

Equalities Comprehensive Impact Assessment v3 - Head of service review

Reference: ECIA562603041

Submitted: 17 November 2023 09:25 AM

Executive summary

Title of policy / decision: Delivery Agreement and Preferred Option for the Colchester Levelling Up Funded scheme: St Botolph's Circus regeneration.

Policy / decision type: Cabinet Member Action (CMA)

Overview of policy / decision: In January 2023, it was announced by the UK Government that Colchester, as well as other areas in Essex (Harlow and Tendring) had been successful with their Levelling Up Fund (LUF) bids. This meant that Colchester City Council (CCC) has £19.66m to deliver significant regeneration projects within the city centre as presented within the bid. One element of the bid was the enhancement of St Botolph's Circus, which will be led by Essex County Council (ECC) as the lead authority for Highways. This report asks for approval to enter into an agreement with Colchester City Council (CCC) to deliver the £11.8m project on their behalf and to draw down the funding of £9.3m from the LUF for the delivery of the St Botolph's Circus scheme along with £2.5m of existing s106 funding. Additionally, this report asks the Cabinet Member to agree to the preferred option for the A134 St Botolph's Circus and requests authority to progress the preferred option through design, planning (permitted development approval) and prepare works information for tender.

The approval of the recommendations in this report will enable works on this strategically significant project to commence. St Botolph's Circus is a key gateway into Colchester's historic centre and the improvements proposed will make the area safer, more accessible and will utilise the current footprint of the roundabout more sustainably with potential for new public realm, making the area more attractive and welcoming. It is also a key first step in improving future transport provision as set out in the newly drafted Colchester City Centre Masterplan.

What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve?: The scheme has the potential to deliver several benefits that align well with the strategic priorities in ECC's Organisational Strategy. It is an enabler of regeneration in the locality, creating new opportunities for growth and investment through improved access to the city centre, release of underutilised land for enhancement, and improving the aesthetics of a key gateway and transport interchange into the city. The additional space and public realm will provide the opportunity for more greening to help improve air quality and improved wayfinding and access to heritage assets with works to overcome current severance issues. Planned removal of underpasses will also improve safety by supporting the reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour through better natural surveillance. It will create a new active mobility-friendly junction promoting walking, cycling and shared mobility, connecting to existing cycleway networks and providing important links to future planned enhancements identified under the Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan (LCWIP). The scheme will also lay the foundations for an improved transport interchange, improving the existing bus station infrastructure and provide an additional stop for the RTS whilst also making links between the existing Colchester Town railway station and all other modes of transport. Better accessibility across the new junction for all users will improve access to jobs, training and services within the city centre for residents and visitors. Finally, the scheme will create a new attractive gateway to the city centre and support car-lite development on the adjoining areas of land, which will be redeveloped by CCC.

Executive Director responsible for policy / decision: Tom Walker (Economy, Investment and Public Health)

Cabinet Member responsible for policy / decision: Cllr Lee Scott (Planning a Growing Economy)

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

How will the impact of the policy / decision be monitored and evaluated?: The St Botolph's Circus scheme is also an enabler to a wider phased approach to improving public transport interchange in central Colchester as demonstrated in the Colchester City Centre Masterplan. The Colchester Masterplan aims to be the overarching strategic document for all city centre work including LUF, Town Deal projects and wider interventions.

Will this policy / decision impact on:

Service users: No

Employees: No

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, Levelling up the economy

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Environment: Transport and built environment

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Health: Healthy lifestyles, Promoting independence

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Families: Safety, Levelling up outcomes for families

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: Medium

Disability - learning disability

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Disability - mental health issues

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Disability - physical impairment

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Disability - sensory impairment

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Sex

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

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 public maintainable highway is already available for everyone to utilise. The ECC-led project involves promoting walking, cycling, public transport and shared mobility through a new active mobility-friendly junction. Making pavements and road crossings safer and more attractive will have the added benefit of improved health and wellbeing outcomes as more feel people feel empowered to travel more sustainably. Additionally, improved public realm will provide more spaces to rest and an improved environment has been shown to have a positive impact on people's mental health. Places to rest and dwell will help older residents as well as shared mobility space that support safe use of mobility scooters around the city. Additionally, the loss of slopes and steps into underpasses will help reduce severance issues and make accessibility easier for those with disabilities. 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, healthcare, shops and other services. The scheme will also improve overall security and safety for pedestrians with the removal and replacement of the existing underpasses (with modern signal-controlled surface crossings), which are known for anti-social behaviour, increasing the comfort and feeling of safety and well-being, particularly during the hours of darkness. The scheme will also improve access to public transport services, making it easier for residents without a car to access services more easily.

