

## Equalities Comprehensive Impact Assessment - Head of service review

Reference: ECIA489339075

Submitted: 07 March 2023 15:15 PM

### Executive summary

**Title of policy / decision:** Active Travel Fund 2 – Proposed Conversion of Footway & Carriageway to a Cycle Track, on Head Street, Colchester The Essex County Council (Head Street, Colchester) (One Way) Order 20 The Essex County Council (Colchester City) (Prohibition of Waiting, Loading and Stopping) and (On-Street Parking Places) (Civil Enforcement Area) (AmendmentNo.39)

**Policy / decision type:** Cabinet Member Action (CMA)

**Overview of policy / decision:** Traffic levels have returned to pre-pandemic levels on the network, with a drop in public transport use still to recover. The area of the town centre has experienced congestion for a notable period of time, extending back to well before the pandemic and are symptomatic of the issues which we are looking to address through a transportation strategy that reduces unnecessary car use and inappropriate routing of traffic through the centre of the town to reduce congestion. Colchester is a growing city, but its centre is constrained by a street system originally laid out centuries ago and is unsuitable for the continued unconstrained growth of vehicle use.

Colchester has already benefited from a range of Phase 1 emergency active travel measures and, building on the strong foundation of the Colchester Cycle Demonstration Town which saw an increase of 19% in cycle numbers at monitored sites between 2007 and 2011, ECC have prioritised three Local Cycling and Walking routes to instigate a further transformational step change in active travel provision,

**What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve?:** The overall effect will make it safer for pedestrians and cyclists and, in so doing, deliver improvements to the health and wellbeing of those who take advantage of these new facilities and also helping to break down any barriers to accessibility that are key to improving everybody's like chances and opportunities to improve their wellbeing. The new cycle way will contribute to modal shift from the private car to a sustainable form of transport, helping ECC meet its targets in this area and also help contribute to less congestion, improved road safety and better air quality. Safer environment for all will ensure those less mobile, particularly in older age groups will feel safer and more confident to walk around their respective areas.

Improving the cycling environment of Colchester City Centre by lower vehicle speeds helping to encourage people to visit the town centre and local businesses.

The proposed new and improved cycleway and prohibition of right-hand turn for pedal cycles' restriction in Colchester will support the environment by providing a safer public realm for children and adults to cycle – delivering on our net zero aspirations, whilst reducing traffic and improving air quality.

**Executive Director responsible for policy / decision:** Mark Ash (Climate, Environment and Customer Services)

**Cabinet Member responsible for policy / decision:** Lee Scott (Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport)

**Is this a new policy / decision or a change to an existing one?:** Change to an existing policy / decision

**How will the impact of the policy / decision be monitored and evaluated?:** Once completed and opened, officers will undertake monitoring of numbers of cycles that use the new cycle lane and will monitor car behaviour and numbers to what the impact of this scheme has been and also as this scheme is part of a wider set of schemes across Colchester city centre, this monitoring will be part of the overall monitoring of the package of schemes. The success or otherwise will go forward and inform other similar schemes that will be introduced in the future. ECC is bidding for future rounds of the funding from Central government that is funding this scheme.

**Will this policy / decision impact on:**

**Service users:** Yes

**Employees:** Yes

**Wider community or groups of people:** Yes

**What strategic priorities will this policy / decision support?:** Strong, Inclusive and Sustainable Economy, High Quality Environment, Health, Independence and Wellbeing for All Ages, A good place for Children and Families to Grow

**Which strategic priorities does this support? - Economy?:** Infrastructure, Future growth and investment, Green growth

**Which strategic priorities does this support? - Environment:** Net zero, Transport and built environment, Green communities, Levelling up the environment

**Which strategic priorities does this support? - Health:** Healthy lifestyles, Promoting independence, Levelling up health

**Which strategic priorities does this support? - Families:** Family resilience and stability, Safety, Outcomes for vulnerable children

**What geographical areas of Essex will the policy / decision affect?:** Colchester

## Digital accessibility

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

## Equalities - Groups with protected characteristics

### Age

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Extent of impact:** High

### Disability - learning disability

**Nature of impact:** None

### Disability - mental health issues

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Extent of impact:** High

### Disability - physical impairment

**Nature of impact:** None

## **Disability - sensory impairment**

**Nature of impact:** None

## **Sex**

**Nature of impact:** None

## **Gender reassignment**

**Nature of impact:** None

## **Marriage / civil partnership**

**Nature of impact:** None

## **Pregnancy / maternity**

**Nature of impact:** None

## **Race**

**Nature of impact:** None

## **Religion / belief**

**Nature of impact:** None

## **Sexual orientation**

**Nature of impact:** None

**Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact:** The measures that form ATF2 promote health and wellbeing by getting people active. The proposals support the provision of good places for children and families to live and grow by improving connectivity and providing low-cost, accessible alternatives to the car. They are designed to reduce the number of unnecessary journeys by car and reduce the overall levels of car use.

