
Cabinet Issues

1. Commissioning Strategy - Children Looked After

As part of the Council's Transformation Programme an extensive analysis and options appraisal programme was undertaken in respect of the future delivery model for the provision of mainstream residential care for Children Looked After. These proposals are being made because the Council must ensure that:

- it effectively manages increasing costs resulting from increased numbers of children looked after, and secure a reduction in these numbers over the coming years;
- it delivers the best results and impact for all children looked after, and;
- as a commissioner of services, it develops a market that is flexible, responsive and able to meet the needs of some of the most challenging children and young people while achieving the best use of resources.

Cabinet was informed of the latest stage of the move to a future delivery model for the provision of mainstream residential care for Children Looked After and of the results of the market analysis in respect of selling or leasing the Council's children's homes as going concerns.

Following the market analysis exercise to determine the appetite of the market to lease or buy the homes, it is evident the Private, Voluntary and Independent Sector would only wish to lease or buy if they could be assured of a block purchase arrangement with the Local Authority or/and come to an arrangement that does not adversely financially impact on them in relation to TUPE.

An expression of interest was received from the in-house children's home management; however their requirements included the block purchase of beds by the Local Authority and this is contrary to the need to purchase placements dependent on individual need.

Based on this analysis Cabinet agreed to close the in-house children's homes and spot purchase needs-led placements required for young people in the Private, Voluntary and Independent Sector, with the exception of Leverton Hall Secure Unit and Leverton House. Each home will have a closure date identified that takes account of young residents' care plans. It is envisaged all could be closed by the end of 2011. Staff working in the children's homes will be re-deployed within children's services or be subject to redundancy.

Leverton House will be marketed as a move on unit to provide move on accommodation from Leverton Secure Unit, with the potential to sell placements to other Local Authorities, subject to the results of full market analysis.

Moving to a fully commissioned model of provision for residential mainstream placements for children looked after will deliver a number of benefits, including:

- the ability to commission resources flexibly in accordance with the needs of individual children and young people in a timely way with consequent benefits in relation to results and impact;
- the ability to develop a greater variety of models of provision within the overall range of available residential provision, enabling more young people with complex needs to remain placed in Essex;
- the release of resources to enable the development of a specialist foster scheme, able to meet the needs of young people with challenging behaviours and who are likely to develop even more difficulties when placed in residential provision; and
- securing reduction in overall unit cost through the implementation of procurement approaches including a Dynamic Purchasing System for all external placements.

The children and young people resident in the homes affected, along with their parents and carers, and all staff directly affected by the recommendations have been informed of the proposals. A programme of more detailed consultation will include:

- further consultation with members of staff, including a 90-day period for formal consultation;
- direct and deep consultation with all children and young people involved, along with all relevant stakeholders, including parents/carers, Independent Reviewing Officers, social workers, schools and relevant health and education services. This consultation will involve deep conversations to agree any changes of placements necessary. Where alternative placements will need to be commissioned for young people, young people will be involved in deciding the type of placement. The involvement of advocates for all affected children and young people is being explored.

2. Adoption of a new Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Essex

The Council's current Local Transport Plan, "*Essex Local Transport Plan 2006 -2011 Now We're Moving*", has expired and needs to be replaced.

The new Local Transport Plan covers all of the Council's policies and delivery plans relating to transport, explaining how these contribute to the wider local agenda. This is a long-term plan covering 15 years which sets out aspirations for improving travel in the County, demonstrating the importance of the transport network to achieving sustainable long-term economic growth and enriching the lives of residents. The plan demonstrates how both capital and revenue funding will be used separately and together to deliver transport schemes, projects and interventions that deliver the County's wider objectives. An Executive Summary is attached as the Annex to this report.

Two documents comprise the LTP: a long term transport strategy and a shorter term implementation plan.

Cabinet approved the new Local Transport Plan entitled “The Essex Transport Strategy” and authorised the Cabinet member for Highways and Transportation to finalise this as a fully formatted document for submission to the Department for Transport and placing on the Council’s website.

Cabinet supported the implementation of the LTP by enabling the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation and the Director of Highways and Transportation to ensure that mechanisms are put in place through the Highways Strategic Transformation Programme to identify and prioritise the most effective transport interventions and deliver these efficiently over the plan period through the four-year Implementation Plan.

Cabinet supported the further development of the Implementation Plan to reflect the outcomes of the Highways Strategic Transformation Programme and the ambition to improve the experience of customers.

