

Paul Gadd County Councillor Update

Saffron Walden Town Council – Planning and Transport Committee

13/2/25

*[Note, items in italics are repeats from last month, still unresolved]*

1. Flooding and drainage issues:
  - a. South Road broken drain – I’m still waiting for Essex Highways to come back with a long term proposal, although the jetting works previously carried out do seem to have stopped the flooding;
  - b. During the storms on 5/1/25 there was significant flooding on Thaxted Rd, apparently again arising at least in part from the Bellway development. I’m still in contact with UDC and ECC who are discussing a joint approach to the issue, including agreeing responsibilities, and I should be having an onsite meeting with them shortly;
  - c. For some while there has been localised flooding of properties at 50 and 50a Debden Road, opposite Station Road. Essex Highways will be carrying out remediation works on 17 February 2025 for roughly 1 week *“The works will involve installing a new gully and channel kerbs to alleviate drainage issues outside numbers 50 and 50a Debden Road. Due to the narrow width of the road and the machinery needed, a road closure will be required for the duration of the works. A signed diversion will be in place.”*
2. LHP schemes. We had another LHP meeting on 29/1/25, and as usual it’s hard to see any progress on any of the Saffron Walden schemes. My usual summary:
  - a. the TRO for the market square regularisation – Terry, Georgia and I met with ECC on 11/10/24, and then went back with follow up information, but have received nothing further from Essex Highway. Georgia chased on 15/11 and I have chased again on 2/12 – still no response. At the LHP meeting, there was a new note that officers (without any prior consultation with me) want to shelve the scheme so that it is paid for from unspecified s.106 contributions, which would presumably put it back yet further. I have asked for it to continue as requested;
  - b. On market square pedestrianisation – as for the TRO.
  - c. Street clutter – in theory this will still happen at the end of this financial year; design work is apparently under way!
  - d. On the other scheme validations, which have now been awaited since October 2021, particularly the pedestrian crossings, I had been told that after 3 years they had finally reached the top of the pile and should be looked at in December 2024. Instead, at the last LHP meeting we had I was told by officers that they were now planning not to pursue the validation because the crossings didn’t meet their criteria (even though we have known this for 2 years, and the previous officer had started preparing a derogation request). I will keep chasing;
  - e. Ross Close measures – as you know, the request for a zebra crossing was refused. I therefore instead applied for some traffic calming / chicane measures (on 14/11/23), but still no progress. I hope that they will be dealt with with the other validations;
  - f. Borough Lane / Debden Rd junction – I have included it on the LHP request list, but no other progress;

- g. Borough Lane – as you know, the LHP application for an island at the London Rd junction was rejected. Given the weight of pedestrian traffic crossing Borough Lane, particularly with the lack of pavement on the south side, I have asked the LHP to resurrect that scheme, but with the island further away from the junction, and would be grateful for your comments;
  - h. I have had various emails from residents of Beeches Close, which a number of the Committee have been copied in on, asking for a safe crossing for Newport Road.
3. Highways generally:
- a. I've forwarded to Georgia notifications from Essex Highways of:
    - i. *"the intended closure/clearway of Debden Road, due to commence on 10th February 2025 for 5 days. The closure/clearway is required for the safety of the public and workforce while Essex County Council undertakes gully installation and kerbing;"*
    - ii. *"the intended closure of West Road, due to commence on 18th June 2025 for 2 nights (19:00-05:00). The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while Essex County Council undertakes machine surfacing";*
    - iii. *"the intended closure of Borough Lane, due to commence on 16th June 2025 for 2 nights (19:00 - 05:00). The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while Essex County Council undertakes machine surfacing."*
    - iv. *"the intended closure of Little Walden Road, Byrds Farm Lane, Little Walden Service Road, due to commence on 19th February 2025 for 3 nights (20:00-05:00). The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while Essex County Council undertakes Machine Surfacing."*
4. ECC matters:
- a. Devolution – ECC have applied to be on the priority list for devolution and have been accepted. The Minister has now written to ECC and the Essex district councils asking them to prepare proposals, and has confirmed that the May 2025 ECC elections will be postponed to May 2026. There seems to be dispute along party political grounds within the Essex Leaders group as to how many unitary authorities to support, with the Conservatives apparently largely wanting 3 in Essex and the others largely wanting 5; I understand that at the most recent Essex Leaders group meeting there was a vote and the majority voted for 5 authorities