



# Colchester City Council's **Active Travel SPD**

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

Climate change is a global issue affecting everyone. Co-ordinated action from all sectors, national and local governments, and individuals is needed to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The science tells us that to avoid catastrophic effects we need to limit the increase in global temperature to 1.5°C. Mitigation measures are required to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and limit global temperature rise. However, even with efforts to limit the cause of global

warming, further climatic changes are inevitable in the future and the UK will need to adapt to the growing risks from climate change.

Colchester City Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and since then have carried out numerous pieces of work across the organisation and city to respond to the climate emergency. The infographics, below, highlight the key areas of work in 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22.





The Council is drafting 3 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) to communicate Colchester City Council's ambitions in respect of the climate emergency for all development within the city. SPDs are material considerations in planning decisions. They build on adopted planning policy and provide guidance on how policy requirements should be implemented. The 3 climate emergency SPDs build on the adopted Local Plan and explain how development proposals should respond to the climate and ecological emergency. The SPDs are: Active Travel, Biodiversity, and Climate Change. All development proposals should strive to achieve ambitious carbon reductions, biodiversity enhancement and promotion of active travel to contribute towards Colchester becoming a greener city that is resilient to the climate and ecological emergency.

The 3 climate emergency SPDs will bring multiple benefits including benefits to health and wellbeing. A healthy environment plays a role in improving health and wellbeing. Many of the actions proposed in the 3 SPD's will also achieve

health benefits for our communities. An increase in active travel will lead to more walking and cycling. More energy efficient homes will be good for people's wellbeing and reduce heating costs. An increase in biodiversity and green infrastructure is good for people's mental wellbeing.

This is the Active Travel SPD. It aims to clearly set out the principles the Council expects to ensure that development proposals respond to the climate emergency by contributing towards a high quality cohesive network of active travel routes and support sustainable growth in line with the adopted Local Plan.

Although this SPD applies primarily to major planning applications, some of the guidance may also be relevant to many minor applications (as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework, NPPF). The Active Travel section of the Climate Emergency Checklist provides further information on what is relevant to your application.

The Council has consulted on this document in accordance with regulations and the Council's





Statement of Community Involvement. All responses received have been considered in preparing the final adopted version of this SPD. This SPD will form a material consideration in the determination of all planning applications for development including applications for renewal of consents.

Chapter 2 of the SPD sets out the background,

**We are in a climate and ecological emergency - the time to act is now**

a definition of active travel and reasons why an active travel SPD has been drafted. Chapter 3 sets out the national context and provides links to relevant reports. Chapter 4 sets out the Colchester and Essex context. It includes relevant Local Plan policies and relevant local strategies and documents. Chapter 5 provides details of the active travel infrastructure in Colchester. Chapter 6 sets out the elements that should be considered as part of new development proposals to encourage and support journeys by active modes. This chapter includes information on providing good quality infrastructure; improvements to existing infrastructure; provision of sufficient and good quality cycle and wheel parking; and information about other sustainable travel measures, promotion and community projects that will all help to encourage active travel. Chapter 7 sets out planning application expectations in relation to active travel modes.

**There is a wealth of information, guidance and best practice available. This SPD does not attempt to distil all this information and guidance into one document. Links are provided throughout the SPD to more detailed guidance for those who want to find out more.**

# Chapter 2:

## The Active Travel SPD

**Active Travel** refers to modes of travel that involve a level of physical activity; including walking, wheeling (trips made by wheelchairs [self-propelled or powered], mobility scooters, pushchairs and adapted bicycles) and cycling (including electric bikes, e-cargo bikes and other bicycle schemes).



Changes to the Highway Code in January 2022 includes a new section on the 'hierarchy of road users'. The concept places road users most at risk at the top of the hierarchy. Those road users are pedestrians, in particular children, older adults and disabled people, cyclists, horse riders and motorcyclists, with particular importance on children, older adults and disabled people being more at risk.

The Active Travel SPD will supersede the Cycling Delivery Strategy SPD, which will ensure that the SPD is up to date and in line with the most recent policy and guidance. The Active Travel SPD is also being prepared to help everyone to understand the important role of active travel within the city of Colchester. This will enable a cohesive, comprehensive and legible active travel infrastructure network to be delivered.

In addition to new policy and guidance updates, there are 3 key themes that support and highlight the need for active travel infrastructure. These are travel patterns and habits, health and responding to the climate emergency. These are set out below.

