

# Draft Executive Summary **Essex Walking Strategy**

**A strategy to promote more  
walking and improve the  
pedestrian environment**

**2019-2025**

**May 2019**

Walking for short trips or as part of a longer journey with other modes of transport such as trains, buses and increasingly shared transport, should be the natural choice.



Essex County Council



# Foreword by Cllr Kevin Bentley

Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure



Walking is the easiest type of travel, and yet many of us aren't walking enough. It is so natural that we often do not even consider it a form of transport. However, in our busy lives, we may have undervalued the most fundamental way of getting around. The Strategy is a plan for pedestrians, to get more of us walking on our network of footways and paths in our rural areas, towns, cities and neighbourhoods. While motivated by the need to reduce congestion and improve the resilience of our transport networks, especially for shorter journeys, the benefits of making our towns more walkable will be a more active, healthier population and a safer and cleaner environment.

## Introduction



The last Essex Walking Strategy was produced in 2001, this was a comprehensive document which provided a policy framework and actions for walking. Since this Walking Strategy was produced, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Government policies such as Cycling & Walking Investment Strategy has changed considerably. The relationship between land use planning and transport, in particular the role of walking is better understood and more clearly defined.



Walking is now recognised as an important part of enabling local journeys to work, local shops, leisure and community and public services. And as an inexpensive, convenient and natural choice for short journeys (defined as under 2km or about 10 mins); and as a key component of more complex journeys and; as a way of maintaining and improving general health. This Walking Strategy sets out objectives and walking priorities for the period up to 2025 to provide a policy framework to promote walking and plan enhanced walking networks.

## The Purpose of the Walking Strategy

This purpose of this strategy is to set out the key barriers, challenges and opportunities to increase levels of walking, which has dropped in the last 30 years. Walking for short trips or as part of a longer journey with other modes of transport such as trains, buses and increasingly shared transport, should be the natural choice. But too often it is not, a significant number of the approximately 44% of car trips that are under two miles could be walked. This strategy will help to re-establish walking as a normal way of getting around for everyday travel and will support local plans in accommodating growth, by encouraging as many journeys to be active possible (walking either as a single trip or with and public transport).

BENEFITS OF WALKING	
Transport Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inexpensive mode of travel</li><li>• Fastest way to get around for short trips</li><li>• Convenient and easy</li><li>• Links different transport modes</li></ul>
Health Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Helps manage weight</li><li>• Reduces stress</li><li>• Improves sleep</li><li>• Reduces risk of chronic disease</li></ul>
Environmental Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduces congestion</li><li>• Part of improving air quality</li><li>• Creates safer places with more people</li><li>• Reduces noise</li></ul>
Social Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduces isolation</li><li>• Encourages community connectedness</li><li>• Provides better access to services and jobs</li></ul>
Economic Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supports local high streets and businesses</li><li>• Improved employee wellbeing</li><li>• Good walking access helps attract and retain staff</li></ul>

# Section One

## Why Walking is Important & Drivers for Change

### The National Policy Context: Cycling & Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS)

The Department for Transport published The Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS 2017), described as the biggest change in government policy for walking and cycling in decades due to its statutory nature and requirement for long term funding and a vision to 2040. It sets out the government's ambition to **"make cycling and walking the natural choices for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey"**.



- Better Safety – where pedestrians feel they belong, and they feel safe through lower speeds where appropriate.
- Better Mobility – with more urban areas that are considered walkable, rural roads which provide improved safety for walking, more networks of routes with safe paths along busy roads and better integrated routes for those with disabilities or health conditions.
- Better Streets – places designed for people of all abilities and ages, so they can choose to walk or cycle with ease; a wider network of green routes and links to opens spaces and a better public realm.

### The National Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018 and Walking

The NPPF (2018) seeks to promote sustainable transport, and in so doing enable and support healthy lifestyles to support local health and well-being needs. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced. The NPPF requires local planning authorities to design in favour of Walking, Cycling and Public Transport. The NPPF states that planning policies should provide for high quality walking and cycling networks and supporting facilities such as cycle parking (drawing on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans); "in new developments opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued; to provide for high quality walking and cycling networks".

The Essex Walking Strategy is an important document which can influence several local plans, policies and strategies including:



# Essex Corporate Objectives and Walking Priorities Outcomes

Local Authorities have complex roles, but fundamentally they are there to support local communities and plan ahead. In terms of Transportation and Highways, walking plays a critical role in enabling Access, Mobility and Place. Encouraging more walking and physical activity for shorter journeys (up to a mile), or as part of a longer multi-modal journey, has an important role in the transport strategy. Encouraging more people to be physically active has the potential to save the NHS vast amounts of money by reducing the risks associated with poor health, reducing health inequalities and reducing pressures on social care budgets.

