.

The £12 million was allocated across different areas of work, including additional highway crews for each borough, city and district to prioritise repairs raised by local Members and residents.

The initiative ensures that each Member has a crew allocated to them for a week every eight weeks. This is in addition to the work Essex Highways already carries out to repair

and maintain the county's highways, including the annual resurfacing programme. The MHI enables Members to identify, plan and prioritise defects in their division and includes repairing outstanding issues as well as new defects.

Issues include potholes, pavements, repairs to street furniture, drainage and enforcing vegetation maintenance on private land where it meets the highways. In the 2024 to 2025 financial year 15,104 such repairs were completed through the programme.

The works have included:

- 8,000 carriageway defect repairs, such as potholes and surface damage
- 6,000 footway repairs, including kerbs and paving issues

- Replacing or repairing bollards, signs, pedestrian guard rails and surface covers.

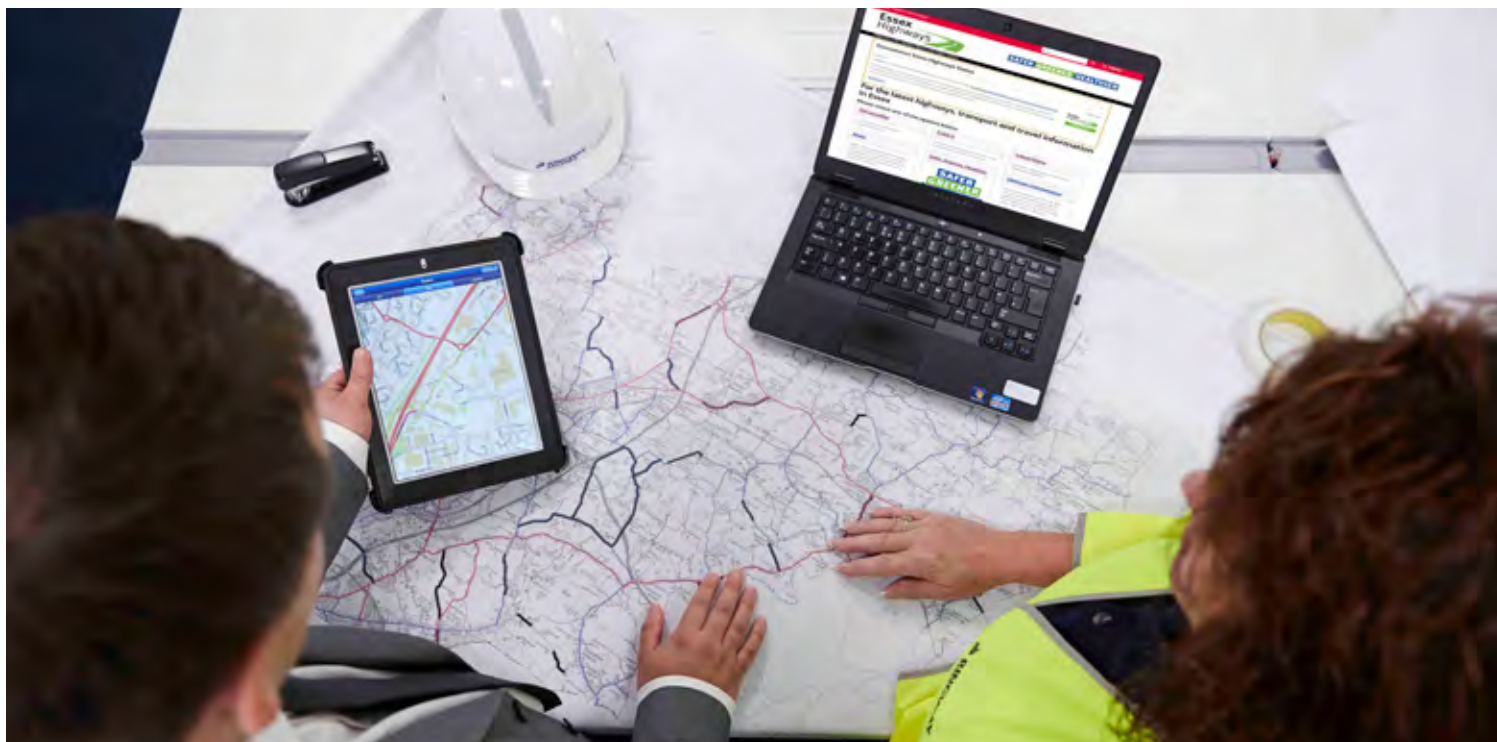
The initiative runs alongside other works, including Essex Highways core maintenance schedule, and last year's extra £25 million Priority One resurfacing programme. The MHI is now fully funded and continuing into the 2025/26 financial year. Local councillors and Essex Highways teams are already working together on new rounds of repairs. These will improve the safety of roads and pavements and keep Essex moving.

The initiative helps ensure more repairs are carried out to help improve the condition of the highways in Essex and helps the council in its ambition to deliver safer, greener and healthier travel for everyone.

Part Two: Service Areas



Asset, Records Management and Inspections



The Asset, Records Management and Inspections Service Area of Essex Highways comprises five teams:

Asset team

The Asset Team implements best practice to ensure delivery and compliance with our integrated asset management-led policy and strategy. This is done to maximise the benefit of investment across all ECC highway assets. The team keeps asset data systems up to date and fit for purpose, ensuring accurate data is readily available for internal and external customers and stakeholders.

The team also provides prioritised asset-derived information to drive Essex Highway's long-term forward programme. Over the next three-year period, the strategic approach taken by ECC will remain asset-led while considering customer requirements.

The service's Asset Management strategy and policy inform an increased understanding of asset condition, helping define the long term, programme for maintenance and renewal, while helping to meet the Safer, Greener, Healthier and Everyone's Essex agendas. The team's focus for the coming year is:

- Sustain the highest level of Asset Management Competence, to support the anticipated Department for Transport (DfT) aim of reintroducing an incentivised element to DfT funding
- Work with Network Rail to deliver the outcomes of the level crossing closure decision as appropriate.
- Continue the England Coast Path project.
- Complete 25/26 Strategic Asset Management Plan.
- Bid for external funding to supplement ECC budgets.
- Continue to embed new ways of working into Public Rights of Way (PRoW) team and target long standing PRoW enforcement cases.
- Continue delivery of land searches within a suitable period, invoicing all districts monthly for searches undertaken.
- Continue work into Carbon Emissions measurement and reduction through supporting the Essex Highways Carbon Emissions Reduction Steering Group.
- Continue work into Climate Adaptation, to develop plans for making Highways Infrastructure more environmentally resilient, in of support anticipated Local Authority reporting requirements from Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) in 2025/26.
- Continue to sustain the relevance of the Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (HIAMP), by presenting supplementary Asset Management Strategic Planning documents for consideration and subsequent approval by the Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport and the Essex Highways Strategic Partnership.
- Develop a five-year programme detailing risks and associated mitigations / planned works and timescales.
- Implement the "Place & Movement" Hierarchy.
- Introduction of Electric Vehicles into Highway Inspections.



Definitive Map & Records Team and Land Searches

This team contributes to economic growth in Essex by providing a prompt and efficient land charge enquiry service to District Councils. The team delivers statutory functions associated with maintaining the Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way (PRoW), and provides a service to carry out Public Path Orders.

The team also liaises with planners to minimise impact/maximise potential for the PRoW network from planning applications. It provides responses to Highway Record enquiries and promotes the further development of web-based IT in order to facilitate self-service by the public.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

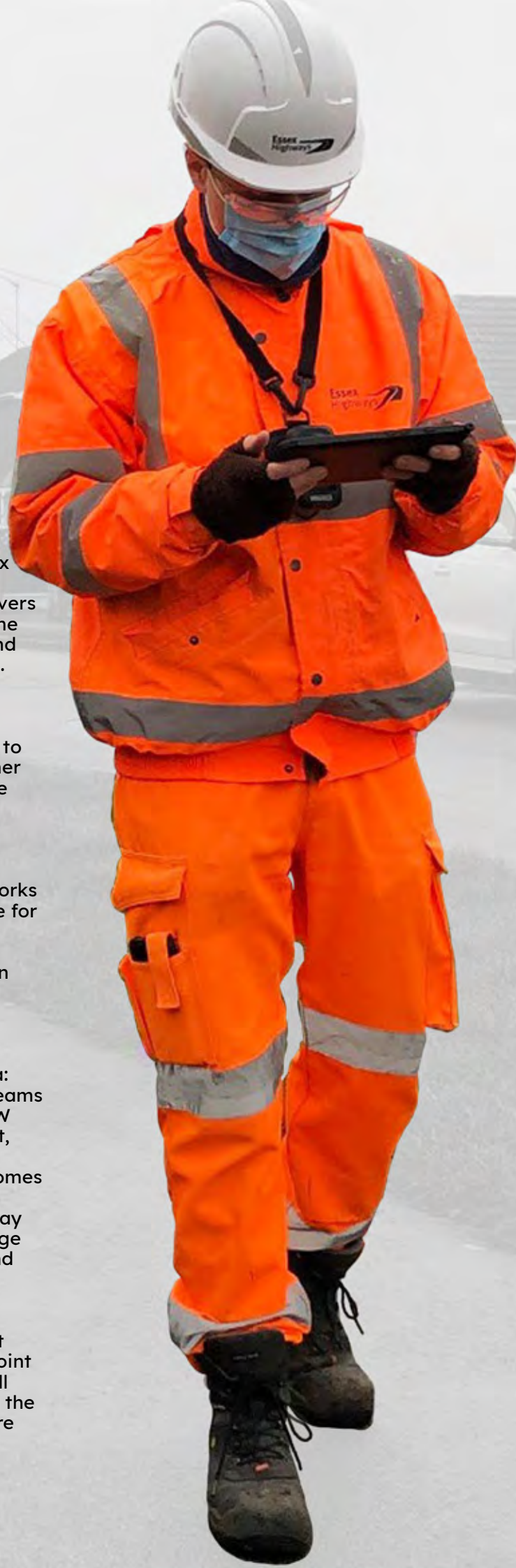
The PRoW team delivers inspections of the PRoW network, as well as programming and managing works on the ground. Additionally, the team is responsible for the engagement and management of volunteers.

Inspections of the PRoW network are undertaken in accordance with the Maintenance and Inspections Strategy for Public Rights of Way.

