



Essex County Council's Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy

(Covering Workplaces, Residential Developments and Schools including Further Education Establishments)

September 2025

Foreword

There is now a consistent policy shift to encourage more efficient use of the car, and to reduce its impact on congestion, the environment and the economy. Provision of travel choice is key to securing easy access to jobs, health and training and education.

This strategy documents the range of sustainable travel planning activities, showcasing other initiatives and actions which are taking place across Essex.

The measures detailed in Essex County Council's (ECC) Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (SMoTS) outline the steps the authority is taking to enable accessibility for all to places of employment and education, including other neighbourhood services such as retail, leisure and health services and delivering health, social and economic benefits to individuals and their communities.

The primary way to give residents a real travel choice is through the provision of a 'travel plan tool' which is being continually developed and enhanced to enable easier travel choice for the people of Essex.

The strategy implements the provisions of the Education and Inspections Act (2006) and conforms with the Education Transport Policy 2024-25. The Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy is one of the key documents that supports the delivery of the Local Transport Plan (LTP) and is aligned to LTP4.

The adoption of this strategy provides the framework for the Council and its partners to coordinate the provision of services and infrastructure to achieve its objectives.

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2.0 Introduction and Overview

Sustainable travel is growing in significance at a national, regional and local level. There has been a constant increase in the importance and weight given to projects and schemes designed to reduce dependence on the private car, and to promote alternative modes of travel.

Essex is a place of opportunity. It is a big place and growing with a population of 1.4 million, more than 650,000 people employed in jobs across the County, 72,000 businesses, over 550 state schools (totalling around 222,820 pupils) and 10.7 billion vehicle kilometres travelled (2018). In April 2024, adopted and emerging Local Plans in Essex are planning to provide for around 154,600 homes by the mid-2030s and beyond 2040, of which around 49,100 have been completed and a minimum of around 105,500 still to be built.

Good easy access to a high quality and efficient transport network is essential to support new development, ensuring that it is sustainable. The County Council can no longer build its way out of congestion and there needs to be a definitive shift to more sustainable modes. With towns and cities within Essex continuing to grow, and the road network already close to capacity in peak periods, more sustainable travel options and what can be done to reduce the number of single-occupied cars on the road must be explored. Consequently, refocusing on sustainable travel to make better use of what is already available and the use of longer-term strategies to encourage real behaviour change is crucial.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2024 states that ‘achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways:

- a) **an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.
- b) **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and
- c) **an environmental objective** – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.’

Local Planning Authorities are required to prepare a Local Plan in accordance with the NPPF. 'The development plan must include strategic policies to address each local planning authority's priorities for the development and use of land in its area. These strategic policies can be produced in different ways, depending on the issues and opportunities facing each area. They can be contained in:

- a) Joint or individual local plans, produced by authorities working together or independently (and which may also contain non-strategic policies); and/or
- b) a spatial development strategy produced by an elected Mayor or combined authority, where plan-making powers have been conferred.

Policies to address non-strategic matters should be included in local plans that contain both strategic and non-strategic policies, and/or in local or neighbourhood plans that contain just non-strategic policies. The development plan for an area comprises the combination of strategic and non-strategic policies which are in force at a particular time.'

'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development**' (paragraph 11).

The [National Planning Practice Guidance](#) adds further context to the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) and it is intended that the two documents should be read together.

ECC understands the importance of working with partners to help promote sustainable travel and deliver initiatives; whilst ensuring that the County remains economically competitive and successful. ECC is committed to working with other local authorities, residents, employers, developers, schools, transportation operators and public health professionals, with much being done across the Council and partners to tackle these issues, through a range of initiatives and schemes as outlined below.

3.0 Aim, Vision and Objectives

3.1 Overarching Aim and Vision

ECC aims to successfully encourage modal shift by giving the people of Essex a better choice when it comes to travelling in and around the county; as well as trying to alleviate some of the strain on the highway network and deliver the environmental, social and health benefits of better managed network.

Mission Statement: The aim of the Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy is to reduce the number of private motor vehicles using the highway network during peak travel times. The key objective is to demonstrate the different methods used by ECC and partners to facilitate the increased use of more active and sustainable travel modes available to businesses, residents and schools within Essex; to meet the overarching aim of better managed congestion.

The private car will continue to be a major mode of transport. However, growth in car travel and traffic needs to be managed to reduce congestion, improve air quality and promote a high quality of life, improved health and wellbeing and economic growth. Car travel demand can be more carefully managed in urban areas using alternatives and new technologies. Combining demand management of car traffic with improvements to sustainable alternatives and improved street design can greatly benefit the local communities, businesses and the environment e.g. the introduction and expansion of Park and Ride facilities on the outskirts of major conurbations such as Colchester and Chelmsford.

Active modes such as walking, and cycling are a high priority, being an essential and highly sustainable means of transport, which also support a healthy lifestyle. Public Rights of Way (PRoW) have an important role as key links into the transport network. They provide access to essential services, offering opportunities to integrate and improve pedestrian networks and facilities within highway projects to promote walking, including to bus and rail stations. PRoW must be well maintained and easy to use by walkers, cyclists and equestrians. To encourage walking and cycling, Councils can make improvements to the network to remove barriers to pedestrians and cyclists and enhance the environment to provide people-friendly streets which give priority to sustainable modes of transport. Priority, safety and convenience should be ensured at the design stage of any road schemes and all users should be considered. Paragraph 96 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 gives healthy lifestyles higher prominence in plan making, with the overall aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places.

ECC recognises the importance of working with partners to promote and deliver initiatives, particularly when monitoring specific activities to identify their effectiveness. Any targets

set, must be appropriate for what each initiative is trying to achieve and would need to be measured geographically rather than county-wide.

3.2 Objectives

This strategy covers a wide range of activities, with their key objectives outlined below:

- Allow and enable residents to make an informed choice about how they travel for work, school and leisure.
- Improve the health, welfare and safety of all Essex residents by encouraging an active lifestyle through increased walking and cycling.
- Shape future planned growth and development in Local Plans at locations which promote the hierarchy of preferred modes of transport, namely walking, cycling and public transport, and focus development on locations which are or can be made sustainable.
- Importance of design to create attractive and safe environments that will be more welcoming and enticing to walking and cycling.
- Better management of congestion to secure the resilience of the network.
- Embed high quality sustainable alternatives, reducing the need to travel by car.
- Reduce CO₂ and other emissions.
- Promote and support the development of travel options being used to access employment, health, education and leisure facilities.
- To consolidate and build on existing Travel Plans developed within the County.
- Contribute to meeting the County Council's Sustainable Travel Business Plan targets that relate to the delivery of transport services.

4.0 National Policy Context

4.1 Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (DfT)

This Strategy aims to create a walking and cycling nation; with a long-term goal (up to 2040) that walking, and cycling become a normal part of everyday life, and the natural choice for shorter journeys such as the commute to school, college, and work or leisure trips.

4.2 Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking 2020 (DfT)

This plan describes the vision to make England a great walking and cycling nation. It sets out the actions required at all levels of government to make this a reality.

4.3 Cycle Infrastructure Design 2020 (DfT)

This guidance supports the delivery of high-quality cycle infrastructure to make cycling and walking the natural choices for short journeys or as part of a longer journey with supporting objectives to increase cycling and walking levels. It reflects current good practice, standards and legal requirements.

4.4 Education and Inspections Act 2006 (DfE)

The Act requires local authorities to promote sustainable travel and to support choice and flexibility of educational provision. It also extends the right to free transport for children living in lower income households.

4.5 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's approach to the location and design of developments to ensure that plans protect and explore opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people. A core planning principle of the NPPF is to actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable.

The framework promotes the hierarchy of preferred modes of transport, from walking and cycling, public transport, car sharing, the use of electric vehicles and finally to single occupancy car use, as the last option.

4.6 Public Health and NICE Guidelines

Promoting physical activity for children and young people, NICE Guidelines [PH17] January 2009

Provides guidance on promoting physical activity among children and young people, including parents and carers, with a series of recommendations.

Public Health Guideline PH41 Physical Activity: Walking and Cycling, November 2012

Sets out how people are encouraged to increase the amount they walk or cycle for travel and/or recreation purposes.

NICE Guidelines NG13 Workplace Health: Management Practices, March 2016

Examples of how to improve the health and wellbeing of employees, placing it at the core of the organisation.

Working Together to Promote Active Travel - (Public Health England), May 2016

Looks at the impact of current transport systems and sets out the many benefits of increasing physical activity through active travel.

NICE Guidelines NG70 Air Pollution: Outdoor Air Quality and Health, June 2017

This guide brings together air quality, active travel and car transport.

5.0 Local Policy Context

The documents referred to in this section (listed alphabetically) all play their role in helping to increase the modal share for active and sustainable modes of travel, and how they support the strategy outlined in Section 6.

5.1 Essex Air Quality Strategy

This has recently been adopted, after being developed in a collaboration between ECC, the twelve district councils and two unitary authorities, in Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock. It sets out our current understanding of the air quality issues in Essex, and outlines the actions planned to be taken to improve air quality.

The main strategy document gives a high-level summary of the reasons why action is needed, what is already being done to improve air quality in Essex and the actions we propose to take to further improve air quality.