ECC has an Organisational Strategy 2017-2021 which sets a number of aims and outcomes, it recognises that the role of the council is changing, that its key role is as an enabler of communities and individuals which will provide residents with information and choices. The Walking Strategy will contribute towards the delivery of the Essex Strategic Outcomes to:

- Help people get the best start and age well.
- To Improve the Health of the People of Essex.
- Help create great places to live, work and grow up.
- Help secure sustainable development and protect the environment.
- Facilitate growing communities and new homes.

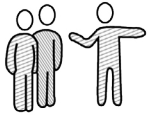
Within this context, the Essex Walking Strategy is clearly linked to the four strategic aims of the Organisational Strategy as set out in the table below:

Strategic Aims and Objectives	Strategic Priorities	Place Outcomes	Walking Priorities
Enable inclusive economic growth	Target economic development to areas of opportunity	Earn a good income Have access to a thriving economy	Improve access to Core Walking Zones, Town Centres and High Streets Encourage leisure walks on the PRow, Country Parks and Coastal Path
Help people get the best start and age well	Improve the Health of people in Essex	People are healthy	Enable all residents to achieve two active 10's per day through everyday travel Improve road safety Encourage social walks to link people together and reduce isolation encourage more walking
Help create great places to grow up, live and work strategic priorities	Help to secure sustainable development and protect the environment Help to secure stronger, safer and more neighbourly communities	Live in safe and secure	Make walking the norm for short journeys Increase footfall on the walking network to improve natural surveillance Design in Walking to new communities and Retrofit Walking Improvements to existing neighbourhoods
Transform the Council to achieve more with less	Limit cost and drive growth in revenues		Encourage residents to be active, resilient and independent

## The Challenges and Opportunities for Walking in Essex

Essex is a large and varied county with a strong rural character with large areas of beautiful rural countryside and remote coastal villages and island communities, but it also has vibrant and growing towns and cities and is close to London. To the east

there is a 350 mile- coastline which is the second longest in England. It borders the counties of Suffolk and Cambridgeshire to the north, to the west the county of Hertfordshire and the Greater London area to the southwest.



### People and Projections

**1,820,900** people in 2017 for Greater Essex. The county's population is expected to increase to **2,133,100** by 2041. With the greatest increases currently projected in Colchester, Basildon and Chelmsford.



### Economic Growth

Greater Essex generates £36bn Gross Value Added (GVA) and supports over 816,000 jobs. **79,000** additional jobs needed forecasted by the East of England Forecasting model (2016 run).



### Development Growth

In 2016, there is approximately 784,000 households across Greater Essex local authorities. **179,657** homes needed across Greater Essex.



### Social and Health

In Essex, **two-thirds (66.3%)** of adults aged 16+ are either overweight or obese (2013-15). While **20.9%** of children in reception and **31.8%** of children in Year 6 are obese. The projected annual increase in obesity rate is **2%** in adults and **0.5%** in children. Over **150,000** Essex residents are expected to be living with a mental health illness, with almost **50%** of them having developed this condition in their early teens.

## Barriers to Walking

There are likely to be a number of factors which prevent more walking journeys. In order to increase the number of walking journeys in Essex and improve the walking environment we need to better understand the barriers to walking. If we are to create walking environments where people choose to walk for journeys around our towns and cities, we will have to make improvements to both the physical environment and the social environment. Urban form characteristics mostly found in semi-peripheral areas such as underpasses, discontinuous walking routes and wide and heavily trafficked roads act as barriers to walking, which must be overcome.

Often people do not walk because there is no direct route to take; sometimes footways are blocked or there are not enough safe places to cross. This can disproportionately impact those who are mobility impaired, older people and those with long term health conditions. While better access and enhanced

mobility are very important factors in encouraging more people to walk, research from Lancaster, Leeds and Oxford Brookes University (2011) have identified several non-physical barriers to walking including:

- Fears around physical safety (fear of others and of injury)
- Discomfort – getting wet etc
- Perception of abnormality
- Complex family routines

Removing barriers to walking to ensure that people have better access and improved mobility is a key part of this strategy. Moreover, by removing both physical and social barriers to walking, we can enhance access and improve the permeability of our neighbourhoods and local and town centres. This can be achieved while improving the public realm and the overall attractiveness of places.

