

18 January 2023

Report of	Assistant Director of Place and Client Services	Author	Emily Harrup Jane Thompson Mike Polom
Title	Sustainable Travel Projects Update		
Wards affected	All		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report updates on the City Council's sustainable travel projects and sets out key progress made since the development of "Sustainable Travel – Our Approach". This document outlines two key goals and ten outcomes which were informed by the Strategic Plan objectives, Sustainable Travel policies, the Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP), community engagement feedback and other national and local guidance. The two goals are to:
 - Increase the proportion of short trips made via sustainable transport
 - Reduce air pollutants in the Air Quality Management areas translating into better health
- 1.2 The main report shows that there has been great work undertaken with some significant achievements that are set out below. Amongst the highlights are the lowering of pollution levels in Air Quality Management Areas, successes with the ongoing and expanding e-Cargo bike projects, and the creation of Colchester's first e-car club by the City Council. Another significant piece of work is the current work on the Active Travel Supplementary Planning Document, which will support Essex County Council (as highway authority) in their bids for Government funding for Colchester infrastructure projects, as well as enable Colchester City Council (as planning authority) to require developers to contribute towards the strategically aligned and planned infrastructure and facility improvements.
- 1.3 A key finding from the community engagement undertaken has shown that residents are willing to travel sustainability if they are given the right infrastructure and support.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To help the community in their desire to travel sustainably by supporting the work of the Sustainable Travel team in working with the County Council and partners to deliver infrastructure and projects to enable travel behaviour change.
- 2.2 Support the progress being made by the City Council in delivering the key goals and outcomes for sustainable travel in Colchester.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 To ensure that the Panel is content with the progress made to date and has the chance to feedback on ongoing work.

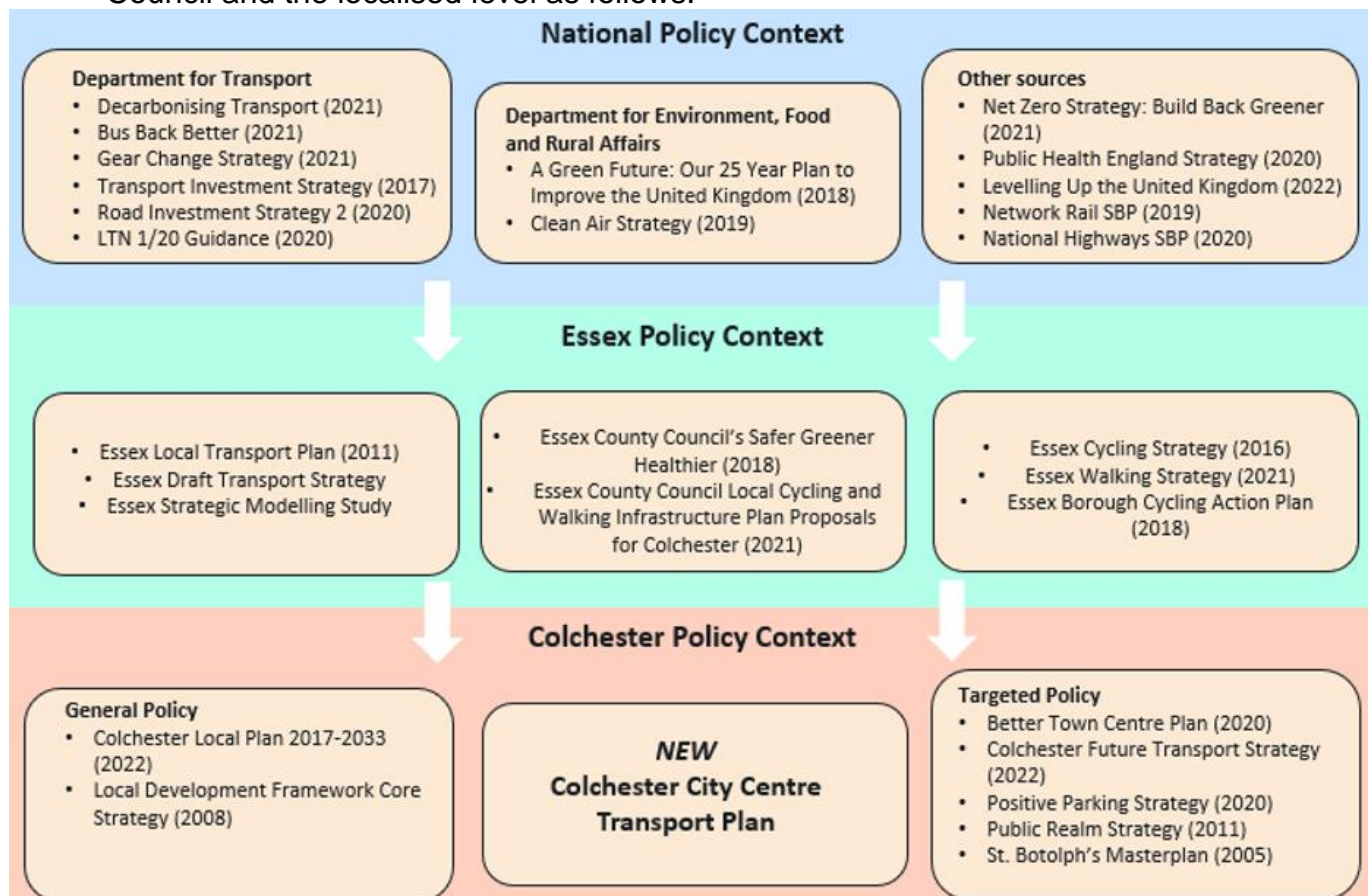
4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Not Applicable