5.2 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs)

The 12 Essex district councils and the 2 unitary authorities (Southend-on-Sea Borough Council and Thurrock Council) monitor air quality and together with ECC form the Essex Air Consortium (EAC). The EAC acts as an opportunity for authorities to work together, share information and discuss wider pollution issues; meeting 4 times per annum. When measured air quality levels exceed government (DEFRA) guidelines an air quality action plan is prepared by the district in liaison with ECC, with the poor air quality generally, but not exclusively, being caused by traffic emissions. These action plans are sent to DEFRA and once approved detail those actions and measures authorities should take, be that through traffic management to planning.

Currently there are 9 sites across the county with declared AQMAs due to traffic emissions at the following locations. The most recent readings as set out below are annual mean NO₂ from 2022. These results have been bias-adjusted and were part of the Defra approved Annual Status Reports.

Brentwood

- Brentwood - Parts of Brook Street AQMA2 – No exceedance and to be revoked in due course
- Brentwood - Parts of Warescot Road, Hurstwood Avenue and Ongar Road AQMA4 – No exceedance and to be revoked in due course
- Brentwood - Wilsons Corner AQMA7 – No exceedance and to be revoked in due course

Colchester

- Colchester – Brook Street AQMA – No exceedance but not enough evidence to revoke
- Colchester – Mersea Road AQMA – 2023 Marginal exceedance 41.0 µg/m³ at relevant exposure
- Colchester – Osborne Street & St John's Street AQMA – No exceedance but not enough evidence to revoke

Epping Forest District

- Epping Forest – Bell View AQMA - No exceedance but not enough evidence to revoke

Maldon

- Maldon - Market Hill AQMA - 2023 Marginal exceedance 41.2 µg/m³ at relevant exposure

Rochford

- Rochford – Rayleigh Town Centre AQMA – No exceedance and to be revoked in due course

Additionally, Essex County Council and Basildon Borough Council were directed by Government to improve air quality on the A127 as quickly as possible and a new 50mph speed limit was introduced in January 2020 to tackle the issue.

They were also directed to carry out further analysis to establish what measures would be needed to bring air quality to within legal levels as soon as possible in East Mayne and protect pedestrians and cyclists, in particular, who are currently exposed to high levels of air pollution.

Strong evidence is needed to demonstrate the likely effectiveness of any potential solution, and we spent several months gathering and analysing a lot of information to show the expected impacts of various options that were considered. This work took place for several months.

In August 2020, the Government, which is funding the project and has been independently verifying all the work through its Joint Air Quality Unit (JAQU), advised it was happy for a preferred option to be identified and for us to prepare a business case for the proposed scheme.

In November 2020, we shared our preferred option – the relocation of the shared pedestrian/cyclist crossing route in East Mayne - as part of a public engagement exercise and encouraged residents, businesses and other interested parties to have their say.

Having considered people's feedback, a business case for the scheme was approved by Essex County Council, Basildon Borough Council and the Government, and works on the scheme started in November 2021 and were completed in early 2022.

Despite these actions, our latest monitoring data (as presented in the 2022 Basildon Air Quality Management Plan Annual Monitoring Report) shows there are six hotspots in Basildon where the legal limit for nitrogen dioxide at the roadside is still exceeded. Air quality will gradually improve over time and the latest data shows a general reduction in nitrogen dioxide concentrations. However, we recognise further measures will now need to be considered to improve air quality further in these localised hotspots.

Further information on all areas of air pollution can be found here:

www.essex.gov.uk/airquality. [The Essex Air website](#) also outlined how the Essex Air Quality Consortium is working to further clean up the air in the county, helping the people of Essex understand what air quality is and how they can play a part in making it better.

It should be noted that the monitoring locations are only representative of one spot, and this may not be the worst concentration representative of exposure.

5.3 ECC Development Management Policies

These policies reflect the balance between the need for new housing and employment opportunities, the regeneration and growth agenda, and protecting the transport network for the safe movement of people and goods and have the following aims:

- Protect and maintain a reliable and safe highway infrastructure
- Improve access to services in both rural and urban locations
- Offer where possible alternative travel options to the private car
- Support and enhance public transport provision
- Address the impact of commercial vehicles on the highway network and communities
- Support the aims and objectives of the County Council as the Highway Authority

These policies should be read alongside the Essex Design Guide; Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA) Parking Standards and the Essex Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions (2020), to provide a full picture of transport policy with regards to sustainable transport.

5.4 Everyone's Essex, 2021 - 2025

The commitments outlined in Everyone's Essex explain how the County Council will encourage sustainable transport through:

- Reducing barriers to employment for disadvantaged groups, including travel to jobs
- Delivering and maintaining high quality infrastructure to improve opportunities for people living in Essex

- Ensuring we have the right local skills and drawing in investment opportunities, including in the movement towards greener travel
- Significantly reducing its carbon footprint, including an acceleration in active and alternative forms of travel across the county
- Via new garden communities delivering sustainable, healthy neighbourhoods for the future
- Helping people to live fit and active lifestyles, through walking, scooting, cycling and public transport

5.5 Education Transport Strategy

This document sets out ECC's Home to School Transport Policy and describes how the Council fulfils its duties and exercises its discretionary powers as required under the Education Act 1996 and subsequent legislation.

ECC is required to provide transport to students with the statutory entitlement or who qualify for discretionary assistance as set out in this policy and who are resident within the administrative area of ECC.

Providing school transport, which meet these criteria, will help in reducing the number of car trips for educational purposes, particularly in the peak hours, when pressure on network capacity is greatest.

5.6 Essex Climate Commission

The Commission, which was established in early 2020, has been asked to provide independent advice on the steps that Essex must take to become a net zero emissions county by 2050. The Commission, chaired by Jules Pretty, Professor of Environment and Society at the University of Essex, includes climate experts including academics, scientists, councillors and business leaders as well as representatives from the Young Essex Assembly.

The [2023-24 Essex Climate Action Annual Report was published in December 2024, and](#) identifies a range of additional short-term actions as well as long-term goals to address the impact of climate change. These are grouped into various themes, including transport, the built environment, energy, waste and community engagement.

Transport-related actions include:

- innovations, such as electric vehicles and e-scooters
- Securing £4.8 from the Department for Transport's Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) 2 scheme for a fleet of 55 electric buses in Basildon
- The new Beaulieu station in Chelmsford, due to open in late summer/autumn 2025
- Uttlesford District Council's Clean Air project, focused on Saffron Walden, working with schools, workplaces and residents to improve air quality in the town

- Essex Pedal Power, providing free bikes to people living in disadvantaged communities in Clacton and Jaywick, Colchester, Harwich/Dovercourt and Basildon, helping them to access key services, education and employment, as well as increasing physical activity, improving mental health and reducing carbon emissions

5.7 Essex Cycling Strategy 2025

Essex County Council wants to support more people to cycle more often, and that is why we have developed a new draft Essex Cycling Strategy. It sets out our vision, outcomes, and actions for cycling in the county for the next few years.

This strategy will help us secure funding to improve and maintain cycling facilities and infrastructure across the county, which will transform cycling into a natural and attractive option for travel and leisure.

We want to hear what communities need and want and will be recruiting volunteer cycle champions to help us listen to communities, so that we are able to work together to make the change.

This document is part of a wider set of plans and strategies that aim to make Essex safer, greener and healthier, and to provide more sustainable transport choices for everyone. We have worked with our partners and stakeholders to produce this strategy, based on the latest policy, evidence and best practice from around the world.

A new Essex Cycling Strategy was adopted in September 2025.

5.8 Bikeability Training Programmes in Essex

Bikeability is the government-approved funded scheme for teaching the National Standards for Cycle Training to children, usually delivered through schools. It takes riders through the steps of learning the necessary skills to ride confidently on today's roads and delivered by Essex County Council. This life-long skill can be taught at a young age, encouraging a healthy lifestyle, boosting confidence and developing independence, encouraging more children to ride to school.

There are three award levels for Bikeability, with a level to suit all abilities, from beginner to experienced rider:

- Level 1 teaches basic bike-handling skills in a controlled traffic-free environment.
- Level 2 teaches riders how to cycle planned routes using minor roads, offering a real cycling experience.
- Level 3 ensures riders can manage a variety of traffic conditions and is delivered on busier roads with advanced features and layouts.

The government have pledged limited extra money to provide Bikeability Plus modules, we at Essex County Council offer:

- Bikeability Learn to Ride: sessions are funded for children who are unable to cycle.

In addition to Bikeability we also offer National Standard cycle training for adults. It's not exclusive to their clients, but we partner with Essex Pedal Power to deliver training to their groups or can offer one to one training, arranged with the instructor directly at a mutually agreed time and date.

- Learn to ride: Bespoke one to one session, we assign an instructor who will help you achieve your goals.
- Adult confidence: Can ride but might need a little more support and confidence building, to remember the skills.
- Adult advanced: Have confidence in riding, but would like to extend riding knowledge and assist with route planning, if there is a specific route you would like to take to work, our instructors will teach the best way to achieve this, and ride the route with you.

To book a session <https://essex.cycleready.co.uk/registerinterest/registerselectcoursetype> or to get in touch contact cycletraining@essex.gov.uk

5.9 Essex Design Guide (EDG)

The EDG is about creating distinctive places that people want to live; building Garden Communities and making sure that the infrastructure and facilities are in place at the right time. Now an interactive online tool, available at www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/

It includes socio-economic themes such as Active Design, Ageing Population, Health and Wellbeing, Digital and Smart Technology and Garden Communities; alongside best practice design standards; which highlight the relationship between sustainable modes of travel and the Guide's overarching themes.