Enforcement

Two Enforcement teams sit within this Service Area: The PRoW and Highway Enforcement teams. The teams share a primary focus, ensuring that both the PRoW and highway networks are free from encroachment, flooding and obstruction, although residents are encouraged to look after the areas outside their homes or property by removing any vegetation or other obstructions from or overhanging the public highway adjacent to their property. This ensures safe passage for all users and helps maintain the appearance and accessibility of the area.

Much of the coming year will continue to focus on delivering training needs, working practices, target areas and getting the new team members to the point where they are able to work independently. This will also include elements of training for other areas of the business (mainly Inspections) to help restore a more connected approach for first line Enforcement.





Our inspection regime continues to support our asset led decisions. This approach delivers revenue maintenance asset condition data that also supports the commissioned capital maintenance programmes, enhanced by technology such as Route Reports (pictured bottom right) which enables driven routes to be undertaken by a single inspector. This has removed the need for Inspectors to stop at the side of the road to log defects, therefore being a more efficient and a safer process.

We have used technology and the data held within CONFIRM (strategic asset management system software) to plot the inspection routes and frequencies on an electronic map, giving us a visual guide to all the inspections on the network. This has highlighted some anomalies that can be amended with ease and will aid the optimisation of the network.

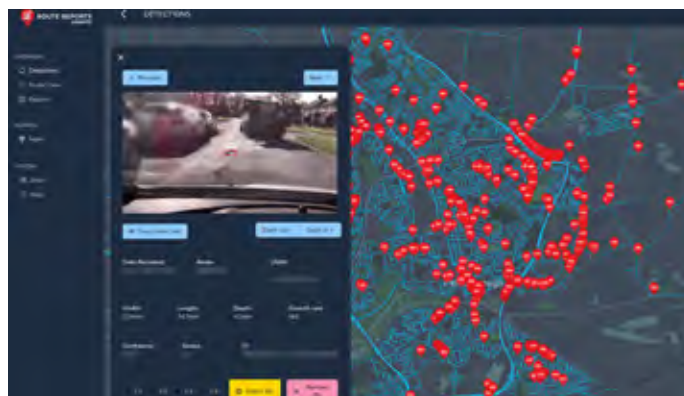
The use of Route Reports and the implementation of route optimisation has enabled us to monitor the workload of inspectors more efficiently. This, combined with performance management and target setting, enables a more efficient delivery of the service.

Highway safety inspections provide a record of defects that meet the investigatory levels set out in the Essex Highways Maintenance Strategy, including those in connection with carriageways, footways, road signs and street furniture.

Inspections also record condition assessments of key highway assets to inform the capital programme. The remote footway network has now been mapped in the asset management system, CONFIRM, which allows better quantifying of the length of network to be inspected.

This makes it possible to review the geographical areas covered by each Inspector with a view to redistributing work across the team to better balance the workloads. The data capture of condition associated with this network, also helps to improve the focus of the capital footway programme.

The inspection regime continues to be developed to support our asset-led decisions. This asset-led approach to inspections delivers revenue maintenance asset condition data that also supports the commissioned capital maintenance programmes.



The PRow Enforcement team deals with everyday issues as they arise on the PRow network and several long-standing enforcement cases were progressed throughout 2024/2025. In 2025/2026, the team will identify a small number (usually 3-4 depending on complexity and other ongoing cases) of cases to proactively address. Focus will continue to ensure improved crossfield reinstatement compliance by farmers and we will also work with The Essex Area Ramblers on a number of cases which have been identified as high priorities by their membership.

Inspections

The team is responsible for routine safety inspections for all adopted roads in Essex. The frequency of inspections is determined by the Essex Highway Maintenance Strategy with PR1 roads inspected monthly, PR2 roads inspected quarterly, and local roads inspected annually. This equates to approximately 2,000 km of road length inspected in any given month.

The team also deals with ad-hoc inspections resulting from customer enquiries. The volume of work associated with these enquiries fluctuates greatly, normally due to environmental factors such as adverse weather but can be between 3,000 and 5,000 enquiries per month. The outputs from these inspections are condition assessments and identification of defects including those passed to utility companies. This information drives the reactive (revenue) and capital programmed works through the commissioned Task Orders.

All Inspections of the highway are undertaken on a routine basis with the frequency of inspection falling in line with the hierarchy of the network and the use of the asset. All defects logged on a routine or adhoc inspection are risk assessed and prioritised accordingly and can form the basis for any court defence. Due to their specialist knowledge and experience, team members are regularly called upon to provide evidence at Court in defence of third-party claims against ECC and Ringway Jacobs.

The team also supports data capture exercises such as those that inform bids submitted by other sections within Essex Highways on behalf of ECC to the Department for Transport for dry weather damage.

The team works with other elements of the Service including Maintenance & Operations and Network & Safety to identify if there are further elements of data capture that can be undertaken on inspections. This will help better informed decisions about works programmes to be made.

16,362
miles of
highway
inspected in
2024/25



Bridges, Subways and other Structures

Ensuring the maximum life of all structural assets through targeted maintenance, to provide safe and accessible passage along the highways

Essex Highways has over 1600 structures to maintain. Structures schemes can take three to five years to develop and it can take a similar time to programme for works due to their complexity and multiple constraints. They comprise bridges, subways, retaining walls, culverts and headwalls. The condition of these assets requires management through regular inspections and maintenance. This inevitably leads to the design of improvements or replacing existing structures.

The importance of improving the Asset Led approach for Structures is recognised and the team is committed to improving its asset data on structures. In addition, the new maintenance policy for structures is being embedded through the ongoing Structures Improvement plan which has three areas of improvement:

- Principal inspections (PIs) - Essex Highways is implementing a risk-based PI programme.
- Structural reviews - these will take place following a Principal Inspection.

- Management of sub-standard assets - completion of a standalone review (not dependent on other works taking place) of all substandard assets

Work on PIs is a clear example where efficiency, innovation and service resilience has all been delivered in one project. Where access equipment was previously required, the use of drones and the process for all PIs has been stripped back to simply collect the data and input it directly into BridgeStation, a complete cloud-based asset management tool for bridges and structures. The system stores all relevant data and assumptions and can be easily kept up to date with any changes to the asset.

This then automatically appraises the asset on priority of reassessment according to the standards. This approach provides Essex Highways with up to date conditions of its assets and better understanding of the impact they will have on the highway network.



Oasis Bridge, Chelmsford

Continued monitoring throughout the year ensures that all interested parties are clear about potential risk, aware of the current status of the structures asset and can agree plans for future works. Schemes contained within the capital programme prioritise the structures with the highest risk.

In 2024/2025 we completed one major replacement scheme, eight strengthening schemes, two major refurbishments, 14 preventative maintenance schemes, 114 minor maintenance works, 19 emergency repairs as well as specialist inspection works. We carry out routine and detailed inspections of over 800 structures per year as well as structural reviews, assessments and the management of substandard assets.

In addition, we worked on 65 schemes which are at different design stages: from option study to detailed design for either bridge replacement, strengthening or major refurbishment to extend the serviceable life of the assets. Examples of new asset include the Generals Lane Bridge (pictured, background) which opened to traffic at the end of

2023, following a huge amount of work from the Essex Highways teams involved in finalising the Technical Approval.

For 2025/2026 we continue to develop 71 bridge schemes for replacement, strengthening, refurbishment and decommissioning; on top of this, 25 capital works are planned.

On occasions, temporary weight limits are imposed on structures while the design of a repair or replacement is completed and / or funding made available. In extreme cases, the passage of traffic over the structure might be restricted or prevented in the interests of safety.

The management of abnormal loads and weight restrictions are also a key element when it comes to managing the county's structures. Each individual bridge on the route is checked by a dedicated Abnormal Loads Office to ensure that they are capable of supporting the proposed loads.

Commercial

The commercial team plays a key role in Essex Highways, supporting all areas of the Service to ensure compliance with the requirements of both the ECC contract and the commercial governance of Ringway Jacobs

The Commercial team does not own any Task Orders but has a responsibility to assist Task Order owners to ensure that budgets and outputs are delivered in a contractually compliant and efficient manner.

The team is responsible for the delivery of all obligations set under the contract and also provide greater visibility, control, and auditability of any key contractual notifications, communications and/or decisions. These are recorded within the Contract Event Management and Reporting (CEMAR) system. This is a web-based change management tool that helps the administration and management of existing contract mechanisms. It also serves as a data log that provides valuable analytics as the Contract evolves, giving control and visibility. It is the sole source of information directly relating to the management of all Task Orders.

CEMAR makes it possible for all relevant users to access live, accurate and up to date information. The responsibility for the maintenance of CEMAR remains with the Business Improvement team, but the Commercial team ensures that Contract communications are processed through the system in a timely manner.

Continuous Improvement

Works delivered through Supply Chain Partners (SCPs) are, where appropriate, procured through a competitive target costing process. This requires that target cost submissions are assessed to ensure their adherence to the pre-contract scope and timeline. Any variations are challenged prior to the award of the work to the most competitive submission.

The works are then managed in accordance with embedded procedures including the revaluation of final accounts. This ensures that these reflect the actual works delivered and are in line with the original target cost quotation. The processes associated with this are reviewed and revised if necessary to mitigate the risk of any noncompliance and reflect any audit/sampling or best practice/ lessons learned throughout the year.

Innovations and Efficiencies

The Commercial team is the main conduit between the wider Service and the Efficiency Manager.



Identifying and maximising cashable benefits is critical to both the Provider and Authority to ensure that targets are met or exceeded. Recently the Commercial team has worked on:

- Promoting long term agreements with the supply chain in return for reduced fees, rates or cost inflation certainty. This provides the supply chain with the ability to plan, and programme works and resources in the most

efficient manner.

- Procuring materials for free issue to the supply chain, removing an element of overhead and profit mark-up, assisting the Operations team to make informed decisions over whether to subcontract or self-deliver works (such as, for example, traffic management, gully cleansing and the provision of operated plant).

Environment, Decarbonisation and Sustainability Management

The Commercial team works with delivery teams to ensure compliance with the accredited standard ISO14001 – Environmental Management. The main driver is the monitoring and reduction of waste. Waste is not only a direct cost but also a waste of natural resources.

