

A Better Connected Essex

Essex Transport Strategy

Public Consultation Summary Report

December 2025

Essex Transport Strategy

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Document history and status

Revision	Date	Description	By	Review	Approved
01	25/11/25	Draft public consultation summary report	GB	VHJ	VHJ
02	03/12/25	Final public consultation summary report	GB	VHJ	VHJ

Foreword

Transport is essential for the efficient and effective movement of people and goods necessary to support and grow the local economy. It connects businesses to their customers and suppliers, and people's homes to workplaces, schools and colleges. For our transport network to adapt to the changing ways we live and travel, a new strategy is needed to guide our approach to transport in Essex.

[‘A Better Connected Essex’](#) is Essex County Council's new transport strategy, also known as our Local Transport Plan (LTP). It sets out our vision and priorities for transport in Essex, and how we will deliver our desired outcomes. The LTP will help unlock future funding opportunities.

Every local transport authority must have an LTP, even those in a transitional period such as Essex which will see the election of a first Mayor for Greater Essex, the reorganisation of current local authorities, and changes to responsibilities for transport in Essex.

A ‘Greater Essex’ Local Transport Plan will ultimately be needed by the new Mayoral Combined County Authority. But this is likely to take several years, and there are significant benefits in finalising a new interim transport strategy now.

A new interim transport strategy will:

- Ensure we meet our statutory duty and have an updated plan covering the transition period while new local government structures are established
- Provide clear and up-to-date policy direction, particularly for Local Plans, which set out how and where areas should be used and developed
- Help support funding bids
- Provide a starting point for the development of a new Greater Essex Local Transport Plan by the new Mayoral Combined County Authority.

Developing a transport strategy takes several years: we carried out a first (part one) public consultation in summer 2024, focused on our initial draft key themes and outcomes. After reviewing feedback from that consultation and developing the full draft Essex Transport Strategy, we then ran a second (part two) public consultation in summer 2025. The second consultation provided an opportunity for people to comment on the full draft strategy, as well as 13 separate place-based strategies which set out how we aim to deliver our vision in different parts of Essex. The place-based strategies were previously known as implementation plans, however, we renamed them following feedback from the consultation.

The two public consultations showed a good level of overall support for our transport strategy. They also provided useful feedback to help us in refining and finalising the strategy, which is expected to be adopted in early 2026, subject to formal approvals.

This public consultation summary report provides a high-level summary of the feedback we received. For more detailed analysis of the feedback, please refer to our full public consultation report.

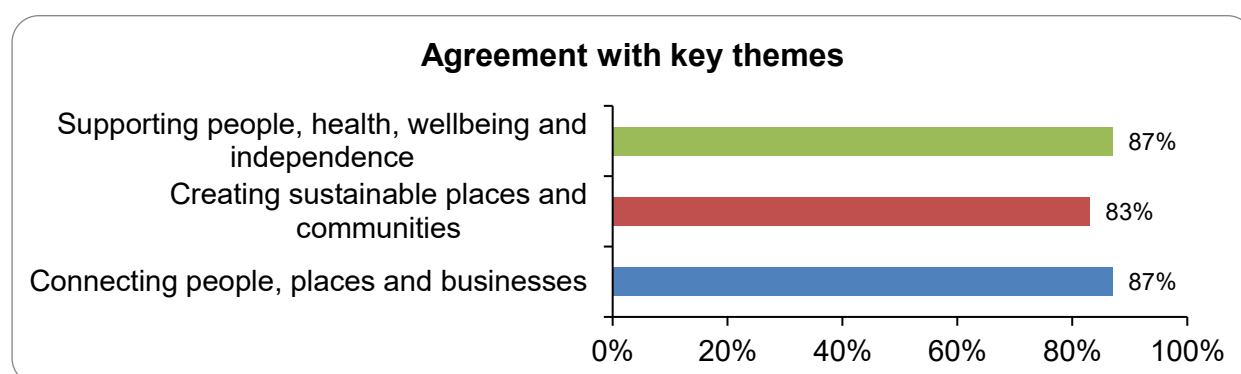
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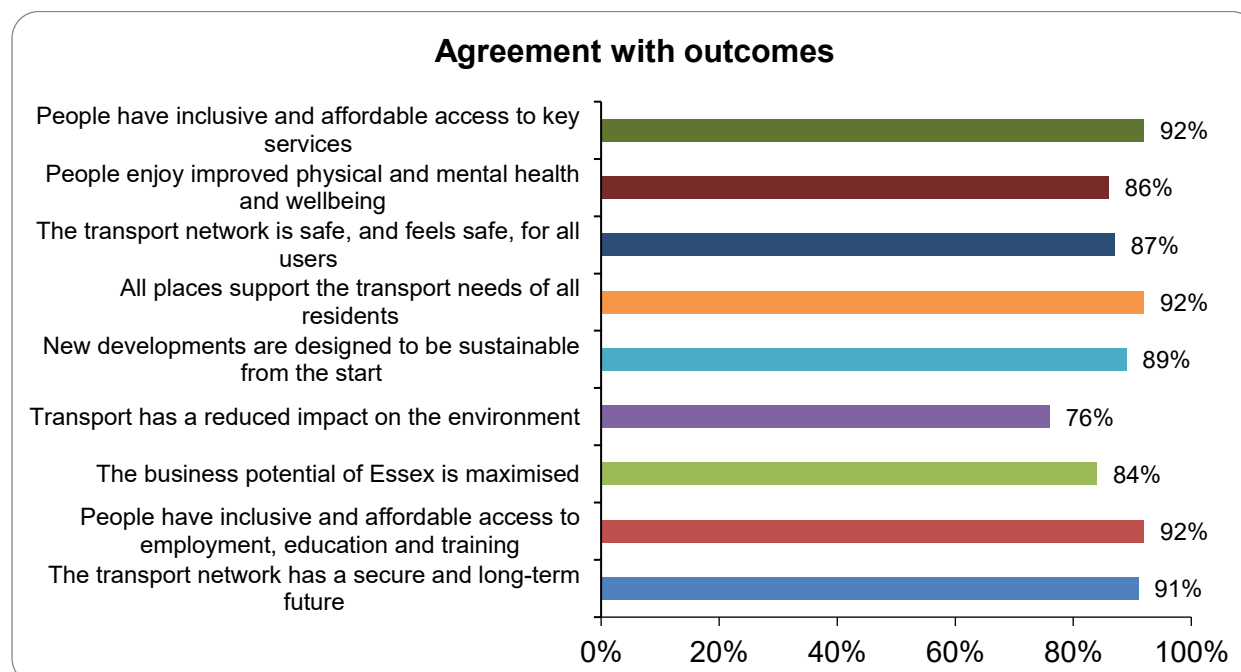
What we heard in part one

