

16 November 2020

Report of	Assistant Director of Place and Client Services	Author	Jane Thompson ☎ 508642
Title	Essex County Council Consultation – Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy		
Wards affected	All		

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1. Essex County Council (ECC) is inviting responses to their draft Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (SMoTS). The Strategy considers travel planning for workplaces, residential developments and educational establishments. It details measures and steps ECC take to enable accessibility for all to places of employment and education, including other neighbourhood services such as retail, leisure and health services and delivering health, social and economic benefits to individuals and their communities.

2.0 Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To agree Colchester Borough Council's (CBC) response to the ECC Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy.
- 2.2 To make the representations to the ECC listed under paragraph 8.8

3.0 Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 To influence the content of the SMoTS.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 To not respond to the consultation. This would mean losing the opportunity to influence ECC on their Travel Planning work.

5.0 Background Information

- 5.1 The County Council is seeking views on their draft SMoTS and the different elements and initiatives contained within it.
- 5.2 The issue of sustainable travel is growing in significance at both a national, regional and local level. There has been a constant increase in the importance and weight given to projects and schemes designed to reduce dependence on the private car, and to promote alternative modes of travel.
- 5.3 The SMoTS sets out how the County Council aims to effectively target and adopt different methods of successfully encouraging modal shift, by giving the people of Essex a better choice when it comes to travelling in and around the county. The strategy also aims to facilitate the associated environmental, social and health benefits of better managed congestion.
- 5.4 The SMoTs includes links to policies and guidance which also help to encourage sustainable travel.
- 5.5 The consultation feedback will be used to inform the current Strategy, which will also be maintained and updated on a biennial basis.

6.0 Policy

- 6.1 The strategy takes into account a number of national and local policies, listed as follows –
- 6.2 National Policy Context
- 6.3 Longstanding and new national policy imperatives to increase sustainable and active travel, including funding opportunities eg Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF).
- 6.4 Local Policy Context
- 6.5 Longstanding and new local policy aims and priorities focusing on sustainable and active travel, air quality and inclusive economic growth eg AQMAs, Cycling Strategy 2016, Draft Walking Strategy 2020, Rights of way Improvement Plan, Local Transport Plan, Community Rail Partnership, Local Plans, Essex Design Guide etc

7.0 The Strategy's Aims and Objectives

- 7.1 The aim of the Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy is to reduce the number of private motor vehicles using the highway network during peak travel times. The County Council aims to successfully encourage modal shift by giving the people of Essex a better choice when it comes to travelling in and around the county; as well as trying to alleviate some of the strain on the highway network and deliver the environmental, social and health benefits of better managed network.
- 7.2 The SMoTS objective is to demonstrate the different methods used by ECC and partners to facilitate the increased use of more active and sustainable travel modes available to businesses, residents and schools within Essex; to meet the overarching aim of better managed congestion.
- 7.3 This strategy covers a wide range of activities, with their key objectives outlined below:

- Allow and enable residents to make an informed choice about how they travel for work, school and leisure;
- Improve the health, welfare and safety of all Essex residents by encouraging an active lifestyle through increased walking and cycling;
- Shape future planned growth and development in Local Plans with a range of sustainable travel choices for the movement of goods or people;
- Better management of congestion;
- Embed high quality sustainable alternatives, reducing the need to travel by car and reducing CO₂ and other emissions;
- Promote and support the development of travel options being used to access employment, health and education;
- To consolidate and build on existing Travel Plans developed within the County;
- Contribute to meeting the County Council's Sustainable Travel Business Plan targets that relate to the delivery of transport services.

8.0 The Strategic Elements

8.1 SE1 - Workplace Travel Planning

8.1.1 A Workplace Travel Plan is a long-term travel management strategy, using a package of practical measures designed to reduce single occupancy car use for journeys to and from work and for business travel.