Supply Chain Partners are encouraged to promote ways to minimise waste to reduce the cost of waste disposal. The Commercial team regularly liaises with the wider Service to identify and capture Social Value. This is then recorded in the Social Profit Calculator tool by the Business Improvement and Performance team. Ringway Jacobs is also assisting ECC with the transition to Theme Outcome Measures (TOMs). Current initiatives include:

- Engaging with Supply Chain Partners to share best practice and see how far along they are re: Environment, Decarbonisation and Sustainability Management. This involves using the Ringway Jacobs Sustainability Business Partner
- Maximising the adoption of electric plant / vehicle where economically viable
- Seeking to incorporate more sustainable ways of working and specifying the use of eco friendly innovations within tender requirements (i.e. the use of solar powered welfare units, grey water harvesting etc.)

Communications

The Essex Highways Communications team provides a mixture of public relations, marketing and customer service support, giving factual, useful service delivery information and knowledge



The communications function manages the main 'one-to-many' information-sharing interfaces between Essex Highways' delivery teams, various other internal groups, and the public and highways users of Essex.

Working to the direction of the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport, the Director of Highways and Transportation and the service's Operations Director, the team provides a public information service using a variety of channels and formats.

It works alongside the ECC Communications and Marketing team, ECC Communications Network colleagues, Customer Services; Your Right to Know Team; Member Services and Corporate & Executive Complaints teams, using our knowledge and the expertise of the service to provide both proactive and reactive information to the public.

Operating entirely in line with ECC policies, protocols and related service areas, the Essex Highways Communications team adds value in three key 'non-engineering' areas:

- Reputation and Brand Management.
- Provision of public, politician, officer and staff highways service information, awareness, and education.

- Help with inbound enquiry management.

The team helps to deliver high quality information to its audiences and encourages them to self-serve with highways enquiries and reports. This is supported by regular auditing and updating of the quality of information available on the **EH website** and signposting through social media channels and engagement with Members.

For 2025/26 the Communications team's work will focus on:

- **Clearly and creatively communicating the benefits of the work Essex Highways delivers.** Whether to help frame road closures ahead of resurfacing works or the importance of the gritters in winter, it is important communications focus on helping our audience understand the benefits of the work.
- **Promoting the role Essex Highways plays in delivering ECC's ambition of Safer, Greener, Healthier travel and transport across the county.** Providing context and using our channels to explain how EH helps deliver the infrastructure needed to encourage safer travel using sustainable methods.

- **Improved engagement and communication with Members.** Building on the significant improvements made in 2024/25 to improve Members' access to information so they have timely updates about works in their divisions to better engage with local residents.
 - **Developing the internal communications function.** Build on new channels installed in 2024/25 to improve staff engagement. Includes a new staff newsletter and establishing support with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and RJ colleagues for staff engagement events.
 - **Further embed the campaigns approach to communication.** Given the seasonal approach to carrying out works, communications will follow the same pattern where appropriate (e.g winter comms campaign focused on the winter service and what residents and members can expect the service to deliver.) This approach can be emulated across spring / summer repair works.
 - **Putting our audiences at the heart of everything we do.** Significant changes to our approach were developed and embedded across the communications team in 2024/25. This year we will further build out the comms function, improving collaboration across EH and ECC teams and the impact that will have on information sharing with our audiences or customers.
 - **Continue to build stronger links between the Essex Highways Communications team and the Essex County Council Communications network.** This will allow the team to access training opportunities, guidance and expertise from others working in comms across the council. It will also ensure the communications the EH team delivers is aligned to ECC's style guide and methods helping give 'one voice' across all council communications.
 - **Embed a programme of communications discipline focused learning and development.** To identify free resources and training for the communications team to help them develop within their disciplines and, in doing so, help the team achieve the objectives set out in this plan. This will also further cement the professional support the communications function delivers within EH.
 - **Promote the work, support and successes of the communications team.** A programme to help educate colleagues in the service on the work the team delivers, support the team can offer to colleagues and an insight into how the team plans and develops communications strategies, handling and plans, with a particular focus on audience and working with Members.
 - **Promoting Wellbeing** (of staff and customers), to champion and celebrate the achievement of the EH workforce, keep the workforce and public safer and healthier. This will include roadworker abuse issues and, where relevant, SERP 'Vision Zero' messages.
- Our core activities include:
- **Improving awareness of the works that Essex Highways is delivering,** through external communications channels and through communication with Members.
 - **Responding quickly to reactive media requests for information about issues across the Essex Road network.** Media queries about highways account for approx. 40% of all media enquiries ECC press desk receives a month - the largest number of calls of any service area. This lets us defend the service's reputation and we work closely with the ECC press team to develop lines and handling, and with colleagues across the organisation to provide accurate and up-to-date information.
 - **Keeping members of the public updated on upcoming works in their area.** This includes working closely with teams to provide communications handling for more sensitive schemes and ensure join up where necessary with other interested parties or utilities to minimise / mitigate any potential issues.
 - **Continuing to build Essex Highways' social media presence** particularly through the Facebook page, which is now managed by the communications team, with the Jacobs team using when needed to promote their activity.
 - **Working closely with members to understand what they need from the service and how best to communicate with them.** In particular, working with the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport.
 - **Responding to Freedom of Information Requests (FOIs) sent in from members of the public and other organisations.** On average there are always 20-30 FOIs in the system and the team relies on the information shared by colleagues and uploaded on Essex Highways systems to develop these.
 - **Communicating with colleagues across Essex Highways.** Sharing regular updates as well as longer form content with news, updates and information from across the service to keep staff at multiple sites updated and to celebrate the great work colleagues are delivering. The focus this year will be to look at more efficient ways of doing this and considering how internal comms can better support the Essex Highways SLT.



Design Services

Design Services feeds into all the Essex Highways objectives by giving consideration during the design process to schemes that promote safe walking, cycling and passenger transport which contribute towards the drive for a greener Essex

The Design Services function covers a range of different activities including the design of a wide range of infrastructure installations (highways, drainage, traffic signals, structures, active travel, etc.) and maintenance of infrastructure which includes but is not limited to traffic signals, structures, and Variable Message Signs (VMS). Design services also oversees Development Management, Vehicle Crossings, Disabled Parking Bays, and Network Assurance. For 2025/26, Design Services will be focused on a range of activities including:

Carbon, Sustainability and Innovation

Carbon reduction activities across the service, aligned with ECC strategy, are gathering momentum and Carbon Reduction Action Groups (CRAG) have been set up, guided by the EH Carbon Reduction Steering Group. The Design CRAG has prepared an action plan to identify specific activities to be undertaken.

The focus this year will be to ensure that actions are completed and carbon consideration is embedded in all stages of the design process, including further awareness and training for staff, and that carbon calculations are undertaken. The team is also looking to identify and support to the net zero project aims of Essex Highways.

Innovative ideas can be applied to all Design Services work areas to aid efficiency and reduce cost. Examples due for implementation include

the creation of electronic forms for Licences which will streamline the process and ensure consistency, and the introduction of Software as a Service (SaaS - cloud-based software) to the Development Management team to aid in managing the development process. In addition, the Specialist Design team is undertaking a three-year programme of upgrading all remaining traffic signals that currently use halogen lamps to Extra Low Voltage LED units. This will remove the need for lamp changes every six months and reduce energy consumption by approximately 70% per site.

The team is also investigating using the latest above ground vehicle/cycle detection technology to replace sub-surface loop detection where possible, to reduce the requirement for physical works to be undertaken in the carriageway by reducing disruption and improving safety due to the reduced need for excavation.

Embed Local Highway Panel Changes

All 12 Borough, City and District areas have Local Highway Panels (LHPs). They are responsible for making recommendations and setting priorities for Highways schemes in their areas. Recent changes have been made to the governance and control of spending by the Local Highway Panels. In 2025/26 Panels are recommending deliverable schemes to be delivered which is supported by £4m of capital funding across the County.

Development Management

Managing the outcome of planning applications and associated roads for adoption by the authority



Economic growth and the need for more housing stock in Essex brings pressures on the local road network and growth in the highway estate road system. Essex Highways' Development Management team is responsible for delivering the design and construction of all works on the public highway and areas for adoption on behalf of ECC. The team has a key part to play in supporting the economic and social prosperity with our work in facilitating development.

It works with colleagues in Strategic Development and the planning authority to consider planning applications. It ensures that any new assets are constructed to a standard suitable for adoption and maintainable by ECC. Each adoption means an increase in assets that the team is responsible for that is not mirrored by increased budgets. This results in increased risk to the network serviceability and requires careful management.

The team has its own regional forum where all our fees are regularly benchmarked. Essex continues to be the County at the cutting edge of working with developers to introduce their developments in a manner that is mindful of the additional pressure these new assets create. Across all of Design Services, it holds a cross contract Design Forum

where the team promotes national bench marking and share expertise across the contracts.

The team is presently involved in approximately 1600 developments across the county which vary in size, from minor developments to the infrastructure for major sites of 3000+ homes, such as Beaulieu in north Chelmsford.

The expectation for the coming year is for sustained demand on our services and increasing workload. To respond to the challenge, we are improving our existing processes and we are working towards developing online interactive software which is targeted at developers providing information and application forms to speed up the process.

The team has a key part to play in supporting the economic and social prosperity with its work in facilitating development. Both the Development Management Team and the Design Teams introduce schemes which promote safe walking, cycling and passenger transport which contributes towards ensuring everything done supports the drive towards a greener Essex. Work on introducing disabled parking bays and pram crossings provides joined up, accessible services.