The Local Transport Plan seeks to achieve five broad outcomes that have been developed in parallel with the outcomes being sought from the Highways Strategic Transformation programme:

1. to provide connectivity for Essex communities and international gateways to support sustainable economic growth and regeneration;
2. to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and improve air quality through lifestyle changes, innovation and technology;
3. to improve safety on the transport network and enhance and promote a safe travelling environment;
4. to secure and maintain all transport assets to an appropriate standard and ensure that the network is available for use; and
5. to provide sustainable access and travel choice for Essex residents to help create sustainable communities.

The Local Transport Plan forms part of the Council’s Policy Framework (Article 6 of the Constitution) and so requires Council’s formal approval.

Recommended:

That the new Local Transport Plan circulated with this Agenda be approved as part of the Council's policy framework.

3. Part-night street lighting

To enable the Council to move to part night street lighting, reduce its carbon footprint and associated energy costs, Cabinet approved the award of a fixed-price contract to Plextek Ltd. for the provision and installation of a Central Management Service which will enable the remote control of streetlights in Essex.

This Contract will:

- allow for the provision of 130,000 photocells to be purchased from Plextek Ltd. with ancillary equipment and associated software, licensing and hosting services;
- allow for the installation of photocells and ancillary equipment over a two-year programme by Plextek Ltd;
- provide maintenance of associated software, licensing and hosting services; and
- enable street lights in Essex to be switched to part night lighting, phased over a two-year period, pending full consultation with District, Borough and Parish Councils and the Emergency Services.

The contract to Plextek Ltd. requires investment totalling £6.52m over a 3-year period to deliver £14.042m of gross savings over a 13-year period.

A part night lighting pilot was approved in July 2006 in Maldon and Uttlesford. The pilot demonstrated there was no significant change in crime statistics or road collisions as a result of changes. In the pilot Highways and Transportation were able to demonstrate energy savings of 20 % (circa £70,000 per annum). The Safer and Stronger Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee recommendations regarding street lighting were issued in November 2009. These were agreed by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation in July 2010.

Moving to remote controlled photocells will enable the Council to control effectively all its lighting stock in a fully responsive manner, enabling the County to move to part night lighting but also allowing the street lighting service to be fully responsive as required.

Peter Martin
Leader of the Council

Essex Transport Strategy Executive Summary

The role of the Local Transport Plan

Good transport is a vital factor in building strong and sustainable local communities and a successful economy. The Essex Transport Strategy, a key component of the third Local Transport Plan for Essex, is a crucial tool that helps us to plan for the longer term provision of adequate transport services, work with stakeholders (including the 12 district/borough councils within Essex), strengthen our place shaping role and guide the delivery of services to our communities. In particular, this strategy enables us to:

- Help deliver the Council's long term vision, contained within '*EssexWorks*', of delivering the best quality of life for Essex residents;
- Support the delivery of the priorities for Essex identified within the Integrated County Strategy;
- Identify priorities for transport investment (both capital and revenue), placing transport improvements in their wider context;
- Support funding bids to a variety of sources (for example to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund), including bids to as yet unidentified funding streams that may be available in the future.

The priorities of this strategy reflect the key issues identified in the extensive evidence base compiled to support its preparation as well as the views of our communities, businesses and other local organisations.

Local Transport Plan structure

Our new Local Transport Plan comprises two distinct parts:

- The Essex Transport Strategy which sets out our vision for transport, the outcomes we aim to achieve over a fifteen year period, our policies for transport and the broad approach to implementing these; and
- An Implementation Plan which sets out how greater detail the outcomes of the strategy will be delivered and monitored and the priorities for investment in the short-term.

The Implementation Plan will be refreshed every three years and will be supported by a three-year rolling investment programme. This will enable flexibility in our long-term approach. The Transport Strategy will be reviewed and updated periodically to reflect significant changes in priorities.

The Local Transport Plan will also be accompanied by a suite of more detailed plans, identifying specific investment priorities for particular areas and types of transport service. These include:

- Delivery strategies for specific service areas (for instance our ‘Passenger Transport Strategy’, or ‘Speed Management Strategy’), which set out the key actions for these areas and the approach to be taken; and
- Area plans for each of the four planning areas of Essex which set out the specific local priorities for achieving the Essex Transport Strategy outcomes.

Vision, Outcomes and Challenges

Our Vision is for a transport system that supports sustainable economic growth and helps deliver the best quality of life for the residents of Essex.

