

Equality Impact Assessment - head of service review

Reference: EQIA367372293

Submitted: 18 October 2021 15:24 PM

Executive summary

Title of policy or decision: Active Travel Fund 2 (ATF2)

Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision): To seek the Leader's approval for officers to continue to confirm the 5 ATF2 initiatives across Essex as proposed and consulted upon.

It will enable officers to continue to facilitate the delivery of the ATF2 by developing schemes within the agreed budgets for delivery and governance undertaking any necessary statutory process. The schemes contain elements to achieve a reduction in traffic speeds to 20mph as appropriate to achieve the desired active travel scheme objectives.

Authority is sought to publish Traffic Regulation Orders where elements may be outside of current policy and strategy guidance that are integral to the delivery of the schemes objectives.

The goal is to go even further in achieving the Councils and Governments core Strategic Objectives.

What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve?: Enable inclusive economic growth, Help people get the best start and age well, Help create great places to grow up, live and work

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Enable inclusive economic growth: Help people in Essex prosper by increasing their skills

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Help people get the best start and age well: Improve the health of people in Essex

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Help create great places to grow up, live and work: Help secure sustainable development and protect the environment

Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project?: a new policy (or decision)

Please provide a link to the document / website / resource to which this EqlA relates:

<http://www.essexhighways.org/safer-greener-healthier>

Please upload any documents which relate to this EqlA, for example decision documents:

<http://www.essexhighways.org/safer-greener-healthier>

Assessing the equality impact

Use this section to record how you have assessed any potential impact on the communities likely to be affected by the policy (or decision): We undertook an extensive consultation exercise over the summer of 2021 to gauge people's support of the measures planned and to find out the reaction to different aspects of the schemes. Each scheme had a Steering Group made up of local representatives and headed by the local ECC Councillor, and supported by officers from ECC. A dedicated email was set up to receive comments from the general public and a series of roadshows were also undertaken, planned to make them as inclusive as possible.

The results and responses received during the consultation were mixed, with support for those elements of the

schemes which respondents saw as increasing safety in respective the local areas, or where they could see the creation of a route which supported journeys they were likely to make. This can be seen in the widespread support for the introduction of 20mph zones and the support for safety around schools, set out within the school street proposals.

There was also a desire from some supporters of the schemes for the schemes to go further in restricting traffic from town centre areas and these comments have been taken on board and a number of extensions are now proposed such as in Chelmsford.

Inconvenience and the potential movement of traffic / impact on parking if vehicles use other roads were cited as the main concerns raised by those who did not support elements of the proposed schemes.

Ensuring access was also a key theme across all of the town/city surveys, particularly with reference to the possible impact of restricting traffic on the elderly/disabled, especially for those who either have no option but to drive or are reliant on carers. By providing safer walking and for some elderly people, cycling conditions, they will feel safer to walk more and to perhaps an older age when perhaps they wouldn't otherwise do so. These measures will contribute to keeping older age groups more active into old age.

These have all been addressed and the final designs will address these concerns in a practical manner.

Does or will the policy or decision affect:

Service users: Yes

Employees: Yes

The wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities: Yes

Which geographical areas of Essex does or will the policy or decision affect?: Basildon, Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Colchester

Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate?: No

Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources?: No

Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies?: Yes

Is the new or revised policy linked to a digital service (website, system or application)?: No

Description of impact

Description of Impact. If there is an impact on a specific protected group tick box, otherwise leave blank. You will be given the opportunity to rate identified impacts as positive, negative or neutral on the next page: Age, Disability - physical impairment, Disability - sensory impairment, Gender / sex

I confirm that I have considered the potential impact on all of the protected characteristics: I confirm that I have considered the potential impact on all of the protected characteristics

Describe any actions that have already been taken to mitigate negative impacts on any of the protected characteristics: Designs of schemes have incorporated all of the latest accessibility best practice and design standards in order that those with disabilities can use the new infrastructure as easily as possible, in particular those suffering with sensory impairments. Lighting and ensuring that the new facilities benefit from a high level of maintenance will ensure that the facilities are safe to use after dark and that pot holes and failed lighting is quickly fixed.

Age

Nature of impact: Positive

Please provide more details about the nature of impact: The new proposed schemes will have positive and significant benefits for all age groups, as they will improve the quality and convenience of their neighbouring walking and cycling networks, particularly those younger people who are old enough to be able to live more independent lives but not able to drive a car or ride a motorbike/scooter in order that they can access their places of employment or attend places of education and training.

Recent innovation of scooters is leading to some concerns over safety as they may come into conflict with pedestrians using the proposed new pedestrian links. It is the younger groups who may be more likely to use this new mode of transport. Older groups may feel more threatened than others in this regard.