The previous Colchester Cycling Delivery Strategy SPD was adopted in 2012. Since then, it is apparent that other modes of wheeling travel would benefit from safe and sufficient routes. These, in addition to walking and cycling, are collectively known as modes of active travel. Active travel can also be used to access other forms of sustainable modes of transport such as public transport and car clubs.

New policies, strategies and guidance have also been published and adopted by national Government and Essex County Council since the Colchester Cycling Delivery Strategy was adopted by the Council. Revised guidance on delivering active travel infrastructure has been produced. National and local guidance recognises that active travel are the least carbon-intensive ways to travel.

## TRAVEL PATTERNS

The Colchester Borough Travel to Work Patterns (2015) was produced, based on Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2011 Census data and shows where and how people travel to work by either rural or urban workplace zones. The document highlighted that the city at that time was quite self-contained with 69% of employees that live in Colchester travel to work in Colchester by either a car or a van.

The 2021 Office for National Statistics (ONS) census data, which was still in the pandemic recovery phase, highlights that 47% of employees travel by either car or a van with only 11% travelling by active modes (2.5% by bicycle and 8.7% on foot).

The Colchester Future Transport Strategy results (July 2022), show that there is significant car use within the city over short distances which could be made by alternative modes to help relieve pressure and congestion on the growing road network. It demonstrates why active travel has so much potential opportunity in the city and why it is important to encourage more people to walk, wheel or cycle, whether it be for trips to work, school, college, shopping or leisure.

The future transport strategy states about 20% of us travel 2km or less to work by car and 40% travel 5km or less. Edge of town residential areas are continuing to produce the highest car use for commuting.

## CLIMATE

In 2019, Colchester City Council declared a climate emergency. Promoting active travel not only helps with people's health and wellbeing but it is also environmentally friendly. If every household changed just one short car journey per week, to travel via an active mode, it would help save multiple thousands of tonnes of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions helping to tackle climate change and improve air quality throughout the city.

The Transport Decarbonisation Plan (2021) and the Net Zero Strategy (2021) nationally sets milestones for journeys in towns and cities of 50% journeys walked or cycled by 2030 and every place in the UK will have its own net zero emission transport network before 2050.

About 60% of car trips are less than 3km (2miles), with 45% of car trips to work under 1.5km (1mile); this is a 15-20 minute walking distance. About 36% of trips are under 5km (3miles) and 59% under 10km (6miles) which suggest that sustainable & active modes of travel must be main pillars of the forward strategy in order to tackle/improve these three agendas. (National Travel Survey 2021)



## HEALTH

There is now significant evidence which proves the direct links and significant benefits of physical activity for health, both physically and mentally. It can help to prevent and manage over 20 chronic conditions and diseases, including some cancers, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and depression. Even a minimum amount of physical activity is better than doing nothing; and using modes of active travel can contribute towards the Chief Medical Officers' recommended 150 minutes of physical activity for adults each week, which provides significant benefits for health and wellbeing. By becoming more active throughout the day people can easily achieve these recommended activity levels.

Unfortunately, the UK population is around 20% less active now than in the 1960s and if the current trajectory continues, it will be 35% less active by 2030. Physical inactivity is one of the leading risk factors for non-communicable disease mortality (cardiovascular diseases [heart attacks and stroke], chronic respiratory diseases [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease COPD and asthma] and cancers). People who are insufficiently

active have a 20% to 30% increased risk of death compared to people who are sufficiently active. Physical inactivity is associated with 1 in 6 deaths in the UK and is estimated to cost the UK in excess of £10 billion annually (including £1 billion to the NHS alone) (Health Matters 2016).

People with disabilities or long-term health conditions are twice as likely not to be active enough for good health and one in four people would be more active if advised by a healthcare professional. Quality inclusive active travel infrastructure could remove any potential barriers for the remaining three in four people to be more physically active, which is a unique opportunity to increase physical activity for all.





# Chapter 3:

## National Context

### Climate and Transport Strategy Context

In December 2015, the UK joined 195 countries in signing an historic global deal to tackle climate change. The UK has long-term, legally-binding targets to bring greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.

[The Governments Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener](#) (October 2021) sets out policies and proposals for decarbonising all sectors of the UK economy to meet the net zero target by 2050. The strategy recognises the importance of the planning system to common challenges like combating climate change and supporting sustainable growth. The Strategy aims to increase the share of trips taken by public transport cycling and walking, making these modes the natural first choice for all who can take them. It recognises that as more journeys are cycled or walked, the carbon, air quality, noise and congestion benefits will be complemented by significant improvements in public health and wellbeing.

