

24 February 2022

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Assistant Director of Place and Client Services</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Jane Thompson Emily Harrup ☎ 508642</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Sustainable Travel: Our Approach and work to date</b>		
<b>Wards affected</b>	<b>All</b>		

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report presents the Council's work on promoting sustainable travel. It outlines how sustainable travel is a key part embedded in the Council's Strategic Plan, and how this is linked in with the aims of work carried out by Essex County Council on sustainable travel.
- 1.2 Engagement to date on sustainable travel is also outlined to show how there are both barriers to sustainable travel (such as cost and lack of suitable infrastructure), but also demand from residents to travel more sustainably (for example 68% interested in shared sustainable transport schemes).
- 1.3 Over the past year, the Council has developed a strategic approach to begin to outline the goals and outcomes of the Council's workstreams on sustainable travel. These are associated with increasing the proportion of short journeys made by sustainable travel in Colchester, as well as delivering improvements in air quality.
- 1.4 The report shows how the Council's activities, in the past, present and future, link to the delivery of outcomes and goals. Several notable workstreams contribute to this such as:
  - Fixing the Link
  - Active Travel Fund
  - Town Deal investment in sustainable travel
  - Secure cycle parking facility
  - Shared bike hubs
  - Colchester eCargo bike library
  - Clean Air for Colchester

## 2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To note and support the strategic approach and the development of the goals and objectives in relation to sustainable travel, and how these align with the Council's workstreams on sustainable travel that are delivered with partners such as Essex County Council.

## 3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 The report is just to note and for no decisions to be made.

## 4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Not applicable

## 5. Background Information

### Strategic and policy context

- 5.1 The Council has had a focus on supporting journeys made by sustainable travel for many years. Sustainable travel has many beneficial outcomes including reduced emissions, improving physical and mental health, and contributing to boosting the economy. It is a key focus of the Council's Strategic Plan 2020-23 and a theme within the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan 2021-23. Facilitating sustainable travel is also a key part of the delivery within the Town Deal, with the planned investment to improve the walking and cycling routes from the Town Centre to Greenstead and University of Essex, along with the provision of bikes for Greenstead residents.
- 5.2 To deliver the numerous projects and actions to promote and encourage sustainable travel, the Council has developed good collaboration with Essex County Council (ECC) as the Highway and Transport Authority, alongside other relevant partners for example Transport East and the rail operator. ECC have secured investment through the Active Travel Fund, to improve cycling links across Colchester and this will link in with work occurring as part of the Town Deal.
- 5.3 ECC are in the process of producing the Colchester Future Transport Strategy (CFTS) and we worked closely with ECC in developing its priorities and assessment tool which will assist with measuring schemes ready for investment prioritisation and supporting their work in delivering schemes which promote sustainable travel. Our work aligns with the CFTS approach. ECC's Colchester Future Transport Strategy aim is
- 'To transform Colchester into a place which prioritises active and safe sustainable travel to bring about health, environmental and economic benefits.'*
- 5.4 There are several national government policies and funds, alongside strategies and initiatives being delivered by ECC, that support sustainable travel in Colchester. A summary is included below, and full documents provided in background papers and appendix.

### National Government:

- **Bus Back Better Strategy** – Setting out the vision for promoting bus travel in England, including aims to develop greener buses, more efficient services and building back after Covid.
- **Clean Air Strategy** – Outlining how different sources of air pollution will be tackled from transport, home, farming and industry
- **Decarbonising Transport – A better, greener Britain** – Government vision for decarbonising all forms of transport from buses, trains, boats, planes and personal transport (e.g. cars, vans).
- **Gear Change – A bold vision for walking and cycling** – Vision outlining promotion of walking and cycling, and how local authorities will be included within this work
- **Funding pots for sustainable modes of travel** – such as the Air Quality Grant Programme organised by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

## Essex County Council

- **Essex Climate Action Commission 'Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral' report** – In the report, the commission made several recommendations for promoting sustainable modes of travel.
- **Colchester Future Transport Strategy** – Setting out how investment will be targeted in Colchester and the priorities for each mode using a zonal approach
- **Essex Cycling Strategy** – A strategy to increase the proportion of journeys made by bike and therefore reducing car trips
- **Essex Walking Strategy** – A strategy to increase the proportion of journeys made on foot and therefore reducing car trips
- **Colchester Cycling Action Plan** – Plans which show how investment in cycling will be prioritised
- **Essex Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans** – Plans which show how investment in walking and cycling routes will be prioritised.
- **E-scooter pilot scheme** – Colchester is one of three district councils supporting the Spin e-scooter pilot that is being facilitated by Essex County Council