The first (part one) public consultation took place in summer 2024, running for seven weeks from Monday 5 August 2024 to Sunday 22 September 2024. It was specifically focused on important aspects of the emerging strategy, such as our three draft themes and nine draft outcomes. We received 651 responses to this consultation.

The LTP is based on three key themes, and at least 83% of people who responded to our consultation survey were in agreement with them.



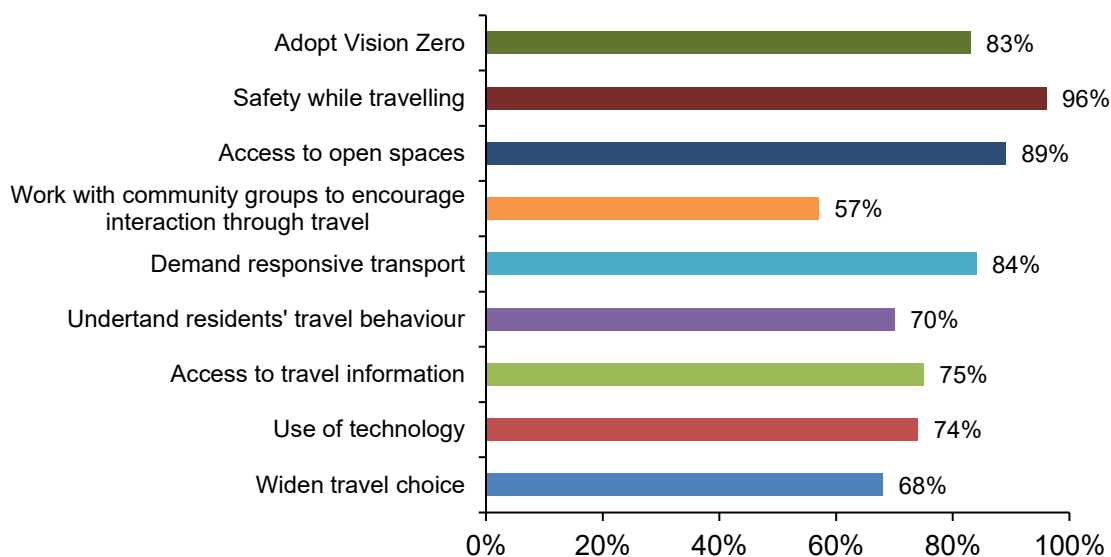
Under each theme, we also developed three outcomes we want to achieve through delivery of the new strategy. Again, most people agreed the outcomes were the right ones to focus on. All but one of the outcomes received at least 84% agreement. The outcome which received the lowest level of agreement ('Transport has a reduced impact on the environment') was still agreed with by 76% of people.