The Essex Transport Strategy will seek to achieve five broad outcomes that have been developed in parallel with those being sought from the Council’s Highways Strategic Transformation (HST) programme:

- Provide connectivity for Essex communities and international gateways to support sustainable economic growth and regeneration
- Reduce carbon dioxide emissions and improve air quality through lifestyle changes, innovation and technology
- Improve safety on the transport network and enhance and promote a safe travelling environment
- Secure and maintain all transport assets to an appropriate standard and ensure that the network is available for use
- Provide sustainable access and travel choice for Essex residents to help create sustainable communities.

For each of the five outcomes, we have identified a series of ‘challenges’ which will need to be met if the outcome is to be achieved. These are based on the evidence base compiled to support the development of this strategy and the concerns raised by our communities, local businesses, district councils and other local organisations with a direct interest in local transport.

Outcome	Challenges
1. Provide connectivity for Essex communities and international gateways to support sustainable economic growth and regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Providing good connectivity to and within urban areas to support self-contained employment and housing growth and regeneration b) Providing good inter-urban connectivity within Essex and with adjacent major urban areas c) Maximising the benefit to the local economy of Greater Essex’s international gateways and strategic transport links to London, the East and South East of England and the rest of the UK
2. Reduce carbon dioxide emissions and improve air quality through lifestyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Reducing the carbon-intensity of travel in Essex b) Reducing pollution from transport to improve air quality in urban areas and along key corridors

Outcome	Challenges
changes, innovation and technology	c) Protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment
3. Improve safety on the transport network and enhance and promote a safe travelling environment	a) Reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured on Essex roads b) Working with partners to promote a safe and secure travelling environment
4. Secure and maintain all transport assets to an appropriate standard and ensure that the network is available for use	a) Effectively and efficiently managing our roads and footways b) Effectively and efficiently managing all of the Council's wider transport assets c) Keeping the transport network operational and safe in all seasons d) Effectively managing the impact of planned works
5. Provide sustainable access and travel choice for Essex residents to help create sustainable communities	a) Enabling Essex residents to access further education employment and vital services (including healthcare, hospitals and retail) b) Maintaining the vitality of our rural communities c) Encouraging and enabling healthier travel and leisure activities d) Creating strong and sustainable communities

Transport in Essex

Demand for travel in Essex is high, reflecting the advantageous location of the county and its capacity for trips to London, across the UK and internationally.

Essex is fortunate to have good transport connections by road, rail, air and sea. The nationally important M11, M25, A12 and A120 run through the county, and major local roads (including the A13, A127, A130 and A414) provide good coverage. Three main rail lines radiate from London, supplemented by a number of branch lines, serving 57 railway stations, and the London Underground extends into the south of the county. The county also contains two major 'International Gateways': the UK's third busiest airport at Stansted and Harwich International sea port which provides nationally important connections to Holland and Denmark. The Port of Tilbury and the new London Gateway port development are located in Thurrock and the Port of Felixstowe is nearby in Suffolk.

Our urban transport networks generally provide good access to employment, education, retail and leisure opportunities. Major new transport infrastructure delivered as part of the previous Essex local transport plans, including the Chelmsford Park & Ride and First Avenue bus corridor in Harlow, have helped to substantially improve access, particularly for public transport. Major highway works undertaken by the Council, including A13/A130 Sadlers Farm improvements and the Roscommon Way extension, are also helping to support new development which will secure the long-term growth of the Essex

economy; though significant further infrastructure investment will be required if this is to be achieved.

Connectivity

Essex has a successful economy with an entrepreneurial workforce and the county is an attractive place to live and do business. The Essex transport network is of critical importance to the performance of the local economy, with significant transport investment vital if we are to enable continued growth and support the regeneration of our town centres. Reliable connectivity enables Essex residents to access jobs and local businesses to attract employees. For employers, this means access to a workforce which can provide the skills they need, particularly where these are not available locally. For individuals, it enables access to employment opportunities they would otherwise be unable to reach.

Transport improvement needs to be delivered in a way that is joined up with spatial planning and economic policies; improving journey time reliability, providing good access for business, and making locations more attractive to live in. The Council needs to ensure that good connectivity is maintained between the main employment centres, the national transport network, and to the rapidly expanding ports and airports. The Council must also ensure that there is provision for sustainable transport to tackle persistent congestion problems within main towns and on our main inter-urban roads.

Carbon reduction and the environment

The ability to travel is an essential requirement of all our lives; however, the choices we make in how we travel have unwanted impacts on the world around us. Travelling by car is part of the daily routine for most residents, particularly those in the more rural parts of the county. This means that carbon emissions from transport in Essex are relatively high when compared to the national average. Petrol and diesel vehicles also generate other airborne pollutants which can be harmful to our health. There are 7 areas in Essex where air quality does not meet the internationally accepted minimum standard due to traffic emissions and a specific action plan has been adopted.