To those with the above characteristics the proposed facilities, the new and improved cycling infrastructure, bring positive benefits.

For those who are young, not able to drive, there will be great benefits in being able to cycle in a safer environment and so this opens up greater accessibility to work, education, health care and shops and other services. They will also derive positive physical and mental health benefits from a more active lifestyle. The same applies to older age groups who will also benefit from more active lifestyles, feeling more confident to cycle at an older age and so able to give them the same greater access than the younger age groups discussed above. Also, some elderly people may not be able to drive, perhaps due to medical issues or simply choose not to drive anymore. As for children, the package of measures is designed to make the streets that they live along safer and more pleasant and as a result make them safer for children to cycle in. This should lead them to enjoying the benefits of extra exercise, good for their physical health and mental wellbeing.

For the four different forms of disability that are highlighted above, the measures included in this scheme will bring many positive outcomes. Anybody with learning difficulties will not be adversely affected by the implementation of the proposed schemes but a safer environment they may feel more confident and therefore better able to interpret their surrounding environment and so increase their independence and so be able to lead a fuller life, taking advantage of opportunities.

For those already suffering from existing mental health issue, greater exercise is well known to bring many

positive benefits and also by promoting more active lifestyles the chances of developing mental health issues in the first place will be reduced.

As regards sensory impairments, the design of the schemes takes this into consideration with tactile paving included, laid at all the appropriate places. By making the streets safer and enjoying lower levels of motorised traffic, it will benefit anybody who previously found navigation difficult due to higher levels of motorised traffic and so make them more independent.

However, for those who are suffering from physical disability, depending on the type and degree of a particular physical disability, no amount of new cycle lanes/routes will help those with particularly acute forms.

Taken together, the approach of planners and designers is very much in line with the spirit of the public sector equality duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010. Of the remainder of the sections of the group there are no impacts.

Finally, a consultation letter was sent to 594 nearby properties in order that residents and businesses were able to comment on the Proposal. Police and other emergency services, and local businesses were also consulted. On street notices were posted in the area together with the proposals being advertised in the Colchester Gazette and made available on the Essex Highways website. In the summer of 2021, there was a roadshow that enabled all those who were interested to speak to officers about these proposals and the broader scheme for Colchester.

**What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts:** Whilst general objections were made regarding costs, the demand for the schemes and impacts of the scheme, on balance it was decided that the proposals as a whole will reduce traffic on an important route into the city centre and will therefore make it safer for cyclists with the consequent benefits to health and wellbeing, which will outweigh the increase in travel times. However, there were no objections on specific disability grounds.

## **Levelling up - Priority areas & cohorts**

### **Children and adults with SEND, learning disabilities or mental health conditions (taking an all-age approach)**

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Extent of impact:** High

### **Children on Free School Meals**

**Nature of impact:** None

### **Working families**

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Extent of impact:** High

### **Young adults (16-25 who have not been in education, training or employment for around 6-12 months)**

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Extent of impact:** High

### **Harlow**

**Nature of impact:** None

## **Jaywick and Clacton**

**Nature of impact:** None

## **Harwich**

**Nature of impact:** None

## **Basildon (Town) housing estates**

**Nature of impact:** None

## **Canvey Island**

**Nature of impact:** None

## **Colchester (Town) - Housing Estates**

**Nature of impact:** None

## **Rural North of the Braintree District**

**Nature of impact:** None

**Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact:** The measures that form ATF2 promote health and wellbeing by getting people active. The proposals support the provision of good places for children and families to live and grow by improving connectivity and providing low-cost, accessible alternatives to the car. They are designed to reduce the number of unnecessary journeys by car and reduce the overall levels of car use.

To those with the above characteristics the proposed facilities, of new and improved cycling infrastructure will bring positive benefits.

Of all the sections in this group, working families; children and adults with SEND, learning disabilities or mental health conditions; and young adults there are positive impacts of the new measures set out in this proposed scheme. For the remainder there are no impacts, positive or negative.

