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## **More progress on Colchester street improvements with introduction of semi-permanent measures**

***Release issued in partnership by Essex County Council and Colchester Borough Council***

In June, temporary 'Safer, Greener, Healthier' public safety and social distancing measures were introduced in Colchester. Next week, upgrades to the existing street equipment will be made.

There will be new types and colours of semi-permanent barriers and other roadside items which will require less maintenance, will be more robust, will help identification of the new areas and also reduce confusion with routine roadworks.

Since the rapid introduction in June of the initial temporary measures with Colchester Borough Council many people, including residents, special interest groups and businesses have made suggestions for improvements.

The measures have been monitored and a group made up of local councillors has met and discussed various options and concerns.

Cllr Kevin Bentley, Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Infrastructure said: "We have listened, taken expert advice and approved scheme modifications which address local needs but still deliver the objective of supporting public safety."

"More robust and improved barriers and signs are useful but what has been really valuable is the public engagement and variety of ideas and comments coming into us from all sides. We had to install these measures at speed once government said go but now we are developing a more in depth understanding of what works best for everyone and what will best help us achieve our Safer, Greener and Healthier goals."

"Our aim is to enable people to social distance effectively on busy routes and outside shops, to encourage safer, easier journeys on foot and by bike instead of always opting for the car and to assist longer-term government plans to reduce congestion and pollution by providing more opportunity to use sustainable forms of travel."

Examples of the upgrades to take place include; adjustments to allow better access to businesses in North Station Road and removal of some trial measures to reduce local congestion in the same area; returning areas of the carriageway back to parking spaces and detailed changes to the cycle route from St Peters St to the High St. An expansion of the 20mph speed limit into adjacent side-streets is also being considered.

Essex Highways is now preparing to make the changes, upgrading existing traffic management equipment to 'semi-permanent' measures. This will include different forms of barrier and lane

separators and other physical measures. Where possible, the semi-permanent changes will be made distinguishable from roadworks.

These measures will remain in place whilst long-term plans are considered and developed.

Feedback and ideas are still very welcome via [SGH.Routes@essex.gov.uk](mailto:SGH.Routes@essex.gov.uk) as the discussions about longer-term aims and plans to make our streets Safer, Greener and Healthier continue.

Cllr David King, Colchester Borough Council Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, added: "The coronavirus crisis has dramatically altered the way people are using streets in and around the Town Centre, with many more residents walking and cycling to make essential journeys or exercise. It was important, therefore, that we moved quickly and flexibly to launch the 'Safer, Greener, Healthier' scheme and to put people's health first.

"We are grateful for the interest of businesses, residents and local councillors. Their views are helping us adjust and change, as we await the upgraded measures.

"Further discussions will be held with local business and the Business Improvement District to make this work as well as we can for us all. We can and must reconcile our duty to enable social distancing and pedestrian and cyclist flows, with the need of businesses and residents. We have a shared interest in safeguarding public health, safety and wellbeing, better air quality in the town and the next steps, including more 20 mph zones."

Now is the time to rethink your travel for short journeys to help ease congestion, clean up air pollution, and improve your health. To help you make the change, you can also now visit the [Stop. Swap. GO! website](#) to find out more and how you can win prizes with a 60 Day Challenge currently on offer.

**ENDS**