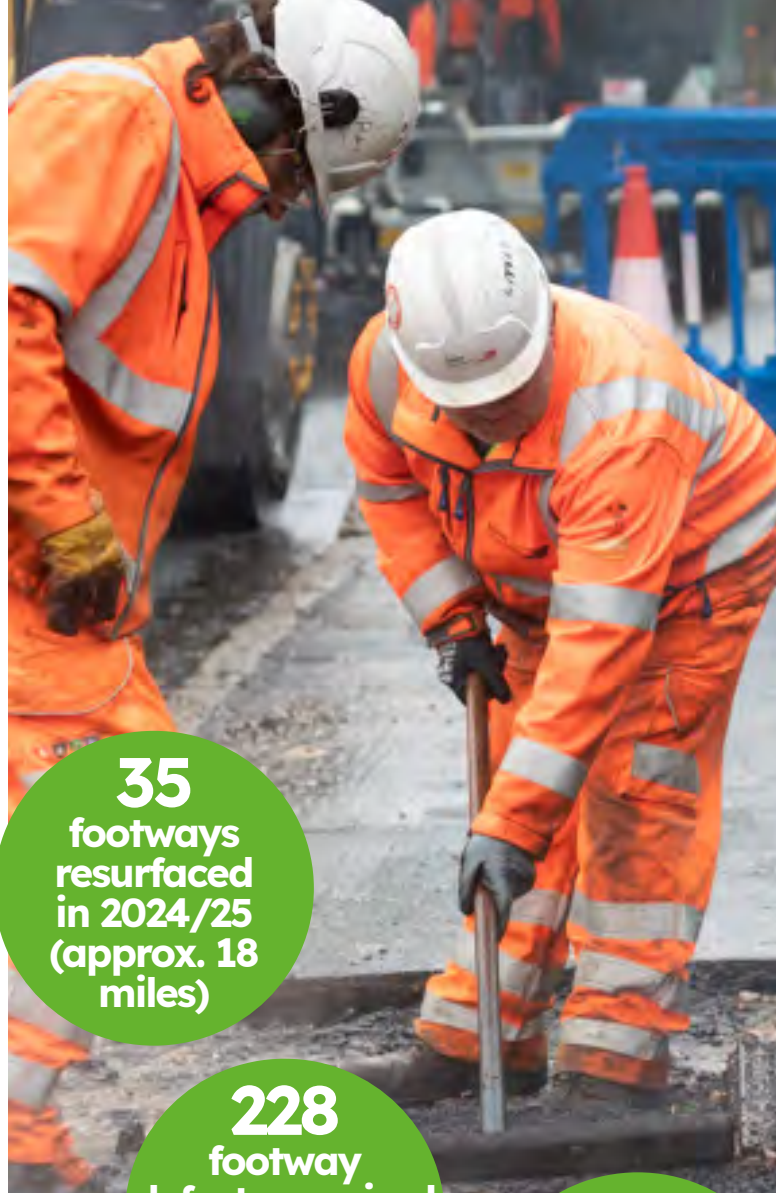
Footways

Essex Highway's strategy for footways is to improve the condition of these heavily used assets while maintaining the usability of the remaining network

Slurry sealing is a cost-effective preventative measure for footways which seals the surface from water ingress and provides a new texture. Pre-patching and other work delivered throughout the year enables slurry sealing works to happen during the optimum time of April-September (depending on weather) - adopting this activity in the later period of the year helps optimise delivery in the following year. Our aim is to always deliver all slurry work by the end of November.

For 2025/26, £1M is being made available specifically for cycleway improvements. These works will be delivered by the Construction Team alongside the Capital Footway programme.

The addition of funding for cycleway repairs is aligned to the Essex Highways Vision and Key Aims for enabling Safer, Greener and Healthier travel for current and future users of the transport network in Essex.



35
footways
resurfaced
in 2024/25
(approx. 18
miles)

228
footway
defects repaired
in 2024/25
(approx. 7
miles)

16,800m²
footway
repairs
expected for
2025/26



Horticulture

Verge cutting and weed control is an important aspect of keeping roads and footways safe for users

This service consists of highway verge cutting and weed control, based on the levels of available investment. During 2024-25, additional funding of £150k was deemed necessary due to extra work required to attend to fallen trees resulting from storm damage.

Roadside verges are cut to preserve sightlines and keep them clear of overhanging trees and shrubs, paying special attention to cutting down growth along our high-speed roads, which includes sections of the A13, a little of the A120, A130, A127, A1245 and A133.

Verge cutting usually involves a cut in Spring and again in Autumn, with most of the work completed overnight because the necessary traffic management, traffic lights and lane closures would otherwise cause congestion.

Around 40 miles of roadside verges in Essex are designated as 'Special Roadside Verges'. Essex Highways works with ECC Place Services, Essex Wildlife Trust

and other partners to manage these important locations to conserve wildflower and other native species living there. As a result we carefully schedule when these areas get cut to help encourage biodiversity. These are due to be cut in April 2025 and October 2025 (with one special verge scheduled to be cut in August 2025).

Other grass verges are cut in late spring and autumn to keep safety sightlines clear in Uttlesford, Tendring, Epping Forest and Colchester council areas, with other councils in Essex organising their own cutting on our behalf.

At the same time, the first application of weed control (of two annually) is done in Braintree, Colchester, Maldon and Uttlesford, with other areas following. Untreated weeds can have a detrimental impact to our network as

they can grow quickly, ultimately causing damage to drains, footways and road surfaces. Landowners and residents can help by making sure that they maintain their vegetation so it does not encroach on the road or footway to help with better visibility and safety for all road users and pedestrians.

As is our statutory obligation, our proactive approach to dealing with weeds and vegetation helps us to protect the asset and preserve its lifespan and represents better value for money for the residents of Essex in the long run because it helps to keep down maintenance costs.

**17,712 km
of weeds
treated in
2024/25
same number
expected
2025/26**

**6,696 km
of grass
verge cut
2024/25
same number
expected
2025/26**



Information Technology

The Information Technology (IT) team plays a key role in maintaining, supporting, and developing all areas of the business, acting as a single point of contact for all of Essex Highways' end user incidents, requests, and general communication

The IT team helps to protect the business's reputation, revenue, and brand by maintaining and developing its security technologies and providing targeted Security Awareness Training to Essex Highways users.

Through innovation, reporting and the implementation of new technologies, the team aims to help reduce business costs, improve business efficiency, profits, and opportunities. In the event of a disruption to service that is within the team's control, work to restore "normal service operation" as soon as possible is the norm. The team operates across three main functions:

Service Desk

As the main point of contact for most business users, the team ensures that all user incidents and requests are prioritised, actioned and, if necessary, escalated in a timely manner, using defined procedures. The team also works to improve user awareness of IT and security issues through online training, verbal education and Knowledge Base articles.

It also maintains the refresh programme for out of warranty laptop devices, all mobile devices which do not meet minimum OS requirements and is working constantly to implement improved automation so as to enable the business to raise new starter, leaver, and hardware requests more efficiently.

Infrastructure

The IT team proactively monitors, maintains and responds to network infrastructure alerts, while providing managed threat detection and remediation services to uncover and address malicious network penetration attempts. To support this work, the team educates and trains users in Security Awareness, using simulated phishing attacks and educational videos. The team ensures that the service's network infrastructure complies with ISO27001, the international standard for information security management.

Another aspect of the team's work is to explore opportunities with which to implement cloud-based solutions that help to further reduce the business's carbon footprint.

Applications

The team is developing the use of the Microsoft Power Platform to optimise the use of data within core systems in order to support strategic decision making. This is being achieved through:

- **Power BI:** Used to provide real time data insights and analytics, especially around carbon footprint and supply chain carbon impact.
- **Power Apps:** Used to consolidate disparate forms, digitise paper-based forms and streamline processes, improving the speed and accuracy of decision-making.



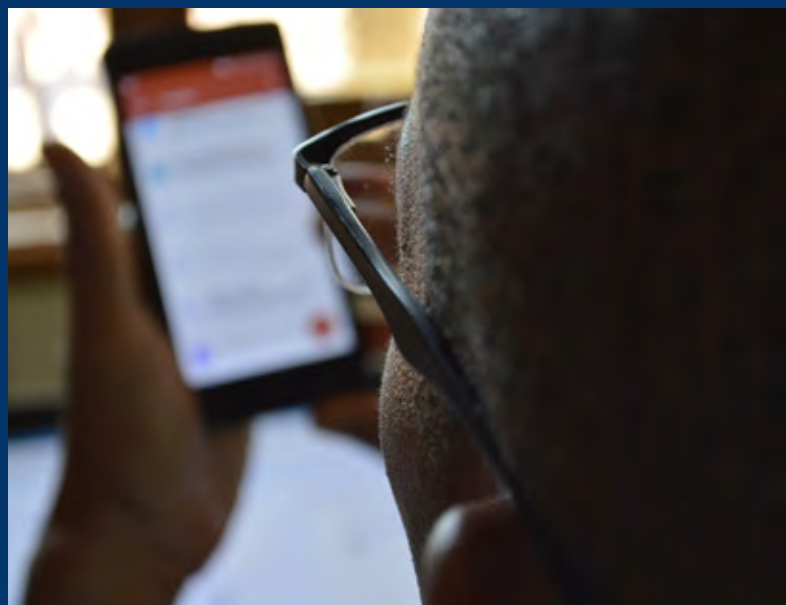
- **Power Automate:** Over the next 10 months the team will identify opportunities for the use of Robotic Process Automation (RPA) within the Contract, with a view to automating workflows and processes. This will help to free up time so that decision-makers can focus on higher-level strategic initiatives.

Work is also being carried out to develop Confirm dashboard reporting to make information easier to understand across all services and all levels, to help guide business decisions. Power Bi can be used to further enhance reporting out of Confirm and the team will be exploring how to best implement this.

Planned improved enhancements and upgrades to Confirm will be made by implementing the 2024 RJ Confirm Road Map. The team will also support the implementation of contract specific projects that require IT development.

As part of the 2025/26 objectives, Ringway Jacobs working collaboratively with Essex County Council will be developing the technology roadmap over the next 18 months. This will include infrastructure, business systems and service innovation through technology.

The IT team will continue to work with its strategic partners, including Microsoft and Brightly, to develop business systems including Confirm, Microsoft Dynamics 365, OpenAI and the PowerApps platform.



Local Highway Panels

LHPs make recommendations and set priorities for local highway schemes



Local Highway Panels (LHPs) exist in all 12 Boroughs, Cities and Districts and are responsible for making recommendations and setting priorities for highway schemes in their areas, meeting on quarterly basis. Each LHP submits its annual LHP programme to the Cabinet Member for Highway Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport and monitors the delivery of its annual programme.

The LHP ensures recommended schemes meet ECC policies, strategies and standards and have due regard to the advice from officers. LHPs also ensure that any schemes submitted not meeting ECC policies, strategies and standards are clearly identified as such but have been made on the basis that all LHP members present and voting at a meeting having considered all alternative measures. They also confirm that LHP schemes do not conflict with other known programmes of work including those funded by third parties.

LHP funding

The City/ Borough/District Councils and ECC may provide further funding to the LHP. Parishes, Districts, Boroughs and the City have the opportunity to pay for schemes identified via the Local Highway Panels in their entirety, applications for schemes are made in the same way however payment will be via the third-party process. If Parish Councils, District, Borough or City Councils would like to fund or part fund any schemes, applications

should be made via the Third Party process. Each year, LHPs will be allocated a sum by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport and make recommendations about the annual prioritised capital funded schemes. All scheme requests are then submitted by the County Member for that division.

Casualty Reduction Schemes

Casualty reduction schemes are prioritised annually by Essex Highways and funded separately to the LHP. Collisions are analysed over the previous three years (January to December). Before analysis can commence, the most recent annual collision data (Jan to Dec) must be signed off by the Department for Transport.

