

Transport Meeting Drop-in Session - December 4th

List of Updates:

1. Progress on (BSIP) and Enhanced Bus Partnership (Eps)
2. Local Bus team overview
3. Travel Information update - (TravelEssex.co.uk)
4. Bus shelter project update
5. Community Transport Volunteer Drive across Essex
6. Questions raised prior to the meeting (will be sent out electronically after the meeting)
7. £2 single fare cap update

1. Progress on (BSIP) and Enhanced Bus Partnership (Eps)

In line with the latest DfT requirements, ECC updated its Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) over 2024, with a revised strategy for 2024 to 2034 being published here: [Bus Strategy](#)

Essex continues to progress its BSIP commitments, particularly to its six transformational programmes (Basildon Volt, Clacton Connect, Harlow Falcon, The Thrive Project for market towns, the Reach demand responsive transport (DRT) programme and the Colchester Rapid Transport Scheme).

A successful bid through the Government's ZEBRA 2 process has led to a grant of around £4.9m being awarded to support a £25m investment by First Essex in the electrification of the Basildon bus network. 55 new battery electric buses and the necessary chargers are expected to be operating out of First Essex Buses Basildon Depot from late 2025, bringing quite comfortable zero emission at tailpipe, new buses to the town and meeting our Basildon Volt aims.

Having successfully developed its first (County Wide) Enhanced Bus Partnership (EP) in 2022, ECC has now started developing a new Enhanced Bus Partnership for Tendring, aimed at increasing the number and reliability of buses along the main bus routes and in the towns, increasing accessibility. This is expected to cost £3m using funding from Essex's BSIP+ grant from the DfT for 2023/25 to improve services in the district, enabling us to start work on the Clacton Connect and Thrive programmes in the area.

Part of the Strategy Teams work is to take part in the planning process for new developments, offering advice to the district level planning authorities on the bus services needed to ameliorate the impact of developments on the road network. Using funding obtained as part of the S106 we have already been able to revise the bus network on Uttlesford, improving the level of service for existing users and extending bus services to many settlements that have not had one for many years. We are also working on the needs of the three proposed 'garden community' developments in Essex at Harlow/Gilston (the latter in Hertfordshire), Chelmsford and the Tendring/Colchester Border, as well as other large sites such as that proposed for Dunton Hills Near Brentwood and Basildon.

Another part of our work is to agree the level of reimbursement to be paid to bus operators for not charging for free bus passes for older people and those with qualifying levels of disability. In 2024/25 this was settled on c£14.35m and the negotiations for 2025/26 are about to start.

We also run a small scale infrastructure programme that makes small changes to road layouts and minor bus related items such as repainting bus cages, addressing poor parking on narrow roads to promote bus services we have put around 40 of these in place over 2022 to 2024.

Going forward we are currently working on developing plans for using some of £17m of government grant funding (for 2025/26) split between capital and revenue funding, which will be focused on our six 6 BSIP transformational schemes.

2. Local Bus Update

The Essex County Council (ECC) Local Bus Team is involved with local bus services across all 12 districts of Essex. With some services extending into neighbouring counties such as Cambridgeshire.

The Essex bus network comprises of approximately 15% subsidised services (funded by ECC) and 85% commercial services. ECC have a total of 153 contracts which make up the subsidised services, and these contracts are operated by various transport providers. The contracted services vary in nature, operating on different days of the week. Many operate Monday to Saturday daytimes, but a number operate in different ways such as evenings, Sundays, only Tuesdays and Thursdays, etc.

At the end of July this year, most of the contracts expired (as they only last for set date periods then ECC need to procure new contracts). There was a competitive tender process where transport providers bid on contracts if they wished to. The most cost-effective bid to the taxpayer won, with some consideration given to specific qualities above and beyond the minimum required standards.

All transport providers operating these contracts are subject to the same terms and conditions. That is why some services changed transport providers from the end of July this year. The reason ECC procure such contracts is because the services are not commercially viable (hence why transport providers are not operating them without contracts) but where there is a need for the services under our policies.

