



Essex County Council

Cabinet

10:15	Tuesday, 22 June 2021	Council Chamber County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH
--------------	----------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------

For information about the meeting please ask for:

Emma Tombs, Democratic Services Manager

Telephone: 033303 22709

Email: democratic.services@essex.gov.uk

Essex County Council and Committees Information

All Council and Committee Meetings are held in public unless the business is exempt in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972.

Members of the public will be able to view and listen to any items on the agenda unless the Committee has resolved to exclude the press and public from the meeting as a result of the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

ECC Guest Wifi

For members of the public, you can now access free wifi in County Hall.

- Please log in to 'ECC Guest'
- Follow the instructions on your web browser

Attendance at meetings

Most meetings are held at County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1LX. [A map and directions to County Hall can be found on our website.](#)

Access to the meeting and reasonable adjustments

County Hall is accessible via ramped access to the building for people with physical disabilities.

The Council Chamber and Committee Rooms are accessible by lift and are located on the first and second floors of County Hall.

Induction loop facilities are available in most Meeting Rooms. Specialist headsets are available from Reception.

Accessing Documents

If you have a need for documents in, large print, Braille, on disk or in alternative languages and easy read please contact the Democratic Services Officer before the meeting takes place. For further information about how you can access this meeting, contact the Democratic Services Officer.

The agenda is also available on the Essex County Council website, www.essex.gov.uk. From the Home Page, click on 'Running the council', then on 'How decisions are made', then 'council meetings calendar'. Finally, select the relevant committee from the calendar of meetings.

Audio recording of meetings

Please note that in the interests of improving access to the Council's meetings, a sound recording is made of the public parts of many of the Council's Committees. The Chairman will make an announcement at the start of the meeting if it is being recorded.

If you are unable to attend and wish to see if the recording is available, you can find out by checking the [Calendar of Meetings](#) any time after the meeting starts. Any audio available can be accessed via the 'On air now!' box in the centre of the page, or the links immediately below it.

Should you wish to record the meeting, please contact the officer shown on the agenda front page.

		Pages
1	Membership, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest	5 - 5
2	Minutes: 8 June 2021	6 - 9
3	Questions from the public A period of up to 15 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions or make representations on any item on the agenda for this meeting. No statement or question shall be longer than three minutes and speakers will be timed. On arrival, and before the start of the meeting, please register with the Democratic Services Officer.	
4	2020/21 Provisional Outturn Report (FP/697/05/20)	10 - 50

- | | | |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| 5 | Procurement of Essex Community Wellbeing Service (FP/054/04/21)
The Equality Impact Assessment is available online – please scroll to bottom of page, below Meeting Documents | 51 - 63 |
| 6 | Bus Back Better - Proposed Enhanced Bus Partnership for Essex (FP/063/05/21)
The Equality Impact Assessment is available online – please scroll to bottom of page, below Meeting Documents | 64 - 78 |
| 7 | Expansion of New Rickstones Academy, Witham and Southview SEN School with residential provision (FP/033/03/21)
The Equality Impact Assessment is available online – please scroll to bottom of page, below Meeting Documents | 79 - 87 |
| 8 | Adoption of the Essex County Council Walking Strategy 2021 (FP/073/05/21)
The Equality Impact Assessment is available online – please scroll to bottom of page, below Meeting Documents | 88 - 155 |
| 9 | Decisions taken by or in consultation with Cabinet Members (FP/081/05/21) | 156 - 156 |
| 10 | Date of next meeting
To note that the next meeting of the Cabinet will take place at 10am on Thursday 29 July 2021 at County Hall, Chelmsford (exact location to be confirmed). | |
| 11 | Urgent Business
To consider any matter which in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered in public by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency. | |

Exempt Items

(During consideration of these items the meeting is not likely to be open to the press and public)

The following items of business have not been published on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. Members are asked to consider whether or not the press and public should be excluded during the consideration of these items. If so it will be necessary for the meeting to pass a formal resolution:

That the press and public are excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the remaining items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the specific paragraph(s) of Schedule 12A engaged being set out in the report or appendix relating to that item of business.

- 12 Confidential Appendix: Procurement of the Essex Community Wellbeing Service (FP/054/04/21)**
- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information);
- 13 Confidential Appendix: Expansion of New Rickstones Academy, Witham and Southview SEN School with residential provision (FP/033/03/21)**
- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information);
- 14 Urgent Exempt Business**
- To consider in private any other matter which in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.

Committee: Cabinet

Enquiries to: Emma Tombs, Democratic Services Manager
Emma.tombs@essex.gov.uk

Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

Recommendations:

To note:

1. Membership as shown below
2. Apologies and substitutions
3. Declarations of interest to be made by Members in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct

Membership
(Quorum: 3)

Portfolio

Councillor K Bentley	Leader of the Council (Chairman)
Councillor L McKinlay	Deputy Leader and Community, Equality, Partnerships and Performance (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor T Ball	Education Excellence, Skills and Training
Councillor M Buckley	Waste Reduction and Recycling
Councillor G Butland	Devolution, Art, Heritage and Culture
Councillor B Egan	Children's Services and Early Years
Councillor L Scott	Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport
Councillor J Spence	Adult Social Care and Health
Councillor L Wagland	Economic Renewal, Infrastructure and Planning
Councillor C Whitbread	Finance, Resources and Corporate Affairs

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet meeting that took place in the Chamber of County Hall on Tuesday 8 June 2021

Present:

Councillor	Cabinet Member Responsibility
Councillor K Bentley	Leader of the Council (Chairman)
Councillor L McKinley	Deputy Leader and Community, Equality, Partnerships and Performance
Councillor T Ball	Education Excellence, Skills and Training
Councillor M Buckley	Waste Reduction and Recycling
Councillor G Butland	Devolution, Art, Heritage and Culture
Councillor B Egan	Children's Services and Early Years
Councillor L Scott	Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport
Councillor L Wagland	Economic Renewal, Infrastructure and Planning
Councillor C Whitbread	Finance, Resources and Corporate Affairs

Councillors Pond, Henderson, King, Durham, Platt, Schwier and Hoy were also present.

1. **Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest.**

The report of Membership, Apologies and Declarations was received and the following were noted:

1. The new membership of the Cabinet was noted and introductions were made.
2. Apologies were received from Councillor Spence, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care and Councillor Mackrory, Leader of the Liberal Democrats Group.
3. There were no declarations of interest.

2. **Minutes of Previous Meetings**

The Minutes of the meetings held on 20 April 2021 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

3. **Questions from the public**

There were no questions from members of the public.

4. **Allocation of Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF): 2021/22 Spending Programme (FP/071/0521)**

The Cabinet considered a report advising that the Council had received additional Contain Outbreak Management Funding from the Department of Health and Social Care to help further contain and respond to the Covid-19 pandemic in Essex. The report asked Cabinet to agree how that one-off funding would be spent.

The Leader of the Council, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community, Equality, Partnerships and Performance, and the Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Corporate Affairs responded to questions from Councillors Henderson, King and Pond regarding:

- The provision of support to organisations that may find the bidding process difficult;
- The need to fund community transport, particularly considering increased NHS pressures;
- The establishment of the Central Law Group, working with Chelmsford Citizen's Advice Bureau, to provide assistance particularly in relation to employment issues;
- The need for regular updates and suitable assurance methods to ensure the funding was being used where it could give the most value;
- The scope of measures to support the Armed Forces;
- The dispersal of funds to areas with high levels of tourism and visitor numbers and how these areas had been identified;
- The need to ensure that urban areas were not disadvantaged when considering the dispersal of funds to support community buildings;
- The importance of the business adaptation grant scheme.

A written answer would also be provided to Councillor King by the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care in relation to how the measures set out at 3.4.11 in the report to support adults with learning difficulties would be administered.

Resolved:

1. That £13.3m of the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) will be used to fund the following public health coronavirus response activities in Essex:
 - 1.1. To increase the maximum Business Adaptation Grant that businesses can apply for from £1,500 to £5,000 and allocate £5m to be made available to District, Borough and City Councils for this purpose, to be paid in stages to each authority to enable them to meet demand in their area.
 - 1.2. That £2.5m will be used to fund measures to reduce the risk of spreading the virus in places in Essex open to the public with high levels of tourism and visitor numbers. £925,000 of this will be used to fund measures in Essex County Council's Country Parks, Essex Outdoors Centres and Cressing Temple Barns. £1.575m will be allocated to a grant scheme which will be open to applications

from District, Borough and City Councils.

- 1.3. To allocate £1.08m to be divided equally between the twelve District, City and Borough Councils in Essex to fund an additional 12 months of direct support to local communities via the community hubs they have established.
 - 1.4. To grant £680,000 to Citizen Advice Bureaux in Essex to meet continued increased demand due to Covid-19.
 - 1.5 To allocate £550,000 to the Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) to deliver, on the Council's behalf, a grant scheme for grassroots clubs to assist with Covid-19 remobilisation costs.
 - 1.6 To agree that £508,000 will be used by the Council's Early Years team to provide a one-off payment to early years settings in the County to assist with PPE costs. A payment of £200 will go to childminders and out-of-school providers, and £500 to pre-schools and day nurseries.
 - 1.7. To allocate £25,000 to the Chelmsford Citizens Advice Bureau to host an Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer.
 - 1.8. To agree that £500,000 will be used by ECC to make bottles of hand sanitiser and face coverings freely available to young people and adults with low income.
 - 1.9. To agree that £50,000 will be used to deliver a targeted Covid-19 communications campaign for gypsy and traveller communities.
 - 1.10 To agree that £100,000 will be used to fund Essex Coronavirus Action (ECA), a digital community campaign model supporting Covid safety compliance, for an additional 12 months.
 - 1.11 To agree that £200,000 will be used to purchase devices for adults with learning disabilities, autism, carers and older people, and £100,000 will be used to facilitate implementation and the upskilling of isolated residents to help them become digitally connected.
 - 1.12 To agree that £500,000 will be used to fund Covid-19 communications and campaigns.
 - 1.13 To allocate £1.5m to the Rural Community Council of Essex to administer a grants scheme to support community buildings, such as village halls, community centres, and faith buildings with the costs of being Covid compliant.
2. To agree that £500,000 will be used to fund Covid-19 communications and campaigns.

3. To allocate £1.5m to the Rural Community Council of Essex to administer a grants scheme to support community buildings, such as village halls, community centres, and faith buildings with the costs of being Covid compliant.

3.1. to agree the criteria for and approve applications for funding pursuant to paragraph 2.1 above; and

3.2. to approve the terms of agreements under which funding is paid.

4. To agree that the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Director, Wellbeing Public Health and Communities and the Executive Director, Place and Public Health is authorised between now and the end of November 2021 to reallocate the funding referred to in paragraph 1. between different heads of funding set out in paragraph 1. to respond to demand and priority need.

5. **Report of decisions taken by or in consultation with Cabinet Members (FP/045/04/21)**

The report was noted.

6. **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Cabinet would take place on the morning of Tuesday 22 June 2021, with the venue and time to be confirmed.

(Post meeting note – due to incorrect advice being provided to the Chairman, the date of the next meeting was advised as being 29 July 2021. 22 June 2021 is the correct date).

7. **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

8. **Urgent Exempt Business**

There was no urgent exempt business.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10.45am.

Report title: 2020/21 Provisional Outturn Report	
Report to: Cabinet	
Report author: Councillor Christopher Whitbread, Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Corporate Affairs	
Date: 22 June 2021	For: Decision
Enquiries to: Nicole Wood, Executive Director for Finance and Technology and Section 151 Officer email nicole.wood@essex.gov.uk or Christine Golding, Chief Accountant email christine.golding@essex.gov.uk or Adrian Osborne, Head of Strategic Finance and Insight email adrian.osborne2@essex.gov.uk	
County Divisions affected: All Essex	

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present and provide commentary on the provisional outturn position for financial year 2020/21 prior to formal closure of the accounts. The report also explains the key movements since the third quarter financial overview report (presented to Cabinet on 19 January 2021) to the year-end position.

2. Recommendations

Approval is sought for the following in relation to the 2020/21 outturn position:

- 2.1 To rename the Service Improvement Reserve to the Ambition Fund Reserve
- 2.2 To rename the COVID-19 Recovery Reserve to the Renewal Fund Reserve
- 2.3 That the net under spend £11.482m is appropriated to the General Balance to support future years' budget planning
- 2.4 General Balance returns of £15.714m in relation to Adult Social Care COVID funding that is no longer required or has been recovered from Health (£15.385m), Slough libraries (£300,000) and Excess Deaths COVID funding no longer required (£29,000).
- 2.5 Withdrawal of £31.542m from the General Balance to earmarked reserves in respect of reassignment of COVID grant funding.
- 2.6 That under spends are allocated between portfolios as set out within the 'Transfers of under / over spends between Portfolios' column of Appendix A.
- 2.7 That the following amounts are appropriated to / from restricted and other revenue reserves:

Restricted Funds

- Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Reserves

- Building Schools for the Future - **£354,000** contribution (Appendix D 6iii)
- Clacton Secondary Schools - **£479,000** contribution (Appendix D 6iii)
- Debden School - **£835,000** contribution (Appendix D 6iii)
- A130 Road - **£219,000** contribution (Appendix D 3iii)

- Waste Reserve - £4.574m contribution mainly relating to PFI credits received during the year (Appendix D 7iii & 17ii)

- Grants Equalisation Reserve - £501,000 contribution in relation to Public Health grant to be utilised in 2021/22 relating to under spends following the maximisation of grant funding (Appendix D 9v)

- Schools - £8.958m net contribution to the Schools' reserve, following under spend against schools' budgets in 2020/21 (Appendix D 5i)

- Partnership Reserves

- Essex Safeguarding Childrens Board Partnership Reserve - **£50,000** withdrawal (Appendix D 1iii)
- Adults Safeguarding Board Partnership Reserve - **£17,000** contribution (Appendix D 9v)
- Public Sector Reform Partnership Reserve - **£47,000** contribution (Appendix D 1iii)
- Youth Offending Teams Partnership Reserve - **£343,000** contribution (Appendix D 1iii)
- Public Law Partnership Reserve - **£19,000** contribution (Appendix D 12iii)

Capital funding

- Capital funding - £2.841m net contribution to transfer capital financing resources to revenue in respect of:

- Replenish the reserve to retain funding to support the capital programme - **£8.450m** contribution
- Essex Housing - **£7.746m** withdrawal for the technical adjustment relating to projects transferring to Essex Housing LLP. The Council will transfer the housing development sites to the LLP during 2021/22 at a price that reflects the market value of the sites and includes the pre-construction costs being treated as abortive by the Council. This is in line with the Cabinet decisions taken in December 2020
- To support Fleet purchase in 2021/22 - **£1.276m** contribution
- Highways expenditure which is capital in nature - **£500,000** contribution
- Capital works relating to the in-house Adults Residential Service - **£200,000** contribution
- Capital expenditure on networking and communications infrastructure - **£82,000** contribution

- Compensation claims for highways as a result of works carried out for Colchester Integrated Transport Package scheme - **£79,000** contribution

Other reserves

- **Carry Forwards - £8.471m** contribution, in respect of revenue budget under spends that it is proposed are carried forward for use in 2021/22. The proposals for utilising this Reserve in 2021/22 are set out in **Appendix C** of this report
- **Adults Digital Programme - £877,000** contribution to continue with projects within the programme for use in 2021/22 (Appendix D 9v)
- **Adults Transformation - £3.5m** contribution to support the Adult Social Care medium term budget (Appendix D 9v)
- **Carbon Reduction Reserve - £192,000** contribution due to unspent project funding which is now required for use in 2021/22 (Appendix D 7iii)
- **Children's Transformation Reserve - £1.314m** contribution to replenish the reserve to support transformation capacity to deliver the Children's Transformation Programme (Appendix D 1iii)
- **Collection Fund Investment Risk Reserve - £42,000** contribution to support funding in 2021/22 (Appendix D 16ii)
- **Community Initiatives Reserve - £275,000** withdrawal to support expenditure incurred on community projects during 2x 20/21 (Appendix D 2iii)
- **COVID Equalisation Reserve - £12.638m** net contribution – withdrawals to and contributions from multiple portfolios to fund COVID pressures and return COVID funding where actual expenditure was lower than previously forecast, plus a contribution to transfer all remaining COVID emergency grant required for future commitments to this reserve; this will be applied to expected COVID related costs from 2021/22 (Appendix D 1iii, 2iii, 3iii, 6iii, 7iii, 9v, 14iii & Appendix M)
- **Emergency Reserve - £10.169m** contribution due to actual expenditure being lower than previously forecast relating to the pandemic and to replenish ECC funds originally used for COVID pressures and losses with emergency grant (Appendix D 3iii, 6iii & Appendix M)
- **Health and Safety Reserve - £681,000** contribution relating to unspent funds for planned projects now slipped to 2021/22 and also a contribution from the General Balance to replenish ECC funds originally used for COVID pressures and losses with emergency grant (Appendix D 6iii, 10iii & Appendix M)
- **Insurance Reserve - £1.238m** contribution in respect of recovery of income relating to Highways claims, to meet ECC budget pressures in 2021/22 as planned in February budget setting (Appendix D 13iii)
- **Quadrennial elections reserve - £668,000** withdrawal towards preparation work incurred for the May 2021 elections (Appendix D 10iii)
- **Renewal Fund Reserve - £21.518m** net contribution – a contribution of COVID emergency grant from the General Balance to support the creation of a £25m Renewal Fund within the reserve and to replenish ECC funds originally used for

COVID pressures and losses. Partially offset by withdrawals for COVID pressures and losses (Appendix D 4iii, 6iii, 11iii, 12iii & Appendix M)

- **Ambition Fund Reserve - £6.069m** net contribution due mainly to replenishment of the reserve using part of the funds received from UBB in respect of the costs order relating to a litigation between the authority and UBB Waste (Essex Ltd) and the ECL Dividend (Appendix D 1iii, 6iii, 8iii, 9v, 10iii, 14iii & 16ii)
- **Technology Solutions Reserve - £1.187m** contribution due to unspent funds for corporate systems reprofiled into 2021/22 (Appendix D 12iii)
- **Tendring PPP Reserve - £303,000** withdrawal of the remaining funds now the contract has been terminated (Appendix D 6iii)
- **Transformation Reserve - £2.445m**, net contribution due to unspent funds relating to slipped or paused projects to use in 2021/22 and also a contribution from the General Balance to replenish ECC funds originally used for COVID pressures and losses which can be funded from government emergency grant (Appendix 1iii, 2iii, 3iii, 4iii, 12iii, 15iii & Appendix M)

2.8 That the financing of capital payments in 2020/21 is approved on the basis set out within Appendix G to this report.

2.9 Capital payment budgets, and associated capital financing, of **£18.032m** are re-profiled into subsequent financial years, in respect of slippage in schemes (as shown in the 'Slippage' column of Appendix H).

2.10 Capital payment budgets, and associated capital financing, of **£4.347m** are brought forward in respect of schemes that have progressed ahead of schedule (as shown in the 'Advanced works' column of Appendix H).

2.11 Portfolios' 2020/21 capital payments budgets are reduced by **£16.016m** (as shown in the 'Reductions' column of Appendix H), with increases of **£11.845m** to other schemes (as shown in the 'Additions' column of Appendix H), to reflect achieved activity in 2020/21.

Approval is also sought for the following in relation to the 2021/22 budget:

2.12 To agree to delegate authority to the Executive Director for Finance and Technology (S151 officer), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Corporate Affairs to release **£8.471m** from the Carry Forwards Reserve in 2021/22 for the purposes detailed in Appendix C of this report, as well as those previously approved in the Half Year report (FP/694/05/20) and Third Quarter report (FP/695/05/20).

3. Executive Summary

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 It is important to note the exceptional impact on the financial management of the organisation during the 2020/21 pandemic, with significant additional net costs and extensive one-off government funding streams to anticipate, manage, monitor and report on transparently. Many of the funds received from government cover more than one financial year and this has a material impact on balances in closure, as we seek to forecast the continuing and associated costs of COVID-19 in 2021/22 and beyond. Essex County Council (ECC) is not alone in this experience and finance professionals work closely with other county councils across the country and report to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to ensure consistency of approach wherever possible. ECC will also continue to face considerable uncertainty as to underlying patterns of demand which will require careful monitoring.
- 3.1.2 Despite the exceptional circumstances the Council has emerged from 2020/21 in a resilient position although there remains considerable uncertainty around both demand pressures and government funding notably beyond 2021/22.
- 3.1.3 The report sets out an under spend on revenue of **£11.482m** (1.3%) against a budget of £913.610m. This position is after adjusting for proposals to carry forward under spends for use in 2021/22 and reserve movements. £3.39m of the under spend is a technical adjustment in relation to insurance, due to lower claims during the pandemic; this can only be forecast at year end given it is subject to an annual actuarial review. **This leaves £7.619m due to under spends on services.** A major driver of this is the £7.259m under spend in Health and Adult Social Care. This was due to volatility in demand, which was less than when the budget was set; this excludes specific COVID related costs which were fully funded by government. Examples of the under spend were in lower volumes of residential and nursing care. It is proposed that the £11.482m under spend is appropriated to the General Balance to support future years' budget planning (see 2.3).
- 3.1.4 The underlying volatility in expenditure and uncertainty in forecasting that has prevailed throughout 2020/21 due to the pandemic impact has been reported every quarter and, not unexpectedly, we have seen movements across most services in the provisional closure figures. We have seen an improvement of £12.088m on the position reported at the Third Quarter stage, which was a forecast underspend of £607,000. The reasons for this movement are set out in Appendix D.

- 3.1.5 The Council has experienced additional expenditure and lost income in relation to the pandemic of £148m for 2020/21, an increase against the original budget of 16%. These pressures are less than the total COVID funding received from government to date (circa £207m), however this is a result of timing of spend versus receipt of funding and is not an uncommitted surplus. Based on our latest intelligence all remaining funding is committed for use against continuing pressures and losses primarily during 2021/22.
- 3.1.6 There is an under spend on capital of £17.856m against the final approved budget of £214.891m –This is 92% delivery against the final approved budget, or 84% against original budget. This is broadly in line with our delivery record in 2019/20, before the pandemic where we achieved 93%.
- 3.1.7 BDO LLP, our external auditor for the 2020/21 financial year, are scheduled to carry out their audit of the Council's 2020/21 Statement of Accounts during the summer, and it is possible that changes may be made to the accounts during this period which may alter the position presented within this report. It is planned to report the results of the external audit to the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee on 27 September 2021, at which stage that Committee is expected to approve the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts for publication. The Statement of Accounts will then be published on the Council's website.

3.2 Overview - Revenue

3.2.3 Through careful financial planning and management, Essex County Council has delivered a moderate under spend of £11.482m (1.3%), of which £3.390m is due to a one-off year end adjustment relating to the actuarial valuation of the insurance provision. This position has been delivered during a year when there has been an exceptional impact on the financial management of the organisation as a result of the pandemic; with additional costs of circa £148m and around £207m of government support confirmed to date through multiple and complex grant streams - this has created a substantial impact on a £914m budget. The monies received from government cover more than one financial year and this has had a material impact on reserves balances at closure, as we need to set aside funding for COVID to meet costs in 2021/22 and beyond: as the cash flows of funding do not match the likely expenditure pattern; this is a pattern repeated across the sector.

3.2.4 The net under spend of £11.482m reflects:

- i. A net under spend by services of **£11.009m**. £3.390m relates to a technical adjustment for the insurance cost recovery account following receipt of the annual actuarial review. The remaining under spend is concentrated in the Health and Adult Social Care portfolio.
- ii. An online position for interest, capital financing and dividends.
- iii. A minor over achievement on funding of **£473,000**

- iv. Proposals to transfer **£88.232m** (net) to earmarked revenue reserves. Excluding transfers to Restricted Funds (£16.296m) which are funds not under the Council's control, and carry forward requests (£8.471m), a significant proportion of the residual balance relates to the timing of cash flows in relation to COVID related expenditure.

3.2.5 The focus is now shifting to how we as a council, as well as our local communities and economy, may fare as restrictions are eased. It is highly probable that there will continue to be volatility in the position throughout 2021/22, as we start to comprehend the fallout of this past year. There remains significant uncertainty around the level of pent-up demand in Adult and Children's Social Care and Home to School Transport, as well as residents' behaviour changes impacting on the volume of household waste. Therefore, the position will be closely monitored throughout the year ahead.

3.2.6 During 2020/21, the Council has made good progress towards delivering its strategic aims and priorities. More detail can be found in the Organisation Plan 2020/21: [Essex Organisation Plan 2020 to 2021.pdf](#)

3.2.7 3.2.5 Commentary on the provisional outturn position for each portfolio is provided in Appendix D of the report.

3.3 Trading activities

3.3.1 The Council's activities that operate on a trading account basis have increased their revenue reserves during 2020/21 by **£513,000**, which was £430,000 higher than the financial target set for the year of £83,000. The favourable variance partly resulted from a surplus by Music Services, this was achieved despite the impact of the pandemic through re-imagining service delivery to offer online tuition.

3.3.2 Commentary on the provisional outturn position for each Trading Activity is provided in **Appendix F** of the report.

3.4 Capital

3.4.1 Capital delivery of **91.7%** against latest budget has been achieved in 2020/21.

3.4.2 The original budget for the capital programme was **£234.786m**. During the year this has been revised to allow for revisions to project delivery plans. The final approved total capital programme budget amounted to **£214.891m**. Actual capital expenditure amounted to **£197.035m**, resulting in an under spend of **£17.856m**. Whilst this is an excellent outcome, we need to be cautious as there are risks ahead with inflation and supplies in the market which may make for a more volatile 2021/22.

3.4.3 During 2020/21, circa 400 schemes were undertaken. Our residents have benefited from and will continue to benefit from a wide range of new investment including;

- Circa. 1,700 new school places delivered across Essex through completed school expansions as well as a new primary school in Colchester providing 420 school places at a total project cost of £6.473m for Lakelands Primary.

- Significant packages of transport improvement work continue to progress such as a new junction at M11 J7A (£19.788m) and A127 Fairglen Interchange (£4.246m). Several schemes successfully completed such as the Harlow Enterprise Zone Edinburgh Way (£1.445m), Basildon Town Centre (£1.261m) and the Ipswich / Harwich Road Roundabout (£1.648m).
- Essex Highways had another busy year delivering essential work, vital to maintaining a safe network (£48.468m). Each improvement and maintenance scheme helps keep our residents safe, contributes to longer-term economic growth, and helps deliver our vision for Safer, Greener and Healthier travel
- 13 Essex capital build projects. We were successful in securing £26.5m for 13 Essex capital build projects through the Get Building Fund. The fund was designed to allow “shovel ready projects” to start on site as soon as possible and regenerate the economy. In 2020/21 £5.415m was spent on these projects with the remaining £21.085m to be spent in 2021/22.
- In 2020/21, the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts strategy approved by Full Council included qualifying expenditure from the Corporate Systems Project (CSP). The 2020/21 total spend for this project is £3.4m, which has been capitalised in accordance with the parameters set out within this strategy.

3.4.4 Approval is sought to:

- Re-profile capital payment budgets of **£14.530m**, from 2020/21 into 2021/22, **£3.203m** from 2020/21 into 2022/23, and **£300,000** from 2020/21 into 2023/24 as a consequence of slippage in schemes;
- Bring capital payment budgets of **£4.347m** forward in respect of schemes that have progressed ahead of schedule; and
- Realign scheme and payment approvals to reflect actual activity in 2020/21– this results in payment approvals for some schemes being reduced by **£16.016m**, with increases of **£11.845m** to several other schemes.

3.4.5 **Appendix G** provides a comparison of approved and forecast outturn capital payments by portfolio and **Appendix H** summarises the proposed variance plan. Commentary on the provisional outturn position for each portfolio is provided in **Appendix I**.

3.5 Reserves and balances

3.5.1 The final approved budget for 2020/21 included provision for appropriations to or from various revenue reserves and restricted funds, and an assumed contribution to the General Balance. Proposals are presented throughout this report which further impact on the Council's reserves and balances. Approval is sought for **£88.232m** (net) to be transferred to earmarked reserves mainly as a result of balancing government COVID grant funding streams applied in the year with timing of the related service demands and associated expenditure together with adjustments to

reinstate ECC reserve balances that had been used earlier in the year prior to grant notifications.

- **£16.296m** relates to restricted funds, particularly specific grants, which are funds held for medium to long term contractual commitments or on behalf of others and not available for alternative use by the Council
- **£8.471m** relates to carry forward of under spends into 2021/22 for specific purposes as set out in **Appendix C**
- Approximately **£3m** relates to the reprofiling of budget to match future cash flow (Adults Digital Programme; Carbon Reduction Reserve; Health and Safety Reserve and Technology Solutions Reserve)
- Approximately **£6m** relates to sums set aside to support the future years budget and mitigate service specific risk (Adults Transformation; Childrens Transformation; Collection Fund Investment Risk and Insurance Reserve)
- Approximately **£25m** relates to COVID related costs and is either funding for decisions being returned to reserves where commitments are now anticipated in 2021/22 (£14m) or where ECC reserves are being replenished by COVID emergency funding from government via the General Balance (£11m) (COVID Equalisation Reserve; Emergency Reserve and Transformation Reserve – see 3.5.4)
- Approximately **£28m** is for investment in COVID recovery and strategic priorities (Renewal Fund Reserve and Ambition Fund Reserve)

A schedule setting out each of the Council's reserves with a summary of its purpose is provided in **Appendix J**

- 3.5.2 **Appendix K** shows the position on the restricted funds and revenue reserves, assuming the proposals contained within this report are accepted. These reserves represent funds set aside for specific policy purposes and contingencies and are necessary to ensure the Council's continued financial resilience to future financial challenges and known pressures. As referenced above the Council is expected to continue to experience COVID-related cost pressures for at least a year and the impacts beyond that are extremely difficult to forecast.
- 3.5.3 **Appendix L** summarises the position on the General Balance at 31st March 2021. Whilst the final outturn position is £4.346m lower than the budgeted balance, this merely reflects where the General Balance is no longer being used as the repository for COVID emergency grant and source of funding for COVID expenditure pressures (see 3.5.4 for more detail). At the year end, the General Balance has increased by £11.657m, the increase primarily being the net revenue under spend for 2020/21 (see 2.3). Given ongoing uncertainty about the impact of the pandemic, it is considered prudent that the level of General Balance is subject to a moderate increase. The closing balance is sufficient to fund **24** days of operating expenditure.
- 3.5.4 **Appendix M** summarises the movement of COVID emergency grant from the General Balance to other reserves to replenish where ECC general funds were used originally for COVID expenditure pressures and income losses and move unused grant to the COVID Equalisation reserve. This also reflects the transfer of COVID emergency grant to support the creation of the £25m Renewal Fund.

3.6 Prudential indicators and treasury management

- 3.6.1 Summaries of the Prudential Indicators and investment and borrowing levels are provided in **Appendix N** and **Appendix O** respectively.

4 Policy context and Outcomes Framework

- 4.1 This report provides an assessment of the financial position of the Council at the end of the 2020/21 financial year, and as such, provides a financial representation of the corporate plan. The Organisation Plan and Budget for 2020/21 were approved in parallel in February 2020.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 All actions proposed within this report are within the available funding. There are appropriate actions to deal with variances arising.

6 Legal Implications

- 6.1 The Council is responsible for setting the budget each year. Once agreed the executive then have to implement the policy framework and keep within the budget, subject to the limits set by Financial Regulations.

7 Equality and Diversity implications

- 7.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when the Council makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 7.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation.
- 7.3 The equality implications are assessed as part of budget setting process and as part of individual schemes.
- 7.4 There are no equality and diversity, or other resource implications associated with this report.

