

Active Travel Essex - Colchester

Colchester Town Centre Various Restrictions

STATEMENT OF REASONS

In July 2020 the Government announced the second Active Travel Fund (ATF2). It invited highways authorities to make bids for funding. The objectives of the ATF2 were to help local authorities implement measures to create an environment that is safer for both walking and cycling. This was to initially enable cycling to replace journeys made by public transport, in order to help avoid overcrowding on the public transport network and to help maintain social distancing during Covid. In the long term it was also expected to help deliver significant health, environmental and congestion benefits by providing better infrastructure to create streets which can accommodate increased levels of cycling and walking.

Essex County Council (ECC) submitted a bid and was awarded £7.4m in November 2020. This was in order for ECC to deliver five schemes across Essex to maintain the growth in walking and cycling seen across the five areas during the period of the pandemic. This funding, together with an element of match funding by ECC, will fund schemes to improve walking and cycling in Basildon (Wickford), Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, and Colchester.

A key part of ensuring success is that ECC has been working with the local partners and parties in order that the schemes garner wider local support; as well as supporting the social and economic recoveries of each locality after the Covid-19 pandemic. ECC undertook a robust and meaningful consultation, taking advantage of technology. Engagement activities that were undertaken included a series of in person consultation road-show events at the locations where the schemes are proposed to allow people to view the plans and ask questions. In addition, a Steering Group for each scheme was made up of representatives from the local authorities, community groups, businesses, access and active travel groups, and these groups helped to shape the proposed schemes ready for consultation.

Detailed information on the process as undertaken can be viewed on the Cabinet Member Action Form Approved by the Leader of Council on CMA FP/142/08/21 "Active Travel Fund 2":

https://cmis.essex.gov.uk/essexcmis5/Decisions/tabid/78/ctl/ViewCMIS_DecisionDetails/mid/422/Id/8818/Default.aspx

Following temporary restriction introduced in 2020 an extensive engagement and consultation has been undertaken with local stakeholders in order to develop a set of permanent restrictions. The proposals for Colchester Borough will see restrictions to Colchester High Street to promote it as a highly attractive area for pedestrians, shoppers, visitors and businesses by restricting the use to through traffic 7am to 7pm. Walking and cycling connections will be improved on a key route to facilitate safer journeys north to south and east to west. This will see a mix of new infrastructure, the introduction of 20mph areas and the creation of new School Streets. The proposals

address journeys which we know are being made by car and therefore look to make walking and cycling a more attractive opportunity.

For further information about the Active Travel Fund and the proposed measures across the Borough of Colchester, please visit our website:

- www.essex.gov.uk/safer-greener-healthier
- www.essexhighways.org/safer-greener-healthier-colchester