### Evidence base and engagement on sustainable travel

5.5 The Council's evidence base on barriers and demand for sustainable travel has been developed over time, through engagement carried out through several of the Council's sustainable travel projects as well as the CFTS consultation. Most recently at engagement events carried out in 2021 such as the Eco Festival 2021, the Women's Tour of Britain 2021, and via "on street" discussions, the sustainable travel team identified that residents face several barriers to sustainable travel. These include:

- **Lack of walking and cycling infrastructure** – Such as cycle lanes, safe crossing points, secure cycle parking
- **Expensive or unavailable sustainable transport options** – Such as residents not owning bikes
- **Poor air quality and environment** – making it unpleasant for residents to walk and cycle
- **Poor health of residents** – Residents feeling they lack the fitness to walk and cycle
- **Lack of confidence/perceived safety** – Residents not feeling confident to cycle on the road, and being concerned about road safety

5.6 Where residents highlighted 'physical' barriers (e.g. damaged paths/roads, lack of cycle lanes) to sustainable travel, we got them to indicate where these issues existed directly onto a map. This enabled them to pinpoint specific issues and this information has been shared with ECC.

5.7 Through engagement, residents have indicated that they are interested in using sustainable travel to get around Colchester more and are concerned about the impact motorised vehicles have on air quality. Several statistics that indicate this are shown below from engagement over the last 2 years:

- **68% interested in shared sustainable transport schemes** (i.e. electric bikes, electric cargo bikes and electric car club) – From survey data collected from respondents via the Eco Festival, door knocking and local networks in September 2021
- **87% concerned about pollution levels in Colchester** – Based on responses to the Clean Air for Colchester surveys carried out in 2019-2020

- **84% of Monkwick residents want to walk and cycle more** – based on respondents engaged as part of the ‘Get Monkwick moving’ project in Summer 2021
- **37% of respondents want electric vehicle charging points in car parks** – Based on respondents to the Positive Parking Strategy survey completed in 2020

## **Sustainable Travel – Our approach to date**

- 5.8 Due to the high number, and diversity of projects and workstreams we influence and carry out, it is considered beneficial to map these out, to help identify interlinkages between them and develop a clear vision for promoting and supporting sustainable travel in Colchester and communicate this in a single place.
- 5.9 Officers have begun this process to identify the sustainable travel workstreams the Council is involved and started to identify potential goals and outcomes of the work.
- 5.10 This report highlights the progress that has been made in this process. The goals are:

### **Goal 1: Increase the proportion of short trips made by sustainable transport**

- Outcome 1: More uptake of walking and cycling for short journeys such as for work, shopping, school drop-off.
- Outcome 2: More businesses trialling eCargo bikes and opting for sustainable transport options for regular use.
- Outcome 3: People are aware of the walking and cycling network leading to greater use of routes.
- Outcome 4: People feel confident about locking up their bikes safely in the town centre, so feel more willing to cycle into town.
- Outcome 5: Widespread take up and recognition of the benefits of cycle training to build confidence, safer cycling practices and increase the number of journeys made by bike.

### **Goal 2: Reduction in air pollutants in the air quality management areas translating into better health**

- Outcome 6: Residents and businesses use a range of sustainable shared transport options on a pay as you go basis.
  - Outcome 7: More people switching off their engines when stationary.
  - Outcome 8: Understanding within Colchester Borough Council and Essex County Council as to how the electric vehicle transition should be promoted in Colchester.
  - Outcome 9: Residents understand and feel more supported and confident about transitioning to use an electric vehicle in Colchester.
  - Outcome 10: Shared transport choices are accessible to all sections of our community regardless of income.
- 5.11 We aim to address these goals and outcomes through the Council’s different workstreams outlined in our activities section 5.12. Future work to help achieve the goals and outcomes is outlined in Appendix 1.