There is a need for the contracts to provide suitable value for money for the taxpayer, so the more passengers that use the services, the more sustainable they become long-term.

3. Travel Information Update :

We appreciate all the feedback we have received on the TravelEssex website since our last update. Many of your suggestions have been taken into account and will be implemented in upcoming developments. These updates will include:

1. Create a custom map functionality
2. Bus stops added to live bus map
3. Many users interface/experience enhancements

Team is exceptionally busy with the changes Transport Providers (and Local Bus) have made to the network over last 6 months. We keep everybody updated with these changes as part of our **TravelEssex newsletter (includes Bus Passenger News)**. Sent out monthly and you can sign up on the website. [Sign up for monthly Bus Passenger News](#)

We have seven agreed changes with Transport Providers in 2025:

- Sunday 05 January 2025
- Sunday 23 February 2025
- Sunday 20 April 2025
- Sunday 01 June 2025
- Sunday 27 July 2025
- Sunday 31 August 2025
- Sunday 02 November 2025

4. Bus Shelter Project Update

Year 1 Programme

The first-year replacement and new shelter programme commenced in September, with 43 shelters installed as of the end of November. Please see the list below of completed shelter installations which is sorted by district.

Flag	Street	Town/Parish	District	Installed
Shops	Felmores	Felmore	Basildon	September
Hospital Subway	Nether Mayne	Basildon	Basildon	September
Old Fortune	Noak Hill Road	Laindon	Basildon	September
Constance Close	Maldon Road	Witham	Braintree	September
Collingwood Road	Collingwood Road	Witham	Braintree	October
Cherry Tree	Cressing Road	Witham	Braintree	October
Shortridge Court	Hatfield Road	Witham	Braintree	October
John Ray School	Notley Road	Braintree	Braintree	October
Knights Ways	Knight's Way	Brentwood	Brentwood	September
High School	Chelmsford Road	Shenfield	Brentwood	October
Mornington Road	Central Wall Road	Canvey Island	Castle Point	September
Tarpots Corner	London Road	South Benfleet	Castle Point	September
Sports Centre	Somnes Avenue	Canvey Island	Castle Point	September
May Avenue	High Street	Canvey Island	Castle Point	September
St Mary's Church	High Road	South Benfleet	Castle Point	October
Church	High Street	Hadleigh	Castle Point	October
Kents Hill Road North	London Road	Thundersley	Castle Point	October
Haystack Corner	Long Road	Canvey Island	Castle Point	October
Savernake Road	Savernake Road	Chelmsford	Chelmsford	September
Ash Tree Crescent	Beeches Road	Chelmsford	Chelmsford	September
Whitehouse Crescent	Meadgate Avenue	Chelmsford	Chelmsford	October
Torrington Drive	The Broadway	Loughton	Epping Forest	September
Roundhill Shops	Roundhills	Waltham Abbey	Epping Forest	September
Traps Hill	High Road	Loughton	Epping Forest	October
Forest Road	High Road	Loughton	Epping Forest	October
Traps Hill	High Road	Loughton	Epping Forest	October
Haydens Road	Haydens Road	Harlow	Harlow	September
The Stow Upper	First Avenue Mandela Avenue	Harlow	Harlow	September
The Hornbeams	Rivermill	Harlow	Harlow	September
Astra Centre	Edinburgh Way	Harlow	Harlow	October
Temple Fields Tesco Store	Edinburgh Way	Harlow	Harlow	October
Tumbler Road	Tillwicks Road	Harlow	Harlow	October
Roche Avenue	Ashingdon Road	Rochford	Rochford	September
Victoria Avenue	London Road	Rayleigh	Rochford	October
Sir Walter Raleigh Drive	London Road	Rayleigh	Rochford	October
Sir Walter Raleigh Drive	London Road	Rayleigh	Rochford	October
Queens Road	Eastwood Road	Rayleigh	Rochford	November
Tower Road	Tower Road	Clacton	Tendring	October
Morrisons	Old Road	Clacton	Tendring	October
Brook Retail Park	Britton Way	Clacton	Tendring	October
Magdalen Green	Old Road	Clacton	Tendring	October
Three Jays	Golf Green Road	Jaywick	Tendring	October
Katherine Semar School	Ross Close	Saffron Walden	Uttlesford	September

An overview of the installation programme is available here [Bus Shelters in Essex | Travel Essex](#) and will be updated periodically.

