

ECC Report September 2024

Reporting issues to Essex Highways online now easier



Improvements have been made to Essex Highways' [Tell Us tool](#). These will make reporting issues on the roads even easier.

Alongside regular safety inspections, Essex Highways relies on residents to report issues. These reports are used to understand where urgent repairs are needed. Last year, Essex Highways received over 50,000 reports from the public.

The improvements made to tool include:

- ability to report some urgent issues such as large potholes, fallen trees or flooded roads online
- an option to tell us that a known issue has got worse
- the ability to sign up to updates on an issue
- defect photos so residents can decide if the issue they wish to report is existing or new

A successful trial of reporting urgent issues online took place between February and April. During the trial, 242 online enquiries were received. Of these, 58% required emergency action.

The number of emergency issues reported during the trial increased by 84%. The trial also saw a significant reduction in the average time taken to make issues safe. This saw response times reduced by more than half.

[Report a highways issue online](#) or [keep up to date on progress of repairs](#).

Road repairs speed up across Essex



Essex Highways is carrying out even more road repairs this summer. This is thanks to £3 million extra funding we announced earlier this year.

Improvements are being carried out by Jet Patchers, which deliver pothole repairs. We have fixed over 2,300 potholes since June.

Jet Patching machines and crews are currently operating in Maldon and Uttlesford. Crews will be moving across the entire county this summer.

Jet Patching is known for its speed and efficiency.

Key benefits of the method include:

- speed and efficiency - allowing entire roads to be treated quickly with minimal traffic management
- versatility – meaning it is effective on quieter rural roads, but also in busier areas
- not requiring road closures - allowing for continuous traffic flow even during repairs

We announced an extra £12 million extra funding for highways repairs in February. Of this, £8 million is being spent on the Members' Highways Initiative. Another £3 million is supporting the Jet Patching programme.

An extra £185,000 of the recently announced £25 million [Priority One funding](#) will also extend the use of Jet Patchers to mid-October.

Essex pupils celebrate GCSE results



Thousands of pupils across Essex received their GCSE results on Thursday 22nd August.

Results day marks the start of the next stage of many young people's lives as they move on to new challenges.

This could see them continue to study at sixth form or college. Or they may move on to an apprenticeship or other work-based learning opportunity.

We have praised learners for their commitment to their studies.

Councillor Tony Ball, Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Lifelong Learning and Employability, said:

"I would like to congratulate every student who has collected their GCSE results today.

GCSEs are an important milestone in the lives of young people, and they mark the culmination of years of hard work and dedication from not only students, but also their families and school staff.

I want to wish everyone who has collected their results today the best in whatever they decide to do next".

As a council, we remain committed to ensuring all pupils in Essex receive the best possible education and continue to work very closely with schools to ensure this is the case.

For support, young people can contact the [National Careers Service](#) on 0800 100 900. They can also speak to their school's career adviser.

There is [local wellbeing support](#) available if they are feeling overwhelmed.

Their school will be able to advise them about appealing exam results if they are unhappy.

Adult learners who attend ACL Essex centres have also picked up their GCSE results today.

New [GCSE courses at ACL](#) will commence in September. English and maths GCSEs are free to those people who do not currently hold a grade (A*-C/ 4+) in the subject already.

A-level results day 2024



Students across Essex received their A-level, vocational and technical results on Thursday 15th August.

Across Essex, thousands of young people have completed courses and sat exams at schools or academies, further education colleges, sixth form colleges and training providers.

Councillor Tony Ball, Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Lifelong Learning and Employability, said:

"I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to everyone who has picked up their A-level, vocational and technical results today.

A lot of hard work and dedication goes into studying for these exams and I am pleased that students' efforts have been rewarded. I wish them the best of luck for the future, whatever path they are now pursuing.

I would also like to thank all our teaching and school staff from across Essex. Students' results are also a testament to them".

Advice for those picking up results:

For careers advice, young people can speak to the [National Careers Service](#) on 0800 100 900. They can also speak to their school or college.

For questions about university admissions or higher education courses, they can contact [UCAS](#) on 0371 468 0468.

Until Monday 21 October, students can apply for a course using [Clearing](#) if they have missed out on an offer - or have declined their firm choice.

Students are also encouraged to find out about the [local wellbeing support](#) available, if needed.

If a student is not happy with their results in some subjects, they have the option to appeal their results or retake their exams in those subjects. Their school or college will be able to tell them about the process for these.

Green skills made more accessible across Essex



Green jobs are expected to nearly double across Essex by 2030. To help our residents and businesses get ahead of the curve, we have launched [Essex Green Skills](#).

Essex Green Skills has been delivered with the Essex Provider Network. It recommends training, jobs and insights to remove barriers in the green sector.

It includes:

- **Green Courses:** search for training programmes
- **Green Jobs:** find careers in the green sector
- **Sector Insights:** explore industries which need green skills
- **Business Information:** how businesses can improve sustainable practices
- **Resources:** teaching and training resources to enhance green skills

[A review we commissioned](#) shows a fast-growing green economy in Essex.