5.0 Sustainable Travel Progress/Updates

5.1 Background

- 5.1.1 Essex County Council (ECC), as the Highway and Transport Authority, are responsible for developing sustainable travel infrastructure to support an increase in walking, cycling and public transport use. The County Council works with Government bodies to develop policies to ensure infrastructure is provided, and is the responsible authority to make funding bids, for example the Active Travel Fund administered by Active Travel England.
- 5.1.2 ECC translate this requirement to the City, Borough and District Councils in Essex to develop sustainable travel infrastructure at the local level. In Colchester this is outlined in their Colchester Future Transport Strategy. However, the Council (and our Sustainable Travel team's work) influences, complements, supports and builds on the work of ECC and we work in close collaboration with them. Our own projects, which build on those of the County Council, go beyond physical highway infrastructure changes to also provide facilities, support and services to enable behaviour change locally. The aligned work, and close partnership approach, has resulted in Colchester successfully achieving a high level of investment, delivering more schemes and being a front runner with innovations and momentum in sustainable travel compared to other towns or cities in Essex.
- 5.1.3 Our Sustainable Travel team have regular meetings and dialogue with ECC and other partners to ensure Government, regional, county and local policies and aspirations are reflected in the work we do, to ensure policies are joined-up and projects are carried out which make the best use of ours and our partners' resources.
- 5.1.4 The policy context therefore flows down from national level, through County level, to City Council and the localised level as follows:



5.2 Our Goals

- 5.2.1 At the April 2022 Panel meeting the Panel reviewed the Council's approach to delivering sustainable travel for Colchester through two goals, and ten key outcomes. The two goals are to:
1. Increase the proportion of short trips made via sustainable transport
 2. Reduce air pollutants in the Air Quality Management areas translating into better health
- 5.2.2 In order to meet our goals, we work to develop, secure and deliver a number of developer and externally funded infrastructure and behaviour change projects. We also work closely with the County Council and other partners to lobby for investment in Colchester and influence and input into proposed plans and strategies such as the Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan (LCWIP), Town Deal, City Centre Master Planning etc.
- 5.2.2 The current projects we are delivering are being funded by £880.5k in grants successfully secured from government departments such as Defra, £1.7m secured through s106 agreements for projects in east Colchester, £120k from partners involved in Fixing the Link, £90k from partners involved in helping to deliver the Secure Bike Park project and approximately £30k per annum in local business and organisation contributions to host the Colchester Travel Plan Club.
- 5.2.3 The below outlines the projects and progress we have made during 2022 towards achieving our two goals and associated ten outcomes. These all contribute to meeting the needs of the community identified through our engagement over the past three years.

