

# A Better Connected Essex

Essex Transport Strategy

Public Consultation  
(Part Two)

July 2025



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# Introduction

‘A Better Connected Essex’ is our new draft transport strategy, also known as our Local Transport Plan. It sets our vision for transport in the county.

Effective transport is essential for the efficient and effective movement of people and goods necessary to support and grow the local economy. Transport connects businesses to their customers and suppliers, and people’s homes to workplaces, schools and colleges.



## Background

This is the fourth Local Transport Plan for Essex and contains our vision for transport and how we will deliver on our objectives. We have been in the process of developing the transport strategy for some time and carried out a first (part one) public consultation in summer 2024. That consultation was specifically focused on our draft key themes and outcomes.

We are now seeking feedback on the full draft transport strategy as part of a part two consultation. We are also consulting on area-specific implementation plans.

This is a transitional period for Essex which will see the election of a Mayor for Greater Essex, the reorganisation of current local authorities, and changes to responsibilities for transport in Essex. Another new Local Transport Plan will ultimately be needed by the new Mayoral Combined County Authority. However, this is likely to take some time and we still believe there are significant benefits in finalising our new transport strategy now.

### A new interim transport strategy will:

- Ensure we meet our statutory duty and have an updated plan covering the transition period while new local government structures are established

- Provide clear and up-to-date policy direction, particularly for Local Plans, which set out how and where areas should be used and developed
- Help support funding bids
- Provide a starting point for the development of a new Greater Essex Local Transport Plan by the new Mayoral Combined County Authority

### Find out more

For more details and to have your say, visit: [consultations.essex.gov.uk/essex-highways/better-connected-essex](https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/essex-highways/better-connected-essex)

## What is a transport strategy?



**All local transport authorities are required by law to develop a transport strategy, also known as a Local Transport Plan.**

We (Essex County Council) are the local transport authority for Essex, which means we are responsible for maintaining, planning and overseeing transport in the county.

The current Local Transport Plan for Essex, [Essex Transport Strategy](#), was written more than a decade ago and adopted in 2011. The challenges we face and the way we travel have significantly changed since then, and it is now time to develop and adopt a new strategy (Local Transport Plan 4).

The new Essex Transport Strategy:



Sets out our transport vision, showing what we are trying to achieve for transport in Essex.



States how we will deliver and manage a full range of transport services e.g. Park & Ride, and walking and cycling facilities.



Includes a full programme of transport investment, outlining what funding support is needed.



Will help guide the transport elements of other Essex County Council plans and strategies, so that all the different parts of the council are aligned.



Will enhance our relationship with our district, borough and city council colleagues in planning and delivering new homes and jobs.

## Why do we need a local transport strategy?

Essex is a diverse county and has a great transport system. Whether by bus, rail, foot, bike or car, Essex residents use transport to get to school, to the shops, to work, often every day.

Despite its strengths, we know that our transport system needs to improve and provide greater access to opportunity for everyone who lives, works and visits our amazing county.

The new draft transport strategy shows our plans and approach to transport across Essex.

It provides an outline for the effective and efficient delivery of our transport services, informing and guiding how we invest, and where we expect to see investment from others, ensuring value for money to residents and creating a service they want to use.