The Governments [Transport Decarbonisation Plan: Decarbonising Transport A Better, Greener Britain](#) (2021) sets out the governments commitments and the actions needed to decarbonise the entire transport system in the UK and includes the wider benefits net zero transport can deliver.

The Government's first [Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy](#) (CWIS1) was published in April 2017. It aimed to 'make cycling

and walking the natural choices for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey'. It stated, 'we want more people to have access to safe, attractive routes for cycling and walking by 2040'.

The Government published ['Gear Change: a bold vision for cycling and walking' in 2020](#)

The plan set out a vision for cycling and walking in England, recognising that to make England an active travel nation, 'we need to take action to tackle the main barriers. We need to attract people to active travel by building better quality infrastructure, making streets better for everyone, and we need to make sure people feel safe and confident cycling. To deliver this, we need to ensure active travel is embedded in wider policy making..'

The actions to achieve this were grouped under four themes: Better streets for cycling and people; putting cycling and walking at the heart of transport, place-making and health policy; Empowering and encouraging local authorities; and enabling people to cycle and protect them when they cycle.

The second [Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy](#) (CWIS2) was published in July 2022 and covers the period from April 2021 to March 2025. The aims and targets in CWIS1, alongside the vision set out in Gear Change, informed a revised set of objectives to:

- Increase the percentage of short journeys in towns and cities that are walked or cycled.
- Increase walking.
- Double cycling.
- Increase the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 who usually walk to school.

[Local Transport Note \(LTN\) 1/20 'Cycle infrastructure design'](#) was published in July 2020 and provides guidance on delivering high quality, cycle infrastructure including:



- Planning for cycling
- Space for cycling within highways
- Transitions between carriageways, cycle lanes and cycle tracks
- Junctions and crossing
- Cycle parking and other equipment.

[Active Travel England](#) (ATE) was established in July 2020 with the overall objective to enable achievement of the vision set out in the governments walking and cycling action plan, 'Gear Change'. The strategic aims of ATE are to increase levels of walking and cycling in towns and cities by:

- Creating better streets and networks for cycling and walking that are built to the 'key design principles' as set out in Gear Change and Local Transport Note 1/20.
- Putting walking and cycling at the heart of transport, place-making, and health policy so travelling without a car is easy and accessible utilising a long-term walking and cycling programme and budget.

Active Travel England became an executive agency of the Department for Transport (DfT) in 2022 and act as a statutory consultee in the planning system and will review active travel provision in all major planning applications (developments that meet the following minimum thresholds 150 residential units; 7,500m<sup>2</sup> commercial area; or site area of over 5ha).

Active Travel England have prepared a planning application assessment toolkit to be used by local planning authorities in conjunction with applicants. In addition to the toolkit, Active Travel England have published a Standing Advice Note for [Active Travel and Sustainable Development](#) (July 2023) and a [Development management procedural note for local planning authorities](#) (July 2023).

The Government's [National Design Guide](#) was updated in January 2021 and sets out characteristics of well-designed places and

demonstrates how well designed places can be achieved in practice. It sets out ten characteristics of well-designed places, which includes movement, and states that patterns of movement for people are integral to well-designed places.

[Manual for Streets](#), first published by the Department for Transport in 2007, provides advice for the design of residential streets. A revised Manual for Streets is currently being developed which will update the existing Manual for Streets and Manual for Streets 2 and will provide guidance for local authorities on designing residential and busier urban streets.

## National Planning Policy

Paragraph 8 of the **National Planning Policy Framework** (NPPF) makes clear that mitigating and adapting to climate change is a core planning objective. To be in conformity with the NPPF, local development plans should reflect this principle, ensuring that planning policy clearly and comprehensively deals with climate change mitigation and adaption.

Section 9 of the NPPF (paragraphs 104-113) 'Promoting Sustainable Transport' is relevant to this SPD. The NPPF (paragraph 106) states that planning policies should provide for attractive and well-designed walking and cycling networks with supporting facilities such as secure cycle parking. It states that 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 are identified and pursued; and so that patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes and contribute to making high quality places (paragraph 104).

[Planning Practice Guidance](#) adds further context to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Guidance is available on a number of subjects including Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements.

# Chapter 4:

## Local Context



In 2008 Colchester was designated as a Cycling Town following Cycling Demonstration Town work. This work showed that for a modal shift to occur three aspects need to be considered; these were infrastructure, training and marketing. The project enabled the Council, working in partnership with Essex County Council (ECC), to improve the then town (now city) cycle network, increase the number of cycle parking spaces and deliver several training and promotional campaigns.