5.3 Community Engagement and Partnership Working

- 5.3.1 Over the last three years we have carried out community engagement to help inform the development of our projects. Genuine engagement has "sense checked" our direction and provided an evidence base for what the community really want; and identify how we need to support them to use active travel.
- 5.3.2 We follow an Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach to our work, being led by what the community tell us they want and need, co-producing solutions and letting the community lead where possible. We work with many different partners some (not all) of which are listed below:
- ECC Sustainable Travel team, Highways (Infrastructure) and Passenger Transport (Bus, P&R)
 - City Centre BID
 - Transport East
 - University of Essex
 - Clean Air Colchester
 - Colchester Bike Kitchen
 - Colchester Cycle Campaign
 - Colchester eCargo Bike delivery service
 - Colchester Institute
 - Destination Colchester
 - Enform
 - Enterprise car club
 - ESNEFT
 - GO4 Café/New Town Bike Kitchen
 - NEECGG
 - NHS and patient participation groups
 - Residents' Associations
 - Tier the e-scooter and e-bike provider
 - Town and parish Councils
 - Civic Society
 - Walk Colchester

- 5.3.3 During 2022 we attended 6 community events, talking to over 800 local residents. 200 people tried an eCargo Bike and 170 signed up for updates on our shared transport projects.
- 5.3.4 Of the top three concerns highlighted in relation to cycling, the overwhelming message from the community (again) in 2022 was fear of cycling on the roads. Lack of signage and bike security and theft were the second and third concern. The top concern regarding the lack of segregated and joined up infrastructure reflects trends elsewhere and remains the main barrier stopping people from cycling in Colchester. This needs to be tackled if genuine travel choice is to be provided and highlights the importance in delivering the Active Travel Fund, Town Deal and Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan (LCWIP) cycle routes to enable people who don't currently cycle to have the confidence to try it.
- 5.3.5 ECC has produced an LCWIP which includes a number of routes for investment in Colchester. The first route to be implemented is the east-west route from Lexden Road to East Hill as part of the County Council's success in obtaining Active Travel Funds from government. This scheme will be followed by the East Hill to University and Greenstead route, which is also supported by the City Council's Town Deal. The Town Deal project includes other investment in the city centre to improve the walking and cycling environment.
- 5.3.6 We also took a barriers map to each event asking the public to place coded stickers on areas of Colchester where they found a barrier to cycling, whether lack of cycle paths, lack of parking, lighting, physical obstacles etc. The map can be viewed here: [2022 Events Map – Cycle Barriers Map](#) This will be shared with ECC and partners to contribute to the evidence base to help support funding for new and improved infrastructure.
- 5.3.7 On the positive side 88% of those asked said that they would definitely cycle for more journeys of 1 to 3 miles if there was more cycle infrastructure separated from cars 95% of those asked said they would replace some car journeys with eCargo Bikes if they had access to a shared scheme. The other 5 top areas of support that the community said they wanted was:
1. Guidance on how to maintain their bike and do simple repairs
 2. A detailed map showing the cycle infrastructure
 3. Information on where to park their bike securely when out
 4. Advice on cycling with children
 5. Support to build confidence to cycle.
- 5.3.8 A number of these issues were able to be addressed by the Council attendees at the events through signposting to our own projects or services provided by local partners (such as ECC, Colchester Bike Kitchen etc). Those that we don't currently have funding for, for example an up to date cycle network map we have incorporated into a funding bid to Defra, outcome pending February 2023.

5.4 Colchester Projects Related to "Goal 1" (*Increase the proportion of short trips made via sustainable transport*)

- 5.4.1 To generate more uptake of walking and cycling for short journeys such as work, shopping, school drop off (etc) the Council has:
- Lobbied for investment in sustainable transport infrastructure with the City Council responding to ECC's consultations on Park and Ride service and Bus Service Improvement Plan as well as assisting with the production of the Colchester Future Delivery Strategy.
 - Started reviewing the adopted Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans with ECC to better reflect where investment is needed.

- Worked with ECC in designing and delivering the Active Travel Fund routes, for example the east-west route from Lexden Road to East Hill.
- Identified funding and worked with others in helping to implement Town Deal LCWIP4 route which joins the east-west route at East Hill and travels to the University and Greenstead.
- Identified student development S106 contributions for projects to help walking and cycling in east Colchester and planning the projects' delivery, for example the Walking with Words wayfinding project delivering an innovative experience and encouraging more people to walk the route from the University and the student accommodations to the city centre and including a link from the University to Greenstead.
- Planned and identified around £120,000 funding for Fixing the Link phase 2 which encourages walking between the main rail station and the city centre, which will see trees in planters installed in North Station Road, and designs prepared for a planting and lighting scheme on Albert roundabout
- Worked with Planning colleagues in developing the Active Travel SPD which will require developers to contribute towards active travel infrastructure and measures.

