

CHIGWELL PARISH COUNCIL
OFFICER REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY SERVICES AND ASSETS COMMITTEE
COMMUNITY SPEED WATCH

Date: 24 September 2026

Purpose of Report

This report provides Members with an update regarding Community Speed Watch activity within Chigwell, the current status of the former Chigwell Community Speed Watch group, and information for Members regarding how Community Speed Watch operates within Essex.

Background

Chigwell previously benefited from a Community Speed Watch group established in 2023 by a small number of residents from the Courtland Estate. The group sought to address concerns regarding vehicle speeds within the local area and worked in partnership with the Essex Community Speed Watch scheme.

Despite efforts by volunteers to expand participation and encourage wider community involvement, including attempts to generate interest from residents in other parts of the Parish, volunteer numbers remained limited. Members may also recall that a previously proposed monitoring location on Lechmere Avenue was not approved for Community Speed Watch deployment.

Due to a lack of volunteers and increasing personal commitments amongst those involved, the group has subsequently ceased operating.

Current Position

The speed detection equipment previously utilised by the group, namely an SL700 laser speed detection device (Serial Number SL7051), remains the property of Chigwell Parish Council. The Council also holds a number of associated signs and high-visibility garments supplied through the Essex Community Speed Watch scheme.

Following the group's decision to stand down, officers made enquiries with the Community Speed Watch team in April and again in August 2026 regarding the possibility of re-establishing activity within Chigwell. On each occasions, officers were advised that there were no volunteers registered or awaiting deployment in the Parish.

Members are reminded that Community Speed Watch is not operated, managed or coordinated by Chigwell Parish Council. The initiative is coordinated countywide through the Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP), working in conjunction with Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, Essex Police and other road safety partners. Volunteers are recruited, trained and supported through the countywide scheme rather than by individual parish councils.

How Community Speed Watch Operates in Essex

Community Speed Watch is a community-led road safety initiative designed to enable trained volunteers to monitor vehicle speeds in locations where speeding is a concern to local residents. The scheme is intended to improve driver behaviour through education, visibility and community engagement. It is not an enforcement activity and volunteers do not issue penalties or fines.

Volunteers are provided with training and support through the countywide scheme, including roadside operational training, health and safety guidance and instruction on the use of speed monitoring equipment. Once trained, volunteers undertake highly visible roadside monitoring sessions at locations approved by the partnership.

When a vehicle is recorded travelling above the speed limit, the registration details are submitted to Essex Police through the established Community Speed Watch process. The registered keeper may then receive an advisory letter reminding them of the importance of complying with speed limits. Persistent concerns identified through Community Speed Watch activity can also assist the wider road safety partnership in identifying locations for additional data collection, enforcement activity or engineering assessments.

The scheme forms part of the wider Vision Zero approach adopted across Essex, which seeks to eliminate deaths and serious injuries on Essex roads by 2040. Community Speed Watch provides local communities with an opportunity to contribute positively towards that objective through education and awareness rather than enforcement.

Volunteer Requirements

To establish or re-establish a Community Speed Watch group, local residents must volunteer directly through the Essex Community Speed Watch programme.

Volunteers:

- Must register with the countywide scheme.
- Receive appropriate training before deployment.
- Must operate only at approved monitoring locations.
- Work in groups and follow prescribed operational procedures.
- Are supported by Community Speed Watch coordinators and partners including Essex Police.

The scheme currently operates countywide with more than 1,000 trained volunteers supporting road safety initiatives across Essex.

Role of Chigwell Parish Councillors

Should Members wish to support the re-establishment of Community Speed Watch activity within Chigwell, the most effective means of doing so would be through encouraging local residents to volunteer and promoting the scheme within their wards.

Members may also wish to consider volunteering personally should they have an interest in road safety and the time available to participate.

Individuals interested in forming or joining a Community Speed Watch group should be directed to: community.speedwatch@essex-fire.gov.uk

Conclusion

At present there is no active Community Speed Watch group operating within Chigwell. Whilst the Parish Council retains ownership of the speed detection equipment previously purchased for the scheme, the success of any future Community Speed Watch activity will depend upon sufficient volunteer interest from within the community.

Community Speed Watch remains a recognised and valued road safety initiative across Essex, providing communities with an opportunity to work alongside road safety partners to raise awareness of speeding concerns and promote safer driving behaviour. Officers will continue to signpost any interested residents to the countywide scheme should enquiries be received.

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