

Director of Highways and Transportation

Salary: £126,909



Penna

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Welcome Letter from Mark Ash

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in this pivotal role of Director of Highways and Transportation at Essex County Council. This is an exciting opportunity to shape the future of our transport infrastructure, working with talented colleagues and partners to deliver innovative and sustainable solutions for the people of Essex.

Essex is a county with a clear identity, a compelling vision, and a robust plan for the future. As one of the largest local authorities in the UK, we serve a diverse population of over 1.5 million residents. From bustling urban centres to picturesque rural communities, Essex is uniquely rich in its people, culture, and opportunities. Our commitment to delivering excellence in public service was recently recognised when we secured a top-three position in the IMPOWER index of councils' productivity—a testament to the impact of our forward-thinking approach.

At the heart of our work is our promise that this is *Everyone's Essex*. We are determined to ensure that no one is left behind and that every community thrives. This role is integral to achieving that vision, as the condition of our highways and the quality of our transport systems influence the daily lives of our residents and the economic vitality of our region.

I won't shy away from acknowledging the scope and scale of the challenges that come with this role. Managing significant budgets, numbers of people, and delivering services that touch every corner of the county is no small task. However, it is precisely these challenges that make this role so rewarding. The opportunity to lead change on such a significant scale is unparalleled, and I firmly believe that with ambition, creativity, and collaboration, the right candidate will not only meet these challenges but also flourish in this role.

Please know that I, along with the wider leadership team, am fully committed to providing the support you need to succeed. We value fresh perspectives and are here to help you unlock your potential as you lead this critical portfolio.

Essex is ready to welcome a leader who shares our passion for making a difference. If you're inspired to be a part of this journey, I encourage you to take the next step and join us in shaping an even brighter future for Essex.



Job Advert

Essex is a county with a clear identity, a clear vision and a clear plan. As one of the largest UK local authorities, with significant diversity of people and communities, we offer a uniquely stimulating public service environment. Our track record was recently recognised with a top-three place in the latest IMPOWER index of councils' productivity. And we've made a firm commitment that this is 'Everyone's Essex' – everyone matters, and no one should be left behind.

About the Role

We're seeking a dynamic and innovative leader to spearhead our Highways and Transportation services. With responsibility for over £320m in annual budgets and a dedicated team of over 300 professionals, you'll ensure our highways remain safe, functional, and ready to support economic growth and our ambitions on net zero. You'll work closely with stakeholders to deliver transformative projects, from road safety initiatives to the development of cutting-edge public transport strategies. In this pivotal role, you'll act as Essex's ambassador in national conversations, advocating for sustainable transport solutions while balancing the diverse needs of our communities. Whether collaborating on multi-million-pound infrastructure projects or driving improvements in customer satisfaction, you'll be at the forefront of shaping a future-ready transport network.

What You'll Bring

- A strategic vision to innovate and drive change in a complex, fast-paced environment.
- Proven expertise in managing large-scale transport projects and budgets.
- A strong track record in stakeholder collaboration and delivering value-driven solutions.
- Exceptional leadership skills to inspire teams and build partnerships.
- A strong track record of working in complex and politically driven organisations.

Why Join Us?

This is more than just a leadership position; it's an opportunity to leave a legacy.

You'll work with passionate professionals dedicated to enhancing the lives of Essex residents.

If you're ready to challenge the status quo and lead Essex into a sustainable and connected future, we want to hear from you!





Job Title:	Director, Highways & Transport
Function:	Climate Environment and Customer
Document Date:	January 2025
Job Code	
Grade:	B Job size 2

Job Purpose

This leader is passionate about Highways and Transport, the need to keep our Highway Network safe and functional, to develop and deliver new infrastructure to accompany economic growth and enable people to travel safely and sustainably whether by foot, cycle, private or public motorised and non-motorised transport.

Partnership working with private sector providers delivering multi-millions of pounds of services and schemes is a significant part of this role, but equally important are the relationships with our District, Borough, Parish and City Councils, our Essex Unitary Partners and Central Government. Therefore, the leader will need to take an effective commercial and innovative approach to how we maintain and develop our highways and transport services and infrastructure whilst being sensitive to differing expectations and needs of different stakeholders. Acting as the Authority's Senior Responsible Officer on Highways and Transport matters this leader will need to be both influential and resilient leader in promoting Essex at a national level and being the focal point for the Member led Authority.

