

## Appendix 1.

### Colchester Active Travel Fund Consultation

Letter of response

1 July 2021

Dear Councillor Scott

We are pleased to be consulted on the proposals for Colchester as outlined in the consultation documents.

Working towards the right solution for Colchester needs everyone's input and we look forward to continuing the work of the steering group to ensure the views of the business community, accessibility groups, walking and cycling campaign groups and other stakeholders are considered to be able to implement the proposals, which will take forward CBC and ECC policies. It is critical that as detailed schemes emerge there is ongoing close working relationships, and we look forward to continuing to work with you on detailed designs to ensure they are the right solution for Colchester.

As you are aware we carry out and promote initiatives which give people the option to travel actively, for example, we are planning for a secure cycle park and loaning e-cargo bikes to help businesses. These measures will go some way to help reduce congestion in the town as people use these measures to enable them to take part in active travel. There is a psychological aspect to travelling by sustainable modes of travel, for example, cyclists that are not as proficient require safe environments to make this an attractive and safe travel option. This then creates genuine alternative choices.

Our policy is that all visitors to Colchester are welcome - whether by car, bus, cycling or walking and to be pro-choice, not anti-car.

We can support the core principles and concepts of the proposals on this basis. The investment that would be made into Colchester also represents a significant opportunity to make a real difference, improving the roads for walking and cycling, but also benefitting the public realm if it is done well. We would support such a transformation that aligns with our other strategic priorities, including (but not exhaustive to) air quality and meeting our climate challenge.

We do have some reservations about specific elements, but we are also aware that this is at consultation stage and will undergo further evolution and refinement based on the results of engagement. We also recognise that the detailed designs will be subject to a road safety audit process, ensuring the schemes are safe for all road users. An important aspect of that will be ensuring that the measures do not create more congestion at key junctions, or confused arrangements, that would then cause risks to all road users.

As you are aware Colchester town centre and North Station Road is a conservation area and due regards must be taken when designing the schemes and the impact that the proposals may have on the character and appearance of the historic environment. Colchester's heritage is also a priority for the Council.

Offering safe alternatives to driving is important to give people the choice to leave their cars at home, however for those who still need or wish to drive into Colchester there will still need to be suitable parking provision. Traders will be encouraged to promote the new discounted MiPermit ticket for those shopping in the town centre, and promotion of St Marys car park to Crouch Street business customers will be explored.

We will therefore help support NEPP in reviewing the resident parking provision in the Rawstorn Road area to investigate whether additional loading and short stay provision can be provided, by reallocating space from the resident parking bays at their lesser used times during the daytime. There will be other measures we may be able to look at in due course too, as part of our Councils' collaborative working.

Air quality in the town is an issue, with three declared AQMA areas, and we understand that the active travel proposals will help to reduce pollution levels, especially around schools. This is an important area of work.

We also note that the routes in some cases coincide with intended routes for the Rapid Transport System which will run between the Park & Ride and Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community. This is anticipated to be operating by 2024/25 so all changes must be designed jointly with this, ensuring that multiple works are not required, and the two schemes form one cohesive design.

We understand that school streets proposals are still in concept stage and look forward to hearing how this scheme will give better and safer access for pupils to get to school, possibly reducing through traffic, while not unnecessarily inconveniencing local residents. We would like to be engaged on specific proposals as they emerge and reserve our support for these until such details are received.

We would also emphasise that consultation with local residents and businesses in the directly affected areas should be carried out by direct mail as well as just online as many residents and businesses feel excluded or may miss online only methods.

Yours Sincerely,

Councillor Crow  
Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability  
Colchester Borough Council