## The Benefits of Walking

Walking is a convenient and low-cost way of travelling, particularly for local journeys and benefits both the individual and the community. There are economic benefits and very clear health benefits. For people who are unable to access a car, it is even more important that we have good walking routes and networks as a way of accessing services and opportunities and to enhance access to skills and jobs

Walking is not only good for public health, it can strengthen community wellbeing by promoting interactions between individuals, families and

communities. Walking can increase the social interaction of families and friends, which also enhances the richness and diversity of the broader community (Gehl 2002).

Stronger, more vibrant and safer communities with well-designed facilities that encourage walking and increased social contact. Lack of social contact within neighbourhoods can lead to social isolation, community severance perceptions of decreased safety and less inclusion. In Essex we have an ageing population and therefore an accessible walking network to enable mobility and social interaction is a key part of helping people to age well.

## Section Two

# The Strategy

# Essex Walking Vision

*Essex has a vision for walking to be:*

*Easy, Safe and a Normal part of our everyday lives*

## Essex Walking Aspiration

Essex is going to change over the next 15 to 20 years and so will the way we travel. It is important that change benefits everyone; we need to work together so that the different communities, groups and businesses of Essex all have the opportunity to set out the kind of Essex we all want to live in and to ensure that increased prosperity leads to better lives for all of the people of Essex.

Essex is well placed to benefit from change - It has vibrant and growing urban centres, it is home to world class businesses, universities carrying out cutting edge research, and to international ports and airports linking us to the world. Essex is also varied; from towns close to London to large areas of beautiful rural countryside and remote coastal villages and island communities. Our ambition is to build upon the possibilities our location offers, unshackling us from cars and congestion with efficient, modern and sustainable transport networks and digitally connected homes and businesses.

The Walking Strategy will provide a framework for the county council to encourage more walking including promoting a vision of normalising walking as an everyday way of getting from A to B; and of enjoying the benefits of the Essex countryside and coastal areas. The walking strategy should be considered as

complimentary to the Essex Transport Strategy (LTP3) and has strong links to other transport strategies, such as the Bus and Cycle Strategies as walk trips are an important part of most journeys. Part of the strategy looks at developing more coherent walking routes which give people more choice in how they access key destinations and Town Centres. In addition to providing a framework to deliver the vision, the strategy will also provide a framework for planning walking network with delivery partners and prioritising future investment.

Walking is often the most convenient way to get around. Our ambition is to improve the walking environment so that it is the easiest choice, that accessibility is enhanced, and the social context of walking is promoted so that everyone can enjoy this simple activity. An aspirational county like Essex requires an aspirational approach to walking.

Nine walking objectives have been identified as part of this strategy, the objectives reflect that while walking is a key transport choice and means of travel, there is also a strong relationship with Road Safety, Better Streets, Health, Accessing Schools, Leisure, and Greenspace Economy, Planning new communities and Changing Attitudes and Behaviours.



# Objective 1

## Increase Walking for Everyday Trips

### Walking for Travel

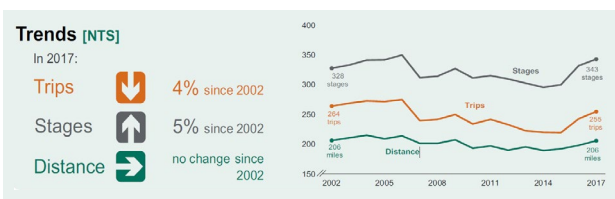
Walking is the most sustainable form of travel, it is often overlooked that walking is also a mode of transport, but an important one all the same. Walking is transport, it is both a mode and a critical part of mobility and a way of accessing other modes, for example the walk to the bus stop, the walk from the park and ride to work.

Department for Transport (DfT) data shows that walking is an important part of urban travel. If we take England as an example, 2014 figures suggest 22% of walking trips are in urban areas, given that these figures exclude trips off of the highway, it is likely that the significance of walking is being underestimated. The collection of data for walking trips is limited, if we are to better understand the potential to increase walking, we need to collect local data on local walking trips, their frequency, duration and the origins and destinations, this will help to plan future

networks and help to priorities enhancements and the maintenance of the footway network.

In Essex the road network in our towns is approaching capacity, however there is an abundance of capacity available on the footway network and therefore a huge opportunity to transport high volumes of people in a relatively small amount of space without significant spending on big infrastructure. Walking provides often the most direct, easy and affordable means of travel, especially for journeys of around one mile. For shorter trips in our towns and cities, walking is often the fastest way of getting from A to B and most journeys which a bus or rail stage have a walking element.