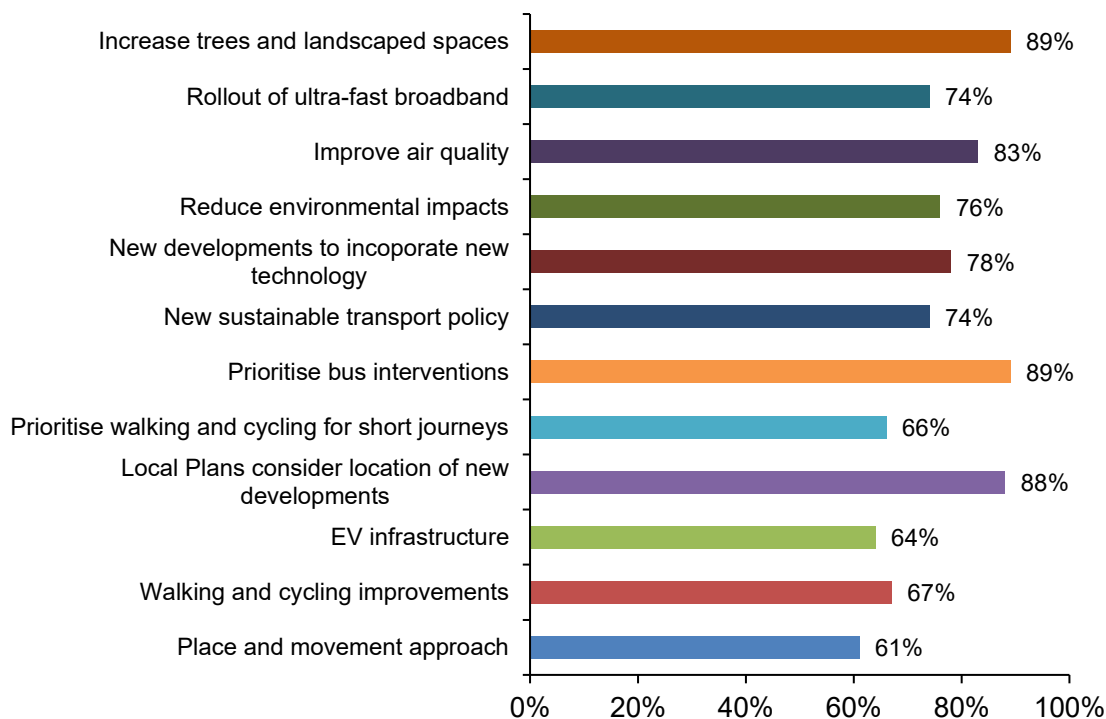
We then set out an initial list of different types of activities for each theme which we felt would help us achieve the specific outcomes. Again, the majority of these were

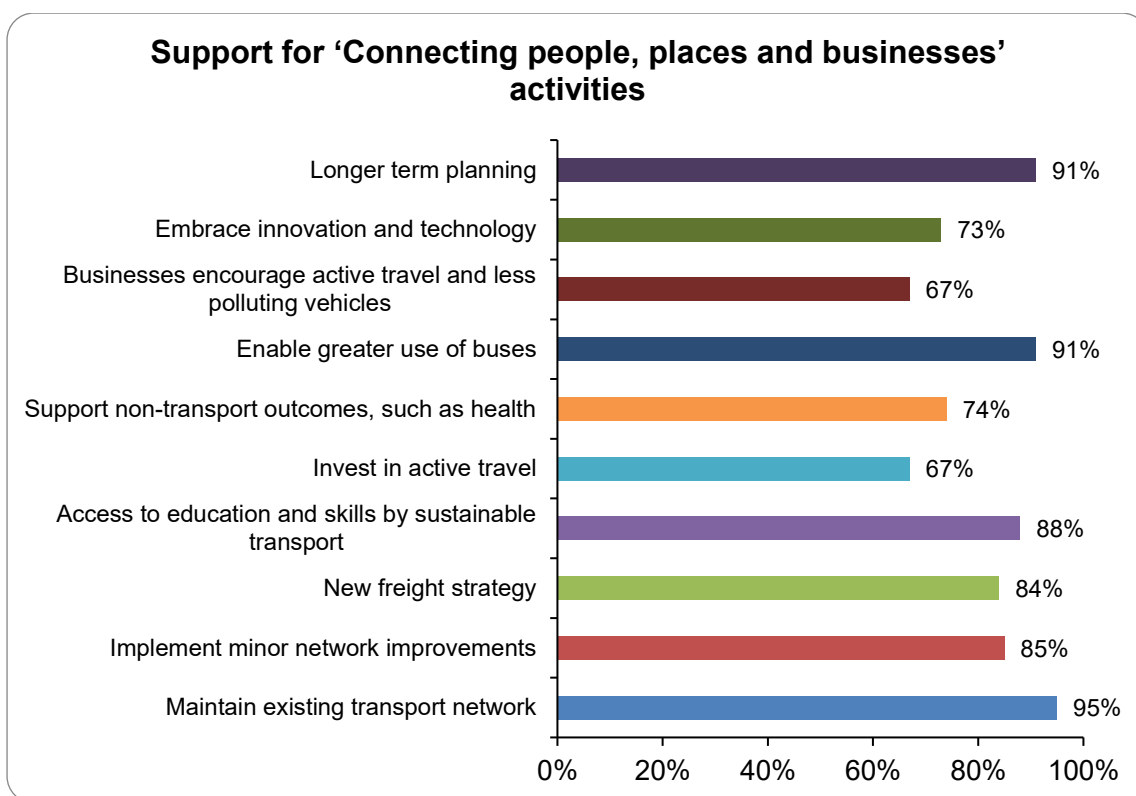
strongly supported. Across all the activities those which were focused on walking, wheeling and cycling improvements or environmental issues tended to be slightly less well supported.