Green jobs are expected to increase by 96% between 2019 and 2030. Most other jobs will also transition to include green skills.

Essex Green Skills can help remove barriers to opportunity by supporting informed choices now. [Take a look at what it can do for you](#).

**Use of landfill in Essex to end ahead of schedule by
October 2025**



The winning bidder for Essex County Council's new medium-term residual waste treatment contracts was today confirmed.

With current contracts due to expire on 31 March 2025, the new contracts will run for seven years from 1 April 2025. The contract includes an option to extend for up to a further seven years.

The estimated total value of the contract over the potential 14 years could be over £1bn subject to changes in law that will impact the waste industry.

It has been confirmed that the winning bidder for each of the four lots is:

- Lot 1 (175,000 tonnes per annum) - Indaver Rivenhall Limited
- Lot 2 (80,000 tonnes per annum) - Indaver Rivenhall Limited
- Lot 3 (40,000 tonnes per annum) - Indaver Rivenhall Limited
- Lot 4 (42,000 tonnes per annum) - Indaver Rivenhall Limited

As part of the tender, the council set a requirement that landfill could not be used from 1 January 2028. This is two years ahead of the recommendation from the Essex Climate Action Commission to send zero waste to landfill by 2030.

In response to the council's requirement, the winning bidder has committed to an impressive complete move away from landfill by 1 October 2025.

It is estimated that the delivery of all four lots combined will result in a reduction in greenhouse gas (CO2 equivalent) emissions of circa 30% when compared to

our current landfill disposal arrangements. This equates to the saving of over 540,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide (equivalent) across the initial seven-year contract term.

Through the contracts, much of Essex's waste will be used for a short period to generate heat and electricity in an energy from waste plant on the continent and in the longer-term electricity in an Essex-based facility.

From 1 October 2025 the new contractor has committed to contributing to the Waste Strategy for Essex recycling ambitions through the removal of metals and the recycling of ash produced by the energy from waste process.

The winning bidder for these four contracts has also committed to delivering a significant amount of social value through various initiatives.

These include:

- committing to a significant spend through supply chains within the local economy
- offering their Essex-based employees from disadvantaged groups a year's worth of training opportunities for Levels 2, 3 and 4 of BTEC, City and Guilds, NVQ and HNC qualifications
- making in kind contributions to and providing staff time for volunteering in local community projects
- offering work placements for local students.

Councillor Peter Schwier, Climate Czar and Cabinet Member for Environment, Waste Reduction and Recycling, said:

"I am delighted to be able to award these contracts for the treatment of our black bag waste in Essex. This will ensure medium-term arrangements are in place for the disposal of our waste while our waste strategy is considered for adoption by our city, district and borough councils across Essex for the longer term.

I am also very pleased to see a very early end to our waste going to landfill which will really benefit the environment and help us achieve our net zero ambitions".

The new contracts will ensure residual waste treatment arrangements are in place for the medium term. For the longer term, it is expected that the new Waste Strategy for Essex will be considered for adoption by all Essex city, district, and borough councils over the coming weeks.

Top tips for parents and carers starting-up a childminding business



Parents of children starting school in September are being encouraged to consider a career in childminding. This is part of our early years and childcare recruitment campaign, '[Make a change. Build a future.](#)'. The campaign aims to inspire people to enter or return to the sector.

To help prospective childminders, we are sharing the following tips:

1. Get registered. There are two [routes to getting registered](#). The first is to become an Ofsted registered childminder. The second is to become a childminder with a registered childminder agency.

2. Check demand in your local area. Parents and carers look for high quality childminders in their area, so research how many other childminders are in your neighbourhood. However, childminders often have a waiting list, so there's normally plenty of demand for services.

3. Gain experience in an early-years role or with school aged children. Childminding is an ideal career option for anyone who has previously worked in an early years setting, school or with children. It's also ideal for someone who's looked after their own children and considering a move back into the workplace.

4. Gain financial support. The [childminder start-up grant](#) is available from the Department for Education. The scheme supports newly registered, eligible childminders. It provides them with a one-off grant to help with the cost of setting up their own businesses. We also offer [practical business support](#) to help you establish your business. Find out more information about [available funding](#).

5. Start slow and then grow. It's a challenge starting up your own childminding business. It's different from looking after your own children. Give yourself time to adapt before taking on too many children. You may also be keen to offer care for children during the school holidays. Get to know demand for your service as this can also help your business grow.

6. Get to know other childminders. Reach out to other childminders to discover what it's like to run a childminding business. Join local groups to gain support and advice from others in your profession. Consider joining a national association to access training, support and information.

7. Never stop learning. We have courses available to help you upskill and learn new techniques. This includes Makaton training in early years, safeguarding, plus observation and assessment support.

8. Be creative. Children thrive when they're given an opportunity to see, hear and do different things. Be prepared to explore days out, walks in the park, as well as crafts and storytelling.

9. Be flexible. All children are different, and their needs will vary. Ensure you provide personalised care to help each family that comes through your doors.

Find out more information and explore funding options for [setting up a childminding business](#).