8.1.2 Workplace Travel Planning Initiatives are -

- 1. Consultations on Local Plans – ECC STPT provide recommendations for Local Plans regarding the formulation of policies and their supporting text, which will feed into the design and location of development at the early stages; to ensure integrated sustainable transport options are secured from the outset.
- 2. Recommendations for Planning Applications – ECC STPT provide advice, support and guidance to developers and/or local employers on sustainable travel related matters.
- 3. National Travel Plan Accreditation (Modeshift STARS Business) – working alongside local businesses and employers with 50 or more staff members within Essex to develop Travel Plans that deliver measurable progression in achieving modal shift.

8.2 SE2 Residential Travel Planning

8.2.1 Residential Travel Plans (RTP) are required as part of new residential developments with 250 or more dwellings. The residential travel plan is a working plan which includes several travel plan measures to ensure sustainable means of travel are available to residents

8.2.2 Residential Travel Planning Initiatives are

- Consultations on Local Plans – ECC STPT provide recommendations on Local Plans regarding the formulation of policies and their supporting text, which will feed into the design and location of development at the early stages; to ensure integrated sustainable transport options are secured from the outset.
- Recommendations for Planning Applications – ECC STPT provide advice, support and guidance to housing developers on sustainable travel related matters.
- Residential Travel Information Pack (prepared by ECC) - production and distribution of a sustainable travel booklet to all dwellings on new residential developments, including the provision of bus/rail tickets for free travel (if required).
- ECC Residential Travel Plan Co-ordinator - The role of the ECC Residential Travel Plan Co-ordinator has responsibility for developing and monitoring Residential Travel Plans for

development sites of 250 or more dwellings, secured through the planning process and ensuring that the smarter choice agenda is followed. This person will assist the Residential Travel Plan Co-ordinator employed by the developer and/or transport consultant, to implement the Residential Travel Plan for their specific development site.

8.3 SE3 School Travel Planning

8.3.3 A School Travel Plan (STP) is an active document produced by the whole school community to identify and implement measures to enable all relevant parties to travel by their most suitable and sustainable modes, with associated benefits for the wider community. All schools are encouraged to develop their own Travel Plan and conduct a travel survey at least once per academic year.

8.4 School Travel Planning Initiatives

- Consultations on Local Plans – ECC STPT provide recommendations on Local Plans regarding the formulation of policies and their supporting text, which will feed into the design and location of development at the early stages; to ensure integrated sustainable transport options are secured from the outset.
- Recommendations for Planning Applications – ECC STPT provide advice, support and guidance to developers and/or schools on sustainable travel related matters. A safety audit should be completed if a scheme influences the safety of any user of the highway and would be completed by a team of qualified road safety Engineers.
- Assessment of the travel and transport requirements for young people - Travel data including mode, postcode, barriers and pupil preference for individual schools is derived through the pupil surveys conducted by the teaching staff when each school completes the first stage of their School Travel Plan. The survey data is then used to establish the existing modal split and demand for transport amongst pupils; alongside consultation with key stakeholders within the school community, for example, pupils, parents, staff and governors.
- Audit of Sustainable Travel Infrastructure and Accessibility - The audit of a school's sustainable travel infrastructure is a large-scale undertaking and has only been carried out in a selection of schools so far.

8.5 SE4 Externally funded projects

8.5.1 To contribute towards the reduction of transport related emissions, ECC promote that electric vehicle charging points are available at several workplaces and community spaces across Essex. There are over 140 publicly accessible ChargePoint locations in Essex. Electric Vehicle Charging Points [UK Government OLEV grant schemes](#) being made available at workplaces.