A reminder of the key processes:

How to request a new or replacement shelter:

- Please submit all requests via the [Local Highways Panel](#) (LHP) process.
- All requests will require the support of a County Member.
- Once a request has been submitted via the above process, the Integrated Passenger Transport Unit (IPTU) Team will /assess the request.
- Once validated, the key stakeholders will be updated with proposed the next steps.

How to report and issue with a bus shelter:

- Please report any issues with Shelters / Poles / Bus Flags / Timetable cases via the [Report-It Tool](#) on the Essex Highways website (not via Clear Channel directly).
- The Integrated Passenger Transport Unit (IPTU) team will then assess and take the appropriate action.
- We aim for scheduled non-urgent works to be fixed within 20 working days.
- And scheduled urgent works to be made safe within 4 hours.

For all enquiries and questions relating to the Bus Shelters project, please email the infrastructure team directly: iptu.infrastructure@essex.gov.uk

5. Community Transport Volunteer Drive

Community Transport plays a vital role in Essex County, providing door-to-door services primarily operated by volunteer drivers. It caters to individuals who cannot use conventional public transport due to age, disability, or geographical constraints. By offering affordable options, Community Transport ensures access to essential services, including health appointments, shopping, support groups, social outings, and visits to friends and family to those who are unable to use traditional bus service.

Volunteers are the backbone of these services, and their contribution extends far beyond transportation—they help build connections and foster a sense of community.

Find out more about Community Transport and learn more about how to become a volunteer [here](#).

6. Questions raised prior to the meeting

Q1: The bus times for children to get to school without having to pay privately. A bus that goes through from Gt. Bromley to Ardleigh.

A: To find out if your child is eligible for home to school transport School transport - please click the link below: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/school-transport/>

Q2: Missing Bus Stop Sign - Outside Lynwoods on Heath Rd, Mistley just before the S bend - I refer to my email on the 12th of November 2024. I have not received a copy response from you as yet regarding a resident's query. There is a missing bus stop

sign - The telegraph pole was damaged in a storm and the bus stop sign went with it. Can you please confirm when the bus stop sign will be replaced?

A: This is still being investigated and a full response to your email will be sent to you in due course.

Q3: A much needed bus service operates between Frinton & Walton using public and private roads. This service can be disrupted in the peak summer periods as a result of visitors parking on the private roads and preventing the bus getting through. The roads are also in a terrible state mainly around the Bell-mouths due to large vehicles such as Buses, Bin lorries etc. turning their wheels and chewing up the surface. Private residents do what they can, but the bell-mouths are a constant problem. Is there any financial help available to the residents to assist their efforts to maintain the road surfaces in good order? Do you have any suggestions to help minimise the disruption caused by Visitors parking in the peak periods?

A: As the roads are not adopted by the Highway Authority, it is I believe the responsibility of the local residents to maintain them. I am not aware of there being any financial help available for such matters. Tendring District Council may be able to give some suggestions. Parking restrictions in this area are generally managed by the North Essex Parking Partnership. However if the issue appears to be on unadopted roads, it may be worth contacting NEPP to see if they are able to suggest a way forward.

Single Fare Cap Scheme

The current £2 cap on single bus fares had been due to come to an end on 31 December 2024.

From 1 January 2025 through to the end of December 2025, the new single fare cap is set at £3 to ensure people across the county can access affordable bus fares and better opportunities all over the country. This will particularly benefit passengers in rural communities and towns and will save passengers up to 80% on some routes.

The contracted services benefit from the current £2 single cap fare scheme (£3 starting from 1st January 2025) where transport providers are part of the scheme with the Department for Transport.