Firstly, children and adults with any one of the conditions within SENDS, will enjoy greater independence, in the safer and more pleasant environment created by the implementation of these measures. In many cases they will benefit from developing greater independence. To those who are from working families and young adults they will benefit from the implementation of new and improved cycle paths/lanes as they provide a safer environment for cyclist to access education, employment, healthcare and access to shops and services. Cycling is a cheap mode of transport, allowing those from low paid sectors of the economy able to access their places of work or allow them to access new better opportunities and so help develop their careers. For young adults without a driving licence, the ability to cycle opens up a range of opportunities that otherwise might be blocked to them. This is a very important means by which ECC can support the levelling up of Colchester.

Of the remainder of the sections of the groups there are no impacts.

Finally, a consultation letter was sent to all affected properties where residents and businesses were invited to comment on the proposal. Police and other emergency services, and local businesses were also consulted.

On street notices were posted in the area together with the proposals being advertised in the Colchester Gazette and made available on the Essex Highways website. In the summer of 2021, there was a roadshow that enabled all those who were interested to speak to officers about these proposals and the broader scheme for Colchester.

**What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts:** Whilst general objections were made regarding costs, the demand for the schemes and impacts of the scheme, the proposed mitigation would

dilute the proposals and on balance it was decided that the proposals as a whole will reduce traffic in the heart of the town centre and will therefore make it safer for cyclists with the consequent benefits to health and wellbeing, which will outweigh the increase in travel times. There were no objections on specific levelling Up grounds.

## **Equalities - Inclusion health groups and other priority groups**

### **Refugees / asylum seekers**

**Nature of impact:** None

### **Homeless / rough sleepers**

**Nature of impact:** None

### **Offenders / ex-offenders**

**Nature of impact:** None

### **Carers**

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Extent of impact:** High

### **Looked after children**

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Extent of impact:** High

### **Veterans**

**Nature of impact:** None

### **People who are unemployed / economically inactive**

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Extent of impact:** High

### **People on low income**

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Extent of impact:** High

### **Working families**

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Extent of impact:** High

**Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact:** The measures that form ATF2 promote health and wellbeing by getting people active. The proposals support the provision of good places for children and families to live and grow by improving connectivity and providing low-cost, accessible alternatives to the car. They are designed to reduce the number of unnecessary journeys by car and reduce the overall levels of car use.

To those with the above characteristics the proposed facilities, of new cycling infrastructure will bring positive benefits.

Of all the sections in this group, carers, looked after children, people who are unemployed/ economically inactive, on low incomes and working families all enjoy high positive impacts of the new measures set out in this proposed scheme. For the remainder there are no impacts, positive or negative.

They will all benefit from the implementation of new and improved cycle paths/lanes as they provide a safer environment for cyclist to access education, employment, healthcare and access to shops and services. Cycling is a cheap mode of transport, allowing those from low paid sectors of the economy able to access the above. Certainly, carers work in a low paid sector and these measures will contribute to their confidence in cycling to their places of work, saving them money in not having to pay for buses or taxis for example and to be less reliant on their own private cars if they use one. As for looked after children, the package of measures is designed to make the streets that they live along safer and more pleasant and as a result make them safer for them to cycle in. This should lead them to enjoying the benefits of extra exercise, good for their physical health and mental wellbeing. For young adults, the unemployed and those on a low income, the areas where the new measures are proposed to be implemented, without a driving licence or access to a private car, the ability to cycle opens up a range of opportunities to them that otherwise might be blocked to them. Finally for working families where income maybe limited as a result of raising a family, the ability to cycle more confidently to access educational facilities, work, healthcare and good and services will allow them to improve their lives.

The implementation of the new schemes will make for a safer environment for all sections of this group and with an expected reduction in the overall level of traffic, there will be less pollution generated that cyclist are exposed to. This will also benefit the whole area.

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**What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts:** Whilst general objections were made regarding costs, the demand for the schemes and impacts of the scheme, the proposed mitigation would dilute the proposals and on balance it was decided that the proposals as a whole will reduce traffic in the heart of the town centre and will therefore make it safer for cyclists with the consequent benefits to health and wellbeing, which will outweigh the increase in travel times. There were no objections from a specific Health group or on priority grounds.

## **Equalities - Geographical Groups**

### **People living in areas of high deprivation**

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Extent of impact:** High

### **People living in rural or isolated areas**

**Nature of impact:** None

### **People living in coastal areas**

**Nature of impact:** None

### **People living in urban or over-populated areas**

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Extent of impact:** High

**Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact:** The measures that form ATF2 promote health and wellbeing by getting people active. The proposals support the provision of good places for children and families to live and grow by improving connectivity and providing low-cost, accessible alternatives to the car. They are designed to reduce the number of unnecessary journeys by car and reduce the overall levels of car use.