Support for 'Supporting people, health, wellbeing and independence' activities



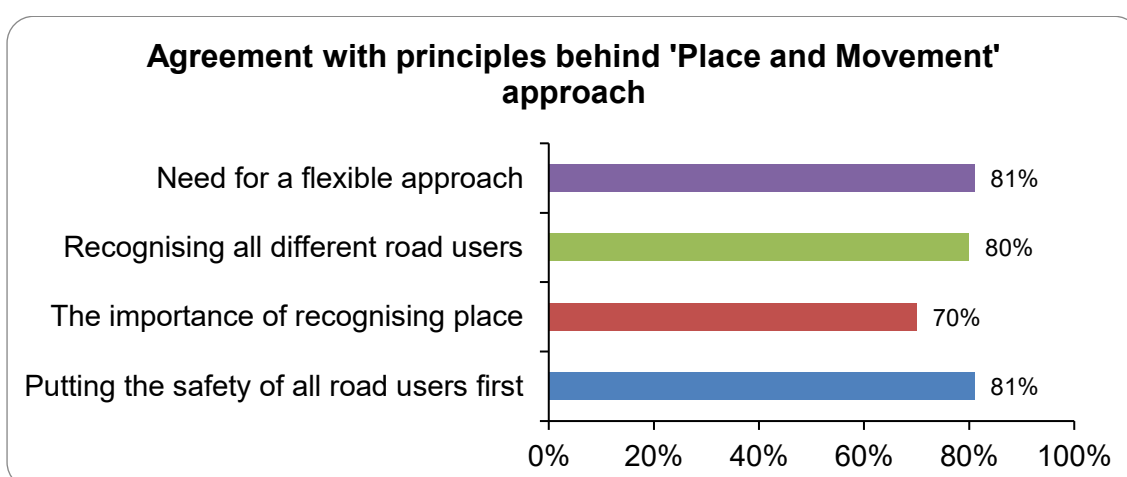
Support for 'Creating sustainable places and communities' activities



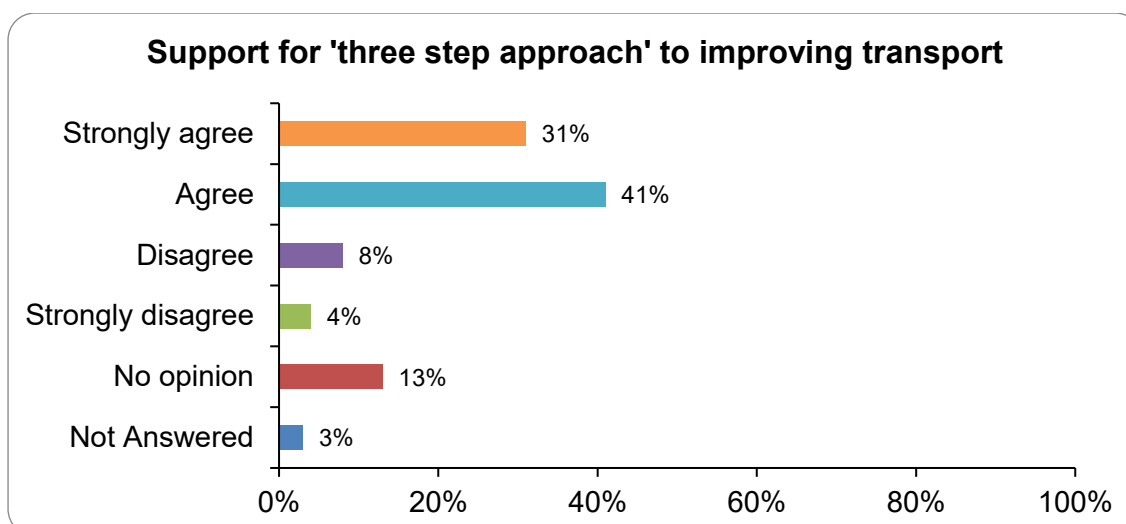


We also asked about our proposed new Place and Movement approach to classifying roads and streets, and our new three step approach to improving transport (starting with managing the existing transport network, then making minor improvements, before making larger and more transformational improvements). These were also well supported.

The four principles behind the new Place and Movement approach which we asked about were all supported by at least 70%, with three of the statements agreed with by at least 80% of people.