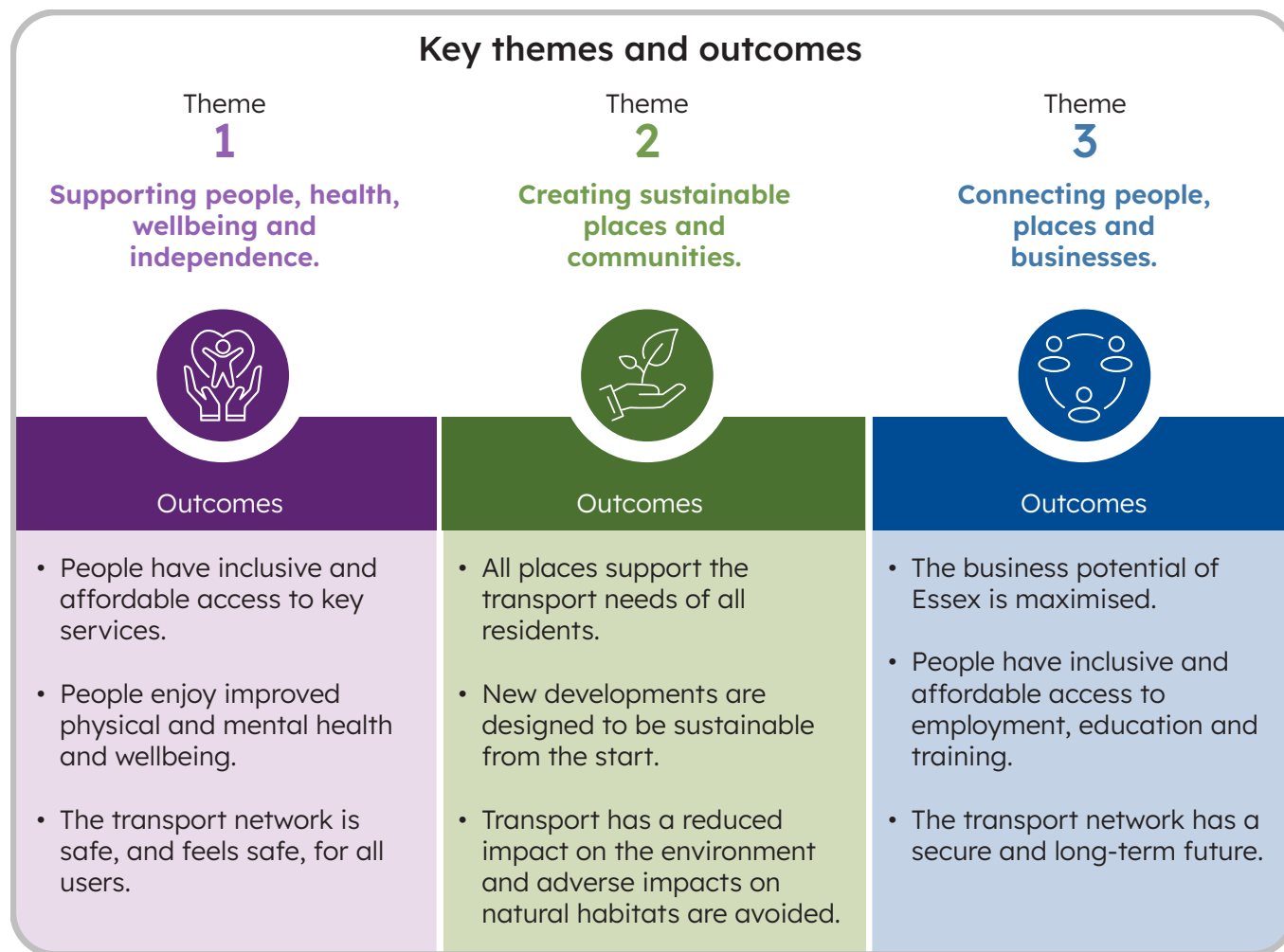
# Vision, key themes and outcomes

Our new draft transport strategy is led by both our vision for transport in Essex and what evidence tells us we need to do and where.

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

As part of the first stage in developing the strategy, we identified three key themes and a set of outcomes which will help us deliver the transport network Essex residents need and want.

We asked for feedback on these during our part one consultation, which took place last summer. All three key themes were well supported, with each theme getting at least 83% agreement from people who responded to the consultation and each outcome receiving at least 75% agreement.



For more information about the key themes and outcomes, please see chapters 3-5 of our full draft Local Transport Plan

# A three step approach to improving transport in Essex

To achieve our outcomes, we are proposing a staged approach which strikes the right balance between managing the existing transport network, delivering improvements, and making more significant changes.

Firstly, we will prioritise the maintenance and operation of the transport networks we already have. Then, we will look at smaller scale improvements to the operation of our transport networks and increasing their use. After this,

we will begin to look at more transformational activity, such as introducing new ground-breaking technologies.



We consulted on our proposed three step approach to improving transport during the part one consultation last summer. 71% of people who responded to our consultation survey agreed with the approach, while a further 13% said they had no opinion. For more information about the three step approach, please see chapter 7.2 of our full draft Local Transport Plan.

# Different types of journey

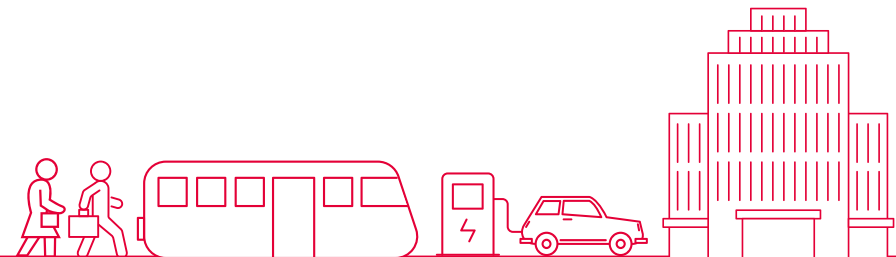
## 1 STRATEGIC JOURNEYS

- Connecting businesses to their suppliers and customers
- National and international connections, including ports and airports
- Freight transport
- Strategic road and rail transport



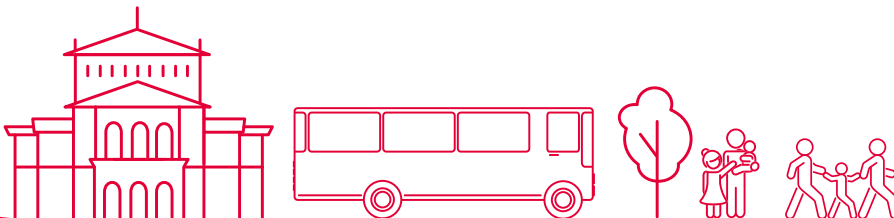
## 2 REGIONAL JOURNEYS

- Access to employment, education and training
- Growth hubs connected to surrounding areas by rail, rapid transit and innovative bus services
- Integrated services, fares and ticketing



## 3 LOCAL JOURNEYS

- Connectivity within urban areas, including the integration of garden communities and sustainable urban extensions
- Focus on using buses and active modes of travel, such as walking and cycling



## 4 COMMUNITY JOURNEYS

- Creating great local communities
- Quality urban environments with trees and landscaping
- Very local links within neighbourhoods
- Focus on active modes of travel, such as walking and cycling
- Local deliveries via sustainable means, such as via cargo bikes



# Activities

Under each of our key themes, we have identified a series of activities planned to help achieve our vision and outcomes. Some of these are activities we will be undertaking across the whole of Essex, while others relate to more specific areas, such as rural or urban parts of the county.