For elderly users it is important that any trip hazards are removed in order that they do not fall which for older groups can be more threatening to their wellbeing than for younger age groups. Also, with the improvement in crossing places, older people, often who are slower at walking, will feel more confident to cross safely in their own time. This will be seen as a positive benefit for these groups.

Parents will feel more confident that their children will be safer when their younger children go out after dark if they are using the new cycling or walking links which are well lit and maintained. Also during the winter months when light levels in the late afternoon and early morning are poorer, children will be better visible to other road users.

Extent of impact: Medium

Please provide more details about the extent of impact: The extent for those who directly benefit from the new infrastructure can be considerable and provide the means to access education, training and employment could be significant. Walking is free and cycling is relatively inexpensive, ideal for those in the early part of their working lives or on low incomes.

For older people, they will enjoy the positive benefits of what were previously difficult highways to cross and so improving their access to shop, services, healthcare and to socialise, improving their quality of life.

Better lighting in hours of poor light levels will help to keep users of all ages safer and be more visible to other users of the footways/cycleways, together with other road users.

Disability - physical impairment

Nature of impact: Positive

Please provide more details about the nature of impact: In particular with regard to the new pedestrian facilities, these will be designed to be fully DDA compliant in order that pedestrians with mobility issues will feel comfortable in using these new routes. There will be sufficient room for wheel chair users to be able to use these new facilities.

Once schemes are built and opened, ECC will ensure that the new routes are regularly checked and maintained to a high standard in order that they remain user friendly and in particular, any trip hazards are removed in order that they are useable after dark and at all times of the year.

Those who are either in a wheelchair or find it difficult to physically use footways can feel threatened by aggressive cycling by cyclists on shared footways.

Extent of impact: Medium

Please provide more details about the extent of impact: Design is key to the attractiveness of the facilities and higher the design quality and the extent of the new links coverage, the more they will be attractive to those who suffer from physical impairments.

Non-compliance of the latest standards will act to deter those with a physical impairment and ECC will be failing in its duty to consider all in its design and implementation in its schemes and programmes.

The introduction of segregated walking and cycling will be positive and help people with physical disabilities feel safer when they use the new segregated routes.

Disability - sensory impairment

Nature of impact: Positive

Please provide more details about the nature of impact: High quality design will include the provision of both required tactile paving and the latest standards in street lighting.. Beyond the design and implementation stages, ECC will ensure that the new routes are regularly checked and maintained to a high standard in order that they remain user friendly and in particular, any trip hazards are removed and where lighting fails it is quickly replaced to ensure that the facilities are useably after dark and at all times of the year.

Extent of impact: Medium

Please provide more details about the extent of impact: Can be an important determining factor for women and young people in whether they want to travel during the hours of darkness. If the conditions are right then this will contribute to such groups healthier lifestyles and independence lives which bring many mental health and general wellbeing benefits.

Gender / sex

Nature of impact: Positive

Please provide more details about the nature of impact: Better lighting of new cycle and walking routes, well maintained subsequently will be of particular benefit to female users, as they will feel safer and less threatened being out by themselves after dark.

Women sometimes feel threaten or unable to use some footways where aggressive cycling brings pedestrians into conflict with cyclists. To have clear segregation between cyclists and pedestrians will have a positive affect in that women will feel more safe and therefore more likely to use these new facilities to gain access to shops, services, employment and friends.

Extent of impact: Medium

Please provide more details about the extent of impact: By helping to make women feel safer they will find access to education, training, employment and healthcare during the hours of darkness, easier and to have more confidence in doing so. If the conditions are improved, then this will contribute to increasing women's healthier lifestyles and independent lives which bring many mental health and general wellbeing benefits.

Aggressive cycling, often carried out by men has been found to dissuade some women from using some footways as they don't feel safe as they feel that they might be involved in a collision with a cyclists.

Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

Does your EqIA indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?: Yes

What are the mitigating actions?: Mitigating actions: regular checks, post implementation surveys

Date they will be achieved: 31/03/2022

Which characteristics do these mitigating actions apply to?: Age,Disability - physical impairment,Disability - sensory impairment,Gender / sex

Details of person completing the form

I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance: I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance

Date EqlA completed: 18/10/2021

Name of person completing the EqlA: Ben Fryer

Email address of person completing the EqlA: Ben.Fryer@essex.gov.uk

Your function: Place and Public Health

Your service area: Highways & Transportation

Your team: Transport Policy

Are you submitting this EqlA on behalf of another function, service area or team?: No

Email address of Head of Service: Tracey.Vickers@essex.gov.uk