



# COVID-19 RECOVERY TRANSPORT PLAN

# CONTENTS

- 3 FOREWORD
- 5 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT
- 5 PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN
- 5 OUR GOAL
- 6 OBJECTIVES
- 8 PRINCIPLES
- 9 OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES
- 12 STRATEGY: AIDING RECOVERY THROUGH  
HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION INTERVENTIONS
- 19 CONSULTATION
- 20 COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT
- 22 FUNDING
- 23 TIMESCALES AND NEXT STEPS
- 24 RISKS
- 25 FUTURE DIRECTION OF TRAVEL
- 26 POTENTIAL SCHEMES

# FOREWORD

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Essex is a vibrant, diverse, entrepreneurial and growing county. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected Essex like most of the world. We must now respond to this new reality, ensuring our county is well-prepared to provide our communities with a safer, greener, healthier and sustainable recovery.

**Transport, infrastructure and connectivity are critical to our recovery and this Emergency Essex Transport Plan is the first step in our strategic response.**

This plan supports the gradual lifting of lockdown per Government guidelines, helping business in Essex to re-open for business and enabling people to move safely and efficiently around the county again while adhering to essential social distancing guidelines.

The need for social distancing and more queuing-space requires a fundamental redesign of what we do with our streets and other public spaces, ensuring access to everyone safely and fairly. And with indoor leisure facilities closed and schools open only in a limited way, local environments need to be safer for people young and old to exercise and play.

Support for Essex businesses is also crucial in the emergence from lockdown, nurturing our economy whilst enabling a transition to a better work/home balance through flexible working practices and increased use of communications technology.

For many, working more from home is becoming a new way of life and it will help relieve the pressure on both public transport and the road network. Further roll-out of fibre broadband and 5G will be a critical component of this. This needs to be underpinned by

effective transport infrastructure. The new post-pandemic landscape is also encouraging us to consider how we can get Essex moving in greener, healthier and more sustainable ways without removing choice.

During the lockdown period, road traffic across Essex was reduced by around two thirds for a sustained period of several weeks. This offered residents a noticeably quieter, safer, cleaner-air environment for walking, cycling and enjoying being outdoors. And personal health and wellbeing is now more critical than ever.

We must now lock in the benefits of changed transport patterns for current and future generations. Developing suitable highway changes, providing mobility options and encouraging Essex people to more carefully consider how and when they travel by making informed choices, will play a crucial part in this.

Many more of us are now walking and cycling where it makes local sense and we welcome this, alongside a gradual return to public transport, as we build a sustainable recovery. We must make more space for walking and cycling and for public transport users whilst also considering those with mobility difficulties.

It is essential that we take the brave decisions that will deliver the best outcomes for our county for both short-term recovery

but also for the long-term future for us, our children and future generations.

Essex will introduce many schemes and projects over the coming weeks and months that will support these changes particularly in more crowded urban areas. We will also consider how less populous communities can be addressed at a lower level of intervention, as they are able to maintain social distancing much more easily.

We can deliver some changes quickly with temporary equipment, but others will need more substantial interventions. We will use the relatively short opportunity there is to retain and encourage travel behaviour change to make a long lasting and permanent difference.

Once short term Covid-19 related measures have been taken, those that have worked well and have stood up to thorough monitoring and assessment may be made permanent to support our long-term aim to put sustainable development at the heart of Essex's future.

The Emergency Essex Transport Plan is the start of our work to build a safer, greener, healthier recovery for Essex and there is a lot more work to do - this is just the start of our work to ensure we use the negative impact of the pandemic to trigger a positive set of transport changes that benefit everyone in Essex for the future.







# 1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

The period of national lockdown brought about by the onset of the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic introduced rapid and unprecedented peacetime changes to the way we live our lives. Virtually overnight, in response to this major public health crisis, personal and public transport & outdoors movement almost ceased as part of steps to reduce the spread and impact of the virus on individuals and whole communities.

**The way we move around locally, nationally and internationally greatly changed, resulting in dramatically different travel patterns and a huge reduction in vehicle-related journey volumes in many cases.**

Through this plan we are seeking to retain, influence and encourage the overall vehicle traffic reduction through short, medium and long-term measures that can be implemented with sufficient funding and resources. However, from a drop to around 60% in pre-crisis levels of traffic, this has already begun to bounce back and as of late May 2020, the number of vehicles using Essex' roads have returned to around 40% of the levels seen before the lockdown started.

Overall the population of Essex has followed Government advice not to travel unless it is essential.

While many people are working from home, unfortunately many businesses and all cultural amenities have had to temporarily close, and millions of people nationally are unable to work. Schools have been closed too, with only a slow return to operation as guidelines permit. These changes have meant that the school run and the commute to work has significantly reduced and the use of public transport has reduced by more than 90%. This has all led to far fewer vehicles on the road.

These dramatic changes have in turn have led to great improvements in air quality, with NO2 levels much lower than compared to pre-lockdown levels and significant drops in CO2 generation. Whilst not conclusive, research has indicated that there may be a correlation between regional air pollution levels and COVID-19 cases and deaths in England.

## 2. PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

**There are four purposes to this plan:**

- 1. Help people to move safely around the county again** while adhering to the social distancing recommendations arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2. Get Essex moving again**, supporting the gradual lifting of lockdown according to Government guidelines and proposals
- 3. Support business in Essex** to recommence trade and support ongoing economic recovery
- 4. Grasp the opportunities offered by the change in travel habits** to encourage a sustainably safer, greener, healthier approach to travel in the county

## 3. OUR GOAL

**Our goal is for Essex to lead by example, delivering transport's county-wide response to the Covid-19 health pandemic. In the short- to medium term (2020/21) we want people to travel again in a safe, sustainable manner and support the recovery of our local economies in one of the UK's most prosperous counties.**

In the medium- to long-term (2021 onwards) we want to provide an innovative, affordable, carbon neutral and low emission transport and highway network that will support inclusive economic growth, support changing work and travel practices, tackle the Climate Emergency and promote the health and well-being of Essex's population.



# 4. OBJECTIVES

The County Council has adopted the following objectives to guide the way we deliver transport improvements over the lifetime of this plan and across the county, as we emerge from lockdown.

### 4.1 Improving public safety

Create public areas with the space needed to enable safe social distancing but also a gradual incorporation of other travel methods such as bus when the time is right, ensuring that new infrastructure is resilient and safe to use, especially for non-car users.

### 4.2 Improving quality of life and the local environment

Build on the positives that have emerged from lockdown, creating a new and better quality of life: good neighbourliness, improved levels of air quality and measures to enhance this, lower levels of CO2 and NO2 through more considered vehicle use and increased levels of social activity. Ensuring that the local environment is maintained in a good state for future generations to use and enjoy.

### 4.3 Encouraging active travel and health

Prioritising active personal travel choices such as walking and cycling to retain and improve people's sense of wellbeing through doing more physical activity; consequently helping reduce car-use and congestion and improving long-term health and wellbeing outcomes. Local areas should be places where people are put first, creating stronger communities with space for exercise and play.