This role requires a focussed and determined leader, who has the drive and creativity to do things differently and forge new relationships and collaborations across Essex, the East of England and Nationally in the short, medium and longer terms including through any possible Local Government Reforms, LGR.

Working within the context of an evolving central government highways and transport agenda and associated financial constraints, this leader will understand how to balance their focus and attention to deliver the best outcomes for Essex, our communities and our businesses to ensure a sustainable future for all.

The leader has a wide ranging role across multiple other Council functions and important part to play in influencing council wide services and strategies in Education, Adults, Procurement, Finance, Public Health, Legal, Environment and Economic Growth, in delivering sustainable services across the breadth of Highways and Transport.

Organisational Accountabilities

Director roles can be appointed, on occasion and as appropriate, as a member of the council's Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and play an active role in the corporate management and development of the council as a whole. The role is accountable for:

- Being an exemplar systems leader - displaying the behaviours expected to support our vision and strategy with Cabinet, CLT, partners and employees at all levels.
- Working collaboratively across the council to support the delivery of best possible outcomes for our customers on a financially sustainable basis.
- Working collaboratively with both the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members, their Deputies and Advisors, other Members, Directors, partners and the community to support the long term vision of the Council.
- Accountable for creating and proactively leading change initiatives which support our longer term vision.
- Anticipating and predicting the long term impact of national and international developments, within an area of expertise to inform the wider function and the council's strategy.
- Using sound commercial judgement to find novel solutions to emerging and complex issues.
- Maximising digital technologies and innovation across the council and with stakeholders and partners.
- Celebrating and considering equality and diversity as part of all decisions taken.
- Using professional expertise to translate the vision and strategy into strategies, goals and plans for the functional area.
- Managing relationships with customers, suppliers and partners to ensure the best outcomes for Essex, its Members and its communities.
- Being widely externally networked with fellow professionals, partners, stakeholders and communities outside the council to evaluate and bring in and apply new best in sector practices.

Service/Functional Accountabilities

Accountable for leading on the strategic direction of the wide portfolio of Highways and Transport services ensuring alignment to the Council's plans and strategies for the future of Essex and its organisational priorities.

Act as the Council's professional lead for Highways and Transportation and accountable for ensuring that the Council delivers and maintains its statutory duties and responsibilities as set out in the Highways Act 1980, Traffic Management Act 2004, Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, Road Traffic Act 1988, New Roads and Street Works Act 1991, Transport Act 2000, Bus Services Act 2017 and any other Highways or Transport Act and their updates are met.

Accountable for ensuring that appropriate interventions are in place to ensure that the Council delivers its statutory duties in providing a safe Highway Network for all users. Responsible for ensuring a systematic approach to the discharge of statutory joint obligations and duties, including statutory inspection requirements, on all relevant Highways and Transport assets and services.

Accountable for leading on the development and implementation of all Highways and Transport Policies and Strategies for Essex including the Local Transport Plan, Place & Movement Strategy, Speed Management Strategy, Highways Asset Management Strategy, Road Safety Strategy, Cycling & Walking Strategies, Bus Strategy, Public Rights of Way Concordat, the Electric Vehicle Charge Point Strategy and all others ensuring that they are kept up to date and informed by best practice from the sector.

Accountable for leading on the embedding high performing Highways and Transport initiatives and providing professional advice to the Council and the Executive Director on the development and delivery of continuing improvements, efficiencies and effectiveness of all services.

Accountable for delivering significant Highways and Transport services and major projects with responsibility for 324 FTE staff and budgetary accountability for approximately £405m a year, consisting of £162m Revenue expenditure and £243m of Capital expenditure.

Responsible and accountable for all aspects of delivery for all services, ensuring that performance management for each Highways and Transport service is clearly defined in terms of measurable outputs and outcomes together with short-, medium- and long-term business, performance and quality targets that are able to be benchmarked with other Authorities to deliver best in class.

