

## **GREAT BARDFIELD – ANNUAL REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR GRAHAM BUTLAND**



Dear Residents,

It is my great pleasure to present my eighth Annual Report to the residents of the Three Fields with Great Notley Division of Essex County Council (ECC). This was going to be my final report as I was not intending to seek re-election at the elections scheduled for May 2025.

However, the election of a new Government in July 2024 has seen plans for a reorganisation of local government brought forward at pace. The existing County Council, two Unitary Councils and 12 District, City and Borough Councils will, over the next couple of years, be replaced by between 2 and 5 new Unitary Authorities. As a result, the Government have cancelled this year's County Council elections, and all existing County Councillors will continue in office for at least a further year.

In May 2026 there will be an election for a Mayor for Essex who will be responsible for the strategic direction of a number of issues across the whole County. He or she will be elected by all 1.5million electors. It is anticipated that elections to the new Unitary Authorities will take place in 2027 and that on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2028 ECC and the District Councils, such as Braintree District Council, will cease to exist.

In the meantime, the County Council will continue to deliver services covering Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Highways and Waste. For interest, the proportion of the Council's expenditure on these major areas are: -

Adult Service Care 43%, Childrens' Services 13%, Highways Maintenance & Sustainable Transport 11%, and Waste 8%.

In previous reports I have referred to the fact that Highways continues to dominate my postbag. Inevitably potholes are raised on many occasions. Residents may be interested to know that they can raise issues direct with ECC. Below is how this can be done: -

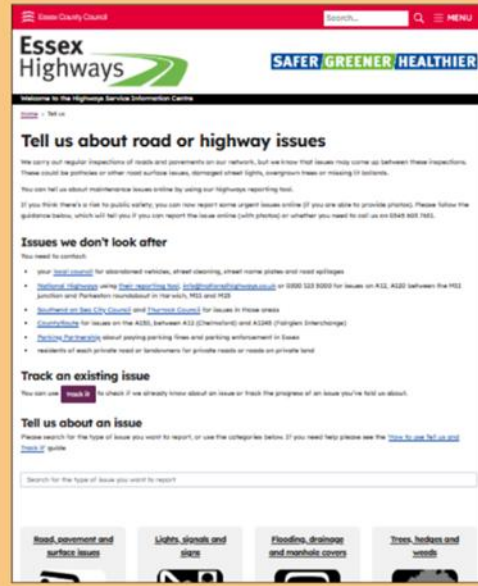
# EASIER THAN EVER TO REPORT HIGHWAYS DEFECTS IN ESSEX

Residents and road users have more options when reporting road defects following a major update by Essex Highways. The update comes as users will no longer be able to raise issues via third-party sites, such as Fix My Street, from 1 January 2025 due to the lack of detail they provide inspectors.

The 'Tell Us' webpage by Essex Highways has been tailored to capture all necessary information. This now includes different types of emergencies and if issues have worsened over time. The 'Track It' webpage lets users see the progress of reports, from inspection to repair, and whether similar issues have already been raised.

Issues logged through third-party platforms are often duplicates of reports already received via Tell Us, or unrelated to the roads managed by Essex Highways. By moving exclusively to Tell Us, Essex Highways can ensure the 50,000 reports received annually are managed in one place, resulting in a faster and more transparent process.

Councillor Tom Cunningham, Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport at Essex County Council, said: "We are committed to streamlined and efficient services throughout the council to provide value for residents, and our highways are no exception. By using Tell Us, residents can be confident their concerns are handled directly and that they will receive updates along the way."



You may also find it handy to keep the following list of useful contacts.

## USEFUL CONTACTS

Whatever the weather, you never know when the unexpected might occur. Should there be instances of fallen trees, power outages, flooding etc, help and support can be found below:

### IN AN EMERGENCY

If you think there's a risk to public safety, do not report it online, please call us immediately on 0345 603 7631 or if you have hearing problems you can use our text phone service on 0345 758 5592.

### FALLEN TREES

To report a fallen tree that is obstructing a highway please contact Essex Highways:

<https://www.essexhighways.org/tell-us/trees-hedges-and-weeds>

To report a fallen tree on a highway that is a risk to public safety call: 0345 603 7631

### POWER CUTS

In the event of a power cut in your area, report to UK Power Networks by calling 0800 31 63 105 or simply 105. You can also report and check power cuts in your area at [ukpowernetworks.co.uk/powercut](http://ukpowernetworks.co.uk/powercut)

### FLOODING

You can keep an eye on flood warnings here:

<https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/>

Essex County Council is the local flooding authority:

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/floods-emergency-planning>

The budget for 2025/26 includes an additional £12.3 million EXTRA for Highways in Essex.

However, it not just potholes that consume significant resources, there is also: -

- £54m invested annually in home to school transport for around 14,000 children
- £16m invested annually in delivering the concessionary bus pass for older people and those with a disability

- £11m invested annually in supported local bus services across the county
- £9m of one-off BSIP+ grant from the Department for Transport invested in a range of projects including Love Your Bus grant funding for Parish and Town Councils to support their services; investments in improved bus services; better journey planning and information via Travel Essex; continuing the DigiGo service when the DfT pilot funding expired; and testing new ways of growing bus services.
- 10year contract covering the replacement, maintenance, and cleaning of 1,400 bus shelters across Essex County Council
- £1.1m invested annually in the 12 Community Transport schemes to support those unable to access mainstream transport because of age, disability, or rurality
- £1.5m invested annually in Park and Ride services
- £0.4m invested annually in bus timetables and Realtime screens and services.

Finally, I would like to thank the Parish Councils across my electoral division for their help and assistance throughout the year.

If you have any issues that you wish to raise with me I can be contacted at [cllr.graham.butland@essex.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.graham.butland@essex.gov.uk)

County Councillor Graham Butland