- Active Design Principles – these help inform the layout of new development at different scales of growth through promoting healthy lifestyles through the principles of walkable communities and connected walking and cycle routes;
- Health and Wellbeing – an individual's health and wellbeing can be improved by high quality of design and layout of new communities; providing open space and natural environments to encourage physical activity; and encouraging active travel, most particularly cycling and walking; and
- Garden Communities – the provision of integrated and accessible transport systems, with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms for local journeys. These new communities seek to provide a step change in sustainable transport putting walking, cycling and public transit systems

at the heart of development, and delivered in a timely way to support the new communities as they grow, and to influence travel behaviour.

5.10 Essex Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions 2025

The draft Guide fits with the overall aims of the NPPF by supporting sustainable development. By promoting a consistent and transparent approach, developers can be assured that they are making a fair contribution to the infrastructure needed to support growth, and residents can understand how development in their area makes a positive contribution to their community; thereby ensuring new development does not have a negative impact upon the quality of life in Essex.

The Developers' Guide provides guidance on the following:

- The requirement to prepare full Transport Assessments (TA) for sites of more than 50 dwellings, or commercial development that generates equivalent or higher traffic flows. Lower levels of development may require a Transport Statement (TS). The TA will identify the sustainable transport measures that will be required to ensure that the site is accessible by a choice of modes other than the private car, including cycling, walking, public transport and horse-riding.
- The preparation of Travel Plans in relation to the workplace (50 employees or more); residential (80 homes or more) with reference to Travel Plan co-ordinator and Travel Information Packs; and schools.
- Contributions to supporting new or diversions to existing services; improvements and/or new bus infrastructure and new integrated transport packages relative to the scale of proposed development. Contributions will also be sought towards home to school transport.

5.11 Essex Green Infrastructure Strategy 2020

This strategy aims to enhance the urban and rural environment, through creating connected multi-functional green infrastructure that delivers multiple benefits to people and wildlife. It meets the Council's aspirations to improve green infrastructure and green spaces in our towns, cities and villages, especially close to areas of deprivation.

Specific relevance to active and sustainable travel modes are found on pages 70 (section 7.6) and pages 90-92 (section 8.2).

5.12 Essex Healthy Schools Programme (ongoing)

Essex Healthy Schools is a school health improvement strategy which builds on the commitment within Essex Schools to improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people.

The strategy allows schools to focus on the specific needs of their school community and they are actively supported in the planning and delivery of needs led, outcome-based

health and wellbeing projects, including work around developing their school travel plan, and sustainable travel to/from school.

Schools can nominate themselves for a Best Practice Award where they can showcase the work that they have been doing in particular areas.

Healthy Schools measures which can contribute towards sustainable travel include:

- Park and Stride
- Assemblies and PHSE lessons to encourage pupils to be healthier and walk/cycle to school
- Pedestrian gates at the school to allow children to walk or cycle
- Bike and scooter racks installed

5.13 Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026

This strategy articulates a shared vision for health and well-being in Essex. It sets out the key countywide strategic priorities, which address five areas of focus:

- Improve mental health and wellbeing
- Physical activity and healthy weight
- Supporting long term independence
- Alcohol and substance misuse
- Health inequalities and the wider determinants of health

5.14 Essex Local Transport Plan (LTP) (ongoing)

The Local Transport Act 2008 requires Essex County Council to develop a Local Transport Plan (LTP) that provides the overarching strategy and policy framework for transport across Essex, outlining the council's vision and focusing on key themes and outcomes to manage, operate and improve transportation networks and services. This requirement is addressed by the Essex Transport Strategy that was formally adopted by ECC in 2011.

Given policy evolution since the adoption of LTP3, such as the endorsement by Essex County Council of Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral and the Transport East Transport Strategy, greater emphasis is now placed upon sustainable development, the provision and use of sustainable transport, and the decarbonisation of the transport network.

ECC has commenced the process that will see the *Essex Transport Strategy* replaced by a new Local Transport Plan to be published shortly. The strategic framework for LTP4 was consulted on during summer 2024 and includes three outcome focussed themes

- Supporting People: Health, Wellbeing and Independence
- Creating Sustainable Places and Communities

- Connecting People, Places and Businesses

LTP4 has been developed but not yet adopted. The Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy is one of the key documents that supports the delivery of the Local Transport Plan and is aligned to LTP4.

5.15 Essex Walking Strategy (2021)

Walking is recognised as an important transport mode, hence the need for a Walking Strategy. Walking is now recognised as an important component of enabling enhanced mobility, as an inexpensive, convenient and natural choice for shorter journeys, and as a way of maintaining and improving general health.

The strategy promotes a vision of normalising walking as an everyday activity, getting from A to B, and enjoying the benefits of the Essex countryside and coastal areas. In addition to providing a framework to deliver the vision, the strategy also provides a programme for planning walking networks with delivery partners and prioritising future investment.

5.16 Essex Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP)

The Essex Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) is a statutory document that sets out the plan for improving the provision of access to the countryside through Rights of Way. The RoWIP is an assessment of the extent to which the existing network of local Rights of Way meets the present and likely future needs of the public.

The RoWIP is the prime means by which ECC identify changes to be made, in respect of the management and improvements to the local rights of way network to meet the Government's aim of better provision for walkers, cyclists, equestrians and people with mobility problems.

5.17 Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership

The Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership (ESSCRP) comprises of two County and one Borough Council, two District Councils and one City Council and the train operating company Greater Anglia, with the partnership formed in May 1998.

The aim of the ESSCRP is to achieve an increase in passenger use of the 6 branch lines: Southend Victoria, Crouch Valley, Mayflower, Sunshine Coast, Gainsborough and Flitch; and to improve the economic, social and environmental welfare of these lines by delivering a programme of community led transport initiatives and regeneration projects.

5.18 Bus Service Improvement Plan 2021 to 2026 (BSIP)

Aims to deliver long term improvements to the passenger transport (bus, minibus, taxi and community transport) network in Essex, in line with the following eight proposals:

- Working in partnership
- Customer quality commitment
- Better, well used services

- Support for valuable, but not commercial, services
- Good customer information
- Tailored solutions
- Ticketing
- Focused local planning

The BSIP sets out how ECC supports the local bus network across the county and has adopted the Local Bus Priority Policy to set out how it will provide contracted bus services where no commercial bus service is provided. The 2021 to 2026 BSIP is due to be updated in Autumn of 2024 to the 2024 to 2030 BSIP, however, the Local Bus Priority Policy will remain a key element of it.

5.19 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs)

As set out in the Government's Second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (2022), LCWIPs are a strategic approach to identifying demand to deliver cycling and walking networks. They suggest infrastructure improvements required at the local level. ECC have received funding from Active Travel England to create LCWIPs in towns and cities across Essex; as well as identifying a rural and strategic network for the county.

The benefits of incorporating LCWIPs into local planning policy are to:

- Ensure that appropriate consideration is given to cycling and walking in all local
- Planning and transport decisions, and identify potential policy conflicts
- Add to the evidence base which can be used to support a Local Plan,
- Neighbourhood Plan or Local Transport Plan
- Enable the consideration and adoption of wider policy levers to encourage more
- Walking and cycling, especially for short trips or including active travel as part of the journey e.g., walking to the bus stop or cycling to the train station
- Enable authorities to seek appropriate contributions to the provision of walking and
- Cycling infrastructure when drawing up the Regulation 123 list for the Community
- Infrastructure Levy; through planning agreements in the form of Section 106
- Obligations: and when Section 278 highway agreements are made
- Identify places where new strategic cycling or walking routes can be delivered by a
- New development, and ensure the protection of alignments for future planned
- Cycling and walking routes

Preparing LCWIPs also help authorities to consider the impact of planning applications and other proposed land use changes on existing and planned cycling and walking infrastructure, and to identify sites that are well served, or capable of being well served, by cycling and walking routes. The existence of a LCWIP will also assist developers in the preparation of Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements.

ECC has developed walking and cycling network plans across the county, including Basildon, Braintree, Brentwood, Castle Point, Chelmsford, Clacton and Jaywick, Colchester, Harwich and Dovercourt, Harlow, Loughton-Buckhurst Hill-Chigwell, Maldon, Rochford, Uttlesford, and Waltham Abbey. A county wide rural network plan has also been identified.

The next stage in the council's plans is to develop a pipeline of delivery to make infrastructure changes to enable people to walk and cycle safely and confidently, especially for shorter journeys.

5.20 Local Plans

The NPPF (paragraph 102) states that sustainable transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued, the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account - including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, improve air quality and public health.

ECC as the strategic highways and transportation authority works closely on long-term transport plans with each Local Planning Authority in support of their Local Plans. This work assesses the overall impact of development and identifies transportation measures to deliver sustainable development, including enhanced passenger transport services and infrastructure, comprehensive cycle and pedestrian networks, improved public rights of way, and active travel planning.

ECC also seeks to embed sustainable transport principles in the Local Plan through inclusion in its objectives, vision, the spatial strategy, specific initiatives/projects and overarching transport policies and specific site allocation policies.

5.21 Neighbourhood Plans

ECC has prepared a [Neighbourhood Plan Guide](#) (September 2019) which explains the main County Council services that may need to be considered when carrying out neighbourhood planning. It also provides weblinks to relevant ECC policy guidance.

This Guide provides the following information on each theme:

- The relevant service or function within ECC, and their responsibilities
- Relevance to neighbourhood planning

- The key documents produced by ECC to be considered when a Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared, and weblinks to those documents.