8 List of Appendices

Appendix A – Revenue Variance Plan
Appendix B – Revenue Outturn Summary
Appendix C – Overview of revenue carry forward requests
Appendix D – Revenue Position – Detailed commentary
Appendix E – Trading Activities
Appendix F – Trading Activities – Detailed commentary
Appendix G – Capital Payments and Financing Summary
Appendix H – Capital Variance Plan
Appendix I – Capital Position – Detailed commentary
Appendix J – ECC Reserves and their Purpose
Appendix K – Restricted use and other revenue reserves
Appendix L – General Balance
Appendix M – Reassignment of COVID Emergency Grant
Appendix N – Prudential Indicators
Appendix O – Treasury Management Summary

(Available at www.essex.gov.uk if not circulated with this report)

9 List of Background Papers

Budgetary control reports

Appendix A – Revenue Variance Plan

VARIANCE PLAN

	Provisional Outturn Variance (Under) / Over spend £000	Transfers of under / over spends between portfolios £000	Under spends to be carried forward into 2021/22 £000	Proposed mitigating actions			Underlying under / (over) spends £000	Total of mitigating actions £000
				Appropriations to/(from) other reserves £000	Unspent supplementary funding £000			
Children and Families	(1,691)	-	203	1,488		-	1,691	
Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate	(1,261)	357	540	271		93	1,261	
Economic Development	7,285	(216)	-	(7,069)		-	(7,285)	
Education and Skills								
Dedicated Schools Budget	(8,958)	-	-	8,958		-	8,958	
Non Dedicated Schools Budget	(4,307)	(4)	-	4,625		(314)	4,307	
Environment and Climate Change Action	(5,877)	(62)	320	5,500		119	5,877	
Health and Adults Social Care	(31,887)	8	-	9,243	15,385	7,251	31,887	
Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships	(345)	47	259	(3)	29	13	345	
Infrastructure	(5,380)	52	312	4,672		344	5,380	
Leader	(913)	136	1,157	(675)		295	913	
Finance	(14,067)	49	177	13,450	300	91	14,067	
Recharged Support Services								
Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate								
Business Support	54	(11)	-	(54)		11	(54)	
Customer Services	(296)	(519)	815	-		-	296	
Democratic Services and Governance	(37)	-	-	-		37	37	
Human Resources	147	(47)	125	(225)		-	(147)	
Information Services	(1,904)	109	463	1,301		31	1,904	
Legal Services	(662)	(13)	384	19		272	662	
Property and Facilities Management Service	(634)	-	465	-		169	634	
Assurance	(104)	93	-	-		11	104	
Finance								
Capital Programme Implementation and Delivery	(178)	34	-	-		144	178	
Car Provision Scheme	20	(20)	-	-		-	(20)	
Finance	(606)	72	408	-		126	606	
Insurance Cost Recovery Account	(4,006)	-	533	1,238		2,235	4,006	
Procurement	(86)	-	86	-		-	86	
Leader								
Communications and Customer Relations	(14)	48	46	(111)		31	14	
Equality and Diversity	12	-	-	(16)		4	(12)	
Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships								
Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships	(72)	(113)	185	-		-	72	
Transformation Support Unit	(750)	-	132	572		46	750	
Net cost of services (Portfolios)	(76,517)	-	6,610	43,184	15,714	11,009	76,517	
Other operating costs - Interest, capital financing and dividends	(2,755)	-	1,861	894		-	2,755	
General government grant	(4,645)	-	-	4,141		504	4,645	
Financing	31	-	-	-		(31)	(31)	
Net expenditure	(83,886)	-	8,471	48,219	15,714	11,482	83,886	
Appropriations to / from restricted funds and other revenue reserves								
Carry Forwards reserve	8,471	-	(8,471)	-		-	(8,471)	
Restricted funds	16,296	-	-	(16,296)		-	(16,296)	
Capital financing	2,841	-	-	(2,841)		-	(2,841)	
Transformation Reserve	2,445	-	-	(915)		(1,530)	(2,445)	
Other reserves	58,179	-	-	(28,167)		(30,012)	(58,179)	
General Balance	(4,346)	-	-	-	(15,714)	20,060	4,346	
Net Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

Appendix B – Revenue Outturn Summary

2019/20 Actual		2020/21						
		Original Budget	Final Budget	Provisional Outturn	Variance			
					Unadjusted variance	Proposed mitigations	Underlying variance	
£000		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	%
122,909	Children and Families	129,043	126,266	124,575	(1,691)	1,691	-	-
16,571	Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate	18,317	9,031	7,770	(1,261)	1,168	(93)	(1.0%)
6,692	Economic Development	6,262	812	8,097	7,285	(7,285)	-	-
	Education and Skills							
451	Dedicated Schools Budget	(3,063)	(2,925)	(11,883)	(8,958)	8,958	-	-
89,140	Non Dedicated Schools Budget	81,394	84,598	80,291	(4,307)	4,621	314	0.4%
81,070	Environment and Climate Change Action	77,582	88,625	82,748	(5,877)	5,758	(119)	(0.1%)
407,305	Health and Adult Social Care	423,018	446,682	414,795	(31,887)	24,636	(7,251)	(1.6%)
48,058	Infrastructure	44,257	38,355	32,975	(5,380)	332	(5,048)	(13.2%)
1,740	Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships	1,902	2,669	2,324	(345)	5,036	4,691	175.8%
5,861	Leader	7,551	7,753	6,840	(913)	618	(295)	(3.8%)
15,438	Finance	17,461	13,468	(599)	(14,067)	13,976	(91)	(0.7%)
	Recharged Support Services							
	Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate							
8,092	Business Support	8,123	9,173	9,227	54	(65)	(11)	(0.1%)
1,638	Customer Services	(2,357)	1,802	1,506	(296)	296	-	-
759	Democratic Services and Governance	691	810	773	(37)	-	(37)	(4.6%)
6,817	Human Resources	5,394	7,355	7,502	147	(147)	-	-
25,280	Information Services	22,514	25,975	24,071	(1,904)	1,873	(31)	(0.1%)
4,431	Legal Services	4,904	4,759	4,097	(662)	390	(272)	(5.7%)
14,393	Property and Facilities Management Service	14,908	15,627	14,993	(634)	465	(169)	(1.1%)
364	Assurance	442	446	342	(104)	93	(11)	(2.5%)
	Finance							
945	Capital Programme Implementation and Delivery	1,002	1,133	955	(178)	34	(144)	(12.7%)
(461)	Car Provision Scheme	-	56	76	20	(20)	-	-
10,293	Finance	8,930	10,422	9,816	(606)	480	(126)	(1.2%)
2,881	Insurance Cost Recovery Account	4,691	4,691	685	(4,006)	1,771	(2,235)	(47.6%)
3,870	Procurement	4,244	4,715	4,629	(86)	86	-	-
	Leader							
1,875	Communications and Customer Relations	1,830	1,974	1,960	(14)	(17)	(31)	(1.6%)
352	Equality and Diversity	462	801	813	12	(16)	(4)	(0.5%)
	Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships							
3,556	Performance, Business Planning & Partnerships	4,923	3,163	3,091	(72)	72	-	-
4,403	Transformation Support Unit	5,372	6,513	5,763	(750)	704	(46)	(0.7%)
884,723	Net cost of services (Portfolios)	889,797	914,749	838,232	(76,517)	65,508	(11,009)	(1.2%)
	Other operating costs							
43,335	Interest, capital financing and dividends	52,405	51,905	49,150	(2,755)	2,755	-	-
	Appropriations to/(from) revenue reserves							
(8,446)	Carry Forwards reserve	-	(2,002)	6,469	8,471	(8,471)	-	-
31,365	Restricted funds	(5,065)	(3,903)	12,393	16,296	(16,296)	-	-
(13,056)	Capital financing	4,074	2,154	4,995	2,841	(2,841)	-	-
12,210	Transformation Reserve	22,759	14,840	17,285	2,445	(915)	1,530	10.3%
23,278	Other revenue reserves	28,699	46,093	104,272	58,179	(28,167)	30,012	65.1%
973,409	Net expenditure	992,669	1,023,836	1,032,796	8,960	11,573	20,533	2.0%
(97,112)	General government grant	(79,059)	(126,229)	(130,874)	(4,645)	4,141	(504)	0.4%
(171)	General Balance - contribution / (withdrawal)	-	16,003	11,657	(4,346)	(15,714)	(20,060)	(125.4%)
876,126	Budget Requirement	913,610	913,610	913,579	(31)	-	(31)	-
	Financed by							
(18,300)	Revenue Support Grant	(18,598)	(18,598)	(18,598)	-	-	-	-
(177,793)	National non-domestic rates	(180,038)	(180,038)	(179,888)	150	-	150	(0.1%)
(671,315)	Council tax precept	(707,864)	(707,864)	(707,983)	(119)	-	(119)	-
(8,718)	Collection fund surpluses	(7,110)	(7,110)	(7,110)	-	-	-	-
(876,126)	Total Financing	(913,610)	(913,610)	(913,579)	31	-	31	-

Appendix C – Overview of revenue carry forward requests (1 of 2)

Carry forward requests of **£8.471m** are proposed for use in 2021/22. Carry forwards are a normal part of financial management - in the main these relate to reprofiling of planned spend into the next financial year, especially in a volatile pandemic year. **£4.891m** relates to requests to repurpose under spends for an alternative purpose. A complete list of carry forward requests is provided below.

Carry forward requests	Total £000
Children and Families	
Training for survivors of domestic abuse	153
To fund additional posts in Performance and Business Intelligence Team supporting Education	50
Sub total	203
Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate	
Additional policy and strategy resources to improve delivery of organisational strategy	140
Coroners - assist clearance of inquest backlog	35
Book and e-stock for Library Service	171
Maintenance of library estate	61
To offset income shortfall pressure as a consequence of new ways of working	133
Sub total	540
Environment and Climate Change Action	
Remedial works at Hadleigh mountain bike trail	200
Purchase of country parks maintenance equipment	20
Reprofile of Befriending programme funding into 2021/22	100
Sub total	320
Finance	
Commercial property programme - to meet modelling costs and cover property void costs	177
Sub total	177
Infrastructure	
Safer, Greener and Healthier transport network	150
Dynamic Purchasing System - set up costs	100
STATs Portal - investment to enhance productivity	47
Braintree Local Highways Panel - cycleway feasibility study	15
Sub total	312

Appendix C – Overview of revenue carry forward requests (2 of 2)

Carry forward requests	Total £000
Leader	
Brexit - Trading Standards role	338
Levelling up bids - supporting the ambition to use capital investment to unlock growth	235
Colchester / Tendring Borders - ECC's contribution towards the project	180
Covid economic response - South and West Essex	175
Strategy and coaching contractual commitment	101
Harlow Investment Fund	70
Reprofile of residual Locality Fund allocation	35
Reprofile of funding for Innovation Fund projects	23
Sub total	1,157
Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships	
Service Transformation- Enabling Digital Platforms and Intranet Discovery projects	259
Sub total	259
Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate (RSSS's)	
To support pressures in 2021/22 including Libraries rental income, delivery of Registrations strategy and various Customer projects	815
Rowan House refit	285
Legal disbursement costs due to cases delayed from 2020/21	384
Stanwell House savings	180
Laptop replacement programme	167
O365 implementation	115
Reprofiled staff cost to support the rollout of Next Generation Networks rollout	79
People operations - to embed the new corporate occupational health service	65
Organisation Development and People Management - to support costs associated with the workforce strategy	60
Finance and Technology staffing pressures and contractual changes	52
To support delivery of Technology Services overtime savings in 2021/22	50
Sub total	2,252
Finance (RSSS's)	
Interim staff to support transformation project work across the authority inc climate change action, costs associated with ensuring the successful implementation of CSP and continued professional development of business partners	533
Finance and Technology staffing pressures and contractual changes	344
Reprofile of costs associated with the social value lead role in Procurement	86
Reprofile of training budgets across Finance and Technology into 2021/22	64
Sub total	1,027
Leader (RSSS's)	
To support temporary staffing in Communications to undertake campaign work	46
Sub total	46
Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships RSSS	
To support the cost of Delivery and Assurance project manager staff	132
To fund additional posts in Performance and Business Intelligence Team supporting Education	100
Data and Analytics - to mitigate pressures resulting from lost income	85
Sub total	317
Operating Costs	
Bridging corporate budget gap	733
Mitigation of risk of interest rate change	600
Finance and Technology staffing pressures and contractual changes	528
Sub total	1,861
Net Total	8,471

Appendix D – Revenue Position – Detailed commentary

Comments are included below on the most significant of the variances against budget at a portfolio level:

1. Children and Families: £1.691m (1.3%) under spend

- i. The provisional outturn of **£124.575m** was 1.3% lower than the final approved budget of **£126.266m**. After proposed adjustments the position is on line, consistent with the Third Quarter report.
- ii. The under spend, before adjustments, is as a result of lower children in care costs due to the reduced visibility of children and young people which led to reduced numbers of referrals and safeguarding interventions. This has led to suppressed entries to care, staff travel and direct payments, which are available for families to arrange care and support and additional income for asylum seekers leaving care, partly offset by the use of agency social workers.
- iii. Approval is sought to the following actions as a consequence of the provisional outturn position for 2020/21:
 - Carry forward **£203,000** to the service, as set out in **Appendix C**
 - **£1.314m** contribution to the Childrens Transformation Reserve which is a resource set aside to create and maintain a sector leading service that has the interests of vulnerable families and children at its heart combined with a passion for delivering and sustaining optimum value for money for the tax payer
 - **£784,000** withdrawal from the COVID Equalisation Reserve to fund pressures on placements and staffing as a result of the pandemic
 - **£139,000** contribution to the COVID Equalisation Reserve relating to under spends against the Emergency Assistance grant for use in 2021/22
 - **£551,000** contribution to the Transformation Reserve in respect of the Multi-Disciplinary Team and Special Guardianship Orders Team, which reflect lower than predicted spend in year and for use in 2021/22
 - **£75,000** withdrawal from the Ambition Fund Reserve in respect of autism clinic costs incurred in year
 - **£64,000** withdrawal from the Transformation Reserve for the Divisional Based Intervention Team (DBIT), part of the Childrens Sustainability programme
 - **£343,000** to the Youth Offending Teams Partnership Reserve, where remand costs ended the year lower than expected
 - **£67,000** contribution to the Ambition Fund Reserve, in respect of Family Centre refurbishments project which has been delayed for use in 2021/22
 - **£47,000** to the Public Sector Reform Partnership Reserve which reflects lower than predicted spend in the year

- **£50,000** from the Essex Safeguarding Childrens Board Partnership Reserve to cover funding for an additional post.

2. Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate: **£1.261m (14.0%) under spend**

- i. The provisional outturn of **£7.77m** is 14% lower than the final approved budget of **£9.031m**. After proposed adjustments there is a **£450,000** under spend (5%) which represents a favourable movement of **£343,000** since the position reported at third quarter.
- ii. The under spend is largely due to a number of staffing under spends across the portfolio, including **£171,000** within Heritage and Cultural Services as a result of a service re-design. In addition there was lower than anticipated expenditure within Customer Services and Member Enquiries (**£203,000**) due to the pandemic impacting on the ability to undertake independent mobility assessments within the Blue Badge service.
- iii. Approval is sought to the following actions as a consequence of the provisional outturn position for 2020/21:
 - Carry forward **£540,000** for a range of services across the portfolio, as set out in **Appendix C**
 - **£497,000** contribution to the COVID Equalisation Reserve relating to previous draw downs for Essex Records Office, Libraries and Registration income losses which have now been funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Income Loss Guarantee scheme
 - **£275,000** withdrawal from the Community Initiatives Fund Reserve to cover revenue expenditure incurred since third quarter
 - **£109,000** contribution to the Transformation Reserve in relation to the Libraries Management system for use in 2021/22
 - **£97,000** withdrawal from the Transformation Reserve for Libraries Modernisation (£89,000) and Management of Excess Deaths (£8,000)
 - **£35,000** contribution to the COVID Equalisation Reserve relating to under spends against the Emergency Assistance grant for use in 2021/22
 - **£2,000** contribution to the Transformation Reserve relating to Customer Services unspent project funding

3. Deputy Leader and Infrastructure: **£5.38m (14%) under spend**

- i. The provisional outturn of **£32.975m**, is 14% lower than the final approved budget of **£38.355m**. After proposed adjustments to return to reserves ECC funds for decisions that were subsequently covered by sources of government funding of £4.985m, of which £1.895m relates to the receipt of MHCLG Income Loss Guarantee scheme and £667,000 to the COVID-19 Bus Services Support

grant, there is a **£396,000** under spend (1%) which represents a favourable movement of **£218,000** since the position reported at third quarter.

- ii. The residual under spend is as a result of a reduction of **£220,000** in the bad debt provision for Park and Ride, with the remaining **£176,000** being due to a combination of reductions in cost as a result of in-year staffing vacancies and an over recovery of Essex Highways permit and regulation income.
- iii. Approval is sought to the following actions as a consequence of the provisional outturn position for 2020/21:
 - **£1.895m** contribution to the COVID Equalisation Reserve following receipt of MHCLG Income Loss Guarantee scheme funding
 - **£1.855m** contribution to the Reserve for Future Capital Funding to fund Essex Highways replacement fleet required to deliver services, Highways embankment improvements and Part 1 compensation claims expected in 2021/22
 - **£667,000** contribution to the Emergency Reserve relating to the return of funding for Park and Ride following receipt of COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant (CBSSG)
 - Carry Forward **£312,000** to the Highways service, as set out in **Appendix C**
 - **£219,000** contribution to the A130 PFI Reserve due to lower than anticipated costs during the year
 - **£36,000** contribution to the Transformation Reserve for use in 2021/22 relating to the Superfast Essex Phase 4 'Last Phase' delivery programme.

4. Economic Development: £7.285m (897%) over spend

- i. The provisional outturn of **£8.097m** is 897% higher than the final approved budget of **£812,000**. After proposed adjustments, there is a **£216,000** over spend (26.6%) which represents a favourable movement of **£129,000** since the position reported at third quarter.
- ii. The over spend results from treating the accumulated capital expenditure on Essex Housing projects as abortive, because the Council will no longer see these schemes through to completion itself. The developments will instead be completed by the Essex Housing Development LLP. The Council will transfer the housing development sites to the LLP during 2021/22 at a price that reflects the market value of the sites and includes the pre-construction costs being treated as abortive by the Council. This is in line with the Cabinet decisions taken in December 2020. The Council's reserves will therefore be replenished via the sale proceeds agreed for these sites, ensuring that the Council remains in a cost neutral position overall as a result of transferring its housing development activity to the LLP.
- iii. Approval is sought to the following actions as a consequence of the provisional outturn position for 2020/21:

- **£7.746m** withdrawal from the Reserve for Future Capital Funding relating to projects transferring to Essex Housing LLP. The Council will transfer the housing development sites to the LLP during 2021/22 at a price that reflects the market value of the sites and includes the pre-construction costs being treated as abortive by the Council. This is in line with the Cabinet decisions taken in December 2020.
- **£696,000** contribution to the Renewal Fund Reserve relating to funding drawn down in year towards economic recovery which is now required in 2021/22
- **£19,000** withdrawal from the Transformation Reserve due to Essex Housing related project expenditure incurred in the final quarter of 2020/21

5. Education and Skills Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG): £8.958m under spend

- The under spend relates to the movement in school balances, which have increased due to schools under spending in year. **£8.958m** has been appropriated to the Schools reserve to offset this under spend.
- The Dedicated Schools Grant is under spent by **£1.708m**, primarily within the early years block, due to take up of free entitlement funding being less than budgeted for. The under spend may be subject to Department for Education (DfE) clawback and, as any adjustments to 2020/21 funding will be made in the summer, will be carried forward to 2021/22.
- This is the first year that the Dedicated Schools Grant will be in surplus subject to the finalisation of the Early Years block. It should be noted that whilst in overall surplus, the High Needs Block remains in deficit due to increased volume and price but is forecast to be balanced by 2022/23.

6. Education and Skills Non-Dedicated Schools Grant: £4.307m (5.1%) under spend

- The provisional outturn of **£80.291m** is 5.1% lower than the final approved budget of **£84.598m**. After proposed adjustments, there is a **£318,000** over spend which represents a favourable movement of **£850,000** since the position reported at third quarter, mainly due to Home to School Transport where demand has been suppressed by the coronavirus.
- The over spend is largely due to the Youth Service (£559,000), due to an overly ambitious income budget set within the National Citizenship Service (NCS) which supports volunteering and project work for young people. Following a review of the contract by the Trust, it is now no longer financially viable to operate the scheme. This pressure has been addressed in the 2021/22 budget.
- Approval is sought to the following actions as a consequence of the provisional outturn position for 2020/21:

- **£2.564m** contribution to the Emergency Reserve to support challenges, such as potential pent up demand that is not budgeted for; this will take the balance on the Emergency Reserve to £12.564m.
- **£650,000** contribution to the Emergency Reserve relating to previous draw down for Adult Community Learning income losses now funded by the MHCLG Income Loss Guarantee scheme
- **£303,000** withdrawal from the Tendring PPP Reserve, **£835,000** contribution of unspent PFI credits to the Debden Park PFI Reserve, **£479,000** contribution to the Clacton Secondary Schools PFI Reserve and **£354,000** contribution to the Building Schools for the Future PFI Reserve
- **£248,000** contribution to the Health and Safety Reserve relating to unspent funding in year at the King Edmund school
- **£141,000** withdrawal from the Renewal Fund Reserve for income lost during the pandemic and not covered by the MHCLG Income Loss Guarantee scheme
- **£41,000** withdrawal from the Ambition Fund Reserve for Youth Strategy Groups
- **£20,000** withdrawal from the COVID Equalisation Reserve to support additional recruitment needs in 2020/21 supporting the COVID response, specifically a recruitment consultant to boost Education recruitment activities

7. Environment and Climate Change Action: **£5.877m (6.6%) under spend**

- The provisional outturn of **£82.748m** is 6.6% lower than the final approved budget of **£88.625m**. After proposed adjustments to return to reserves ECC funds for decisions that were subsequently covered by government funding of £5.820m which is predominantly due to the MHCLG Income Loss Guarantee scheme, there is a **£57,000** under spend (0%) an immaterial movement since third quarter.
- The underlying under spend is due to the utilisation of grant funding to deliver activity, coupled with the recharges of staff time to projects, that would have otherwise been funded by ECC. This is a one-off opportunity within this financial year.
- Approval is sought to the following actions as a consequence of the provisional outturn position for 2020/21:
 - **£4.875m** contribution to the COVID Equalisation Reserve returning funds originally drawn down for income losses within Outdoor Education of £2.592m and Leisure of £2.284m but subsequently covered by the MHCLG Income Loss Guarantee scheme funding
 - Carry Forward **£320,000** to Country Parks, as set out in **Appendix C**
 - **£433,000** contribution to the Waste Reserve towards price/volume pressures in future years as a result of an under spend within Integrated Waste Management

- **£192,000** contribution to the Carbon Reduction Reserve relating to project funding required in 2021/22.

8. Finance: £14.067m (104.4%) under spend

- The provisional outturn of (**£599,000**), is 104.4% lower than the final approved budget of **£13.468m**. After proposed adjustments, there is a **£140,000** under spend (1%) which represents a favourable movement of **£108,000** since the position reported at third quarter.
- The under spend is due to £13.45m received from UBB in respect of the costs order relating to a litigation between the authority and UBB Waste (Essex Ltd).
- Approval is sought to the following actions as a consequence of the provisional outturn position for 2020/21:
 - **£8.45m** contribution to the Reserve for Future Capital Funding to ensure that the reserve is not depleted and to retain the funding to support the capital programme
 - **£5m** contribution to the Ambition Fund Reserve to provide additional funding for future new investment priorities
 - Carry forward **£177,000** to Commercial Property, as set out in **Appendix C**.

9. Health and Adult Social Care: - £7.259m (1.6%) adjusted under spend

- After proposed adjustments, there is a **£7.259m** under spend (1.6%) which represents a favourable movement of **£7.242m** since the position reported at third quarter.
- Public Health spend was in line with the amended budget which reflected the additional grants received during the year, such as Contain Outbreak Management funding, Lateral Flow testing and Test and Trace, to provide vital services to residents across Essex through the pandemic.
- Throughout 2020/21 there were significant challenges around forecasting the financial implications associated with COVID-19 on the cost and demand for Adult Social Care services in both the 2020/21 financial year and future years. There were also additional tranches of funding received from central government for specific purposes where it was impossible to predict what would be required.
- Within the overall position reported for Adult Social Care, there are a number of offsetting under and over spends which are driven by changes in expected levels of demand for services compared to when the budget was set. The under spends have been in the areas of residential and nursing care (**£3.2m**), cash payments (**£5.8m**), and increased income from Health and non residential service users (**£6.5m**) offset by over spends in reablement services **£6.6m**.

The (**£7.2m**) favourable movement since the third quarter is driven by reduced Residential and Nursing Care volumes and an underutilisation by providers of the funding set aside to underwrite vacant bed capacity (**£3.9m**), as well as increased Non-Residential Income as there has been an increase in the number of clients paying a contribution towards their care, (**£3m**), along with a decrease in the sundry bad debt provision of (**£721,000**)

- v. Approval is sought to the following actions as a consequence of the provisional outturn position for 2020/21:
- **£3.718m** contribution to the COVID Equalisation Reserve to support the COVID Resilience Fund
 - **£3.5m** contribution to the Adults Transformation Reserve to build resilience for the Health and Adult Social Care budget in the medium term as there continues to be immense uncertainty about the impact / legacy of COVID-19
 - **£877,000** contribution to the Adults Digital Reserve to support expenditure within the Digital Programme that has been rephased into 2021/22
 - **£501,000** contribution to the Grants Equalisation Reserve to be utilised in 2021/22 to reflect the rephasing of expenditure into 2021/22
 - **£136,000** contribution to the COVID Equalisation Reserve for use in 2021/22 relating to under spends following the maximisation of COVID specific grants
 - **£294,000** contribution to the Ambition Reserve due to slippage of Mental Health projects for use in 2021/22
 - **£200,000** contribution to the Reserve for Future Capital Funding to support a Capital refurbishment project in 2021/22
 - **£17,000** contribution to the Adults Safeguarding Board Partnership Reserve.
 - **£15.385m** contribution to the General Balance for COVID funding that is no longer required or that has been recovered from Health

10. Leader – £913,000 (11.8%) under spend

- i. The provisional outturn of **£6.84m** is **11.8%** lower than the final approved budget of **£7.753m**. After proposed adjustments, there is a **£431,000** under spend (5.6%) which represents a favourable movement of **£393,000** since the position reported at third quarter.
- ii. The under spend relates to; Garden Communities, **£270,000**, due to a review of spending plans and contribution to North Essex Advisory Board, Members Support, **£93,000**, because of some activities being limited due to the pandemic, Localities Fund, **£54,000**, because original estimates of project costs by third parties were higher than what was finally claimed and some were unable to progress because of safety restrictions still in place.
- iii. Approval is sought to the following actions as a consequence of the provisional outturn position for 2020/21:

- Carry forward **£1.157m** to a range of services across the portfolio as set out in **Appendix C**
- **£668,000** withdrawal from the Quadrennial Elections Reserve for preparation costs for the May 2021 elections
- **£12,000** withdrawal from the Ambition Fund Reserve for the Essex 2020 project
- **£5,000** contribution to the Health and Safety Reserve returning funding for use in 2021/22 relating to the implementation of measures required in main ECC office locations to reduce the risk of COVID-19 to staff.

11. Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships – £345,000 (12.9%) under spend

- The provisional outturn of **£2.324m** is 12.9% lower than the final approved budget of **£2.669m**. After proposed adjustments, there is a **£60,000** under spend (2.2%) which represents a favourable movement of **£50,000** since the position reported at third quarter.
- The underlying under spend and the movement from third quarter relates to delays on projects such as Website Accessibility Phase 2, Digital Strategy, Digital Accessibility and Intranet Discovery with the majority of spend now taking place in 2021/22.
- Approval is sought to the following actions as a consequence of the provisional outturn position for 2020/21:
 - Carry forward **£259,000** to Service Design for work to be undertaken on enabling digital platforms and intranet discovery projects, as set out in **Appendix C**
 - **£3,000** withdrawal from the Renewal Fund Reserve due to additional work within Service Design due to the pandemic.

12. Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate Recharged Support Services: £3.436m (5.2%) under spend

- The provisional outturn of **£62.511m** is 5.2% lower than the final approved budget of **£65.947m**. After proposed adjustments, there is a **£143,000** under spend (<1%) which represents an adverse movement of **£25,000** since the position reported at third quarter.
- The under spend is driven by a Corporate Systems Programme under spend, lower consumption of utilities on the Core estate and income from staff recharges and other local authorities relating to Legal.
- Approval is sought to the following actions as a consequence of the provisional outturn position for 2020/21:
 - Carry forward **£2.252m** to a range of services across the portfolio service, as set out in **Appendix C**

- **£1.187m** contribution to the Technology Solutions Reserve relating to return of funding drawn down in year now required for use in 2021/22 in respect of the Corporate Systems project (**£967,000**) and Social Care Platform project (**£220,000**)
- **£259,000** withdrawal from the Transformation Reserve relating to redundancies costs associated with the new Occupational Health contract (**£143,000**), Business Services additional workload (**£54,000**), the New Ways of Working project (**£48,000**) and resourcing for a dedicated recruitment consultant for Delivery and Assurance (**£14,000**)
- **£84,000** contribution to the Transformation Reserve to be used in 2021/22 for Technology Services projects (**£32,000**) and the Workforce Strategy project (**£52,000**)
- **£82,000** contribution to the Reserve for Future Capital Funding to support capital expenditure on the networking and communications contract (DUCL) within Technology Services
- **£72,000** withdrawal from the Renewal Fund Reserve for Entry Level Employment staffing (**£41,000**) and additional work due to the pandemic (**£31,000**) both within Human Resources
- **£19,000** contribution to the Public Law Partnership Reserve

13. Finance Recharged Support Services **£4.856m (23.1%) under spend**

- The provisional outturn of **£16.161m** is 23.1% lower than the final approved budget of **£21.017m**. After proposed adjustments, there is a **£2.591m** under spend (12.3%) which represents a favourable movement of **£3.079m** since the position reported at third quarter.
- Within the position there is an under spend of **£4.006m** relating to the Insurance Cost Recovery Account, partly due to recommendations in the annual Actuarial report (£3.390m) in relation to the level of provision the authority should hold as a result of a reduction in the number of Employers Liability and Public Liability claims. Also received in year was **£1.238m** in relation to recovery of a historic income claim relating to Highways claims. Offsetting this is a pressure caused by under-recovery of income in relation to Schools Insurance where legislation has now changed, and as such, ECC are insuring a smaller than planned number of schools.
- Approval is sought to the following actions as a consequence of the provisional outturn position for 2020/21:
 - Carry forward **£1.027m** to the offset pressures in the following services: Procurement (£370,000), Finance (£349,000) and Technology Services (£308,000), as set out in **Appendix C**
 - **£1.238m** contribution to the Insurance Reserve in respect of recovery of income relating to Highways claims.

14. Leader Recharged Support Services - £2,000 (<1%) under spend

- i. The provisional outturn of **£2.773m** is less than 1% lower than the final approved budget of **£2.775m**. After proposed adjustments, there is a **£83,000** under spend (3%) which represents a favourable movement of **£110,000** since the position reported at third quarter.
- ii. The under spend is driven by Communications and Marketing where COVID related spend was funded from COVID reserves
- iii. Approval is sought to the following actions as a consequence of the provisional outturn position for 2020/21:
 - Carry forward **£46,000** to support temporary staffing within Communications to undertake campaign work including promotion of the new Organisational Plan and budget and domestic abuse support, as set out in **Appendix C**
 - **£111,000** withdrawal from the COVID Equalisation Reserve to cover media campaign costs relating to the pandemic such as advertising for surge testing and “Stop the Spread” campaign within Communications and Marketing
 - **£16,000** withdrawal from the Ambition Fund Reserve relating to the Just About Managing project to cover the costs associated with the Working Families Initiative including summer child care activity packs

15. Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships Recharged Support Services: £822,000 (8.5%) under spend

- i. The provisional outturn of **£8.854m** is 8.5% lower than the final approved budget of **£9.676m**. After proposed adjustments, there is a **£67,000** over spend (<1%) which represents an adverse movement of **£75,000** since the position reported at third quarter.
- ii. The under spend is driven by Local Government Reform funding no longer required and project management costs funded by COVID specific grants.
- iii. Approval is sought to the following actions as a consequence of the provisional outturn position for 2020/21:
 - Carry forward **£317,000** for a variety of services across the portfolio, as set out in **Appendix C**
 - **£572,000** contribution to the Transformation Reserve relating to Local Government reform (**£468,000**) and Project management costs (**£104,000**) for use in 2021/22.

16. Other Operating Costs (interest, financing and dividends) - £2.755m under spend

- i. The underlying position comprises under spends on interest payable and on revenue provision for the repayment of debt. The under spend on interest payable arose because it did not prove necessary to secure any new external

loans during the year. The under spend on revenue provision for the repayment of debt (referred to as Minimum Revenue Provision or MRP) resulted from financing less of the 2019/20 Capital Programme from borrowing than was anticipated when the 2020/21 budget was set. Additionally, in year, non-budgeted dividends were received.

- ii. Approval is sought to the following action as a consequence of the provisional outturn position for 2020/21:
 - Carry forward **£1.861m** to the following services: Central and other Operating Costs (£600,000); Technology Services (£165,000); Finance (£210,000); Procurement (£153,000) and support for the Corporate Finance Review (£733,000), as set out in **Appendix C**
 - **£852,000** contribution to the Ambition Fund Reserve relating to the Essex Cares Dividend
 - **£42,000** contribution to the Collection Fund Risk Reserve

17. Other Operating Costs (General Government Grants) - £4.645m (3.7%) increase of funding budget

- i. The higher than budgeted general government grant funding is predominantly due to Waste PFI credits received this financial year
- ii. Approval is sought to the following action as a consequence of the provisional outturn position for 2020/21:
 - **£4.141m** contribution to the Waste Reserve in respect of PFI credits received during the financial year

Appendix E – Trading Activities

Trading Activities Summary							
2019/20 Actual		Original Budget £000	Final Budget £000	2020/21 Provisional Outturn £000	Variance £000	Variance %	Rag status
(15,708)	Income	(7,518)	(7,384)	(7,054)	330	(4.5%)	●
15,034	Expenditure	7,004	7,412	6,701	(711)	(9.6%)	●
-	Financing Items	-	-	-	-	-	■
(674)	(Surplus)/Deficit	(514)	28	(353)	(381)	(1360.7%)	●
497	Appropriations	430	(111)	(160)	(49)	44.1%	●
(177)	Net (increase) / decrease in revenue reserves	(84)	(83)	(513)	(430)	518.1%	●
	Analysis of net (increase) / decrease in Trading Activities reserves						
53	Music Services	-	-	(113)	(113)	-	■
(230)	Place Services	(84)	(83)	(400)	(317)	381.9%	●
(177)	Net (increase) / decrease in revenue reserves	(84)	(83)	(513)	(430)	518.1%	●
2019/20					2020/21		
Closing					Opening	Closing	
Balance					Balance	Balance	
£000					£000	£000	
(828)	Total Reserves Balance				(828)	(1,341)	

Appendix F – Trading Activities – Detailed commentary

Comments on the performance of individual trading activities are set out below.

1. Music Services

- i. The trading activity increased its accumulated revenue reserves in 2020/21 by **£113,000** (compared to a 'break even' financial target) due to a reduction in the bad debt provision and the cancellation of activities planned in March.

2. Place Services

- i. The trading activity increased its accumulated revenue reserves in 2020/21 by **£400,000** (which was **£317,000** more than budgeted). This is driven by:
 - Additional income of **£252,000** with an increase in planning application numbers and Legacy Grazing sales
 - Reductions in cost of **£65,000** due to a change in the delivery model for training.