## Supporting people, health, wellbeing and independence



### People have inclusive and affordable access to key services

Raise awareness of the impacts of individual travel choices and alternatives consistent with our 'Safer, Greener, Healthier' approach

Encourage digital innovation, such as new apps that enable the delivery of essential services, such as healthcare, in ways that are less dependent on travel

Support the rollout of faster broadband and ongoing improvements to 5G mobile coverage in rural and deprived areas

Implement our Bus Service Improvement Plan

Provide attractive, safe, convenient, inclusive and high quality public transport routes and facilities, designed in line with latest design standards and guidance

Explore opportunities to expand our Demand Responsive Transport network in rural areas

Work with partners to promote more sustainable forms of car use, such as lift sharing and car clubs

Develop and deliver long-term plans to improve our cycling and walking networks by considering our Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans

Develop and deliver mobility hubs to facilitate convenient access to public transport services, shared mobility solutions, and active travel options. In rural locations, these could combine transport, retail and community services

Work with the Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership to put our stations at the heart of our communities

Design, build, operate and maintain transport infrastructure so that it is accessible, easy and safe to use for everyone



## Supporting people, health, wellbeing and independence



### People have inclusive and affordable access to key services

Work with the bus and rail industries to secure further improvements to the accessibility of public transport and passenger assistance on buses, trains and at bus and rail stations

Travel information will make use of new technology and be available in a range of formats for everyone to access

Support the introduction of multi operator and fully integrated smart ticketing for transport services in Essex

Ask the Government and the rail industry to implement simpler and better rail ticketing

Support the wider roll-out of contactless payment to the rest of the rail network in Essex

Work with schools and employers to enhance connectivity, parking and other facilities for cyclists and scooters

Use travel planning to promote active travel choices across all sizes of development and major existing generators of traffic

Provide training and promote free initiatives to increase people's confidence and participation in cycling

Continue to evaluate the suitability of our towns and cities for new electric forms of transport, such as e-scooters while we await new national laws



### People enjoy improved physical and mental health and wellbeing

Develop and deliver long-term plans to improve our cycling and walking networks by considering our Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans

Widen access to Essex Pedal Power, which provides free bikes and a support service for our most disadvantaged communities

Implement our Green Infrastructure Strategy to deliver better quality and more accessible multipurpose green spaces and links for everyone

Work with landowners and other partners to ensure that public rights of way are well maintained and easy to use



## Supporting people, health, wellbeing and independence



### People enjoy improved physical and mental health and wellbeing

Improve access to, and raise awareness of, the green spaces, facilities and activities available to the public

Support people and increase their confidence to travel by improving travel information, while making fares and ticketing easier and simpler to understand

Promote the support we provide on mental health and wellbeing through our Essex Wellbeing Service

Promote the work of the independent charity – Rural Community Council of Essex – in tackling hidden deprivation and social isolation in our villages and rural areas



### The transport network is safe, and feels safe for all users

Follow a safe systems approach in designing and maintaining our highway network

Collaborate with partners, such as the police and Safer Essex Roads Partnership, to improve safety

Promote training initiatives (e.g. Bystander training) and apps (e.g. Travel Guardian) to improve safety and confidence when travelling

Collaborate with the police and public transport operators to reduce crime and the fear of crime when travelling on the transport network

Design new and improved infrastructure and promote well-designed neighbourhoods so that they feel safe and secure to use

Work in partnership to create safe environments around schools

Provide cycle training to develop or improve people's skills and confidence to cycle safely within Essex



## Creating sustainable places and communities



### All places support the transport needs of all residents

Introduce a 'Place and Movement' approach to help embed the principles of 'Healthy Streets' and manage the transport network effectively for both existing streets and new developments

Implement 'well designed neighbourhood principles' in the redesign of existing neighbourhoods

Implement our Electric Vehicle Strategy to provide suitable access to a reliable, convenient, accessible and fairly priced network of electric charge points

Promote opportunities to convert public transport, taxi and freight vehicles to cleaner fuels

Continue to evaluate the suitability of our towns and cities for new electric forms of transport, such as e-scooters while we await new national requirements



## Creating sustainable places and communities



### New developments are designed to be sustainable from the start

Introduce a 'Place and Movement' approach for planning all new developments

Adopt a vision-led approach to planning for new growth and its transport needs, including through all new Local Plans and the identification of monitoring measures

Adopt an 'Avoid-Shift-Improve' approach to plan transport and development from the earliest stages of development planning

Use connectivity planning to help locate new homes, jobs and essential services in sustainable places that align with our vision for transport