### 4.4 Economic recovery and growth

Support sustainable economic recovery and development, and vibrant local economies, by development of a travel infrastructure and environment that ensures people and goods can move safely from place to place, particularly with the growth of online commerce and consequent deliveries to consumers.

### 4.5 Accessibility for all

Improve accessibility, efficiency and attractiveness of transport county wide, thus increasing social inclusion and ensuring there is access to as many opportunities as people wish and need to achieve their full potential in leisure and work hours. We will also encourage people to travel at times to spread and reduce peak rush-hour periods, aligned to new working practices.

### 4.6 Public transport services are retained and promoted

Public transport services like buses and trains are now focused on getting people to their workplaces and destinations whilst maintaining social distancing. In the short to medium-term there is likely to be some reluctance to travel on public transport and public transport capacity will need to be managed to support social distancing on these modes.

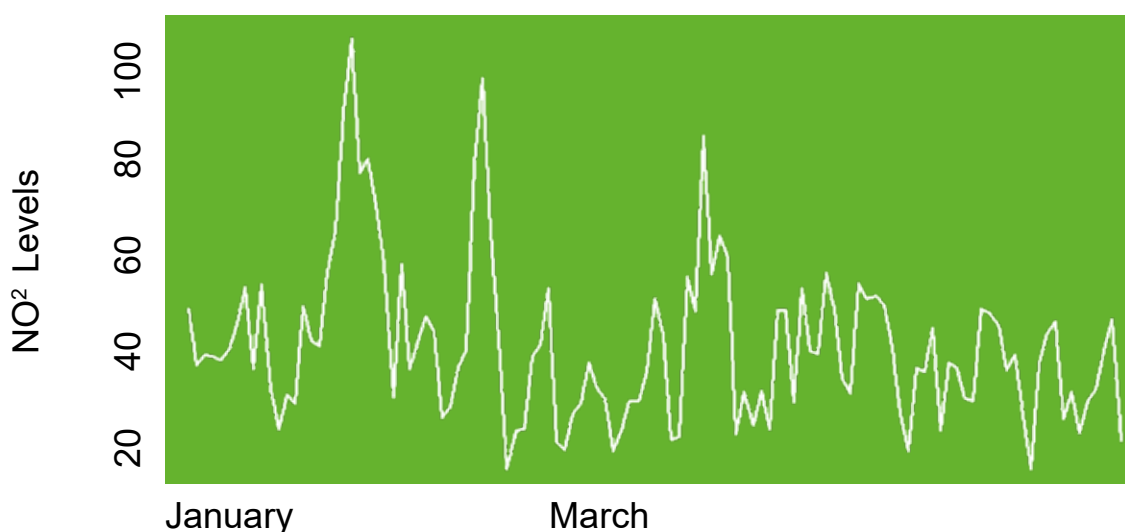


Fig 1: Change in Levels of NO2 levels along Victoria Avenue, Southend, Jan-Mar 2020







# 5. PRINCIPLES

In prioritising, designing and delivering schemes and supporting packages within this plan, we will:

- Ensure safety remains paramount. As well as our usual highways safety engineering work, this also means incorporating rules of social distancing and minimising the amount of contact users have with surfaces, and the facilities that will allow people to clean hands (Fig 2) and other hygiene techniques
- Follow the vision and objectives set out in the Essex's Third Local Transport Plan (LTP3)\*
- Maximise opportunities provided by pre-existing and planned projects and funding to be fast tracked in this new environment
- Identify opportunities to align delivery with the planned highway maintenance programme, or maximum efficiency and least overall disruption
- Implement schemes as trials or temporary measures (using Temporary and/or Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders initially), with options for future conversion to permanent status
- Retain suspension of on street parking restrictions during the period of lockdown and then review them in light of potential future demand for on street parking and until future options have been considered
- Engage and work with District Councils, Ward Councillors and other key partners, and ensure that the public are kept informed and involved with any changes being made
- Develop a communications and marketing campaign to influence and accelerate desired attitude and behaviour change
- Undertake ongoing monitoring and review of all schemes and measures on a regular basis

\* This Emergency Essex Transport Plan does not replace Essex's LTP3.



New Handwashing Stations delivered to site to aid our response to COVID-19



# 6. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Many opportunities and challenges exist and they will be considered in this plan. They include:

**On 11 May 2020, the Government published a national COVID-19 recovery strategy, setting out the conditions and steps for easing lockdown to enable more activities to take place while continuing to control the virus spread.**

Although (as at June 2020) national COVID-19 restrictions are being slowly eased, the core guideline remains that a certain amount of social distancing is likely to be in place for a long period of time. This has implications for the level of street activity and the spacing people need to keep when moving around outdoors. In turn, this will affect how our measures can be developed.

We will focus on introducing practical measures so that residents, workers and visitors to Essex are safe and feel comfortable travelling by any mode into and within Essex and its urban areas.

Building on both the recent changes in travel and work behaviour that have already happened and on broader sustainable travel trends, this plan focuses focusses mainly on healthier and sustainable transport interventions. However, it does not mean that other modes, like cars, are excluded. All transport methods have a part to play in providing a safe and inclusive transport system.

Support for businesses is also crucial in the emergence from lockdown, safeguarding our economy and enabling a transition to a better work/home balance through flexible working patterns, consideration of delivery patterns and increased use of communications technology. Further roll-out of fibre broadband and 5G will be a critical component of this.

The lower traffic levels experienced recently may reduce, but it remains the case that lower traffic may have had many benefits for the health of the population, and it showed that economic growth is not linked inextricably to rising levels of car use. Growth in walking and cycling is also very encouraging for longer-term public health reasons. This plan aims to ensure that this increase in healthier travel methods is locked in and is encouraged as much as is practicably possible.

Unless action is taken, the effect of increased traffic and congestion could fundamentally damage our bus network. And by not providing adequate physical distancing space in town centres at bus stops we could see major challenges to people's confidence in returning to buses. Safe bus travel must be ensured and promoted, to give people the confidence to return to them in numbers at least similar to previous levels. A way will have to be found to balance that and to maintain service reliability and viability for those who are currently dependent on the bus.

## BEST PRACTICE 1: CHELMSFORD CITY GROWTH PACKAGE

At a local level, ECC has been working to deliver a package of measures, a total investment of £15 million via the Chelmsford City Growth Package (CCGP), to address the fact that Chelmsford's core transport network is operating at 96% capacity during peak hours.

Despite this, demand continues to grow, especially with the growth anticipated over the newly adopted Local Plan period to 2036. In addition to the measures there is also city-wide signage and technology improvements. Many of the schemes are cycle and pedestrian focused, designed to aid modal shift from the private car.

The CCGP is being joint funded between ECC and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). The project is based upon the principles and objectives of the 2017 Future Transport Network Strategy for Chelmsford ([www.essex.gov.uk/chelmsfordtransport](http://www.essex.gov.uk/chelmsfordtransport)), which adopts a zonal approach for schemes within one of the UK's newest cities.