Appendix G – Capital payments and financing summary

	Original Approval	Final Approval	Actual	Variance
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Children and Families	1,040	545	454	(91)
Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate	5,564	5,416	8,962	3,546
Deputy Leader and Infrastructure	134,736	129,429	122,423	(7,006)
Economic Development	20,960	20,640	9,310	(11,330)
Education and Skills				
Local Authority Controlled	58,163	41,351	39,602	(1,749)
Schools Controlled	1,061	1,523	969	(554)
Environment and Climate Change	4,479	3,807	2,353	(1,454)
Health & Adult Social Care	421	208	198	(10)
Leader	8,362	11,972	12,764	792
Total payments to be financed	234,786	214,891	197,035	(17,856)
Financed by				
Unsupported borrowing	102,557	86,781	67,837	(18,944)
Grants and contributions	111,407	118,529	125,821	7,292
Capital receipts	14,580	9,581	3,377	(6,204)
Reserve for future capital funding	6,242	-	-	-
Total financing	234,786	214,891	197,035	(17,856)

Appendix H – Capital Variance Plan (Summary)

	2020/21				2020/21	2021/22
	Slippage	Additions	Reductions	Advanced Works	Changes	Changes
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Children and Families	(83)	-	(8)	-	(91)	83
Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate	(44)	3,722	(230)	98	3,546	(54)
Deputy Leader and Infrastructure	(8,570)	4,940	(3,799)	423	(7,006)	8,147
Economic Development	(4,129)	2,722	(10,971)	1,048	(11,330)	3,081
Education and Skills						-
Local Authority Controlled	(2,994)	70	(752)	1,927	(1,749)	1,067
Schools Controlled	(617)	72	(9)	-	(554)	617
Environment and Climate Change	(1,243)	34	(245)	-	(1,454)	1,243
Health & Adult Social Care	(208)	200	(2)	-	(10)	208
Leader	(144)	85	-	851	792	(707)
Total payments to be financed	(18,032)	11,845	(16,016)	4,347	(17,856)	13,685
Financed by						
Unsupported borrowing					(18,944)	
Grants and contributions					7,292	
Capital receipts					(6,204)	
Reserve for future capital funding					-	
Total financing					(17,856)	

Appendix I – Capital Position – Detailed commentary

Comments are included below on the most significant of the variances against budget at a portfolio level:

1. Children and Families - £91,000 (16.6%) under spend

- i. The provisional outturn of **£454,000** was **£91,000** less than the final approved budget of **£545,000**. This is largely attributable to the Adaptations programme, which is requesting slippage for three schemes not yet completed.
- ii. Approval is sought to reprofile **£83,000** into future years, and reductions to the programme of **£8,000**.

2. Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate - £3.546m (65.5%) over spend

- i. The provisional outturn of **£8.962m** was **£3.546m** above the final approved budget of **£5.416m**. The main reason for the over spend is in relation to the technical accounting adjustment for the implementation of the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts strategy, where £3.377m of capital receipts were used to fund revenue expenditure in relation to the Corporate Systems Project.
- ii. Approval is sought to reprofile **£44,000** into future years, additions to the programme of **£3.722m**, reductions to the programme of **£230,000** and to advance **£98,000**.

3. Deputy Leader and Infrastructure - £7.006m (5.4%) under spend

- i. The provisional outturn of **£122.423m** was **£7.006m** less than the final approved budget of **£129.429m**. The main reasons for the under spend are set out below:
- ii. **Major Schemes - £2.5m under spend** due to the following factors
 - Slippage of £775,000 into 2021/22 relating to delays in scheduling of works around the Colchester ITP roundabout due to the pandemic and the repairs that are required to the railway bridge that have been identified during the works. These are now to be completed by summer 2021.
 - Slippage of £750,000 relating to Fairglens Interchange scheme, previously flagged as a risk. Tenders have been assessed and contractors provisionally appointed however, work cannot commence until land issues are resolved
 - Slippage (£521,000) within Advance Scheme Design due to delays in agreeing which schemes to proceed with for Active Travel and design work delays in LCWIP (Local cycling and walking infrastructure programme) schemes. These will now be progressed in 2021/22.
 - Slippage of £462,000 within Basildon ITP resulting in delays from getting legal funding agreements set up for the bus station works to be commenced.

- An addition of £379,000 to Colchester ITP, being requested from Bridges (within Highways Maintenance capital programme) to allow for the works identified during the Colchester ITP roundabout mentioned above.
 - Additions of £134,000 in relation to Chelmsford Growth Area for the Tindal Square project which have been incurred ahead of funding being received from Chelmsford City Council. Funding will be claimed, in full, on a retrospective basis once costs are known.
- iii. **Highways Maintenance - £103,000 over spend** owing to the following:
- Slippage into 2021/22 of £113,000 within Bridges due to delays in two projects originally commencing in March
 - Additions of £500,000 within Road Maintenance that will be funded in full by DfT grant received earlier in the financial year
 - Reduction of £300,000 within Bridges in support of the works identified to the railway bridge as part of the Colchester ITP project (major schemes)
- iv. **BDUK Superfast Broadband - £4.6m under spend** as a result of conversations with suppliers funding has been rephased to match the anticipated delivery timetable, meaning the milestone trigger points will not be met in order to allow the milestone payments to be made in this financial year. These are now expected to be made in 2021/22.
- v. Approval will be sought to reprofile **£8.57m** into future years, additions to the programme of **£4.94m**, reductions to the programme of **£3.799m** and to advance **£423,000**.

4. **Economic Development - £11.33m (54.9%) under spend**

- i. The provisional outturn of **£9.31m** was **£11.33m** less than the final approved budget of **£20.64m**. The under spend is mainly due to the following:
- £3.712m slippage due to delays in signing funding agreements for a number of projects including Swan Modular Housing, Colchester Northern Gateway, Essex Pedal Power and Nexus Harlow. The funding will be phased into 2021/22 to enable the projects to be delivered in full.
 - £560,000 addition for Flight Path where LGF funding bid has been approved and awarded and the scheme has commenced.
 - Essex County Hospital addition of £2.1m relating to early land purchase
 - A reduction following the technical adjustment relating to projects transferring to Essex Housing LLP. The Council will transfer the housing development sites to the LLP during 2021/22 at a price that reflects the market value of the sites and includes the pre-construction costs being treated as abortive by the Council. This is in line with the Cabinet decisions taken in December 2020. These costs were previously part of the capital programme, but given the asset transfer need to transfer to revenue. There is also a reduction of £700,000 on the Essex County Hospital and St Peters College schemes due to lower than anticipated demolition costs, and further reductions on Rocheway (£565,000) where the contractors are reporting lost construction time due to adverse weather conditions and COVID-19 restrictions.

- £967,000 Braintree H120 Enterprise advanced works where contracts have been agreed. This is a GBF scheme where the grant funding needs to be fully spent and all works completed by March 2022.
- ii. Approval is sought to reprofile **£4.129m** into future years, additions to the programme of **£2.722m**, reductions to the programme of **£10.971m** and advanced works of **£1.048m**.

5. Education and Skills - £1.749m (4.2%) under spend

- i. The provisional outturn of **£39.602m** was **£1.749m** less than the final approved budget of **£41.351m**. The under spend is driven by the following:
 - Slippage of **£2.994m** related to Local Authority Controlled items consisting of Tendring Secondary £471,000 slippage due to the modular units required for Clacton County High and Colne Community School not being delivered to site until after the year-end. Slippage for Castle Point Basic Need (£418,000) due to unforeseen need to increase funding on some projects as per initial scoping now required in 2021/22. Finally slippage for Harlowbury Primary School (£335,000), where the legal site transfer and a deed of variation are required, before construction can begin. **£752,000** reduction due to Clacton County High following a revised scope of works.
 - This is offset by **£1.927m** advanced works mainly relating to Special Schools due to Wickford PRU (£1m) and Paxman PRU (£218,000) as the contractor's forecasts indicated that spend on site would be ahead of the current budget profile.
- ii. Approval is sought to reprofile **£2.994m** into future years, additions to the programme of **£70,000**, reductions to the programme of **£752,000** and to advance **£1.927m**

6. Environment and Climate Change Action - £1.454m (38.2%) under spend

- i. The provisional outturn of **£2.353m** was **£1.454m** less than the final approved budget of **£3.807m**. With the under spend relating to the following:
 - Slippage of £776,000 for Green Homes Grant where there has been an extension given to June 2021 to deliver the project.
 - Slipping funding of £113,000 for Estate Energy Storage into next year due to delays with the Decarbonisation Grant upon which this project is dependant.
 - £177,000 slippage for Country Parks Maintenance where delays in obtaining the Environment Agency license has pushed completion of the Thorndon sewage system back by 8 to 10 weeks, taking it into 2021/22.
 - Reduction of £168,000 in relation to Flood where the contractor has confirmed that they have had an efficiency on one of the schemes to be delivered this year.
- ii. Approval is sought to reprofile **£1.243m** into future years, additions to the programme of **£34,000** and reductions to the programme of **£245,000**

7. Health and Adult Social Care - £10,000 (4.8%) under spend

- i. The provisional outturn of £198,000 is broadly online with the budget of £208,000.
- ii. Approval is sought for additions to the programme of £200,000 to improve the facility at Bridgemarsh, to reprofile £208,000 into future years, and for reductions to the programme of £2,000

8. Leader - £792,000 (6.6%) over spend

- i. The provisional outturn of **£12.764m** was **£792,000** more than the final approved budget of **£11.972m**. The over spend is driven by the advance works of Colchester Rapid Transit System relating mainly to the groundwork investigation and design works in relation to a petrol station being brought forward.
- ii. Approval is sought to reprofile £144,000 into future years, additions to the programme of £85,000 and to advance £851,000

9. Schools Controlled – £554,000 (36.4%) under spend

Approval is sought to re-profile **£617,000** into future years and net addition to the scheme of **£63,000** in relation to the Schools Devolved Formula Capital grant and schools cash balances, which the authority holds on behalf of Essex Schools and have no control over the spend, for transactions that do not meet the capitalisation criteria.

Appendix J – ECC Reserves and their Purpose (1 of 2)

Restricted Use Funds	Description
Grant Equalisation reserve	Equalise the timing differences between the recognition of grant income in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (in accordance with Accounting Policy 2.6) and incurring the grant eligible expenditure.
COVID Equalisation Reserve	Equalise the timing differences between the recognition of emergency funding in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and incurring the expenditure.
A130 PFI	Equalise the timing differences between expenditure and government grant over the life of the PFI contract.
Clacton Secondary Schools PFI	Equalise the timing differences between expenditure and government grant over the life of the PFI contract.
Debden PFI	Equalise the timing differences between expenditure and government grant over the life of the PFI contract.
Building Schools for the Future PFI	Equalise the timing differences between expenditure and government grant over the life of the PFI contract.
Waste Reserve	To smooth the effects of future increases in the costs of waste disposal.
Schools (not available for ECC use)	Schools are permitted to retain unspent resources (whether planned or unplanned), which are held in the Schools Reserves. The statutory authority to commit such resources rests with school governors.
Partnerships and Third Party (not available for ECC use)	To retain unspent contributions from partners and apply them in subsequent years.
Trading Activities	Surpluses generated by trading activities, to be applied by these activities in subsequent years.

Appendix J – ECC Reserves and their Purpose (2 of 2)

Earmarked Reserves	Description
Adults Digital Programme	Used to meet the costs of the Adults Digital Transformation programme.
Adults Risk Reserve	To help manage commercial price pressures that may arise from meeting cost of care
Adults Transformation Reserve	To set aside resources to support change capacity to deliver ongoing future sustainability work
Ambition Fund Reserve	Reserve created to fund investment in new delivery models and ways of working.
Bursary for trainee carers	New reserve created in the 2019/20 Provisional Outturn report to fund bursaries for trainee carers.
Capital Receipts Pump Priming	Used to meet costs associated with bringing properties into readiness for disposal.
Carbon Reduction and Energy Risk	Used to finance measures aimed at reducing the Council's carbon footprint and support the costs of the Carbon Reduction Credit scheme.
Carry Forward	Used to carry under spends in the current financial year forward to support expenditure plans in the forthcoming financial year.
Childrens Transformation Reserve	To support transformation capacity to deliver the Childrens Sustainability programme
Collection Fund Investment Risk	Established to mitigate the risks of falling collection rates for council tax and non-domestic rates.
Commercial Investment in Essex Places	Established to set aside funding for commercial investment in Essex Places that align to the Council's housing growth and town centre agendas.
Community Initiatives Fund	To fund revenue and capital community initiatives.
EES Pensions Deficit	Earmarked reserve to cover future costs that may arise as a result of pensions arrangements following the sale of EES.
Emergency	To help deal with risk around increased market fragility, exit from the EU, capacity issues across social care, as well as general risks around delivery and demand.
Emergency Planning	To meet costs associated with emergency planning.
Essex Climate Change Commission	Can be drawn upon by the Essex Climate Change Commission to fund initiatives to reduce carbon emissions and promote Green Infrastructure initiatives.
Future Capital Funding	Comprises revenue contributions to be used to supplement the resources available to finance future capital expenditure.
General Balance	Reserve set aside to allow the Council to deal with unexpected events or costs at short notice.
Health & Safety	Used to meet the costs of undertaking asbestos, legionella and Disability Discrimination Act surveys.
Insurance	Provides for future potential and contingent liabilities for insurance claims.
Property Fund	Reserve created to manage the risks associated with landlord responsibility (e.g. gaps in occupancy).
Quadrennial Elections	Reserve established to meet costs associated with the Council's quadrennial elections.
Renewal Fund Reserve	New reserve to support COVID-19 recovery activity.
Social Distancing and Hygiene	New reserve created in the 2019/20 Provisional Outturn report to support new burdens on the Council to manage social distancing requirements.
Technology Solutions	To set aside resources to meet the future cost of replacing key council's technology systems.
Tendring PPP	To meet costs associated with the Tendring PPP contract.
Transformation	Used to meet costs associated with project management and change management aspects of the Council's ambitious programme of transformation.

Appendix K – Restricted use and other revenue reserves

EARMARKED RESERVES							
	Balance at 1 April 2020	2020/21 movements		Balance at 31 March 2021	2021/22 estimated movements		
		Contributions to reserves	Withdrawals from reserves		Budgeted approp to/(from) reserves	(Withdrawals) / Contributions	Est. Balance at 31 March 2022
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Restricted use							
Grants equalisation reserve	49,853	39,845	(39,289)	50,409	-	(31,011)	19,398
COVID equalisation reserve	-	38,505	(1,009)	37,496	28,808	(60,000)	6,304
PFI equalisation reserves					-	-	-
A130 PFI	39,278	1,822	(4,652)	36,448	(9,255)	-	27,193
Clacton secondary schools' PFI	532	479	(271)	740	-	104	844
Debden PFI	630	835	(501)	964	-	513	1,477
Building Schools for the Future PFI	233	590	-	823	-	159	982
Waste reserve	112,276	4,574	-	116,850	(6,344)	(1,792)	108,714
Schools					-	-	-
General	34,642	11,378	(2,419)	43,601	-	-	43,601
DSG Deficit Reserve	(5,359)	5,359	-	-	-	-	-
Partnerships	1,458	426	(120)	1,764	-	-	1,764
Trading activities	828	513	-	1,341	(304)	304	1,341
Total restricted use	234,371	104,326	(48,261)	290,436	12,905	(91,723)	211,618
Future capital funding	1,905	7,942	-	9,847	3,074	(3,074)	9,847
Other revenue reserves							
Adults Digital programme	2,869	877	(2,458)	1,288	-	(1,288)	-
Adults Risk reserve	-	-	-	-	10,089	-	10,089
Adults Transformation	-	3,500	-	3,500	-	-	3,500
Ambition Fund	3,971	13,819	(1,212)	16,578	2,700	(9,200)	10,078
Capital receipts pump priming	3,204	1,000	-	4,204	-	-	4,204
Carry Forwards Reserve	14,804	19,933	(13,464)	21,273	(3,260)	(18,013)	-
Childrens Transformation	-	1,314	-	1,314	-	-	1,314
Collection Fund investment risk reserve	1,412	2,617	-	4,029	12,418	-	16,447
Commercial Investment In Essex Places reserve	12,583	-	-	12,583	-	-	12,583
EES Pension Deficit reserve	4,000	-	-	4,000	-	-	4,000
Essex Climate Change Commission reserve	250	5,000	(250)	5,000	-	-	5,000
Emergency Reserve	-	33,069	(20,505)	12,564	4,000	(4,000)	12,564
Health and Safety Reserve	3,100	681	(969)	2,812	2,038	(371)	4,479
Insurance	7,411	1,238	(1,151)	7,498	-	-	7,498
Quadrennial Elections reserve	1,093	500	(668)	925	500	(1,425)	-
Renewal Fund	2,900	26,018	(1,018)	27,900	-	-	27,900
Technology Solutions	3,785	9,129	(4,165)	8,749	10,000	(13,940)	4,809
Transformation	37,401	25,705	(8,420)	54,686	5,480	(18,000)	42,166
Other reserves	3,958	1,226	(815)	4,369	600	-	4,969
Total other revenue reserves	102,741	145,626	(55,095)	193,272	44,565	(66,237)	175,969
Total	339,017	257,894	(103,356)	493,555	60,544	(161,034)	397,434

Appendix L – General Balance

GENERAL BALANCE	
General Balance	£000
Actual Balance 31 March 2020	56,439
2020/21 Original Budget withdrawal	-
Opening Balance 1 April 2020	56,439
Subsequent movements	
Approved contributions	73,571
Approved withdrawals	(57,568)
Budgeted balance at 31st March 2021	72,442
Movements as a consequence of the Revenue Outturn Position	
Contributions	
Underlying under spend	11,482
Return of unspent supplementary funding	15,714
Withdrawals	
Redirect Covid Funding to earmarked revenue reserves	(31,542)
Actual balance at 31 March 2021	68,096

Appendix M - Reassignment of COVID Emergency Grant

Value to replenish ECC Funds / Transfer COVID emergency grant to COVID Equalisation Reserve £000	
COVID Equalisation	2,258
Emergency	6,288
Health and Safety	428
Renewal Fund	21,038
Transformation	1,530
Value of COVID emergency grant to transfer from the General Balance	(31,542)

Appendix N – Prudential Indicators

Prudential Indicators - Summary			
		Approved Indicator	Provisional Outturn
Affordability			
Incremental impact on Council Tax of 2020/21 and earlier years' 'starts'	£	£93.03	£100.78
Ratio of financing costs to net revenue streams (excl. gen. govnt. grant)	%	9.4%	8.4%
Ratio of financing costs to net revenue streams (incl. gen. govnt. grants)	%	8.7%	7.4%
Prudence			
Net borrowing and Capital Financing Requirement		Net borrowing is below the medium term forecast of the CFR	
Capital Expenditure			
Capital expenditure	£m	235	197
Capital Financing Requirement (excluding credit arrangements)	£m	1,040	990
External Debt			
Authorised limit (borrowing only)	£m	930	N/A
Operational boundary (borrowing only)	£m	810	N/A
Actual external borrowing (maximum level of debt during year)	£m	N/A	628
Treasury Management			
Interest rate exposures			
Upper limit for exposure to fixed rates			
Net exposure	£m	930	454
Debt		100.0%	99.9%
Investments		100.0%	80.0%
Upper limit for exposure to variable rates			
Net exposure	£m	279	241
Debt		30.0%	4.6%
Investments		100.0%	58.0%
Maturity structure of borrowing (upper limit)			
Under 12 months	%	40.0%	3.0%
12 months & within 24 months	%	40.0%	2.3%
24 months & within 5 years	%	40.0%	6.0%
5 years & within 10 years	%	40.0%	15.3%
10 years & within 25 years	%	78.0%	32.0%
25 years & within 40 years	%	40.0%	29.1%
40 years & within 50 years	%	20.0%	0.0%
50 years & above	%	20.0%	12.5%
Total sums invested for more than 364 days			
Authorised limit	£m	50	N/A
Actual sums invested (maximum position during year)	£m	N/A	10
Summary			
All Treasury Management activities have been undertaken in accordance with approved policies and procedures.			
External debt is within prudent and sustainable limits.			
Credit arrangements have been undertaken within approved indicators.			
Maturity Structure of borrowing: maturity dates for market loans are based on the next review date, not the final maturity date.			

Appendix O – Treasury Management Summary

TREASURY MANAGEMENT SUMMARY - 2020/21						
	Actual Balance 1 April £000	Movements			Balance at 31 March £000	Interest payable / (earned) to date £000
		Raised £000	Repaid £000	Net movement £000		
Borrowing						
Long Term	616,709	1,495	(18,364)	(16,869)	599,840	20,951
Temporary	1,977	19,168	-	19,168	21,145	-
Total External Borrowing (A)	618,686	20,663	(18,364)	2,299	620,985	20,951
Investments						
Long Term	10,000	-	-	-	10,000	(454)
Temporary	402,800	167,000	-	167,000	569,800	(638)
Total External Investments (B)	412,800	167,000	-	167,000	579,800	(1,092)
Net indebtedness (A-B)	205,886	(146,337)	(18,364)	(164,701)	41,185	19,859

Borrowing	
Average long term borrowing over period to date (£000)	599,350
Opening pool rate at 1 April 2020	3.38%
Weighted average rate of interest on new loans secured to date	N/A
Average pool rate for year	3.47%
Investments	
Average daily cash balance over period to date (£000)	584,647
Average interest earned over period	0.22%
Benchmark rate - average 7 day LIBID rate	-0.07%

Forward Plan reference number: FP/054/04/21

Report title: Procurement of the Essex Community Wellbeing Service	
Report to: Cabinet	
Report author: Councillor John Spence, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care	
Date: 22 June 2021	For: Decision
Enquiries to: Chris French – Head of Wellbeing and Public Health Email: chris.french@essex.gov.uk Claire Bartoli – Senior Wellbeing and Public Health Officer Email: claire.bartoli@essex.gov.uk	
County Divisions affected: All Essex	

This report includes a confidential appendix which is **not for publication** because it includes information falling within paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in releasing it.

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report seeks agreement to procure a community wellbeing service that will deliver a cohesive and innovative model of wellbeing for residents which approaches the issues impacting wellbeing holistically and focusses on unmet need, a single point of access, equality and a digital offer. The Council has a statutory duty to commission health improvement services, including the NHS Health Checks programme. These services and a wide range of community wellbeing programmes are commissioned through multiple contracts and it is proposed that they are re-procured and awarded under one contract. The service will enable equality in access to support and improve outcomes and will meet the needs of the wider population and specifically target and support those with the greatest needs. This whole system approach to supporting the wellbeing of our communities is ambitious and will be one of the first of its kind in the UK.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Agree to procure a provider to deliver an integrated, countywide Essex Community Wellbeing Service for a period of five years, with the option to extend for a further two years.
- 2.2 Agree to undertake a competitive procurement exercise using a two-stage tender process, with bids to be evaluated on 60% quality of which 10% will be allocated to social value, and 40% price with agreement of the detailed evaluation criteria being subject to the approval of the Director, Wellbeing, Public Health and Communities.

- 2.3 Agree that the Cabinet Member, Adult Social Care and Health, is authorised to award the contract to the successful bidder following completion of the procurement process.

3. Summary of issue

Background

- 3.1 ECC are committed to improving the health of those they serve, as part of our strategy to ensure we have inclusive economic growth, help people get the best start and age well and help create great places to live and work, and do so while transforming the Council to achieve more with less.
- 3.2 The contract for the new service will include NHS health checks, physical activity promotion, weight management support for adults and children, mental health support, smoking cessation services, emotional wellbeing support, workplace wellbeing support for Essex businesses, community agents who will connect people with services which support wellbeing and coaches to support communities in tackling social isolation and loneliness. The service will include a single point of access and triage through a care navigation service, to enable residents to access the care and information which best meets their health and social care needs.
- 3.3 People who are overweight, who are lonely or who undertake low levels of physical activity live shorter lives and endure poorer health. Additionally, people in deprived communities often have more barriers to adopting healthy lifestyles.
- 3.4 A key challenge for all councils has been how to address the lifestyle choices that individuals make that impact on their health and to do so at significant scale. For example, with two thirds of Essex residents being overweight, and with 5% of people always lonely and 16% sometimes lonely, traditional commissioning of services delivered by professionals is not able to respond to this level of need. As we emerge from Covid, it is evident that many people have suffered a negative impact on their physical and mental health, including the adoption of less healthy lifestyles, and many of those who already experience the most significant inequalities have been most affected.
- 3.5 The service will approach wellbeing holistically rather than dealing with lifestyle risk factors, such as smoking or obesity, in isolation. It will better address all of the issues that impact on an individual's wellbeing via a single triage and aligned pathway approach, thus making it easier for residents to access the support they need and enabling them to increase their personal resilience. The new service aims to develop community-led projects, building cohesion and resilience, building on the lessons learned from the community Covid-19 response, where people supported the wellbeing of others in their local communities. It will also address the wider determinants of health, for example, social, economic and environmental factors which impact people's physical and mental wellbeing and their ability to make healthy lifestyle choices. This approach will help to surface

unmet need and to assist many more residents and their families to lead happier, healthier and more connected lives.

- 3.6 We require a response that has the ambition to deliver at scale in a way that no organisation has managed to date. Over the last three years, we have been piloting innovative approaches to this as referenced in this report. These pilots have required a different approach, working with and through communities, helping people to support each other to choose a healthy lifestyle and to improve wellbeing. Through these pilots we have already demonstrated that people attending Essex-based peer-led weight loss groups can lose a similar amount of weight to those attending national specialist-led diet programmes.
- 3.7 To enable this approach, we will commission a provider who can produce seamless, easily accessed lifestyle support linking with stakeholders including primary care, existing providers and voluntary groups and with communities and residents themselves.
- 3.8 This new commissioning of population wellbeing is better aligned to broader health outcomes and the wider system ambitions of improving the mental and physical health of our residents. It will be stringently monitored in terms of performance through a comprehensive suite of monthly trajectories and key performance indicators and robustly managed through a range of contractual levers, including financial penalties for under-delivery in key areas. A detailed description of the new model and how it has been developed is attached as Appendix A.
- 3.9 The new approach will help enhance ECC's key partnerships with NHS colleagues, including Integrated Care System (ICS) organisations which include, NHS Acute Trusts, Primary Care Networks, individual GP practices and pharmacies. Integration is key to the success of these partnerships and improving outcomes for residents. Having a single point of access for residents will both simplify the process for them and consequently increase the number of referrals made. This model will work alongside the existing Clinical Commissioning Group / ICS structure, but would be much more effective if the ICS worked on co-terminus boundaries, allowing better integration across care pathways although this is not possible at this stage.
- 3.10 Providers undertaking this contract will be expected to demonstrate how they are upholding and contributing to the themes of the Essex Climate Action Commission recommendations including a focus on low carbon transport, waste reduction and recycling, effective use of energy, sustainable land use and green infrastructure contributing towards the carbon neutral agenda and a more climate friendly approach to the built environment. In addition, the new Essex Wellbeing Service offer will see considerable channel shift to a digital offer where appropriate and therefore a reduction in travel. A key part of the model will also feature green and physical activity social prescribing that will contribute to the joint aims of both the service and the Essex Climate Action Commission.

- 3.11 GPs are commissioned by ECC to deliver approximately 80% of the NHS Health Check Programme and this arrangement will continue, enhanced with improved outcomes for patients via referrals to the new service.
- 3.12 Some public health services that are not part of the Essex Community Wellbeing service are sexual health services, drug and alcohol services and children and young people's wellbeing (excluding child weight management services). This is because they are clinically specialised, targeted and still have significant contract terms remaining. However, it will be explicit in the contract that the successful bidder will be required to develop effective working relationships with out-of-scope services to enable effective support for Essex residents.
- 3.13 Commissioners started work on the procurement in 2019. At this time, the various contracts and grant agreements were due to expire on 31 March 2021. However, due to the Coronavirus outbreak, the procurement was put on hold and existing contracts and grant agreements were extended until 31 March 2022. Work on the procurement recommenced in January 2021, with a planned contract start date of 1 April 2022.

The new Community Wellbeing Service

- 3.14 Early engagement with partners and stakeholders, including current and prospective providers, started in 2019 and included a second market engagement event held in April this year, where over 80 different provider organisations were present. This has helped inform the commissioners' aspirations for, and modelling of, the new Essex Community Wellbeing Service.
- 3.15 The new service has been designed to increase the number of people who are supported to live healthy lives, increase the time over which wellbeing outcomes are sustained, and deliver individual care plans which offer social, economic and emotional support and positively impact upon people's ability to adopt healthy lifestyle behaviours.
- 3.16 Covid-19 demonstrated the ability to implement change and innovation at pace and examples of best practice include the efficient mobilisation of the Essex Wellbeing Service, which included a single point of access for Adult Social Care pathways, the harnessing of volunteer support, and the use of digital approaches at scale. The new model will enable us to harness these innovative ways of working to deliver outcomes for the longer-term benefit of Essex residents.
- 3.17 In addition to the specialist professional support offered where needed, and building on the success of the community weight management project, the new community-based model will employ a social movement approach that encourages local people to help other local people, through programmes such as United in Kind Coaches, who encourage communities to kick-start their own micro initiatives, and through a broad training offer to the people of Essex to increase resilience in their communities.
- 3.18 The new model will build on the Council's work as part of the Strengthening Communities programme, including its current approach to reducing loneliness

and social isolation, which in turn includes the mobilising of the existing Essex Wellbeing Service which led to identifying, coordinating and deploying welfare support to those at greater risk from Covid-19. This collaboration has created a network of community infrastructure, co-ordinated through a central reporting system that is underpinned by a common aim and purpose.

- 3.19 The new model will include focus on a digital-first, citizen-led model of civic infrastructure, building on online communities' work to date and use of social media channels, as well as face to face and other forms of support.
- 3.20 This approach has the potential to substantially increase the scale of Essex residents engaged and being supported, but also to ensure a localised approach, shaping health and wellbeing support to reflect and respond to the differing social, cultural and economic needs across Essex.

Consultation and engagement

- 3.21 There has been early engagement with prospective and current providers, including a number of market engagement events. There has also been ongoing consultation with other stakeholders, including Clinical Commissioning Groups, voluntary sector representatives, and other commissioners for Children and Families, Adult Social Care, Mental Health and Learning Disabilities.
- 3.22 Feedback from Essex residents was captured via different survey methods, including social media, and from current service users. This has provided further insight into what residents want from the new service, and why people do and do not engage with existing services. Consultation with the public will be a continuous element of contract delivery.

Procurement process and contract

- 3.23 A competitive procurement exercise will be undertaken, using a two-stage tender process. Stage one invites bids from the open market where any organisation(s) who wants to submit a bid can do so. As part of the evaluation process, bidders will be scored against their responses to the Standard Selection Questionnaire (SSQ). The bidders who achieve the four highest scores will be taken through to stage two.
- 3.24 At stage two, bidders will be evaluated on the basis of 60% quality and 40% price. This is a departure from the Council's usual balance of 70% price and 30% quality and reflects our desire to optimise the quality of the new service. It is proposed that 10% of the quality weighting will be allocated to social value evaluation criteria which will allow ECC to promote social value within the procurement, and in doing so improve community cohesion and supply chain resilience and capacity. Criteria could include employment opportunities targeted at those groups and areas that would find access to employment difficult, and supporting local small and medium enterprises. Bidders will also have the opportunity to participate in the Accelerated Payment Rebate Scheme offered by the Council. Participation in this scheme will be optional and will not be scored as part of the procurement.

- 3.25 The contract will be with a single lead provider who will work with a number of delivery partners to deliver the whole range of services. This model has been proven to work well in respect of the Essex Sexual Health Service and is a model suited to bringing together a range of health improvement services, aligning and simplifying pathways for residents, ensuring they can access the support they need. For this reason, this is the recommended approach for this contract although this is a new approach for these services and the lead provider will need to build the relevant connections and sub-contract services to ensure that this model is deliverable.
- 3.26 The cost element of the procurement will take the form of a capped cost. Whilst no additional top-down savings are prescribed in this new contract, there is a strong expectation that providers will find significant economies of scale and efficiencies of operation, whilst maintaining the highest standards of quality and effectiveness. The evaluation criteria will assess bidders on their ability to deliver innovation in addressing the wider determinants of lifestyle behaviours, the sensitive identification of need through a robust triage process, the ability to realise delivery at scale over a longer duration than traditional services, and realisation of digital potential for wellbeing support.
- 3.27 Monitoring of performance will require a balance of short-term process measures that can be informed over a short time, and longer-term outcomes and therefore the contract will require both quantitative and outcomes based performance measures and targets in terms of total numbers receiving support and sampled outcomes measures within an identified sample. There will also be contractual mechanisms to modify performance measures, if agreed, if more suitable ones can be generated. This is important because of the innovative and aspirational nature of some of the outcomes and performance measures in the specification.

Staffing and resource implications

- 3.28 The staff engaged in delivering the existing services are employed by external providers. The new contract will also be procured from external providers and the incoming and outgoing contractors will need to manage the transfer of staff where necessary, in accordance with the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE). Current providers will be expected to provide accurate TUPE information and prospective bidders will be expected to conduct their own due diligence to check the accuracy of the information provided.

4. Policy Context

- 4.1 The procurement of the Essex Community Wellbeing Service model will deliver against the Council's organisational strategic aims and priorities, namely:
- a. Enable inclusive economic growth: Help people in Essex prosper by increasing their skills;

- b. Help people get the best start and age well: Enable more vulnerable adults to live independently of social care; and improve the health of people in Essex;
- c. Help create great places to grow up, live in and work: Help secure stronger, safer and more neighbourly communities;
- d. Transform the Council to achieve more with less: Develop the capability, performance and engagement of our people; and reimagine how residents' needs can be met in a digital world.