5.22 Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP) - Vision Zero

Vision Zero is a shared aspiration that the only acceptable number of deaths and serious injuries on the roads of Essex is zero, and this should be achieved by 2040. To achieve this, the Vision Zero strategy employs the internationally recognised and proven approach known as the Safe System. Under the Safe System, everyone – including public bodies, private companies and individual people – has a role to play in making road travel safer.

The Vision Zero strategy was launched on 1st April 2022 and is currently being reviewed following progress and feedback and in anticipation of ongoing developments that are likely to occur:

- In the transport sector
- In local government structure
- In the risks faced by people using the road
- In the development of the Safe System

The aim of the Safer Essex Roads Partnership Strategy is to inform and encourage the cooperation and action needed to implement a Safe System, to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on the roads in Essex to zero by 2040.

6.0 The Strategy

This section describes the key strategic elements required for successful delivery of the objectives contained in 3.2 above. A key mechanism for these elements is Travel Plans. Travel Plans are long term management strategies providing a range of interventions to encourage and promote travel by alternative and more sustainable means, reducing the use of the private car, reducing localised congestion, and delivering positive health and wellbeing benefits. 'Travel Plans should, where possible, be considered in parallel to development proposals and readily integrated into the design and occupation of the new site rather than retrofitted after occupation' (Planning Practice Guidance, paragraph 003).

The Local Plan strategies and policies can ensure that development is located to reduce the need to travel, or development is of a scale that promotes sustainable transport that is accessible for all. The NPPF requires the transport system to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes whilst recognising that different policies and solutions will be necessary in different areas. Good accessibility and access to a high quality and efficient transport network is essential to support new development. Similarly, ensuring that it is sustainable, enabling the community to access their needs (e.g. employment, shopping, schools, leisure) easily and without always needing a car is crucial for the long-term protection of the environment.

Garden Communities

Essex County Council (ECC) is fully supportive of the principle of Garden Communities (GCs) and is actively involved in the planning and delivery of the following GCs at Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT), Tending Colchester Borders Garden Community (TCBGC), Chelmsford Garden Community and Dunton Hills Garden Village.

These are being progressed based on the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) Garden City Principles, and with regards to the following key principles:

- Integrated and accessible transport systems, with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of local transport.
- The GC emerging strategic priorities and guiding principles to support sustainable transport include.
- Creating development that is accessible by different modes of transport, especially walking and cycling and the use of public transport is essential to promoting sustainable development as it reduces car dependency.
- People-orientated transport hierarchy i.e. prioritising walking and providing access for people with mobility impairment; cycling; public transport; cars (for occupiers on site and visitors); powered two wheelers; and commercial vehicles.
- Sustainable transport management will be based on promoting modes which minimise environmental impact and promote social inclusion e.g. well located in relation to existing walking, cycling and public transport networks.
- Provision for car travel will include an emphasis on the use of new technology such as electric and ultra-low emission vehicles. Strategies for car usage will include car sharing, car clubs and appropriate car parking strategies.
- To maximise the use of public transport new forms of high-quality rapid transit networks are needed to connect the proposed garden communities to existing urban centres such as Colchester and Braintree.
- The new garden communities will seek to manage travel demand, providing retailing, jobs, services and facilities within the site to help reduce the need to travel, and integrate and connect with the rest of North Essex and beyond through public transport to promote sustainable travel patterns and reduce adverse impacts on the highway network.
- Connectivity should be improved across barriers such as rail lines and major roads to bring together communities.

In addition, ECC is committed to a Vision-Led Planning approach in the development of Garden Communities. This means shaping places around a clear and shared long-term vision that reflects the aspirations of local communities, stakeholders, and future generations. Vision-led planning can ensure that active and sustainable modes of transport are integrated from the outset, rather than being retrofitted.

In practice, this is what Vision-Led planning looks like:

- Working alongside communities to shape a local vision that puts sustainability, inclusivity and resilience front and centre.
- Transport is planned to support how people want to live - not just to respond to problems after they arise.
- Ensuring land use and transport planning go hand in hand, to create neighbourhoods that are easy to get around without needing a car.
- People are involved early on, helping to co-create the vision and keep it on track as plans develop.
- By embedding this approach into our Garden Communities programme, we're aiming to build communities that are not only practical and well-connected, but also inspiring, fair and built to last.

The Council also manages the efficient movement of freight within the county by working with local businesses to promote and support the sustainable distribution of goods and encouraging a shift of freight, from road transport to rail transport.

This strategy brings together existing initiatives and policies as outlined above to promote more sustainable travel patterns to places of employment, new housing developments, schools, colleges and for leisure purposes. These include specific projects being pursued by the ECC Sustainable Travel Planning Team (STPT), District, Borough and City Councils, Essex & South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership (ESSCRP), Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP), Modeshift London and Eastern Region meetings, Colchester Travel Plan Club (CTPC), Integrated Passenger Transport Unit (IPTU), Public Health, Active Essex, local public transport operators and other organisations supporting sustainable travel initiatives, providing the framework to achieve more through a coordinated approach.

6.1 Strategy Elements (SE)

Sustainable travel should be integrated early and at the design stage to encourage attractive environments and through routes via the design of multi-functional green infrastructure that will provide multiple benefits to encourage people to use for recreation and everyday use; connecting to local amenities, act as a green corridor, address air pollution, flood and water management and create a sense of place.

The SMoTS highlights ways of seeking to influence travel behaviour in sustainable modes as early as possible in, Local Plan preparation, site and master planning, design and layout, voucher schemes and residential travel packs etc.

SE1 Workplace Travel Planning

A Workplace Travel Plan (WTP) is a long-term travel management strategy, using a package of practical measures designed to reduce single occupancy car use for journeys to and from work and for business travel.

Workplace Travel Planning Initiatives

1. **Consultations on Local Plans** – ECC STPT provide recommendations for Local Plans regarding the formulation of policies and their supporting text, which will feed into the design and location of development at the early stages; to ensure integrated sustainable transport options are secured from the outset.
2. **Recommendations for Planning Applications** – ECC STPT provide advice, support and guidance to developers and/or local employers on sustainable travel related matters.
3. **National Travel Plan Accreditation ([Modeshift STARS Business](#))** – working alongside local businesses and employers with 50 or more staff members within Essex to develop Travel Plans that deliver measurable progression in achieving modal shift.

Travel Plans are reviewed, monitored and where applicable, accredited with an Approved, Good, Very Good, Excellent or Outstanding level award. These awards reflect the business, or organisations efforts in the promotion and development of their Travel Plan, ensuring that it remains an “active” document.

Accreditation is based upon three levels of criteria:

- Employee engagement (measured by staff travel survey response rate)
 - Number of Travel Plan Measures implemented (as identified by the Sustainable Travel Planning Officer and evidenced by the Travel Plan Co-ordinator)
 - Level of mode share achieved, as demonstrated by staff survey
4. **Smarter Travel for Essex Network (STEN)** - membership to this Network for organisations who would like support with car park management, combined with making alternative travel modes an attractive option for their employees. The STEN provides employers of Essex with the following benefits:
 - Dedicated support line – unlimited support and advice via phone and email
 - Monthly e-newsletter – providing information on new initiatives, suggested activities, resources and networking opportunities
 - Marketing collateral – access to a bespoke range of posters to promote campaigns/events throughout the year and help achieve travel plan goals
 - Employee engagement – support with promotional event days
 - Travel to Work Survey – web-based questionnaire undertaken annually asking commuters how they travel to work, providing an analysis of employee travel habits

- Guidance on behaviour change theories and methods, to overcome behaviours
- Access to a range of resources, including Essex Car Share Scheme, personalised journey planning, Travel Plan documents and staff postcode maps
- Bi-annual networking events – all STEN members are invited to workshops, where they can discuss their travel plan issues and share best practice

Case Study – Battelle UK

Battelle is a global science and technology company. Their head office is based in the USA, with one of the UK offices in Chelmsford. In 2013 the company relocated from Ongar to brand new offices on the Chelmsford Business Park, 2.5 miles from the city centre.

A Travel Plan was prepared for the new building as part of their planning requirements, as part of this a range of infrastructure measures were put in place to support employees travelling sustainably, including secure cycle storage, shower facilities, lockers and car share spaces. The Travel Plan also included soft measures such as appointing a Travel Plan Coordinator, publicising public transport services, publicising walking and cycling routes, and promoting awareness days, including Cycle to Work Day. Since occupying their building, they have also organised Dr Bike events for staff and invested in their IT equipment enabling staff to work from home when necessary.

Battelle employees are asked to record how they travel to work each day on their timesheets. This ensures that there is 100% accuracy in capturing employees' mode of travel daily and provides an excellent evidence base to calculate modal split. Since 2014 their walking rate has increased from 3.5% to over 4%, as displayed in the table below.

	Drive Alone	Car Share	Walk	Bike	Public Transport	Taxi
2014	77.75%	16.44%	3.51%	1.52%	0.58%	0.20%
2015	72.54%	15.03%	4.56%	6.20%	1.28%	0.40%
2016	76.5%	12.39%	4.30%	2.32%	3.59%	0.83%
2017	69.49%	16.15%	5.13%	0.64%	5.46%	1.19%
2018	74.6%	18.48%	2.21%	0.40%	3.07%	1.23%
2019	77.45%	14.35%	4.06%	0.50%	2.19%	1.46%
2023	67.57%	16.22%	5.41%	2.70%	0.00%	0.00%

Case Study – Broomfield Hospital (Mid Essex Hospital Services Trust)

Bus Travel:

At Mid Essex Hospital Services NHS Trust, they offer their staff a 50% discount on quarterly and annual season tickets for travel with First Bus. The Trust provides 25% of the funding with First matching the other 25%. A flexible 12 journey bus ticket has also been introduced to encourage shift workers to use the bus to travel to work. The Trust offers a 20% subsidy for this ticket. Since its introduction, the 12-journey ticket has been very successful. First Bus also visits the Trust on a weekly basis to sell tickets and offer advice on bus services. Recently the Trust also rolled out the introduction of the M-ticketing App that allows staff to purchase bus tickets via an App and still qualify for discounts.