Work with Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and other partners to allocate developments in Local Plans and deliver new Garden Communities to help meet the significant housing targets set for Essex by the Government

Work with LPAs to ensure that measures proposed in large developments and Garden Communities to promote sustainable transport are deliverable and sufficient to meet the vision for active and sustainable mode share

Set up Transport Review Groups for larger developments to help the ongoing management of transport impacts

Require effective travel plans for all new homes, new and existing workplaces and schools, including Garden Communities and other large-scale developments in line with our travel plan guides for residential, workplace, school, and large-scale developments and garden communities

Monitor the delivery of active and sustainable mode share targets through the Travel Plan with permission for latter phases of development linked to the achievement of modal split targets for early phases in line with our travel plan guide for large-scale developments and garden communities

Work with LPAs to embed inclusive design principles into all new developments

Promote tools, guidance and best practice documents, such as A New Street Types Model for Essex, EPOA 2024 Parking Guidance, Mobility Hubs as part of the Essex Design Guide and the Highways Technical Manual, to help plan all new developments sustainably

Implement 'well designed neighbourhood principles' in the design of new communities

Require planning applications to be supported by a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) considering the Essex Healthy Places Checklist



## Creating sustainable places and communities



### Transport has a reduced impact on the environment and adverse impacts on natural habitats are avoided

Deploy approaches such as sustainable drainage and natural flood management to promote greater flood resilience on the highway network

Create and deliver a highways water pollution reduction strategy to improve water quality with partners

Adopt an 'Avoid-Shift-Improve' approach to plan transport and development from the earliest stages of development planning

Implement the Essex Air Quality Strategy to reduce exposure to poor quality air

Develop effective and deliverable Air Quality Action Plans with partners

Implement measures to reduce traffic noise where this impacts a significant number of people or noise important areas

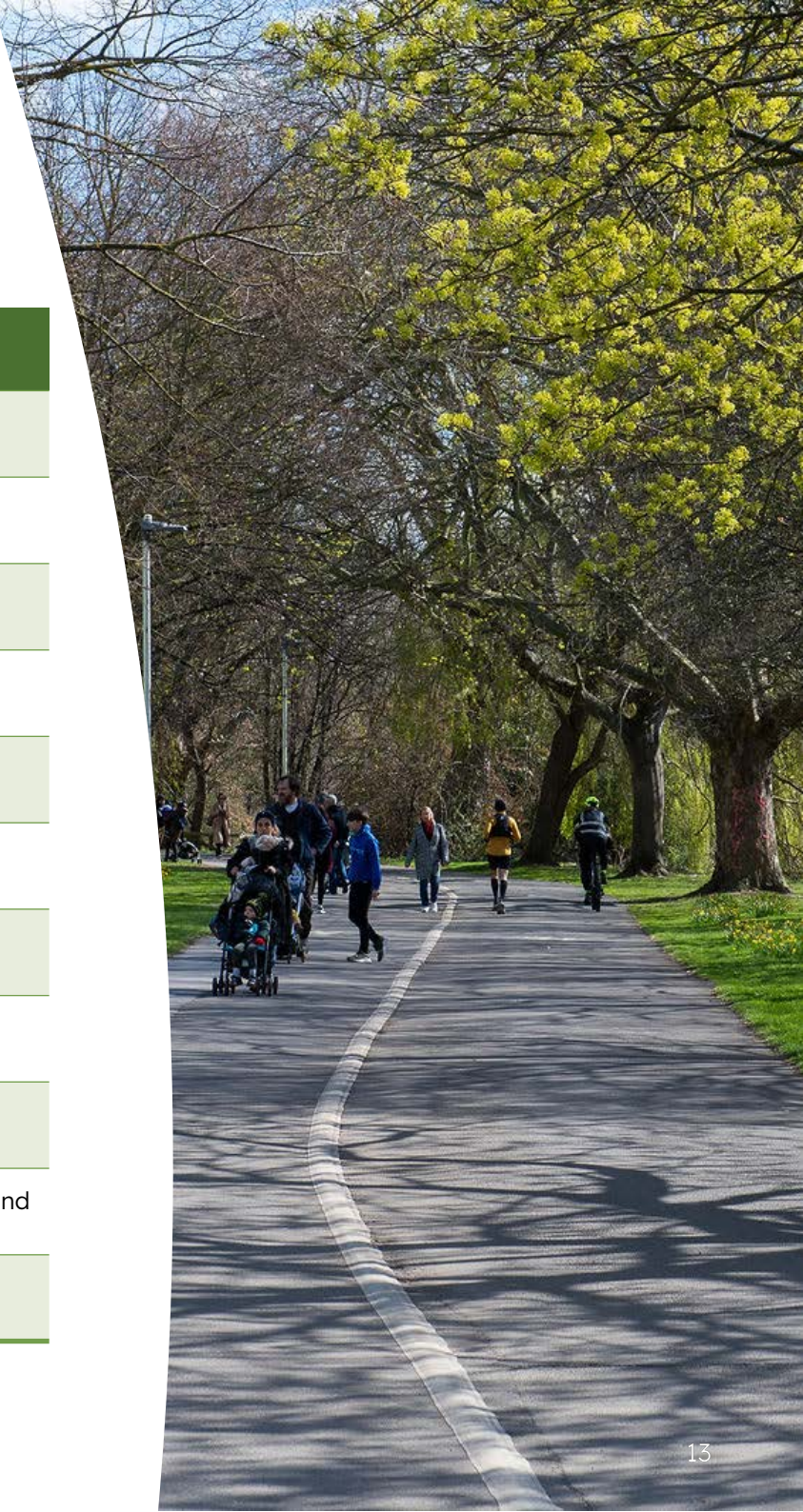
Reduce the noise impacts of our road maintenance and construction activities