The collision analysis is undertaken across the County and sites are prioritised on the basis of those that can be effectively treated with engineering measures to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions.

The Cabinet Member for Highways Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport receives recommendations for Casualty Reduction schemes before the end of the calendar year and, once approved, these will be included in the next annual LHP programme or funded from other funding allocations.

Major Projects

The collaborative ECC / Ringway Jacobs Major Projects service finds itself at the front end of responding to the Government's investment strategy in housing, jobs, sustainable travel, carbon reduction and supporting transportation infrastructure.

Essex Highways (EH) continues to develop expertise to enable more effective delivery of improvement schemes, getting it right first time and making long term, sustainable improvements.

Major improvements to transport infrastructure are required to keep the Essex economy growing to its full potential. All of these are planned, developed designed and managed through construction to completion and opening.

The growth and breadth of service delivery over the years has enabled the development of a strong local team with extensive reach back to our shareholder, Jacobs, with its specialist support services and resource top ups across the UK and other parts of the world.

Monthly governance mechanisms to plan and manage this extensive and dynamic delivery programme are in place and operating well. A key part of this is the ongoing collaborative working between the Major Projects team, other

EH colleagues and ECC sponsors. In 2025/26 this will include the operations with the ECC Climate and Environment Service.

Our teams are able to rapidly compile credible funding bids for numerous funding sources including the recent Active Travel Fund (ATF), Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF), Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Major Road Network/Large Local Major (MRN / LLM), Pinch Point Fund etc.

During the past 13 years Essex Highways Major Projects teams have managed an increased demand for the service; wider industry shortage in resource; management of external influences to the delivery programme; constant adaptation to changing funding and government needs.

For 2025/2026 our focus will be on the managed reduction of the forward programme, assisting in the finding of new funding sources for future programmes

and supporting ECC on the new journey to the prospective local government reorganisation across Essex. The moving political scene with regards devolution and local government reorganisation will have an increasing impact on how our projects develop including their timelines which we will be operating within.

We will accommodate more activity in our project development to consider positive sustainability and carbon management outcomes with ECC colleagues.

With Ringway Jacobs' carbon management system in place and accreditation to the PAS2080 standard, we now have more capability to provide both initial and then follow through design abilities to help identify and then reduce carbon content in our projects. This is especially important for those projects funded by external bodies that require carbon management improvements as part of releasing funds to pay for projects.





The following major schemes were progressed/delivered:

- A127/A130 Fairglen Junction improvements: Detailed design completed, and contract tendered with goal of sign off in March 2025 ready for construction in 2025/26.
- ATF4 Construction Schemes: Harlow Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) 9 completed construction on site in Autumn 2024, whilst a number of Healthy School Streets were also completed.
- Beaulieu Park Station – continued successful construction on site.
- Colchester Rapid Transit System (RTS): Sections A and Section B completed, and Section C is on site with planned completion in summer 2025.

- Flood management projects – The growing workload with ECC Flood management Services has been a learning.
- Army and Navy junction, Chelmsford – design work continued and negotiated planning permission hurdles ready for completing detailed design and contract tender in 2025 subject to funds security.
- St Botolphs circus, Colchester, design now well into detailed design and goal to go to tender and construction in 2025.
- Dovercourt Public Realm: design going well in 2024 and goal of construction in Autumn 2025.

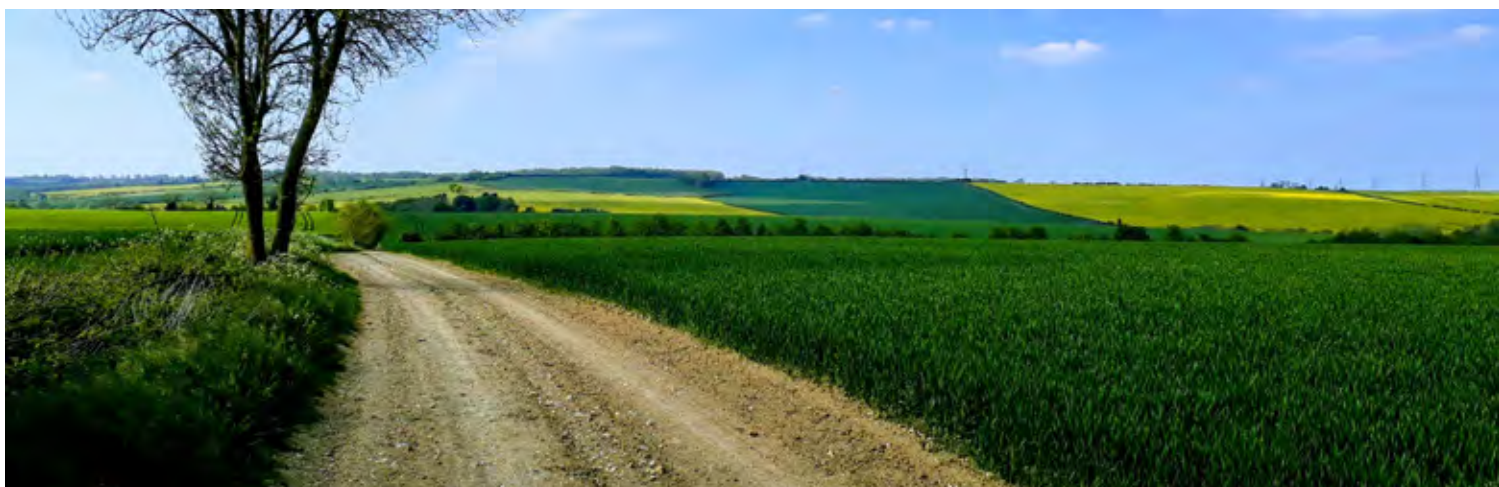
For 2025/26, more focus will be placed on reviewing existing projects, their cost estimates, Early Contractor engagement

across EH, to help ensure that the best value possible is being achieved, as well as how this will affect future projects and their cost estimates to manage expectations.

Project development from this year onwards will increasingly incorporate the principles of the Vision Zero goals to delivering a safer highway network for all users, especially the more vulnerable such as those walking and pedalling. As part of this the MPCM now takes more account of these needs and ideas to assisting improvements. Early design studies will look at existing patterns to see what mitigations can be woven into project ideas. Then with more detailed design outputs what safer systems measures can help create safer spaces and routes.

Public Rights of Way

The management and maintenance of 4000 miles of Public Rights of Way throughout the County which comprise footpaths, bridleways and byways to provide unimpeded access for permitted users



The Public Rights of Way (PRoW) team delivers inspections of the PRoW network, as well as programming and managing works on the ground. Additionally, it is responsible for the engagement and management of volunteers. Inspections of the PRoW network are undertaken in accordance with the Maintenance and Inspections Strategy for PRoW.

The team has implemented and embedded the first countywide model of the PRoW network hierarchy. This has enabled a targeted approach across all PRoW activities on the network and informed a Rights of Way Improvement Plan Review.

This statutory document (updated every 10 years), also captured other initiatives, including the Byway policy and an updated version of the Developer and Public Rights of Way Guide which affords greater protection for PRoW in the development process, as well as guidance on new PRoW creation.

Public Path Orders (PPOs) are required when it is necessary to create or divert paths as a result of road or drainage improvements, housing developments and following requests from landowners. PPOs are published to advertise and inform the public to ensure that the views of all interested parties are considered. Orders are split into two types, those made under the Highways Act (HA) and those that the team makes on behalf of the planning authorities under the Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA).

HA Orders are charged against a framework with a basic set fee but there is an extra charge for additional add-ons. Essentially this means that the more PRoW are affected by an order proposal, the greater the cost. Extra plans or orders associated with a PPO scheme are cost recoverable accordingly. TCPA Orders do not have a set fee and officer time

and costs such as advertising are recouped, but they are sealed by the legal department of the relevant authority. The work is quite complex as there are over 115 elements to complete when making an order and they can take months to process. Over the last six years the team has processed an average of 120 annually.

Some parish councils choose to maintain sections of their network themselves and this is managed through the Parish Path Partnership (P3) which comprises 39 parishes and 17 community groups (in addition to the volunteers working in the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty - AONB).

Under the Headland Management scheme, more than 75 landowners maintain sections of PRoW on behalf of ECC. Our team also manages the Essex Local Access Forum (ELAF) and undertakes Land Searches connected with house sales and purchases. The responsibility of maintaining the Definitive Map and Highway Records (which officially records the extent of highway ownership and any changes that have occurred) also falls within our remit.

The PRoW Inspection team ensures that routes are accessible through regular, walked surveys and takes enforcement action when routes have been obstructed inadvertently or otherwise. Several long-standing enforcement cases were progressed last year. In 2025/26, a small number (usually 3-4 depending on complexity and other ongoing cases) of cases will be identified to proactively address.

The team will continue to ensure improved PRoW reinstatement compliance by farmers and work with The Essex Area Ramblers on a number of cases which have been identified as high priority by their membership.



Red and Green Claims

Red Claims are claims by third parties against the Authority arising out of the condition of its Network or the performance of the Service provider.

Green Claims are claims by the Authority against third parties for damage to the assets of the Authority within its Network and highway boundaries

Red Claims

All personal injury claims are handled by specialist members of the team with extensive experience in dealing with all aspects of Red Claims, including (but not limited to) liability investigations (under s.41 & s.58 Highways Act 1980), statute and common law reviews, personal injury assessments, quantum assessments, costs calculations. The team has capacity to reach back to insurers on complex matters.

Through co-operative working, the team is able to provide clear guidance and advice on all aspects of highway claims including, but not limited to, the provision of pro forma witness statements, case law reviews and claims defensibility training.

The successful defence of claims relies on the timely completion of Safety Inspections and repairs backed up by substantive documentary evidence such as decision criteria regarding intervention levels, measurement details and photos.

The Red Claims Officer from the Essex Highways legal team, who is fully conversant with Highway Inspection policies of all contracts, is used to provide testimony and advice in court on the Risk-Based Approach for Highway Maintenance, explaining how the risks are calculated in order to

ensure the most appropriate risk rating for the network. The regular training of staff takes place within the legal team through external courses, job shadowing and secondments.

Monthly Claims meetings are held with the Essex Highways Head of Legal/Red Claims Officer and ECC Insurance team to discuss issues arising in claim defences.

Green Claims

Through training and the establishment of 'good claims practice' we have significantly improved the collection of culprit data, enabling us to maximise recovery of costs for damage caused to network infrastructure.

