

Paul Gadd County Councillor Update

Saffron Walden Town Council –Planning and Transport Committee 9/10/25

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

1. Flooding and drainage issues:
 - a. Nothing to report
2. Highways generally:
 - a. I've forwarded to Georgia notifications from Essex Highways of:
 - i. *"the intended closure of Newport Road, due to commence on 20th October 2025 for 12 days. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while Cadent undertakes gas main works";*
 - ii. *"the intended closure of Hadstock Road, due to commence on 7th October 2025 for 4 days. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while Affinity Water undertakes new connection."*
 - b. I told you that I've put forward for my last Member Pothole allocation the 2 crumbling drains on Newport Rd, but the Cadent gas road closures near by are preventing work on Newport Rd. I've now been informed that this will happen in January 2026.
 - c. I've asked Essex Highways what they are proposing to do about the red crosses being painted on mini-roundabouts. They have replied, and don't propose to do anything;
 - d. I was told yesterday by a resident who had seen the story in the Walden Local that Essex Highways are proposing to "reconfigure" the Wendens Road cycle path. I'd heard nothing about this, but have now tracked down the proposed road closure which says that the section between Abbey Farm and Audley End Road will be closed from 10-21/11/25. I am trying to find out what is proposed, particularly given the mess that Essex Highways made of this section when it was first installed, and why no-one locally appears to have been consulted on it. I will forward details when I get them.
3. LHP matters:
 - a. The LHP is effectively now closed to any new schemes I'm afraid, although given how little it has delivered over the last 5 years, that won't make much practical difference.
 - b. There was an LHP meeting on 29/9/25:
 - i. The dropped kerbs in place of the requested zebra crossings on Thaxted Road and Ashdon Road should be implemented this financial year. Hopefully they will be better than nothing, but are clearly no substitute for proper crossings;
 - ii. There was a suggestion of a similar dropped kerb arrangement opposite Beeches Close, but I was only allowed to support 1 further scheme, so didn't support this;
 - iii. The long-awaited validation of the requested Ross Close pinch point rejected it – the validation actually considered something different from the scheme requested, but it was clear that any pedestrian improvements were going to be rejected regardless of what I requested.
4. Buses:
 - a. You may have seen that Essex Passenger Services are consulting on scrapping the 59/590/320/321 bus routes serving the Saffron Walden to Audley End station. The consultation document says that usage of the service has been increasing. I've asked ECC why they are proposing this, particularly given the need for the service and the stated

increase in usage, but have yet to receive a reply explaining the rationale. I've chased again and will let you know when I hear.

5. ECC matters:

- a. Local Government Reorganisation – ECC have published their full proposals and business case for wanting a 3 authority reorganisation, with Uttlesford being part of a north Essex authority including Colchester, Braintree and Tendring. There are currently four distinct proposals being prepared for submission to Government on 26th September:
 - i. Proposal 1: A proposal for a three Unitary structure
 - ii. Proposal 2: A proposal for a four Unitary structure (supported by Rochford)
 - iii. Proposal 3: A second proposal for a four Unitary structure (supported by Thurrock)
 - iv. Proposal 4: A proposal for a 5 Unitary structure;
- b. We've had nothing further from ECC following the 26th September submission date, which is presumably not unrelated to their preferred option having little support from the other councils, but according to the LGR website the 3 authority structure is preferred by ECC and 2 district councils (Epping and Braintree), and the 5 authority structure by 10 of the 15 Essex councils, including Southend and 9 of the 12 district councils (being Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Chelmsford, Colchester, Harlow, Maldon, Tendring and Uttlesford).
- c. Under the 5 authority structure, Uttlesford would join with Harlow and Epping.