

ECC Report July 2026 Meeting.

Highways

At the first County Council meeting, I asked what was happening to the consultation results of the new Speed Strategy and whether the Highways Cabinet Member would be taking it forward to policy. The strategy sets out a new, flexible and evidence-based approach for introducing safer speed measures across Essex. Speed is the biggest factor in fatal road collisions in Essex. In 2025, 60 people died on Essex roads, with almost half of deaths linked to excess speed. The strategy supports Vision Zero – the ambition that no one should be killed or seriously injured on Essex roads by 2040. In my opinion it is the start of a major shift towards slower speeds and lower speed limits. Despite asking, I have been given no indication as to whether this will continue and be adopted as policy.

I have submitted the same question to the Main meeting of 14th July (for the third time!)

I do know that the Members Highways Initiative has been ceased. This is where each Cllr was able to prioritise highway defects including pot-holes, pavements, signs, drains, verges, etc. Instead, the teams have been moved to just road defects and in isolated areas. So, I can no longer control such repairs. I had 3 jobs planned for w/c 8th June and 2 were completed. This looks like the last of the repairs under MHI.

We have access to the MHI website which shows the status of jobs submitted by Cllrs, but I cannot see Stock or Margaretting ones following the boundary changes. I asked for an update on these and was told I can only see the ones I submitted.

In replacement to MHI, each Cllr was asked to submit 3 roads in their division, but were only given 48 hours to do so. I quickly consulted with my PCs and made a submission (of 4) including the road past Gardening Express.. One of my 4 has already been done and they repaired around 30 holes in a 2 mile stretch of Pleshey Road!

The Reform Administration have also declared a “pothole emergency”, but we do not have any details behind what that means.

Highway Rangers

This was previously funded by ECC but was discontinued a couple of years ago. I did object, as I believe it is a valuable service.

Chelmsford City Council have brought it back for Chelmsford, and I welcome this initiative.

The Rangers can undertake a range of minor environmental and maintenance tasks, including:

- General tidying and vegetation cutting on footpaths
- Cutting back overgrown paths
- Cleaning street name plates and road signs
- Painting village gates and structures

ECC Report July 2026 Meeting.

- Basic maintenance of parish seating

The service will not cover:

- Replacement of ECC road signs
- Repairs to paving defects or kerbs
- Large-scale vegetation works
- Weed spraying

A small materials budget is available, but parish councils may be asked to contribute towards larger jobs.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and Devolution

The Govt has announced that Chelmsford will join Brentwood and Maldon, along with Essex County Council services, to form a new mid-Essex unitary authority from April 2028. This forms part of the wider five unitary model which has now been selected for Greater Essex. Until 1 April 2028, Chelmsford City Council and Essex County Council will continue to operate as usual. Elections for the Unitary Authorities will take place in May 2027 but the Cllrs will not take control until April 2028. However, the new Reform ECC Administration have written to Steve Reed MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, and stated that ECC “*will utilise all resources at our disposal to challenge and resist LGR*”. They have now decided to submit a formal judicial review. It remains to be seen whether LGR will go ahead. If it does, the plan was to have elections for Unitary Councils in May 2027. If it doesn't, the Chelmsford City Council elections will need to be held in May 2027.

Devolution is separate from LGR, and delegates further powers from Central Govt to County Authorities. Given the direction of Central Govt, it seems highly likely that a Greater Essex Combined County Authority (GECCA) will still be formed and we will have elections for a Mayor in 2028. But nothing is certain!

Update on Minerals Local Plan

The Minerals and Waste Planning Authority received just under 10,000 comments as part of the last public consultation. They have now almost completed assessing all the comments received and will subsequently make amendments to the Plan and Site Assessments accordingly. They will then devise a draft site selection methodology and then present a draft list of Preferred Sites alongside reports justifying the draft list and how comments received in the previous consultation were taken into account. This work will then undergo a further public consultation.

The Minerals and Waste Development Scheme (MWDS) sets out the timetable for policy preparation. It outlines the documents that we will produce and when.

The current [MWDS](#) was adopted in November 2019 and Appendix 2 sets out a timetable for the Minerals Local Plan review which is now out of date. A review of the Minerals Local Plan is

ECC Report July 2026 Meeting.

however still being advanced, with progress to date and the next steps set out on our [consultation webpages](#)

Following local elections, a new Portfolio Holder now covers County Planning and there will be the requirement for briefings ahead of the Portfolio Holder confirming the preferred future direction for the Minerals Local Plan Review. This includes the need to take account of the new regulations for local plan making published in March 2026. A new timetable will be agreed with the Portfolio Holder in due course.

Pylons

I am aware that NG intend to submit planning applications for temporary compounds in advance of the decision on the DCO, and so they will have reinstatement plans.

I am only aware of these as local residents have been informed and they passed it on to me.

These are the ones I am aware of:

Chelmsford 1 - Goodmans Lane

Two temporary site access points on Goodmans Lane and Paulk Hall Lane.

Chelmsford 2 - Little Waltham

- A temporary construction compound off the A131 Braintree Road
- A site access point off the A131 providing access to the compound
- A site access point on the B1008 Essex Regiment Way
- Two site access points on Chatham Hall Lane.

Chelmsford 3 - Minnow End

- Two temporary site access points on Chelmsford Road, at Minnow End.

Chelmsford 4 - Chignal Road

- Two temporary site access points on Chignal Road.

Chelmsford 5 - Mashbury Road

- Two temporary site access points on Mashbury Road.

ECC Report July 2026 Meeting.

Chelmsford 6 - Roxwell Road

- Two temporary site access points on Roxwell Road.

As of today, City Council Planning have not yet received any applications – although some have been delivered to the more northern districts.

We are members of a joint comms group on these, as there is a desire to be consistent

CGR

It has not been officially announced, but I believe that the perishing of the centre of Chelmsford has hit a roadblock. It transpires that to continue with this would mean City status would be lost.k