The Trust also offers an interest free salary advance for their staff to purchase quarterly and annual bus tickets. These salary advances are now further promoted as one of the services offered through the Trust's Travel Centre – a centre for Trust staff to offer advice and assistance with individual travel planning choices.

Car Share:

Broomfield Hospital has implemented a dedicated online Broomfield Hospital car share scheme which enables staff to easily register their journey and find other staff who are keen to share their commute to work. Employees registered on the scheme enjoy reserved parking in a dedicated car park and members of the scheme also qualify for a guaranteed ride home.

Cycle to Work Scheme

The Trust has launched a formal salary sacrifice Cycle to Work Scheme, working with one of the UK's leading providers of the scheme. A wide choice of bikes is available (with over 550 cycling brands) to staff through the scheme, meaning staff can build the perfect Cycle to Work package enabling them to have a healthy and more active lifestyle.

Staff can typically save either 32% (lower rate taxpayers) or 42% (higher rate taxpayers) through the Cycle to Work scheme. With the package costs recovered from gross pay via salary sacrifice, staff make savings through Tax and NI contributions.

Subsidised Park and Ride

In partnership with Essex County Council, the Trust offers a regular Park and Ride shuttle bus service from Chelmer Valley Park and Ride to Broomfield Hospital. A subsidy is offered to encourage staff to use the service rather than parking at the hospital. Subsidised rates are offered in line with car park charges.

Motorcycle Parking Units

The Trust introduced 10 secure motorcycle parking units at the front of the main hospital building. These units are for use by the public and staff on a first come first served basis. The units allow users to securely store their belongings inside the locker and secure the motorcycle on an alarmed lock. These units are available to use free of charge.

- 5. ECC Employee Travel Plan** - management and co-ordination of sustainable travel planning measures to employees within ECC including Cycle to Work Scheme, Interest Free Bike Loan Scheme, Rail Discount Scheme, Bus Discounts, Car Share Scheme(s) across hub offices and a Pool Bike Scheme.

Case Study – Essex County Council

ECC is leading by example and has developed a Travel Plan for its own employees (in operation for approximately 22 years). The aim of the Travel Plan is to minimise the impact ECC employee travel has on the local transport network and actively contribute to reducing CO₂ emissions in Essex.

ECC has over 7,000 employees with the aim of the Travel Plan to offer these employees a range of options to consider when commuting and for business travel. The ECC Employee Travel Plan includes measures for walking, cycling, bus and rail use (including Park and Ride), as well as car sharing.

Cycling – is promoted amongst employees by offering an interest free bike loan up to the value of £650, as well as a salary sacrifice scheme to assist with the purchase of a new bike and accessories tax free. The main County Hall building also offers safe and secure cycle storage on site, including shower and changing facilities.

Public Transport – to encourage bus and rail use, employees can benefit from a range of discounted tickets offered by the main operators, as well as flexible ticketing arrangements for part-time workers.

Car Sharing – plays a fundamental role in the Travel Plan. ECC have a branded car share scheme and website which offers a free online matching facility, alongside free parking to members of the scheme.

To ensure the County Council remains at the forefront of sustainable travel a package of activities have been developed which encompasses businesses, schools and residents in Essex.

These measures are supported by a suite of banners for each of the different travel modes as well as other publicity materials. The purpose of the branding is for residents, employees and schools to have a single recognisable brand for travel planning in Essex.

An Employee Travel Survey was undertaken in June 2023, with results showing that across all the major hub offices occupied by ECC employees throughout the county, 36.5% drive alone to their place of work. Other modal splits were:

*10% walk, 8% use the bus, 3% car share, 13% use the Park and Ride, 13% travel by train and 12% work from home all the time. A breakdown of the full results can be found in **Appendix 1**.*

SE2 Residential Travel Planning

As working from home becomes even more popular, alongside the roll out of Superfast Broadband; and in the interests of reducing the need to travel by car and promoting sustainable development and transport, Residential Travel Plans are required as part of new residential developments with 80 or more dwellings. This is in accordance with Development Management Policies DM9 - Accessibility and Transport Sustainability and DM10 - Travel Plans.

A Residential Travel Plan (RTP) is a working plan which includes several travel plan measures to ensure sustainable means of travel are available to residents.

Residential Travel Planning Initiatives

- 1. Consultations on Local Plans** – ECC STPT provide recommendations on Local Plans regarding the formulation of policies and their supporting text, which will feed into the design and location of development at the early stages; to ensure integrated sustainable transport options are secured from the outset.
- 2. Recommendations for Planning Applications** – ECC STPT provide advice, support and guidance to developers and/or local employers on sustainable travel related matters.
- 3. Residential Travel Information Pack (prepared by ECC)** – are physical documents providing information on different modes of travel available. The Travel Information Packs are specific to each district within Essex and are provided to new residential developments of all sizes, from 1 dwelling upwards.
- 4. ECC Residential Travel Plan Co-ordinator** – The role of the ECC Residential Travel Plan Co-ordinator is to assist the Residential Travel Plan Co-ordinator employed by the develop and/or transport consultant, to implement, develop and monitor the Residential Travel Plan for their specific development site (80 or more dwellings).
- 5. You. Smart. Thing.** – This is an online personalised travel assistant, which provides personalised travel plans to users. It is currently in use at 8 residential developments across Essex, with 727 travel plans have been generated to February 2025, 93.1% of which have been made by sustainable modes of travel.
- 6.** In responding to specific planning applications due consideration is given to ensuring pedestrian, cycle and where appropriate bridleway connectivity is provided within the site and to the wider area to improve connectivity to nearby key destinations and services. Travel Plan recommendations are adapted to reflect the needs and requirements of a particular site, e.g. student accommodation.

Some of the larger development sites can take between 5 and 10 years to build, before completion. It is therefore essential for sustainable travel patterns to be established at the early stages of occupation of the development.

Case Study – Beaulieu Park, Chelmsford

In March 2014 the Council granted outline planning permission for a new neighbourhood of up to 3,600 new homes and up to 62,300 sqm of employment

floor space to the north of the city. This included a new business park, retail, hotel, leisure, open space, education and community facilities. This development is called Beaulieu Park. First occupations took place in September 2015, and by late 2019 559 dwellings were occupied.

With the development located on the edge of Chelmsford City Centre, the developer, Countryside Zest (Beaulieu Park) LLP, was committed to working with Essex County Council and Chelmsford City Council to encourage the use of sustainable travel modes made by residents and visitors to and from the site.

Among the more recent innovations serving the site, the Beaulieu 57 bus service began to operate through the site from October 2018. This service travels through the estate, and links it up with not only the city centre, including the train station, but also Anglia Ruskin University and the suburbs on the other side of the city.

More recently cycling has been a key focus on the development, and from April 2019 free bike training was offered to residents. Provided by Outspoken Training this helped those at all levels of skill and confidence to better handle themselves on a bike and expand the potential for bike journeys to replace those made by car. Anyone who completed the training was given a £50 gift voucher for the Giant Bicycle Store, situated on New Street.

As part of the planning condition, all new residents were issued with a residential travel pack upon occupation. This outlines all the sustainable travel choices and opportunities available to them in their new home, and is updated to reflect new initiatives, such as the Beaulieu 57.

Using the four-year analysis of car journeys taken from the development, the number of car trips taken per household per day decreased by more than 8% from the first year to the fourth. In tandem, over the same period, the equivalent number of walking trips more than doubled, and cycling went up by nearly 90%.

At the time of the Year 8 monitoring report and surveys, in November 2024, 1,291 dwellings were occupied. A Dr Bike Cycle Repair service day took place in October 2024 and works on Beaulieu Park Station (the first new station on the Great Eastern Mainline in 100 years) is completing construction, with the official launch opening scheduled for 26 October 2025.

The outcomes achieved from this case study demonstrate the positive contributions that Travel Plans can have on residential developments if implemented and monitored correctly.

SE3 School Travel Planning

Whilst it is acknowledged that ECC has statutory duties to provide home to school transport, reference should be made to the following measures, which seek to encourage sustainable school trips, and the preference to encourage walking and cycling to improve mental and physical wellbeing.

- The development of School Travel Plans.
- ECC will use its highways, transport and school's expertise to examine the provision of safe direct walking and cycling routes from new housing to education and other community facilities.
- To seek financial contributions for off-site works to walking and cycling routes, where appropriate.
- Where appropriate, highway contributions will be sought to establish a safe walking route before seeking a school transport contribution.

School Travel Patterns

In July 2020 a Parents Travel Survey was conducted by Sustrans and ECC to identify travel patterns of school pupil's pre-lockdown (Covid-19). The figures represent results from over 550 schools, including primary and secondary, in Essex. Some schools were more engaged with this process than others, although the data provides an overview of the mode of travel used by many for their home to school journeys.

The tabulated figures found in **Appendix 3** show a breakdown of the results across the County by District and travel mode.