4.2 This proposal will also support the Council in meeting the overarching objectives of the Public Health Outcomes Framework (2019 – 2022), namely:

- a. Improvements against wider factors which affect health and wellbeing and health inequalities;
- b. People being helped to live healthy lifestyles, make healthy choices and reduce health inequalities
- c. The population's health being protected from major incidents and other threats, whilst reducing health inequalities;
- d. Reduced numbers of people living with preventable ill health and people dying prematurely, whilst the gap between communities is reduced.

5. Options

5.1 **Option 1: Proceed with the re-procurement** – For the reasons set out above, it is recommended that the Council undertakes a procurement process to appoint a single lead provider for the Essex Community Wellbeing Service.

5.2 **Option 2: Do nothing and let the current contracts cease** - This option is not recommended. The existing contractual arrangements for delivery of services will expire on 31 March 2022. The Council has a statutory public health duty to commission the NHS Health Checks programme for the residents of Essex, as well as the responsibility for commissioning health improvement services, including weight management support.

5.3 **Option 3: Re-procure existing services on a piecemeal basis** – This option is not recommended and does not take account of the evidence that individual behaviours need to be tackled by taking account of people's overall life circumstances, rather than focusing exclusively on an individual's behaviour in isolation. Furthermore, the commissioning of different providers to deliver different but inextricably linked services acts as a disincentive to working in collaboration with each other.

6. Financial implications

6.1 There is an expectation that by combining contracts in the manner proposed under the recommended option, efficiencies and savings will be delivered. However, until the tenders are evaluated this is not guaranteed and the precise value of any potential savings will not be known. With tender evaluation criteria

being evaluated using 60% quality and 40% price, providers are expected to bid competitively on price alongside submission of a high-quality bid.

- 6.2 The confidential appendix contains further information on the financial implications of the procurement.

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 Public Health Services fall within “social and other specific services” within Schedule 3 of The Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
- 7.2 Section 7 of Chapter 3 of the Regulations requires ECC to publish its intention to award a contract for social and other specific services by either a Contract Notice or a Prior Information Notice (subject to conditions relating to the contents of both the Contract Notice and Prior Information Notice).
- 7.3 Regulation 76 of the Regulations states that Contracting Authorities will determine the procedure to be followed to award the contract, but that such process must at least be sufficient to ensure compliance with the principles of transparency and equal treatment of economic operators.
- 7.4 Regulation 67 of the Regulations sets out how evaluation criteria are to be established. The Council must select evaluation criteria that will help it establish the most economically advantageous tender. Regulation 67 also allows the Council to consider social aspects of a tender in assessing quality, provided that they are relevant and proportionate to the contract and linked to the subject matter of the contract.
- 7.5 The Council, as a Public Health Body, has a statutory duty to undertake the NHS Health Checks Programme by virtue of regulations 4 and 5 of the Local Authorities (Public Health Functions and Entry to Premises by Local Healthwatch Representatives) Regulations 2013.
- 7.6 Section 12 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 places a duty on the Council, as the Public Health Authority, to take appropriate steps to improve the health of people living in Essex. The services to be included within the Community Wellbeing Service are one of the ways in which the Council is able to discharge this duty.

8 Equality and Diversity implications

- 8.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful.

- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

8.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c), although it is relevant for (a).

8.3 The Equality Impact Assessments indicate that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

9 List of appendices

Appendix A - Description of the New Commissioning Model

Appendix B – Confidential Appendix

Appendix C – Equality Impact Assessments

10. List of background papers

None declared

APPENDIX A: DESCRIPTION OF THE NEW COMMISSIONING MODEL

The model

In summary the new model for the service does four things:

- 1) Develops infrastructure and capacity for people in Essex to support each other in their wellbeing, to enable both delivery of outcomes at much larger scale than traditional services, and to focus professional service support where it is really needed.
- 2) Bring together previously separate contracts into a single care pathway so that wellbeing is looked at holistically across all risk factors, not just weight management or smoking in isolation for example, which also enables agencies referring into the service to have a single rather than multiple referral in routes.
- 3) Delivers better value and lower unit cost at the same time increasing the scale of wellbeing support offered.
- 4) Attempts to build our service population's individual resilience by looking at the things that risk their resilience, as a foundation on which to build work on modifying individual lifestyle risk factors.

How we have arrived at this

Public health strategic thinking has evolved over the past three years to consider how best to support people in their wellbeing. The position has moved from looking at individual lifestyle risk factors in isolation, delivered exclusively by professional services, to looking at the real drivers of overall wellbeing in a collective sense. This better reflects how people live their lives and is a significant change from how we have historically commissioned services focused on individual outcomes such as smoking cessation or weight management. Individual lifestyle risk factors are still very important and have not been compromised in this new model. However, the evidence suggests that commissioning individual risk factor services focused on a single risk factor outcome does not have as significant an impact and do not reflect what people need in order to be supported in their wellbeing.

Whilst certain areas of work have been developed within existing contracts, our ability to realise this new commissioning approach strategically and at scale has been limited by the constraints of previous contracts, which have now been brought into alignment. Over the past 15 months of the Covid pandemic, we have developed very local community infrastructure using digital approaches and social media, and harnessing the capability, capacity and desire of the people of Essex to support each other. This has had very significant benefits, such as supporting vulnerable groups who were shielding during lockdown with shopping and other daily tasks, and also identifying previously hidden and unmet need. There is a strong indication that the level of support that the people of Essex want to give to each other is increasing, and a determination that we should not return to old ways of doing things. The challenge the new model seeks to achieve is to convert the community wellbeing support offered to date, including the considerable support offered during Covid, into a sustainable community support offer for wellbeing going forward. This is a new approach, but is

what is needed to achieve outcomes at scale. Sir Derek Wanless, independently commissioned by the Dept of Health to review nationally what it would take to get the population engaged in their wellbeing, asserted that “more of the same (public health practice) won’t work”. In Essex we are responding to this challenge.

Work over the past two years in both weight management and strengthening communities has shown that more really can be achieved with less. Weight management services were reconfigured two years ago to include a light touch model using community delivery partners, such as the Councils for Voluntary Service, who were not highly trained professionals and provided basic social support for people in their weight management journey. Our proposal based on public health experience was very simple: that local people want to support their neighbours and others in their community, and in doing so they gain considerable benefit as well as the people they help and support.

The strengthening communities’ model has used digital community campaigns to digitally support many more people who are socially isolated, and has surfaced unmet need. Three recent key digital campaigns that support wellbeing themes are United in Kind, Essex Coronavirus Action and Never too Late Mate which supported mental health awareness. 45,000 Essex residents were trained in mental health first aid and suicide prevention, compared with 976 residents being trained using traditional commissioned nondigital mechanisms.

Evidence of effectiveness

To date the evidence shows that our new model works. Weight management results showed that this light touch model still produced clinically significant weight loss. Within 12 months a 30% increase in the number supported to lose weight was achieved as well as a 50% saving in contract value, compared with a traditional service baseline.

For the digital campaigns, 90% of those who reported back on the Mental Health First Aid training have stated that they have used the training within their own communities, on themselves or from a parenting perspective. Everyone reported that the training was beneficial to them. In addition the new strengthening communities model generated 7000 volunteers who were mobilised on wellbeing activities from March 14th to March 21st, and 3651 volunteers were mobilised to support an NHS Trust over 3 weeks, 80% of whom had not volunteered before, compared to traditional recruitment of 476 volunteers across 12 organisations within 3 months. In addition, during 2020/21 the Social Isolation model transformed to become the Essex Wellbeing Service and has supported 207,000 people with a range of needs from daily living tasks through to supporting a range of cohorts of vulnerable people within our community during the Covid pandemic.

Risks of the new model and associated mitigation

The greatest risk is posed by continuing the status quo of mainly commissioning a traditional service model. This will not deliver the required outcomes at the scale needed, particularly in the context of the greater need of the population for wellbeing caused by Covid.

Risk: direct measurement of outcomes at scale through use of a light touch support model - our proposed approach does not fit neatly into the traditional service performance management model where professionals intervene more directly in evaluating outcomes, such as direct measurement of weight for example.

Mitigation: this risk has been mitigated by directly measuring a sample of the overall population, as well as corroboration through self-report measures. This is standard and accepted methodology within the public health and academic and research community and does not risk meaningful reporting of outcomes at scale.

Risk: trying a new approach which goes beyond the evidence base of traditional services - the existing evidence base for some lifestyle interventions is well-established, but these interventions are not replicable at scale in their current form. We are incorporating the traditional evidence base but operating beyond it.

Mitigation: we will add to the traditional evidence base by prospectively generating new evidence. Whilst we have developed exploratory new performance measures to test a new approach, we have not confused innovation and flexibility with lack of clarity about what we expect from a provider or clear contractual accountability. Forensic clarity on individual performance measures as well as contractual terms which require action against any underperforming areas limit the risk to ECC, whilst giving the provider (and ECC as commissioner) the necessary agility to continue the developmental journey required to achieve the transformation we need towards achieving outcomes at scale.

Risk: commissioning this new model at a point when the new ECC administration has only just begun to define priorities and strategic plans - it is early days, both for the new administration and its strategic plans, and for the development of the Essex 4 year strategic public health plan which could impact on commissioning priorities.

Mitigation: the new commissioning model allows for early manifestation of the new public health strategic approach, and early testing of the key question: how do we improve outcomes at scale across the wider Essex population? This key question will remain in any public health strategy and the new administration's plans going forward. However, the contract and specification still retain flexibility in what will be needed to be a developmental journey, in both strategic policy and operational delivery.

Risk: not achieving wellbeing outcomes because we have not worked sufficiently with other parts of the system - multiple factors impact on wellbeing and not working well with other partners, such as the NHS risking not only delivery of the outcomes in this ECC specification, but the wellbeing outcomes that other system partners also seek to achieve.

Mitigation: Appendix A of the specification clearly describes services in scope, as well as out of scope. The successful provider will be expected to develop strong relationships with out of scope services commissioned by others, such as the NHS, in order to secure joined up overall care plans for our residents. This will involve alignment of services and pathways optimised to residents. It is essential to build on the opportunities for systems working with Primary and Secondary Care catalysed by Covid. EWS is currently supporting 53 practices across Essex to understand vaccine

hesitancy; this has seen the system come together to put information sharing agreements in place in a way that would not have been possible prior to Covid. The model is supported by both CCGS and the ICS systems with pathway work rolling out to assist those held on elective waiting lists within Secondary and Primary Care.

Forward Plan reference number: FP/063/05/21

Report title: Bus Back Better: Proposed Enhanced Bus Partnership for Essex	
Report to: Cabinet	
Report author: Councillor Lee Scott, Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport	
Date: 22 June 2021	For: Decision
Enquiries to: Andrew Cook, Director, Highways and Transportation email andrew.cook@essex.gov.uk or Helen Morris, Head of Integrated Passenger Transport Unit helen.morris@essex.gov.uk	
County Divisions affected: All Essex	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Bus Back Better, the Government's national bus strategy, was published on 15 March 2021. It makes it clear that better bus services are seen as a key part of the Government's 'levelling up' agenda by improving public transport outside London. The Council has a key part to play in improving sustainable transport which will improve the environment, reduce congestion and improve our residents' lives.
- 1.2 Amongst other things the strategy asks local transport authorities to commit either to setting up 'enhanced quality bus partnerships' or adopt bus franchising and to make a statement to that effect.
- 1.3 This report asks the Cabinet to agree that ECC should formally issue a statement of intention to set up enhanced quality bus partnerships.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Agree that the Council will progress the development of an Enhanced Partnership Plan for the whole of the administrative county of Essex with the intention of delivering an Enhanced Partnership Plan and one or more Enhanced Partnership Schemes as soon as possible, and if possible, by April 2022.
- 2.2 Note that the Cabinet Member will take decisions relating to:
 - the final number of schemes,
 - the draft issued to give operators the chance to object
 - the consideration of objections from operators; and
 - the final consultation draft.
- 2.3 Note that as there are likely to be additional resources required in order to issue a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) by 31 October 2021, a further decision

relating to the resource requirements may be required once the detailed requirements have been developed.

- 2.4 Note that the Cabinet will take the final decision on adopting the Enhanced Partnership plan and scheme(s) and on the adoption of the Bus Service Improvement Plan.

3. Summary of issue

- 3.1 Essex County Council is the local transport authority (LTA) for Essex. This makes it responsible for delivering concessionary fares and for addressing market failure by commissioning bus routes. Bus services have been seriously affected by the pandemic and have received significant public funding to maintain the financial position of operators.
- 3.2 Supporting people to transfer journeys that can be made by bus from car to bus is one of the key opportunities to quickly address carbon emissions from the transport sector. It's a direct way for individuals to help reduce the impact of climate change, as well as supporting better air quality, their communities, better urban spaces, the local economy and local jobs and reducing congestion. Supporting growth in the bus sector is one of the priorities identified by the Essex Climate Action Commission. Good bus networks also support the renewal of the local economy, jobs, the environment and communities by enabling people to access a wide range of services. They also support equality, as they disproportionately support the travel of those on lower incomes, women, older and younger people and people with a disability. This includes supporting access to jobs, education, training, healthcare and leisure.
- 3.3 'Bus Back Better', the Government's national bus strategy, was published on 15 March 2021. It sets out a bold and ambitious vision for the UK's bus network and places significant expectations on LTAs. These include:
- a request that by 30 June 2021 each LTA issues a statement of intent to pursue one of two statutory routes provided to enhance the delivery of local bus networks
 - An Enhanced Partnership (EP); or
 - Network Franchising.
 - a request to issue a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) by 31 October 2021 setting out the Council's vision and timeframes for developing the local bus network in its area.
 - the request to publish an Enhanced Partnership Plan and at least one Enhanced Partnership scheme by April 2022. Even if a franchise approach is adopted, an EP is still required as a first step.
- 3.4 The document states that failure to commit to one of the approaches will leave the authority ineligible for further bus specific funding from DfT; including, from April 2022, the remaining part of the £3bn announced in the strategy and

funding it already receives, such as Covid Bus Service Support Grant Restart and potentially other funding received which supports contracted bus services.

3.5 The National Bus Strategy also indicates that a council's performance in developing its strategy for improving bus services in its area will be taken into account by the Department for Transport in considering applications for all other transport funding. The Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) will set out the Council's assessment of the current state of its bus network; the opportunities; and risks; and also set out its vision for the future and the strategy for delivery. The BSIP will be subject to a further Cabinet decision in the autumn.

3.6 Buses are a key element in achieving a range of ECC's priorities including:

- Helping deliver economic recovery from the Covid pandemic
- Achieving Zero Carbon Emissions
- Attracting inward investment from businesses
- Reducing congestion
- Improving air quality
- Allowing Essex residents to access a whole range of services from school, training and work to health, leisure and shopping
- Promoting social inclusion - bus passengers are disproportionately from more vulnerable groups, such as older people, younger people, women, those on lower incomes and those with disabilities.

3.7 Therefore, measures to support the bus network also help deliver the following Strategic Priorities:

- Help people in Essex prosper by increasing their skills
- Enable Essex to attract and grow large firms in high growth industries
- Target economic development to areas of opportunity
- Help keep vulnerable children safer and enable them to fulfil their potential
- Enable more vulnerable adults to live independent of social care
- Improve the health of people in Essex
- Help to secure stronger, safer and more neighbourly communities
- Help to secure sustainable development and protect the environment
- Facilitate growing communities and new homes
- Limit cost and drive growth in revenue
- Re-imagine how residents' needs can be met in a digital world

3.8 The two options for Essex County Council are an Enhanced Partnership or Franchising.

3.9 An **Enhanced Partnership (EP)** is a legally binding partnership between a Council and operators in an area. Both parties commit to certain measures to improve services. The partnership comprises:

- An **EP plan** - which is a high-level vision and objectives for bus services in the local area; and

- **One of more EP schemes** - which set out the detail of how the vision and objectives will be achieved, including any commitments made by the local authority or standards to be met by bus operators
- 3.10 An EP scheme must put obligations on bus operators to improve their services. There are five main types of obligation:
- the vehicles used to operate bus services, including their appearance (livery)
 - providing information about bus services to the public and the publicising of local services;
 - harmonising the dates on which timetables may be changed; and
 - tickets - including:
 - how tickets can be purchased and fares paid;
 - how entitlement to travel can be evidenced by passengers;
 - the publicising of fares or ticketing arrangements;
 - the appearance of tickets;
 - the price of multi-operator tickets;
 - standardised ticketing zones, ticket lengths, or concession eligibility; and
 - arrangements that facilitate the operation of the scheme.
- 3.11 The creation of an EP requires a long and complex statutory process to be followed, involving discussion and consultation as well as an objection period. The Council and all bus operators in the area are then bound into the scheme (even if a minority of bus operators opposed the EP they are still included in its provisions). Advice from the monitoring officer about deliverability by April 2022 is set out in the legal implications.
- 3.12 The advantages of an enhanced partnership are that it can articulate a clear set of commitments for both the Council and operators which passengers can see. The level and type of commitment involved are agreed between the parties as part of the negotiation process and a decision by the County Council at this time to pursue an EP route does not commit it to any particular set of measures or level of expenditure.
- 3.13 A binding partnership of this type also gives both parties confidence that the partnership will be delivered and that investments made by one will not be undermined by the failure of the other parties to proceed. As it does not involve significant change to the underlying commercial operating model it can therefore be done relatively quickly. However, because it is a partnership there may need to be some compromise from each side's ideal position to reach agreement.
- 3.14 An ambitious EP is likely to take longer to put in place than a less ambitious one. Once an EP is in place, we can work with operators in local areas to build more ambitious proposals tailored to local areas.
- 3.15 **Franchising** involves the Council taking control of the management and high-level delivery of the local bus network in a designated area, similar to how Transport for London controls bus services in London.

- 3.16 The Council would plan routes and timetables and then procure services. Operators have a limited range of statutory objections that they can raise to the process. This is a completely different operating model to the one that currently operates in Essex, where the commercial operators decide in the first instance which routes to operate. ECC's role is to commission services to fill any gaps in provision not provided by the market.
- 3.17 The Franchising process is lengthy and requires significant investment by the Council – both the upfront costs of establishing a franchise and then through the ongoing strategic, customer and contract management plus operational oversight for what would be in effect a major business operation. A Franchise system would allow all fare revenue to accrue to the Council, meaning that profitable high use routes, such as commuter routes, could be used to cross subsidise un-commercial routes with lower usage, for example in rural areas. However, this would leave the full revenue risk falling on the taxpayer and it can potentially mean lower investment in higher usage routes because of the element of cross subsidy. As the Council would have full control of the network, major decisions (such as on routes, frequencies and fares) would be made by elected representatives who would be publicly accountable for them.
- 3.18 ECC will continue to engage with operators and wider stakeholders throughout the process, including businesses and District councils. This also includes working closely through Transport East and with neighbouring transport authorities to ensure measures are co-ordinated and do not disproportionately impact cross-border services. Early engagement is focused on which, if any, statutory route should be pursued. Operators are asked to indicate their preference. Four engagement sessions have been held with operators, community transport schemes bus user groups and a further session was held with business representatives. All eight of the operators who expressed a view on the options have indicated they would prefer an enhanced partnership approach. The other stakeholders raised no objections to the proposed option and welcomed the opportunity to become informed.

4. Options

- 4.1 **Option 1: Do Nothing (not recommended):** this option would mean Essex chose to pursue neither an Enhanced Partnership nor Franchising. It could well result in the County Council being unable to access Central Government funding for bus services, including some funding it already receives such as the Covid Bus Service Support Grant Restart and the replacement Bus Services Operators Grant. It would also mean operators were potentially excluded from funding such as the Green Bus Bids and Essex County Council bids for other transport funding could be detrimentally impacted. While Essex would be able to continue its ongoing support for the bus network, it would mean that there would be no opportunity to deliver a step change in provision or develop proposals for new funding streams in line with our climate change and levelling up goals.

- 4.2 **Option 2: Commit to an Enhanced Partnership for Essex (recommended):** Enhanced Partnerships (EPs) offer a way for Essex County Council and bus operators to work formally together to identify and commit to a package of measures that can deliver significant improvements to the bus network. They also offer an opportunity to identify projects which are suitable for future funding bids from central government which are expected to be made available as part of the implementation of the strategy. In addition, it secures operator access to ongoing funding such as Covid Bus Service Support Grant and ensures that Essex County Council bids for other transport funding will not be detrimentally impacted. As such an EP avoids the disbenefits of Option 1 and the significantly higher costs and risks associated with Option 3, while retaining flexibility over the level of commitment, which can be shaped in the light of available resources. This is therefore the recommended option.
- 4.3 As part of this ECC need to decide how many schemes to make. Given the speed at which the process needs to move it is likely that a relatively straight forward county wide scheme will be the most achievable, but this will need to be kept under review as the work develops.
- 4.4 In the longer term more local, schemes can be made. Examples of the kinds of improvements can be achieved in the longer term include bus priority measures, ticketing arrangements, information and vehicle standards and new services.
- 4.5 **Option 3: Commit to franchising for Essex (not recommended):** The bus strategy makes clear that only Councils that have already commenced the franchising process can commit to this route. Councils which have yet to commence a franchising route must complete an Enhanced Partnership first. As noted above this option entails significantly higher level of investment, operational responsibility and risk than an EP approach. Therefore, although this option is available in principle, there is insufficient time to progress franchising in Essex, meaning that a commitment to franchising alone would not be sufficient to meet the expectations of the national strategy. There has been insufficient time to work up proposals for franchising as a long-term ambition. It is not therefore recommended that the Council explores franchising further at this time. The Council will need to monitor the position nationally on franchising and this may be something that can be considered in future.

5. Links to Essex Vision

- 5.1 This report links to the following aims in the Essex Vision

- Enjoy life into old age
- Provide an equal foundation for every child
- Strengthen communities through participation
- Develop our County sustainably
- Connect us to each other and the world
- Share prosperity with everyone

5.2 This links to the following strategic aims in the Organisational Plan:

- Enable inclusive economic growth
- Help people get the best start and age well
- Help create great places to grow up, live and work

6. Issues for consideration

6.1 Financial implications

6.1.1 The table below summarises expenditure and funding that has been received for local bus services over the past 3 years alongside the current Medium Term Resource Strategy (MTRS) period with expected (but not confirmed beyond 2021/22) funding. The second table summarises grant funding received from DfT for passenger transport over the same period:

	Actuals			Budget (MTRS)		
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Bus Fare income (incl. concessionary fares pot allocation to local bus)	(1,180)	(1,043)	(760)	(664)	(664)	(664)
Bus Service Operators Grant (local bus element)	(1,121)	(1,121)	(1,121)	(1,121)	(1,121)	(1,121)
CBSSG Grant (local bus element)	0	0	(291)	0	0	0
Expenditure	10,389	10,482	11,321	10,899	10,907	10,907
Net Expenditure	8,089	8,319	9,149	9,114	9,122	9,122

Passenger Transport grants	Allocation				Assumed	
	2018/19 £000	2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000
Bus Service Operators Grant	1,186	1,186	1,186	1,186	1,186	1,186
COVID Bus Services Support Grant *	0	0	2,706	TBC	0	0
Supported Bus Service Grant	0	0	965	0	0	0
Transport Demand Management	0	0	225	0	0	0
Rural Mobility Fund	0	0	2,575	0	0	0
Cleaner Bus Grant	1,460	0	0	0	0	0

* Full year estimate of grant to be received. Not all retained by ECC, a share is allocated to operators for shortfalls in passenger income due to COVID.

6.1.2 Local bus funding by ECC is discretionary. The annual expenditure detailed above reflects ECC's existing policy to support rural and other bus routes that would not otherwise be commercially viable. The DfT's Bus Back Better strategy requires the Bus Service Improvement Plan to be published in October 2021 to contain a commitment from the local transport authority as to how bus service improvements will be delivered including proposed investment plans.

- 6.1.3 There are a number of other, competitive project specific central Government grants that have been secured by ECC and are not at risk. However, for context in terms of materiality and example, these grants include but are not limited to;
- all major schemes
 - levelling up funding
 - growth funding (such as transport elements included within HIF funding)
 - cycle and road network improvements
 - transport related funding from LEPs
- Future funding allocations for wider non-bus related transport schemes such as these may be put at significant risk if ECC does not meet the performance expected by DfT with respect to the policies set out in the Strategy and for which ECC sets out the delivery plan for in its BSIP.
- 6.1.4 A total of £300m has been made available nationally in 2021/22 by DfT to support the bus sector to recover from the pandemic, with a specific £25m allocated for the development of partnership and franchising work. ECC has received a revenue grant of £100,000 to date for the purpose of developing local bus proposals as outlined in the National Bus Strategy. There is a possibility that ECC may benefit from further funding released to support development of the strategic approach, but this has not yet been confirmed by DfT and is dependent on this decision to pursue franchising or an enhanced partnership. This funding would be expected to be returned to the DfT should ECC not apply it to undertake the work as outlined.
- 6.1.5 The national strategy outlines a total of £3bn funding available to support it. The funding is discretionary with imminent implications for funding loss and withdrawal for Council's who do not provide a commitment by the end of June to entering into Enhanced Partnerships or have started the statutory process of franchising services.
- 6.1.6 From 1 July 2021, the COVID Bus Services Support Grant (CBSSG) will only be made available to Councils making the above commitment. For 2020/21, a total of £2.71m is expected to be received from DfT relating to CBSSG. Of this, an expected £1.49m will be retained in relation to ECC operated local bus and park and ride services. There is a commitment from the DfT to continue CBSSG funding as long as is necessary to support operators financially through the pandemic. Any new sources of bus funding from the £3bn announcement are also deemed to be discretionary and accessible only if a commitment to Enhanced Partnerships is entered into by the Council.
- 6.1.7 The Bus Services Operators Grant (BSOG) will be reformed following consultation and as part of the English Devolution and Local Recovery white paper due to be issued in the near future, the reformed BSOG will be devolved to Councils who seek it. It is unclear what impact that will have on the quantum of grant funding ECC may receive in the future.
- 6.1.8 From 1 April 2022, actual delivery of Enhanced Partnerships are expected and the national strategy further underlines that;

- Discretionary forms of bus funding from this date are accessible only by services operated or measures taken under an Enhanced Partnership or franchising scheme.
- Only services operated under this statutory arrangement will be eligible for the reformed BSOG (currently £1.186m per annum is received by ECC).
- Council's performance with respect to policies set out in the strategy will also be taken into account when considering funding allocations for wider, non-bus local transport schemes. This may include schemes such as pothole funding and local road widening schemes amongst others. Detail of previously received grant funding is set out in the table above and could be at risk should the strategy not be pursued.

6.1.9 Future discretionary funding arising from the £3bn announcement will be available competitively and based on performance evaluation against the strategy and the Council's published Bus Services Improvement Plan. Additionally, the BSIP will influence the share of transformation funding that each Council will receive. This funding is not limited to buses alone. The performance of local authorities with respect to policies set out within the plan will be taken into account when considering funding allocations for wider, non-bus local transport schemes putting it at risk should ECC not pursue the development of EPs or a franchising model.

Mobilisation and development phase

6.1.10 By taking a decision to pursue Enhanced Partnerships, revenue costs will start to be incurred in 2021/22 in order to mobilise the development of the BSIP document and the development and negotiation of Enhanced Partnership agreements. At the present time, the scope of works is not established and as such, resourcing requirements not set out in detail, but these can be expected to include resourcing requirement for service operroperancy, project management, finance, legal, procurement, communications, IT and HR. Expenditure is expected to align with key deliverables within the Better Bus Back strategy such as the deadline in October 2021 for the publishing of the BSIP and subsequent deadline of 1 April 2022 for EP's to be agreed and in place. £100,000 grant funding currently received from DfT may be used towards this requirement, but any remaining shortfall is currently unfunded within the MTRS, therefore it is likely that a Cabinet Member decision will be required in the next few months to seek additional funding in this respect.

6.1.11 Financial and commercial insight will be actively sought from other Local Authorities to help inform mobilisation and assist in identifying the most appropriate operating model for ECC to take forward within the strategy.

6.1.12 Financial analysis and due diligence will be undertaken during the mobilisation phase to accurately map out the existing state to include financial stakeholders and relevant cashflows into and out of ECC, detailed financial costings will be developed for all phases of the project to include the initial mobilisation phase, implementation and a future forecast of costs and revenue flows post implementation as far as is possible. The aspiration of ECC that it

becomes a net zero emissions county by 2050 will be integrated into the planning and costings.

6.1.13 Cross council collaboration will be required and is key in successfully achieving the aims of the strategy within the timeframe and optimising activity to produce the best result possible. Collaboration between Councils is also specifically noted and encouraged by the strategy whereby joint plans and partnerships should be developed if beneficial to overlapping local economies and travel to work areas.

6.1.14 The strategy states that there will be a 6 monthly reporting requirement placed upon the Authority to evaluate performance against the BSIP and strategy. The BSIP also requires a formal annual review and to be reflected in ECC's Local Transport Plan. These requirements will ultimately impact upon funding decisions and will require investment to ensure that robust management information and key performance indicator data can be produced and tracked accurately and effectively. Performance evaluators include (but are not limited to);

- Journey time targets and reliability improvements
- Air quality and carbon reduction targets
- Road network pressure targets
- Passenger growth
- Customer satisfaction

6.1.15 On the 17 May, the DfT issued further guidance to assist with preparing a Bus Service Improvement Plan and have previously indicated that existing guidance on Enhanced Partnerships and franchising will also be updated. Within this BSIP guidance, DfT have deferred the provision of information on how future funding will be allocated and assessment to the summer. But at a high level it suggests that two tranches of funding will be made available, one allocated by formula to all local authorities based on the overall quality of their BSIP, together with other relevant information; and a separate tranche of funding for specific larger schemes. In assessing the overall quality of BSIPs, the Government will give particular weight to measures which support local bus markets as they emerge from the pandemic, for example bus priority and targeted fares reductions. It was hoped that clarity around financial commitment and investment would be given along with more detailed guidance on reporting requirements that will be placed on the authority and how these will be assessed. Without such clarity, the extent of financial commitment required from ECC both during mobilisation and implementation is unable to be quantified. We await further guidance to be issued in the summer.

Investment

6.1.16 There are a number of strategic aims stated by DfT that potentially place a significant revenue and capital burden on operators and/or ECC in future years if funding cannot be secured from DfT and projects are still considered a priority,

- Public subsidy to support operator and whole system financial viability of an enhanced provision at lower cost with a commitment to making buses more frequent, expanding existing routes, supporting the system until patronage increases sufficiently to make the system profitable to operate and financially self-sustaining.
- Turn up and go services on major urban routes where passengers do not require a timetable
- Demand responsive vehicles in low-density and low-demand areas – every village every town aspiration set out in the strategy
- New Council traffic regulation enforcement powers
- Ambitious bus priority schemes planned to compliment walking and cycling routes, with swift implementation in areas of high traffic stress
- Lowering of fares and price capping
- Journey planning websites and apps
- Real time information at bus stops
- Socially necessary provision to be expanded into economically necessary which will impact level of public subsidy requirement over what is currently provided for in the MTRS
- Branding, promotion and marketing
- Enhanced accessibility and security i.e. CCTV
- Modernisation of fleet to a high specification and greener, zero emission buses which will help drive cost out of the provision and ultimately contribute towards lower public subsidy. An expectation that Councils may play a role in the funding and financing arrangements for this investment alongside DfT and operators.
- Integration of buses with other modes of transport, rapid transit systems.

6.1.17 Significant investment may be required to fulfil these strategic requirements in future years subject to the gap between existing provision and meeting the aspiration of the national strategy and the availability of central Government funding. The current capital programme does not explicitly include funding for many of these investments. Many of these requirements will need capital investment which may subsequently lead to a revenue cost of borrowing burden on ECC in the future unless existing commitments are re-prioritised.

6.1.18 There may be the opportunity to direct some existing line items within the current aspirational capital programme to directly address some of the requirements that DfT have set out. There will also be a requirement for a detailed gap analysis of the Essex market to determine the extent to which investment in each of the areas is needed.

6.1.19 The strategy states an explicit requirement that the BSIP published in October 2021 must set out how the objectives in the strategy will be achieved including growing bus use and setting out a detailed plan for delivery. Specifically referenced is the requirement to detail investment plans for both the Council and the operators and financial support that the Council is providing for subsidised bus services (to include number of routes and route mileage supported). These requirements may create additional financial commitments that will need to be determined and reflected in future years' medium term resource strategy (MTRS) if approved.

6.1.20 The Better Bus Back strategy references aims that could have a direct impact on the whole system by which buses are managed and sustained. Achieving a step change in the national bus network to deliver holistic bus services that are of low cost to the passenger, with expanded geographical coverage, increased bus frequency, with high quality and accessible buses which unlocks modal shift from cars represents a significant challenge and is likely to require significant resource over a long period to achieve.

6.2 Legal implications

6.2.1 An Enhanced Partnership consists of a Plan and one or more schemes. It is given statutory force by the Transport Act 2000. Before it can be put in place there is a lengthy and complex multi-stage process to be followed as set out below and the Council may not proceed unless it is satisfied that:

- (1) the scheme will contribute to the implementation of—
 - (a) the policies set out in the related enhanced partnership plan, and
 - (b) their local transport policies.
- (2) the scheme will—
 - (a) bring benefits to persons using local services in the whole or any part of the area to which the scheme relates by improving the quality or effectiveness of those services, or
 - (b) reduce or limit traffic congestion, noise or air pollution.

6.2.2 The current statutory guidance says:

Before any formal processes are embarked upon, the authority and operators that run services in the geographical area that it is being considered for an EP should hold informal discussions on whether an EP is viable in this area

We would also expect the authority and operators to seek informal views from a wider set of stakeholders at this informal stage – such as passenger groups, community transport operators and representatives of local businesses.