**The Colchester Cycling Delivery Strategy**, adopted by Colchester City Council as SPD in 2012, was created to provide guidance and support this work. Over the years it has been used as guidance for many of the infrastructure changes and updates to the current networks. It was also used to inform the ECC Colchester Cycling Action Plan and the Colchester Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). **This Active Travel SPD will replace the Colchester Cycling Delivery Strategy SPD.**

### Colchester Local Plan

This SPD aligns with the Councils adopted policies in the Local Plan, expands upon the existing planning policy on the provision of appropriate infrastructure requirements contained within the Local Plan; as well as supporting future initiatives, including for example, the emerging City Centre Masterplan.

The [Colchester Local Plan](#) is in two sections. Section 1 provides a shared strategic policy context and was adopted in February 2021. Section 2 of the Local Plan was adopted in July 2022 and provides the policy framework, site allocations and development management policies for the borough. The most relevant

Local Plan policies to this SPD are summarised below.

**Policy SP7: Place Shaping Principles** – which requires all new development to reflect a number of place shaping principles including creating ‘well-connected places that prioritise the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport services above use of the private car’.

**Policy SG7: Infrastructure Delivery and Impact Mitigation** – requires all new development to be supported by, and have good access to, all necessary infrastructure. It sets out that ‘Permission will only be granted if it can be demonstrated that there is sufficient appropriate infrastructure capacity to support the development or that such capacity will be delivered by the proposal’. It also states ‘Where a development proposal requires additional infrastructure capacity, to be deemed acceptable, mitigation measures must be agreed with the Local Planning Authority and the appropriate infrastructure provider.’

**Policy ENV3: Green Infrastructure** – states that the ‘Local Planning Authority will aim to protect, enhance and deliver a comprehensive green infrastructure network comprising strategic green links ..’ It seeks to protect and enhance the existing network and to secure the delivery of new green infrastructure where deficiencies and gaps are identified. It states the Local Planning Authority will ‘seek opportunities from future developments, where appropriate, to improve the connectivity between the Colchester Orbital route, new developments and the wider countryside.’

**Policy PP1: Generic Infrastructure and Mitigation Requirements** – which, in addition

to site specific requirements, requires all proposals to make contributions to the cost of infrastructure improvements as required and supported by up-to-date evidence from appropriate sources. In addition, proposals must as relevant, address a number of borough wide requirements including 'safe pedestrian access from the site to existing footways to enhance connectivity'.

**Policy DM1: Health and Wellbeing** – which requires all development to be designed to help promote healthy and active lifestyles including through 'providing a healthy living environment where healthy lifestyles can be promoted including green space and creating attractive opportunities for activities including walking, cycling, horse riding and formal sport, as well as clearly seeking to improve opportunities to increase levels of physical activity within the community.'

**Policy DM20: Promoting Sustainable Transport and Changing Travel Behaviour** – seeks to increase modal shift towards sustainable modes by improving accessibility of development through the promotion of walking and cycling as an integral part of development.

**Policy DM21: Sustainable Access to Development** – states that 'All new developments should seek to enhance accessibility for sustainable modes of transport.' To achieve this, proposals for development should:

1. Give priority to the movement of people walking and cycling;
2. Create safe, secure, convenient and attractive layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic, cyclists and pedestrians;
3. Link the development to the surrounding walking, cycling and public transport networks taking into consideration the Cycle Strategy SPD;
4. Provide and give access to quality public transport facilities;

5. Ensure streets and junctions are designed to provide people-friendly street environments and to give priority to sustainable transport;
6. Incorporate charging facilities for electric and other ultra-low emission vehicles where appropriate, or as a minimum the ability to easily introduce such facilities in the future;
7. Ensuring accessibility for those with impaired mobility; and
8. Accommodate the efficient delivery of goods and services.

**Policy DM22: Parking** – contains requirements for secure cycle parking to be provided. The Essex Parking Standards: Design and Good Practice document was published in 2009 and adopted by Colchester Borough Council as SPD in 2012. This document, which is currently being updated, includes information on the quantity and quality of cycle parking required in new developments as well as location and layout.



# Essex Transport Policy

**The Essex Transport Strategy** the Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Essex was published in June 2011. This strategy is the overarching transport plan for Essex and sets out the aspirations for improving travel in the county. The LTP sets out the focus on schemes that support the uptake of active and sustainable travel to enable and encourage healthy choices within our communities for their improved health and wellbeing.