A School Travel Plan (STP) is an active document produced by the whole school community to identify and implement measures to enable all relevant parties to travel by their most suitable and sustainable modes, with associated benefits for the wider community. All schools are encouraged to develop their own Travel Plan and conduct a travel survey at least once per academic year.

A small selection of schools (mainly primary) have recently conducted their 'hands up' surveys (during 2024-25) providing the following results from around 20,000 pupils:

	Actuals	Percentage
Walk	7,994	40.6%
Scooting	962	4.9%
Cycle	726	3.7%
Public Bus	934	4.7%

Dedicated Bus	967	4.9%
Park & Stride	1,823	9.3%
Train / Tube	477	2.4%
Car Share	313	1.6%
Car	5,490	27.9%
Total	19,685	100%

This data shows that walking is the highest mode, followed by trips made in the car. However, it is possible there would be more bus users if more secondary school data was available, with the proportion of scooting likely to decrease too.

There is no ECC policy for schools converting to academies, however central government does provide some [guidance](#) on this. Essentially this process takes place through the Department for Education.

Case Study – Woodville Primary School

Woodville Primary School is a large school, with a net capacity of 420 places in the town of South Woodham Ferrers. The school have been very engaged with sustainable travel over the years, working each year to keep their travel plan up to date. Their initiatives include installing ample parking for pupils who cycle and scoot to school, a successful park-and-stride scheme from a local supermarket, Dr Bike mechanics visiting the school, and taking part in annual promotions, such as The Big Walk & Wheel and Walk to School Week.

These and other actions have resulted in the proportion of pupils walking, scooting or cycling all or part of the way to school increasing from 46% in 2018, to 89% in 2025. These have helped contribute to an equally impressive reduction in the number of pupils being driven all the way to school, from 53% in 2018 to 9% today.

School Travel Planning Initiatives

- 1. Consultations on Local Plans** – ECC STPT provide recommendations on Local Plans regarding the formulation of policies and their supporting text, which will feed into the design and location of development at the early stages; to ensure integrated sustainable transport options are secured from the outset.
- 2. Recommendations for Planning Applications** – ECC STPT provide advice, support and guidance to developers and/or local employers on sustainable travel related matters.
- 3. Assessment of the travel and transport requirements for young people** – Travel data including mode, postcode, barriers and pupil preference for individual schools is derived through the pupil surveys conducted by the teaching staff when each school completes the first stage of their School Travel Plan.

The survey data is then used to establish the existing modal split and demand for transport amongst pupils, alongside consultation with key stakeholders within the school community, for example, pupils, parents, staff and governors.

- 4.** The Council also has a Travel Training team which focuses upon assisting young people with special educational needs (SEN) to be able to travel independently and develop skills for life.
- 5. Audit of Sustainable Travel Infrastructure and Accessibility** – The audit of a school's sustainable travel infrastructure is a large-scale undertaking – Essex has over 550 schools and it is not practical to deal with all of them simultaneously.

Therefore, an audit of the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure of one primary and one secondary school from each of the 12 districts in Essex was conducted in 2018, comprising 24 schools in total. This identified the travel modes that may be used when travelling to and from pupils' home location, or between schools/institutions within Essex.

Two maps were produced using the Geographical Information System (GIS) for each of these schools. The maps showed relevant infrastructure, information and services to schools, including the wider catchment areas such as student postcode distribution and can be used to encourage sustainable travel.

Audits were conducted as a desktop exercise and consisted of a:

- Review of onsite infrastructure and layout
- Review of the surrounding transport network between the school and pupils' home locations

The data that was provided can be integrated into the School Travel Plan to complement the overview of their on-site transport facilities. Schools can then analyse and assess how accessible their site is for pupils from their home locations. A full breakdown of the various elements of the audit and what was contained within each map can be found in **Appendix 4**.

Safer Streets and Community-led Street Design

The award of Active Travel Funding (ATF) has enabled ECC to trial Safer Streets on areas near schools around the county.

A Safer Street is one where changes have been made to make it as easy and safe as possible for children and to walk, wheel or cycle to school.

Many changes can be made including (but not limited to) raised zebra crossings, 20mph speed limit, speed cushions, trees and planting, extended barriers and other public improvements (cycle parking, benches and lighting). The [Safer Street](#) areas proposed for Essex will feature a combination of the two. They will seek to put in 20mph zones, extra cycle parking, signal upgrades, and short windows at either of the school day where motor vehicle access to road outside the school is managed.

Safer Streets in Essex build on the work undertaken since 2019 along Winstree Road in Colchester. Winstree Road is about a kilometre long but has four schools and well over 2,000 students travelling there each day. The remainder is almost all residential, with connections to retail and central Colchester at either end.

ECC in partnership with Sustrans worked on a community-led street design project where new ideas were tested on the ground, generated from an extensive period of active engagement with the local community. On-street trials were conducted, based on public feedback, with temporary measures installed to facilitate a safer, more sustainable road.

A final report on the effects of them suggested the trials decreased problem parking on the road and pavements, and a decrease in car speed. There's also the potential for park-and-stride to be more widely implemented. It is also understood that public feedback was broadly positive on the overall purpose and ambitions for the scheme.

Additionally, an area-wide parking study has been conducted, to assess the levels and nature of parking along Winstree Road and the surrounding areas.

Winstree Road was used as a pilot project, with lessons learnt from here alongside other plans/schemes which are in the pipeline, helping shape future ECC policies for network design near to schools, new and existing. Assorted measures linked to Safer Streets, including a prioritisation tool, have also been developed. The prioritisation tool allows us to forecast which schools and which areas would benefit most from Safer Streets interventions, alongside their in-school work to support active travel.

SE4 Externally Funded Projects

Electric Vehicle Charging Points

At the beginning of 2024, the government mandated that from 2035 onwards, all new car and van sales will be electric. Approximately 300,000 nationwide public charging points are required by 2030 to support the shift to electric vehicles (EVs), with the Essex Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy stating Essex needs at least 6,000. As of July 2025, Essex had 782 public charging points, of which 382 were classed as rapid charging points. However, there are disparities across the administrative area of Essex, with some city, borough and district area's boasting more charging points than others.

Moreover, when we compare the number of charging points per 100,000 population, Essex has far less than its neighbouring counties:

Table: The number of electric vehicles charging points per 100,000 population in Essex and neighbouring counties as of July 2025.

Cambridgeshire	119.7
Essex	51.5
Hertfordshire	140.4
Norfolk	100.1
Suffolk	124.9

Source: Department for Transport, 2025

Since records began in October 2019 there has been a 467% increase in charging points in Essex, and we envisage that this will rapidly increase as we head towards the phase out of sales of new internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles.

But the Essex wide vision of “delivering the right charger in the right place”, as outlined in [the Essex Electric Vehicle Charge Point Strategy](#), must be carefully planned so not to increase vehicular use, because the most effective way to achieve transport decarbonisation is to reduce reliance on private motorised transport methods, where possible. EVs are not without their flaws, they are still a vehicle and thus contribute to congestion and are only zero emission at the tailpipe, following resource intensive processes to make them. They also emit particulate matter, to which there is no safe level of exposure, to name a few. But over their lifetime, they emit considerably less greenhouse gas emissions than their ICE counterparts.

A key challenge for Essex is 36% of its households do not have access to off-street on-plot parking, so are unable to easily charge a car. Social equity is an objective of Essex's Strategy to ensure everyone can access affordable and adequate charging points, which meets their needs, now and in the future.

In 2023, Essex was successful in securing over £230,000 from the On-Street Residential Charging Point Fund (ORCS) administered by the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) to install approximately 66 charging points across Essex. These are currently being installed and are expected to be complete by the end of 2025. In early 2024, ECC

were successful in securing over £8million of funding from the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund through OZEV, to install a further 5,000 charging points between 2026 and 2031.

Further details of additional charging points can be found at <https://www.zap-map.com/>.

SE5 Marketing and Promotion

Regular marketing and advertising are extremely important to ensure there is an awareness of the Travel Plan. A strong campaign, delivered by the business, school or residents, promoting sustainable modes of travel, is essential to assisting employees, pupils and parents to choose which is the best way to travel to work and/or school, enabling them to do so in the most effective and sustainable way. Examples of current behaviour change initiatives include: [Safer, Green Healthier](#), [ForwardMotion South Essex](#), [Love to Ride Essex](#), [Go Jauntly](#) and [TravelEssex](#).

Channels through which to distribute this information can include the provision of leaflets, posters, a travel information board / company intranet and inviting local press to launches / travel awareness days etc. Other opportunities could be to promote through school literature, including websites, and newsletters, prospectuses and open evenings.

Resources available from ECC to assist businesses, schools and residential developments include:

- Advice and consultancy from Sustainable Travel Planning Officers, providing examples of best practice most suited to the business, school or developments location and demographics.
- Smarter Travel for Essex Network membership.
- Access to [various guidance documents and templates](#) to assist in the preparation of a Travel Plan.
- Support with promoting national campaigns such as Walking Month (May), Bike Week (June), Catch the Bus Week (July), and Car Free Day (September).
- Free registration and support to utilise the [Modeshift STARS Education](#) system, a nationally recognised Travel Plan Accreditation platform. This enables schools, workplaces and residential developments to earn and progress through Approved, Good, Very Good, Excellent and Outstanding level awards.
- Modal-specific safety training, most commonly Bikeability, but also pedestrian safety education. Full details can be found in **Appendix 6**.
- Alignment with the national Healthy Schools programme, promoting active travel.