Accountable for developing and delivering the Council's commissioned and commercial services both in-house and through external partners and providers on Highways Services, Major Schemes, Sustainable Transport and Passenger Transport across the whole of Essex.

Accountable for ensuring that effective plans are in place which anticipate future demands and are responsive to changes in funding in order to best commission best value solutions and identify ways to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Work collaboratively with the commissioned services and projects within the Highways and Transport Portfolio including the Highways Integrated Service Provider, Utility Providers, Major Civil Engineering Scheme Contractors, Passenger Transport and Bus Providers, Electric Vehicle Charge Point Providers, Electric Scooter and Rail Providers.

Accountable for the performance of the Highways Service Provider, monitoring and managing their services in line with the Council's specified Contract.

Responsible for ensuring that all ECC staff are embedded effectively with the service provider within the Highways Service to maximise the benefits of the service to the Council, its staff and the communities and residents of Essex.

Lead for the Council on our relationships with the Department for Transport and other relevant national agencies such as National Highways, National Rail, Active Travel England and Transport East. Responsible for leading effective and robust relationships with neighbouring Essex Unitary, District, Borough, Town, City and Parish Authorities to ensure effective Highways and Transport services are delivered across Essex in the short, medium and long terms including any possible Local Government Reforms.

Accountable for the development and delivery of high quality communication plans and ensuring statements with local and national press and social media both are delivered both proactively and reactively to enhance the reputation of the Council.

Work collaboratively with the Directors for Finance, Procurement, Legal, and Customer Services to ensure corporate governance processes and procedures are embedded in Highways and Transport services.

Work collaboratively with the Directors for Economic Growth and Director Property, Investment and Delivery to ensure that major Capital projects are delivered effectively and efficiently ensuring alignment of work programmes across the directorates to deliver the required benefits for the people of Essex within the budgets available.

Work collaboratively with the Directors for Education, Procurement and Finance to ensure that the statutory requirements of Education Home to School Transport is delivered safely, effectively and efficiently within the budgets available.

Accountable for undertaking delegated functions as detailed in the council's constitution (and as amended from time to time).

Accountable for specific individual and shared targets and objectives that are defined annually within the Council's Annual Plan and performance management framework.

Represent the Council at a national level with national and regional sector associations such as Association of Directors for Environment, Planning and Transport, ADEPT, Future Highways Research Group, FHRG, Civil Engineering Contractors Association, CECA and other relevant professional bodies to ensure the Council delivers sector leading highways and transport services to support the residents and communities of Essex and support the growth of the network and facilitate economic growth.

Dimensions

Budgetary management responsibility (direct or indirect impact):

Responsible for budgetary accountability for approximately £405m a year, consisting of £162m Revenue expenditure and £243m of Capital expenditure.

People management responsibility:

Line management responsibility for 324 FTE direct reports. Also responsible for over 1,000 staff within the Essex Highways wider team.

Breadth of roles with major impact (level, contacts, impact on Essex County Council):

Responsible for the delivery of all Highways and Transport services to the residents, communities and businesses of Essex.

Within Highways, ECC has a statutory duty to maintain over 5,100 miles of roads, 4000 miles of public rights of way, footways, structures, streetlights, signs, lines, fencing and safety barriers, traffic lights, gullies, drainage pipework, cycle routes, bollards and road crossings ensuring they are safe for the public to use. We also have a statutory duty in managing and minimising the impact of any new infrastructure or repairing of the existing infrastructure upon the residents and users of the network.

In Transport terms, around 42 million bus journeys are made on the bus network each year. Around 15% of the network is supported by the Council to those areas where a commercial service is not viable. Additionally, about 350,000 community transport journeys are provided to residents who cannot access mainstream passenger transport.

Around 5 million journeys are provided each year to approximately 13,000 children in Education and 500 adults in social care supporting those most vulnerable within our society. We also manage 3 park and ride sites delivering approximately 1.5 million passengers into Chelmsford and Colchester a year.

Highways and Transport are the most important Council services for to the residents, communities and businesses of Essex. This means that the service generates over 70,000 of customer enquiries to the Council representing over 83% of all Council enquiries. This means that customer satisfaction in the delivery of Highways and Transport services have the highest reputational impact of any service upon the Council.