A previous consultation on improving the St Botolph's area identified several local priorities in terms of improving accessibility, safety and the public realm. The scheme has been developed in a balanced way recognising that there are essential car journeys that move around the junction and that delays because of the proposed scheme should be minimised. Similarly, access will be maintained to car parks around the area also reflecting concerns around Blue Badge parking.

Currently according to the results of Essex Resident Survey 2022, 49% of urban residents of Essex residents

feel safe when outside in their local area after dark. Safer public realm with improved natural surveillance and crime reduction measures has been considered to ensure people feel safer walking through the city in the evening especially women who can feel particularly vulnerable. It is therefore anticipated that there will be a positive impact on the feeling of safety in these areas, particularly for women.

Public consultation took place in June and July 2023 and comments and feedback have been taken on board with revisions to the proposed concept design. A Consultation Report and Promoter's Response Report are available if required.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?:

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?: The scheme is an infrastructure intervention which is part of a wider master plan initiative. The physical and delivery constraints around the scheme itself do place limitations on its scope (e.g. funding and timescales) however the wider master plan does focus on how inclusive use of the city centre can be encouraged and ECC expects to work with Colchester City Council around wider initiatives to improve the public realm and accessibility of the area beyond the immediate vicinity of the scheme itself.

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: Medium

Children on Free School Meals

Nature of impact: None

Working families

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

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: Low

Residents of Harlow

Nature of impact: None

Residents of Jaywick and Clacton

Nature of impact: None

Residents of Harwich

Nature of impact: None

Residents of Basildon (Town) housing estates

Nature of impact: None

Residents of Canvey Island

Nature of impact: None

Residents of Colchester (Town) - Housing Estates

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Residents of Rural North of the Braintree District

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: The St Botolph's project is part of the wider Colchester City Centre Masterplan. In developing the Masterplan over 2000 people have been engaged during the process (incl. council members, young people (10-18yrs), businesses, strategic stakeholders, networks and organisations) through:

- 2 Public events
- 8 Themed co-design workshops (business, accessibility and active travel, heritage, health and wellbeing, community/residents and creative and digital)
- 1847 Online survey responses

Summary headlines from the work include:

Results from the public survey show that one of the most important issues to respondents (65.8%) was addressing the issue of there being a high proportion of low paid jobs in the city centre. More higher paying jobs in the city centre with good transport links will give more opportunities for working families and young people to get more sustainable employment. The city centre is home to 28% of Colchester's jobs so tackling severance issues is important.

Respondents said most important was Colchester's heritage in improving the city's image and making it a well-known tourist destination (70%). The ability to navigate the city centre easily and safely while showcasing and enhancing the green space and heritage will make more people want to visit and will improve the residents that live in the areas pride of place and wellbeing.

Children and adults with SENDS, will enjoy greater independence, in the safer and more pleasant environment created by the implementation of the St Botolph's project. For 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 to access their places of work or allow them to access new 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

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?:

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?:

Equalities - Inclusion health groups and other priority groups

Refugees / asylum seekers

Nature of impact: None

Homeless / rough sleepers

Nature of impact: None

People who experience drug and alcohol dependence

Nature of impact: None

Offenders / ex-offenders

Nature of impact: None

Victims of modern slavery

Nature of impact: None

Carers

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Looked after children / care leavers

Nature of impact: None

The armed forces community (serving personnel and their families, veterans, reservists and cadets)

Nature of impact: None

People who are unemployed / economically inactive

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

People on low income

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Sex workers

Nature of impact: None

Ethnic minorities

Nature of impact: None

Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities

Nature of impact: None

People with multiple complex needs or multi-morbidities

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: According to Census 2021 data Greenstead, Berechurch and Old Heath and The Hythe wards, just on the outskirts of the city centre, have the highest number of people unemployed due to long-term sickness or disability. The current junction is a key gateway into the city for the southeast wards of Colchester so improvements to this key entry point will make a safer, more accessible way into the city for those walking, cycling or using other forms of mobility like wheelchairs and mobility scooters.