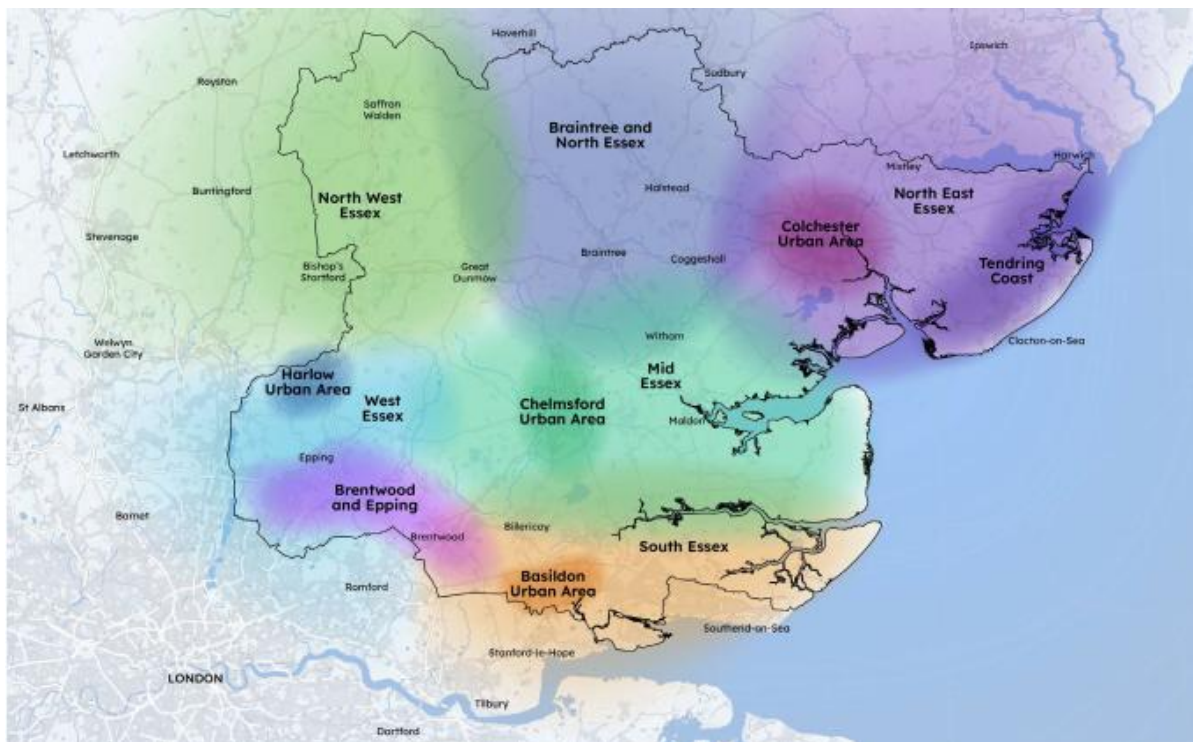
Seventy-two per cent of people agreed with the proposed 'three step approach' to improving transport.



Alongside the above, we also asked for more general 'open ended' feedback. Common themes included a significant number of comments about the need for public transport improvements, particularly better bus services. There were mixed views about walking, wheeling and cycling, with some respondents in support of improvements and others expressing concerns about safety and accessibility issues. In addition, there were a lot of comments about ensuring transport is safe and accessible for everyone, that the necessary transport infrastructure is in place to support any new housing developments, and that more focus is placed on maintaining the road network. There were also several comments about the need to deliver transport improvements as soon as possible and suggestions that the county's rural communities needed greater consideration in the final strategy.

What we heard in part two

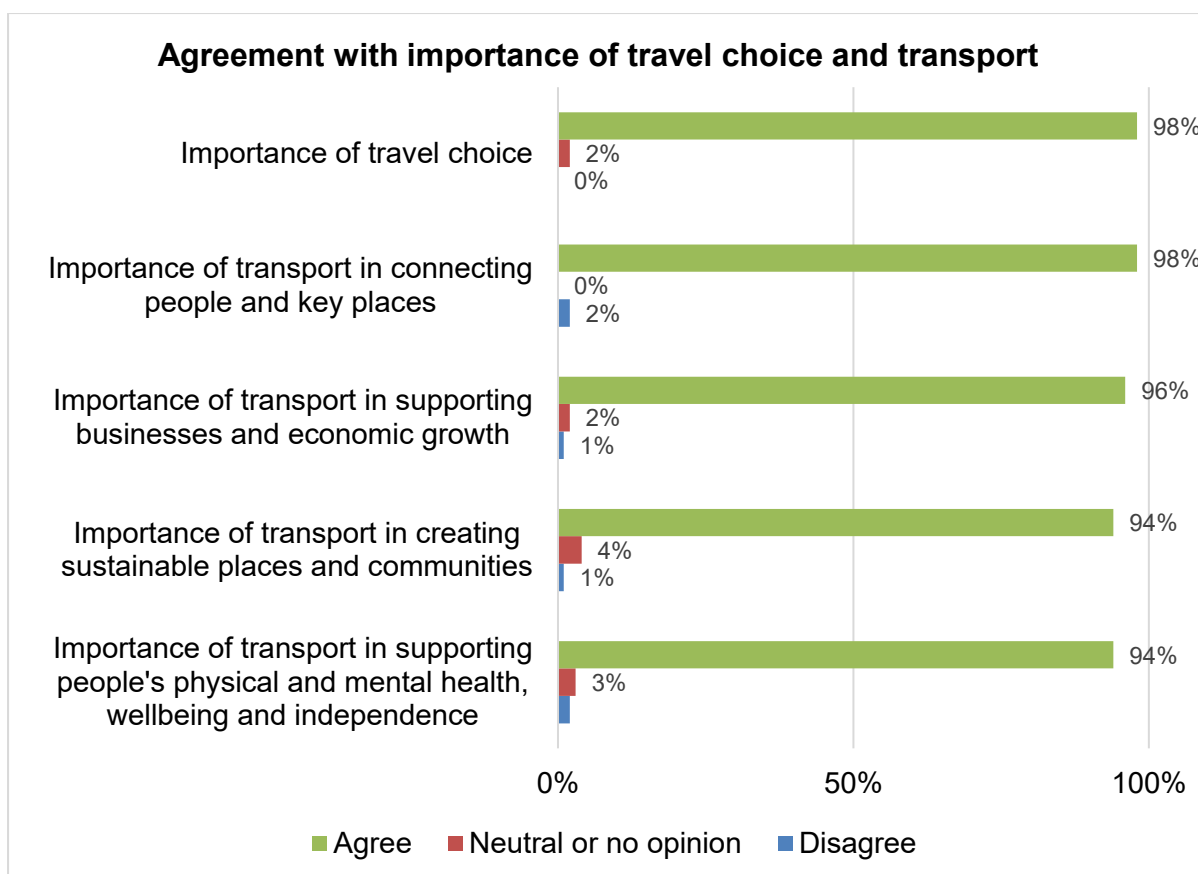
Having reviewed feedback from the first consultation, we used it to help shape our full draft Essex Transport Strategy, now called '[A Better Connected Essex](#)'. We then ran a second (part two) public consultation in summer 2025. This consultation provided an opportunity for people to comment on the full draft strategy, as well as 13 separate place-based strategies (previously known as implementation plans) which set out how we aim to deliver our vision in different parts of Essex. The areas covered by 12 of the placed-based strategies are shown in the map below, while the 13th, our Essex-wide Connectivity Strategy, focuses on longer distance and more strategic transport routes, such as the county's motorways, major A roads and the rail network.