6.2.3 Initial meetings have been held with bus operators, Community Transport schemes, bus user groups, business groups and officers. Officers report that the eight bus operators who have expressed a view are positive about the proposals and that other consultees raised no objections.

6.2.4 Following publication of the notice of intention there need to be discussions with operators and a plan and scheme produced and agreed by Councillors. Given the tight time frame it will be crucial that councillors are involved in the negotiations, otherwise there is a risk that things may be included that Councillors do not support.

6.2.5 Once a draft has been agreed it has to be sent to all operators, giving a period of at least 28 days for operators to object. The scheme has to be abandoned at this point if there is enough objection from operators – there are detailed legal

rules about what the level of objection counts as sufficient to block the scheme from proceeding.

6.2.6 The objections are then published. Objections then have to be considered and if possible resolved.

6.2.7 Assuming there are insufficient objections the scheme can then be approved by the Cabinet or the Cabinet Member for formal consultation. This is likely to need a significant scale public consultation.

6.2.8 At the conclusion of the public consultation all comments must be 'analysed thoroughly' and 'changes made to the proposals where necessary' (statutory guidance). The DfT are clear that sufficient time must be allowed for this.

6.2.9 Once the consultation responses have been analysed there should be discussions with operators and then the Cabinet can decide to make the scheme. If there are significant changes to the scheme then the Council must re-run the objection period with operators.

6.2.10 Notice must be given once the plan and scheme have been made. The scheme and plan can then come into force. It should be noted that if the scheme requires changes to bus services then we will have to allow 56 days for the appropriate legal formalities with the Traffic Commissioner to take effect.

6.2.11 During the process there will be a significant need for legal advice. Many proposals may have an impact on competition between operators and this will need to be carefully considered and assessed, as well as the requirement to undertake a detailed assessment of the impact on smaller operators.

6.2.12 It will be seen that this is a very long and complex consultation, involving three further decisions by the Cabinet or the Cabinet Member and three rounds of consultation/negotiation/discussion with operators. It will be extremely challenging, to say the least, to get anything in place for April 2022. Many other authorities will be in this place. The more ambitious the plans the longer it is likely to take to put them in place. The Council may therefore choose to focus initially on one scheme covering part of the county rather than spreading resources across the County

6.2.13 The Council has told the Department for Transport of its concerns and it is considering whether or not to issue further guidance including on the timescales.

7. Equality and Diversity implications

7.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

7.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

7.3 The equality impact assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic. The bus network is disproportionately used by those with a protected characteristic in terms of age, disability and gender. Measures to improve the network will therefore be beneficial to these groups and individuals.

8. List of appendices

Appendix A - Draft notice of Intent

Appendix B - EQIA

9. List of Background papers

[The Bus Services Act 2017: enhanced partnerships \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/624442/The-Bus-Services-Act-2017-enhanced-partnerships.pdf)

[Bus back better - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/bus-back-better)

APPENDIX A - NOTICE OF INTENT

Notice of Intent to Prepare an Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme

[Date]

Essex County Council hereby gives notice pursuant to section 138F (1)(a) of the Transport Act 2000 that it intends to prepare an Enhanced Partnership Plan to cover whole of its area and one or more Enhanced Partnership Schemes.

For further information please contact Helen Morris, Head of the Integrated Passenger Transport Unit helen.morris@essex.gov.uk

Forward Plan reference number: FP/033/03/21

Report Title: Expansion of New Rickstones Academy, Witham and Southview SEN School with residential provision.	
Report to: Cabinet	
Report author: Councillor Tony Ball, Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Skills and Training	
Date: 22 June 2021	For: Decision
Enquiries to: Clare Kershaw, Director for Education email clare.kershaw@essex.gov.uk	
County Divisions affected: Witham Northern	

Confidential Appendix

This report has a confidential appendix which is not for publication as it includes exempt information falling within paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

1. Purpose of Report

To endorse the expansion of New Rickstones Academy in Witham in order to meet the need for secondary school places in the locality and to endorse the expansion of sixth form places and residential provision at Southview SEN School.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Agree to support the expansion of New Rickstones Academy by increasing capacity from 6 forms of entry to 8 forms of entry with effect from September 2022.
- 2.2 Agree to support the expansion of Southview SEN School by adding 24 sixth form places and residential provision for ten children.
- 2.3 Agree to the procurement of the associated building works for New Rickstones Academy and Southview SEN School through a two-stage design and build mini competition using the Essex Construction Framework 2.
- 2.4 Agree that the Head of Infrastructure Delivery is authorised to award the contract to the successful bidder, when he is content that the following conditions have been met:
 - a. A satisfactory planning permission has been granted; and
 - b. The construction costs are within the agreed budget and represent value for money.

- 2.5 Approve the capital budget for construction and associated project fees, as per the profile stated in the confidential financial appendix, including a re-profiling of budget in relation to Southview School of £80,000 from 2021/22 to 2022/23.

3. Summary of issue

New Rickstones Academy

- 3.1 Essex County Council (ECC) has a duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places for children living in the county. There is predicted to be a significant growing deficit of secondary school places in Witham in the next 10 years with a shortfall of 50 Year 7 places in 2022/23 growing up to 64 Year 7 places by 2026/27, as identified in the latest ECC School Places 10 year plan.

Year 7 Place Forecast

Year	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31
+/-	-15	-50	-50	-45	-58	-64	-91	-92	-120	-113
Maltings Academy, New Rickstones Academy										

- 3.2 New Rickstones Academy has agreed that it can take an additional 60 pupils in 2021 within its existing accommodation. To be able to meet the demand from 2022 onwards, it is proposed to expand the School by 60 Year 7 places.
- 3.3 There are two secondary schools in the Witham area school places planning group - New Rickstones Academy and Maltings Academy - both of which could be expanded to meet the need for additional places. Viability studies were carried out at the two schools to assess the practicality of expanding them and to give an indication of potential costs. The studies showed that it is possible to expand each of the schools; but, due to site constraints, the cost of expansion at Maltings Academy is significantly higher than expansion at New Rickstones Academy.
- 3.4 New Rickstones Academy is rated “good” by Ofsted and is a popular school. Expansion will increase the number of parents gaining a school place of their preference for their children and will increase the number of children receiving a high-quality education. As an academy, the school does not require ECC’s approval to expand. ECC is not required to fund the expansion but ECC has a statutory duty to ensure that sufficient school places are available. ECC has brokered the agreed approach to increasing school places and support of the school’s proposal to expand is intended to ensure that local children have the opportunity to access a good local school.
- 3.5 The pupil number forecasts are predicated on substantial amounts of additional housing being built in the planning group over the next 10 years. It is expected that further additional places will be required in the area from 2027, this will be planned for in due course, but further expansion of New Rickstones Academy, beyond this proposal, will not be possible.

- 3.6 New Rickstones Academy carried out a consultation exercise about the proposed expansion of the school. The formal consultation took place between 2 December 2020 and 27 January 2021. The stakeholders invited to comment included all parents, senior Local Authority representatives, District Councillors and senior officers, NRA union representatives, and all local schools. 4 responses were received and these all raised concerns.
- 3.7 The concerns raised were by schools from outside the town and the local MP. The concerns related to the issue of unfilled places at other secondary schools within the Braintree district and the possible negative impact on these schools' admissions should New Rickstones expand. Whilst it is the case that some secondary schools within the Braintree district do currently have some surplus places, New Rickstones Academy and ECC are clear that the proposed expansion at New Rickstones is required for the growing demand of places within Witham and there are no secondary schools within a reasonable distance of Witham that would be able to take the additional pupils without additional accommodation being provided.
- 3.8 On this basis, The Academies Enterprise Trust has agreed to move forward with the expansion process for New Rickstones Academy. If Cabinet agrees to support and fund the expansion, the Trust will prepare a business case for submission to the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) asking for permission to expand the school.

Southview SEN School

- 3.9 Southview School in Witham is the only special school in Essex which is specific to the needs of children and young people who are identified as having a severe physical difficulty combined with a neurological impairment. ECC has a statutory responsibility to maintain Education Health Care Plans for some young people beyond the statutory school age into post-16 provision; other young people may require the plan to be maintained until the age of 25. Provision for young people with the most severe needs is limited particularly at post-16. The intention to develop post-16 provision at Southview is to enable ECC to support young people to continue their education at the school until year 14 and to better prepare them for a transition into adulthood.
- 3.10 At present there is no maintained residential provision in Essex special schools to meet the needs of the pupil cohort at Southview. This means that ECC has needed to commission far less cost-effective independent school provision to meet the needs of children and young people who require residential provision.
- 3.11 Although the number of children and young people requiring residential provision is low (currently only five children across the County) the cost is high with an average of over £100,000 per placement and an annual spend of over £800,000 on the pupils concerned. The scheme at Southview to develop residential provision will mean ECC is able to avoid using far less cost-effective provision.
- 3.12 Recent Essex schemes to rebuild schools for children and young people with severe learning difficulties (Glenwood and Lexden Springs) have included the

provision of a hydrotherapy pool which is currently considered highly desirable to meet the needs of some pupils and particularly those in the Southview cohort. Such facilities are not available at the nearby Edith Borthwick School which means many children and young people who require the provision have no local access to a hydrotherapy pool. The provision of a hydrotherapy pool at Southview would support both schools' pupil populations.

- 3.13 Southview SEN School is an Academy, and as such the school does not require ECC's approval to expand. Southview School carried out a consultation exercise about the proposed expansion of the school between 23 February 2021 and 23 March 2021. The stakeholders invited to comment included all parents, senior Local Authority representatives, District Councillors and senior officers and all local schools. The formal consultation letter is included in the background papers. No responses to the consultation were received. ECC is not required to fund the expansion however ECC has a statutory responsibility to maintain Education Health Care Plans for some young people beyond the statutory school age into post-16 provision and this report requests approval to support and fund the expansion to ensure provision for young people with severe needs in the post-16 age range.

Infrastructure Required

- 3.14 The expansion of both schools will require the delivery of infrastructure on the New Rickstones Academy site.
- 3.15 The current Southview site has been assessed on a number of occasions. The site is already limited and undersized for the current capacity of 74 pupils and there are no viable locations where the school could be extended, and the provision that is required provided. As such, the facilities for both New Rickstones Academy and Southview School will be accommodated on land to the rear of the car park of New Rickstones Academy. This area is currently underutilised, and New Rickstones Academy agree that this area can be taken out of their demise.
- 3.16 Construction works will be carried out to include a new standalone two storey teaching block to the west of the existing New Rickstones Academy building which provides all the additional new teaching and ancillary accommodation required for New Rickstones Academy. In addition, the Southview sixth form centre and residential facilities are to be incorporated into a new two storey block with an attached single block for the hydrotherapy pool. An additional 29 car parking spaces are proposed for the Southview facilities.
- 3.17 Photovoltaic cells have been included in the design of both schools to generate renewable energy thereby reducing the carbon footprint of operating the buildings. This will reduce the ongoing energy costs of the school and increase the amount of renewable energy that is used on site although there is a cost to ECC of £26,000 for installing the PV cells.
- 3.18 The expansion of Rickstones is the closest secondary school to the area of pupil growth. The expansion of this school mitigates potential pupil to school transport

issues by expanding this school rather than alternative solutions located outside Witham.

- 3.19 Traffic and parking concerns relating to the proposal have been considered. The New Rickstones Academy expansion will result in 1,200 pupils at the school. In accordance with ECC standards, this equates to a need for 81 parking spaces. The project proposes that the 122 existing spaces will be retained, which exceeds the ECC standards by 40 spaces and therefore the completed development will include parking provision of 50% in excess of the ECC maximum standards. It is considered that the existing car park also has capacity to accommodate the drop off and pick up of pupils without the requirement for parking on street assuming this is managed by the school efficiently. Therefore, the proposed development over delivers on parking as per maximum standards which means there will be no overspill onto public roads and there will not be a negative impact on the existing on street parking provision. In addition to the above, Conrad Road already has a number of traffic mitigation measures in place including line markings and signage. A bus stop bay exists outside the school to encourage sustainable travel. The planning approval for the school expansion required the trust to submit a school travel plan as part of the planning submission. This travel plan places significant emphasis upon school journeys that do not rely on car trips, it emphasises walking and cycling as the preferred methods to access the school.
- 3.20 10 cycle spaces have been provided for staff at Southview College and this will be provided under a covered cycle store close to the main entrance. Additional pupil and staff cycle storage will also be provided for at the New Rickstones Academy. Two shelters providing 30 cycle spaces each will be provided opposite the existing cycle stores.
- 3.21 To facilitate the new Southview SEND Block and Hydrotherapy Pool, the existing landscape and car park at New Rickstones Academy has been rearranged and extended to the east. This allows provision of a dedicated access road with car parking that leads up to the new Southview college block and hydrotherapy pool. The level of parking proposed for the Southview development is 29 spaces, including 2 disabled bays, which is in excess of the maximum standards. There will also be 5 dedicated minibus bays directly outside the colleges' main entrance and an on-site minibus drop off facility. All students attending the Southview SEND facility arrive by minibus or taxis.
- 3.22 Proposed delivery timescales are as follows:

Milestone	Date
Planning application submitted	January 2021
Planning Permission	April 2021
Final Business Case to Recovery Advisory Board	May 2021
Start on Site	July 2021
Build Completion for handover	August 2022

4. Options

New Rickstones Academy

Option 1 - Expand New Rickstones Academy by 2FE from September 2022.

- 4.1 This is the recommended option. There is predicted demand for an additional 2FE of capacity from 2022. The proposed expansion approach will provide the 2FE additional capacity in 2022. Expansion of New Rickstones Academy is financially more cost effective than expansion of other schools in the area and will meet the growing demand for places within Witham.

Option 2 – Expand an alternative school in the area to meet the expected demand.

- 4.2 The only other school in the locality is Maltings Academy. This school is viable to expand but, due to the nature of the site, would be cost significantly more to do so. For this reason, this option is not recommended.

Option 3 – Do nothing

- 4.3 The forecasts are clear that even if lower levels of new housing are built than are presently anticipated there will still be the need for additional places over and above those that are available at present. If additional capacity is not provided there is a high risk that not all local children will have a place at a local school and that some may need to be transported large distances to other schools outside their locality. For this reason, this option is not recommended.

Southview SEN School

Option 1 – Expand Southview SEN School by 24 places for sixth form. Add residential provision for 10 pupils and a hydrotherapy pool.

- 4.4 This is the preferred option. There is no space on the Southview site to accommodate the proposal and therefore expansion is needed. The addition of the hydrotherapy pool will also support children and young people who attend Edith Borthwick School who do not have access to this much needed facility. The addition of residential provision will enable the school to meet the needs of children and young people who have additional care and educational needs which require a waking day curriculum. At present, ECC would commission an independent special school place where a 38 week residential setting was identified; the residential provision at Southview will deliver a more cost-effective alternative and enable children and young people to continue to be educated close to their community and families.

Option 2 – Do nothing

- 4.5 The current and forecast increases in the numbers of children and young people requiring an Education Health Care plan and a special school place have placed enormous pressure on the Essex special schools. Southview School has

reached the limits of its physical capacity and without expansion Essex will not be to provide appropriate, and local, school places. This option is not recommended.

5. Links to Essex Vision

5.1 This report links to the following aims in the Essex Vision:

- Enjoy life into old age
- Provide an equal foundation for every child
- Strengthen communities through participation
- Develop our County sustainably
- Connect us to each other and the world
- Share prosperity with everyone

For more information visit www.essexfuture.org.uk.

5.2 This links to the following strategic aims in the Organisational Plan:

- Enable inclusive economic growth
- Help people get the best start and age well
- Help create great places to grow up, live and work
- Transform the council to achieve more with less

6. Issues for consideration

6.1 Financial implications

6.1.1 Please see the confidential appendix for details of the financial implications of this decision.

6.1.2 The total capital cost is included in the current and future years' capital programme and the revenue implications are included in the Medium Term Resource Strategy (MTRS). A contingency of 5% has been included to cover any risks identified.

6.1.3 Whilst the total capital cost is included in the current and future years' capital programme there is a marginal re-profiling required across financial years. £44,000 is required to be advanced from 2021/22 into 2020/21 (which will be requested through the 2020/21 Provisional Outturn Report on this same agenda) and £80,000 is required to be re-profiled from 2021/22 to 2022/23, which is requested within this report. Details are included within the Confidential Appendix.

6.2 Legal implications

6.2.1 The Council has a statutory duty to commission supply of school places. ECC is responsible for funding the 'basic need' provision of additional school places in Essex at all schools, including academies.

6.2.2 As academy schools, ECC does not control the size of the schools or the expansion process which is for the Academy Trusts and the Department for Education to agree and approve.

6.2.2 The Council must comply with the terms of the Framework Agreement when awarding the contract for infrastructure works. Since the Academy Trusts will not be party to the construction contract, it will be necessary for the contractor to provide collateral warranties to the Academy Trusts.

6.2.3 New Rickstones Academy will need to enter into an agreement with ECC to allow ECC access to the premises for the construction works.

6.2.4 The current lease between ECC and the Academies Enterprise Trust for the New Rickstones Academy site will need to be varied to remove the land which is required for the Southview expansion.

6.2.5 ECC will need to grant an academy lease of the new Southview site to the Academy Trust.

7. Equality and Diversity implications

7.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

7.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

7.3 The equality impact assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

8. List of appendices

8.1 Confidential Appendix

8.2 Equality Impact Assessment

9. List of Background papers

9.1. 10 Year Plan – Meeting the demand for school places in Essex 2021 – 2030

9.2. DfE Guidance - “Making Significant Changes to an Open Academy and Closure by Mutual Consent” (Departmental advice for all types of academy trust, November 2019)

9.3. AET Trust consultation letter

9.4. Responses to AET Trust consultation

9.5. Southview SEN School consultation letter

Forward Plan reference no: FP/073/05/21

Report title: Adoption of the Essex County Council Walking Strategy 2021	
Report to: Cabinet	
Report author: Councillor Lee Scott, Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport	
Date: 22 June 2021	For: Decision
Enquiries to Andrew Cook, Director, Highways and Transportation email andrew.cook@essex.gov.uk or Julian Sanchez, Active Travel Manager julian.sanchez@essex.gov.uk	
County Divisions affected: All Essex.	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 There are numerous benefits to walking as a mode of transport. Walking improves people's health, reduces traffic congestion, and has environmental and community safety benefits.
- 1.2 This report asks the Cabinet to adopt the Essex County Council (ECC) Walking Strategy 2021 which outlines the actions the Council will take to achieve its strategic priorities around active and more sustainable travel.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Agree to adopt the proposed ECC Walking Strategy in the form appended to this report.

3. Summary of issue

Background

- 3.1 Essex County Council is the highway authority for Essex. Some of our towns are congested and traffic levels can be high. This adversely impacts on travel times and on carbon emissions. The Council takes many measures to promote alternatives to using private cars.
- 3.2 If we can increase the proportion of journeys which people undertaken on foot then we will reduce car journeys, carbon emissions, congestion and improve the resilience of our transport networks. It will also result in a more active and resilient population and a safer, greener, healthier environment, bringing public health benefits too.
- 3.3 Promoting and enabling walking can have wider benefits beyond transport, it can help improve access to jobs and skills, higher footfall can contribute

towards a sense of good natural surveillance and safer streets. There are also clear health benefits in terms of improving mental and physical health including increasing physical activity and reducing the risk of heart disease and other non-communicable diseases. Furthermore, increasing walking, particularly if more older people walk regularly, will help achieve the Council's strategic aim of helping more people will to live well for longer.

- 3.4 The aim of the strategy is to highlight the opportunities for walking as a mode of travel for shorter journeys and how increasing walking can help reduce congestion and carbon emissions.
- 3.5 The strategy sets out aims that will help to increase walking, it recognises walking as a mode of travel and provides a context for the emerging Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) which aim to create coherent walking networks and high-quality walking infrastructure over a ten-year period as of increasing walking trips for shorter journeys.
- 3.6 Furthermore, it will provide a coherent set of policies which clearly demonstrate the role of walking in responding to the challenges set out by the Essex Climate Action Commission. It will contribute towards the policy framework which aims to create new Walkable Neighbourhoods and will encourage Healthy and Active environments which enable people to walk to maintain and improve Physical and Mental Health.
- 3.7 Essex County Council's statutory umbrella transportation strategy can be found in its third Local Transport Plan (LTP3), which was formally adopted in July 2011. Often referred to as the Essex Transport Strategy, the LTP3 remains broadly relevant in terms of its vision, the challenges it identifies, the outcomes it seeks and the policy framework within which it exists. There have however been important changes at the council since the adoption of LTP3, with ECC now an outcome-led organisation.
- 3.8 The council has since developed a new Vision for Essex that replaces the previous Essex Works and Corporate Outcomes Framework. The council is also currently developing a new Transport Vision, which will show the various ways in which transport policy can help to deliver the objectives of Vision for Essex. The Transport Vision will also provide an updated strategic context for LTP3 and will be adaptable to a variety of formats.
- 3.9 The emerging Transport Vision, which has not yet been approved, aims to achieve:
 - Greater focus on the need to decarbonise transport.
 - Better communication with the public (including a new website), so that people can more easily understand ECC's transport strategies and responsibilities.
 - Better communication with Government, through providing a clear context for investment.

- More efficient and informed decision-making thanks to a more transparent context.
- A more 'joined-up' framework for transport planning, which links LTP3 to the range of revised plans and strategies adopted since LTP3 was introduced.
- More productive discussions with partners (including district planning authorities, neighbouring transport authorities, Highways England, Network Rail) thanks to a clearer policy framework.
- Greater efficiency and clarity when producing funding bids.

3.10 The Essex Walking Strategy is consistent with this vision in terms of the strategies it suggests both for planning new developments and enhancing existing ones. When finalised, this strategy will therefore be well-positioned for integration with the wider LTP3 vision.

The Goals of the Strategy

3.11 There are nine walking objectives have been identified as part of this strategy, reflecting the fact that walking intersects with so many key aspects of development and planning – including Road Safety, Better Streets, Health, Accessing Schools, Leisure and Greenspace Economy, Planning New Communities and Changing Attitudes and Behaviours.

3.12 The objectives are as follows:

- Objective 1 Increase walking for everyday trips
- Objective 2 Improve road safety for pedestrians
- Objective 3 Better design and enhanced accessibility
- Objective 4 Enable physical activity and walking for health
- Objective 5 Enable more walking to schools
- Objective 6 Promote walking for leisure
- Objective 7 Support economic development
- Objective 8 Improve neighbourhoods and support the development of new communities
- Objective 9 Encourage walking by changing attitudes and behaviours

3.13 ECC's role in helping to achieve these outcomes will be to work alongside partners to support the actions set out in Strategy linked to the emerging Organisational Plan These include:

- Enabling inclusive economic growth by improving access to core walking zones, town centres, high streets and encouraging leisure walks on PRow, country parks and coastal paths.
- Helping people to get the best start in life and to age well by enabling all residents to achieve more active travel, improve road safety and encourage social walking.

- Helping to create great places to grow up, live and work by making walking the norm for short journeys, and develop walking infrastructure in line with DfT guidance to ensure people feel safe
- Helping the Council to achieve more with less including reduce private car journeys by offering a flexible working approach and using technology to enable modern working styles.

Consultation

- 3.14 The Council consulted on the draft strategy over an 8-week period from 5 June 2019 to 31 July 2019. One comment was that this was not long enough, so the consultation was re-opened from 2 September until 18 October in order to give residents longer to respond. The result of each consultation have been combined into one report. Colchester had the highest number of respondents with 244. Chelmsford and Tendring followed with 172 and 80 respondents respectively. Epping Forest (26) and Harlow (10) had significantly lower response rates than any other location. Over half of the respondents (598) stated that 'leisure' was the main purpose for walking whilst 286 people stating they walk for functional reasons such as walking to work. The main purpose for people walking was to enjoy green spaces with 602 out of 884 doing so at least once a week and 220 of these doing so more than 5 times a week. This was closely followed by going to the shops with 546 people walking for this purpose at least once a week. Natural England made no comment on the strategy. There were a number of comments.
- 3.15 Responses from district level local authorities highlighted support for the strategy, a willingness for joint working to develop walking infrastructure and networks, on-going maintenance issues and changes to the document were suggested in order to make it easier to read, review some of the background data, improve referencing, format, and structure of the document to provide greater clarity. These points were taken on board and in response and the final version has been amended to improve readability and make the document more coherent and improve accessibility
- 3.16 A number of issues were raised by the public and stakeholders including support for the strategy, issues around footway maintenance, raising the importance of linking new developments to cycle and walking routes. Cycling on footways, the importance of leisure walking and walking in greenspace, issues around the public right of way network, overgrowth on rural footways and the need for enhanced mapping of the network to enable promotion of leisure walks. A summary report of consultation themes and responses is appended to this report.
- 3.17 The key conclusions from the consultation was that over half of the respondents (598) stated that 'leisure' was their main purpose for walking, their main purpose for people walking is to enjoy green spaces and on average 77% of respondents who are Essex residents walk for more than 15 minutes a day. For 10-15-minute distances, 728 out of 884 residents would walk rather than use other modes of transport such as driving.

- 3.18 Responses to the consultation included the top three barriers which prevented people from walking which were: it is easier to drive (7.1%), the roads are too dangerous (5.0%) and joint third at 4.8% is it is too difficult to get to my destination on foot as my end-to-end journey involves multiple trips.
- 3.19 We asked residents 'what would encourage you to walk more?' 52.8% said better maintained footways while 30.5% said more green infrastructure but there were 20.7% that said none of these as they already walk a lot which suggests at least 20% of Essex residents are satisfied with the amount of walking they already do. There was an option to comment 'other' reasons as to what would encourage people to walk more with the most mentioned 'other reason' being fewer cyclists on footways
- 3.20 The option to drive alone is overwhelmingly preferred when travelling to work/school (preferred by 18%) and when visiting family/friends (preferred by 27%). It is interesting that 26% of people stated that their motivation for walking is because it is the most convenient way to travel however the top barrier which prevents people walking was 'it is easier to drive'.
- 3.21 Colchester, Chelmsford, Rochford and Uttlesford said their top barrier was that it is easier to drive. Colchester and Chelmsford respondents said that it was easier to drive due to the size of the area and residents undertake multiple trips in one go. However, in Rochford and Uttlesford this is due to cyclists using pavements, making walking unsafe and the speed of vehicles - residents said they would like more traffic calming measures in place
- 3.22 The actions to deliver the strategy will continue to be updated as the impacts of the pandemic are better understood e.g. individuals in Essex being less active as a result of working at home, the increased appreciation of green spaces and evolving DfT guidance to ensure that walking and cycling can be undertaken safely. This could be done during formal reviews or as part of ongoing work to ensure that it remains relevant.

4 Options

Option 1 – Adopt the ECC Walking Strategy (Recommended Option)

- 4.1 This is the recommended option given the anticipated benefits that adopting an ECC-owned Strategy developed through internal and external stakeholder engagement will achieve. The Strategy is a way of signalling ECC's ambitions on active travel and updates our policies and ambitions in line with the Department for Transport's Cycling and Walking Strategy (2017) and connects Highways to ECC's revised Organisational Strategy and Green Infrastructure Strategy.

Option 2 – Do not adopt the ECC Walking Strategy (not recommended)

- 4.2 This option would prevent ECC from developing approaches to encourage more active travel (including walking as a mode of travel) delivered in isolation from the ECC's wider ambitions to create healthy communities across the county. This option would not allow for the anticipated benefits of publishing a strategy as outlined in paragraph 4.1.

5 Next steps

- 5.1 ECC will work with external partners to monitor progress against the strategic goals and carry out an annual review of progress towards the objectives to ensure it remains relevant. ECC will explore the value in developing joint local strategies and action plans with willing Borough, City and District partners to reflect local context.
- 5.2 ECC will continue to work with ECC officers to ensure the Walking Strategy continues to be aligned with the emerging ECC Organisational Strategy.

6 Issues for consideration

6.1 Financial implications

- 6.1.1 This Strategy does not commit ECC to any new expenditure, with all current activity included in existing budgets and delivered using existing allocated resources. Any additionality is planned to be funded through the sources outlined in 6.1.2 below. A summary is shown below of future years' budgets as per the Local Authority's Medium-Term Resource Strategy (MTRS).

	2022/23	2023/24
	£	£
<u>Revenue</u>		
Footways	1,200,000	1,200,000
PROW	900,000	900,000
<u>Capital</u>		
Footways	7,200,000	7,200,000
PROW	360,000	360,000
TOTAL	9,660,000	9,660,000

- 6.1.2 The strategy provides a context for future funding opportunities from government for investment in walking infrastructure. Any new funding bids aligned to this strategy will focus on both the initial infrastructure and any ongoing maintenance implications for the authority going forwards, so as not to create an additional revenue burden on the organisation.

6.2 Legal implications

- 6.2.1 The Council is not required to have a strategy of this nature. The report explains how the strategy will benefit the Council's strategic priorities.
- 6.2.2 Adoption of the strategy does not commit the Council to any future commissioning or spending decisions.

7 Equality and Diversity implications

- 7.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
 - (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful.
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 7.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 7.3 The Equality Impact Assessment indicates that the strategy will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on people who share a protected characteristic.
- 7.4 Any new equality and diversity considerations will be considered as part of the annual review and refresh of the action plan.

8 List of appendices

Appendix 1 Draft Essex County Council Walking Strategy 2021

Appendix 2 Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 3 Consultation summary

Essex Walking Strategy

2021

Essex wants walking to be an
easy, safe and normal part of everyday life

**SAFER
GREENER
HEALTHIER**

Page 95 of 156


Essex County Council

Foreword by Cllr Kevin Bentley

Leader of Essex County Council

Walking is the easiest type of travel, and yet many of us aren't walking enough. It is so natural that we often do not even consider it a form of transport. However, in our busy lives, we may have undervalued the most fundamental way of getting around. The Strategy is a plan for pedestrians, to get more of us walking on our network of footways and paths in our rural areas, towns, cities and neighbourhoods.

Essex Highways is motivated by the need to reduce congestion and improve the resilience of our transport networks. The benefits of making our towns more walkable will be a more active and resilient populations and a safer, greener, healthier environment.



Introduction

Walking is good for individuals and for communities. It's free and almost universally accessible. It improves physical and mental health. And it reduces the pressures placed on our natural and built environments by other, mechanised forms of transport.

For journeys under 2km (equivalent to about 10 minutes' walking time), walking should be the natural option. But walking can also form an effective, beneficial and enjoyable part of longer, multipart journeys.

For much of the last century, walking has been overlooked in favour of superficially more convenient forms of transport. The aim of the *Essex Walking Strategy* is to reverse this trend. It seeks to raise awareness of the many benefits of walking, and to spotlight opportunities for local government to encourage and facilitate more journeys on foot. This strategy sets out objectives and priorities until 2025, in the hope of providing a policy framework that will promote more walking and better walking networks.

Note: Throughout this document, we use the term 'pedestrians' to refer to individuals travelling on foot or in/on a wheelchair, stroller or mobility scooter at or around walking pace (max. 4mph).

The purpose of the walking strategy

Walking should be the natural choice, whether for short trips or as part of longer journeys. But over the last 30 years it has become less popular. Today, approximately 60% of trips between 1 and 2 miles are currently by motor vehicle and could therefore be walked. This prompts an obvious question: why aren't people walking more?

This document seeks to answer that question by outlining the barriers that discourage people from walking, as well as by defining opportunities to reverse the trend.

Its ultimate aim is to help re-establish walking as the first choice for everyday travel wherever appropriate, while accommodating and even enhancing local plans for growth.



Benefits of walking

Transport Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inexpensive • Often faster for short journeys • Convenient and accessible • Links other forms of transport
Health Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps manage weight • Reduces stress • Improves sleep • Reduces risk of chronic disease
Environmental Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces traffic congestion • Reduces air and sound pollution • Enhances safety by increasing the number of people in public spaces
Social Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces isolation • Encourages community connectedness • Provides easy, convenient access to services and jobs
Economic Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages use of local high streets, businesses and services • Improves employee wellbeing • Good walking access helps attract and retain staff

Why does Essex need a walking strategy?

Section 1



The National Policy Context, part 1: The Cycling & Walking Investment Strategy and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans

In 2017, the Department for Transport published *The Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS 2017)*, which set out the government's ambition to "make cycling and walking the natural choices for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey".

The strategy represented the biggest development in Government policy towards walking and cycling in decades, thanks to both its statutory nature and the requirement it set out for long-term funding. The strategy proposed a vision up to 2040, stating that "The Government wants walking and cycling to be a normal part of everyday life, and the natural choices for shorter journeys such as going to school, college or work, travelling to the station, and for simple enjoyment. As part of our aim to build a society that works for all, we want more people to have access to safe, attractive routes for cycling and walking by 2040." (DfT 2017).

The CWIS was accompanied by technical guidance in *Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP 2017)* aimed at local authorities. This guidance provided a new, strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements required in the longer term (10 years) at the local level.

In response to this, Essex County Council (ECC) has developed walking and cycling network plans for the five largest urban areas in the county: Basildon, Braintree, Chelmsford, Colchester and Harlow. The next stage in the council's plans is to develop coherent walking networks across the entire county.

Government's objectives are divided into stages. The most immediate aims at the time of CWIS publication were to increase, by 2020, both walking activity (measured as the total number of walking stages per person per year) and the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 who typically walk to school.

Following this, the aim is to increase walking activity to 300 stages per person per year by 2025, and to increase the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 who typically walk to school from 49% (2014) to 55% over the same period.

By 2040, the Government's ambition is to deliver a suite of enhancements to the public realm that will make walking and cycling safer, easier and more enjoyable:

- **Better safety:** Whereby pedestrians feel safe and not out-of-place when walking in public spaces, even at slower speeds.
- **Better mobility:** Whereby more urban areas are considered walkable, more rural roads are made safe for pedestrians, busy roads offer safe walking paths, and more routes are accessible for those with disabilities or health conditions.
- **Better streets:** Whereby more streets are integrated into a wider network of green routes, designed to be safer, better connected and therefore more welcoming for people of all abilities and ages, so that they can walk or cycle with ease.