Ensure the Essex Nature Recovery Strategy is considered at the earliest opportunity when thinking about the design of transport projects and the location and layout of new developments

Consider further opportunities to plant wildflower verges and other mixed grassland on appropriate highway land to increase biodiversity and carbon storage

Implement our Green Infrastructure Strategy to deliver 'Healthy Streets' and more accessible green spaces and links that provide multiple benefits for people and the environment

Avoid adverse effects from new transport projects on the integrity of internationally important habitat sites.



## Connecting people, places and businesses



### The business potential of Essex is maximised

Introduce a 'Place and Movement' approach to help embed the principles of 'Healthy Streets' and manage the transport network effectively for both existing streets and new developments

Adopt a vision-led approach to planning for new growth and its transport needs, including through all new Local Plans

Prioritise journey time reliability for all modes of transport, including freight and public transport

Work with partners to make the case for investment in our strategic road and rail links, including to the airports and ports to provide enhanced capacity for freight

Work with partners to make the case for investment in better facilities for lorry drivers

Work with the Government to explore how their plans for local government finance, devolution and wider policy objectives can enable Essex to play its full part in supporting national economic growth

Support our airports in preparing and implementing Surface Access Strategies, including the Sustainable Development Strategy for London Stansted Airport

Work with partners and the freight industry to reduce the impact of freight and delivery vehicles on communities and the environment

Work in partnership to implement our Rail Strategy to influence the delivery of nationalised rail services and plan rail improvements

Work with the rail industry to explore how Essex stations can be served by a minimum of two trains per hour

Work with partners to secure better public spaces and access around stations and bring underutilised station buildings into community use



## Connecting people, places and businesses



### People have inclusive and affordable access to employment, education and training

Tackle barriers to travel, such as accessibility, complexity and security, to support greater use by everyone

Work with organisations such as bus operators and active travel organisations and funders to make the case for new investment

Work with partners to improve walking, cycling and public transport connections between residential and employment areas

Work with partners to secure better facilities at stations for onward travel via all modes of transport, including step-free access

Provide measures to enable more children to walk and cycle to school via safe, direct routes

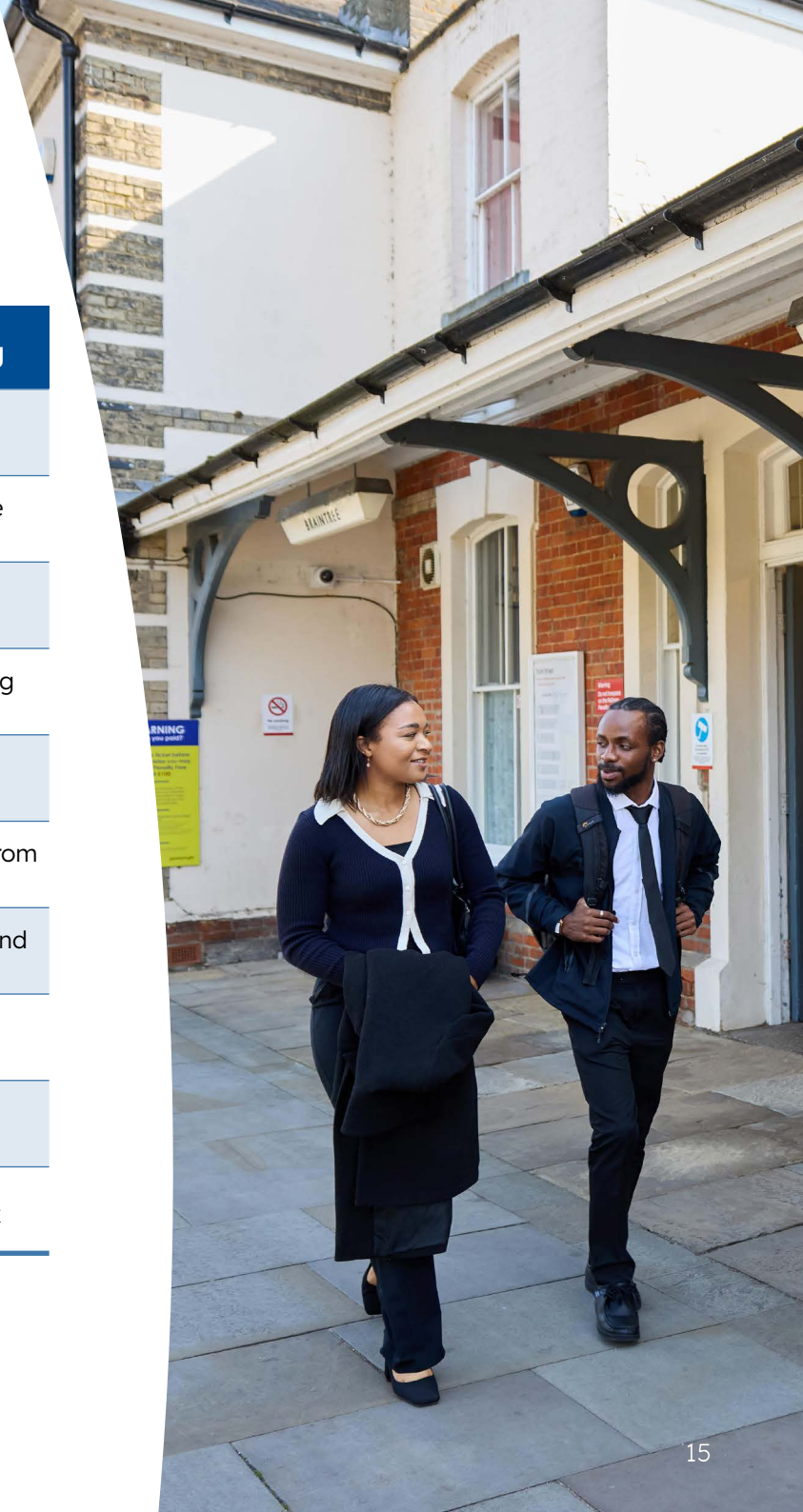
Deliver locally relevant training programmes to address skills gaps holding people back and stopping firms from investing