This means that walking will play an increasing role in allowing our towns and cities to expand and continue to function efficiently. Improving the public realm and how it links to bus and rail services in our towns and urban areas is a better way to improve the attractiveness of town centres and high streets rather than providing cheap parking, which takes valuable land away from other activities which might be more productive and can provide a better return on investment.



## Objective 2

### Improving Road Safety for Pedestrians

Almost one third of pedestrian injuries are either serious or fatal (“KSI”), these take place mainly in urban areas at a mix of junctions and crossing facilities and open road.

Pedestrians have a higher injury risk per mile travelled than car occupants, but lower than cyclists and motorcyclists. UK roads are amongst the safest in the world in terms of total fatalities per head of population. Although walking is not inherently risky, unreported collisions, high speed traffic and near misses (Aldred 2018) are likely to increase the level of risk perceived by the public.

In Essex, the majority of pedestrians injured (2013-2017) were crossing the road (not at a crossing) and a quarter of pedestrian crossing the road collisions were at T-junctions. Road safety and perceptions of

road safety are known to be key factors in barriers to walking and influence whether people choose to walk.

The provision of a safe environment in which people feel confident to walk and cross the road without fear of being involved in a collision is vital. While all pedestrians require a safe walking environment, two groups of people that are especially vulnerable are children and the elderly. Often members of these two groups do not drive or have access to cars and so their mobility is limited if they cannot access facilities safely on foot. The promotion of road safety involves education of both pedestrians and car drivers and physical measures where regulations permit, such as crossings and traffic calming to make the roads safer for all users.



Learning how to use the road safely as a pedestrian during childhood provides a foundation upon which safe road using habits can be built into adulthood. The amount of experience a person has using the road is the most important factor in reducing their individual risk. Therefore, it is important that children have regular opportunities to practice skills such as crossing the road. These opportunities will be more available in an environment which is both perceived as safe and incentivises safe behaviours by design.

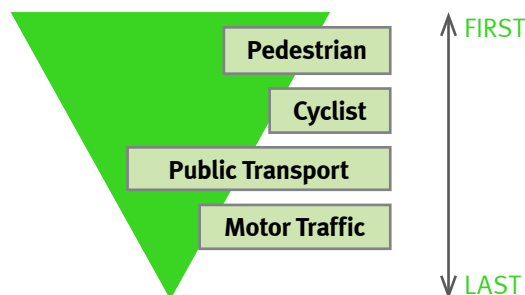
### Fatalities increase with road speed, over the 5-year period 2013-17

**54** pedestrians killed (**11 per year**)  
**515** seriously injured (**103 per year**)  
**1,411** slightly injured (**282 per year**)

## Challenges of Improving Road Safety - The Road User Hierarchy

The number one barrier to achieving higher levels of physical activity is safety and perceived safety (the number of people killed or seriously injured has plateaued). Pedestrians including older people and those with mobility impairments must feel safe and secure in their interactions with cyclists and motor vehicles. This includes a restatement of the principle of the Road User Hierarchy. This is a well-established concept which places the most vulnerable road users at the top, that is, pedestrians and people with disabilities, followed by cyclists, public transport and motorised transport. The objective is not to give priority for pedestrians and cyclists in every situation, but to ensure that the needs of vulnerable road users are considered first.

Those in positions of decision-making authority have an important role in ensuring all road users' needs are met and in safeguarding the hierarchy of road users in the decision-making process.



## Objective 3 Better Design and Enhanced Accessibility

### Better Streets Design Guide

The Essex Design Guide (EDG) [www.essexdesignguide.co.uk](http://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk) focuses on street and road design, giving consideration for how we should aim to design permeable layouts that link well to the existing transport, walking and cycle networks both inside and outside of the development. The EDG

also identifies types of road layout, speed limits and access considerations, lighting and parking information that should be provided to users of the space. The EDG provides an excellent framework for 'designing in' road safety to new developments.



# Improving the Walking Environment

Street design also needs to take the needs of those who have mobility impairments. Around One-fifth of people in the UK have a disability and so may be at more risk than their non-disabled counterparts. The walking environment should be made safer and more accessible for disabled pedestrians by:

- Tactile paving at the edges of steps and pavements and safe crossing places. Well-maintained, firm, flat and wide footways making the roads easier to navigate and safer to use for those with disabilities;
- Avoiding unnecessary street 'clutter' such as advertising boards and bollards, particularly in the case of those who are visually impaired;
- Tarmac, rather than paving stones, which reduces the risk of uneven surfaces and trips and falls and makes the use of mobility scooters more comfortable and efficient<sup>10</sup>;
- Dropped kerbs to allow easier access for wheelchair users and;
- Safe crossings with signalling that can be detected by those with sight or hearing loss and longer crossing periods for people with mobility impairments to safely cross the road.