In delivering these services, this role has a critical role every day in mitigating any direct financial and legal impact of not delivering statutory services and reputational damage upon the Council.



Skills, Knowledge and Experience

Educated to degree level or equivalent by experience.

Evidence of continuing professional development and expert knowledge in a relevant professional area of Highways and Transport.

A deep understanding, gained through significant experience, in developing solutions to deliver value for money services in a relevant service/functional area.

Strong project management and commercial experience with evidence of a clear understanding of the financial responsibilities associated with programmes of Highways and Transport work.

Experience and ability to operate at the most senior level with our stakeholders, supply chains and partners to operate, negotiate, agree and deliver appropriate commercial structures which incentivise delivery, including dispute resolution.

Proven track record of responsibility for client management in the delivery of large commercial contracts in Transportation and/or Highways.

Ability to focus on results, forging a strong team from diverse backgrounds to achieve strategic objectives.

Proven communication skills with an ability to influence both strategically, tactically, operationally and corporately in a complex organisation with senior stakeholders.

Proven track record of using professional expertise to deliver strategic objectives and expected outcomes, while managing conflicting priorities.

Experience of successful delivery within a rapidly changing and ambiguous environment.

Experience of creating and proactively leading change initiatives in a complex environment.

Leadership Behaviours/Professional Competence

Acts Strategically

Inspires - Displays a passion for making a difference. Creates and shares an ideal image of what we can become and motivates others to see exciting possibilities for the future.

Innovates - Thinks radically, takes risks and is prepared to make mistakes when looking for new ways to improve services. Sees disappointments as learning opportunities. Seeks opportunities to challenge and change the status quo.

Engages People

Enables - Builds energised teams and recognises contribution. Creates an atmosphere of trust, respect and dignity so others feel able to experiment with new or innovative ways of working.

Collaborates - Contributes to teams and networks and involves others to deliver shared solutions and services for our customers. Works effectively with partners to join together in a common purpose.

Achieves Results

Delivers - Develops a quality service by valuing and modelling professional excellence and expertise to enable the delivery of commercially, financially viable services. Takes into account diverse customer needs and requirements.

This role is politically restricted - please refer to Politically Restricted Posts policy and guide: ECC politically restricted posts for full details.

About Essex

There is no single centre to Essex, but rather a series of interconnected economic corridors, overlapping labour and housing market areas and health economies.

72% of the county is rural, there are 350 miles of coastline, 35 islands, and we have the seventh largest road network in the country, as well as areas sitting in the London fringe.

Within our towns and villages there is diversity too, from the Roman city of Colchester to the 1950s new towns of Harlow and Basildon, the seaside resort of Clacton-on-Sea and the market town of Saffron Walden.

We are well connected to London, Cambridge and the M11 corridor and are a gateway to trade and investment with two international airports (London Stansted and London Southend), and two emerging Freeports (Thames Freeport and Freeport East), building on the Haven ports (Harwich and Felixstowe) and London Gateway and Port of Tilbury, as well as 57 railway stations.

Essex is home to two universities: the University of Essex, and Anglia Ruskin University, both of which generate research with world-leading impact.

Some of the most outstanding schools in the country – four of which, the girls' and boys' grammar schools in Chelmsford and Colchester, regularly feature amongst the top 20 schools in the country.



Highways and Transportation Service

Essex County Council has one of the largest highway networks in the country – around 5,000 miles of roads and 5,000 miles of footways – and we're responsible for maintaining all of it. This includes road maintenance, street lighting, drainage and flooding, winter travel, road safety, traffic management, highway development, bridges and structures, grass and vegetation, bus stops and bus shelters, and roads strategies right across the county.

The Director is responsible for all aspects of highways and transportation for Essex County Council including, Asset Management, Transport Planning, Maintenance, Major Scheme Development, Sustainable Transport, Highway Maintenance, Programme Management, Network Management, Road Safety, Development Management, National Liaison, Passenger Transport and Home to School Transport. Over the coming years, the Highways and Transportation team will modernise the service, maximising value from technology, and raising customer engagement.