As mentioned above improved access to jobs, education, training and services will help support those that may be on low incomes, unemployed or economically inactive.

Additionally, setting out the reasons for removing the underpasses, accessibility, streetscape, and active travel design guidelines recommend implementing design principles that are safe, comfortable, direct, and attractive for all users, which contribute to placemaking and a healthy street environment where people want to spend time travelling on/ through. Simply renovating the existing underpasses would not meet these design principles and they will remain uninviting and areas that users, especially vulnerable users, will avoid.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?:

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?:

Equalities - Geographical Groups

People living in areas of high deprivation

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

People living in rural or isolated areas

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

People living in coastal areas

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

People living in urban areas

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: Colchester City Centre is well serviced by public transport and is home to 28% of Colchester's jobs. It is a key site for retail, leisure, education, training, jobs and services and catchment for these spans across the immediate urban area to the more rural, isolated and coastal areas within Tendring etc.

Colchester is one of the fastest growing places in England – By 2030 the Borough's population is projected to be over 214,000. That's higher than the current populations of Norwich and Aberdeen. The city is set to grow and enabling people to travel more sustainably around it will help reduce congestion, noise and improve air quality.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?:

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?:

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: None

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: Not applicable for this scheme

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?:

Crime & Disorder

Crime and disorder

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: High

The misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Re-offending

Nature of impact: None

Serious violence

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact:

As is often the case in more urban areas, Colchester City Centre has the highest rate of crime in Colchester with 3587 per 100,000 with Anti-Social Behaviour and Violence and Sexual offences being the most prevalent crimes (Essex JSNA, 2022). In the Essex Resident survey, 2022 around half of Colchester residents feel unsafe when outside in their local area after dark. The Essex Design Guide embodies the notion that clever design can create

safer neighbourhoods, a set of design principles known as crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) have been gaining popularity with planners and security professionals around the world in recent years. The four main principles of CPTED are:

- Natural Surveillance
- Natural Access Control
- Territorial Reinforcement
- Maintenance

When these principles are put into practice, the resulting environment should discourage or impede criminal behaviour, while at the same time encourage the rest of the community to keep a watchful eye and make them feel safer. The St Botolph's Circus project will remove underpasses creating areas that can be overseen and feel brighter, more visible and safer. Removing locations where the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances have been known to occur. The recent consultation showed that new pedestrian infrastructure was generally welcomed, with more support than opposition for removing the underpasses, with anti-social behaviour being a concern. The aim of removing the underpasses is partly to help reduce anti-social behaviour / fear of crime and this had significant support from those living close to the junction. The area will be designed so people are physically guided through the clearly designated, direct and functional public space promoting the appropriate use of the area.

(If negative impact assessed) What actions will be undertaken to mitigate negative impacts, including timescales:

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?:

N/A

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?:

By strengthening the above principles

Climate

Does your decision / policy involve development or re-development of buildings or infrastructure?: No

Does your decision / policy take place in, or make use of, existing buildings or infrastructure?: No

Does your decision / policy involve elements connected to transport, travel or vehicles? This includes travel needs / requirements of both service users and staff (including staff you're planning to recruit): Yes

Where are staff or service users coming from and how are they travelling?: Yes, this is a transport scheme. It provides an improved junction and transport interchange (as highlighted and detailed in previous sections). As part of the future tender package and procurement for the construction works the contractor will need to advise how they intend to reduce their carbon impact. This would be through travel plans and also sourcing and use of recycled materials (for example recycled roadway base course materials, both from the planning and the reconstruction).

