

HIGHWAYS HIGHLIGHTS

CONDUCTING THE ORCHESTRA

MANAGING ROADWORKS TO MINIMISE INCONVENIENCE

We all want a highways network that enables people to move freely and easily in Essex, with minimum inconvenience caused by roadworks delaying journeys or generating excessive noise, dust or other nuisance.

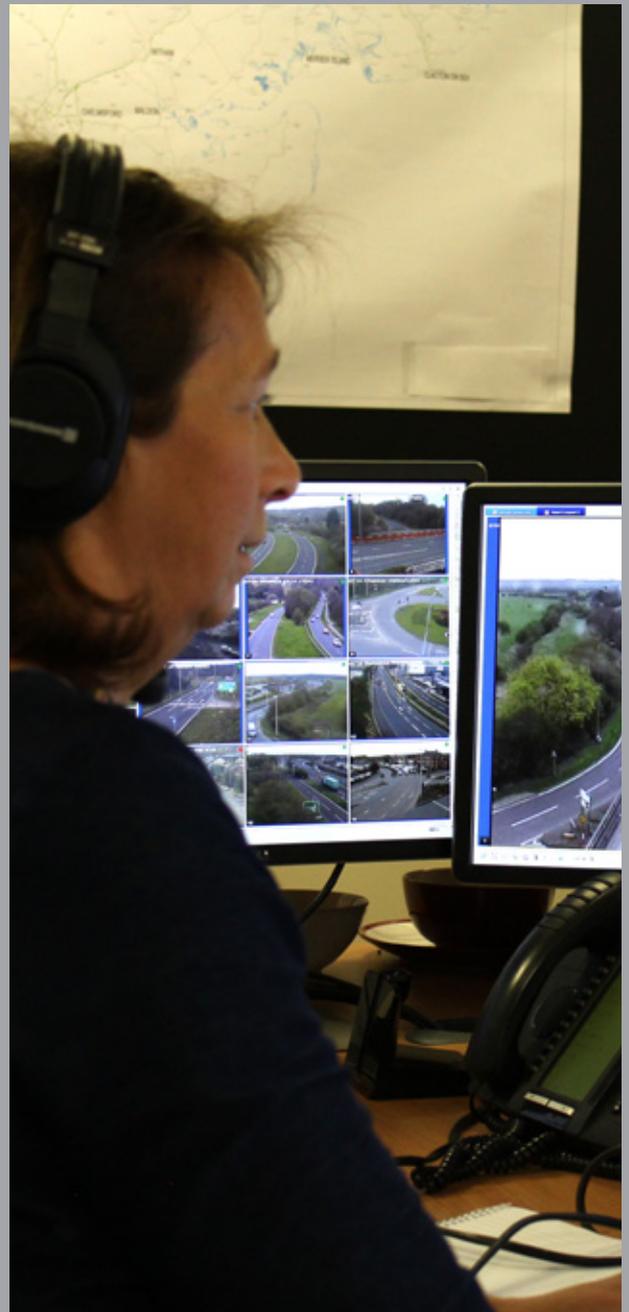
Equally, as the Highway Authority we have a duty to ensure that every organisation who needs access to their equipment in, under or above the highway can get it.

Maintaining the road network and keeping it operational is our number one aim and we manage various works through road-space bookings. These typically include our own repairs to highways assets, renewing or adding new equipment and access for utilities companies so that they can supply the water, sewerage, gas, electricity, internet and TV facilities we all demand.

Under the Traffic Management Act 2004 we have an officer designated as our 'Traffic Manager' - this role exists to monitor the network and consider all the requests we have to work on it, develop it or change it. From that information we constantly try and balance the competing pressures, ensuring work that is necessary is given permission to take place; setting conditions to that work; but still allowing the network to be used without obstruction wherever possible.

Just like a conductor trying to ensure all the instrumentalists coordinate and keep time, and the audience hear a well-conducted symphony!

