

Essex Highways

Toolkit for Members, borough, city
and district councils

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Message from Councillor Lee Scott, Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport

We currently find ourselves in challenging financial times, with council budgets – and the finances of many of your residents – under increasing pressure. This includes our resources for highways and the scope of repairs needed on the road network across the county. You will no doubt have seen in recent media coverage, heard in council meetings and picked up on the doorstep that we are needing to make difficult decisions about how to best prioritise funding for highways, so we deal with the greatest risks to drivers and pedestrians in order to keep them safe and make sure Essex residents and users of Essex’s highways continue to move around the county safely.

I know how much of a concern repairs and maintenance on our roads is to all of you, as I’m hearing the same messages from residents in my own ward. I hope this toolkit proves to be a useful guide to you in these conversations, helping you understand where to find out more about roadworks taking place in your local area, how to report a problem and where to read more about how Essex Highways carries out its work – information that you can easily share with your residents. And to reiterate, if an issue is dangerous, we will always prioritise fixing it to keep Essex residents safe.



About Essex Highways

Essex Highways is a strategic partnership between Essex County Council, the highway and transport authority in Essex, and Ringway Jacobs, the integrated highways service provider delivering maintenance and infrastructure works across the county.

Essex Highways is delivering and enabling Safer, Greener and Healthier travel for current and future users of the transport network in Essex.

FAQ on highway and footway maintenance and repairs

How can I report a pothole?

If a resident is reaching out to you about a defect on a road or footpath, there are a number of routes through which it can be reported.

1. It is really important that you encourage the resident to report the defect themselves. They can use the report it tool on the Essex Highways website (www.essexhighways.org), which allows you to report a pothole or other issue on either a road or footpath. The location can be pinpointed on a map, where you can also see if it's already been reported before the complaint is submitted. You'll receive a defect number and can use this to track your complaint through the 'track it' service on the website.
2. If you believe your issue is dangerous but not being progressed you can speak with your County Council Member as if it is obviously dangerous they may also refer defects to the ECC Members Enquiries service, who will log the issue.
3. For the year 2022/23 County council members are given an allocation of funding each year to repair defects in their division. These issues are given priority status and allow members to get up to 36 defects (split into two tranches of 18) repaired for the current year.

How long does it take to repair a pothole?

Essex Highways has a system of prioritising defects on highways and footways. An inspector will aim to assess the site and if the site is deemed unsafe, it will be classed as high priority and a team will visit the site to make it safe. The team are then likely to return following the winter months to provide a fuller repair.

I reported a pothole weeks / months ago and it's not been repaired, why?

There are a number of factors that could have prevented the reported defect from being repaired. Firstly, the issue may not have met the criteria for needing a repair, i.e it's not deemed to be unsafe to road and footway users. Secondly, weather conditions, particularly during winter, will prevent teams from being able to visit a site.

How much does it cost to fix a pothole?

Essex Highways cannot estimate the cost of repairing a single pothole because of a number of factors. These include the bulk purchase of materials, which provides savings to the surface, and materials being used to repair more than one defect in a single location.

What do orange squares around a pothole mean?

The orange lines drawn around a defect on a road are there to show that we have identified the defect as one that needs fixing, and as a visual aid to our operatives so they are clear which defect on the roads or footpaths they are fixing.

Why do multiple teams come out over several months to fix the same defect, why can't it be fixed the first time?

During the winter months, Essex Highways will do a 'make safe' repair on a defect - designed to make the area safe to drivers and pedestrians in the short term, before the team returns when conditions are improved to carry out a full repair. A 'make safe' can be carried out with minimal disruption to users of the road or footpath, so prevents disrupting journeys and access in the short term.

Can Essex Highways and utility companies work together so the roads are only dug up once?

We work extremely hard to co-ordinate all roadworks taking place on our network. However, emergency situations like burst water mains do occur and when they happen, utility companies do not need to apply for permits like they ordinarily would for planned works. Instead, they just need to ensure that we are informed of the works within two hours of them starting.

There are defective street lights in my area, how do I report them?

Issues with streetlights can be reported using the same 'tell us' tool as road defects on the Essex Highways website. However, the new LED streetlights being installed across the county do have sensors which report issues into a central system, which means if there is a fault with a new street light, the Essex Highways team will be aware of it and taking action.

Useful links and reading

- Essex Highways website: [Essex Highways](#)
- Report an issue you've seen: [Tell us](#)
- Track an issue you've reported: [Track It](#)
- Find out what roadworks are happening in your area with the live traffic map: [one.network](#)
- Find out what works Essex Highways is responsible for and planned programmes of capital works: [Highways Information Map | Essex County Council \(essexhighways.org\)](#)
- Find out about roadworks happening two weeks up to 12 months into the future: [Future Roadworks Map | Essex County Council \(essexhighways.org\)](#)
- Track the gritters in your area and find out more about how Essex Highways decides when and where to send them in the winter: [Track the gritting lorries | Essex County Council \(essexhighways.org\)](#)
- Essex Highways latest news: [News, Press Releases and Highway Highlights \(essexhighways.org\)](#)
- Essex Highways Twitter – for updates, features and photos of work happening across the county: [@essexhighways](#)
- Latest updates from Essex County Council's Traffic Control Centre Twitter: [@essex_travel](#)
- Further reading – road strategies, including annual maintenance plans: [Road strategies | Essex County Council \(essexhighways.org\)](#)