

Extract from the draft minutes of the Policy and Public Initiatives Panel meeting of 31 July 2019

28. Public Initiatives

Councillor Jowers (by reason of being a member of Essex County Council) declared a non-pecuniary interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5).

Councillor Robert Johnstone (of Myland Community Council) addressed the Panel to suggest that the Council investigate ways to recommend improvements to the manner in which the Highways Authority installs cycleways on existing footpaths, especially where this results in a mixed-use, unsegregated cycleway/footpath.

Councillor Johnstone described the example of the mixed-use foot/cycleway on Mile End Road, raising concerns regarding the lack of consultation, poor planning and problematic implementation. The concerns raised included lack of transparency regarding funding, and the lack of before and after traffic studies to assess the impact of the installation. Only one 'information' (rather than consultation) session had been held prior to work commencing, and public dissatisfaction was such that the design was then altered. Implementation work lasted 28 weeks, rather than the 14 weeks scheduled. The approximate cost was £0.75m, funded by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP).

The Panel were informed of the range of dangers to cyclists and pedestrians from unsegregated cycle/footways and Local Transport Note 1/12 was noted, regarding its summary of the potential disadvantage of using unsegregated cycle/footways.

The Panel discussed Councillor Johnstone's request, as to whether there should be a recommendation submitted to Cabinet that the matters raised be formally reviewed and, if so, how this should go forward.

Panel members agreed that there were examples in Colchester of problems arising from the installation of certain cycleways. The Panel noted that the installation of cycleways was a matter for Essex County Council, as the local Highways Authority, and that there was little that Colchester Borough Council could do directly regarding problems with the way in which installation is conducted. A member informed the Panel that Councillor Kevin Bentley (Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Infrastructure) had agreed to examine the use of 'shared spaces' and demarcation options. It was suggested that a letter of support for Councillor Bentley's work on this could be written by the Council.

A Panel member asked whether any information had been provided to Colchester Borough Council by Essex County Council regarding the cycleway installation on Mile End Road. It was stated that local consultation should be a necessary part of any future plans to install cycleways and that it would be good practice for a protocol to be in place for local authorities to advise highways authorities as to where a need for cycleways had been identified.

Councillor Johnstone addressed the Panel to note that Colchester Borough Council was the local planning authority and had powers to direct how cycleways be planned within new developments. One recent development had been permitted with on-pavement cycleways on footpaths, next to 14-metre-wide roads. He stated that Local Transport Note 1/12 guidance had not been followed by Essex County Council regarding cycleways. The Panel noted that Highways Authority views would have been sought as part of the planning process for this.

RECOMMENDED to CABINET that a letter be sent to Essex County Council, supporting the work of Councillor Bentley in examining this issue, noting protocols and statutory consultation rights regarding cycleway installations, and stating Colchester Borough Council's support for segregated cycleways, wherever feasible.