## Good Street Lighting

Pedestrians often avoid unfamiliar streets, deserted public spaces and dark underpasses if they perceive that they are at risk of harm or assault in these locations. This means that they may choose to take a route or cross a road in a location with higher traffic

risk. Street lighting promotes a sense of safety in urban areas and so increases the quality of life by artificially extending the hours in which it is light so that activity can take place.

## Better Streets and Design Principles



The Department for Transport has published guidance documents to help local authorities design safe road infrastructure, including *"Manual for Streets 2"*.

Walking routes should be continuous, direct and join up residential areas, commercial areas and schools. Pedestrians need safe and well-designed footways and crossing facilities and walking routes that are:

- **Direct** – shortest, quickest route to minimise delay.
- **Safe** – the route must be safe and feel safe
- **Coherent** – joined up and easy to follow
- **Attractive** – enhance the existing streetscape
- **Comfortable** – clean, smooth surface in all weathers
- **Accessible** -for all users.

Good design is fundamental to the successful delivery of new walking infrastructure. It is an essential component of creating a good walking environment which reduces barriers to walking by enabling existing people to have the most convenient and pleasant walking experience; and it should encourage more people to walk.



# Objective 4

## Enabling Physical Activity & Walking for Health

### Health Challenges in Essex

In Essex around 26% of residents are failing to meet the minimum amount of physical activity to keep healthy, however this average figure is masking large disparities between individual districts. Inactivity across Essex has been identified by the County Sports lead, Active Essex who wish to get 1 million people active in Essex by 2021 (Active Essex (2017) Active Essex: Our Strategy 2017-2021; Changing 1 million live to get Essex Active).

In addition to physical inactivity, excess weight levels (those within the population who are classed as either overweight or obese) can lead to medical, psychological and social ill health. Obesity is a leading cause of increased morbidity and mortality in the United Kingdom. The most recent available data (2012-2014) shows the proportion of Essex adults who are classed as having excess weight is 67%, this is higher than neighbouring authorities and higher than average in England.

### Walking and Health

Walking is an accessible every day activity which is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of individuals and their communities. Walking for transport, often known as active travel, and walking for leisure are both an important element of enabling people to achieve the recommended 150 minutes of physical activity per week (CMO (2011) Physical activity factsheet 4 adults aged 19-64).

Walking is the easiest and simplest way to incorporate physical activity into our everyday lives. If more people were to walk for short journeys of about a mile every day, not only would we be able to reduce congestion and improve air quality, there would be significant health benefits. Walking is natural and

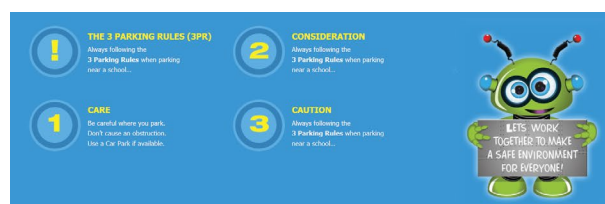
simple and is often part of a longer journey to a bus stop or railways station. Walking to maintain our weight and general health has implications for not only our physical health, but also our mental health. Regular walking will not only help to reduce the risk of conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, cancers and stroke, it can help to improve mental health including depression and anxiety. Further, walking can help people to socialise, through informal social interaction or in a more formalised way through group walks and could help to reduce wellbeing issues such as loneliness and social isolation (PHE) (2018 Guidance Physical Activity: applying All Our Health).

# Objective 5

## Enabling more Walking to Schools

Government have an ambition to get more children walking to school. This is shared by Essex County Council, we recognise that child pedestrians are more vulnerable road users, it is vital that this is taken into consideration when designing new environments or improving existing ones to encourage more children to walk (and cycle) to school. Traffic calming measures, speed reduction and 20mph zones can all contribute to providing protected areas for children as can the provision of appropriate crossing place and other schemes such as safer drop off points.

In order to get more children traveling 'actively' to school, we need to take an innovative approach which consider the barriers and solutions available to enable more children to walk to school.



# Objective 6

## Promoting Walking for Leisure

### The Public Rights of Way Network

The public rights of way (PROW) network in Essex comprises approximately 6300km of footpaths (84%), bridleways (12%), and restricted byways (4%). There are many interesting walks via public rights of way around picturesque locations across Essex. Our green infrastructure is not just an attraction or key destination, but also as an attractive through route that links places and communities.