The national policy context, part 2: **National Planning Policy Framework**

The *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2018)* sets out a number of planning policies for England. Its purpose is to inform the way local planning authorities construct their own local plans – and the promotion of walking (as a key form of sustainable transport) is central to its aims .

The NPPF's proposals are intended to satisfy economic, social and environmental objectives, many of which are interdependent and must be pursued in mutually supportive ways. Well-designed walking and cycling networks can contribute to meeting these objectives in various ways – for example, by supporting local economic growth, promoting health as well as social and cultural wellbeing, and by assisting in the wider move towards a lower-carbon economy.

It's no surprise then that the NPPF positions walking and cycling as core considerations when designing new developments. By designing in favour of high quality walking and cycling networks, as well as supporting facilities such as cycle parking, local authorities can reduce car dependency and emphasise a 'people-oriented transport hierarchy'.

This latter point is important, and worth taking a moment to explore: it means that all applications for development are required to give first priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme itself and in neighbouring areas. Second priority is to facilitate access to high quality public transport.

The national policy context is therefore clear: both the NPPF and the CWIS emphasize the importance of walking (and cycling) in support of a number of interrelated and mutually supportive economic, social and environmental benefits. Designing for walking means designing for a smarter, cleaner and healthier future.



The *Essex Walking Strategy* isn't a standalone document. It's designed to inform and influence a number of other plans, policies and strategies – as this graphic shows.



The Role of Walking as part of the Essex Transport Strategy

Essex County Council's statutory umbrella transportation strategy can be found in its third *Local Transport Plan (LTP3)*, which was formally adopted in July 2011. Often referred to as the *Essex Transport Strategy*, the LTP3 remains broadly relevant in terms of its vision, the challenges it identifies, the outcomes it seeks and the policy framework within which it exists. There have however been important changes at the council since the adoption of LTP3, with ECC now an outcome-led organisation. The council has since developed a new outcome led *Vision for Essex* that focusses on the people of Essex and the places they live in.

Reflecting this new outcome led approach the Council is also currently developing a new *Transport Vision*, which will show the various ways in which transport policy can help to deliver the objectives of Vision for Essex. The *Transport Vision* will also provide an updated strategic context for LTP3.

The new Transport Vision aims to achieve:

- A refreshed high level strategy to better reflect wider Essex outcomes
- Sustainable Environment - address carbon generation and improve air quality,
- Sustainable Communities - build new communities and reshape existing ones
- Healthy communities – encourage healthy lifestyles
- Sustainable Economy – a forward looking economy with improved access to a wider range of opportunity
- Reflecting emerging Government policy

- Future of Mobility (Transport): Urban Strategy 2019 (and Rural Strategy in development)
- Road to Zero carbon reduction strategy
- New approaches to rail and bus service delivery
- More devolved and collaborative decision making
- Covid recovery – embedding positive change

Essex will need to:

- Focus on the efficient and effective movement of people, goods and information
- Reduce the carbon dependency of the transport network
- Promote smarter working and more sustainable forms of transport
- Focus on active travel.
- Understand and implement new modes of travel and their supporting technology
- Make more effective use of data
- And integrate transport into peoples daily lives



The role of local plans

In the provision of mixed-use development Local Plans should seek to ensure the design of development optimises the provision of transport networks, including walking and cycling.

Local Plans should seek to ensure that mixed-use development is optimised for transport networks – not least walking and cycling.

- Local Plans should include policies that seek to provide for high quality walking and cycling networks. These networks should be designed to provide safe and accessible routes to key facilities and services.
- Local Plans should look to incorporate the provision of supporting facilities as outlined in Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).
- LCWIPs can support Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans by considering and enabling policies that encourage more walking and cycling; by seeking appropriate contributions towards the provision of walking and cycling infrastructure when drawing up the Regulation 123 list for the Community Infrastructure Levy; through seeking planning agreements in the form of Section 106 obligations; and through ensuring walking and cycling are key considerations during the making of Section 278 highway agreements.
- Planning policies should also identify places where new walking routes can be delivered by new developments, and ensure the protection of alignments for future planned cycling and walking routes.



Supporting ECC's Organisational Structure

Local authorities have complex roles, but fundamentally they are there to support local communities and to plan ahead. Essex County Council's *Organisational Strategy 2017-2021* recognises that the role of the council is changing.

Now and in the future, ECC wants to be an enabler of communities and individuals, providing residents with information and options. The *Essex Walking Strategy* is part of this, and seeks to support the four aims of ECC's *Organisational Strategy 2017-2021* as outlined in the table below.

Strategic Aims and Objectives	Strategic Priorities	Place Outcomes	Walking Priorities
Strong, inclusive and sustainable economy	Target economic development to areas of opportunity	Earn a good income Have access to a thriving economy	Improve access to Core Walking Zones, town centres and high streets Encourage leisure walks on the PRoW, country parks and coastal path
High quality of life and environment	Improve the Health of people in Essex	Healthier people	Enable all residents to achieve two active 10s per day through everyday travel Improve road safety Encourage social walking to bond individuals and communities, and to reduce isolation
Health, wellbeing and independence for all ages	Help to secure sustainable development and protect the environment Help to secure stronger, safer and more neighbourly communities	Live in safe and secure communities	Make walking the norm for short journeys Increase footfall on the walking network to improve natural surveillance Design-in walking to new communities and retrofit walking improvements in existing neighbourhoods
Best start in life for children and young people	Limit costs and drive revenue growth		Encourage residents to be active, resilient and independent

Walking in Essex: challenges and opportunities

Essex is a large and varied county with a strong rural character. It has large areas of beautiful countryside, remote coastal villages and island communities, while also offering vibrant, fast-growing towns and cities.

Its eastern border consists of 350 miles of coastline – the second longest of any English county. To the north lie the counties of Suffolk and Cambridgeshire; to the west, Hertfordshire; and to the southwest, London.



Page 105 of 156

Transport geography

We need to build upon the policy led approach of LTP3 to include a more overt commitment to a sustainable and low carbon transport system that focuses on; reducing the need to travel, increasing the sustainability of travel, and finally decarbonising residual travel necessary to support economic activity and social interaction. In order to achieve this we are developing a tiered approach to support the use of the most appropriate form of transport for the many different journeys related to the movement of people and goods

- 1 Strategic Connectivity to support trade
- 2 Economic hinterlands - Growth Hubs connected to their rural hinterlands by rail and rapid transit and innovative bus services
- 3 Connectivity within urban areas by public transport and sustainable modes – including garden communities
- 4 Sustainable and active links within local and rural neighbourhoods

The Walking Strategy therefore has a key role in promoting the most sustainable form of transport for as many journeys as possible, especially with local urban and rural neighbourhoods. Walking and good walking routes have a clear role to play within this larger transport system, either as the main way to travel for shorter journeys or as a way of interchanging between other forms of transport.

The demographic context

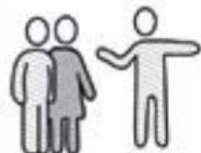
In Essex in 2014, 58% of people took the recommended minimum amount of weekly physical activity – 2.5 hours. At least 33% of females were active once a week, compared to 38% of males.

In 2017, the *Active Lives Survey* found that 27% of people in Essex were physically inactive, with this lack of activity costing the NHS in Essex an estimated £58m per year.

These statistics must be viewed against the backdrop of a growing population, with around 100,000 new homes planned for Essex over the next Local Plan period (which runs to the early 2030s).

These statistics make it clear that:

- 1. There is a real and present need to encourage more physical activity in Essex.
- 2. Both individuals and the community as a whole will benefit significantly from the improved health outcomes that accompany increased physical activity.
- 3. Considered design and planning which prioritises high quality walking networks will be central to sustainable development growth, as well as improved health and wellbeing.



People and Projections

1,820,900 people in 2017 for Greater Essex. The county's population is expected to increase to 2,133,100 by 2041. With the greatest increases currently projected in Colchester, Basildon and Chelmsford.



Development Growth

In 2016, there were approximately 784,000 households across Greater Essex local authorities. Approximately 170,000 additional homes will be needed across the same area by 2036, many of which have already received planning permission and are being built.



Economy

Greater Essex currently generates £36bn Gross Value Added (GVA) per year and supports over 816,000 jobs. According to the East of England Forecasting model (2016 run), 79,000 additional jobs will be needed within the county by 2041.



Social and Health

In Essex, around 27% of residents are failing to meet the minimum recommended amount of healthy physical activity (around 2.5 hours per week). This county-wide average, however, masks large disparities between districts. Inactivity across Essex has been identified as a key issue by the county sports lead, Active Essex, whose objective is to get 1 million people active in Essex by 2021. (Active Essex: Our Strategy 2017-2021; Changing 1 million lives to get Essex Active, Active Essex 2017).

Increasing physical activity is a priority for the Joint Essex Health and Wellbeing strategy (2018-2022) with the Health and Wellbeing Board objective being to reduce the percentage of residents (aged 16+) who undertake less than 30 minutes physical activity per week (Sport England Survey).

Walking for travel

The chart below shows the frequency with which Essex residents walked for travel purposes in 2018/19, divided by district. A trip was counted if it involved walking for 10 minutes or more.

- In 2018/19, Essex showed higher average rates of walking for travel purposes than the previous year across all frequencies.
- Braintree, Harlow, Tendring and Maldon had lower rates than the county as a whole for walking once a week 2018/19.

What does the data suggest?

Department for Transport data for England suggests that the decline in walking trips since 2002 may have plateaued, and that the number of walking trips is no longer declining. However, the ambition remains to increase the amount of walking for travel in Essex, primarily by reducing the number of short car trips in and around towns that could be switched to walking or walking and public transport (buses, rail and park-and-ride).

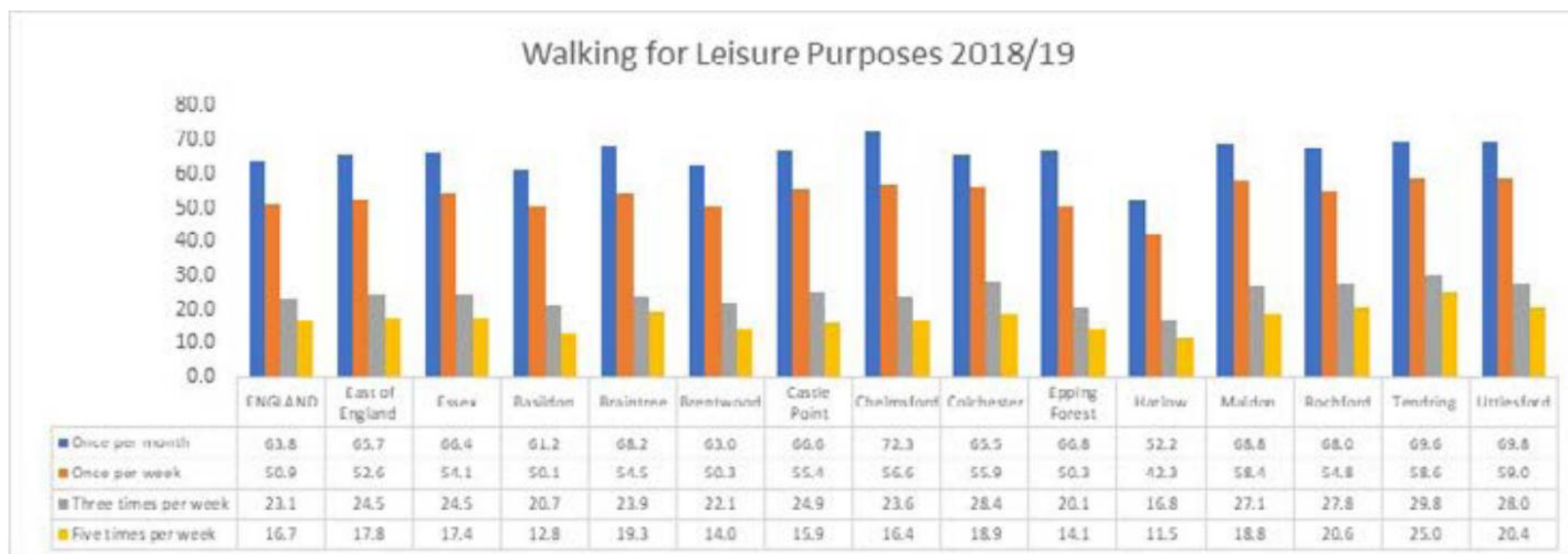


Walking for leisure

Promoting leisure walking

The promotion of leisure walking and provision of high quality walking routes is central to the *Essex Walking Strategy*. Walking trips in Essex are not monitored and measured in the same way as other modes of travel, making it harder to know and understand route patterns and preferences.

We do however have some insight into the frequency of walking trips from the annual *National Travel Survey*. We also have data regarding the intensity and duration of physical activity from the *Active Lives Survey*. Taken together, we can build a useful picture of the current situation: that many journeys within Essex could be taken on foot, but aren't; and that many Essex residents aren't walking enough to maintain or improve their general health.



The chart above shows the frequency with which Essex residents walked for leisure purposes in 2018/19, divided by district. Again, a trip was counted if it involved walking for 10 minutes or more.

- In 2016/17, Essex showed higher average rates of walking for leisure purposes than the previous year across all frequencies.
- Leisure walking is clearly important to a significant number of Essex residents. However, there are still large numbers of people in Essex who are not enjoying the benefits of leisure walking.

Barriers to walking in Essex

What stops people walking in Essex?

Physical barriers

Much of the fault may lie with problematic features in the physical environment. Put simply, people will walk more if there are safe, open, convenient, accessible and enjoyable routes available to them.

Underpasses, blocked or discontinuous routes, wide roads busy with traffic – all can act as barriers to walking. Such features may disproportionately affect certain groups of pedestrians, including the elderly, those with impaired mobility, people with long-term health conditions or parents with young children.



Social barriers

Research by Lancaster, Leeds and Oxford Brookes universities (2011) has also identified several non-physical (or social) barriers to walking. These include fears around physical safety, discomfort (such as getting wet), perception of abnormality and complex family routines leading to increased car journeys.



Page 109 of 156

Removing barriers

By removing both physical and social barriers to walking, we can enhance access, improve mobility and increase the permeability of neighbourhoods. This can be achieved while optimising the public realm and the overall attractiveness of public spaces.

This is particularly important in view of Essex's ageing population. By making walking a more convenient and natural choice, we can ensure all residents benefit from improved health and enhanced community connectedness – whatever their age.



Making walking the first, best choice

Section 2



Our Vision

Essex wants walking to be an easy, safe and normal part of everyday life

Essex is set for huge changes over the next 15 to 20 years, not least in terms of the way we travel. The council's aim during this period is to unshackle us from cars and congestion by developing efficient, modern and sustainable transport networks alongside digitally connected homes and businesses.

Of course, change should benefit everyone. It's therefore vital that the different communities, groups and businesses within Essex have the opportunity to help shape the Essex of the future.

The good news is, Essex is well-positioned to make such a progressive leap. The county contains vibrant and growing urban centres, is home to world-class businesses, has universities carrying out cutting-edge research, and is linked to the wider world by international ports and airports. As an aspirational county, we need and deserve an aspirational approach to walking.

This section of the *Essex Walking Strategy* will provide a framework by which the council proposes to encourage more walking, both as a way to travel 'from A to B' and for leisure purposes. This strategy should be considered as a complement to the existing *Essex Transport Strategy* (LTP3) as well as other specific transport strategies, such as bus and cycle strategies.

Part of this strategy looks at how we can develop more coherent walking routes, giving people more choice as to how they access key destinations and town centres. Elsewhere, the strategy provides a framework for planning walking networks alongside delivery partners, and for prioritising future investment.

Nine walking objectives have been identified as part of this strategy, reflecting the fact that walking intersects with so many key aspects of development and planning – including Road Safety, Better Streets, Health, Accessing Schools, Leisure and Greenspace Economy, Planning New Communities and Changing Attitudes and Behaviours.

Objectives

Objective 1	Increase walking for everyday trips
Objective 2	Improve road safety for pedestrians
Objective 3	Better design and enhanced accessibility
Objective 4	Enable physical activity & walking for health
Objective 5	Enable more walking to schools
Objective 6	Promote walking for leisure
Objective 7	Support economic development
Objective 8	Improve neighbourhoods and supporting the development of new communities
Objective 9	Encourage walking by changing attitudes and behaviour

Objective 1

Increase walking for everyday trips

Walking for travel

Walking is the most sustainable form of travel, albeit one that is often overlooked. Walking is both a mode of transport and a critical way of accessing other modes – for example, a pedestrian may walk from their home to the bus stop, or from the park-and-ride to their place of work.

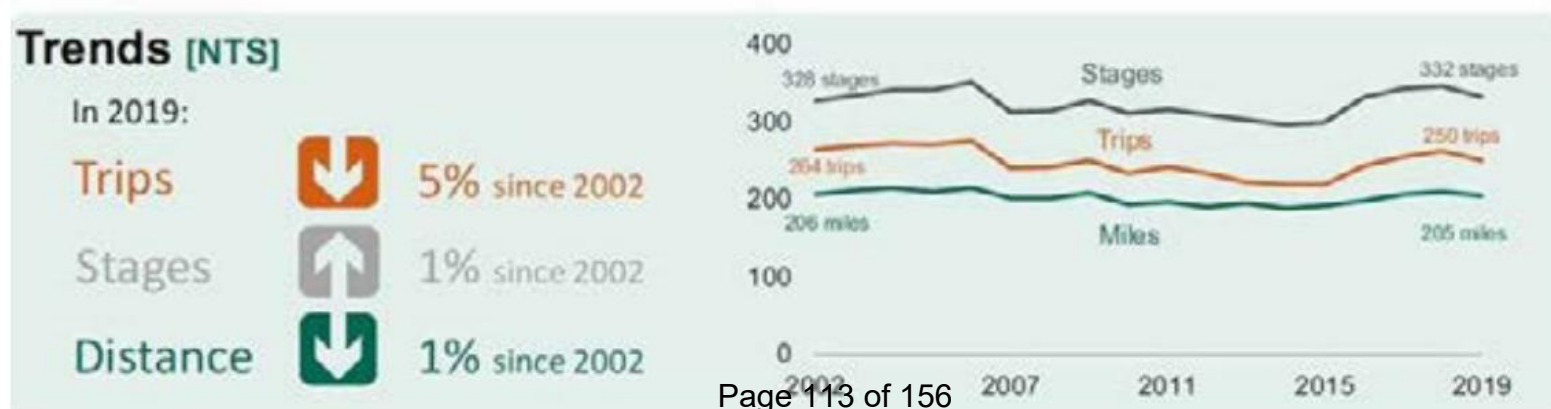
Department for Transport data from 2014 supports the view that walking is an important part of urban travel. In England as a whole, 22% of walking trips take place in urban areas – and given that these figures exclude trips that don't take place on public highways, it's likely that the significance of walking is being underestimated.

The collection of data around walking trips is limited, and this deficit needs to be addressed. We need more data about local walking trips, their frequency and duration, their origins and destinations. Such data will be vital in planning and prioritising both new networks and improvements to existing ones.

In Essex, the road network in our towns is approaching capacity. But there is still abundant capacity on the footway network, and a huge opportunity to transport high volumes of people in a relatively small amount of space, without significant infrastructure spending.

Walking is often the most direct, easy and affordable means of travel, especially for journeys of around a mile. For shorter trips within towns and cities, walking is often the fastest way of getting to a destination – and most journeys which involve bus or rail transport have a walking element.

It's clear therefore that walking must play an increasing role in the expansion and efficient functioning of our towns and cities. By improving walking networks and ensuring they have good links to bus and rail services, we can make our town centres and high streets more attractive – and save valuable land being given over to car parking.



Wayfinding

Wayfinding refers to the means by which people navigate streets and find their way around. Wayfinding tools and systems can support coherent walking networks by providing information that helps to orient pedestrians. They can also be helpful in demonstrating how easy and convenient it is to walk. One example of a wayfinding system that may encourage more people to walk: a map of an area showing key landmarks and destinations (such as rail and bus stations), along with the time it takes to reach them by walking.



Coherent walking networks

The walking routes and networks available have a direct impact on the number of people choosing to walk. It's therefore important to provide direct, coherent routes that don't cause pedestrians to deviate from their preferred path (or 'desire line'). Walking should be the most convenient way of accessing local neighbourhoods, high streets, key destinations and town and city centres – and high quality walking networks are a prime way to achieve this.



Walking as part of a longer journey

Journeys by bus or rail typically involve walking to and from stops, stations and/or interchanges. There is therefore a strong relationship between the use of public transport and the number of stages of walking that people undertake as part of their everyday life.

Walking may comprise a large or a small part of a longer journey – whatever the case, the provision of high quality interchanges will encourage more people to walk and use public transport instead of using a car.

Buildings that form part of interchanges should be easily identifiable and convenient to access. For example, with a new development, ensuring that a building's pedestrian access is sited near to a bus stop will make moving between the building and the bus stop more convenient. Encouraging people to walk to the bus stop is not simply a matter of reducing distance, though – it's also about ensuring a pleasant and safe environment along the way, ideally with places for people to rest or interact with others.

Walking along a tree-lined street with strong visual interest and other people present is a completely different experience from walking the same distance along a street with blank frontage, or with frequent interruptions from side turns or vehicles parked on the footway. As with stops and stations themselves, walking routes should be designed for use by people of all abilities (CIHT 2017).

Reducing congestion and emissions

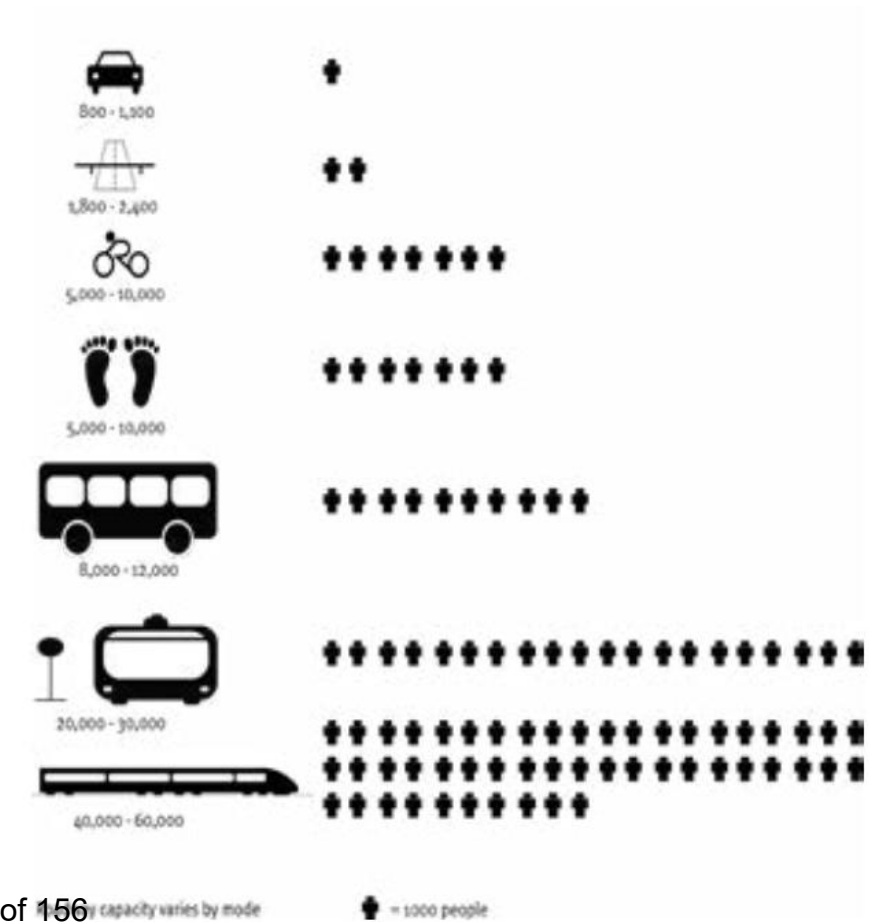
Walking and cycling are more space-efficient modes of transport than motorised vehicles – it’s possible to move seven times more pedestrians/cyclists than car users along the average urban road. By choosing to walk, people free up scarce and valuable road space for those journeys where motorised transport is the only reasonable option.

Reduced congestion also lowers transport-related costs for road users, effectively bringing firms and workers closer together and generating productivity improvements through greater agglomeration economies. In this way, walking and cycling generates economic value not just for the individuals involved, but for wider society. Yet more value is generated by the decreased demand for expensive transport infrastructure, with reduced road maintenance leading to more efficient use of resources.

Finally, walking has a clear and positive role to play in reducing air pollution and creating Clean Air Zones – which can in turn encourage more local journeys on foot.

Strategy Walking Proposals
Aim for 400 walking trips (for travel) per person per year by 2025 (where the average trip is approx. 1km or 10mins).
Promote park-and-stride
Grow footfall on priority walking networks to improve natural surveillance.
Collaborate with partners and developers to maximise and optimise walking networks, including where appropriate those that connect with public transport services.
Implement a hierarchy system to allow greater focus of resources on the most used routes.

The average number of people that can be accommodated in a 4m-wide space by different modes of transport:



Page 115 of 156 Capacity varies by mode

Objective 2

Improving road safety for pedestrians

Almost one-third of pedestrian injuries are either serious or fatal, and take place mainly in urban areas at a mix of junctions, crossing facilities and open roads.

Although walking is not inherently risky, unreported collisions, high-speed traffic and near misses (Aldred, 2018) are likely to increase the level of risk perceived by the public.

Pedestrians *do* have a higher injury risk per mile travelled than car occupants, but this risk remains lower than for cyclists and motorcyclists. Such facts should however be viewed in a wider context: UK roads are amongst the safest in the world in terms of total fatalities per head of population.

In Essex, the majority of pedestrians injured during the period 2013-2017 were crossing the road at a point not designated as a crossing. One quarter of these collisions took place at T-junctions.

Both actual road safety issues and individual perceptions of compromised road safety are known to be key barriers to walking. Conversely, we know that more people choose to walk when they feel it is safe to do so.

It's therefore vital to ensure walking networks give people confidence about their safety in relation to other road users. This is even more important for the elderly and children, who often do not drive or have access to cars, and whose mobility is limited if they cannot travel safely on foot. Improving road safety involves educating both pedestrians and drivers, and introducing physical road safety measures (such as crossings and traffic calming systems) where appropriate.



Road collisions involving pedestrians in Essex, 2013-17:

54 pedestrians killed (11 per year)
515 pedestrians seriously injured (103 per year)
1,411 pedestrians slightly injured (282 per year)

Previous experience of road use is the most important factor in reducing an individual's risk. It's therefore vital to learn to use roads safely as a pedestrian in childhood.

Children require regular opportunities to practice skills such as the safe crossing of roads – and such opportunities are maximised in environments that are both perceived as safe and designed to incentivise safe behaviours.

The risk of an accident while crossing the road increases as people progress through old age, increasing rapidly during their mid to late 70s. Collisions are closely related to the times and places that older people most often walk, being more common during the day and within 1km of home (*National Travel Survey, 2016*).

The injuries older pedestrians suffer in collisions are also more severe than those suffered by younger people. Despite this, older people do not necessarily feel any more vulnerable than other pedestrians, and their concerns about pedestrian safety tend to focus more on the experience of walking on the pavement than on that of crossing the road. Problems can occur when habits (such as crossing the road at a place not designated as safe for crossing) don't change with age, even as the risks of an accident increase (*Transport for London older pedestrians research, 2013*).

The single most effective way to improve road safety for older pedestrians is to provide a safer walking environment, designed for their needs. Essex has an ageing population, and such design will become increasingly important in the future.

Older pedestrians are particularly vulnerable at complex junctions and where traffic speeds are higher, as they often need more time to cross safely than other pedestrians. Giving pedestrians priority at such junctions, alongside clear visual cues to motorised traffic about pedestrian priority, is essential – and will both encourage walking and enhance pedestrian safety.



The national approach to road safety (CWIS)

Through its *Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy*, the Government hopes to promote a more holistic view of road danger reduction, in line with the Safe System approach. This approach recognises that there may be no single intervention which will transform road safety, but that many smaller measures can, together, make a difference.

The Safe System approach is advocated by the World Health Organisation and is fundamental to the objectives of Vision Zero (which hopes to reduce road fatalities and serious injuries to zero). It has already been adopted in countries including the Netherlands, Sweden and New Zealand, and elements of the approach have been adopted as part of the Safe streets for London Action Plan and Highways England's strategy. The Safe System approach can be applied to all types of road and road user. It recognises that people make mistakes, and promotes designing roads and vehicles so that such mistakes are less likely to result in death or serious injury.

A central feature of the Safe System approach is the separation of traffic – in particular the separation of more vulnerable road users from motorised traffic on high-speed roads. Where such separation isn't possible, the system recommends that roads be designed so as to reduce traffic speed.

The safety of pedestrians must be central to any strategy that aims to increase the number of walking trips. In Essex in recent years there has been an increase in the number of recorded serious and fatal injuries to pedestrians. However, this increase is more than accounted for by changes in recording standards, increases in the population and increases in the average number of miles per year people walk. Therefore the average risk per mile to the individual has dropped slightly over recent

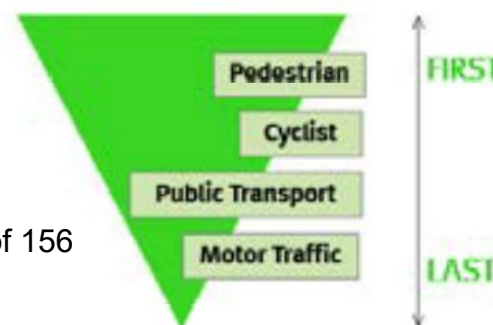
years, but these changes are small and by no means guaranteed to continue without further intervention.

Busy urban roads, junctions and high-speed roads designed without adequate consideration for pedestrians increase the chance of accidents involving pedestrians, whether they're walking beside the road or trying to cross it. A 'Safe System' approach to road design could help Essex County Council to reduce the risk of road accidents involving pedestrians. When accidents do occur, their severity could be reduced.

Improving road safety: 1. The Road User Hierarchy

The main barrier that stops people walking is a lack of, or perceived lack of, safety – even though the number of pedestrians killed or seriously injured on our roads has plateaued. To overcome this, we need to ensure that pedestrians – including older people and those with impaired mobility – feel secure in their interactions with cyclists and motor vehicles.

The Road User Hierarchy can help here, and should be promoted in line with recent government guidance (LTN1/20). This well-established concept places the most vulnerable road users – pedestrians and people with disabilities – at the top of the hierarchy, followed by cyclists, users of public transport and, finally, users of motorised transport. The objective is not to give priority to pedestrians in every situation, but to ensure that the needs of vulnerable road users are considered first.



Decision-makers and local authorities should look to reinforce the Road User Hierarchy during the decision-making process, thereby ensuring that all road users' needs are met.

Improving road safety: 2. Footway maintenance

Poorly maintained footways can be a major tripping hazard for pedestrians. It's therefore important that they are regularly inspected and maintained to a good standard.

In April 2019 the Essex Footway Network was introduced. This is a tailored functional route hierarchy that organises the footways ECC manages into three tiers: Primary Footway 1 (PF1), Primary Footway 2 (PF2) and Primary Footway 3 (PF3). Combined, the PF1 and PF2 tiers comprise the County Route Footway Network – a high-footfall network. The PF3 tier comprises the Local Route Footway Network – which includes all low-footfall footways in the county.

Introducing these tiers has allowed ECC to ensure that it is addressing all areas of the network appropriately, based on their unique properties. This enables the council to take a much more targeted, local approach than would be possible using only the national classifications. It also makes it easier to evolve the network to reflect local priorities. The Maintenance and Inspection Strategy – Carriageways, Footways and Cycleways (May 2019) sets out this approach in more detail.

Strategy Walking Proposals	
Explore the implementation of a Safe System approach as the founding principle for all infrastructure projects, using the Road User Hierarchy to ensure that pedestrian needs are prioritised.	
Prioritise road safety engineering schemes which treat sites with a history of pedestrian casualties.	
Support proactive policing, targeting driving offences that put pedestrians at risk and make roads less pleasant to use.	

Improving road safety: 3. Traffic speed

One of the most effective ways to improve pedestrian safety is to reduce vehicle speeds. Even at relatively low impact speeds, pedestrians receive more severe injuries than many other road user groups because they are less protected. It has also been established that pedestrians find it harder to accurately judge vehicle speed when those speeds are higher. This is particularly true for the very young and the very old.

Speed determines the severity of injuries because at lower speeds drivers have more time to react and avoid collisions. Engineering measures can be used to reduce vehicle speed and thereby lower the number of pedestrian accidents. It is increasingly understood that the layout of roads is critical to creating safe environments for pedestrians.

Road Danger Reduction (RDR) has been a key policy area for over 30 years, and is now well-embedded in the work of the many bodies responsible for road safety. The strategy aims to develop road environments that enable people to travel by any mode of transport, while reducing or removing the risk imbalance caused by motor vehicles. The RDR approach recognises the needs of vulnerable road users in line with the Cycling & Walking Investment Strategy - Safety Review (2018).

Although infrastructure can improve the safety of all road users, most road accidents are at least partly caused by human error, which can range from simple mistakes and misjudgements to deliberately dangerous and illegal behaviour. Creating a safer pedestrian environment can help to improve the behaviour (and therefore safety) of all road users. Education (including training and publicity) and enforcement also play a role. Ultimately, however, all road users – including pedestrians, cyclists and drivers – must take some responsibility for their own choices and behaviour.

Objective 3

Better design and enhanced accessibility

Better Streets Design Guide

The *Essex Design Guide* (EDG; essexdesignguide.co.uk) focuses on street and road design, advocating for permeable layouts that link well to existing transport, walking and cycle networks, both inside and outside developments.