## Sustainable Travel – Our activities – Past and Present

- 5.12 The Council engages in a variety of different activities to promote and support sustainable travel in Colchester, many of which involve collaboration with key partners and individuals. These are highlighted below, and grouped under two main headings:

### Sustainable travel infrastructure workstreams and achievements

- **Lobby for investment** in sustainable transport infrastructure by working with others on strategic documents, new developments and masterplans. Recent examples where we have influenced policy are Transport East's Transport Strategy consultation, ECC's Bus Service Improvement Plan consultation, Strategic Walking and Cycling plans, the town centre master planning work and advising on planning applications.
- **Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs)** - Working alongside Essex County Council to deliver sustainable travel infrastructure which set out investment in a network of routes to encourage sustainable travel. This work has enabled ECC to be among the first to present agreed LCWIP plans for town in Essex to Government, putting Colchester in a good position in encouraging investment in infrastructure in Colchester.
- **Active Travel routes in the town centre** being delivered using around £3.6m of Government funding, with Colchester gaining the highest allocation in Essex.
- **Town Deal** - Working with ECC to deliver the LCWIP route 4 from town centre to Greenstead and University. The total costs are around £5m, with ECC's Active Travel Fund (ATF) providing £1.3m and complementing the Town Deal funding of around £3m, with further contributions from S106 agreements.
- **S106 contributions** secured which require that infrastructure supporting and promoting sustainable travel is provided as part of new developments, for example the University accommodations providing S106 funds for walking and cycling improvements in the vicinity of their developments contributing to around £1,500,000 towards sustainable travel projects
- **Fixing the Link** between the Colchester rail station and the town centre to encourage more people to walk the route. This initiative, which included wayfinding and public realm improvements, was one of the first in the country to link up the rail station to the town centre. This has included wayfinding flags, elephants to mark the routes as well as historical information bronze plaques, and the second phase is about to be launched.
- **Secure cycle parking** facility being provided in the town centre. This is expected to be opened in the spring and will provide space to park around 40 bikes, where owners will book a bike parking space via an app. The facility is funded by the Borough Council, ECC and Safer Colchester Partnership and operated by Spokesafe an established London bike parking operator.
- **Colchester Bike Kitchen** will be present in the secure cycle parking facility, providing a community bike maintenance facility supporting bike owners with tools and direction to learn how to maintain their own bikes meaning more bikes on the road and less in the shed.
- **Shared transport hub** being planned in the town centre, which will provide residents with a pay as you go option to use bikes, electric bikes (ebikes) eCargo bikes and an electric car club with two vehicles. This had been funded by DEFRA with £91.7k.
- **The Orbital** - management and promotion of the Colchester Orbital encouraging more people to walk the public rights of way. The Orbital maps for walking and cycling have been produced and are available online. Hard copies of the maps are being printed. Waymarking discs have been sourced and are with the countryside team to install on Council green spaces. Discussion about the removal of some barriers along the Orbital are being discussed with ECC's Public Rights of Way team.

## Promoting sustainable travel workstreams and achievements

- **Managing the Colchester Travel Plan Club** to provide support to over 60 organisations in creating travel plans that support sustainable travel to work. A lot of recent work has been going into the CBC travel plan that is hoped to act as a leading travel plan example to share with Colchester Borough Homes and other member organisations
- **Supporting improvements and investment in public transport** by supporting ECC on their Bus Service Improvement Plan initiative.
- Working with ECC and Spin, the e-scooter provider, on the **e-scooter trial** in Colchester to ensure its success. There have now been around 250,000 journeys in the urban area which is a great achievement.
- **Colchester eCargo bike library** project to support businesses and local organisations to make the switch to electric cargo (eCargo) bikes for their operations. Over 12,500 miles have been travelled by the Council and the project champions using the eCargo bikes in just over a year. Case studies from the champions are being drafted and will be shared through business networks such as the Colchester Business Enterprise Agency (Colbea) to continue to increase uptake of the eCargo bikes and promote the Council's short term loan eCargo bike offer.
- **Providing free adult cycle training**, funded by CBC's 3<sup>rd</sup> successful behaviour change grant from Defra and delivered by Safer Essex Roads Partnership. 44 people have completed training since April 2021, with another 15 pending (as of 11<sup>th</sup> February 2022) out of a target of 400. Take up will increase significantly from the spring and when the new shared bike hubs open.
- **Creating a shared electric car (e-car) club**, for residents to use, enabling them to borrow an e-car as and when required, removing the costs and hassle of ownership of a private car. Further information on the progression of this action is provide in paragraph 5.13.
- **Clean Air for Colchester project**, promoting no-idling and encouraging walking and cycling for short journeys, to help improve air quality in Colchester. Work streams include the no idling signage trial, evaluation of bikeability training in schools, work on the 'Get Monkwick Moving' project and the CAREless pollution campaign. This latter campaign has been nominated in the 'Consumer Engagement/Marketing Campaign of the Year' category at the [Edie Sustainability Leader Awards](#).