A good network of public rights of way and cycle routes exists in the county with the most comprehensive network in the south of the county. To maximise the opportunities for leisure walks, the County Council will seek to identify how to improve access to the public rights of way network, in particular, the PROW which are near to our main settlements and urban areas.

There are many long-distance trails that pass-through Essex, such as The Essex Way, the Flitch Way and the Thames Estuary Path. There are also routes which are promoted by organisations like the Ramblers (the Saffron Way) and complement ECC's promoted trails such as:

- The Forest Way
- The St Peter's Way
- The Roach Valley Way
- The Stour Valley Path
- The Saffron Way (promoted by the Ramblers)

The PROW network is a key asset which we can encourage more walking by working with communities and parishes to encourage leisure walking. Whilst long trails offer the more experienced walker an opportunity to enjoy the Essex Countryside, other smaller routes can also be found across Essex, providing potential opportunities for those new to leisure walking to also explore their abilities and their environment.

As well as prospects to improve link paths from urban areas for leisure and recreation, it is also important to encourage communities to create and use a greater variety of short routes that can be completed by users with different needs including circular walks around towns and villages or walks to places of interest.

The county council will explore innovative ways to maintain and enhance the PROW including liaising with neighbourhood plans who can seek funding for PROW improvements and for walks information to be distributed to new housing.

Volunteers have an important role to play in leading walks in communities and to keeping paths in a good condition. The county council will seek improvements for access through development opportunities and S106 funds and will continue working with the Local Access Forum and representatives of user groups to improve services and promote access.

# Objective 7

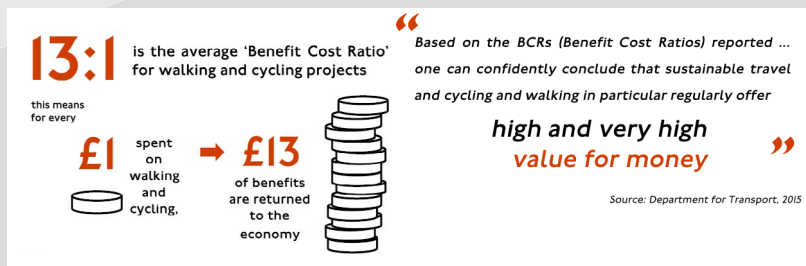
## Supporting Economic Development

### Walking Supports the Economy

There are five key areas where walking (and cycling) contribute to economic performance

- Keeping traffic flowing by reducing congestion (encouraging people to walk and cycle who would otherwise drive).
- Supporting Town Centres and High Streets by encouraging high levels of footfall and good access (often when combined with park and ride and passenger transport).
- Improving Productivity and Absenteeism through a healthier workforce
- Leisure and tourism (visiting businesses and attractions e.g. on the coastal path).
- In the coming year, SELEP will launch its Local Industrial Strategy which will include components from each of the Federated Areas including Essex. The strategy will articulate how the area will not only support jobs and housing growth but how it will also address Productivity





**Overall Increased business productivity**

Increased footfall around retail and leisure businesses

Improved health and wellbeing of staff

Improved employee productivity

## Town Centre, High Streets and Local Regeneration

### THRIVING HIGH STREETS



Town Centre's are essential to the fabric of a place and are key attractors, offering public sector, service, retail, leisure, employment and residential opportunities for both locals and visitors. They often serve as the transportation hubs, connecting and linking various parts of our Towns together. The fundamental structure of Town Centres has changed from goods transactions to one of consumption of food and experiential services such as health and entertainment, this fundamentally changes the role that the Town Centre plays in shaping a sense of place.

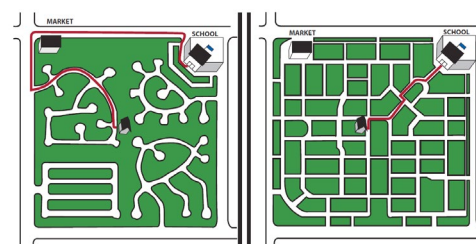
## Objective 8 Improving our Neighbourhoods and Supporting the Development of New Communities

### Designing Walking into New Communities

For new neighbourhoods and Garden Communities, it is essential that walking (and cycling) is designed in at the planning stage, to ensure that residents have a real choice regarding how they get around and how they access services. A settlement that favours active walking (and cycling) with access to good public transport will provide the best possible opportunity to create a distinctive attractive public realm, with a reduced amount of land set aside for car-based infrastructure and instead more land for green space, development and useful amenities. This should be facilitated by a dense network of high-quality walking (and cycle) routes to connect to key destinations both within new developments and to existing infrastructure and local services. This will enable residents to walk (and cycle) to jobs, leisure and the full range of services, and where for longer journeys, with public transport options as the default choice

of travel linking into key destinations and transport interchanges.