5.4.2 The City Centre eCargo Bike delivery service is part of a £188k funded Defra project to support residents to walk, cycle or use public transport to get into town or to park in outlying car parks. This will reduce driving through the AQMA as well as support economic growth in the City Centre as shoppers can purchase bulky items with the confidence, they can be delivered home, as well as staying in Colchester for longer to make use of leisure and entertainment facilities. The project includes developing logistics software that will interface with parcel lockers in Napier Road car park and at the park and ride, allowing shoppers to choose multi-modal active travel journeys.

- Ran a trial Christmas Delivery Service in the weeks leading up to Christmas 2022. Shoppers were able to drop their shopping at a town centre logistics hub in Priory Walk, and have it delivered to their home for a small charge.
- We worked closely with the City Centre BID to promote and market the trial alongside their Christmas promotions.
- The main focus of the trial was to test logistics software, route optimisation and speak to members of the public to gauge interest and understand their needs.
- The trial replaced 61 miles of van deliveries with electric cargo bikes, equating to at least 30kg of CO2 saved and fewer vehicles congesting the city centre.
- Response from the public was overwhelmingly positive, with 100% of feedback rating the service between 8 and 10 out of 10, and 100% of feedback stating users would recommend the service to a family or friend.

5.4.3 The Council has also been working to help and support more businesses trialling eCargo Bikes and adopting sustainable transport options. By the end of 2022 our eCargo bike fleet had collectively ridden 30,000 miles saving 9 tonnes of CO2e. In addition we have:

- Refreshed the eCargo Bike champions, with businesses borrowing a bike on short term loan becoming Champions to replace inactive ones including GO4 café/Urban Beauty and Raymond Grey – Carpenter.
- Provided free short-term loans of eCargo Bikes to Together We Grow with discussions underway with Colchester Garrison, Youth Enquiry Service, Maldon district Council and Provide.
- Presented at National Cycle City Active City Sheffield conference and ECC's Autumn Sustainability conference
- The Colchester Travel Plan Club continued to work closely with over 15 local businesses and organisations as paying Travel Plan Club Members (and 100 associate members) to develop and implement workplace travel plans. This has included a new

site-wide travel plan for the University of Essex and Northern Gateway and developing a new travel plan for Colchester City Council.

- The Travel Plan Club officer has advised planning colleagues on planning applications which require a travel plan, including engaging directly with the applicants to ensure their developments have active and sustainable travel at their core.
- Continued to work with bus operators to negotiate and implement discounts for Travel Plan Club members, especially in a world of more flexible working.
- Created a pool ebike/ecargo bike booking system for staff for the return to Rowan House as well as supporting Shrub End and Highwoods Country Park with move to ebikes/cargo bikes

5.4.4 Our eCargo bike champions continue to support us in making cargo bikes more visible in Colchester and have enabled us to develop some strong business cases for using eCargo bikes which will help us promote the short term loan scheme in 2023. We are working in partnership with The City Centre BID to promote and develop the City Centre eCargo Bike Delivery service to encourage business to business use of the service as well as for use by customers. The Colchester Travel Plan Club continues to be a conduit to engage with businesses and make them aware of all of our sustainable travel projects. We are regularly sought out by other councils for advice on how we are setting up and running our eCargo bike projects as well as being asked to present at conferences. We have been asked to participate in the DfT'S Local Authority ecargo bike grant round table discussion in February 2023.

5.4.5 To make sure people are aware of the cycle network leading to greater use of them the Council has been working on ways to promote this and publicise it so that information is more widely available. At the events we attended this year we promoted the cycle network.; however, progress with this outcome is hampered by lack of an up-to-date cycle infrastructure map. ECC's cycle map was last updated in 2016 and there are no funds to update it at present in the difficult financial climate. Consequently, we have applied for funding from Defra to create a new and up to date map for Colchester.

5.4.6 Notwithstanding the above challenge, some 338 Monkwick residents have been directly engaged with and a further 1,542 indirectly through a small Defra funded project to promote the off-road walking and cycle route from Monkwick to the City Centre. Legacy projects include an information board to show the route and mark the start of the route that many residents weren't aware of. The signposting along the route is also going to be improved.