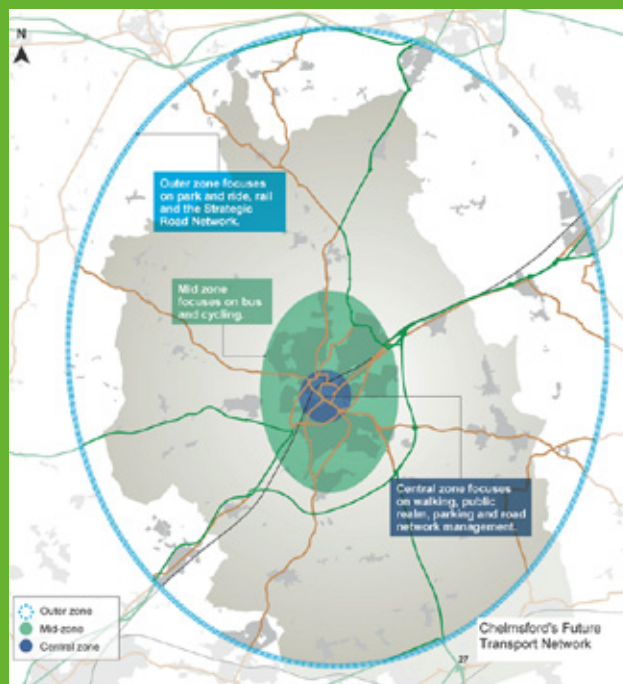


Fig 2: Concentric circles diagram of intercepting car trips in the Chelmsford Strategy

Traffic levels in Essex are currently around 60% of their usual levels on both urban and interurban/rural roads (see fig. 3 and 4) and these routes are more than likely enjoying greatly improved air quality to benefit anyone who happens to live adjacent to these routes. It is essential that this benefit is maintained as part of overall work to improve air quality in Essex and along these routes.

Realistically however, it is likely that the public will feel safer in their own cars when restrictions are eased further, without measures to address the challenges. The effect of an increase in congestion would make it impossible to maintain an effective and viable bus network and make critical deliveries more difficult.

It would also result in delays for workers and for shops and services in all the city and town centres trying to recover from the effects of the pandemic. If visitors are discouraged / impeded from visiting shopping centres these centres will suffer economically.

Emissions from increased traffic will also have a detrimental impact on public health with pedestrians and cyclists being adversely affected. In order to encourage sustainable travel, the health and wellbeing of these two groups must be ensured. As we pass through lockdown phases a staged approach will be best, with health and safety, physical and mental, having the highest priority linked to the proven benefits of active travel. The following five rules will inform how this is carried out:

1. Continue to promote working from home and travel avoidance – where possible – as the best solution
2. Create space for social distancing to enable businesses to reopen and the economy to recover. This requires the reallocation of road space in our towns
3. To prevent congestion, we do not want people to travel into the town centres by car, so we will therefore promote and enable walking and cycling routes into our towns
4. Where private car use presents itself as the safest / only mode of transport for people, we will look to encourage rush-hour peak spreading by encouraging people to change their habits and consider travelling at different times of the day. This will be a key early intervention
5. When the time is right, we will work with bus and train operators to re-establish safe public transport use to support the long-term viability of these services and reduce car use
6. Embed good practice and further enable sustainable access to our towns by creating permanent spaces for pedestrians and improved walking and cycling routes. This may be by encouraging residents to 'reclaim their streets' by cutting off rat runs, enabling more and easier cycling and walking in local neighbourhoods and residential areas.

Measures to address many of these issues are identified in this paper, but we must act quickly with immediate action required in some locations. Helpfully, introducing temporary measures may not be as difficult as would historically have been the case.

The Department for Transport (DfT) has issued guidance around publicising Temporary Traffic Orders, subject to providing public information, which gives local authorities more flexibility in implementing necessary measures to support government guidelines. And there are mechanisms for introducing temporary measures for emergency situations. They also give greater flexibility to amend existing schemes on the ground to better deliver a desired outcome as the situation changes.

It is important that the council can continue to enable compliance with government guidance. 'Lockdown' and social / physical distancing are the main tools currently available to reduce virus transmission. The need for distancing is likely to continue well into the recovery period or until such time as other tools or public health solutions become available. As restrictions ease, the number of trips is likely to increase.

Home working, for those who can, must be encouraged for as many days per week as possible. However, journeys both on public transport and by road need to be managed to ensure physical distancing requirements are maintained, and space is provided on footways to allow pedestrians ample room for passing others and ensuring distancing from cyclists. We need to maintain low levels of private motor vehicle traffic in urban areas, so that walking, and cycling can continue and increase, and to become the natural choice for shorter journeys.





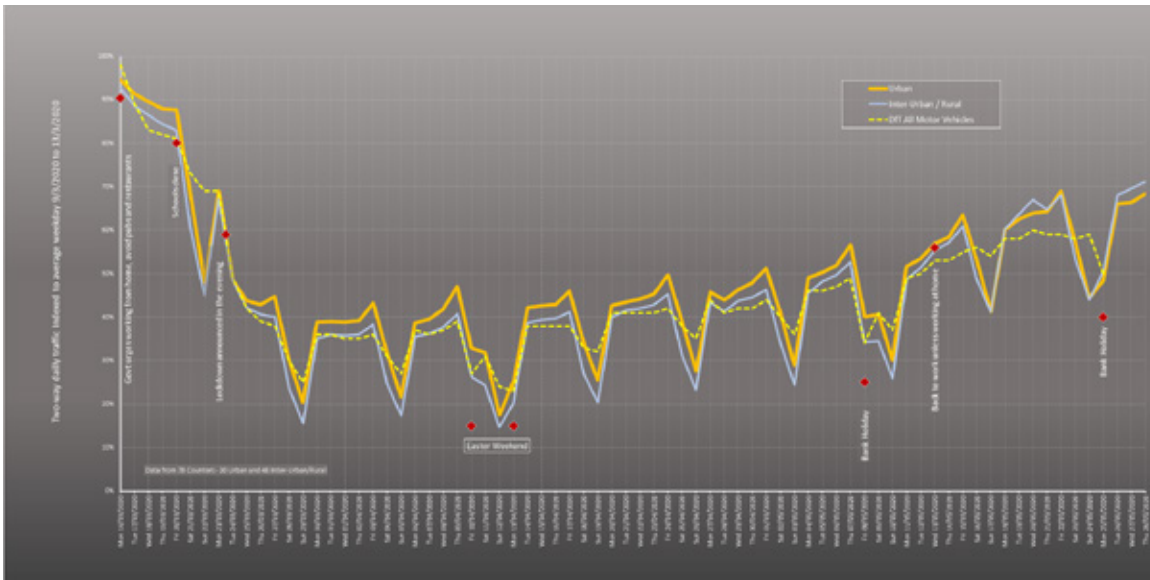


Fig 3: Latest Daily Essex Traffic Trend (28-05-20)