We will aim to reduce these impacts by; reducing the carbon intensity of travel in Essex, reducing pollution from transport to improve air quality in urban areas and along key corridors, and protecting and enhancing the natural, historic and built environment. We will build on our recent success in encouraging sustainable travel for daily trips, particularly for the journey to work and school, enable greater travel choice, and support initiatives to make car travel more sustainable. The Authority will also need to examine the role innovation and technology can play in reducing carbon emissions and pollutant levels such as the widespread introduction of electric vehicles and alternative fuels.

Protecting and enhancing the natural, historic and built environment will require the assessment of the environmental impact of our transport projects, designing sympathetically with the surrounding environment and minimising the visual and aural intrusion of transport.

Safety

Road deaths and serious injuries affect whole communities. A road network on which all users can travel safely is essential to achieving the Council's aim to provide the best quality of life for Essex residents. Safety on the highway network has improved markedly in recent years and it is essential that we continue to work in partnership with Essex Police, Essex Fire and Rescue service, the Highways Agency and the Essex Ambulance Service to do what we can to protect those who live and travel in Essex.

Promoting a safe travelling environment is also important to the delivery of the other outcomes of this strategy. To promote greater public transport use or healthier travel choices such as walking and cycling, we need to ensure that people are not only protected, but also have confidence that they will be safe when travelling. Similarly, improving safety is essential to making best use of our transport network, ensuring that our roads are effectively maintained and managed to minimise the risk of accidents and the disruption and delay these can cause.

Asset management

With a combined replacement cost of over £7 billion, our transport infrastructure represents one of Essex County Council's largest assets. In addition to over 4,700 miles of road, we manage and maintain a wide array of transport-related assets, including street lights, footways, bridges, bus stops, Public Rights of Way and cycleways; each serving an important role in enabling people to travel safely and efficiently in Essex.

Essex therefore already has a significant asset base and with limited funding for major new infrastructure, it is vital that we make best use of what we already have and ensure that this can be used effectively both now and in the future. We must therefore ensure that we use the funding we do have to deliver the most effective improvements, targeting investment to where it is most needed and exploring new and innovative ways of working to help us deliver continual efficiency improvements in the ways in which our assets are managed and maintained; enabling us to do more with less.

Recent cold winters and flooding across much of the country have shown how significantly peoples' lives and the economy are affected by an inability to use the transport network. Similarly, an incident on one of the major routes which pass through Essex could lead to significant disruption on our roads, unless appropriate co-ordinated management is in place. The Authority has therefore identified a hierarchy of routes which are considered to be essential to the functioning of Essex, both as a competitive economy and as place to live. The Authority will endeavour to ensure that the essential parts of the network remain useable in all situations.

Equally, the Authority must balance the needs of the Essex economy with those of local communities. Localism will be a key theme that puts customers at the heart of everything the Authority does.

Access and travel choice

Our ability to reach essential services (including healthcare, retail and leisure facilities), employment or education has a major influence on our overall quality of life. Most of us have benefited from the improvement in personal mobility made possible by rising car ownership. This has offered many people greater choice in when and where they can travel and increased the opportunities available to them, for instance by enabling access to jobs across a wider area. Those without access to a car or those who have difficulty travelling often have more limited choices and opportunities.

Poor access to services can also affect certain groups of people disproportionately, particularly those with disabilities, mobility impairments or learning difficulties. If a person cannot make use of a particular mode of travel, for instance because they cannot physically access it or understand timetable information, then it does not matter to them how good a service it may provide to others. These barriers can therefore have significant impacts on personal independence.

The County Council will work with partners and service providers to make essential services accessible to all, continuing to remove barriers to travel for those with disabilities, and ensuring that travel information is available in different formats and is accessible to everyone. The Council will encourage and support innovation to improve the provision of essential services.

Essex is evolving with a number of areas, including the Thames Gateway undergoing major transformation. By 2018, the Essex population is forecast to have grown by around 10% which, without adequate provision for sustainable transport, would overwhelm our current transport networks and increase carbon emissions. If the Authority is to achieve this vision of sustainable growth, it needs to broaden travel choices and promote the take-up of available sustainable travel options; for instance by encouraging the 30% of Essex residents who travel less than 3 miles to work to do so by bike, or by encouraging those travelling less than a mile to walk.

Transport Priorities

Using a combination of the evidence base compiled in support of this strategy, evidence from the individual district/borough Local Development Frameworks, and the findings from stakeholder and public consultations, we have determined a list of key priorities.