The income that ECC receives from third parties is for the recovery of the costs incurred by the service in repairing the damage to the network assets.

Green Claims are notified through various data sources, with the vast majority coming through the CONFIRM asset management system. Automated notification from CONFIRM lands in individual and team inboxes which are monitored daily. These are enquiries that come directly to us from members of the public.

Continual analysis and monitoring is undertaken to ensure that recoverable incidents are successfully seen through to

completion and that greater analysis is undertaken of non-recoverable incidents, so as to identify any trends or re-occurring locations where a different design or solution may be required.

The main challenge is the funding for non-recoverable incidents as more of these occur than monies received. Often, costs must be passed back to the revenue task orders to fund, adding pressure on what can be delivered.

The Green Claims team has been given a change in focus / direction by its new Senior Claims Manager – focus areas include pro-actively chasing down aged debt, building costs differently to maximise revenue and to negotiate harder and more effectively with insurers and loss adjusters.

The Green Claims team uses data and analytics to drive processes and strategy as it moves through 2025/2026. It is collaborating closely with internal Service Areas and Supply Chain Partners to ensure that a more effective service is delivered, while closer Collaboration with ECC colleagues is also taking place regarding revenue recovered versus current financial targets.

Finally, the team is proactively encouraging other Essex Highways internal Service Teams to contribute to the 'Green Claims journey'.

Roads

Effective asset management of roads and footways leads to a safe, accessible, serviceable and sustainable highway network - vital for providing access to key services such as employment, healthcare, education, social services, sports and leisure

£12m extra funding for the county's roads, footways pavements and potholes was announced in February as part of Essex County Council's 2025/26 budget. The £12 million was allocated across different areas, including over £8 million for additional crews for each borough, city and district, prioritising repairs raised by local councillors (see page 17).

To maximise the cost-effectiveness of available budget and other investment, our asset-led maintenance strategy ensures that informed evidence-based decisions are made on the maintenance of all highway assets, giving the benefits of long-term planned works. Investment in road and footpath maintenance is delivered at carefully planned intervals over the lifecycle of each route.

The Technical Working Group (TWG), a joint body within the partnership, reviews and updates current specifications, materials, technologies and

treatment options across all service areas in support of delivering value for money.

In addition, the frequency of inspections is determined by the Essex Highway Maintenance Strategy with Primary Route roads; PR1 inspected monthly and PR2 roads inspected quarterly and Local Roads inspected annually. This equates to approximately 2,000 km of road length inspected in any given month. See more about Inspections on page 21 for further detail about how we are improving this service.

For 2025/26 the strategic direction continues with the strategy of maintaining the county routes subject to funding while focusing capital funding on residential areas to target those areas in deteriorated condition in addition to addressing residents' concerns, helped in part by works undertaken by the Priority One scheme (see page 16) and Member's Highway Initiative (see page 17).



Road Drainage

Essex Highways has a clear plan for prioritising the work to reduce preventable flooding incidents on our roads



There are 311,235 gully assets on the network including:

Gullies - to remove surface water from the highway.

Slotted and grilled drainage channels - more discreet types of gully to remove surface water.

Catchpits - chambers with an inlet pipe and an outlet pipe, allowing sediment to collect by removing it from the flow of water.

Manholes - inspection chambers for maintenance work.

The key objectives, drivers, and goals for this area of the service in 2025/26 are:

- To maintain the condition of the highway drainage assets to provide, as far as is reasonably practicable and affordable, a flood free highway and to ensure a safe network for road users in Essex.
- Continue to develop asset condition data.
- Contribute to a reduction in loss of control incidents resulting from standing water.
- Increase opportunities for the Highway Authority to successfully provide a robust defence for flood related insurance claims.
- Extend the life of the

highway asset by reducing the likelihood of standing water adversely affecting the condition of the infrastructure.

- Increase the positive public perception of the service.
- Maintain the condition of the individual drainage assets so that silt levels do not pass into and cause blockages in main pipe runs which require expensive jetting operations to cleanse.

All cleansing data is captured in Map16 and updated during the routine cleansing operation. Defects identified during the cleansing operation are transferred from Map 16 into Confirm in readiness for high pressure jetting or civil engineering solutions to be prioritised and implemented subject to funding.

The delivery of ad hoc drainage cleansing and jetting works required in response to specific weather events, e.g., flooding, and drainage assets in connection with other work projects is not included within the main service plan. However, the works and associated data are collected and mapped in Map 16.

The Map 16 system enables previous years' cleansing history to be imported into the system and for new cleansing data to be collected. This helps enable a risk-based, prioritised cleansing of the PR network managed.

The management of drainage systems has been strengthened by using the link between the cyclical highway drainage cleansing approach and the ECC's Flood Management information. Electronic information on all drainage assets is captured along with data from incidents and inspections to support a more intelligent approach to maintenance.

The routine gully cleansing programme provides for the cleansing of the following types of drainage assets on the Essex network and includes recording the asset's location and its condition in Confirm:

- Road gully cleansing of all types
- Footway gully cleansing
- Catchpits / manholes
- Slotted and grilled drainage channel.

The cleansing activity for drainage assets is limited to the gully, catchpit and manholes and their immediate connection - cleansing of the main pipe runs are not included. Asset condition data is collected for each gully, catchpit, manhole and comprises the location, time of cleanse, detritus/silt level measure and accessibility. For 2025/26 as in previous years, Essex Highways has highlighted the need to maximise attendance to applicable assets, so as to support planned delivery.

This means that all assets on the PR1 and PR2 network are cleansed at least once per year over a two-year cycle. Assets on the Local Road networks will be programmed for cleansing on a district-by-district basis.

There will be additional cleanses at known vulnerable locations/ flood hot spots i.e., Canvey Island and areas within Essex County Councils approved Flood Management Plans etc.

New gully vehicles (pictured below), have helped us continue to provide a significant improvement on the reliability of the fleet.

The approach for this year will be to undertake cleansing on:

- A127 – complete cleanse of all assets in Lane 1 and Lane 2 and the on and off slips and associated junction layouts (7 junctions in total).
- A13 – complete cleanse of all assets on this part of the network.
- PR network - once per annum risk-based network.
- PR network – Year 2 of the alternate years risk-based network.
- Local Roads in Chelmsford and Uttlesford

Surface Water Alleviation Schemes (SWAS) are projects to improve highways drainage systems. These can involve the replacement of pipes or implementing new drainage assets.

The Asset Management team ranks proposed SWAS schemes by risk assessment and high priority SWAS schemes are scheduled to be delivered by a capital funded programme in 2025/26. An extensive network of watercourses and ditches forms an important part of flood risk management.

As more intense and heavy rainfall events are experienced, the significance of maintaining the capacity of these local drainage systems has never been greater.

Finally, Essex has suffered hundreds of gully cover thefts over the last few years, sometimes in large numbers, leaving the service with a huge task in making safe and scheduling repairs. The high price of metal has led to thieves stealing the covers and selling them to scrap merchants.

We can't simply replace the cover itself, as each cover sits within its own frame. In many cases, the frames are very old and finding a matching product is not possible. Replacement gullies and frames are not easy to source, particularly given the problems in national and global supply chains.

Replacing both the cover and frame is time consuming and costly to the taxpayer – around £1,000 per lost cover/frame depending on location - and can be more where concrete roads are involved mainly due to excavation.



Road Safety

To ensure people enjoy safe travel on our highways with the key aim to reduce ‘Killed and Serious Injuries’ (KSIs) towards the vision of zero deaths and serious injuries

The Road Safety team delivers Essex Highways’ contribution to the Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP) delivery plan, to achieve its “Vision Zero” goal, improving safety on the roads through the provision of training courses, education, enforcement and publicity and community engagement activities.

The team aims to embed and support the Safe System approach across Essex Highways and Essex County Council to elevate the priority given to safety and the reduction of risk for all road users in every scheme and element of work that changes the highway network in Essex.

The team is working to ensure that other teams not currently aware of their role in reducing risk on the roads become aware of the safe system approach and start to develop plans to eliminate risk.

ECC and EH, as part of SERP, have committed to Vision Zero - to achieve zero deaths and serious injuries on Essex roads by 2040: with an interim target of halving deaths and serious injuries to 355 or fewer by 2030.

This challenging ambition necessitates a rethink of road safety, based around the development of a transportation system that provides layers of protection for the user; accepting that users make mistakes, known as the Safe System approach (see diagram).

Road Safety focus will be on the delivery of certain EH activities including:

- The delivery of National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme (NDORS) courses on behalf of Essex Police (administered through a team of 13 staff.)
- The organisation and delivery of multi-partner Vision Zero engagement days, of which approximately 11 will be in Essex and which will include School Speed Watch activity and Community Speed



Diagram 1: THE SAFE SYSTEM APPROACH



Watch groups wherever possible and further targetted days of engagement delivered by the EH team.

- Training and support to Community Speed Watch groups which may include Speed enforcement by EH staff with delegated powers from the Chief Constable.
- Engagement with Essex businesses in association with other ECC teams engaging with businesses.
- Promotion, delivery, and evaluation of Driving with Confidence courses delivered free for drivers aged 70 years and above.
- Support for development of campaigns and provision of face-to-face delivery of campaign messages to appropriate audiences.
- Parent and reception-age child walks offered to 200 schools.
- Road safety training offered to 400 Year 5 children in Essex primary schools.
- Provision of targeted messages through Theatre in Education and workshops to 32000 year 7, 9 and 11 students.
- Review, delivery and evaluation of uptake and outcome of new digital Road Star to year 12 students offered to all schools.

- Development of web-based resources for teachers, parents, businesses etc. to facilitate self-delivery if desired.
- Development and evaluation of digital resources for Early Years providers (nursery schools etc.)

Through being a member of SERP, EH also benefits from the delivery of road safety activities by other partners.

These include motorcycle training including 'first on scene' training, targeted safety campaigns and materials such as magazines, young driver engagement and training, engagement with groups such as those not in employment, education or training, Community Speed Watch, Extra Eyes, additional SERP funded roads policing and improvements in post collision response through the attendance of the Essex & Herts Air Ambulance Trust helicopter or car.

Additionally, the operation and maintenance of all approved safety camera housings provided by EH is funded by SERP. EH has some direct responsibilities for delivering the 'Safe roads and roadsides' element of the safer systems

approach outlined in the SERP's Vision Zero Strategy.