Support the rollout of gigabit speed broadband and ongoing improvements to 5G mobile coverage in rural and deprived areas

Work in partnership to provide attractive, safe, convenient, inclusive, and high quality walking, cycling and public transport routes and facilities

Deliver high quality rapid transit networks where feasible

Support the introduction of multi operator and fully integrated smart ticketing for transport services in Essex



## Connecting people, places and businesses



### The transport network has a secure and long-term future

Implement our Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan and supporting plans and strategies to maintain our transport infrastructure to appropriate standards which offer value for money to the Essex taxpayer

Proactively monitor the condition of our road, cycle and pedestrian networks and other pieces of infrastructure

Manage, maintain and improve our network by considering our Climate Adaption Plan Framework, Decarbonisation Strategy and our Strategy for managing the Green Estate

Develop our own ability as a Council to adapt to climate-related risk

Deliver suitable actions that enable our transport network to adapt to change

Deploy approaches such as Sustainable Drainage and Natural Flood Management to promote greater flood resilience on the highway network

Play an active role in flood defence, coastal protection, and conservation to reduce the risks and impacts on our coastal communities and transport network

Work with National Highways and neighbouring local transport authorities to provide a common approach to innovation

Accurately digitise our highway networks and traffic regulation orders to support future use of our networks by autonomous vehicle systems

Manage the introduction of appropriate alternative fuel infrastructure to encourage cleaner zero-emission travel

Support the pilot and where appropriate the adoption of new technology which enables more sustainable travel