To those with the above characteristics the proposed facilities, of new and improved cycling infrastructure, will on the whole, bring positive benefits.

The implementation of the new schemes will make for a safer environment for all sections of this group and with an expected reduction in the overall level of traffic, there will be less pollution generated that cyclist are exposed to. This will benefit those who live and visit the areas where the new measures are proposed.

By their very nature, the areas that the schemes are proposed to be implemented in are urban, being within Colchester and so these measures will have a high positive impact on those inhabitants living there.

Colchester doesn't suffer from high levels of deprivation other than the Greenstead ward to the east of the city centre. This is classed as being the most deprived ward in Colchester and amongst the top 10% most deprived wards in the country, but the scheme in question here does not lie in this ward. However, improved cycling facilities, both this scheme and other ATF2 cycle schemes in Colchester will benefit anybody from the Greenstead ward as they travel westwards in Colchester to such their places of work, public transport hubs such as Colchester train station, in order that they can take advantage of opportunities to improved their life chances. Also to be able to access shops and services more cheaply than by private car, amongst other benefits, to help improve their diets and access services that will improve their day to day lives.

Neither can Colchester be described as either rural/isolated or coastal.

Taken together, the approach of planners and designers is very much in line with the spirit of the public sector equality duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

Finally, a consultation letter was sent to all affected properties where residents and businesses were invited to comment on the Proposal. Police and other emergency services, and local businesses were also consulted. On street notices were posted in the area together with the proposals being advertised in the Colchester Gazette and made available on the Essex Highways website. In the summer of 2021, there was a roadshow that enabled all those who were interested to speak to officers about these proposals and the broader scheme for Colchester.

Of the remainder of the sections of the group there are no impacts.

**What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts:** Whilst general objections were made regarding costs, the demand for the schemes and impacts of the scheme, the proposed mitigation would dilute the proposals and on balance it was decided that the proposals as a whole will reduce traffic in the heart of the town centre and will therefore make it safer for pedestrians and cyclists with the consequent benefits to health and wellbeing, which will outweigh the increase in travel times. There were no objections on specific Geographical grounds.

## Families

**Family formation (e.g. to become or live as a couple, the ability to live with or apart from children)**

**Nature of impact:** None

**Families going through key transitions e.g. becoming parents, getting married, fostering or adopting, bereavement, redundancy, new caring responsibilities, onset of a long-term health condition**

**Nature of impact:** None



## **Family members' ability to play a full role in family life, including with respect to parenting and other caring responsibilities**

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Extent of impact:** High

## **Families before, during and after couple separation**

**Nature of impact:** None

## **Families most at risk of deterioration of relationship quality and breakdown**

**Nature of impact:** None

**Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact:** The measures that form ATF2 promote health and wellbeing by getting people active. The proposals support the provision of good places for children and families to live and grow by improving connectivity and providing low-cost, accessible alternatives to the car. They are designed to reduce the number of unnecessary journeys by car and reduce the overall levels of car use.

To those with the above characteristics the proposed facilities, new and improved cycling Infrastructure, on the whole would bring no benefits with the exception of "ability to play a full role in family life" as new safer cycle routes would allow families to go out together on their cycles and so help strengthen family relationships, enabling them to spend more time together.

As part of the development of the scheme, a consultation letter was sent to all affected properties where residents and businesses were invited to comment on the Proposal. Police and other emergency services, and local businesses were also consulted. On street notices were posted in the area together with the proposals being advertised in the Colchester Gazette and made available on the Essex Highways website. In the summer of 2021, there was a roadshow that enabled all those who were interested to speak to officers about these proposals and the broader scheme for Colchester.

**What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts:** Whilst general objections were made regarding costs, the demand for the schemes and impacts of the scheme, the proposed mitigation would dilute the proposals and on balance it was decided that the proposals as a whole will reduce traffic in the heart of the town centre and will therefore make it safer for pedestrians and cyclists with the consequent benefits to health and wellbeing, which will outweigh the increase in travel times. There were no objections on specific Family grounds.