SERP has facilitated an International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP) of sections of the A127 and A414 as a means of understanding risk reduction approaches and the programme's star rating system. The iRAP approach has been used to prepare a bid for funding for a scheme for A104 and will be used to prepare a scheme for A113 this year.

Further work on Safety Performance Indicators (SPIs) is required at a national level and the SERP Partnership Manager is on the national development group. Further options to integrate the Safe System approach in all schemes designed and delivered by EH will be explored and developed to understand the responsibilities and options for delivery.

The Safe System approach needs to be integrated with, and complement, other strategic goals and requirements such as Safer, Greener, Healthier, and wider ECC objectives such as addressing climate change and the economy if EH is to deliver a common vision, working collaboratively, seamlessly and with integrity and transparency.



Street Lighting

The provision of cost effective and efficient lighting for the safety of users of the roads, footways and cycleways

There are approximately 132,000 lighting columns, 12,000 illuminated signs and 5,600 bollards on the network. We repaired 14,904 faults on streetlights in 2024/25 and a similar number of repairs is expected in 2025/26.

Our aim is to keep these assets in a safe and serviceable condition, to maximise their service life and reduce ongoing energy usage and reactive maintenance costs. Street lighting assets have a high maintenance cost and energy expenditure. The Streetlighting team is responsible for lighting design, asset management, maintenance, supervision, software and data management, programme management and electrical engineering

ECC budgets include a significant amount for revenue maintenance and energy on an annual basis. Not only is this costly to Essex but it is unsustainable for the environment and street lighting contributes £150,000 pa on carbon taxes.

This is why we started to change all our lights to LED in 2015/16. LED lights are more sustainable and offer better value for money. We will also have better control over the brightness of the new units, so that they can be dimmed depending upon the surroundings.

Phase 3 of the LED replacement scheme was completed in 2019 and comprised more than 23,000 units. These will help reduce energy consumption and maintenance cost savings over the next 20 years as the lamps having a longer design life. The final part of the programme, LED Phase 4, commenced in mid-May of 2021/22 with works taking place in Chelmsford, Basildon, Colchester and Tending, which saw crews replacing the first of the remaining 82,000 old-style streetlights ECC operates. In 2022/23 work was carried out in Colchester, Tending, Braintree, Epping and Castle Point.

Works in 2021/22 and 2022/23 resulted in a reduction in energy and carbon of 74% of the units replaced - over 500 tonnes. By the end of 2022, we had upgraded a total of 40,325 luminaires (37,000 units through the main programme and 3,000 units through maintenance activities).

Wednesday 26 April 2023 marked a major milestone in our LED streetlight replacement programme with the installation of the 100,000th unit in Bracken Drive, Chigwell. Reaching this important milestone was particularly gratifying as LED Phase 4 of the programme was significantly impacted by the global shortage of components for the telecells that are used to control the streetlights.

**100% of
our network
was converted
to LED at
end 2024/25**

LED lights bring many benefits for both residents and the environment as they save on average around 75% energy usage and 1700 tons of carbon emissions involved in generating electricity.

The replacement will also mean a better service and more effective use of taxpayer's money, as the LEDs are expected to last 20 years, whereas 20% of all sodium lamps fail after four years and must be replaced.

Elsewhere, Cable faults are becoming a far bigger part of our ongoing maintenance. Our cable fault crews will identify cables which have reached the end of their design life and, by analysis of the test results, will then overlay

cables, replacing the cable between two access points. The new cable will be recorded on the management system (Mayrise) and on the AMP system by our sub-contractor ET Limited, a legal requirement under Highways Authorities and Utilities Committee Code of Practice For Recording Of Underground Apparatus In Streets.

To further comply with the above, in 2023/24 we began to identify the private cable network that is owned by ECC.

This involved identifying the 28,000 private connection (access) points and the associated connecting cables, to ascertain those owned by ECC or others and, additionally,

how many of these require replacement. In 2023/24 4759 units were inspected in Basildon. In 2024/25 - 3712 units were inspected in Harlow/Tendring. There are approximately 6620 cable inspections remaining, approximately half of which, 3206, are planned to completed this year and the balance in 2026/27 which will complete this programme.

There is £140K budget to spend on cable relays this year under T10 which we hope will equate to 10-15 sites being upgraded throughout Essex. Anything outside of this is maintained by our maintenance teams who investigate and repair faults on an ad hoc basis.



**16,238
streetlighting
units repaired
in 2024/25
22% reduction
thanks to LED
replacement
programme**



Streetworks

Management and permitting of all road works on the highway and co-ordination of works to minimise disruption to the travelling public while maintaining safety

More than
110,000
permit
applications
expected
2025/26



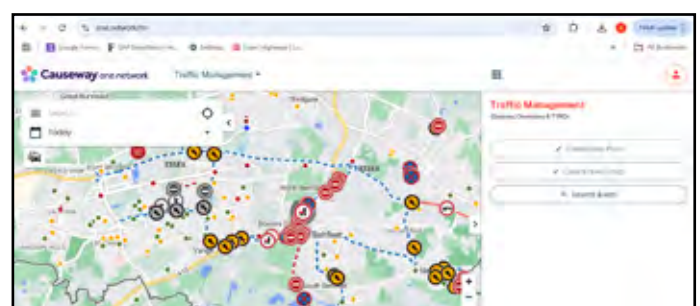
The Street works team is responsible for the management and permitting of all road works on the Essex Highways network. Through the ECC Permit Scheme, the team co-ordinates works to minimise disruption to the travelling public while maintaining safety.

This is demonstrated through low levels of granted permits and through congestion levels around works being reduced as far as possible. The team ensures that works are carried out to the appropriate safety standards, measured through numbers of failed safety inspections and is dependent upon compliance of all works promoters. Some of the Key tasks and outcomes are:

- Working closely with each utility in Essex to send a seamless message.
- Holding monthly meetings with all Utilities to maintain pressure on all contractors to maintain quality of works.
- Aim to check 95% of all completed works and defect accordingly.

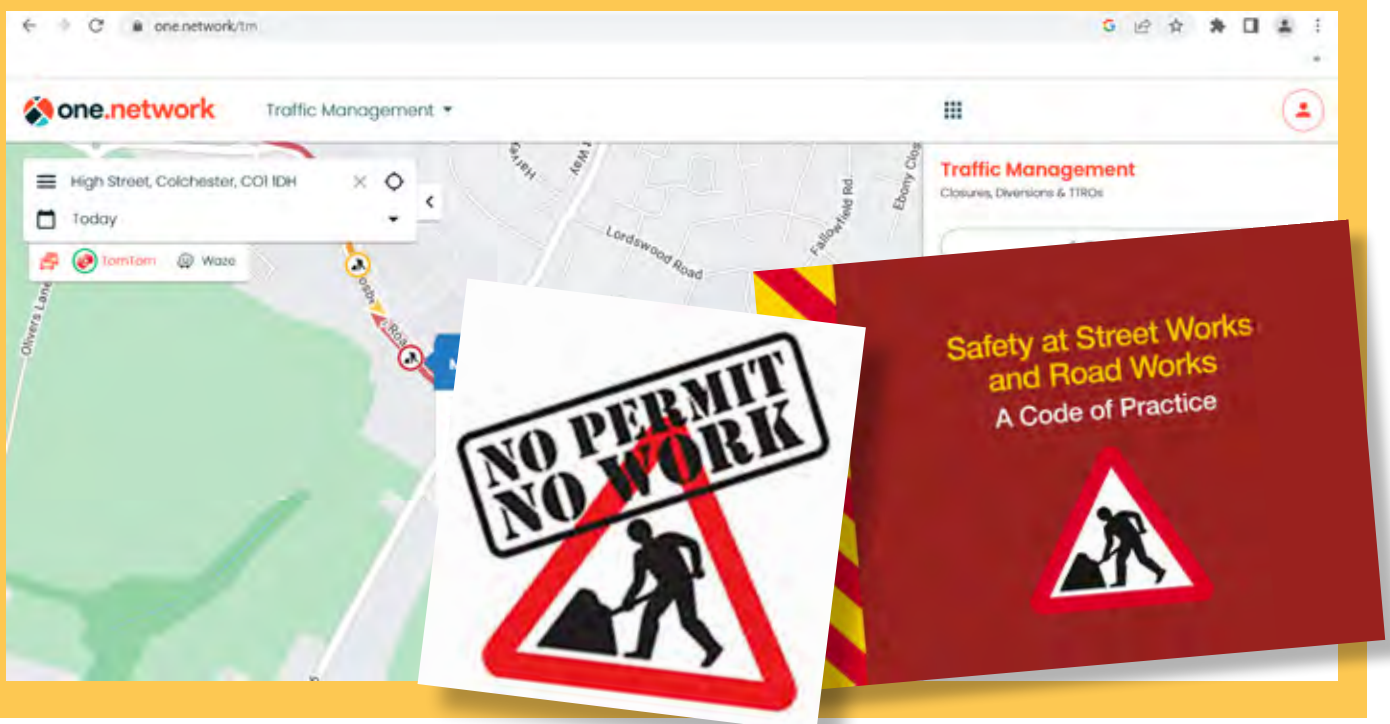
Where works promoters are failing to maintain standards, the new Streetworks legislation enables the team to increase sample numbers (inspections) for underperforming utilities. These will not be reduced until they can demonstrate improved and satisfactory performance.

The Streetworks team also utilises opportunities through enhancements of one.network, using it to its fullest, with the objective of providing enhanced information to the public and more efficient processes for the organisation.