The EDG also identifies different types of road layout, speed limits, access considerations, lighting and parking information that should be provided to road users. The EDG provides an excellent framework for those looking to 'design in' road safety to new developments.

Improving the walking environment

Street design must also account for the needs of those with impaired mobility. Around one-fifth of people in the UK have a disability and may be at more risk on the roads than their non-disabled counterparts. The walking environment should be made safer and more accessible for disabled pedestrians by:

- Using tactile paving at the edges of steps and pavements and safe crossing places. Well-maintained, firm, flat and wide footways make roads easier to navigate and safer to use for those with disabilities.
- Avoiding unnecessary street 'clutter' such as advertising boards and bollards, which can prove particularly hazardous for the visually impaired.
- Using tarmac rather than paving stones, to reduce the risk of uneven surfaces, trips and falls, and to make the use of mobility scooters more comfortable and efficient.
- Installing dropped kerbs to allow easier access for wheelchair users.
- Ensuring safe crossings with signalling that can be detected by those with sight or hearing loss, as well as longer crossing periods that allow people with impaired mobility to cross the road safely.

Design principles

The Department for Transport has published guidance documents to help local authorities design safe road infrastructure, including *Manual for Streets 2*. The guidance states that walking routes should be continuous, direct and serve to join together residential areas, commercial areas and schools. Pedestrians need safe, well-designed footways, crossing facilities and walking routes that are:

- Direct – Shorter, quicker routes minimise delays.
- Safe – Routes must be safe and feel safe.
- Coherent – Routes should be joined-up and easy to follow.
- Attractive – Routes should enhance the existing streetscape.
- Comfortable – Routes should have clean, smooth surfaces in all weathers.
- Accessible – Routes should be designed for all users.

Good design is fundamental to the successful delivery of new walking infrastructure. It is essential that walking environments offer a pleasant, convenient walking experience, thereby reducing the barriers to walking and encouraging more people to walk.

Street lighting

Pedestrians often avoid unfamiliar streets, deserted public spaces and dark underpasses through a perception that such places are unsafe. This means that they may choose to take a route or cross a road in a location with higher risk of road accidents. Street lighting promotes a sense of safety in urban areas, increasing the quality of life by artificially extending the hours when it is perceived to be safe to be outside.

Walking and active environments

Planning for walking in new communities involves the strategic placement of key buildings (such as schools and other community assets) at the heart of safe, convenient and appealing walking networks.

Essex County Council is committed to improving existing walking networks, corridors and walking infrastructure through the implementation of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans. For new neighbourhoods and garden communities, the council will take an Active by Design approach, whereby the design of new residential areas will be strongly informed by the need to ‘design in’ walking and cycling as well as active environments. This is sometimes called Healthy Urban Planning.

Due to the scale of housing development in Essex, there is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to ‘design in’ new walking infrastructure so as to actively enable walking as the most natural way to travel.

Strategy Walking Proposals

Promote *Essex Design Guide* and *Garden Communities Principals* in new developments.

Review design standards for walking infrastructure to ensure they encourage safe behaviour and meet pedestrian needs (including provision for the elderly and mobility-impaired).

Enable walking networks for key towns through development of LCWIPs.

Enable more accessible network of walking and cycling routes in Essex

Support better wayfinding and legibility to encourage ‘walking with confidence’.



Objective 4

Enabling physical activity & walking for health

Health challenges in Essex

In Essex, around 27% of residents are failing to meet the minimum recommended amount of healthy physical activity (around 2.5 hours per week). This county-wide average, however, masks large disparities between districts.

Inactivity across Essex has been identified as a key issue by the county sports lead, Active Essex, whose objective is to get 1 million people active in Essex by 2021. (*Active Essex: Our Strategy 2017-2021; Changing 1 million lives to get Essex Active*, Active Essex 2017).

The issue of physical inactivity is compounded by the issue of excess weight levels in the community (i.e. individuals medically defined as either overweight or obese). Obesity is a leading cause of increased morbidity and mortality in the United Kingdom, and can lead to physical, psychological and social ill health.

The most recent available data for Essex (2012-2014) shows the proportion of adults classed as having excess weight as 67% – higher than neighbouring authorities and higher than the England-wide average.

The challenge of sedentary lifestyles and physical inactivity

We know that much ill health could be prevented if people were to increase their overall levels of physical activity. Physical inactivity costs the NHS an estimated £1 billion per year, with approximately 20% of the population thought to be less active than the general population of England in the 1960s. This figure is projected to rise to 35% of the population by 2030 (*Physical activity: applying All Our Health*, PHE 2018).

Differing levels of physical activity are associated with health inequalities. Health inequalities are differences in levels of health between groups within a population that are considered to be both unfair and avoidable. *Everybody active every day* (PHE 2014) identified inequalities associated with lower levels of physical activity related to age, geography, disability, race, sex and sexual orientation.

The relationship between health, place and travel

Health and wellbeing are primarily determined by factors other than healthcare. Essex County Council is committed to playing a positive role in influencing the health and wellbeing of Essex residents. Active travel offers a potentially transformative solution to the challenge of sedentary lifestyles (*Physical activity: applying All Our Health*, PHE 2018). Walking and cycling can be incorporated into daily routines, either as main modes of transport or as part of public transport journeys, improving health outcomes while remaining accessible, inclusive and applicable to all age groups.

A growing body of evidence supports the view that active travel produces positive benefits to health and wellbeing (*Spatial Planning for Health: An evidence resource for planning and designing healthier places, PHE 2017*). This evidence highlights the positive impacts of active travel on physical health and mental wellbeing, as well as on other, social determinants of health such as the economy, air quality and community safety.

Social determinants of health relate to the conditions in which people are born, live, learn, work and age. Having access to a job, housing and education is key to health and wellbeing. And a key part of that access is access through the transport system. Good local walking networks encourage active travel to access jobs, learning and skills opportunities, as well as local services – all of which can contribute significantly to reducing health inequalities. Access to a high quality walking environment is therefore a key enabler and determinant of health.

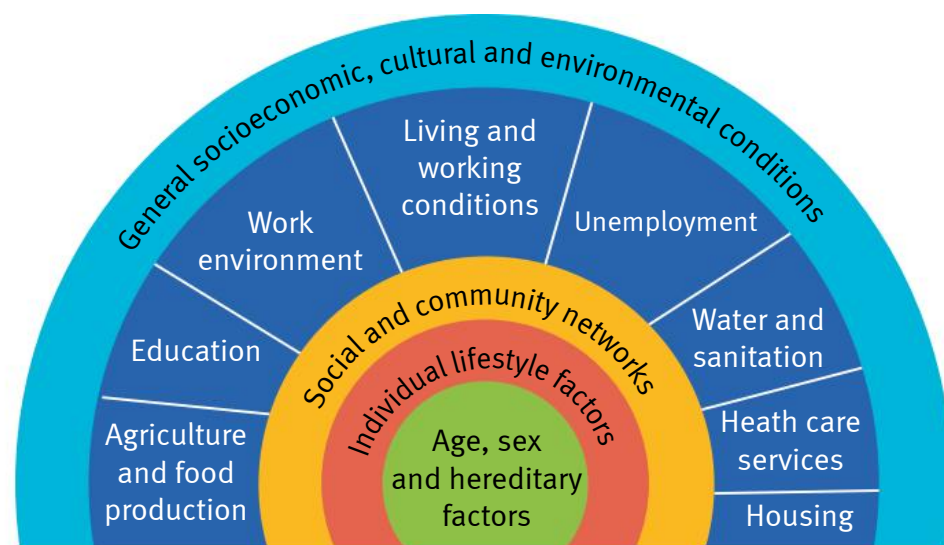


Image: *The Determinants of Health (1992) Dahlgren and Whitehead*

Walking and health

Walking is an accessible everyday activity that is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of individuals and their communities. Both active travel and leisure walking have vital roles to play in enabling people to achieve the recommended 2.5 hours of physical activity per week (*Physical activity fact sheet 4 adults aged 19-64, CMO 2011*).

Walking is the easiest and simplest way to incorporate physical activity into our everyday lives. If more people were to walk short journeys of up to a mile each day, the health benefits would be considerable – as would the positive effects on congestion and air pollution.

Regular walking can help to reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes, cancers, stroke and mental illness. It can also encourage people to socialise through informal or more organised interactions (such as walking groups), thereby improving wellbeing and reducing loneliness and social isolation (*Physical Activity: applying All Our Health, PHE 2018*).

The health benefits of walking

Walking for shorter trips of up to a mile or 15 minutes is a great way to build physical activity into daily routines. This applies whether the walk comprises a whole journey or part of a longer journey involving public transport.

Walking as part of daily travel either circumvents or helps to address many of the barriers to physical activity, including lack of time or money, poor health or physical limitations. Walking is free and accessible to those groups who most benefit from being more active – such as older people or those on low incomes. Walking requires no special equipment, training or membership fees. Walking is also a moderate, low-impact activity, unlikely to cause injury.

You can walk almost anywhere and at any time. You can start slowly and easily and build up gradually – ideal if you are very unfit, have a long-term condition or are on a rehabilitation programme. For some people, walking even becomes a gateway to more vigorous activities.



Prevention

Moderately intense physical activity is that which increases the heart rate and causes faster breathing. Just two bouts of brisk walking a day, each lasting around ten minutes, is an easy way for adults to introduce moderately intense physical activity into their day, and can reduce the risk of early death by up to 15% (PHE). Walking as a means of commuting to places of work or school can fulfil this function, while supporting wider societal benefits such as reduced congestion at peak times, improved air quality and an enhanced sense of community.

As the following graphic shows, physically active people can reduce their risk of a range of health conditions:

Image: *Walking Works* (2013)

Health condition	Reduced risk from being physically active
Coronary heart disease and stroke	20 – 35%
Type 2 diabetes	30 – 40%
Colon cancer	30%
Depression	20 – 30%

The health benefits of walking for older people

Walking is an accessible form of physical activity for older people with long-term conditions, mobility challenges or low levels of fitness, or who simply find other activities too challenging. Walking is an important way to counter-balance the tendency for physical activity levels to decrease with age. Age UK's Walking Tips (2020) recommends walking as a key way for older people to stay healthy. With an ageing population in Essex, walking is a key tool to prevent ill health (physical, mental and social).



Reducing health inequalities - The role of walking

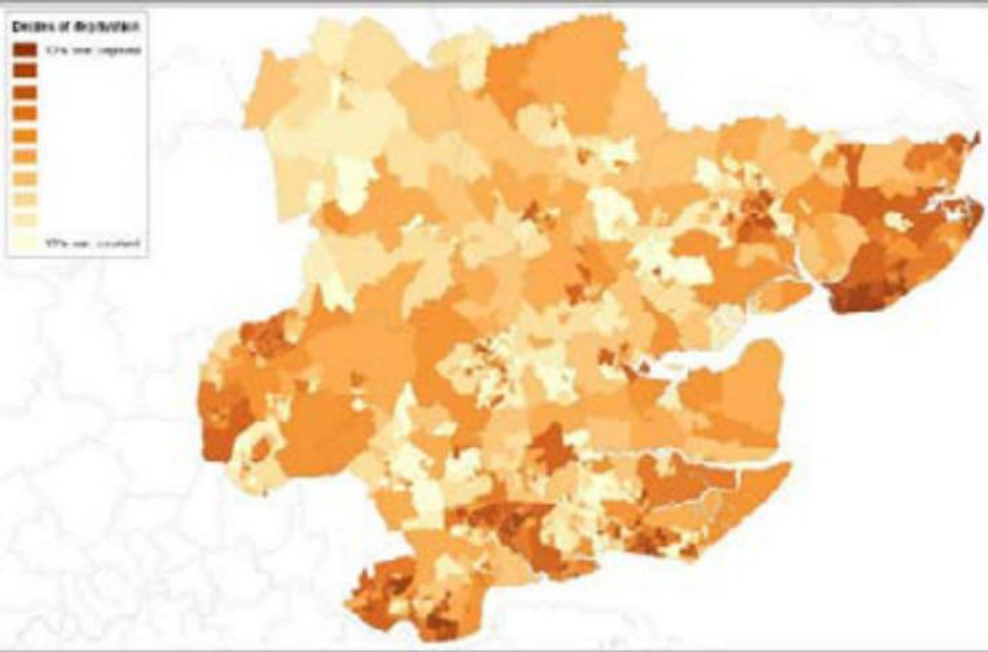
The *Marmot Report* identified active travel, including walking, as a key means not only of improving health but of improving the wider determinants of health inequalities.

Essex is no stranger to health inequality. Some of the most deprived 1% of nearly 33,000 areas in England are within Essex: six in Tendring and two in Basildon. Uttlesford is the only local authority in Essex that contains no areas among the most deprived 20% in England (JSNA 2016).

The *Marmot Review – Fair Society, Healthy Lives, the Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England Post 2010* states: “In order to reduce health inequalities, universal action is needed, but with a scale and intensity that is proportionate to the level of disadvantage – this is called proportionate universalism.”

Walking is broadly a universal activity, open to most people. It therefore plays an important role in reducing health inequalities, both by contributing to increased physical activity and by enabling better access to jobs and services – both of which are key determinants of health.

Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015, Essex



Strategy Walking Proposals

- Enable residents to achieve two 10-minute sessions of physical activity per day via active travel
- Collaborate with public health practitioners and stakeholders to raise awareness of the benefits of walking for health.
- Create and improve walking networks for key towns through development of LCWIPs.
- Support social prescribing to encourage walking as part of good mental health.
- Promote the *Active Essex Strategy*.

Reducing inequalities - Essex Local Delivery Pilot

To address the challenge of health inequalities, Essex is participating in a Local Delivery Pilot with Sport England which looks to tackle the issue of physical inactivity in Essex head-on.

The Essex Local Delivery Pilot (LDP) is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make a difference to the people of Essex, addressing the high levels of inactivity in our most deprived communities. It will supercharge the delivery of Active Essex’s strategy to get 1 million people active.

The Active Essex approach entails delivering ‘system change’, and is focused on Basildon, Colchester and Tendring. However, the intention is for the pilot to serve as a prototype; if successful, the same system change approach can be rolled out to the rest of Essex.

This project will go a significant way towards increasing physical activity in Essex, and will include projects which will increase both the frequency and duration of walking trips.



Objective 5

Enabling more walking to schools

Both Government and Essex County Council want to encourage more children to walk to school, while recognising that child pedestrians are more vulnerable road users. It is therefore vital that the safety of children is considered when designing new environments or improving existing ones.

Traffic calming measures, speed reduction and 20mph zones can all help to create protected areas for children – as can the provision of appropriate crossing places and other schemes, such as safer drop-off points.

Three parking rules (3PR)

Communities around schools often experience challenges around parking and access, which can result in barriers to walking to schools. The Essex Parking Partnerships have recently developed a new initiative called 3 Parking Rules, or 3PR – Care, Consideration and Caution. It is hoped that the 3PR approach will help to tackle some of the parking problems outside and around schools, actively engaging with the local and school community to better understand, promote and answer local needs.

The approach features a character called 3PR, who has been designed to help deliver positive messages about school parking. 3PR provides advice and guidance to children, parents and local residents about safe and considerate parking practices, as well as promoting alternative modes of travel. The initiative is easily tailored to suit each school's individual needs and includes a reward element to encourage children to use active travel to get to school.

Schemes such as 3PR help to encourage walking by making changes to the social environment around a school as well as by providing incentives for behaviour change. Social environment responses may include developing an advisory no-parking zone outside the school, marked by lamppost signs. Tailored maps can be created to highlight the zone, and may include pictures of common parking problems (parking on the pavement, parking on the zig-zag lines etc.) 3PR Patrols – often children with a teacher, parent or other volunteer – may stand at each end of the 3PR Zone, handing out tokens to children who walk, scoot or cycle into the zone.



Park-and-stride

If a suitable location can be found for parents to park their vehicles, park-and-stride schemes can enable children to walk a portion of the way to school. This can be a good way of encouraging physical activity while reducing congestion and the risk of accidents nearer to schools. This approach may be complemented by a 'walking bus', whereby a group of children form a 'bus', and walk a risk-assessed route with the help of volunteers who 'drive' and 'conduct'. Schools may designate 'pick-up' and 'drop-off' points, and sometimes even stops along the route to and from school.

Community Led Street Design

If there is strong community support, another way to improve access to schools, encourage walking and reduce localised congestion and emissions is through community-led street design (CLSD).

A CLSD approach may use time-limited interventions to slow traffic and transform the space around schools. Temporary barriers, painted signs or street markings and scheduled activities can lead to a better alignment between road use and the needs of road users.

The goal is for the community to explore and recommend possible strategies and ideas for increasing the use of more active travel modes. Community ownership of both the engagement process and its outcome (proposals shortlisted for the county council's consideration) are therefore of paramount importance.

Those living in a community have the greatest knowledge of the transport network in the area. Living, learning and working in the vicinity also provides an insight into the thought processes affecting their community's travel decisions. This in turn enables the community to propose ideas to mitigate road traffic and safety issues which fit how the community functions, and avoids a less effective 'top-down' approach prescribed by local authorities.



Strategy Walking Proposals

Encourage more walking to schools through behaviour change programmes such as 3 Parking Rules (3PR).

Develop a place strategy linking community physical and marketing approaches.

Support education initiatives to increase the skill and confidence levels of young pedestrians throughout their school years.

Enable more accessible walking environments

Support better wayfinding and legibility to encourage 'walking with confidence'.

Objective 6

Promoting walking for leisure

The coastal path

Essex has one of the country's longest coastlines stretching for over 350 miles. The many different uses of the Essex coast all exert varying pressures on this sensitive and highly valued natural resource. Much of the Essex coast is also particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, including the loss of saltmarsh (which is itself a natural form of coastal sea defence) and the increased risk of coastal erosion and flooding.

The Essex Growth Commission highlights coastal regeneration as an important theme, including a focus on tourism and opportunities to promote culture, outdoor recreation and the Essex landscape. Essex Highways is developing a plan for a coastal path in Essex, working in conjunction with Natural England – which is itself determining the route of an England Coast Path.

In 2014, Essex County Council launched the Thames Estuary Path, funded by the Veolia North Thames Trust and the Maxi Green project. The Thames Estuary Path is a walking route that explores the fascinating South Essex Marshes, from Tilbury Town all the way to Leigh-on-Sea, passing through an historic industrial and settled landscape with a wealth of green heritage and biodiversity. The path is easily accessible by train, linking six local train stations on the London Fenchurch to Shoeburyness line, and can also be enjoyed as any of five smaller walks starting and finishing at these stations. The path is clearly signed and waymarked with a distinctive logo.

The establishment of a county coastal path will provide an opportunity for seaside tourism and coastal regeneration, and will help to leverage the many health and environmental benefits that leisure walking can offer.

Natural England is also implementing an extension to its England Coast Path in Essex, running from Burnham-on-Crouch to Maldon. The same body is also now looking to improve access to its England Coast Path along a 70km stretch of the Essex coast between Tilbury and Southend-on-Sea.



Walking for leisure

While walking for travel is a central part of this strategy, walking for leisure purposes is also significant – especially in a largely rural county like Essex. Many residents who cannot reasonably walk for travel purposes (such as going to work or shopping) still enjoy walking during their leisure time.

Walking for leisure can be a personal activity, where we take time to gather our thoughts. It can also be highly sociable, involving walking with family, friends and in groups. Whatever the case, it's important that walking for leisure is both enabled and promoted, especially for those who are unable to achieve their 'active minutes' as part of their other daily journeys.

Essex is fortunate to have a beautiful natural environment, one that enables people to interact with culture and history through an extensive network of public rights-of-way, country parks, coastal paths and working farmland.

There is increasingly strong evidence to show that time spent in green space is good for both physical and mental health. Parks, green spaces and coastal and rural paths should therefore be accessible and welcoming to everyone. The most successful green spaces attract a wide range of people and activities.

Promoting rural walking networks is a key aspiration of this strategy, not just because of the personal benefits but because such networks promote closer connection with and better stewardship of important community assets. Essex County Council must be a key enabler of rural walking networks, enhancing access for all users.



Green infrastructure

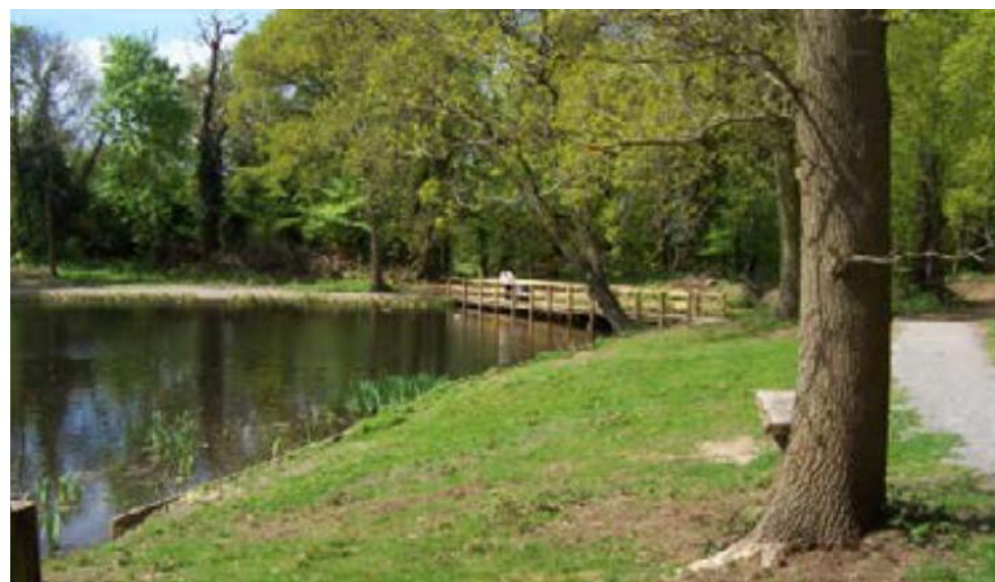
There are over 6,000 kilometres of public footpaths, bridleways and byways throughout Essex. These provide vital access to the countryside for informal recreation. They also form part of the highway network and, as such, will have an increasing role to play in the provision of a sustainable transport network by providing active travel networks.

Essex County Council administers 13 country parks and open spaces covering 1,266 hectares as well as 41 areas of woodland totalling 236.2 hectares. In addition, there are number of parks administered by district and town councils. Essex County Council makes contributions to Thames Chase Community Forest and the Lee Valley Park.

Enjoying green spaces is likely to involve walking, whether that is to a country park, coastal path or on the public rights-of-way (PROW) network. However, it is also important to recognise that walking should be considered and encouraged as part of accessing and improving connectivity to green spaces (Green Infrastructure Strategy, 2020).

Nature can be an excellent motivator for walking, and biophilic design should be incorporated into streetscapes to create diverse, living natural features which enhance the character and attractiveness of streets. Trees, plants and shrubs can be integrated into the urban street environment and designed to fulfil many practical functions as well as adding character, providing shade and helping to create a sense of place.

Trees can provide shade from the sun or rain, as well as creating oxygen and absorbing pollution. Well-designed planting areas can absorb water and fulfil a natural sustainable urban drainage function. Green infrastructure will be ever more important in the future as we strive to adapt to climate change – and good design is key. ECC's *Tree and Woodland Strategy – General Principles* identifies how the council will assist in the protection, maintenance and enhancement of the county's trees, and in promoting the many benefits they provide.



The public rights-of-way network

The PROW network in Essex comprises approximately 6,300km of footpaths (84%), bridleways (12%) and restricted byways (4%). There are many interesting walks via PROW around picturesque locations across Essex, with the PROW network at its most comprehensive in the south of the county. This green infrastructure is not just an attraction or key destination; it's also an attractive through-route that links places and communities.

To maximise the opportunities for leisure walks, the Essex County Council will seek to identify how to improve access to the PROW network; in particular those PROW that are near to our main settlements and urban areas.

There are also many long-distance trails that pass through Essex, including the Essex Way, the Flitch Way and the aforementioned Thames Estuary Path. Other routes include those promoted by organisations like the Ramblers (the Saffron Way and those promoted by ECC:

- The Forest Way
- The St Peter's Way
- The Roach Valley Way
- The Stour Valley Path
- The Saffron Way (promoted by the Ramblers)

The PROW network is therefore a key asset – one which can help to encourage leisure walking. While long trails offer the more experienced walker an opportunity to enjoy the Essex countryside, smaller routes provide opportunities for those new to leisure walking to explore both their abilities and their environment.

As well as improving linking paths from urban areas for leisure and recreation, it's also important to encourage communities to create and use a greater variety of short routes. These can be enjoyed by people with different levels of ability, and may include circular walks around towns and villages, or walks to places of interest.

ECC will explore innovative ways to maintain and enhance the PROW network. This may include liaising with neighbourhood plans, which can seek funding for PROW improvements and require that information about local walking routes be distributed to new housing.

Volunteers have an important role to play in leading walks within communities, and to keeping paths in a good condition. The council will seek improvements for access through development opportunities and S106 funds, and will continue working with the Local Access Forum and representatives of user groups to improve services and promote access.

Strategy Walking Proposals
Encourage social walks in greenspace to link individuals and reduce isolation.
Promote use of PROW, coastal paths and country parks including links to rail and bus operators
Support community involvement in maintenance of PROW.

Objective 7

Supporting economic development

Walking supports the economy

Four key ways in which walking (and cycling) can enhance economic performance include:

- Keeping traffic flowing by reducing congestion (encouraging people to walk and cycle who would otherwise drive).
- Supporting town centres and high streets by encouraging high levels of footfall and good access (often when combined with park-and-ride and public transport).
- Increasing productivity and reducing absenteeism through a healthier workforce.
- Increasing leisure and tourism opportunities through people visiting businesses and attractions e.g. on the coastal path.

To ensure that the county can recover from the economic impacts of the pandemic, and to build a stronger, fairer and more dynamic economy for the future, Essex County Council has identified several strategic priorities through its Economic Recovery Strategy. These include a focus on employability and skills, regenerating our town centres, identifying key growth sectors and stimulating green growth. Our strategy also focuses on securing and delivering investment – including inward investment and turbo charging capital investment to unlock growth. Through this strategy, the council is seeking to deliver an ambitious programme of initiatives to increase skills levels, develop our sectors and regenerate key localities in the county, and will work with internal departments and external partners to deliver on these priorities”.

In its simplest form, an increase in accessible walking routes would support increased access to jobs and would enhance employer PROW network is most comprehensive in the south of Essex access to labour markets.

An Essex Growth Infrastructure Framework (GIF) was developed to provide a view of emerging development and infrastructure requirements that can support growth across Essex. The GIF provides a strategic framework across the county for identifying and prioritising investment across a range of infrastructure, for planned growth up to 2036. It presents an overview of growth patterns and the infrastructure projects needed to support such growth, their costs, how much funding has already been secured or is expected toward their delivery, and the funding gap.

The framework report draws together information and data from a range of sources, including district local plans and Infrastructure Delivery Plans (IDPs), and covers all forms of infrastructure that support the economic, environmental and social needs of the study area. The framework recognises the impact of growth in population and jobs.

Walking infrastructure is a fundamental part of building communities and ensuring resilience for the future. Walking (and cycling) infrastructure planning and delivery is therefore essential to underpinning future sustainable economic growth – as well as to reducing some of the future burdens on other forms of infrastructure, such as highways and health (*Greater Essex Growth and Infrastructure Framework: 2016-2036; ECC, 2017*).

Overall Increased business productivity

- Increased footfall around retail and leisure businesses
- Improved health and wellbeing of staff
- Improved employee productivity

Essex Growth Commission - walking and economy

The Essex Growth Commission was set up in 2016 to help shape inclusive growth in Greater Essex. Essex has a strong entrepreneurial culture with a high number of smaller businesses and a good record of new business start-ups (EGC 2018). Essex is home to some important economic corridors, which are based upon good strategic transport links – however, economic performance is not as strong as other parts of the southeast England economy. One challenge is to improve access to markets and jobs through enhanced transport connectivity.

While there are major ongoing projects to improve key road corridors, there is also a recognition of the important role of walking alongside public transport, which together can help to take pressure off of roads, easing congestion and keeping the economy moving.

Encouraging more people to use public transport will also involve encouraging walking journeys or ‘walk stages’. Some industries, such as those in the digital, creative, business and finance sectors, tend to cluster in towns. Good walking (and cycling) networks, well-connected public transport and park-and-ride areas within employment areas and town centres are therefore key to the successful delivery of local plans for growth.



“Based on the BCRs (Benefit Cost Ratios) reported ... one can confidently conclude that sustainable travel and cycling and walking in particular regularly offer high and very high value for money”

Source: Department for Transport, 2015

Town centre, high streets and local regeneration

Town centres are essential to the fabric of a place and are key attractors, offering public sector, service, retail, leisure, employment and residential opportunities for both locals and visitors. They often serve as transportation hubs, connecting parts of our towns together.

The fundamental function of town centres has changed from places for goods-based transactions to places for consumption of food and experiential services, such as health and entertainment. This has fundamentally altered the role that town centres play in shaping a sense of place.

Technology is having a similarly major impact on our high streets. Research by the sustainable transport charity Sustrans shows that on average there were 177 shopping trips per person in 2015 compared to 216 in 2002. Internet spending has increased but 87 % of potential shoppers live within a five-mile radius of their nearest high street, and 38% visit their local high street several times a week (Sustrans, 2018). It's clear that the function of our high streets and town centres is changing, and they are no longer primarily retail.

Strategy Walking Proposals

Support enhanced walking infrastructure in town centres, as well as high street regeneration.

Enhance walking infrastructure, including wayfinding, in key economic centres

Work with large employers including business, hospitals and universities to create walking champions, and to provide information on walking to work.

Page 135 of 156



Local regeneration schemes that focus on improving high streets and town centres often require significant investment in the public realm, including pavements, footways and other walking infrastructure (e.g. seating, lighting and green infrastructure). Enhancing pedestrian access and fostering a good walking environment is key to supporting a more mixed-use approach to such areas as they evolve to serve as destinations for shopping, leisure and enterprise.

Visitors to town centres and high streets expect a good street environment and are concerned with the attractiveness of the environment. Enhancing walking routes through Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans will improve access to key attractors and destinations – walkable street locations have actually been proven to increase shop footfall by 20-40% (Walkonomics, 2012). In this way, a good walking environment fosters economic and social benefits that in turn make for a more vital, successful and attractive sense of place – thereby encouraging more walking.

Objective 8

Improving our neighbourhoods and supporting the development of new communities

Walkable neighbourhoods

Walkable neighbourhoods have the potential to increase walking for short journeys or as part of a journey involving public transport. Most people would be happy to walk 10-20 minutes to access local shops, GP surgeries, dentists, schools and other local amenities such as bars, restaurants and pubs.

However, a high number of such journeys are still undertaken by car. The volume of traffic and pollution generated on main roads can often feel excessive, and can impact negatively on those pedestrians and cyclists who share the space. This can also negatively impact on the level of interaction within communities located in these areas. Those who live on streets with higher traffic levels are likely to have fewer social interactions within their neighbourhood.

Improved opportunities for walking will enable people to access local shops and businesses, supporting the viability of these services. Providing parking alternatives (such as park-and-ride) outside of central areas, or encouraging people to walk reasonable distances via park-and-stride schemes can reduce the number of cars and support the rebalancing of the road network. Improving the street environment for all road users will ensure our urban areas are safe, attractive, vibrant places to live, work and visit.

Walking also has a role to play in promoting community resilience and helping to reduce isolation and loneliness. It cannot solve such problems on its own – but it can make a significant positive contribution.

Active by design: NHS Healthy New Towns

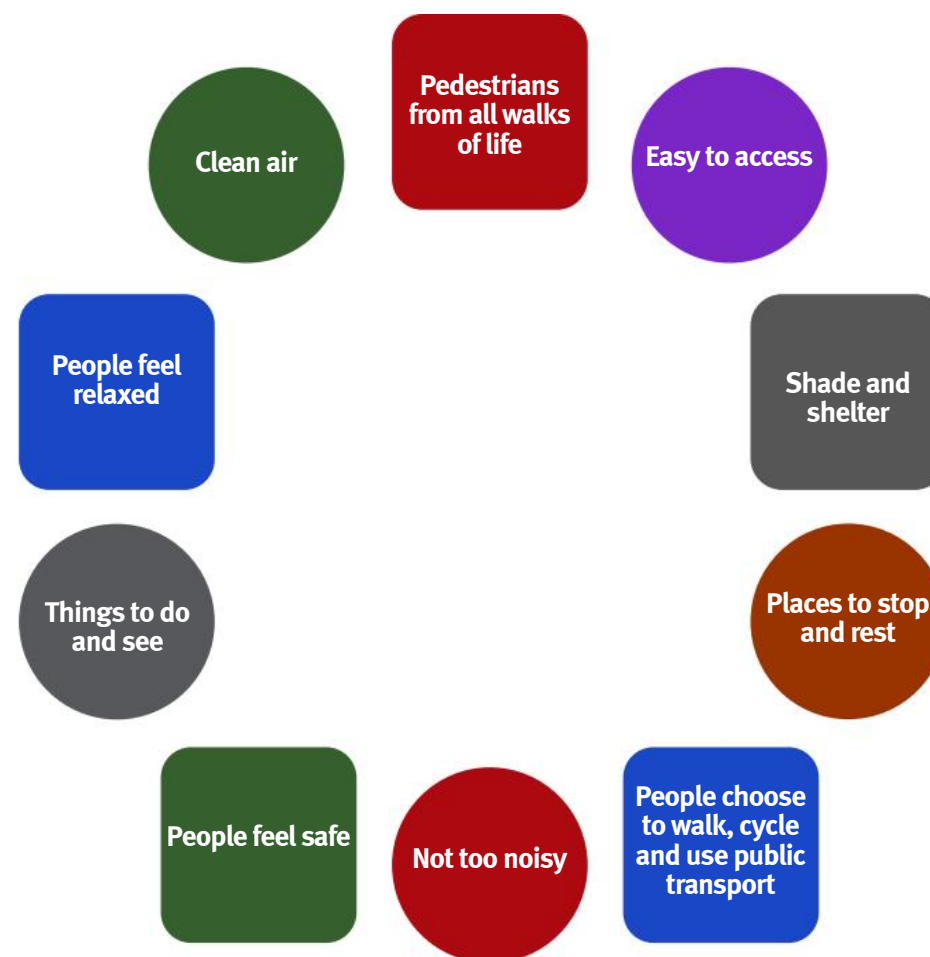
The NHS Healthy New Towns (HNT) programme launched in 2015 and encourages local areas to work together to promote health and wellbeing through the design of the built environment. New developments provide an opportunity to test new ideas, to promote active travel and to innovate new ways of designing health and wellbeing into spaces (TCPA 2016).