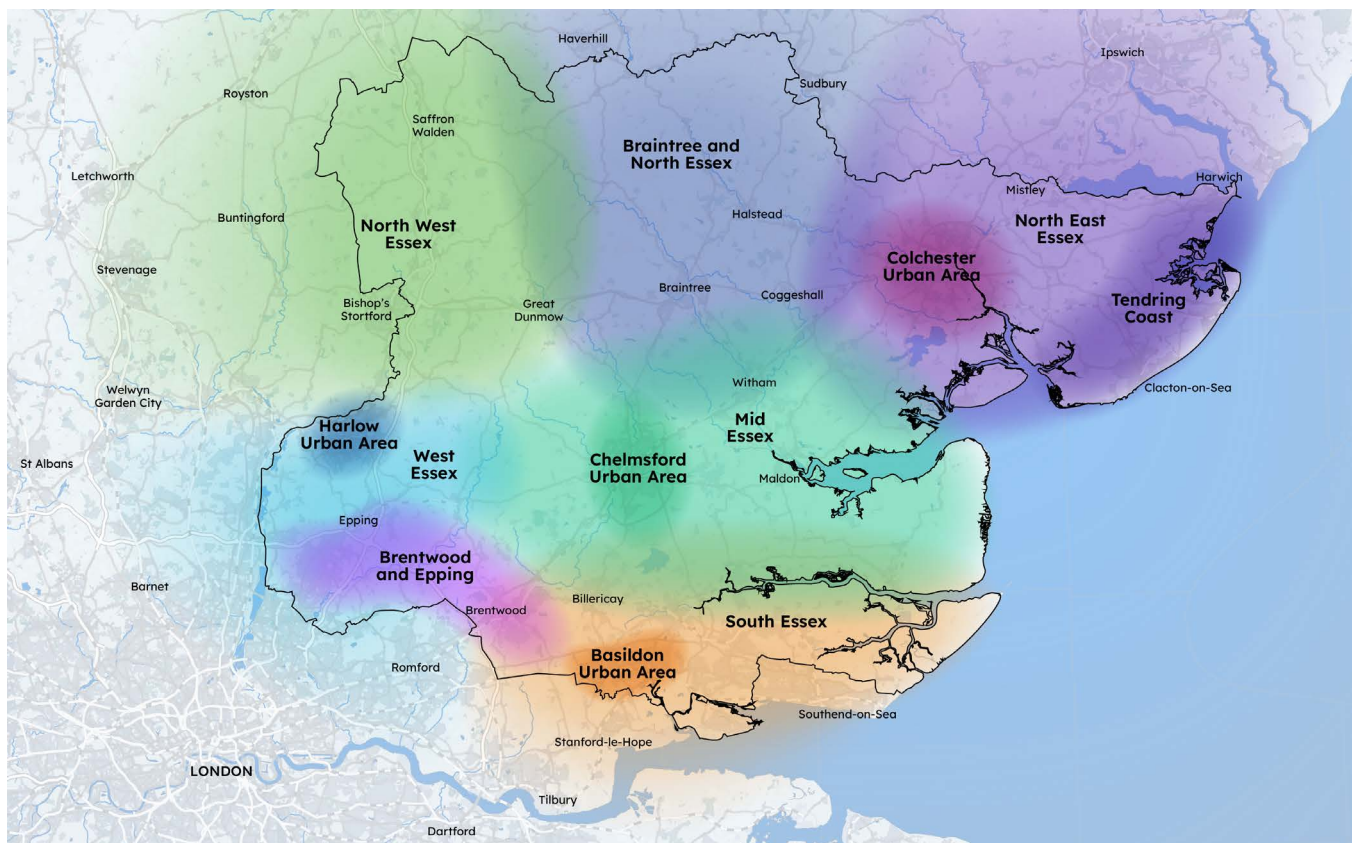


# Implementation plans

Alongside the transport strategy, we have developed 13 area-specific implementation plans. These plans set out how we aim to deliver our vision and outcomes in different parts of Essex.

## The implementation plan areas are:

- Strategic issues
- South Essex
- Basildon Urban Area
- Epping and Brentwood
- West Essex
- Harlow and Gilston Urban Area
- North West Essex
- Braintree and North Essex
- Tendring Coast
- Colchester Urban Area
- North East Essex
- Chelmsford Urban Area
- Mid Essex



These areas have been chosen because they reflect the journeys people typically make in Essex.

Each implementation plan includes an introduction to the area and current travel. They also set out our transport ambitions in the area and the outcomes we want to achieve. Finally, the implementation plans outline our plan for improving transport in each area and an initial list of potential projects.

## Project identification and assessment

As the county council, we must use the funding available to us in the way which gives the most value for money and greatest benefit to residents and taxpayers. This means being led by both our vision and the evidence we have available. This approach has shaped a series of 13 implementation plans for different parts of Essex, detailing how we will work with other organisations and the community to deliver the most effective projects.

A five-stage process (as set out below) has been used to firstly help identify current issues and challenges.

- 1 Understanding what is important to people and the outcomes that need to be achieved.
- 2 Understanding the journeys that need to be made to achieve the desired outcomes and/or alternatives to travel.
- 3 Defining the transport challenge and the size of the intervention needed to address it.
- 4 Thinking about making better use of what we already have.
- 5 Project identification and development.

By taking this approach, we ensure that our projects and potential schemes are best aligned with the outcomes we want to achieve.

Once we have identified a transport issue, we then need to develop safe, affordable, deliverable solutions and create a pipeline of schemes so that we are ready to take advantage of any future funding opportunities.

The government expects local authorities to devise a method for prioritising transport projects and our approach will consider whether the project options:

- Support our strategy outcome, i.e. will it do what we need it to do?
- Are affordable and whether funding is likely to be available
- How easy or difficult the project will be to deliver

Our implementation plans include potential schemes which meet these criteria and will be developed further as appropriate funding is identified.

### Find out more

For more information about our implementation plans and to have your say, visit: [consultations.essex.gov.uk/essex-highways/better-connected-essex](https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/essex-highways/better-connected-essex)



# Integrated sustainability appraisal



**An Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) has been carried out to inform and improve the new transport strategy.**

**ISA is a process for assessing social, economic and environmental impacts of strategies and projects. It helps make sure sustainable development principles underpin the strategy to protect the environment, people's health and equality.**

## The ISA includes:

- **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**
- **Health Impact Assessment (HIA)**
- **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)**
- **Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)**

A key part of the ISA is an ISA Monitoring Plan, which will help measure progress against important objectives and targets to inform future reviews of the strategy and identify any mitigation measures required. This will form part of our overall monitoring and evaluation plan for the new transport strategy.

The full ISA report and a summary of it are available on our consultation webpage at: [consultations.essex.gov.uk/essex-highways/better-connected-essex](https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/essex-highways/better-connected-essex)

## Five stages in the ISA process

- 1** Scoping the ISA assessment
- 2** Assessment of the emerging new transport strategy
- 3** Reporting: Draft transport strategy and ISA report
- 4** Public consultation
- 5** Finalise the new transport strategy and ISA statement, and implement ISA monitoring plan )

Following our public consultation, the new transport strategy will be reviewed, updated and finalised. A statement on how the ISA findings and consultation feedback have been considered will be published with the final Local Transport Strategy.