Streetworks key tasks 2025/26

- **Operating the ECC Permit Scheme – 115,000+ applications are expected to be processed in 2024/2025 with increases expected due to the further acceleration of the broadband rollout.**
- **Deliver a programme of inspections - 10 % category A & B inspections and 30% category C inspections of road works equating to 46,000 sites being inspected in 2024/2025. Of these a minimum of 11000 will be funded by utilities (£50 per inspection – as defined in legislation)**
- **Deliver a programme of coring of reinstatements that will further protect our asset – approx. 200 cores every four months (600 cores per annum) total cost pa £28,000. It is anticipated that this will be a cost neutral service.**
- **Respond to requests for Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs) to facilitate road works and schemes. A total of 3,304 temporary orders were processed in 2023/2024 comprising 1,952 TTROs and 1,352 Temporary Traffic Regulation Notices (TTRNs). It is anticipated that the total of TTROs/TTRNs processed in 2025/26 will be similar to 2023/24.**
- **Undertake skip and scaffold inspections – in 2023/24 the number of skip licences and scaffold licences assessed was 1,138. We anticipate this will be similar in 2025/26.**
- **The processing and issuing of all invoices served relating to Street Works (including TTRO invoices as each one has a separate invoice) -in 2023/24 was 3,742. We estimate this to be similar in 2025/26.**
- **The Identification and serving of all relevant Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) for 2023/24 - 158 'working without a permit'; 2,188 breach of conditions, 1,179 'late registrations' failure to register within 10 working days, and 2,189 'late start/late stop' failure to submit notice within 2 hours. A total of 5,714 FPNs, with similar anticipated for 2025/26.**
- **Deliver the Utility Service drawings enquiry service – approx. 12,000 enquiries pa.**
- **Implement and embed a strong performance ethos within the team, driving improvement in utilities performance through accurate targeted inspections and the levying of correct penalties.**
- **Investigate and produce a feasibility cost/benefit report on the option for a lane rental scheme in Essex regarding a joint scheme with Suffolk CC.**
- **Implement better monitoring processes of all work streams to drive efficiencies**
- **The Power BI reporting dashboard is now being used to monitor and drive better performance of both the utilities and staff.**
- **Through better data individual training programs will be developed and implemented.**
- **Work with providers to ensure that the national programme of the rollout of super and ultra-fast broadband over the coming years can be supported in Essex, minimising disruption, and protecting the highway asset**
- **Section 58 protection has now been added to any works meeting the criteria set by DfT.**



Traffic Management

The provision of efficient Traffic Management for the safety of users of the roads, footways and cycleways

The Network and Safety function delivers the Network Management Duty of the Traffic Management Act supporting the safe and efficient movement of people and goods around and through the county.

The Network Operations team is responsible for the real-time management of incidents and events, along with planning and agreeing traffic management requirements for events.

The Essex Traffic Control Centre (ETCC) plays a pivotal role in maintaining access to the road network broadcasting information to road users via many sources. The ETCC has a wide range of deliverables.

It responds to incidents and congestion/delays on the road network, working with all relevant agencies by taking action to control traffic to ease or manage congestion or closure and maintaining contact with the travelling public within operational parameters.

Working with the Intelligent Traffic Systems (ITS) team, the ETCC develops and implements new systems and controls. The team liaises with promoters of major schemes (both internal and external) to ensure that Variable Message Signs (VMS) and other media forms are used to advise travellers of planned works.

Using a variety of media both at the roadside and remotely, the ETCC communicates live network performance.

'X' is also used (approx. 55,656 followers) as a further way to communicate.

As a proactive member, the ETCC attends Safety Advisory Groups (or other meetings regarding events) across Essex to form links with borough/city/district councils and external event organisers, to support the management of events locally, ensuring they are run safely, minimising the impact on the road network.

These range from small charity events such as local village fêtes to nationally significant ones such as the Tendring Motor Rally or any network management requirements that may be needed.

The ETCC also Provides Network Operations intelligence/insight regarding new schemes on the network and their potential impact/benefit/dis-benefit to its operation, supported by the knowledge gained through the ETCC on the daily operation and performance of the network.

Updating of the **one.network** website following liaison with all district/borough, city councils and external event organisers is another of the team's responsibilities, ensuring a coordinated approach is in place for all activities and arranged on the network. This includes events and road closures.

96 events were added in 2024/25 including many requiring Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders for closures and other restrictions to be put in place to manage the network.

262 events were communicated to us by local borough/city/district Councils using Town & Police Clauses Acts (T&PCAs) to close roads for local events.

Team representatives attend national and regional “enforcement” user group meetings to maintain knowledge and influence the national agenda, particularly around issues of concern in Essex. There is typically one regional meeting every six months and one national meeting every six months. Essex Highways Chairs the national user group.

The ETCC continues discussions with Thurrock Council (and others where opportunities arise) to establish an agreement for Essex

Highways to undertake Bus Lane Enforcement on their behalf.

The team supports the two Parking Partnerships in Essex, providing policy guidance and attends approx. 20 meetings annually (providing support and briefings for the Cabinet Member as required).

Work with both Parking Partnerships is also undertaken on defined ECC transformation projects devised to generate income, such as additional paid on-street parking.

The ETCC also attends the Regional and National Traffic Managers Forums, and is Chair of the regional group. (Quarterly meetings for each).

Finally, the ETCC leads within Essex Highways on Smart Technology, contributing to the technology forum, projects identified, bidding opportunities etc.; supporting delivery of the projects identified in the Essex Highways Innovations Tracker and the ECC Technology Strategy for Transport.



Duke Street, Chelmsford





The deliverables of this team for 2025/26 are: -

- Respond to incidents/congestion/delays on the road network, working with all relevant agencies to control traffic, ease or manage congestion or closure and maintain contact with the travelling public within operational parameters; use hot/cold debrief processes with agencies to learn from incidents to better manage future situations.
- Work with the Permit team to pre-empt the impact of planned and emergency work that occurs on the network, taking appropriate action when necessary; make use of tools available via **one.network** such as “Replay” as a debrief to understand how delays develop, to help improve future roadworks, events and other activities.
- Through day-to-day monitoring of the road network, we will identify sites that have regular congestion/delays. Where these are Intelligent Traffic System (ITS) sites, we will work with the ITS team to develop control strategies to manage/alleviate these delays where possible.
- Liaise with promoters of major schemes (both internal and external) to ensure that Variable Message Signs (VMS) and other media forms are used to advise travellers of planned works.
- Use a variety of media both at the roadside and remotely (including social media) to communicate live information on network performance.
- Attend Safety Advisory Groups (or other meetings regarding events) across Essex to form links with borough/city/district councils and external event organisers to support the management of events ensuring they are run safely, minimising the impact on the road network. Implement agreed ECC charges for advice where agreed and applicable. Manage between 50 to 150 events.
- Provide Network Operations intelligence/insight regarding new schemes on the network and their potential impact/benefit/supported by ETCC knowledge of daily operation and performance of the network.
- Actively use and develop **one.network**, inputting events, road closures etc. Use the functionality of **one.network** to increase knowledge of the road network and continuously improve the management of events and response to incidents.
- Manage the bus lane enforcement process and provide advice and guidance on the proposed enforcement of other bus lanes/gates (predicted total of approx. 90,000 issued in 2023/24. 21 enforcement cameras are currently installed and operational. This was predicted to rise to 23 by the end of 2025.
- Continually monitor resource requirements to ensure the most efficient cost neutral processing of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) is achieved.
- Attend national and regional “enforcement” user group meetings to maintain knowledge and influence the national agenda, particularly around issues of concern in Essex. (One regional meeting every six months; One national meeting every six months – Essex Highways acts as Chair to these user groups.
- Work with ECC in offering advice and guidance regarding the requirements for future enforcement of existing or new bus lanes/gates.
- Support the two Parking Partnerships, providing policy guidance, and attending approx. 20 meetings annually (providing support and briefings for the Cabinet Member as required).
- Work with both Parking Partnerships on defined ECC transformation projects to generate income, such as additional paid on-street parking.
- Attend Regional and National Traffic Managers Forums as Chair of the regional group. (Quarterly meetings for each).

Winter Safety

Aiming to keep roads, as far as reasonably practicable, free from ice and snow, for the safe and expedient movement of the travelling public

The Winter service period in Essex is between late October to early April, using 55 salt-spreading vehicles to treat approximately 2008 miles of roads. The salting network can be viewed on the ECC website.

Winter service will commence on Monday 20 October 2025 until Monday 6 April 2026, with a 24-week standby for drivers on a two-week rota delivering up to 49 routes, plus two mini treatment routes. Double shifting over the Christmas and New Year period provides resilience to delivery.

Our vehicles deliver a mix of rock salt and brine solution which improves the adherence of the treated salt to the road surface and depending upon circumstances, e.g. weather, this averages at approximately 70% pre-wet'. In severe weather or heavy snowfall, delivery is adjusted

accordingly and any significant build-up of snow addressed by ploughing.

Essex has ten weather stations located at strategic locations around the county combined with specialist road surface forecasters who determine the weather and its likely effects across all parts of the county network. The replacement of a winter weather station will be identified in line with our cyclical replacement plan, and a couple of locations are currently under consideration.

The successful introduction of route-based forecasting three years ago has allowed us to appropriately focus our attentions on the network where the need is greatest.

The accuracy of the Meteo Group route-based forecasting (RBF) tool is currently being validated which should provide EH with a greater

awareness of the cold and hotspot areas of the network. The aim of this is to allow a reduction in potential salt usage by focusing on specific routes. The data is subject to ongoing analysis.

Town Councils, Parish Councils and un-parished urban areas are invited to sign up to the Salt Bag Partnership prior to the winter season where the delivery of one-tonne of bagged salt is provided to help treat local areas. The scheme also covers urban un-parished wards. We are very grateful to our network of many farmers who are prepared to plough local roads when required, following snow fall.

It costs in the region of £1.7m to prepare and provide the resources required to be able to respond to the weather conditions. The average cost of treating the network is £2.7m but this is dependent upon the weather.

**136,045
miles of
network
gritted during
2024/25**



We trialled consolidating 10 of our quickest routes into five longer routes for that year's winter season, seeing how long these new routes would take to treat. Most of them were not too long over our targeted three-hour treatment time, from depot gate to depot gate.

By implementing these changes we realised a permanent saving of five treatment lorries, five associated LGV drivers (staff that we have traditionally found challenging to recruit in some parts of Essex) along with the associated costs in vehicle maintenance and fuel savings.

We optimise all our routes using in-house Geographic Information System analysis and the Exactrak

navigation system so as to transfer some roads on longer routes to adjacent shorter routes, thereby levelling up the distances driven, resulting in treatments being delivered more evenly across our treatment routes.

This optimisation exercise showed that we could treat almost the same network within a three-hour treatment time but using eight fewer treatment lorries. We also significantly reduced the 'dead running' distance.

In 2023/24, we took this exercise a stage further around the Colchester area making a reduction of two more treatment lorries and LGV drivers. The outcome of this transformation work over the last three winter

seasons is that we have reduced the number of treatment routes from 57 routes to 49. This has realised a significant saving of approximately £250K during a typical Essex winter season.

The maximum time taken to treat the network is the same, the vehicles can still treat all the network without running out of salt and the treated network length is almost the same as in previous seasons.

This is an excellent example of the transformation programme helping us deliver the same level and standard of service but at considerably less cost and CO² emissions for our client and the taxpayers of Essex.





This information is issued by:
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