Continues over ►



COMMENT

COUNCILLOR KEVIN BENTLEY

DEPUTY LEADER, ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL
AND CABINET MEMBER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

We're into the summer programme but already we've seen extreme temperatures which have affected our network.

The heat has also led to the closure of the Army and Navy flyover in Chelmsford and I will be reporting more on this after engineers conduct further intensive investigations. However,

fine weather means we can concentrate on re-painting white lining which you will see in every part of the county.

The Member pavement scheme is closed for applications and thank you to everyone who has taken part. You will soon start to see work underway on the footways you have nominated for repair.



CONDUCTING THE ORCHESTRA Continued

It is also helpful to think of the roads in Essex just like the veins, arteries and capillaries we have in our bodies. Just like blood in a healthy body, we want traffic to flow freely around our network.

However if a vein gets damaged or blocked, it can cause immediate complications. And if a major artery is closed even to do improvement works, it may be that pressure increases on other veins. Roads are the same.

Essex Highways has three teams, working together to regulate the highway network. These are:

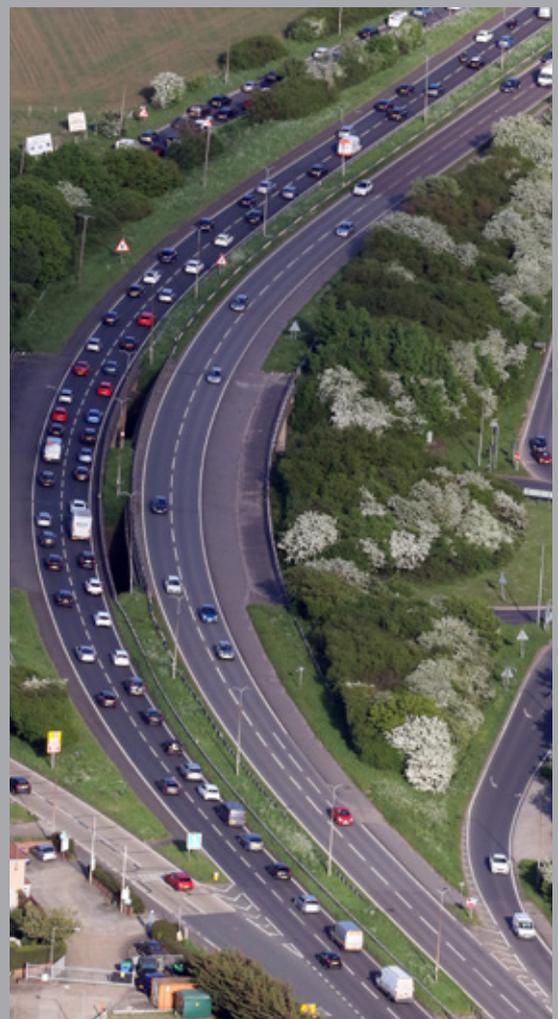
- **Network Management** – this team looks at longer-term changes to the network, enacting Traffic Regulation Orders that permanently close, alter or open up new routes
- **Streetworks and Permitting team** - The Permitting team

issues over 85,000 permits every year, allowing works and road closures to be done on the highway network for a specific time period and in a co-ordinated way that causes fewest problems. We fine them if they overstay.

- **Essex Traffic Control Centre** – this team monitors the traffic on our roads Mondays to Saturdays, providing real-time updates to road users, making changes to traffic light timings and updating our roadside message boards

Beyond these teams, elsewhere in Transportation there are specialist planners who work with local planning authorities to see what needs to be planned for in five, 10 or even 20 years time.

This involves considering the changes we're likely to see happening in society, technology, funding and economic development. More on this work in a future issue.





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

Potholes fixed per district/city/borough in June are as listed below: When considering these numbers, remember that there are many more miles of road in Uttlesford than in Harlow, for example, and the balance of types of road (main, secondary, local) are different too, so a direct comparison is misleading.