# Have your say

We now want to hear the thoughts of the people who live, visit or work in Essex on our full draft transport strategy and area implementation plans.

Your feedback will help us refine and improve the plan before it is finalised and adopted later this year.



The best way to tell us what you think is by completing our online consultation survey at: [consultations.essex.gov.uk/essex-highways/better-connected-essex](https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/essex-highways/better-connected-essex)

The survey opened on **Thursday, 31 July 2025** and will close on **Wednesday, 24 September 2025**.

A printed copy of the survey questions is also available on request and can be printed, filled out and posted to the following address (please note the address is case sensitive):

**FREEPOST ESSEX HIGHWAYS ENGAGEMENT TEAM**

You can request a printed copy of the survey and/or this document, or an alternative format, by emailing: [engagementhub@essexhighways.org](mailto:engagementhub@essexhighways.org)

We also have a small number of printed copies available in the following libraries.

- Basildon Library, The Basildon Centre, St. Martin's Square, Basildon, SS14 1EE
- Braintree Library, Fairfield Road, Braintree, CM7 3YL
- Brentwood Library, New Road, Brentwood, CM14 4BP
- Canvey Island Library, High Street, Canvey Island, SS8 7RB

- Chelmsford Library, County Hall, Market Road, Chelmsford CM1 1QH
- Clacton Library, Station Road (opposite the Town Hall), Clacton-on-Sea, CO15 1SF
- Dunmow Library, 47 White Hart Way, Great Dunmow, CM6 1FS
- Epping Library, St John's Road, Epping, CM16 5DN
- Harlow Library, Central Library, Cross Street, Harlow, CM20 1HA
- Maldon Library, Carmelite House, White Horse Lane, Maldon, CM9 5FW
- Prettygate Library, Prettygate Road, Colchester, CO3 4EQ
- Rayleigh Library, 132/4 High Street, Rayleigh, SS6 7BX

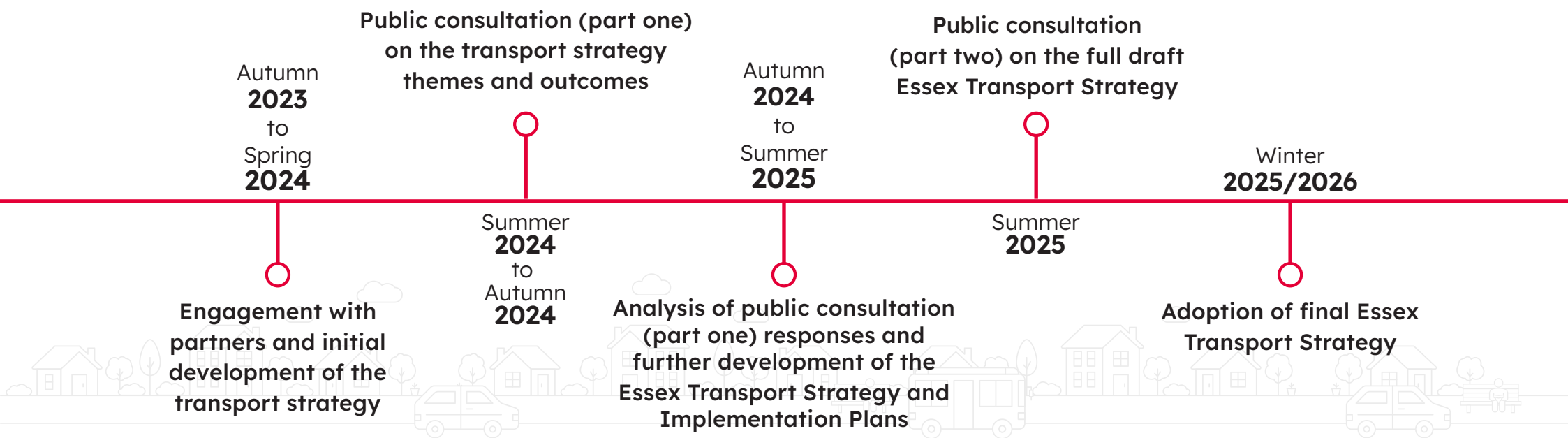
Please respond to the survey only via one of the methods. We cannot accept responsibility for ensuring that responses sent in other ways are considered. When responding please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation. You have until **Wednesday, 24 September 2025** to respond to the survey. There is no guarantee that any responses received after this date will be considered.

## Next steps

Once our part two consultation has closed, we will analyse and review all responses and the findings will help us improve and finalise the transport strategy and implementation plans.

A summary report, setting out the feedback we received through both the part one and part two public consultations, will be published.

A final version of the transport strategy and implementation plans is expected to be approved and adopted later this year.



This information is issued by:  
Essex County Council

Contact us:  
**[engagementhub@essexhighways.org](mailto:engagementhub@essexhighways.org)**

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

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