Pavements and Footways should be aligned as directly as possible between the main trip origins and destinations. Most walking journeys begin or end at a person's home, workplace or a transport hub or car park. Most journeys undertaken include a walking element or 'walking stage' which is part of a longer journey.



PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY: CUL-DE-SAC AND GRID LAYOUT

# Objective 9

## Encourage walking by changing attitudes and behaviour

### Creating New Social Norms

Social norms are the unwritten behaviours or codes which are deemed acceptable in society. It is often stated that people make their own choices about the factors which impact their health, including how much physical activity they undertake. However, the decisions people take are highly influenced by social norms and the range of travel choices available.

*...changing behaviours is challenging, as the contexts in which they occur are complex, involving the interaction of people's individual characteristics, social influences and physical environment – among other things.* (Dr Lidice Tombor and Professor Susan



Over recent decades people have become reliant on their cars for almost all of their journeys, this has been reflected in urban planning and in a reduction of walking journeys. People often perceive that cars are the most convenient mode of travel for all journeys, regardless of distance and/or time and therefore too often driving has become the norm for all journeys, rather than for longer and more complex trips.

Social norms are not static, they are evolving as attitudes change and more people recognise the benefits of being active and that regular walking can help maintain their general health. Moreover, short bouts of more intensive walking can contribute towards reducing the risk of several cancers as well as heart disease and stroke.

Michie A healthier life for all).

To encourage more people to walk for shorter journeys, either within their neighbourhoods or to the bus stop or railways station, we must make walking the natural choice for shorter journeys or for the first and last mile of a longer journeys involving other modes, walking should be the easiest and most accessible form of transport. Moreover, as set out in the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) Safety Review 2018, pedestrians should be considered first as part of planning highways schemes.



We need to think differently about human behaviour



Even when there is a wider shift in societal views, attitudes and expectations may differ within specific communities. For example, expectations of ageing healthily are very low among some socio-economic groups in the UK and these expectations may be linked with unhealthy behaviours such as very sedentary lifestyles (The Health Foundation).

The influence of social networks highlights the limitations of individually focused approaches and highlights the need for systems thinking which influence habits and norms of populations not simply individuals. Behavioural insights studies have shown that most decisions people make are fast, instinctive and automatic, rather than slower, considered and logical (Kahneman Thinking Fast and Slow). Therefore, to create the conditions for Walking to be seen as 'normal' as well as easy and convenient, a focus is required on both the social environment and the physical environment.

The **Nine Walking Objectives** and the **Strategy Priorities** are summarised in the table below. The Priorities will be delivered by an Action Plan included in Section 3.

### **Objective 1**

#### **Increase Walking for Everyday Journeys**

- Encourage walking by making it the norm for short journeys.
- Aim for 400 walking trips (for transport) per person per year by 2025 (average trip is approx. 1km or 10mins).
- Promote Park and Stride.
- Enable an increase in footfall on the priority walking network to improve natural surveillance.
- Collaborate with partners and developers to maximise the walking network including role of passenger transport and rail.
- Implement a hierarchy to focus resources on the most used paths.

### **Objective 3**

#### **Enabling more walking to Schools**

- Promote Essex Design Guide and Garden Communities Principals in New Development.
- Review design standards for walking infrastructure to ensure they encourage safe behaviour and meet pedestrian needs including provision for the elderly and mobility impaired.
- Enable walking networks for key towns through development of LCWIPs.
- Promote best practice design to improve walkability in our neighbourhoods including learning from B Lines.
- Enable more accessible walking environments.
- Support better wayfinding and legibility.

### **Objective 6**

#### **Promoting Walking for Leisure**

- Encourage social walks in Greenspace to link people to groups and reduce isolation.
- Promote use of PROW, Coastal Path and Country Parks including links to Rail and Bus Operators.
- Support community involvement in maintenance of PROW.

### **Objective 8**

#### **Improving our Neighbourhoods and Supporting the Development of new Communities**

- Promote Active by Design – make walking the most convenient way to get around our local areas.
- Develop Framework for improving walking at a Neighbourhood Level drawing on Healthy Streets Principles.
- Develop a framework for working with developers to ensure that Walking (and cycling) is designed in to new housing and communities and provide links to existing destinations.
- Create better links to Walking Corridors from local

### **Objective 2**

#### **Improving Road Safety**

- Explore the Implementation of safe systems as the founding principle for all infrastructure projects, using the Road User hierarchy to ensure the needs of pedestrians are met first.
- Prioritise road safety engineering schemes which treat sites with a history of pedestrian casualties.
- Support proactive policing to target driving offences which put pedestrians at risk and make roads a more unpleasant environment.