5.4.7 To ensure that people can feel more confident about locking their bikes safely in the city centre, and feel more willing to cycle into the city, the Council has been working on several projects. The progress during 2022 includes the following:

- A premises was identified for the Secure Bike Park (SBP), an operator commissioned and around £90,000 funding identified to deliver this project. This is now in final legal stages and should complete soon ready to open in Spring 2023.
- The Secure Bike Park agreement has also been evolved so that the premises will also host the Colchester Bike Kitchen and shared eCargo Bike hub.
- In line with the opening of the Secure Bike Park a review will be carried out of the existing on-street parking provision to make cycle parking safer and more convenient for all of the city's shoppers and visitors.

5.4.8 There has also been work undertaken to deliver the outcome "to promote widespread take up and recognition of the benefits of cycle training to build confidence, safer cycling practices". In 2022:

- Over 100 adults have received a free Cycle Training session funded by our Defra funding, free cycle training will continue into 2023.

- Working in partnership with ECC and Anglia Ruskin University, pupils and parents were engaged through focus groups and online surveys to identify what further support could be provided to enhance Bikeability training for year 6 children. 227 survey responses were received, 96 children participated in a focus group, 6 interventions have been identified and will be tested with 4 schools in early 2023.

5.5 Colchester Projects Related to “Goal 2” (Reduce *air pollutants in the Air Quality Management areas translating into better health*)

- 5.5.1 To support residents and businesses to use a range of shared transport on a pay as you go basis, in 2022:
- Colchester’s first electric car club car offering pay as you go driving was launched in November 2022 in Priory St car park. A second will follow in another Town Centre location. There are 17 members so far.
 - A Council led eBike/eCargo bike hub is being developed to be based in the SBP. The ebikes/cargo bikes were used at the summer 2022 events for Try Outs.
 - We are supporting the GO4 café and community volunteers to set up a volunteer led shared eCargo Bike hub, the bikes have been ordered and storage currently being investigated.
 - We are currently exploring an on street eBike hire scheme with Tier
 - We have inputted into ECC’s plans to develop a Shared Transport Hubs policy and supported them and Tier with the onstreet eScooter scheme
- 5.5.2 These projects are all contributing towards providing a range of affordable and flexible shared transport options to give the local community transport choice without having the cost and hassle of owning multiple types of vehicle. The car club vehicles are the first in a network that will develop through developer section106 commitments and through partnerships with the business community. Through setting up the community led eCargo Bike hub, all the learning is being collated to develop a guide to support other local communities wanting to do similar. These are our first steps towards a longer term ambition of being able to offer the community Mobility As A Service (MaaS) where all forms of shared transport including public transport are integrated through one platform making booking a complete journey using multiple shared transport modes seamless for the user.
- 5.5.3 There is national evidence that access to shared transport schemes reduces car use, reduces emissions and benefits health. (CoMoUK)
- 5.5.4 To advocate more people switching off their engines when stationary, the Council has:
- Completed psychological based messaging on No Idling signage study in Brook Street and Eastgates with a peak switch off of 26% evidenced; an increase in 11% from baseline figures.
 - Worked with 23 local schools providing assemblies, school’s tool kit, resources and banners
 - Worked with businesses such as McDonalds, Hiscox and St Helena Hospice
 - Developed a resident toolkit that has been used by St Mary’s Resident association, Mill Road Patient Participation Group and many individual local residents
 - Developed a no-idling policy which can be shared with local businesses and organisations to implement on their sites.
 - Exploring sites for murals to emphasis importance of clean air in the streetscape
- 5.5.5 CCC’s CAREless Pollution campaign received national recognition at the 2022 Edie Sustainability Leaders awards gaining highly commended for Consumer Engagement/Marketing campaign of the year.

