**Freedom of Information Act / Environmental Information Regulations Request**

Reference: ECC19036512 09 25
Response: 09 October 2025

I can confirm that Essex County Council does hold some of this information, and where we are able to release this, our response is listed below.

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, please accept this request for the following information regarding public rights of way within your authority:

1. Public Rights of Way Management.
2. The total length (in miles or kilometres) of public rights of way for which your authority is responsible.
3. The length of each classification of rights of way (for example: footpath, bridleway, byway etc)
4. The method or process your authority uses to calculate this total length.

Calculated from the figures present in Geographic Information System (GIS) data.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Type | Length (km) | Percentage |
| Footpath | 5,336.95 km | 83.23% |
| Bridleway | 821.85 km | 12.82% |
| Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT) | 237.44 km | 3.70% |
| Restricted Byway | 16.09 km | 0.25% |
| Total | **6,412.33 km** | **100%** |

1. Public Rights of Way Impacted by Development-Highway Works.

For public rights of way impacted by development where the development has required works on or under the public rights of way, please provide:

The total number of cases this applies to, that you were either consulted on/aware of.

1. The number of these cases that have a Section 278 agreement under the Highways Act 1980 in place.
2. The number of cases where no Section 278 agreement was in place.
3. Where possible, the reference numbers or policy identifiers associated with each case.

I confirm that Essex County Council may hold the information you have requested, but cannot provide this to you. The information has been withheld due to an exception in the Environmental Information Regulations.

The exception applicable to the information is:

EIR Regulation 12 (4) (b) – Manifestly Unreasonable

**Public Interest Considerations Favouring Disclosure:**Informing public debate

**Public Interest Considerations Not Favouring Disclosure:**Disproportionate effort on the part of Council Staff
Diverting resources away from the day-to-day business of the Council

**Public Interest Balancing Test:**We acknowledge there would be some public interest in the disclosure of this information.

We don’t record this information in a way that we can provide this information to you.

To be able to provide you answers to the questions you have raised we would need to examine each planning application we have ever been a consultee of or are aware of.

As this information is not already collated this would involve considerable resources and officer time and this would be considered manifestly unreasonable and would involve a disproportionate effort on the part of Council Staff and divert resource away from the day-to-day business of the Council.

It is our opinion that the balance of the public interest test favours maintaining the exception and this information should not be disclosed.

Therefore, we will not be complying with this part of your request. In accordance with the Environmental Information Regulations, this letter acts as a Refusal Notice in respect of your request.

1. Policies and Standards.

Whether your authority has an adopted Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP).

Whether your authority has design standards or guidance specifically for the construction, maintenance, or improvement of public rights of way.

If your right of way management is part of a highways authority team, a right side way specific team or other.

If possible, please provide any relevant documents, links, or indicate where information can be accessed for section 3.

Our Rights of Way Improvement Plan, is publicly available online - [www.essexhighways.org/getting-around/public-rights-of-way/rights-and-responsibility](http://www.essexhighways.org/getting-around/public-rights-of-way/rights-and-responsibility)

Our Standard Folio drawings are publicly available online - [www.essexhighways.org/highway-schemes-and-developments/adoptions-and-land/essex-folios](http://www.essexhighways.org/highway-schemes-and-developments/adoptions-and-land/essex-folios)

Information about Public Rights of Way maintenance is publicly available online [www.essexhighways.org/roads-and-pavements/public-right-of-way-maintain](http://www.essexhighways.org/roads-and-pavements/public-right-of-way-maintain), maintenance is carried out or organised by a dedicated public rights of way team.

**Your Right to Know**

Democracy and Transparency

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