### **Objective 4**

#### **Better Design and Enhanced Accessibility**

- Enable residents to achieve two active 10's per day through everyday travel.
- Collaborate with public health practitioners and stakeholders to raise awareness of walking for Health.
- Support social prescribing to encourage walking as part of good mental health.
- Promote Active Essex (Active Essex Strategy).

### **Objective 5**

#### **Enabling Physical Activity & Walking for Health**

- Encourage more walking to schools through behaviour change programmes such as 3Parking Rules (3PR).
- Develop pilot study, linking community, physical and marketing approaches.
- Support education initiatives to increase the skill and confidence levels of young pedestrians throughout their school years.

### **Objective 7**

#### **Supporting Economic Development**

- Support enhanced Walking infrastructure in Town Centre and High Street Regeneration.
- Enhance walking infrastructure to key economic centres including Wayfinding.
- Work with large employers including Business, Hospitals and Universities to create walking champions and provide information on walking as a way of getting to work.

### **Objective 9**

#### **Encourage walking by changing attitudes and behaviour**

- Develop a Behaviour Change Programme using whole systems approach with proven systems thinking techniques.
- Enable frameworks to incentivise partners to deliver walking support.
- Continue to develop travel planning for workplaces, schools, communities using innovative communications and marketing techniques.
- Develop marketing plan for walking including new products and information which can be used with apps.



# Section Three

## Monitoring, Funding & Delivery of the Strategy

### Monitoring

- Monitoring the safety information as part of collisions and casualties recorded on the network.
- Through the Active Lives Survey and National Travel Surveys
- Using lessons learned and results from the Active Travel Grant
- Using data from the Essex Local Delivery Pilot

### Funding

Capital funding for infrastructure improvements will be sought from developer contributions and external sources such as through SELEP and through the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS).

Potential sources of funding include:

- Local authority Regeneration Schemes
- Department for Transport CWIS Funding
- From the Active Essex partnership
- High Street Fund
- Developer contributions – planning contributions
- from new developments is an important source of finance.
- Local Growth Funds.
- Network rail and rail operating companies.
- Local Highways Panel funding for districts road safety schemes.
- SELEP Local Growth Funds for Local Sustainable Transport Programme.

### Delivery of the Strategy

The Walking Strategy is an overarching document which seeks to provide a framework for the planning of walking networks and routes, encouraging more walking for travel across Essex, and encouraging more physical activity to ensure that all residents can enjoy the benefits of walking. Walking is foundational to the planning of the Transport System and urban development and will influence local plans and the next iteration of the Essex Local Transport Plan, as along with cycling will be the priority for short journeys and as part of a longer journey stage. It is anticipated that there will be an increased focus on ride sharing and multi modal journeys in future, walking has a key role to play in enabling future transport choices.

Emerging evidence from the Sport England, Local Delivery Pilot suggests that increasing physical activity requires a 'system approach', that is a

joined- up approach to ensure that the physical and social environment is conducive to increasing physical activity. This principle is a useful approach to encouraging more walking, whereby we consider how to make our streets more walkable & healthier; and how we identify and work with those who are currently not able to enjoy the benefits of walking by identifying barriers and reducing or removing them where possible.

To achieve this and support the ECC Strategic Outcomes and the Walking Strategy Objectives and Proposals a draft Action Plan is proposed, which is proposed to inform a programme of activities which will be delivered by the council and our partners. It is intended that the Walking Strategy will guide our plans and policies over the period to 2025, to align with the CWIS.

# Draft Action Plan

1. Appoint a Walking Champion.
2. Count Walking - count, monitor, and share information about walking, exploring the use of new technologies.
3. Develop a network of walking advocates and stakeholders.
4. Develop campaign to make Walking the natural Choice for Shorter Journeys or to access Passenger Transport.
5. Reduce Obstructions to walking (Quick Wins).
6. Delivering behaviour change through partners - supported by Walking Grant.
7. Better Streets & Corridors – Deliver (LCWIP Priorities, Braintree, Chelmsford & Colchester) & 10minute neighbourhoods' approach (subject to support from DfT).
8. Better information e.g. legibility and apps.
9. Develop Walkable Communities/Localities Pilot (seeking DfT support).
10. Walking Networks Refresh for Harlow and Basildon.

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Published May 2019.