The priorities listed are not presented in order of importance, or intended to be exhaustive; we recognise too that these may change or evolve over the course of the lifetime of the strategy.

Strategic transport priorities

- Identifying an agreed and deliverable solution to address congestion at the Thames Crossing and adjacent M25 junction 30/31;
- Lobbying Government for enhancements to the A12;

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- Lobbying Government for enhancements to the A120 to access Harwich port and between the A12 and Braintree;
 - Lobbying Government for additional capacity on the Great Eastern Main Line and West Anglia mainline to accommodate growing commuter demand, the provision of competitive journey times for Essex Thameside services, and an enhanced local role in the rail franchise process.

Countywide priorities

- Reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured on Essex roads;
- Continuing to work with the Essex Casualty and Congestion Board;
- Working with partners to promote a safe and secure travelling environment;
- Maintaining the Essex highway network and other transport assets.
- Keeping the transport network safe and operational.
- Managing the impact of planned works on the highway network

Priorities for Thames Gateway

- Providing for and promoting access by sustainable modes of travel to new development areas;
- Improving public transport links within and between the Thames Gateway towns (including the A13 Passenger Transport Corridor and *sert* schemes);
- Improving the availability of sustainable travel choices and raising public awareness of these through travel planning;
- Addressing maintenance, signing and broken links in the cycle network to improve conditions for cyclists and create a safer atmosphere for cycling.
- Improving the attractiveness and ease of use of public spaces to support regeneration;
- Improving journey time reliability on strategic inter-urban routes including the A127, A129, A130 and the A13;
- Improving access to London Gateway Port and Southend Airport.

Transport priorities for the Haven Gateway

- Providing the transport improvements needed to accommodate housing and employment growth in a sustainable way;
- Tackling congestion within Colchester (including the provision of Park & Ride facilities);
- Improving the availability, reliability and punctuality of local bus services;
- Improving the attractiveness of public spaces to support regeneration, particularly within the coastal towns;

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- Improving and promoting cycle networks; and 0improving the availability of travel choices and awareness of them.
 - Improving journeys for commuters travelling to London from Colchester and Braintree; particularly by improving access to railway stations and improving facilities for passengers;
 - Improving transport access to Harwich to enable low carbon expansion of the port and wind port.

Transport priorities for the Heart of Essex

- Delivering transport improvements to support growth, including the North East Chelmsford Station;
- Providing for, and promoting, sustainable forms of travel;
- Maintaining and improving public transport links;
- Tackling congestion and improving journey-time reliability;
- Improving access to railway stations and improving station facilities;
- Extending and upgrading the Chelmsford cycle network and promoting its use
- Improving the attractiveness of streets and public spaces;
- Improving journey time reliability on key routes including the A130;
- Developing long-term solutions to resolving gaps within the strategic network.

Transport priorities for the West Essex

- Improving access to and from the M11 corridor;
- Tackling congestion and improving the management of traffic in Harlow town centre;
- Providing the transport improvements needed to support housing and employment growth;
- Improving the attractiveness of bus services;
- Improving cycling networks and walking routes and encouraging their greater use;
- Improving the attractiveness of public spaces and their ease of use;
- Working with Transport for London to improve the journey experience of Essex residents using the Central Line underground services;
- Improving access to Stansted Airport by low carbon forms of transport.

Transport priorities for rural areas

- Supporting the economy of our historic rural towns and villages, extensive coastline and varied countryside.

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- Providing support for transport in rural areas to ensure that access is provided to employment, education, healthcare and food shopping.
 - Ensuring that people in rural areas are able to access important services (including shopping, healthcare, library facilities, etc.), without needing to travel long distances.
 - Minimising the impact transport has on the character of our rural areas.

Delivery of the Local Transport Plan

It is essential that transport services and projects are delivered efficiently and effectively. Robust procedures are being put in place to ensure that the programme of transport interventions delivers the outcomes identified within the transport strategy. These procedures will see changes to the way Essex County Council works; ensuring that value for money, efficiency and the wider needs of Essex are at the core of everything we do

The Essex Transport Strategy is accompanied by the Implementation Plan that will show how the strategy will be delivered over the period from 2011/12 to 2014/15

We will ensure that the transport programme is developed in a way that identifies and prioritises the most effective interventions and delivers these efficiently, following the governance procedures that have been put in place by Essex County Council.

We will continue to monitor and report on the delivery of the local transport plan. Each of the five outcomes will be monitored by a suite of performance indicators that will together give a broad measure of the effectiveness of our plan.