The part two consultation ran for eight weeks from Thursday 31 July 2025 to Wednesday 24 September 2025, and we received 597 responses. Again, it showed a good level of overall support for the draft Essex Transport Strategy, together with useful feedback which we have used to help us refine and finalise the strategy and our Essex-wide Connectivity Strategy. We remain in the process of updating the other 12 draft place-based strategies and these will be finalised and approved separately.

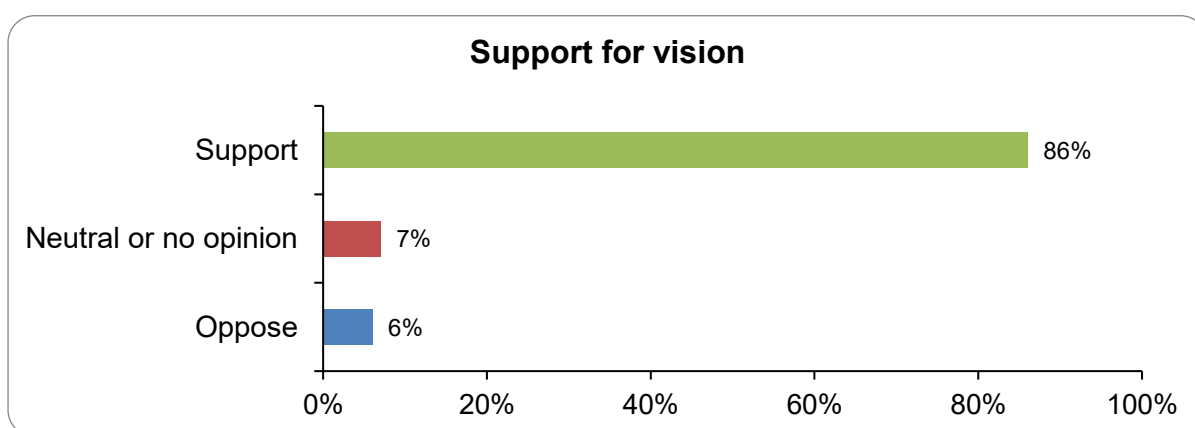
Essex Transport Strategy

Reinforcing the support from the part one consultation, there was very strong agreement with statements about the importance of transport, aligned with our key themes. Between 94% and 98% of people who responded to our consultation survey said they agreed with the five statements we asked about.