Drains are cleared in a “cyclical” programme. Districts are done in rotation. Cleaning of drains in Uttlesford continues during July. Local road drain cleaning is now complete in Maldon, Tendring and Brentwood. Main, or “county” routes in these districts starts in July. 240 drains were cleared in June where we re-surfaced roads. Footway (pavement) defects fixed includes “remote footways” that is pavements or paths not directly alongside the road.

DISTRICT	COUNTY ROUTES	LOCAL ROADS	PAVEMENT DEFECTS FIXED	DRAINS CLEARED
BASILDON	28	15	34	0
BRAINTREE	17	49	9	0
BRENTWOOD	17	19	23	2094
CASTLE POINT	7	17	6	0
CHELMSFORD	22	24	56	0
COLCHESTER	11	42	48	0
EPPING FOREST	19	28	30	0
HARLOW	18	27	15	0
MALDON	27	22	9	438
ROCHFORD	1	19	11	0
TENDRING	21	20	17	727
UTTLESFORD	46	30	18	5829
TOTALS	234	312	276	9088

MAKING SURE OF THE RIGHT LINES

Summer is our best time to re-paint white lines, with good weather and longer daylight hours.

Our maintenance crews are working hard, including often at weekends when traffic is less on some roads, to renew safety-critical faded markings.

We also employ specialist company WJ to paint the new MMA (Methyl Methacrylate) or “cold plastic” - very long-lasting white lines and roundabout markings on high-wear heavily trafficked areas, as shown here on the A128 in Brentwood in July.

When we re-surface a road, it’s our responsibility to re-paint the lines, but otherwise all parking bays and yellow lines are done by one of the Essex Parking Partnerships.



HI-TECH ‘SMART CITIES’ PILOT PROGRESSES



Our recent trial project in Harlow made progress with using our streetlight radio-control system for collecting live data.

Jointly with Hertfordshire County Council and Telensa (the company that makes the control devices on each street light) we proved the effectiveness of getting data from sensors of traffic, wind speed and silt in drains, to a central “dashboard” where the data is analysed to produce live updates.

Did you know, each streetlight transmits information (when it comes on or if it’s not working properly) to our CMS (Central Management System) and they can be dimmed, switched on/off from the office.

On some heritage lamp columns you can still see a metal bar underneath the light – that was for the lamplighter to rest his ladder on while lighting the gas. Good job technology has moved on with now 129,000 lights in Essex!

[FIND OUT MORE HERE](#)

OUT OF SIGHT, NOT OUT OF MIND

We’ve all heard the criticism - ‘loads of cones, but not a worker in sight’. While it can be true at a particular site on a particular day, for instance if we are waiting for a utility company to do their part of the work or if material needs to set, it’s certainly not true to assume no-one is working on the network.

In a county of 1300 square miles it is easy to miss our teams, despite their hi-visibility clothing. Numbers of workers do vary daily, as specialist teams come and go according to works phasing, as urgent works crop up or even if the weather changes

and forces us to postpone works. Nevertheless, we took a quick check on a typical day a few weeks ago and found that in fact there were almost 700 professionals busy on the network, working hard to make travel better for all of us. They included:

- More than 60 Inspectors – assessing defects on roads and Public Rights of Way and checking that utility works were being conducted as per permit terms
- About 70 Officers or Engineers working on structures, traffic lights, validating future recommended works, checking on third party developer works or considering Local Highway Panel ideas or issues

- More than 30 conducting footway repairs
- About 20 officers delivering road safety events and training
- 25 local Rangers, doing smaller maintenance tasks
- Over 120 routine and cyclical maintenance workers, fixing potholes and streetlights, emptying and repairing gullies, white-lining, weed spraying and so on
- About 300 workers delivering capital works including surface dressing, resurfacing, structures and drainage works, local highway panel works etc
- About 50 workers delivering major schemes in places like Harlow, Colchester and M11Jcn7a

Please look out for them!

