

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: COVID-19 RECOVERY TRANSPORT PLAN



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**Pedestrians and people who cycle are now (June 2020) starting to reap the benefits of investment in helping residents travel safely around Essex. Essex County Council (ECC) is improving and expanding the cycling infrastructure, changing parts of the road network, and extending footpaths in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.**

The funding comes as part of the £250 million Department for Transport (DfT) Active Travel Fund, the first stage of a £2 billion investment for Britain's transport network. To support this, ECC have developed a recovery strategy focusing on:

1. Helping people to move safely around the county, while adhering to the social distancing rules
2. Getting Essex moving again, whilst continuing to follow Government guidelines
3. Supporting business in Essex to recommence trade and support ongoing economic recovery
4. Encouraging a sustainable safer, greener, healthier approach to travel in the county

As we emerge from lockdown and more and more shops open and with increasing numbers of people returning to work, these new measures are essential to ensuring the health and safety of all residents and to prevent further infection. By delivering and promoting interventions

like this we will promote healthy travel choices and help tackle the climate emergency and air quality challenges, as well as supporting a sustainable local economic recovery.

## **Locking in sustainable transport behaviour change**

Working closely with businesses, employers, and transport operators, we can deliver lasting and sustainable improvements to the way people travel about Essex and develop healthier, happier and more equitable communities for the future.

Over the next few months the focus will be on:

- Enhancing safe routes for pedestrians and people who cycle
- Reducing speed limits to 20 mph
- Improving existing paths and cycle routes
- Encouraging active travel and healthy travel

Our goal is to help people get back to work, education, shopping and leisure by sustainable means and at a safe social distance. The plans will also encourage more residents to choose active and sustainable alternatives over motor transport.

A second phase of funding will focus on longer-term transport upgrades and will address longer-term active travel. Plans under consideration include:

- Sustainable transport to/from schools, using 'school streets' measures
- New Park and Ride sites
- Trialling e-scooters and provision of more electric car charging points
- Publicising ECC's cycling and walking strategy
- Establishment of four Rapid Transit routes in Essex, initially associated with the Garden Communities.

These longer-term schemes will make cycling, walking and public transport more accessible and safer by increasing road space for non-motor transport. The initiatives support ECC's long-term aim to bring about a permanent shift to active and sustainable travel.

Talking about the initiatives, Cllr Kevin Bentley, Deputy Leader, Essex County Council and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, highlighted the opportunities to transform Essex: "We have a real opportunity here to make a difference. We want to transform the way Essex residents travel.

"The funding will enable us to make our county a place where many more journeys are made by people cycling who feel safer, and pedestrians who have improved routes and where communities and the workplace are connected for a more sustainable future."