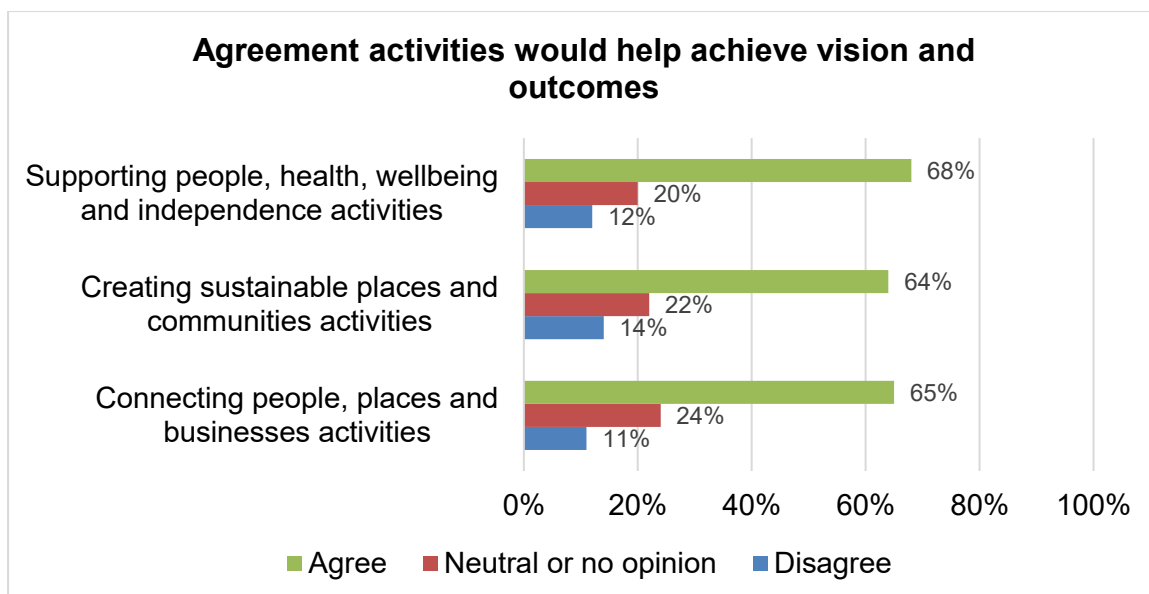


More specifically in relation to the strategy itself, 86% of people supported our vision for transport in Essex, which is as follows:

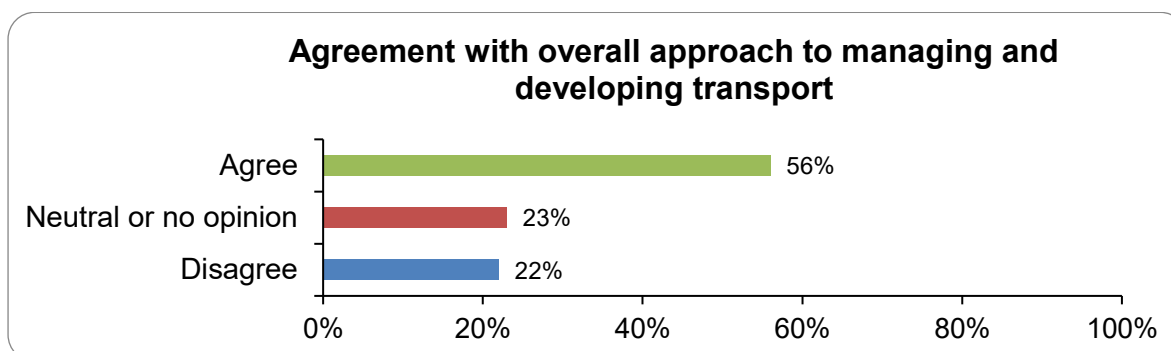
“Our vision is for a safe transport system that supports economic growth and prosperity, provides access to our homes, services, education, work and leisure and enables more sustainable choices and journeys to be made.”



Under each theme, we asked people about a more comprehensive list of proposed activities. The majority of people agreed the activities under each theme would help achieve our vision and outcomes, with between 64% and 68% agreement for each of the three sets of activities.



Finally, 79% of people either agreed the new transport strategy sets out the right overall approach to managing and developing transport in Essex or had a neutral view or no opinion (56% specifically agreed).



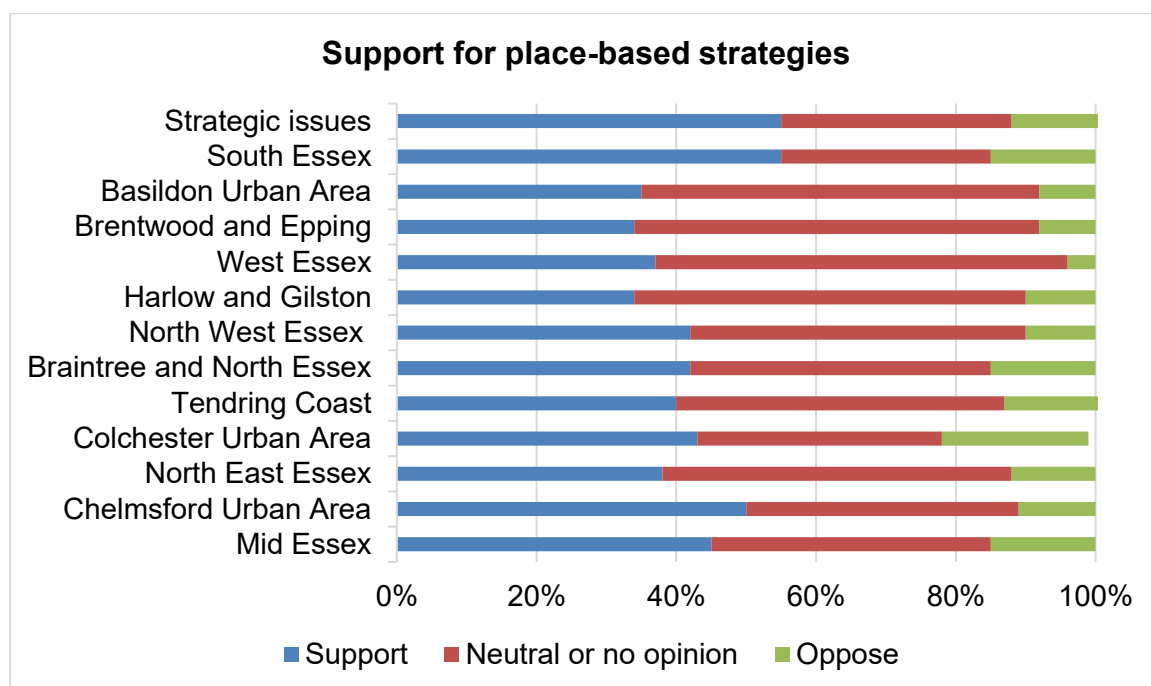
The most common themes in the comments we received were current issues and proposed improvements to different modes of transport, including bus and train services, road transport, and walking and cycling. Road safety issues, the impacts of housing developments and the need to support vulnerable (e.g. elderly or disabled) transport users were also recurring themes. In particular, we received a number of comments about horse riders being absent from the strategy.