If car travel is unavoidable, are you specifying electric cars and vehicles?: No

What is your transition plan to introduce electric vehicles?: Not Applicable

Are you undertaking a procurement exercise?: Yes

Please confirm for purchase over £100k that you have a carbon reduction plan as part of your procurement: N/A

Please list which climate TOMS (Themes, outcomes & measures) you have included in your procurement and the weighting these have been given: Yes a procurement exercise will be undertaken but not at this part of the design stage. This stage will utilise the existing Essex Highways contract for design services. Procurement of a construction contractor will follow after completion of the detailed design phase. This section can be updated as part of governance decision taken at that stage when information will be available from the

work undertaken.

Does your decision / policy involve the purchase of goods or materials?: Yes

Have you considered making use of goods / materials that already exist in the organisation, or using second-hand equipment?: N/A

Will you purchase goods that are durable and long lasting, and can be easily maintained or repaired?:
Yes

Will you source goods / materials from a local provider where possible?: Yes

Will you use goods or materials made with recycled content and / or recyclable at the end of their life?:
Yes

Will any waste be generated by this decision? This includes waste from construction, waste generated by service users / staff, and waste generated by replacing existing products / materials with new: Yes

Most of our activities will generate waste so it is important that this waste is managed properly. Generally, the more waste produced the greater the greenhouse gas impact. What approaches are in place to maximise reuse, recycling and composting of any waste generated by this decision? Please specify how you are:

Measuring the amount of waste being generated and setting targets to reduce, for example setting reuse requirements: The project is at the early concept design stage. Procurement of a construction contractor will follow after completion of the detailed design phase in the future. This section can be updated as part of governance decision taken at that stage when information will be available from the work undertaken. This scheme provides an improved junction and transport interchange (as highlighted and detailed in previous sections). As part of the future tender package and procurement for the construction works the contractor will need to advise how they intend to reduce their carbon impact. This would be through sourcing and use of recycled materials (for example recycled roadway base course materials, both from the plaining and the reconstruction). This section can be updated as part of the decision-making approval when the scheme is developed sufficiently as part of the approval to go out to tender when this information will be available.

Requiring recycling - such as setting targets for waste recycled, or providing facilities to recycle: as above

Operating the service in a digital way to reduce use of material resources: as above

Sharing goods and services with others to reduce resource use: as above

Donating or selling materials and products that are no longer required to keep them in use elsewhere: as above

Avoiding over-packaged or difficult to recycle goods: as above

Avoid single-use items, in particular single use plastic: as above

Recycling and composting waste where applicable: as above

Where will waste be treated and disposed of? This includes general rubbish and recycling: as above

Nature of impact

Built Environment / Energy: Positive

Sustainable Transport / Travel: Positive

Waste: None

Extent of impact

Built Environment / Energy: Medium

Sustainable Transport / Travel: High

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: Public survey found that 56.5% of respondents think that it is very important to take effective action against the impacts of climate change. The Masterplan is an overarching strategic document that includes, 'actively respond to the Climate Emergency' as a key strategic objective within its vision. Public realm improvements including planters, Street Furniture, Improved pedestrian experience, cycling infrastructure (cycle parking), specific cycle and walking routes. Consideration of all of the above is being taken into account through feasibility work etc.

Particularly in busy built-up urban areas such as Colchester, interventions are targeted at reducing traffic congestion and poor air quality that can severely impact people's health and wellbeing. Travel in Colchester is car dominated, with over 60% of residents using it as their primary method of travel. If everyone in Colchester who travelled to work by car (pre-Covid-19) used a different form of transport two times a week (e.g. P&R), this would remove nearly 150,000 car journeys each week. Children, older people and those with heart and respiratory conditions tend to be disproportionately affected by poor air quality. Compounded if they live in areas of high deprivation.

There are no modelled exceedances of the annual mean NO₂ Air Quality Objective (AQO) with the proposed scheme. The overall effect of the proposed scheme on air quality is assessed to be not significant with some local reductions in NO₂ emissions along Mersea Road

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?:

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: 16/11/2023

Name of person completing the ECIA: Amie Hall

Email address of person completing the ECIA: amie.hall2@essex.gov.uk

Your function: Economy, Investment and Public Health

Your service area: Sustainable Growth

Your team: Localities Team

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

Email address of Head of Service: andrew.burgess@essex.gov.uk