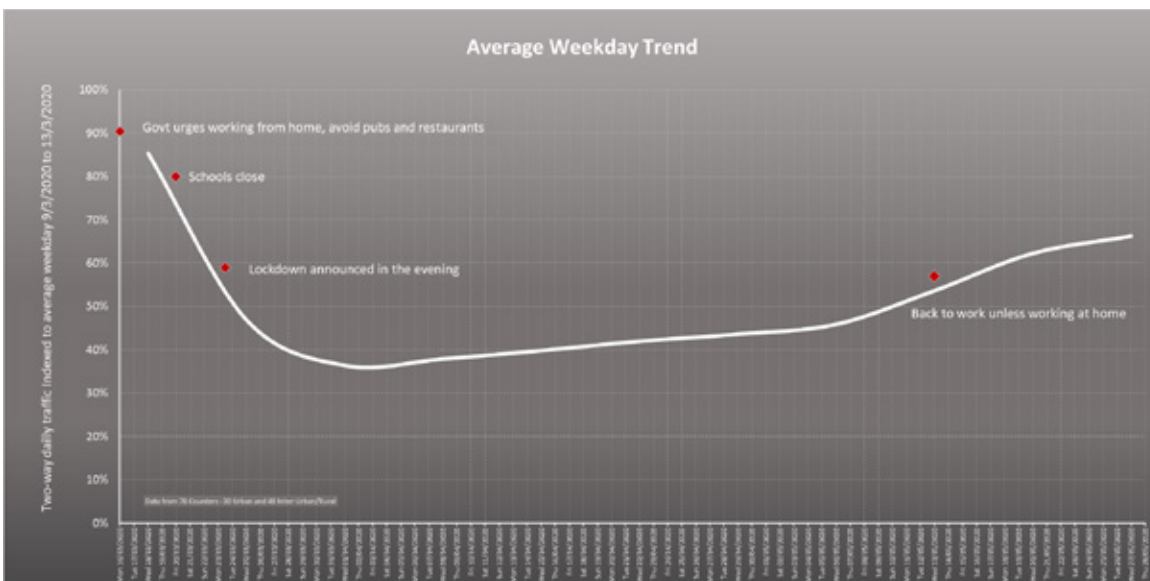


Fig 4: Latest Average Weekday Traffic Trend (28-05-20)

# 7. STRATEGY: AIDING RECOVERY THROUGH HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION INTERVENTIONS

We will follow a two part-strategy to deliver our plan objectives:

- Introduce new engineering-based infrastructure measures to facilitate safe, greener, healthier transport
- Other, non-engineered initiatives

## 7.1 Infrastructure

Where possible, turn temporary motor traffic restrictions into experimental and then permanent schemes, such as coned-off cycle lanes being turned into permanent cycle lanes and develop them as part of low traffic or filtered neighbourhoods such as in London and Bath.

Where we can, these will be delivered within existing resources, but some aspects would require additional funding to implement. However, vehicle access for servicing and people with accessibility requirements will need to be catered for in some way for all restricted streets. Essex will keep access requirements under review.

### 7.1.1 Support for walking

On many urban centre streets, pavements are too narrow to maintain safe social distancing, even with a small proportion of the workforce initially returning to work.

In some streets it is likely that existing arrangements will be a potential danger to the public. People will also have a lower tolerance for crowding on pavements and at crossing-places. This may result in more people walking in the carriageway if nothing is done to increase the amount of pavement space.

This may be exacerbated by queues outside shops, food outlets and offices. Sometimes vegetation can encroach across pavements which forces pedestrians closer together or to step onto the carriageway if not kept cut back. Local councils must be more proactive in ensuring residents keep their hedging and other planting cut back.

Now is the time to introduce temporary increases to the available space and then to formalise that temporary space into permanent pavement space, so locking in this benefit to pedestrians.





After a relatively long lockdown period there may be an increased desire to engage in activities in the public realm, people wanting to safely spend time outdoors, particularly if they return during the summer and early autumn when the weather is likely to be fine.

Work should be carried out to identify opportunities to provide more space so that seating can be accommodated alongside pedestrians moving around at safe social distancing, particularly on streets with food outlets where consideration should be given to creating extra space for queuing. This will however entail a regular cleaning regime set up to ensure seating is clean and safe and so resources will have to be identified.

Rather than return road space to private motor traffic, space and priority must be given to active and sustainable modes like walking and cycling. Once businesses see more people in centres, they will begin making requests for more outside on-street facilities e.g. open street eateries, and requests for extended opening hours.

### 7.1.2 Support for cycling

We will support new, returning and potential cyclists as they choose to convert their cycling for permitted exercise into utility cycling, particularly to and from work. Support will focus around:

- Bike availability and maintenance;
- Route awareness;
- Safety and skills; and
- Trip end facilities.

Until the onset of the pandemic and subsequent lockdown, Essex County Council through its Cycling Strategy recognised the importance of cycling as a solution to the problem of congestion in urban areas and as one way to address poor public health.

Cycling also strengthens the economy, enhances the environment, can facilitate urban renewal and encourage sustainability. All these are now in Essex's recovery.

Good quality and well-planned infrastructure is vital in encouraging cycling and improving safety. Increased cycle parking in key urban locations, plus additional provision at train stations, P&R sites, etc will be provided and interchange hubs will be developed to promote this. Also, any strategy to support the cycling network will include clear signposting.

We will work to ensure that every urban area has a well-planned, safe and well-maintained cycle network that:

- Connects key destinations;
- Supports a network of recreational routes; and
- Caters for all users and abilities

Essex's cycle networks will ensure that the physical barriers to cycling in many of the county's urban areas are progressively broken down and cycling becomes a prioritised and preferred mode of transport in the mind of Essex residents, locking in the significantly increased number of cycle journeys brought about by the pandemic.



# BEST PRACTICE 2: LOCAL CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLANS (LCWIPS)

The LCWIPS have seen a step change nationally in building and applying evidence-led approach to active travel network planning, prioritisation and scheme development. It has become a well-established mechanism for making investments into the walking and cycling network in the last few years.

Fortunately, in Essex, a number of the LCWIPS sit on the existing cycling and walking network and as a short-term measure must be promoted as 'active travel corridors' in response to the CV-19 emergency. In addition, temporary measures should be implemented where there are funnels/pinch points/crossings on the corridors and/or on the sections where provision is missing or poor. These are measures that can be treated as trials and possibly accelerate the implementation of existing projects and schemes to support the local economy by using tactical urbanism/frugal innovations.

## Electric two-wheeled transport

A recent development is the growth in ownership and use of electric bikes or 'e-bikes', in essence a normal bicycle with a modified frame that has been designed to incorporate an electric motor and hold a battery pack. Riders with poor mobility, especially in their legs, will benefit as they don't need to pedal as quickly to get up to speed. The extra power helps older cyclists to cycle later into life as there is less impact on joints and lungs. A number of companies are interested in introducing e-bikes into Essex and positive talks continue.

There is increasing acceptance of 'e-scooters' as a mode of transport, despite limited experience of people having used them and there still being road safety questions that need resolution. E-scooters are now due to be trialled in the summer of 2020 and the Government is amending road traffic regulations to enable these trials to be carried out in selected cities. Essex is engaged in conversations to explore the use of e-scooters as part of sustainable recovery.

## Interim into permanent measures

Where success has been demonstrated, we will turn interim motor traffic restrictions into experimental and then permanent schemes. For example, coned-off shared pedestrian or solo cycle lanes could be turned into permanent cycle lanes and developed further as part of low traffic neighbourhoods, such as in London and Bath.

Maintenance of vehicle and pedestrian service access and access for people with mobility limitations will need to be maintained in some way for all such restricted streets. Essex will keep access requirements under review.

