

Guidelines for County Members: 'Highways 'Relationship Leads'

(The 'buddy system')

- To improve shared understanding and to improve communications, we offer County Members (only) a highways 'Relationship Lead' officer – also known as your 'buddy'.
- Each Member is paired with an Essex Highways 'buddy', drawn from Essex Highways Senior Management. The buddies, although senior and experts in their functional area, are not all engineers. However they know their way around the service, so should be well-placed to help you.
- They will contact you for an initial meeting/chat and provide their contact details, for use during their working hours.
- They have been allocated to County Members generally on a geographic basis or because they may have already buddied you before.
- Some Members will have different buddies for operational reasons.
- Your highways Relationship Lead will have three roles:
 - Gaining local intelligence from you, to improve or focus service delivery
 - Offer or obtain for you further information on highways processes, topics and local issues
 - Assistance to resolve complex issues, where the usual channels have not so far worked
- They will be happy to meet with you and look at/discuss any highways issues/concerns you may have that don't fall under routine work or Local Highway Panels.
- Meetings, when agreed, should be held on neutral ground or on-site at a mutually agreeable time.
- They do not replace the need to use the online Reporting tools for new defect reporting, or the use of Member Enquiries for your queries. Please use these routes first before approaching your buddy for help.
- This scheme may help information to be imparted more promptly, increase your understanding about the art of the possible and why things are done the way they're done.
- If your buddy can't immediately answer your query, they will gather any relevant information and commit to getting back to you where possible within 10 working days.
- Please remember that your buddy isn't there to grant favours or help you avoid ECC policies and that the Member Enquiry process will remain the principal channel for your advice and support.

We hope you find the officers useful and friendly.