## **Climate**

**Does your decision / policy involve elements connected to the built environment / energy?:** Yes

**Do you know what products, materials, and qualified built environment professionals you will be using?**

**Are you maximising the opportunity to source materials locally and maximise use of sustainable materials such as wood?:** Yes

**Are you using a qualified architect / design team / consultant with the experience and capability to design and secure planning permission to deliver to the highest carbon zero building standards?:** Yes

**Are you clear that the builder, sub-contractor is qualified and capable of delivering climate resilient buildings (noting risks including subsidence, flooding, overheating), to the highest net zero carbon build quality?:** Yes

**Is your proposed development / building using the best practice guidance and advice on design quality, climate change and health?**

**Are you using the design quality and advice provided by the Essex Design Guide?:** Yes

**Are you using the Climate Change guidance and advice provide by the Essex Design Guide?:** Yes

**Are you providing a policy compliant development which accords with the District Local Plan policies?:**  
Yes

**Are using the Health and Wellbeing guidance provided by the Essex Design Guide?:** Yes

**Have you provided a costed net zero option for consideration?:** No

**Is your proposed development / building as efficient as possible?**

**Is the Energy performance Certificate (EPC) rating of the achieving and EPC A+ or net zero carbon standard?:** N/A

**Have opportunities to reduce energy use through the use of smart digital systems been considered?:** N/A

**Does your development by design avoid the need for air conditioning?:** N/A

**Does your new development have water efficiency measures in place?:** N/A

**Do you know where your energy is coming from and how much of it comes from renewable sources?**

**Are you maximising opportunities to use onsite renewable energy (e.g. roof top solar panels) to deliver this service?:** N/A

**Are you maximising opportunities to use onsite renewable energy (e.g. roof top solar panels) to deliver this service?:** N/A

**Is your new or extended development using a renewable heat source e.g. district heating or a form of heat pump?:** N/A

**Is your development resilient to climate risks including flooding, overheating and subsidence?**

**Is your site at risk of coastal erosion? Is there a plan in place to protect the coastline: if the coastline is being allowed to erode, this may impact the lifetime of your site.:** No

**Have you reviewed environment agency to ascertain your flood risk? Do you need to put in place mitigation such as sustainable drainage?:** Yes

**Water is scarce and needs to be absorbed into the land wherever possible. Are you prioritising nature based flood risk mitigations such as sustainable drainage, water butts, planting and ponds which protect against water scarcity?:** Yes

**Are you using external planting, green walls and green roofs to insulate the building and provide shading to cut risks of overheating?:** N/A

**Is your development supporting active travel and minimising pollution?**

**Does your site allow connection to key public transport and active travel routes?:** Yes

**Are you using Green Infrastructure to interrupt the pathway of carborne pollutants to the public e.g. use of hedges, shrubs and trees?:** No

**Have you provided space for secure cycle parking, showering, cycle and walking pathways on site etc?:**  
No

**Does the building have adequate space for recycling and waste separation?:** N/A

**Does your decision / policy involve designing service provision and procurement to minimise freight and staff travel and enable use of active and public transport options?:** No

**Does your decision / policy involve elements connected to waste?:** No

## **Nature of impact**

**Built Environment / Energy:** Positive

## **Extent of impact**

**Built Environment / Energy:** High

**Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact:** Colchester has already benefited from a range of Phase 1 emergency active travel measures and, building on the strong foundation of the Colchester Cycle Demonstration Town which saw an increase of 19% in cycle numbers at monitored sites between 2007 and 2011, ECC have prioritised three Local Cycling and Walking routes to instigate a further transformational step change in active travel provision, including new high quality cycle route along Station Way.

In regard to protecting the climate, the proposed facilities, new and improved cycling infrastructure, will bring positive benefits, through the reduction in greenhouse emissions and the reduction in car journeys.

**What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts:** Whilst general objections were made regarding costs, the demand for the schemes and impacts of the scheme, the proposed mitigation would dilute the proposals and on balance it was decided that the proposals as part of a larger package of sustainable transport measures would help reduce the level of traffic in the heart of the city centre and will therefore make it safer for pedestrians, cyclists and the most disadvantaged, with the consequent benefits to health and wellbeing, which will outweigh the increase in travel times by some buses and private cars.  
There were no objections on specific climate grounds.

## **Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts**

**Does your ECIA indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more of the groups / areas identified?:** No

## **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 ECIA completed:** 07/03/2023

**Name of person completing the ECIA:** Ben Fryer

**Email address of person completing the ECIA:** ben.fryer@essex.gov.uk

**Your function:** Climate, Environment and Customer Services

**Your service area:** Sustainable Transport

**Your team:** Transport Policy

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

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