For new developments, ECC will undertake a Development Policy review to embed increased sustainability measures such as tacking car dependency at source. This will help ECC meet its broader health and wellbeing objectives. Where available, these measures will be delivered within existing resources, but some aspects would require additional funding to implement.



A new cycle lane installed on Park Lane, London



A worker puts the finishing touches to a pop-up cycle lane on Park Lane, London





Social distancing measures, Colchester Station

### 7.1.3 Support for Public Transport

In the short to medium-term there is likely to be some reluctance to travel on public transport and public transport capacity will need to be managed to support social distancing.

However, unless action is taken now, there will be a 'double whammy' effect of increased traffic and congestion with people using cars more in the absence of bus and train availability. This will both limit the recovery of the bus network and our capacity to provide adequate physical distancing space in town centres giving passengers the confidence to return to using buses.

As we move further out of lockdown there are unique challenges to the operation of public transport, provided by private operators who need to operate at a profit, with or without subsidies. Sustaining the bus network is particularly problematic, and therefore requires its own response. For buses to be effective, journey time reliability will need to be maintained.

This may require additional road-space and improved busway links. Therefore, the issues around allocation of road-space will need to be considered holistically. Supporting the viability of the bus network will be key to providing a sustainable recovery alongside more support and infrastructure for cycling and walking.

More Park and Ride sites must be considered with sites identified outside Chelmsford and all other major towns in the county. In order to ensure that car dependency is not locked into the 'new normal' it will require huge efforts and commitment to provide a financially sustainable service which support lower income groups, key workers and sustainable alternatives.

We will also work with our train operating companies to ensure stations are safe to use and space is provided to enable passengers to follow social distancing requirements. As lockdown eases, we will work with the rail operators to re-establish a normal level of train travel when it is safe to do so.



A new cycle lane installed on New Street, Chelmsford

#### 7.1.4 Reallocating road space

With finite space (including footways) available, we will allocate more road space to walking and cycling to enable social distancing and support people to use these modes. This will very much depend on how the situation evolves and develops as travel returns to some form of “normal” and public transport has adequate measures in place for enough people to feel confident about using it again.

We will not remove space from public transport (buses) and we will also seek opportunities to introduce additional bus priority measures that support proposals to enable social distancing on buses. In the short term, with reduced capacity on each vehicle, bus operators need to be able to run routes as quickly and efficiently as possible, meaning bus priority measures are extremely important.

Reducing bus journey times can increase the overall number of people that can be carried over the course of a day. To prioritise schemes for road space reallocation to increase the provision for cycles, we will:

- Review and audit carriageways to establish the potential for reallocation of road space such as introduction of new cycle and/or public transport (bus) priority lanes;
- Review and audit high street locations, including on-street parking, to establish any potential for footway widening to enhance social distancing;
- Review and audit footways (where widths permit, and pedestrian use is low) to establish any potential for conversion to shared footway/cycle track, undertaken in reference to the countywide Cycle Strategy Guidelines; and
- Audit footways to ensure that vegetation is cut back/removed (and any extraneous street furniture) to ensure full width of footway is available for use
- Audit of footways to identify areas where existing infrastructure is too narrow to allow social distancing but where corrective action is not possible and so explore other solutions.

We will also review and enhance all existing scheme proposals to maximise walking, cycling and public transport elements, and audit and upgrade as required all existing walking and cycling infrastructure.

As the situation changes as we come out of lockdown, we expect more people to use alternative transport so not all on-street parking should be reinstated.

We want to lock modal shift in now. The permanent removal of some on-street parking may enable a whole street to be remodelled to create a much more cycle- and pedestrian-friendly environment.



### 7.1.5 Managing demand through parking measures

In the context of social distancing, on-street parking can limit the space available to pedestrians. We will retain Blue Badge holder spaces; however the removal of some general on-street parking provides a 'quick win' to deliver more pedestrian space.

As the situation changes as we come out of lockdown, we expect more people to use alternative transport so not all on-street parking should to be reinstated. We want to lock modal shift in now. The permanent removal of some on-street parking may enable a whole street to be remodelled to create a much more cycle- and pedestrian-friendly environment.

As car use has reduced during lockdown, large numbers of vehicles now spend more time parked at home. Where properties do not have access to off-street parking, this can lead to more pavement parking, further limiting space for people to move around at a time when more people are walking in their local area.

Subject to resources and feasibility, we will:  
Review on-street parking and opportunities for footway widening, contributing to the reduction of long-term parking provision;

- Use communications channels to discourage people from parking on footways;
- Simplify opportunities for businesses to introduce parklets and make use of widened footways for spill-out activity;
- Prioritise space for disabled parking, car club vehicles, electric vehicle charging;
- Provide additional cycle and motorcycle parking facilities, including at Park and Ride sites;
- Introduce requirements for increased temporary parking outside of large urban areas to reduce traffic within towns and cities
- Undertake a review of Controlled Parking Zones and how these are implemented;
- Adopt a new Parking Supplementary Planning Document to support the new Development Management DPD.



## 7.2 Other Initiatives

In addition to the infrastructure schemes, a range of other measures can be utilised to support the Covid-19 Recovery Transport Plan vision.

Local authorities have statutory public health duties to perform, including a duty to act to secure the safety of pedestrians and cyclists. They already have the powers to implement most of the reasonable requests to fulfil that duty in response to the pandemic. In most instances local authorities can act quickly if they have the resources to do so but this must be balanced by the issue of pressurised supply chains and delivery delays for key equipment and demands placed by other authorities nationally.

Expectations must be realistic, and proposals will take time, co-operation and planning before schemes can be delivered on the ground. In other areas the Government has issued new statutory guidance on reallocating space to walking and cycling and closures to general traffic on 9 May.

To date no special powers have been provided to enable delivery, but the guidance refers to existing powers. New regulatory traffic signs to support social distancing have been designed. Guidance has also been issued regarding procedural and advertising requirements for Traffic Orders.

### 7.2.1 Prioritising active travel in local neighbourhoods

During lockdown, active travel in local neighbourhoods has been widely adopted for permitted exercise and trips to local shops. The urgent need to convert this to long term behaviour change cannot be understated and there is also real potential to reduce rat runs running through these areas and consider other traffic management measures.

An important tool in enforcing this is to consider introducing further 20 mph zones ('Twenty's Plenty') in local neighbourhoods. We have existing powers that can be used to do this quickly and it is important the county council capitalises on this.



### 7.2.2 Returning to workplaces

We will support business and organisations with planning for and management of travel as their operations adapt to the gradual easing of lockdown, including continued support for agile and flexible working practices.

Support will be given to businesses and organisations to use existing and newly adapted travel planning resources, including online travel planning tools, to conduct travel surveys and focus on short- and medium-term planning for their staff. With proper PPE, there may be opportunities to engage with businesses

to develop personalised travel plans and area-wide travel plans to help businesses work together in safely co-ordinated ways, for example in industrial estates.

Our travel planning team are producing guidance for employers on how to consider post-Covid-19 transport in the most sustainable way, embedded active travel and car avoidance from the start.