5.13 The Council has also started taking action to support the electric vehicle transition in Colchester. An update on progress to date can be found in appendix 2.

## Next steps and recommendations

5.14 This report is for the panel to note the Council's approach to sustainable travel, and how this has been embedded into the Council's Strategic Plan and Climate Emergency Action Plan, as well as linked into ECC strategies and in line with Government strategies. The panel is also asked to note the work carried out to date, alongside the future work outlined in the report and Appendix 1 and give comments and recommendations about the development of the Council's sustainable travel workstreams.

## 6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

6.1 There are no equality, diversity and human rights implications of the report.

## 7. Strategic Plan References

- 7.1 This report directly links to the [Strategic Plan 2020-2023](#) themes of 'Tackling the Climate Challenge and Sustainability', 'Creating safe, healthy and active communities' and 'Growing a fair economy so everyone benefits'.

## **8. Consultation**

- 8.1 There are no consultation considerations at this stage.

## **9. Publicity Considerations**

- 9.1 There are no publicity considerations.

## **10. Financial implications**

- 10.1 There are no financial implications.

## **11. Community Safety Implications**

- 11.1 There are no community safety implications.

## **12. Health and Safety Implications**

- 12.1 There are no health and safety implications.

## **13. Risk Management Implications**

- 13.1 There are no risk management implications.

## **14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications**

- 14.1 The report highlights how the Council is taking on action to promote and support sustainable travel in Colchester. Action in this field will help to reduce emissions throughout Colchester and lead to other positive co-benefits such as improved air quality and physical and mental health.

## **Background Papers**

### **Government Strategies**

[Bus Back Better Strategy](#)

[Clean Air Strategy](#)

[Decarbonising Transport – A better, greener Britain](#)

[Gear Change – A bold vision for walking and cycling](#)

### **ECC led strategies/documents**

[Colchester Future Transport Strategy](#)[Essex Climate Action Commission 'Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral' report](#)

[Essex Cycling Strategy](#)

[Essex Walking Strategy](#)

[Colchester Cycling Action Plan](#)

[Essex Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans](#)

[Escooter pilot scheme](#)



## **Appendix 1**

### **Our Goals and Outcomes**

#### **Goal 1: Increase the proportion of short trips made by sustainable transport**

- Outcome 1: More uptake of walking and cycling for short journeys such as for work, shopping, school drop-off
- Outcome 2: More businesses trialling eCargo bikes and opting for sustainable transport options for regular use.
- Outcome 3: People are aware of the walking and cycling network leading to greater use of routes.
- Outcome 4: People feel confident about locking up their bikes safely in the town centre, so feel more willing to cycle into town.
- Outcome 5: Widespread take up and recognition of the benefits of cycle training to build confidence, safer cycling practices and increase the number of journeys made by bike.

#### **How we will achieve the outcomes:**

- Continue to work with ECC to encourage investment in Colchester for the LCWIP routes and other strategic initiatives, and the delivery of the Active Travel Fund routes to provide infrastructure that supports cycling and walking in Colchester as well as other initiatives to support sustainable travel.
- Continue the development of case studies and promotional material about the Colchester eCargo bike library project to show evidence of the bikes being effective for making deliveries, to help increase business confidence in trying them out. An event to promote eCargo bikes to businesses is also being planned for later in 2022, which the Council will seek to attend to promote the project and eCargo bikes more generally.
- Improve publication of the Colchester Orbital through creation of a paper based map and improving wayfinding along the route. Continued work through the 'Get Monkwick Moving' project will help to make residents aware of the off-road walking and cycling route from Monkwick to the town centre.
- Finish the progression of creating the secure cycle parking facility in the town centre, and take any learnings from this process to think about the locations of future secure cycle parks in Colchester.
- Work with ECC and planning colleagues to ensure new developments are linked to the sustainable travel network and where appropriate require them to contribute towards measures to encourage more walking and cycling making their developments are more sustainable.
- Continue to promote the cycle training offered by ECC, and the evaluation of bikeability training to ensure more children leave school feeling confident in their cycling abilities.
- Work with other organisations to help promote and lobby for sustainable travel within to and through the Borough. For example ECC's Passenger Transport led Bus Partnership, Greater Anglia, the rail operator, Great British Railways (Network Rail), Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership and Transport East, as well as Government departments when required.
- Continue to work with and support businesses through the Colchester Travel Plan Club to develop and implement robust travel plans to encourage sustainable travel for commuting and work related journeys.