While a number of comments supported elements of the transport strategy, some respondents felt that it was too aspirational and lacked more specific details. Others expressed concerns about how it would be delivered, particularly in the context of financial constraints and planned local government reorganisation and devolution.

We also received detailed feedback on elements of the draft strategy from partners and key stakeholders, including the majority of the district, city, borough and unitary councils in Greater Essex, and neighbouring local highways authorities. These have also been reviewed and considered as part of the consultation. Partners were generally supportive of our vision and the broad aims and principles behind the strategy.

Place-based strategies

The level of agreement and support for our 13 place-based strategies varied and a significant number of people (between 30% and 59%) expressed a neutral view or said they had no opinion. Although people were not required to answer every section of the survey, the high number of people who expressed no significant opinion about the place-based strategies perhaps reflects they have less interest or knowledge of areas outside those where they live, work or visit regularly. For each place-based strategy, at least 78% of people said they either supported it, had a neutral view or no opinion. In addition, at least 78% either agreed, had a neutral view or no opinion about whether each place-based strategy would help achieve our outcomes.



A number of different comments were made in relation to our draft place-based strategies. As with our transport strategy, a significant proportion of the comments related to people's experience of different types of transport and what they believed to be the current transport issues in each area, as well as the transport improvements they felt were needed. The impacts of housing developments and the need for additional transport infrastructure to support this growth was again a common theme across responses to the various place-based strategies. Like with the transport strategy, there were again comments about making transport safe and accessible to vulnerable users, including people with disabilities.

We received a number of very detailed and specific comments about the place-based strategies from partners and key stakeholders, including the majority of the district, city, borough and unitary councils in Greater Essex, neighbouring local highways authorities, Network Rail and National Highways. There were a number of comments about the challenges in the different areas of Essex, as well as feedback on specific schemes included or missing from the place-based strategies. These responses have been reviewed and considered as part of the consultation, and we are in the process of updating the place-based strategies.

Next steps

Overall, the two public consultations showed a good level of support for our draft Essex Transport Strategy. They also provided useful feedback which we have used to help develop, refine and finalise the strategy. Following the conclusion of the part two consultation in summer 2025, we have carefully considered people's feedback and made a number of changes to the strategy. The main changes include:

- Expansion of our vision for transport in Essex to include the positive contribution to our places and people's health
- Expanded graphic to show how transport delivers better environmental outcomes, as well as economic and societal ones
- Minor changes to the wording of some of our outcomes, including mention of equitable access and the role of transport in enhancing biodiversity
- Expanded detail on adult social care-related transport issues, and the Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy's approach to improving health
- Renaming of our implementation plans to place-based strategies to better reflect the high-level nature of the documents
- Additional detail on what we are doing to design for everyone, including reference to the development of a future Accessible Transport Strategy
- Greater detail on what we are doing to achieve our Vision Zero ambition
- Updates to our planned activities to support all of our themes
- Reference to the use of advisory Transport Review Groups to support us in monitoring and evaluating the performance of garden communities and large-scale developments
- Strengthening of references to horse riding throughout the document
- Additional potential performance measures added
- Rewording of Policy 3 to include references to wheeling and horse riding
- Rewording of Policy 5 headline to 'historic and built environment' to better reflect the content of the policy.

Having refined and finalised the strategy, we will now be taking it through formal approval processes to allow us (Essex County Council) to adopt it in 2026. The strategy will be taken to Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee for review and discussion in December 2025, before being taken to Cabinet in January 2026 and Full Council in February 2026. Our Essex-wide Connectivity Strategy has also been finalised and will be considered at the same time. We are continuing to make updates to the other 12 place-based strategies and we expect to take them through formal approval processes separately, later in 2026.

Once formally adopted, our new transport strategy and place-based strategies will help inform our decisions about transport in Essex and will support us in unlocking potential future funding opportunities.

Another new Local Transport Plan will ultimately be needed by the new Mayoral Combined County Authority, however, this is likely to take some time. Our new strategy will ensure there is an up-to-date plan in the interim and provide a strong starting point for the development of a new Local Transport Plan for Greater Essex.