### 7.2.3 Reopening schools

We will support schools with planning for increased attendance by pupils of different ages, focussing on sustainable transport to/from schools and safe social distancing at drop off and collection times, supporting the installation of emergency school streets measures. We will work closely with the Education Transport team to overcome any issues.

We will continue to support schools to use online travel planning tools such as Modeshift STARS and will work with individual schools, if practical, to find ways to deliver the strong messages to all parents and carers that the school run should be done by walking, scooting or cycling as the norm, where possible.

### 7.2.4 Policy Review

For new developments, ECC will undertake a Development Policy review to embed increased sustainability measures such as tackling car dependency at source. This will help ECC meet its broader health and wellbeing objectives.

### 7.2.5 Data and Network Management

We use data on a day to day basis to manage the transport network in real time, as well as to inform future developments and strategic planning decisions. This data informed our response to lockdown and will inform our response to the recovery in the same way.

This will include appropriate traffic signal timing changes, for example giving more priority to pedestrians to reduce time standing waiting in groups, making sure the busiest junctions operate in line with traffic levels and, where possible,

coordinating traffic signals along key corridors especially where this provides priority to public transport.

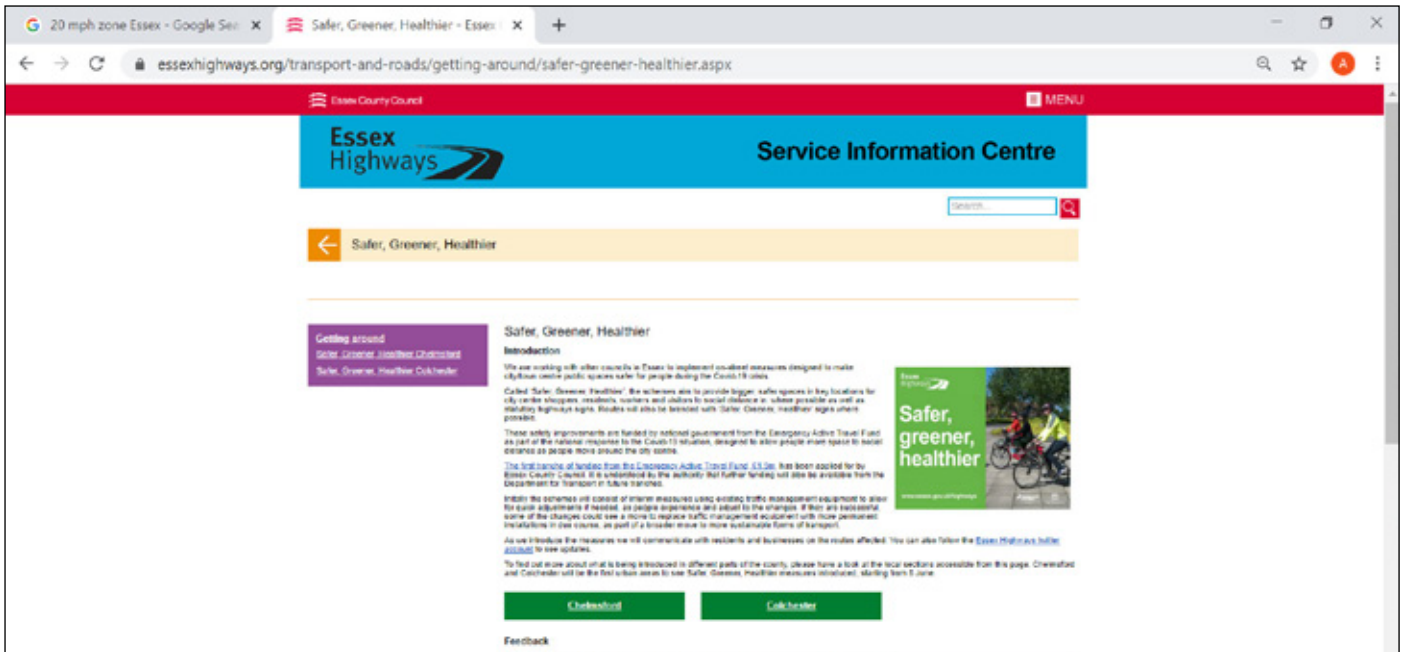
### 7.2.6 Management of Street Works

During lockdown we are taking the opportunity to permit and carry out street works in ways that would have been too disruptive under normal circumstances. As demand for travel increases, it will be necessary to balance the implementation of street works, maintenance and other highway works against the reallocation of road space to active travel and public transport, recognising the importance of these works in getting the economy going again.



# 8. CONSULTATION

The emergency nature of the initial infrastructure projects will mean changes to the way in which Essex usually consults with key partners and the public. It is important to note that these circumstances have resulted in a situation where new and experimental methods and practices have had to be quickly adopted to react with the required speed and agility, particularly in the first stages of this work.



**Nevertheless, local District Councils will be approached for their comment and views and the views of other local politicians and key sectoral groups will be sought.**

Essex will ensure that key partners and the public are kept informed of the work we are doing, through a dedicated webpage <https://www.essexhighways.org/transport-and-roads/getting-around/safer-greener-healthier.aspx> on the Essex Highways website, and the reasons for a particular scheme, but will not be able to carry out extensive public consultation prior to implementation.

We will also invite comments and feedback once measures are in place and operational and engage with local people to determine how it is working for them and if it is achieving the intended aims. An email address [SGH.Routes@essex.gov.uk](mailto:SGH.Routes@essex.gov.uk) has been set-up to receive comments and queries.

This ongoing dialogue with individuals and communities will help to inform future scheme development and whether measures evolve or become permanent fixtures.

It is important to stress that the situation is very fluid and it is one that nobody has had to deal with before. This plan is very much a live plan, evolving all the time as and when the situation changes.



Planning for a second phase of safe and sustainable travel initiatives will begin soon. Districts are encouraged to prioritise their ideas locally and then share with ECC. All phase two initiatives will be contingent on DfT funding and criteria.

# 9. COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Delivering clear, comprehensive communications to the travelling public is essential. We want people to consider walking and cycling as essential modes of travel, for all or part of many of their journeys - and not as an afterthought. This is a key element for raising awareness of the travel and health benefits and the issues around air pollution and climate change which the switch in mode will bring.

**We will also want to build awareness of the changes people can make to their behaviour to have a positive impact, and to emphasise that this transport plan is part of a public health plan, albeit with a strong transport focus; and one which strongly supports mental and physical wellbeing in the short- and longer-term.**

An initial recovery communications theme 'Safer, Greener, Healthier' has been approved and introduced which builds upon Government approaches and messages, as these have generally been well received and observed.

This also implies a public health narrative around maintaining safe physical distancing during what are likely to be recovery phases. It is hoped that this will support community spirit which has been revived in a time of crisis, where communities have rallied in mutual aid.

**Safer, Greener, Healthier** campaign aims:

- To be seen to be working in partnership, at pace, to provide more space for safe social distancing for people in urban high-footfall areas ('Safety' message)
- To encourage shifts seen recently to more walking, cycling and jogging/running ('Sustainability' message)
- To support broader wellbeing and healthy living initiatives that bring personal and societal benefits ('Wellbeing' message) – including air quality

The Safer, Greener, Healthier campaign will be developed as a key Essex Highways umbrella communications strategy for the longer-term. The slogan will appear on on-street measures that Essex highways put in place, and once a scheme is confirmed for a semi-permanent adoption, we will, where possible, swop orange and white traffic management equipment or Green and white, to help positive identification of such schemes.