8.6 SE5 Marketing and promotion

8.6.1 Regular marketing and advertising are extremely important to ensure there is an awareness of the Travel Plan. A strong campaign, delivered by the business, school or residents, promoting sustainable modes of travel, is essential to assisting employees, pupils and parents to choose which is the best way to travel to work and/or school; enabling them to do so in the most effective and sustainable way. Examples of current behaviour change campaigns include: Safer, Green Healthier, Stop.Swap.GO!, ForwardMotion South Essex and Love to Ride Essex

8.6.2 Resources available from ECC to assist businesses, schools and residential developments include:

- Advice and consultancy from Sustainable Travel Planning Officers,
- Smarter Travel for Essex Network membership
- Access to various guidance documents and templates to assist in the preparation of a Travel Plan
- Support with promoting national campaigns such as Walking Month (May), Bike Week (June), Catch the Bus Week (July), and Car Free Day (September).
- Free registration and support to utilise the Modeshift STARS Education system,
- Modal-specific safety training, most commonly Bikeability, but also pedestrian safety education
- Alignment with the national Healthy Schools programme, promoting active travel.

8.7 Work carried out by the Borough Council which assists with the Strategy

8.7.1 The Borough Council is pleased that the Strategy, and much of the work being carried out by ECC, complements the work of Colchester Borough Council and the Colchester Travel Plan Club. This strategy will strengthen the already good working relationship with ECC.

8.8 The Strategy could be even better if....

- a. The Borough Council feels that the SMoTS could aspire to do more to help take forward the sustainable travel agenda. The Council suggests that ECC should consider the following -
- b. Review of current policy or guidance and consider it they meet today's sustainability, climate change and healthy lives agenda objectives
- c. A commitment by ECC to carry out an audit of all schools to identify if any highway improvements or targeted measures could be introduced to encourage walking and cycling to school, for example better footways, speed limits on nearby roads, or the introduction of School streets.
- d. Lobby for all schools to carry out and maintain a robust School Travel Plan
- e. A commitment to work with other major trip generators, for example rail stations, to develop their own travel plans.
- f. Encourage local businesses and other organisations to join together to form a Travel Plan Club where members can negotiate discounts for sustainable travel and lobby for sustainable travel improvements.
- g. Consider student accommodation developments as a separate target for a Travel Plan as they will have different needs/requirements than the residential travel plans can offer.
- h. Requirement, as part of the development process, for developers to contribute towards the monitoring as well as membership of their local travel plan club.
- i. Review the Residential Travel Packs as part of development initiative to consider if their provision is the best way to promote sustainable travel among new residents.
- j. Commitment to work with developers to ensure sustainable travel is included in their marketing to new residents
- k. Foster more joint working and data sharing with partners where possible, to help partners develop projects to take forward Travel Planning aims.
- l. Sharing examples of best practice and innovative ideas from across the county, for example Winstree Schools Community Led Design, Stanway.
- m. Including examples of initiatives like school street or similar and clean air zones as these all help promote active travel and improve air pollution and modal shift.
- n. The importance of Higher Education should be emphasised in the strategy alongside Further Education establishments and schools.

- o. Including National Guidance for Behaviour change should be cited in the Strategy <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-change-guide-for-local-government-and-partners>
- p. Including include the NICE guidelines (Air pollution: outdoor air quality and health NICE guideline [NG70]) which bridge both air quality and active travel and car transport. There should be a specific reference to the guidance <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng70>.

9.0 Standard References

There are no particular references to equality, diversity and human rights, consultation or publicity considerations or financial; community safety; health and safety or risk management implications.

10.0 Strategic Plan References

- 10.1 Four main aims of the Strategy closely match the Borough Council's [five strategic imperatives](#) of -
- o Tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability (ECC: Air Quality)
 - o Creating safe, healthy and active communities (Health & Wellbeing)
 - o Delivering homes for people who need them (Quality of life)
 - o Growing a fair economy so everyone benefits (Economic growth)
 - o Celebrating our heritage and culture (Health & Wellbeing)

11.0 Environmental and Sustainability Implications

- 11.1 This Strategy includes aims to reduce carbon emissions from travel by promoting the use of travel plans to reduce the need for travel, encouraging travel using more sustainable modes of travel and travelling outside of peak times. These actions also aim to tackle congestion, reducing air pollution from cars stuck in traffic. These aims align with the third theme of the Borough Council's [Climate Emergency Action Plan](#) (Planning, Development & Sustainable Travel).

Background Papers

The ECC Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy can be found [here](#)