Walkable neighbourhoods are linked to improving long-term health outcomes, helping people to live and age well. Improved street connectivity, mixed land use, access to green space and active leisure spaces, walkable connections to key destinations such as shops and schools, and compact residential design are all important features of walkable neighbourhoods (Hajna et al, 2015).

Healthy streets framework

In London, a concept called Healthy Streets has been developed which includes a framework used to assess the functioning of streets according to various criteria. This framework is becoming increasingly popular across the UK and abroad as a way of determining the quality of the streetscape.

In Essex, we can draw upon the Healthy Streets framework as a set of useful principles to guide the development of better streets, balanced in their appeal to all users. The Healthy Streets concept provides a holistic way of exploring issues of safety, noise, clean air and the walking environment – including the role of trees and the needs of users. Ultimately, the Healthy Streets framework prioritises and promotes walking as a mode of everyday travel.



Designing walking into new communities

For new neighbourhoods and garden communities, it is essential that walking and cycling are designed in at the planning stage, to ensure that residents have a real choice regarding how they get around and how they access services.

A settlement that favours active walking (and cycling) with access to good public transport will provide the best possible opportunity to create a distinctive and attractive public realm, with a reduced amount of land set aside for car-based infrastructure. More land should instead be set aside for green space, development and useful amenities.

Key to such schemes are dense networks of high-quality walking and cycle routes that connect to important destinations both within new developments and in their pre-existing surroundings. Such networks enable residents to walk (or cycle) to jobs, leisure and other services. For longer journeys, public transport becomes the default choice of travel, linking as it does to key destinations and transport interchanges.

Pavements and footways should be aligned as directly as possible between the main trip origins and destinations. Most walking journeys begin or end at a person's home, workplace or a transport hub or car park.

Pedestrian connectivity:
cul-de-sac and grid layout



Essex Design Guide

The *Essex Design Guide (EDG)* has pioneered local design, creating space for innovation and encouraging high-quality development. The EDG aims to create distinctive places where people want to live, to build communities and to ensure that infrastructure and facilities are in place at where and when needed.

The EDG focuses on street and road design, considering how best to design permeable layouts that link well to transport, walking and cycle networks both inside and outside of a development. The EDG also identifies types of road layout, speed limits and access considerations, lighting and parking information that should be provided to users of a space.

The EDG provides an excellent framework for 'designing in' road safety to new developments. This has been supplemented by guidance (in an appendix to the EDG) on how to prepare a Health Impact Assessment. Such assessments are gradually becoming part of both developers' and planners' toolkits, and are intended to ensure that walking is designed in as an integral part of new communities.



Essex Garden Communities

The *Garden Communities Principles* provide a good starting point for designing and developing sustainable new communities centred on high-quality places, where people and their needs are at the heart of all development. Garden communities represent a change in the traditional approach to delivery of large-scale development. The concept of the garden community was founded on the principles of community inclusiveness and walkable, sociable and liveable neighbourhoods.

Emphasising the importance of the ‘walkable neighbourhood’ – the origin of most walking trips – helps designers to prioritise and meet the needs of local populations when planning for walking. The walkable neighbourhood is a place with which people interact daily, and is assumed to be where most walking for transport occurs. It is also crucial in the development of building a community.

Strategy Walking Proposals

Promote Active by Design principles – make walking the most convenient way to get around local areas.

Develop a framework for improving walking at a neighbourhood level by drawing on Healthy Streets Principles.

Develop a framework for working with developers to ensure that walking (and cycling) is designed in to new housing and communities, and provides links to existing destinations.

Create better links to walking corridors between local neighbourhoods and new communities.



Objective 9

Encourage walking by changing attitudes and behaviour

Creating new social norms

Social norms are the unwritten behaviours or codes deemed acceptable by and within society. There is a common conception that people are responsible for the decisions that impact their health – not least how much physical activity they undertake. However, this idea omits to account for the degree to which individuals are influenced by both social norms and their environment.

...changing behaviours is challenging, as the contexts in which they occur are complex, involving the interaction of people's individual characteristics, social influences and physical environment – among other things. (A healthier life for all, Dr Lidice Tombor and Professor Susan Michie).

To encourage more people to walk for shorter journeys, either within their neighbourhoods or to bus stops and rail stations, we must ensure walking is accessible and convenient. In this way, it will become the natural choice.

Over recent decades, people have become more reliant on their cars for almost all journeys, and this has been reflected in urban planning. It's now imperative to reverse this trend at the planning level. When development prioritises active travel and public transport, driving stops being the norm and is replaced by healthier, more socially positive forms of travel.

However, broader social attitudes change for the better, and norms and expectations can differ between and within specific communities.

The influence of social networks highlights the limitations of individually focused approaches, and shows the need for systems-based thinking that seeks to influence habits and norms across entire populations. Behavioural insights studies have shown that most of the decisions people make are fast, instinctive and automatic rather than slower, considered and logical (Thinking Fast and Slow, Kahneman). To create the conditions for walking to be seen as 'normal' as well as easy and convenient, we need to focus on both the social and physical environments.



Walking and the social environment

While the physical design of streets and spaces has a strong influence on the amount of active travel people undertake, social factors play an equally important role. Perceptions of risk and safety, for example, have a significant effect on whether and how much people walk.

A range of opportunities exist to promote behaviour change with regard to walking. Existing and new social networks can be used in line with marketing and communications strategies. Community champions or ambassadors can play a key role by organising walking groups. Experience from the South Essex Active Travel Programme has demonstrated that providing better information on walking (and cycling) via a strongly branded website, as well as targeted and personalised travel planning with key employers and organisations, can change attitudes towards walking. As more people walk and a critical mass of people walking develops, the activity becomes a regular part of people's routines and thereby becomes a social norm, especially for shorter journeys.



The whole system approach

A whole-system approach recognises that societal problems such as physical inactivity are part of a wider ecosystem of causal factors, which extend far beyond personal barriers (such as cost, time and confidence).

The whole-system approach aims to tackle the root causes of inactivity by addressing the determinants of inactivity at an individual level (e.g. attitudes, beliefs and needs), a social environment level (e.g. families, local community), an institutional level (e.g. schools and employers), a physical environment level (e.g. transport links, place and access to nature) and a policy and regulation level (e.g. laws, regulations). Whole-systems theory proposes that all causes are interconnected and must be addressed together to bring about behaviour change.

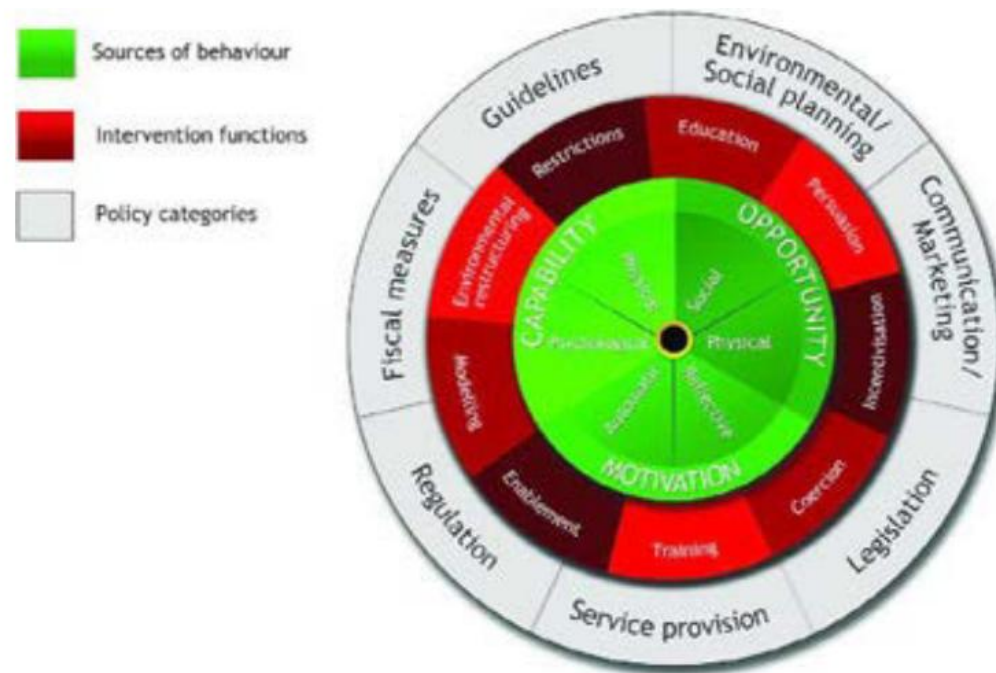
Strategy Walking Proposals

Develop a behaviour-change programme using a whole-systems approach with proven systems-thinking techniques.

Develop frameworks that incentivise partners to deliver walking support.

Continue to develop travel planning for workplaces, schools and communities using innovative communications and marketing techniques.

Develop a marketing plan for walking, including new products and information that can be used in/with apps.



The behaviour change wheel; Susan Miche, Lou Atkins and Robert West (2014)

The nine walking objectives and the strategy priorities are summarised below. The priorities will be delivered via the Action Plan included in Section 3.

Objective 1: Increase walking for everyday journeys

- Aim for 400 walking trips (for travel) per person per year by 2025 (where the average trip is approx. 1km or 10mins).
- Promote park-and-stride.
- Grow footfall on priority walking networks to improve natural surveillance.
- Collaborate with partners and developers to maximise and optimise walking networks, including where appropriate those that connect with public transport services.
- Implement a hierarchy system to allow greater focus of resources on the most used routes.

Objective 2: Improve road safety

- Explore the implementation of a Safe System approach as the founding principle for all infrastructure projects, using the Road User Hierarchy to ensure that pedestrian needs are prioritised.
- Prioritise road safety engineering schemes which treat sites with a history of pedestrian casualties.
- Support proactive policing, targeting driving offences that put pedestrians at risk and make roads less pleasant to use.

Objective 3: Enable more walking to schools

- Promote the Essex Design Guide and Garden Communities Principles in new developments.
- Review design standards for walking infrastructure to ensure they encourage safe behaviour and meet pedestrian needs (including provision for the elderly and mobility-impaired).
- Enable walking networks for key towns through development of LCWIPs.
- Enable more accessible networks of walking and cycling routes in Essex.
- Support better wayfinding and legibility to encourage 'walking with confidence'.

Objective 4: Better design and enhanced accessibility

- Enable residents to achieve two 10-minute sessions of physical activity per day via active travel.
- Collaborate with public health practitioners and stakeholders to raise awareness of the benefits of walking for health.
- Create and improve walking networks for key towns through development of LCWIPs.
- Support social prescribing to encourage walking as part of good mental health.
- Promote the Active Essex Strategy.

Objective 5: Enabling physical activity & walking for health

- Encourage more walking to schools through behaviour-change programmes such as 3 Parking Rules (3PR).
- Develop a pilot study linking community physical and marketing approaches.
- Support education initiatives to increase the skill and confidence levels of young pedestrians throughout their school years.
- Enable more accessible walking environments
- Support better wayfinding and legibility to encourage 'walking with confidence'

Objective 6: Promoting walking for leisure

- Encourage social walks in Greenspace to link people to groups and reduce isolation.
- Promote use of PROW, Coastal Path and Country Parks including links to Rail and Bus Operators.
- Support community involvement in maintenance of PROW.

Objective 7: Support economic development

- Support enhanced walking infrastructure in town centres, as well as high street regeneration.
- Enhance walking infrastructure, including wayfinding, around key economic centres.
- Work with large employers including business, hospitals and universities to create walking champions, and to provide information on walking to work.

Objective 8: Improve our neighbourhoods and supporting the development of new communities

- Promote Active by Design principles – make walking the most convenient way to get around local areas.
- Develop a framework for improving walking at a neighbourhood level by drawing on Healthy Streets Principles.
- Develop a framework for working with developers to ensure that walking (and cycling) is designed in to new housing and communities, and provides links to existing destinations.
- Create better links to walking corridors between local neighbourhoods and new communities.

Objective 9: Encourage walking by changing attitudes and behaviour

- Develop a behaviour-change programme using a whole-systems approach using proven systems-thinking techniques.
- Develop frameworks that incentivise partners to deliver walking support.
- Continue to develop travel planning for workplaces, schools and communities using innovative communications and marketing techniques.
- Develop a marketing plan for walking, including new products and information that can be used in/with apps.



Monitoring, funding & delivery

Section 3



Monitoring methods

- Through safety data collected while recording collisions and casualties on the network
- Through the *Active Lives Survey* and *National Travel Survey*
- Using lessons learned and results from the Active Travel Fund
- Using data from the Essex Local Delivery Pilot

Funding sources

Capital funding for infrastructure improvements will be sought via developer contributions and external sources.

Potential sources of funding include:

- Local authority regeneration schemes
- Department for Transport Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) funding
- The Active Essex partnership
- The High Street Fund
- Developer contributions (funding that forms part of the planning requirements for new developments)
- Local Growth Funds
- Network Rail and other rail operators
- Local Highways Panel funding for district road safety schemes
- SELEP Local Growth Funds for Local Sustainable Transport Programme

Delivery and governance

The Walking Strategy is an overarching document which seeks to provide a framework for the planning of walking networks and routes, encouraging more walking for travel across Essex, and encouraging more physical activity to ensure that all residents can enjoy the benefits of walking. Walking is foundational to the planning of the Transport System and urban development and will influence local plans and the next iteration of the Essex Local Transport Plan, as along with cycling will be the priority for short journeys and as part of a longer journey stage. It is anticipated that there will be an increased focus on ride sharing and multi modal journeys in future, walking has a key role to play in enabling future transport choices.

In support of this goal (not to mention the ECC Strategic Outcomes and the Essex Walking Strategy's detailed objectives and proposals) a draft action plan is being developed. This plan will inform a programme of activities in support of walking that will be delivered by the council and our partners up to 2025/6, in alignment with the CWIS 2.

Delivery of the action plan (along with the Essex Cycling Strategy) will be overseen by the Active Travel forum.

Draft action plan

1. Appoint a Walking Champion.
2. Count walking - measure, monitor and share information about walking, exploring the use of new technologies to do so.
3. Develop a network of walking advocates and stakeholders.
4. Develop a campaign to make walking the natural choice for shorter journeys, or to access public transport.
5. Reduce obstructions to walking.
6. Deliver behaviour change through partners (supported by a Walking Grant).
7. Deliver Better Streets and Corridors (LCWIP Priorities, Braintree, Chelmsford and Colchester).
8. Provide better information about walking and walking networks (for example, legibility and apps).
9. Develop Walkable Communities/Localities Pilot (seeking DfT support).
10. Walking Networks Refresh for Harlow and Basildon.

References

- Active Essex. (2017). Changing 1 million lives to get Essex active: Active Essex Our Strategy; 2017-2021.
- Active Essex. Active Essex. (2017). Sports & Physical Activity Profile: Greater Essex. Retrieved from Active Essex: <https://www.activeessex.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/JSNA-Report-Greater-Essex.pdf>
- Adrian Harvey (New Local Government Network) – Building Homes, Growing Communities – 2017
- Alder (Rachel) Unreported injuries: analysis of NTS injury data (2018)
- Arup – Cities Alive, Towards a Walking Word – 2016
- Behaviour Insights Team Ltd – EAST Framework -
- Chartered Institute for Highways and Transportation (CIHT) – Designing for Walking – 2015
- CIHT – Planning for Walking - 2015
- Collaborate Essex LDP Essex – Readiness for Systems Change Main Report Summary – October 2018
- Dahlgren and Whitehead - The Determinants of Health - 1992
- Department for Transport – Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 2017
- Department for Transport – Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy – Safety Review – 2018
- Department for Transport – Walking and Cycling 2017
- Dhanani (Dr Ashley) Walkability Modelling and Analysis – 2018
- Environment and Planning (Journal) Jorge Gill - Street network analysis “edge effects”: Examining the sensitivity of centrality measures to boundary conditions - 2017
- Essex County Council – Draft Green Infrastructure Structure – 2019
- Essex Design Guide - www.essexdesignguide.co.uk
- Essex Economic Commission – Enterprising Essex – Meeting the Challenge- 2018
- Essex Highways: The Maintenance and Inspection Strategy – Carriageways, Footways and Cycleways (May 2019).
- Essex Transport Strategy – The Local Transport Plan for Essex - 2011
- Essex Health and Wellbeing Board Report: Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2016
- Essex Local Delivery Pilot: Action Research Initial Evaluation Report October 2018
- Gehl Architects - Alison Dutoite – Transport and Health Conference, Bristol February 2017
- Government Office for Science (Professor Miles Tight) – Walking in the UK Transport System – How and Why it is Changing – December 2018
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority – Beelines - cycling and walking infrastructure proposal – 2018
- Hanja et al - Associations between neighbourhood walkability and daily steps in adults: a systematic review and meta-analysis - 2015
- Intelligent Health (Dr William Bird and Marc Harris) – A review of physical activity data and insight in Essex – October 2018
- Kings Fund – Social Determinants of Health Equity - 2014
- Journal of Transport and Health - Road Danger Reduction: a research challenge -2017
- Journal of Transport and Health - Road Danger Reduction: Why it is needed -2017
- Journal of Urban Design (Katherine Brookfield) - Residents’ preferences for walkable neighbourhoods
- Living Streets – The Pedestrian Pound – Updated 2018
- Living Streets – Creating Walking Cities – A Blueprint for Change
- Local Government Association – Health in All Policies (Professor Michael Mansfield) 2019

- Marmott (Professor Michael) Marmot Review report – ‘Fair Society, Healthy Lives - 2010
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government – National Planning Policy Framework (updated) 2018.
- National Institute for Health and Care Excellence – Physical Activity – Walking and Cycling Guidance ph41 – 2012
- National Travel Survey 2016
- National Travel Survey 2017
- Natural England – England Coastal Path (Essex) 2018
- Neto (Luis) Walkability Index – 2015
- Public Health England – All our Health - 2018
- Public Health England – Everyone Active Everyday – An evidence based- approach to physical activity – 2014
- Public Health England - Spatial Planning for Health An evidence resource for planning and designing healthier places – 2017
- Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) – Pedestrian Safety Policy Paper – August 2018
- Safer Essex Roads Partnership – Overview of Pedestrian Casualties - 2019
- Sport England Active Lives Adult Survey – October 2018
- Sport England – Tackling Inactivity What we know: Key insights from our Get Healthy Get Active pilots and Tackling Inactivity: The Design Principles 2016
- The Health Foundation – Healthy Lives for People in the UK – 2017
- The Ramblers – Walking Works – Walking for Health 2013
- Sustrans - Active travel and economic performance: A ‘What Works’ review of evidence from cycling and walking schemes – 2017
- Sustrans – Community Led Street Design
- Sustrans Linking Active Travel and Public Transport to Housing Growth and Planning – 2017
- The Health Foundation – A Healthier Life for All - 2016
- Three Parking Rules – The North Essex Parking Partnership - 2019
- Todd Littman – Measuring Transportation 2015
- Town and Country Planning: Special Issue: Healthy Planning – Securing Outcomes from United Action – November 2016
- Town and Country Planning Association – Walking in Greenspace – 2018
- Transport for London – Older Pedestrians Research Report - 2013
- Transport for London – Pedestrian Comfort Guidance for London - 2010
- Transport for London – Walking Action Plan - 2018
- Transport for London – Walking and Cycling – The Economic Benefits – 2018
- Universities of Lancaster, Leeds and Oxford Brookes – Understanding Walking and Cycling 2011
- University of the West of England – Commuting and Wellbeing Study – Understanding the Impacts of Commuting on People’s Lives - 2017
- Urban Transport Group – The Case for Active Travel – October 2016

October 2019

Walking Strategy: Consultation Report

Research and Citizen Insight

Contents

Introduction.....	02
Who gave their views.....	03
Findings.....	04
Graphs.....	06

Introduction

Essex County Council recognizes the importance of walking both as a form of transport and as a leisure activity. The Walking Strategy is a response to the challenges and opportunities of walking in Essex, it outlines in detail the steps being taken to encourage walking at present and the direction that will be taken in the future.

A preliminary consultation was made available to stakeholders but due to the fact that over 90% (496) of the 541 were residents of Essex, we are combining the data from the preliminary consultation with the resident consultation which was made available to the residents of Essex. The only difference between the two consultations is that the resident one contained two additional questions - 'How would you prefer to travel and why?'

The strategy itself contains **three** sections:

Section 1: Explains why walking is important and explores the drivers for change.

Section 2: Sets the Essex Walking Vision – “Easy, Safe and a Normal part of our everyday lives” and how this can be achieved.

Section 3: Explains the monitoring regime we will adopt to assess the effectiveness of the Strategy and the Performance Indicators we will use to track progress. This section also outlines potential funding options.

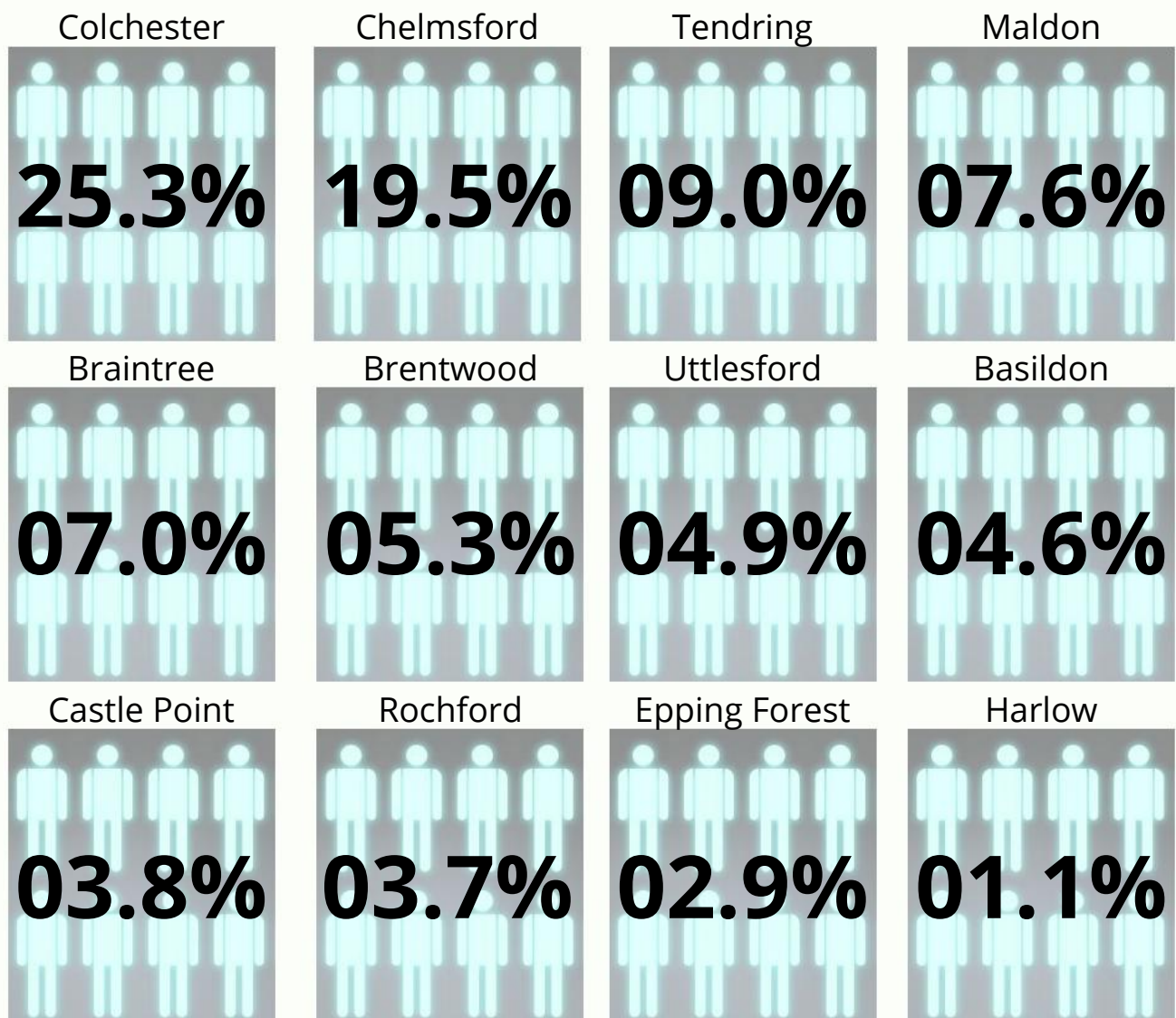
The preliminary consultation was published on 05 June 2019 and was open for 8 weeks closing on 31 July 2019, received 541 total responses. The resident consultation was published on ... and was open for ... closing on ... and it received a total of 343 responses, making the overall total of responses from both consultations 884.

The results of both surveys will help shape a further engagement piece that will inform the final version of the strategy.

Are they a resident?

92.1% (815) of the 884 respondents are residents of Essex.

Where are they from?



2.8% of respondents did not state where they live.

Findings

Colchester had the highest number of respondents with 244. Chelmsford and Tendring followed with 172 and 80 respondents respectively. Epping forest (26) and Harlow (10) had significantly lower response rates than any other location.

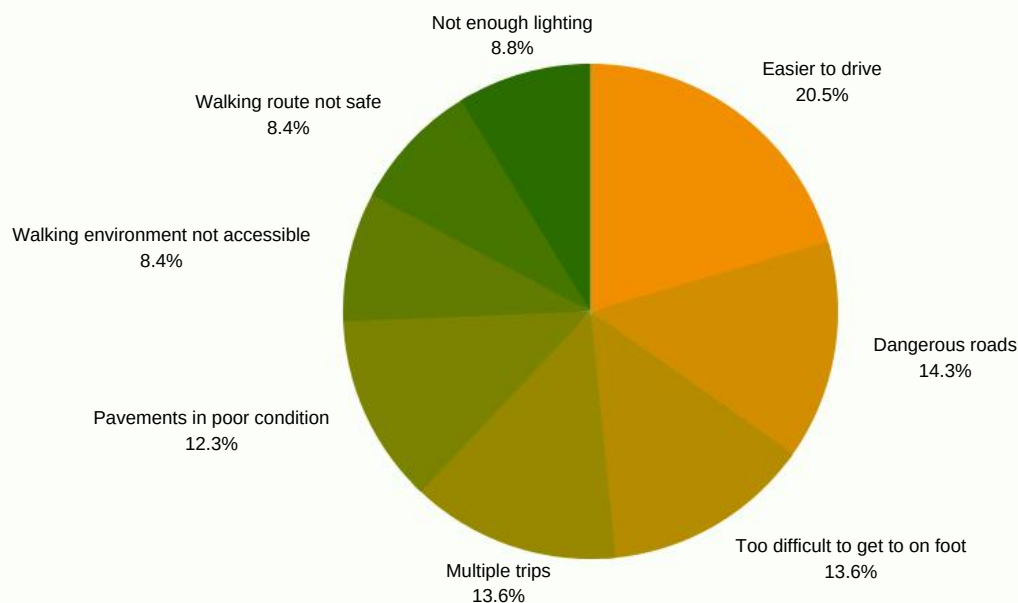
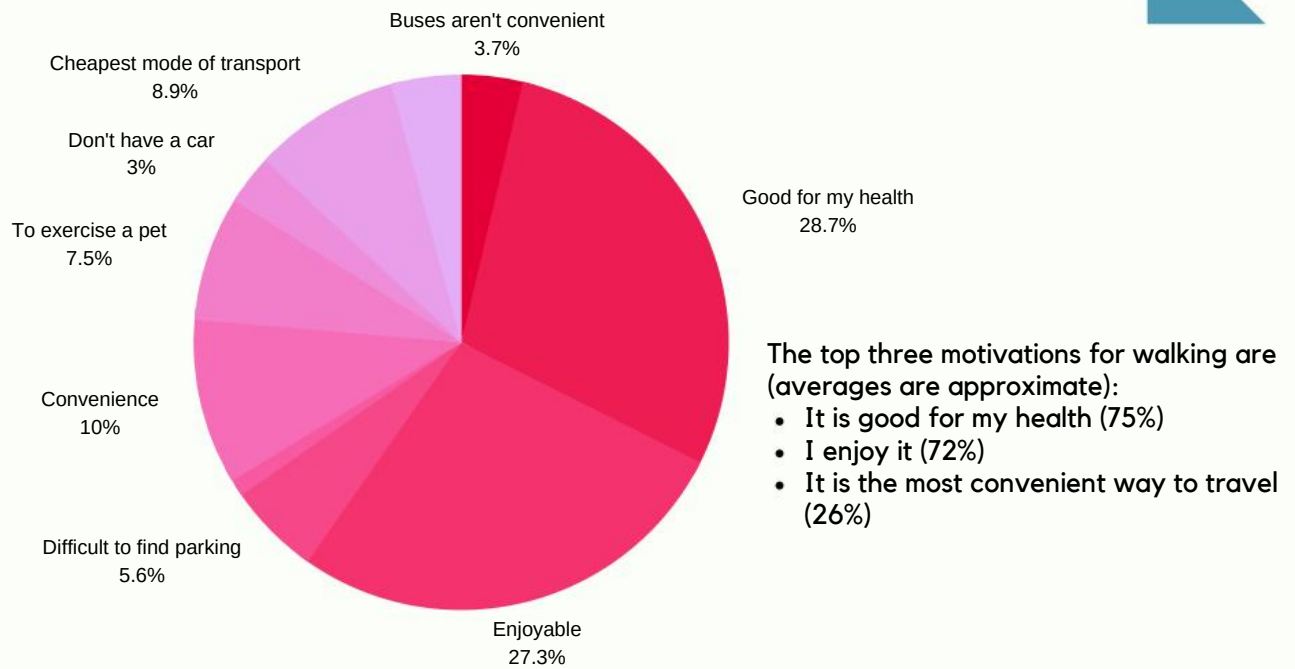
Over half of the respondents (598) stated that 'leisure' was the main purpose for walking with 286 stating they walk for functional reasons such as walking to work.

The main purpose for people walking is to enjoy green spaces with 602 out of 884 at least once a week and 220 of these being more than 5 times a week. This is closely followed by going to the shops with 546 people walking for this purpose at least once a week.

On average 77% of Essex residents walk for more than 15 minutes. The average across Essex for only walking 15 minutes or less is approximately 19.3% with 30% of Tendring residents as the highest value and 10.6% of Brentwood residents as the lowest.

For 10-15 minute distances, 728 out of 884 residents would walk rather than use other modes of transport such as driving.

Findings cont.



The top three barriers which prevent people from walking are: it is easier to drive (7.1%), the roads are too dangerous (5.0%) and joint third at 4.8% it is too difficult to get to my destination and I have to do multiple trips. It is interesting to note that Epping Forest residents do not indicate any barriers which prevent them from walking.

We asked residents 'what would encourage you to walk more?' 52.8% said better maintained footways while 30.5% said more green infrastructure but there were 20.7% that said none of these as they already walk a lot which suggests at least 20% of Essex residents are satisfied with the amount of walking they already do. There was an option to comment 'other' reasons as to what would encourage people to walk more with the most mentioned 'other reason' being less cyclists on footways.

When looking at the results from preferred mode of transport - it is worth noting that this question (and why?) only appeared in the resident consultation. The only time people prefer to walk over drive alone is when going to the doctors (preferred by 5%) or to enjoy green spaces, where 51% of respondents would rather walk to enjoy green spaces.

However, the option to drive alone is overwhelmingly preferred when travelling to work/school (preferred by 18%) and when visiting family/friends (preferred by 27%). It is interesting that 26% of people stated that their motivation for walking is because it is the most convenient way to travel however the top barrier which prevents people walking was 'it is easier to drive'.

Colchester, Chelmsford, Rochford and Uttlesford said their top barrier was that it is easier to drive. Colchester and Chelmsford it is easier to drive due to the size of the area and residents have to do multiple trips in one go. However in Rochford and Uttlesford this is due to cyclists using pavements, making walking unsafe and the speed of vehicles - residents said they would like more traffic calming measures in place.

Forward Plan Ref No. FP/081/05/21

Report title: Decisions taken by or in consultation with Cabinet Members	
Report author: Secretary to the Cabinet	
Date: 22 June 2021	For: Information
Enquiries to: Emma Tombs, Democratic Services Manager, 03330 322709	
County Divisions affected: All Essex	

The following decisions have been taken by or in consultation with Cabinet Members since the last meeting of the Cabinet:

Leader of the Council

FP/083/06/21 Proposed 20mph Speed Limit, Rowhedge Village, East Donyland, Colchester

Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

***FP/049/04/21** Extension of In Lieu of Reablement services

Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Skills and Training

FP/084/06/21 Appointment and Re-Appointment of School Governors by Essex LA - Schedule 374

FP/085/06/21 Appointment and Re-Appointment of School Governors by Essex LA - Schedule 375

Cabinet Member for Waste Reduction and Recycling

***FP/009/03/21** Integrated Waste Handling Service Delivery – Fleet and Plant Procurement

*** Key Decisions 2**