- 5.5.6 The different activities are working towards a sustainable legacy where residents, businesses and schools will have access to a range of materials and resources to carry out their own activities to discourage engine idling with support from voluntary group Clean Air Colchester, Colchester Travel Plan Club and the CCC Transport & Sustainability team. We will be seeking planning permission to put the no idling signage up permanently in Brook St, Eastgates and potentially other locations in the AQMA. Evaluation of the CAREless Pollution campaign will commence in April 2023.
- 5.5.7 To advance the outcome of “Understanding with ECC and CCC what is needed to transition to EV’s” The Council has:
- Attended a workshop with ECC to discuss strategy development
 - NEPP had a stall at the Eco Festival to gather feedback from people interested in EV’s. 22 survey responses were received.
 - Engaged with other private sector and local authorities who have installed EV Rapid Charging stations (working with Colchester Amphora Energy Ltd, ECC and NEPP)
 - Analysed electricity grid capacity, future supplies and demands (engaging with UKPN)
 - Looked at early options for locations for EV rapid charge points, and the market context within which this could be delivered
- 5.5.8 To facilitate that residents’ feel more supported and confident about transitioning to use an electric vehicle in Colchester, it is currently considered that this is an area to develop once a strategy is available and requires some dedicated resource. However, the electric vehicle market is moving increasingly rapidly, and naturally the marketplace will also lead on this behaviour change as vehicles become more frequently seen on roads, better understood, and myths begin to be unwrapped.
- 5.5.9 To increase the Shared Transport choices that are available to all sections of our community regardless of income:
- We attended 6 community events across different areas of Colchester offering eCargo Bike Try Outs this included Monkwick, Newtown and The Mayors Diversity Festival to ensure that we are reaching out to the underserved areas of our community
 - The eCargo bike hubs will be priced to cover their costs rather than make a profit.
 - The car club offers reduced membership for residents on low income.
- 5.5.10 Shared transport schemes as well as offering more sustainable transport options offer access to a range of transport without the cost of owning it. Costs can be controlled due to the services being pay as you go. This will support the community to reduce personal car use and car ownership as well as reducing household costs. Providing affordable services that can be accessed by all has been central to our shared transport projects. Once the projects are launched we will be looking at how they can be promoted and extended out into other areas of our community.
- 5.5.8 The Council has undertaken some targeted work to promote cleaner air and behaviour changes so that we can improve air quality. Generally across the borough air quality is improving, however some hotspots remain and in 2021 three locations exceeded the 40 µg/m3 air quality objective’s these were Mersea Road, Brook Street and Osborne Street. All these locations are within the borough’s declared air quality management areas.

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 6.1 This report has no specific equality, diversity and human rights implications, however sustainable travel can help support families and people on low income by enabling options

to travel to work, education or services without the need to own and run a private car. Examples include the Get Monkwick Moving project.

7. Strategic Plan References

7.1 The projects outlined in this report help meet three of the objectives contained in the strategic plan :

<i>Tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Respond to the Climate Emergency</i> • <i>Conserve and enhance biodiversity</i> • <i>Enable more opportunity for walking and cycling around Colchester.</i>
<i>Creating safe, healthy and active communities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Build on community strengths and assets</i> • <i>Tackle the causes of inequality and support our most vulnerable people</i> • <i>Provide opportunities for young people.</i>
<i>Growing a better economy so everyone benefits</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Enable Economic Recovery from Covid-19 ensuring all residents benefit from growth</i> • <i>Work with partners to deliver a shared vision for a vibrant town</i> • <i>Create an environment that attracts inward investment to Colchester and help businesses to flourish.</i>

8. Consultation

8.1 There are no consultation considerations for this paper, although many of the projects referenced have community engagement elements within them and success in promoting sustainable travel will involve engagement and education of others to influence behaviour change more widely.

9. Publicity Considerations

9.1 There are no specific publicity considerations.

10. Financial implications

10.1 There are no specific financial implications from this paper, however the projects have attracted significant investment, for example

- Over £4.5m for the Active Travel/ Town Deal LCWIP4 route from East Hill to University/ Greenstead
- Around £2.5m Active Travel route from Lexden Road to East Hill
- £1.7m s106 funds mainly from student accommodation providers in east Colchester enabling a number of projects to be implemented for example Walking with Words and Animating King Edward Quay
- £800.5k for a number of Defra funded Clean Air projects
- £120k fixing the Link phase 2 project
- £90k Secure Bike Park in city centre
- £30k per annum to host and coordinate the Colchester Travel Plan Club
- Additionally Town Deal projects including those improving public realm encouraging more walking and cycling.

11. Community Safety Implications

11.1 There are no specific community safety implications from this paper.

12. Health and Safety Implications

12.1 There are no health and safety implications from this paper, however sustainable and active travel helps increase activity and access to work, education and leisure meaning a benefit to physical and mental health. Also, cleaner air will help reduce the 1 in 20 deaths currently attributed to poor air quality in the city. (Public Health England)

13. Risk Management Implications

13.1 There are no risk management implications from this paper.

14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

14.1 The projects and initiatives outlined in this report are all relevant to tackling climate change and/or improving the environment as well as increasing the level of sustainable transport, allowing people to reduce their car use. Actions and projects highlighted in the report all have co-benefits outside of environmental improvements for residents.

Background Papers

[Sustainable Transport – Our Approach](#)

[Colchester Future Transport Strategy](#)