

Essex County Council Active Travel Fund 3 Draft Engagement Plan March 2022

Introduction

In March 2022, the Department for Transport (DfT) announced that they will be awarding Essex County Council (ECC) £1.3M to improve walking and cycling in Colchester, specifically LCWIP route 4. This is a bold and ambitious scheme which will make a real difference to active transport in Colchester, specifically for those travelling to / from the town centre and the university. A key part of ensuring success is that ECC engage with the community and make sure this scheme meets local needs.

This document details our proposed engagement activity including

- The principles guiding the engagement process
- Who we plan to engage with, the proposed approach and timescales
- How the schemes will be monitored

We will be engaging on the high level detail of LCWIP 4

Engagement will begin after the pre-election and election period in Colchester have concluded.

Engagement principles

We will ensure that the engagement is:

Inclusive

The engagement process will be open to all residents living within the immediate vicinity of each scheme as well as local community groups and third parties related either by geography or interest.

Accessible and convenient

Any in person engagement events will meet any current / future Covid-19 restrictions. We will also consider online events and will ensure that they are widely publicised.

Genuine and meaningful

Interested parties will be engaged at an early stage (avoiding the holidays) so that feedback can be gathered and comments can be considered before any work commences.

Accountable

A full record of all feedback will be maintained. We will report back on the feedback received, key themes and how comments have helped to further evolve plans.

Draft engagement plan (subject to cabinet approval)

ECC will engage with interested parties in best way we can taking advantage of technology, existing groups and individual needs. Full details are in the table below but in summary, we will engage with:

- **Residents** – engage via online survey on the aspirations of our proposals.
- **Important third parties** (business, disability groups, cycling groups, passenger transport, schools) –engage via our existing Colchester ATF2 steering group. This group meets to shape our ATF2 schemes to ensure the needs of the local community are met.
- **Politicians** – local MPs, and district and county councillors, via briefings or virtual meetings.
- **Other legal consultees** as part of the Traffic Regulation Order process.

| Who | How we will engage | When |
|--|--|--|
| Engagement will begin after the pre-election and election period in Colchester have concluded | | |
| County Councillors | Briefings via ECC cabinet meetings | After pre-election and elections, ~May / June |
| Businesses | Via existing steering group | After briefings with County Councillors, and expected to run until Spring 2023 |
| Disability and sight loss groups | | |
| District councillors | | |
| Bus operators | | |
| Other consultees not covered elsewhere | Via Safer, Greener, Healthier website & email | After pre-election and elections, ~May / June |
| Local MPs | Virtual discussions with ECC members | After pre-election and elections, ~May / June |
| Residents | Online public opinion survey based on DfT best practice template, shared press releases, posters and social media. We may also make use of 'virtual town halls' to provide visual representations of our schemes | Autumn / early winter 2022, for 3 weeks |
| Emergency Services | Statutory consultee via TRO process | This will be updated when more information is available |
| Royal Mail | Statutory consultee via TRO process | This will be updated when more information is available |

We will focus our engagement on those directly impacted by our proposals.

Once the above appropriate engagement has concluded, ECC will confirm, in a letter signed by the responsible senior officer, the following to the DfT:

- That an appropriate local engagement has taken place
- That there is sufficient support for proposals to begin delivery, highlighting any proposed changes taking account of local feedback
- That a clear communications plan has been implemented to deal with any backlash which draws on the results of local feedback;
- Provides a summary of MPs' responses
- Confirmation that appropriate monitoring and evaluation of the schemes as recommended by the DfT will be introduced