Everyone's Essex is the Council's four-year strategy running from 2021-2025 and sets out the vision for services for our residents. The Highways and Transportation Service has a key role in the commitment to build an environment that supports and levels up life chances for our residents, which includes delivering a step change in sustainable travel across the county, by growing passenger transport and active travel.

Our focus is clear: to improve travel in the county while helping fuel sustainable long-term sustainable growth in Essex and enriching the lives of our residents.

Read our plans and strategies relating to highways and transport and our goals for improving travel in Essex:

- <https://www.essexhighways.org/>
- [Travel and transport | Essex County Council](#)



Highways & Transportation Structure Chart

Director for Highways & Transportation

Head of Essex Highways Commissioning:

Head of Network & Safety (Essex Highways)

Head of Maintenance & Operations (Essex Highways)

Head of Integrated Passenger Transport

Head of Network Development

Head of Sustainable Transport

Commissioning Manager & Contract Lead

Business Planning Manager

Asset Strategy and Technical Manager

Technical Contract Manager

Asset Strategy & Policy Senior Engineer

Business Co-Ordination & Project Officer

Senior Quantity Surveyor

Senior Business Planning Officer

Strategic Development Manager (South)

Business Planning Technician

Strategic Development Manager (North)

Highways Engineer & Technical Business Analyst

Essex Highways Strategic Partnership (ECC & Ringway Jacobs)

Strategy, Growth, Infrast & Integration Manager

Network Programme Manager

Transportation Infrastructure & Planning Manager

H&T Delivery Support Manager

Network Programme Manager

Transport Strategy Lead

Lead for Community & Education Travel

Network Programme Manager

Sustainable Travel Planning Manager

Lead for Commercial Operations

Rail Engagement Manager

Commissioning Delivery Manager

Political Make-up

Officers and Members at Essex County Council work closely to develop and implement the strategies to improve the lives of our residents.

Essex County Council is made up of 75 elected members and is currently governed by the Conservative group. The Council Leader is Kevin Bentley. The Council composition is currently as follows:

Conservative: 51

Liberal Democrats: 8

Labour: 6

Non-aligned group: 10

More information about the Cabinet:

[How decisions are made: The Cabinet | Essex County Council](#)



How to apply

This guidance contains important information to help with your application:

- Please apply by submitting a CV and Covering Letter (no more than four sides of A4 in length per document aligned to the person specification). Please also include your contact details.
- Please ensure your full employment history is outlined in your CV; and that where there are essential criteria, competencies and/or qualifications you make clear how you meet these. We may wish to verify this information during the recruitment process.
- Please share with us in your supporting statement, the values and behaviours that you bring to your leadership, and how you will transfer your skills and experience into this role.
- Please complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form when you upload your details.
- Please return your application by the closing date – no applications will be accepted once the long listing process has begun.
- Following long listing, you will be contacted directly by a Penna consultant to update you on the status of your application.
- At any point throughout the process our retained consultants at Penna will be happy to help you with information, insight and guidance about the process and our clients.

Essex County Council is a Disability Confident Employer so candidates who wish to be considered under the scheme and meet the essential criteria will automatically be invited to interview. Please note, that should you require any adjustments through the process, we will accommodate as much as possible.

To apply for this role, please click the link below:

[Director of Highways and Transportation](#)

For further information or confidential discussion, please contact:

Ali Tasker on 07514 728114 or email: ali.tasker@penna.com

Rachael Morris on 07840 711217 or email: rachael.morris@penna.com



Timeline

The following timetable sets out the key dates in the recruitment process:

Activity	Date
Closing Date	Sunday 18 May 2025
Longlist meeting (candidates are not required to attend)	29 May 2025
Preliminary Interviews	w/c 9 June 2025
Shortlist meeting (candidates are not required to attend)	w/c 16 June 2025
Psychometrics	w/c 16 June 2025
Final Panel Interviews	w/c 23 June 2025



Further Reading

[Our vision for Essex | Essex County Council](#)

[Equality and diversity: Our approach | Essex County Council](#)

[Climate Action | Essex County Council](#)

[Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022 – 2026](#)

[Travel and transport | Essex County Council](#)

<https://www.essexhighways.org/>

[Home - Working for Essex](#)

[Extraordinary Essex video](#)