## Medium-Term

The County Council has already carried out some research into the barriers of using buses and walking and cycling, just before the pandemic began. This research will be used to help scope a longer-term marketing plan, with the aim of it helping to lock in behaviour change, for the longer-term, if not indefinitely. National research e.g. IPSOS Mori will also be utilised.

Community safety and support of people's general health has been another theme during the crisis, and this could be helpful in getting across our messages in ways that resonate with the public so that they understand the wider purpose and be less inclined to view any temporary measures as restrictive.

The plan will also cover advertising and Legal Notices and engagement with key partners and stakeholders. The use of social media can allow ECC to engage with residents in real-time to gauge their reactions to ongoing works and initiatives, interact with them and participate in any community discussions taking place, e.g. through Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and other platforms.

The following key messages will be widely disseminated as the situation moves further into the 'new normal':

- We are making further changes to the transport network to facilitate social distancing, such as increasing the amount of space for walking and cycling and allowing more trips to be made actively as lockdown is gradually lifted.
- Travel should still be limited, and people should continue to work from home where possible to keep the network flowing so key workers can reach their workplaces.
- Essex already has many good and safe routes available for cycling and walking.
- We want a low carbon, clean air recovery as we emerge from lockdown/COVID-19.
- Much good work has been undertaken over the years into road safety and these road safety measures will continue to be invested in and promoted as we come out of lockdown to ensure that Essex's road network remains safe for all users.



Essex  
Highways

Safer,  
greener,  
healthier

[www.essex.gov.uk/highways](http://www.essex.gov.uk/highways)



RINGWAY  
JACOBS





## 10. FUNDING

On 9 May 2020, we welcomed a Government statement by the Secretary of State for Transport announcing a £2 billion funding package to support walking and cycling over the next few years and that the first stage of this, a £250 million Emergency Active Travel Fund, will be created for swift, emergency interventions to make cycling and walking safer.

**The first tranche of funding from the Emergency Active Travel Fund has been applied for by Essex County Council. The authority understands that further funding will also be available from the Department for Transport in future tranches.**

Under the 'Safer, Greener, Healthier' banner we are now (June 2020) preparing and rolling out a number of protected spaces for walking and cycling, pop-up bike lanes, wider pavement areas, safer junctions, cycle and bus only corridors, using standard traffic management equipment.

These first tranche of activities focusing on temporary footway widening and sustainable travel routes is estimated to be relatively low cost. These costs would

cover related traffic management, implementation and maintenance.

Costs will depend on the level of interventions at each location, how much physical equipment is required and the length of time for which the interventions need to be in place. The costs of delivery relate to on-street changes and associated communications costs, staff costs for design and deployment, and data collection, monitoring and analysis of feedback.

Any contribution that Essex receives will only form a part of the overall investment that will be required to deliver the step-change in infrastructure envisaged in this Emergency Transport Plan.



# 11. TIMESCALES AND NEXT STEPS

Essex has plans and support for many schemes and projects and in order to commence work on them there is an urgent need to evaluate them against the plan's Vision and Objectives to assess their deliverability. It will also be possible to deliver some quickly with temporary infrastructure, while others will need more substantial changes to make them deliverable in the medium-term. Initial interim on-street schemes were introduced to Chelmsford City centre and Colchester town centre during week commencing 8 June.

**Schemes of any type will also need to lock in, promote and encourage travel behaviour change and make a long lasting and permanent positive difference.**

Once short-term Covid-19 public health related measures have been taken, those that have worked well and have stood up to thorough monitoring and assessment, will be made permanent to support the long-term aspiration to embed sustainable transport in Essex, rather than removed.

There is a need to act now to determine which projects can be delivered as part of this plan and which will deliver the most benefits to Essex. Once this initial evaluation is complete, a pipeline with a timescale for delivery will be drawn up, considering what can be implemented in the:

- Short term/immediate – over the next few weeks;
- Medium term – over the next few months; and
- Longer term – beyond 2020.

On the ground delivery will follow, but with flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances, particularly around future Government announcements, Covid-19 alert levels and what activities people are permitted to carry out at each alert level.

It should be reiterated that the impacts of all projects will materially contribute to Essex meeting our long-term Net Zero targets.

## 11.1 Short term or immediate: temporary and emergency measures

The emphasis here will be on immediate public safety interventions to allow social distancing, with a focus on local urban centres and any other places where retail and work locations generate greater demand for travel.

## 11.2 Medium term: the economy reopens while social distancing is still in place

In this timescale, we expect to focus on response to four key changes:

- Phased return to school or other place of education;
- Opening of non-essential retail and some hospitality venues;
- Re-introduction of more public transport in urban areas, subject to strict distancing measures.
- Permitting cultural and sporting events behind closed doors;

## 11.3 Long term: a low-carbon, clean air transition to a 'new normal'

Lockdown has changed some travel habits significantly, and for long enough that there is the very real opportunity to lock in new and more sustainable habits in the whole population. Without this, we will not reach Net Zero in 2050.

Careful and appropriate messaging both locally and nationally will be crucial here, as well as providing infrastructure that strongly discourages a return to car dependency, encourages walking and cycling and ensures that our public transport services are able to return to full strength and to increase patronage and mode share.

Our focus will be on maximising the number of activities that can take place safely in public spaces while mitigating against the potential increase of car traffic.



# 12. RISKS

Any apparent attempt to change the way that people go about their normal daily routines runs the risk of opposition and, in extreme cases, the breaking of any laws that have been put in place to achieve this. Among the risks anticipated are the following:

1. The public will understandably prefer to undertake most trips by car to avoid contact with others if they can. In fact, this may drive short-term increases in car use beyond pre-COVID-19 levels, particularly whilst public transport modes remain unattractive.
2. Natural reluctance on the part of some people to seriously consider changing deeply ingrained travel habits – for instance an unwillingness to consider swapping their car for a bike ride or walk, over relatively short local journeys.
3. Some journey times for motor vehicles will be longer as a result of the changes outlined, with some streets busier and possibly more traffic, potentially resulting in delays and parking problems.
4. If the County Council is not proactive in allocating space on the highway, there could be public safety risks as the public are forced into greater proximity and are unable to maintain physical distancing, or into live carriageways.
5. A reputational risk, if the council is seen to be slow to respond to create further measures to protect the public or similarly, if they are seen to be rushing through ill-conceived measures
6. Deliveries and servicing: servicing and loading/unloading arrangements will be considered as part of the design process. However in most cases it will be possible to engage with the businesses in advance. Some may be reluctant or find it difficult to make the necessary changes.
7. Resourcing of materials: Neighbouring London Boroughs, unitary authorities and Counties are also delivering temporary changes to their streets and this may result in delays in supply chains and reduced ability to source equipment and materials. Many authorities are already reporting delays.
8. There are further risks associated with 'do nothing', if there is an increase in pedestrians in the road who are then at greater risk as a result of reduced road safety.