The initiatives, resources and advice outlined in the section above are available to all organisations in the County, who wish to participate in the projects. The STPT will work

with individual businesses and/or schools that identify themselves as having accessibility issues, with resources concentrated on and prioritised for those establishments who wish to work in partnership with ECC.

Some of the resources will incur a charge for those organisations who wish to participate, the travelplanteam@essex.gov.uk can provide further details.

7.0 Strategy Monitoring and Review

The SMoTS on-going development and implementation is the responsibility of the ECC STPT. The team will maintain and update the strategy on a biennial basis, report on progress and ensure that emerging issues and changing circumstances are reflected within the document. As part of this process, any views and comments from interested parties will be welcomed on a continuous basis throughout the life of the strategy. This will help maintain its relevance in influencing other policies and decision-making and ensure it continues to evolve to meet emerging needs and requirements.

There are clearly other mechanisms used to monitor the effectiveness of the elements of this strategy, for example: Travel Plans for Workplace, Residential and Schools all have a dedicated monitoring programme contained within them, individual counts of people using cycle facilities and/or walking are also conducted by schools and workplaces, as well as monitoring the take-up of bus tickets for residential developments.

Review Publish Date

Annual review to ensure the SMoTS is fit for purpose - Annually by the 31st of August

A complete review to ensure data, interventions and case studies are up to date - Every 2 years.

8.0 Appendices

Appendix 1: Results from ECC Employee Travel Survey June 2023

Appendix 2: Extract from ECC Residential Travel Information Pack

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Appendix 4: Breakdown of Audit elements contained within each map

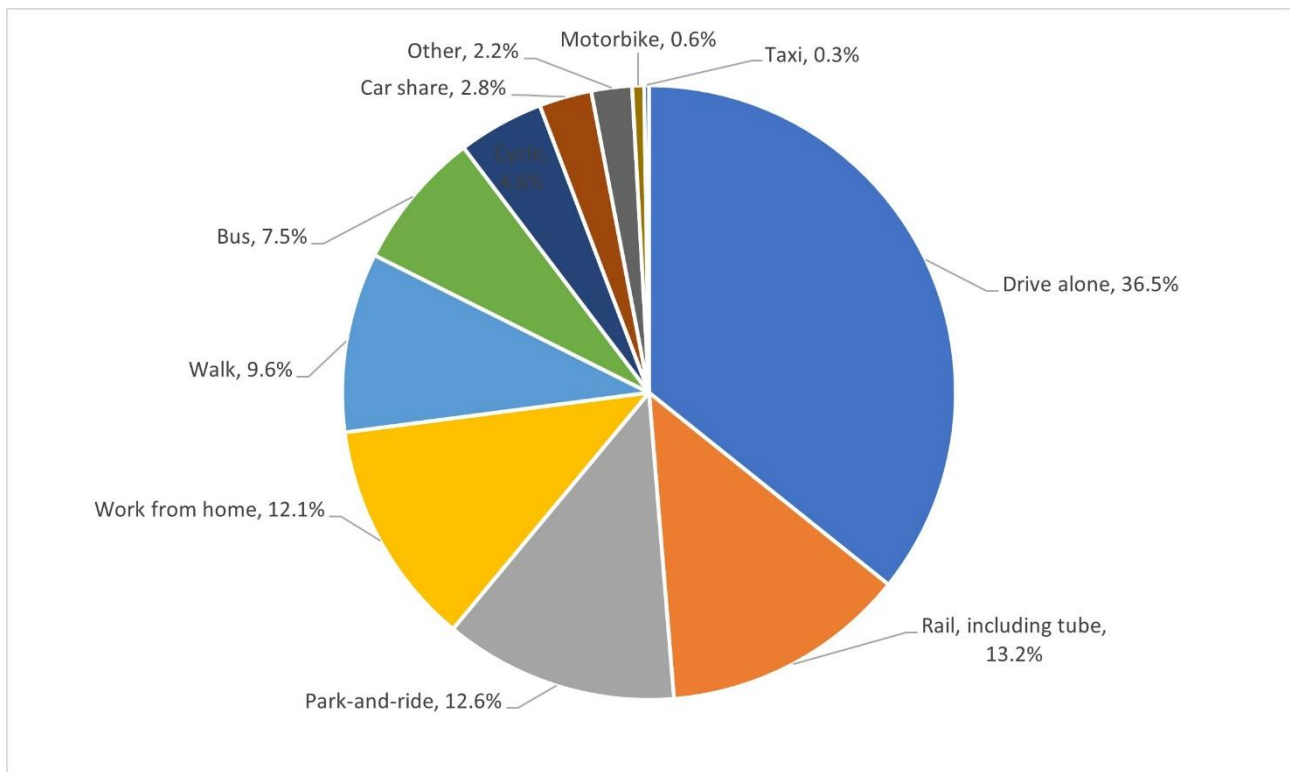
Appendix 5: School Travel Plan Accreditation Factsheet

Appendix 6: STEN Factsheet

Appendix 1: Results from ECC Employee Travel Survey June 2023

ECC Staff Travel Survey 2023

All Sites Modal Method of Transport to and from Work



The chart shows that over a third of staff, 36.5%, drove to work alone. Walking, bus (including the park and ride), train and car share made up the majority of rest of the modal split.

Appendix 2: Extract from ECC Residential Travel Information Pack

This shows a two-page spread of the Colchester residential travel pack, explaining the options for walking to get around town.

Use Your Feet and Take to the Street

Why walk?

For fun and fitness...

Walking gives you more energy, it can help you feel and sleep better, reduce your levels of stress, blood pressure and cholesterol, keep your heart strong and help manage your weight. Not only is it a great way to keep in shape, but it's the greenest form of transport and free.



Step up...

Walking more, whether it's for work or leisure, is an easy way of becoming more active without trying too hard. Setting yourself a target of **walking 10,000 steps a day** can be a fun way of increasing the amount of physical activity you do.

- Tips for getting more steps into your life:
 - Get off the bus early and walk the rest of the way
 - Walk to the station instead of taking the car or bus
 - Take the stairs instead of the lift
 - Walk children to school
 - Get fit with Fido – walk the dog

Check out the 10,000 steps challenge <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/loseweight/Pages/10000stepschallenge.aspx>



Following a different path

Public rights of way ...

Enjoy the footpaths, bridleways and byways that criss-cross Essex and travel, without using the roads, through stunning countryside.

For inspiration and to find public rights of way, check out the Essex County Council Interactive Map: www.essexhighways.org/Transport-and-Roads/Getting-Around/Public-Rights-of-Way/Interactive-map.aspx or purchase an Ordnance Survey map from bookshops and stationers.



Walk Colchester


Walk Colchester is a community-led project aimed at improving health and community engagement by encouraging walking. Visit www.walkcolchester.org.uk for more information and advice.



Join in and step out

Fancy walking with others? Improving your fitness and mobility in a sociable atmosphere? Then Colchester Borough Council's health walks led by fully trained volunteer leaders could be for you. The walks are held on a regular fortnightly pattern on alternate Fridays and Sundays throughout the year.

Visit www.colchester.gov.uk/walkingforhealth for more information.



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Make a start | Travel smart

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5

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Appendix 3: Sustrans Parent Survey Data from 2020

District	Bus	Bus %	Car	Car %	Cycle	Cycle %	Park and Stride	Park and Stride %	Scooter	Scooter %
Basildon	70	7.56%	298	32.18%	54	5.83%	14	1.51%	16	1.73%
Braintree	74	11.99%	231	27.44%	17	2.76%	9	1.46%	9	1.46%
Brentwood	19	11.31%	48	28.57%	2	1.19%	2	1.19%	3	1.79%
Castle Point	6	3.66%	51	31.10%	5	3.05%	6	3.66%	10	6.10%
Chelmsford	75	10.95%	248	36.20%	27	3.94%	7	1.02%	16	2.34%
Colchester	292	21.86%	365	27.32%	66	4.94%	13	0.97%	33	2.47%
Epping Forest	96	15.87%	194	32.07%	5	0.83%	2	0.33%	9	1.49%
Harlow	33	3.12%	376	35.57%	56	5.30%	10	0.95%	32	3.03%
Maldon	19	57.58%	10	30.30%		0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Rochford	5	1.57%	108	33.96%	5	1.57%	13	4.09%	16	5.03%
Tendring	95	17.40%	268	49.08%	9	1.65%	4	0.73%	4	0.73%
Uttlesford	70	16.06%	166	38.07%	3	0.69%	1	0.23%	15	3.44%
Total	854	12.39%	2,363	34.29%	249	3.61%	81	1.18%	163	2.37%

District	Taxi	Taxi %	Train or other Public Transport	Train or other Public Transport %	Walk	Walk %	Other	Other %	Grand Total
Basildon		0.00%	11	1.19%	463	50.00%		0.00%	926
Braintree	8	1.30%	3	0.49%	265	42.95%	1	0.16%	617
Brentwood		0.00%	42	25.00%	52	30.95%		0.00%	168
Castle Point		0.00%		0.00%	86	52.44%		0.00%	164
Chelmsford		0.00%	24	3.50%	288	42.04%		0.00%	685
Colchester	3	0.22%	18	1.35%	546	40.87%		0.00%	1,336
Epping Forest	1	0.17%	8	1.32%	290	47.93%		0.00%	605
Harlow	1	0.09%		0.00%	548	51.84%	1	0.09%	1,057
Maldon		0.00%		0.00%	4	12.12%		0.00%	33
Rochford		0.00%	2	0.63%	169	53.14%		0.00%	318
Tendring	2	0.37%	10	1.83%	153	28.02%	1	0.18%	546
Uttlesford		0.00%	1	0.23%	180	41.28%		0.00%	436
Total	15	0.22%	119	1.73%	3,044	44.17%	3	0.04%	6,891

Appendix 4: Breakdown of Audit elements contained within each map

AUDIT & MAPPING EXERCISE FOR SCHOOL TRIPS

An audit of the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure with the authority that may be used when travelling to and from pupils' home location, or between schools/institutions within Essex.