## **Goal 2: Reduction in air pollutants in the air quality management areas translating into better health**

- Outcome 6: Residents and businesses use sustainable shared travel to access a range of transport options on a pay as you go basis
- Outcome 7: More people switching off their engines when stationary
- Outcome 8: Understanding within Colchester Borough Council and Essex County Council as to how the electric vehicle transition should be promoted in Colchester
- Outcome 9: Residents understand and feel more supported and confident about transitioning to use an electric vehicle in Colchester.
- Outcome 10: Shared transport choices are accessible to all sections of our community regardless of income

How we will achieve the outcomes:

- Promote the shared travel hub once created and involve the community in the creation of a second hub in Colchester.
- Continue to develop the no-idling signage trial, with analysis carried out by University of Essex. Ensure we can show that the trial is directly contributing to improvements in air quality by working with ECC to receive daily air quality measurements from the new air quality sensors to be installed in the town centre. The campaign can then be developed based on this more detailed insight.
- Work with Essex County Council to understand where investment should be placed in Colchester to support the electric vehicle transition. Also, continue the investment in electric vehicle charge points in town centre car parks as started with the installation of the charge points in Priory Street Car Park
- Alongside ECC, working to develop the Council's approach to supporting electric vehicles in Colchester, so residents understand when EV charge points will be being installed and where.
- Monitor the usage of the shared travel hub and continue with research of similar facilities to determine suitable pay as you go prices for residents so they are financially accessible. Proceed with working with a resident working group to identify the location of a second shared travel hub, with the aim to deliver further hubs in the future.

## Appendix 2: An update on electric vehicles

It has become clear that demand for electric vehicles is increasing across the UK, and this is no different in Colchester. 968 ultra low emission vehicles were registered in Colchester by end of September 2021, a 77% increase from September 2020.

The Council recognises that it needs to support the transition to electric vehicles, in order to meet increasing resident demand and help reduce emissions across Colchester. A start on this has been made and achieved through collaboration with ECC, alongside other partners such as North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP), Colchester Electric Vehicle Society, Chipside and Mobilize. Currently there are 19 electric vehicle charging points across Colchester borough.

A summary of key activities to date include:

- **June 2021:** Funding secured to create an electric car club in Colchester, with two vehicles to be offered on a shared pay as you go basis. The tender for a car club provider is currently underway with the aim of launching the scheme in Spring 2022.
- **December 2021:** 3 electric vehicle charge points installed in Priory Street car park, one space and point to be used for one of the forthcoming electric car club vehicles.
- **January 2022:** Participation in ECC led workshop with other Essex local authorities to discuss Essex wide electric vehicle strategy. At this meeting each district was requested to recommend 6 locations for installation of on street electric vehicle charge points as part of a planned Office for Zero Emission Vehicles grant bid led by ECC in March 2022.
- **January 2022:** Commencing installation of electric vehicle charge points in Rowan House car park and St John's car park. St John's car park will have 10 charge points to support the CBC and NEPP fleet transition to electric vehicles. 12 charge points will be installed in Rowan House for fleet, staff and visitor use.
- **February 2022:** NEPP are preparing an OZEV bid for installation of electric vehicle charge points in CBC owned car parks, with rollout in 2022 if the bid is successful in several locations such as Napier Road car park, Butt Road car park, Three Crowns Road car park, St Mary's surface car park and the High Street car park in Wivenhoe (the latter to be agreed with Wivenhoe Town Council).

Essex County Council have also installed three on street electric vehicle charge points in Colchester in 2021, one of which is currently operational in Wellesley Road.