The temporary measures proposed in this paper are intended to mitigate these risks and continue to give confidence to the public by managing transitions out of the Covid-19 Lockdown to support public health and the local economy.





# 13. FUTURE DIRECTION OF TRAVEL

Before the pandemic outbreak, there had already been some shift towards sustainable transport modes, which the lockdown has been able to build upon. This is also seeing significant steps towards decarbonising Essex's transport sector.

**As we prepare for a move out of lockdown in the second half of 2020, we must retain this shift. We must embed the new safer, greener, healthier behaviours, encourage people to continue to walk and cycle for shorter journeys and to work to rebuild public transport when it is safe to do so.**

We must make sure that Covid-19 does not force us to take a step backwards with a rise in private car use and its accompanying adverse effects on air quality and congestion.

Currently, roads are quiet enough for many people new to cycling to try it more easily for essential journeys or exercise. Air pollution has dropped and levels of noise on our streets have diminished to levels not experienced in a generation. There are more children and families out walking, alongside other, more experienced walkers taking advantage of the lower levels of traffic; or cycling on residential roads, than ever before.

Both groups would greatly benefit from far fewer cars on residential streets to become the norm, with active travel and public transport dominating our streets as part of a thriving society. This sudden change has made many people more aware of the high levels of air pollution in the air they breathe and they compare the previous choked streets to how they are at the moment.

This must be a catalyst for action and change, discouraging a return to car dominated streets once the pandemic is over. As the crisis recedes, urgent consideration of several issues is needed:

- Avoiding motor traffic levels being higher than before, as people continue to steer clear of public transport;
- Will those newly returned to cycling carry on cycling as motor traffic levels rise?
- Will parents continue to ride with their children?
- Awareness to design and introduce schemes that also work safely for people with disabilities
- If more people work at home more often, what will be the impact be on private and public transport, and parking?
- Will shopping patterns change, with more home deliveries and online shopping, which could be concerning for local economies and residential areas?

The latter needs to be carefully managed through this response and the County Council's strategy, in addition to locking in the benefits which have already occurred, with targeted and planned interventions.





# 14. POTENTIAL SCHEMES

In order to move the Plan forward, realise the health, environmental and economic benefits, and lock in the benefits of the temporary measures, schemes across Essex are being aligned / consolidated.

**This is an evolving process and will be informed and enabled as funding is available and agreement reached by various partners on what best works well in different areas of Essex.**

As a way of ensuring that different types of settlement are treated in the same way, a series of settlement types displaying similar characteristics and issues have been drawn up:

**Type One:** Type One: complex and dense geographic towns with high pedestrian demand but with limited ability to achieve social distancing without a holistic approach to transport management. In these locations social distancing and the promotion of active travel will require comprehensive introduction of traffic management plus new temporary cycling and walking infrastructure.

**Type Two:** more modern or less complex high demand towns with more opportunity to reallocate road space. In these locations simpler traffic management should enable social distancing and active travel measures to be introduced.

**Type Three:** traditional market towns with linear high streets. In these locations social distancing is more easily achieved through wider pavements and narrowing of carriageways with reduced parking.

**Type Four:** Large Public Transport interchanges requiring managed access and egress and integration with buses, walking and cycling - examples include railway and bus stations. In these locations the interface between the highway and the interchange will need traffic management measures to promote social distancing.

**Type Five:** high intensity single purpose land uses often with tidal movements. Examples include retail parks, schools, commercial estates. These locations will need a more tailored approach with other partners.





## LIST OF SETTLEMENTS IN ESSEX BY POPULATION BASED ON 2011 CENSUS RESULTS

SIZE	CITY/TOWN	POPULATION	TYPE 1	TYPE 2	TYPE 3	TYPE 4	TYPE 5
<b>OVER 100,001</b>	<b>SOUTHEND</b>	<b>175,547</b>					
	<b>COLCHESTER</b>	<b>119,441</b>	<b>*</b>			<b>*</b>	
	<b>CHELMSFORD</b>	<b>110,507</b>	<b>*</b>			<b>*</b>	
	<b>BASILDON</b>	<b>107,123</b>		<b>*</b>			
<b>10,001- 100,001</b>	<b>RAYLEIGH/SOUTH BENFLEET/THUNDERSLEY</b>	<b>95,580</b>					
	<b>HARLOW</b>	<b>82,059</b>		<b>*</b>			
	<b>BRENTWOOD</b>	<b>52,586</b>					
	<b>CLACTION-ON-SEA</b>	<b>50,548</b>		<b>*</b>			
	<b>BRAINTREE</b>	<b>41,634</b>	<b>*</b>				
	<b>CANVEY ISLAND</b>	<b>38,170</b>					
	<b>BILLERICAY</b>	<b>34,274</b>			<b>*</b>		
	<b>WICKFORD</b>	<b>33,486</b>					
	<b>LOUGHTON</b>	<b>31,106</b>					
	<b>WITHAM</b>	<b>25,353</b>					
	<b>MALDON</b>	<b>21,462</b>	<b>*</b>				
	<b>HARWICH</b>	<b>19,738</b>					
	<b>WALTHAM ABBEY</b>	<b>18,743</b>					
	<b>SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS</b>	<b>33,486</b>					
	<b>SAFFRON WALDEN</b>	<b>15,210</b>	<b>*</b>				
	<b>WALTON-ON-THE-NAZE</b>	<b>12,054</b>			<b>*</b>		
	<b>HALSTEAD</b>	<b>11,906</b>					
	<b>CHIGWELL</b>	<b>10,365</b>					
	<b>EPPING</b>	<b>10,289</b>			<b>*</b>		
<b>5,001- 10,000</b>	<b>TIPTREE</b>	<b>9,182</b>					
	<b>BRIGHTLINGSEA</b>	<b>8,076</b>					
	<b>GREAT DUNMOW</b>	<b>7,749</b>					
	<b>GREAT NOTLEY</b>	<b>7,749</b>					
	<b>WIVENHOE</b>	<b>7,637</b>					
	<b>WEST MERSEA</b>	<b>7,057</b>					
	<b>BURNHAM-ON-CROUCH</b>	<b>6,905</b>					
	<b>DANBURY</b>	<b>6,673</b>					
	<b>STANSTED</b>	<b>6,669</b>					
	<b>MOUNTFICHET</b>						
	<b>HULLBRIDGE</b>	<b>6,097</b>					
	<b>CHIPPING ONGAR</b>	<b>6,093</b>					
	<b>MANNINGTREE</b>	<b>5,696</b>					
	<b>SHENFIELD</b>	<b>5,432</b>			<b>*</b>		
	<b>GREAT WAKERING</b>	<b>5,400</b>					
	<b>INGATESTONE</b>	<b>5,365</b>					
<b>0- 5,000</b>	<b>WRITTLE</b>	<b>4,840</b>					
	<b>JAYWICK</b>	<b>4,799</b>					
	<b>COGGESHALL</b>	<b>4,727</b>					
	<b>KELVEDON</b>	<b>4,717</b>					
	<b>FRINTON-ON-SEA</b>	<b>4,687</b>			<b>*</b>		

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