GIS Maps will be produced for schools, within Essex, to encourage sustainable travel. The maps show relevant infrastructure, information and services to schools.

The following may be contained within each school map produced:

- Pupil postcodes
- School location
- A 15-minute walking zone for primary schools
- A 25-minute walking zone for secondary schools
- No dropping off areas that are in place around the surrounding area of the school
- Cycle routes and Safer Routes to School routes
- Location of manned and vacant School Crossing Patrols used by pupils from that school
- Location of traffic calmed areas and crossing
- Location of accessible routes from the surrounding area within 2 miles

For secondary schools, the following additional information may be included:

- Relevant bus stop location, bus services, routes and details of local bus, stating whether it's a public service bus or a dedicated school bus

Other information included on all maps:

- Map copyright
- Safer, Greener, Healthier logo across the bottom of the map about the benefits of sustainable travel.

Appendix 5: School Travel Plan Accreditation Factsheet

School Travel Plan Accreditation Scheme

Essex County Council's Sustainable Travel Planning Team is working with Head teachers from schools of all ages to assist with the development of a School Travel Plan. These have multiple aims, including decreasing traffic levels around schools, improving pupils' road safety, interlinking with Healthy Schools status and Bikeability, and helping everyone get to and from school actively, more alert and ready to learn.

To help develop a School Travel Plan, a new and free national accreditation scheme has recently been launched. Modeshift STARS has been established to recognise schools that have demonstrated excellence in supporting cycling, walking and other forms of sustainable travel. Schools can register on the scheme for free and will be granted access to an online system, guiding them through each element of a Travel Plan with user-friendly instructions.

Once registered on the system, there are three levels of accreditation that a school can achieve, with plaques awarded for each on a yearly basis to display within the school:



Approved STARS Accreditation

For schools that demonstrate their proposals and willingness to implementing a series of sustainable travel initiatives.



Good STARS Accreditation

For schools that demonstrate a commitment to promoting sustainable transport by conducting an annual survey, identifying travel issues and solutions, and delivering a range of travel initiatives.



Very Good STARS Accreditation

For schools that achieve a reduction in car use on the journey to school, identifying the sustainable modes which most suit their needs and working towards improving or implementing facilities to support these.



Excellent STARS Accreditation

For schools that have excelled with promoting sustainable travel and achieved a noticeable reduction in car use on the journey to school by fully embracing sustainable travel as the norm throughout the entire school community.



Outstanding STARS Accreditation

For schools that have achieved Excellent, and further to that conducted at least three annual pupil travel surveys over four years, and increased the proportion of pupils travelling by active modes by at least 5%.

Essex County Council can provide support to schools throughout their Travel Plan process. One of our Sustainable Travel Planning Advisors will offer their expertise and assistance, completely free of charge.

From September 2015, schools can apply for an Approved or Good accreditation, with the sign-off process for approval conducted by ECC. Applications for Very Good, Excellent or Outstanding accreditations will need to be endorsed by ECC prior to a quality assurance exercise carried out by Modeshift.

Accreditations will be given on a termly basis. Each school, when successful, will receive a certificate for display to show their level of achievement.

Excellent and Outstanding level schools will be put forward for the National STARS School Travel Awards. A national awards panel made up of experts in the field will decide upon the Regional and National Schools of the Year with the best schools in each region going forward to a national event with money-can't-buy prizes up for grabs.

A School Travel Plan is a relatively simple project which consists of three core sections:

1. A profile of the school, encompassing its size, location, pupil and staff population, and its existing facilities. This will include simple surveys (which ECC can assist with) on the travel habits and preferences of the pupils.
2. An analysis of the travel and transport issues affecting the school. A lot of this will become apparent from the surveys, but further investigation through consulting staff, parents, governors, other visitors to the school and the school council will add to the body of evidence.
3. Finally, based on the first two stages, an action plan should be devised, aimed at solving any problems that have been outlined and meeting the demands and needs of all those travelling to the school.

Once established, a School Travel Plan is a living document which can be adjusted and tweaked as and when circumstances at your school change. Repeating the surveys at the same time each year and collecting any new evidence enables you to measure progress and reassess how even more opportunities can be provided.

Some of the opportunities provided by a working School Travel Plan includes:

- Healthier and more active, alert pupils
- Decrease in congestion around the school
- Greater awareness of safety issues
- Opportunities for Bikeability cycle training
- Complementing Healthy Schools applications and reviews
- Participation in national initiatives such as Living Streets' WOW Travel Tracker
- Cleaner air in and around the school
- Pupils' greater connection with their local environment.

Our Sustainable Travel Planning Officers can help you every step of the way and are happy to share ideas that have worked well in other similar schools. We know that, like children, every school is different and so will encourage the school to own the Travel Plan, personalised to their needs.

We can also offer several free physical resources to encourage everyone to take part (depending on availability of products).

To get started, you can either register your school on the Modeshift STARS website (<https://modeshiftstars.org>) or contact us at travelplanteam@essex.gov.uk or 0333 013 9390.

Appendix 6: Smarter Travel for Essex Network Factsheet

Smarter Travel for Essex Network

Smarter Travel for Essex Network — an exciting opportunity for your business

The Smarter Travel for Essex Network (STEN) is a programme that brings together organisations with over 50 employees to promote and encourage active and sustainable travel. The network takes a lead on promoting more environmentally-friendly modes of transport, which helps in reducing traffic congestion and improving air quality.

STEN assists organisations to prepare and implement effective travel plans that promote walking, cycling, public transport, car sharing and the use of electric vehicles. The overall aim is to encourage and enable change to the way people travel around the county, by promoting a range of sustainable travel opportunities.

Join the Smarter Travel for Essex Network today and transform the way your organisation travels! Take advantage of free membership and a host of benefits designed to promote sustainable travel and improve your business environment.

Benefits:

- Attract and retain employees.
- Have a healthier, happier, and more productive workforce.
- Increase travel choices to your site.
- Reduce the cost of and demand for parking.
- Reduce on-site congestion, air, and noise pollution.
- Improve visitor/delivery access.
- Enhance your Corporate Social Responsibility.



Membership:

STEN members will have access to bespoke, creative and innovative benefits:

- A dedicated support line offering unlimited support, advice and guidance via phone and email.
- Access to the Annual Travel to Work survey. Data collected will allow members to see which travel incentives they should consider, based on the popularity of travel methods used by employees National Accreditations.
- A monthly e-newsletter providing information on new travel initiatives/campaigns, active travel-related suggestions and activities as well as examples of best practice.
- Members will be eligible to apply for national travel plan accreditation facilitated by [Modeshift STARS](#) — an online travel planning toolkit that creates, develops and supports travel plans.

- A range of bespoke marketing materials for targeted campaigns to promote different travel modes and help with achieving travel plan goals.

Accreditation:

STEN members are eligible to apply for National Travel Plan Accreditation, supported by [Modeshift STARS Business](#).

Modeshift STARS Business is an online travel planning tool kit that helps create, develop and support travel plans. It recognises organisations that have demonstrated excellence in supporting cycling, walking and other forms of sustainable travel and rewards them with accreditation status.

There are five levels of accreditation* organisations can achieve:



Our team of Sustainable Travel Planning Officers will provide support to organisations, who wish to apply for accreditation, via Modeshift. Offering expertise and assistance, completely free of charge, we will help to build your Modeshift profile and input all the necessary data required, to get your organisation accredited.

*Accreditation awards are free, but for those organisations progressing through to Very Good and above, a small fee is charged by Modeshift.

Next steps:

We believe now is the time to be bold and create a new blueprint for the way we travel. Don't miss out on this opportunity to make a positive impact on your business and the environment. Membership to STEN is completely free so become a STEN member today!

Contact us at travelplanteam@essex.gov.uk to learn more and sign up. Together, we can create a safer, greener and healthier Essex.



This information is issued by:

Essex County Council

Contact us:

✉ travelplanteam@essex.gov.uk

letstalkessexsustainabletravel.co.uk/hub-page/businesses

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The information contained in this document can be translated, and/or made available in alternative formats on request.

- ECC Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions 2020
- ECC Employee Travel Plan
- Development Management Policies 2015/16
- 2024 Essex Parking Guidance
- Transport Assessment Guidelines 2016
- DfE Home to School Travel and Transport Strategy Guidance 2014
- Essex Cycling Strategy 2025 (to be approved and adopted)
- Essex Walking Strategy 2021
- Workplace Travel Plan Framework and accompanying Guidance Notes
- Residential Travel Plan Framework and accompanying Guidance Notes
- School Travel Plan Framework and accompanying Guidance Notes
- Essex Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership Business Plan
- Essex Design Guide 2018
- Modeshift STARS online portal
- Everyone's Essex: our plan for levelling up the county 2021 to 2025
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-change-guide-for-local-government-and-partners>

This information is issued by:

Essex County Council

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