**The Essex Cycling Strategy** was published in November 2016. This strategy aims to encourage Essex residents, workers and visitors to enjoy the health benefits of cycling; it acts as the over-arching policy framework to enable, provide and promote cycling in Essex.

**The Essex Walking Strategy** was published in October 2021. This strategy is a response to the challenges and opportunities of walking in Essex. It outlines in detail the steps being taken to encourage walking at present and the direction that will be taken in the future.

The **Colchester Cycling Action Plan (CCAP)** was published by Essex County Council in January 2018 as part of a commitment in the Essex Cycling Strategy to create Cycling Action Plans for every district. The CCAP aims to:

- Identify how cycling levels could be increased in the city area.
- Enable any funding for new cycling schemes in Colchester to be prioritised.
- Create a useable, high-quality cycle network.
- Create opportunities to increase recreational cycling in Colchester.

**The Colchester Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)** was developed in 2021. This plan aims to see the introduction of new walking, wheeling and cycling networks making it easier and safer for people to walk and cycle in our city. The Colchester LCWIP refresh was consulted on in September 2023. Key outputs of the LCWIP include:

- A network plan for walking, wheeling and cycling which identifies preferred routes and core zones for further route development;
- A prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment; and
- A report which sets out the underlying analysis carried out and provides a narrative which supports the identified improvements and network.

The **Colchester Transport Strategy**, published in July 2022, contains a vision 'To transform Colchester into a place which prioritises active and safe sustainable travel to bring about health, environmental and economic benefits.' The Future Transport Strategy focuses on the type of journey – short, medium and long distance. This is achieved through creating zones: Zone 1 (City Centre); Zone 2 (Wider City Area); Zone 3 (Borough Boundary); and Zone 4 (Strategic Corridors).





# Chapter 5:

## Active Travel Infrastructure in Colchester

The Colchester City Council area is varied and encompasses a diverse range of places with unique characteristics. The urban area of Colchester includes the city centre and the surrounding built up areas, identified in the Local Plan as North, South, East and West (including Stanway). The Local Plan also identifies Sustainable Settlements. Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe are the largest of the Sustainable Settlements and provide essential services. These areas are surrounded by other villages and the rural hinterland.

Within the urban areas of the city of Colchester, active travel infrastructure comprises networks of footways, public footpaths and cycle routes. The quality of these routes varies in terms of segregation, widths, continuity and surfacing. Cycle route provision includes:

- Traffic free routes;
- Shared walking and cycle routes with varying levels of segregation;
- Infrastructure adjacent to and/or on the carriageway;
- Signed on-road routes.

The Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network, which includes public footpaths and bridleways, provides links across the Colchester City Council urban and rural areas. [The PRoW Interactive Map | Essex County Council \(essexhighways.org\)](#) provides more detail. All legal users should be considered

where plans are made for improvements to a route for active travel modes, on the Public Rights of Way network.

Cycle networks are less well established in other urban areas (e.g. Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe) and in the rural areas. National Cycle Network (NCN) Routes 1, 13 and 51 run through the Colchester City area. The [Colchester Orbital](#) provides a circular route around the city following Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and links with cycle routes wherever possible.

Although much of the formal walking and cycling network is focused on the Colchester urban area, quality active travel infrastructure is important across the city-wide area, to link residents to their destinations as well as providing active travel routes for leisure and recreation. Therefore, the principles set out in this SPD relate to the whole of the Colchester City area.

In rural areas, it will be important to take into account the differing speed limits that exist and ensure that the most appropriate infrastructure is delivered. Country lanes are part of our rural environment, but the volume and speed of traffic, and the presence of heavy lorries, can make them uninviting and intimidating. The opportunities for specific active travel requirements of the rural communities can be identified through partnership working with the Parish and Town Councils and where appropriate may be considered through Neighbourhood Plans.

# Chapter 6:

## The elements needed to encourage active travel

If a place is designed to support and encourage active travel, more people are likely to travel by active modes for some of their journeys. Neighbourhoods should be designed so that facilities for daily essentials and recreation are within easy reach. Good onward connections through walking and cycle networks and public transport should be provided to enable travel further afield.

This SPD supports the 'key design principles' set out by the Governments Walking and Cycling Plan [Gear Change](#); the '[10 principles of Active Design](#)' set out by Sport England; and the [10 Healthy Streets Indicators](#) by Healthy Streets.

Encouraging walking, wheeling or cycling is not just about infrastructure, although it is an important element. Providing quality active travel routes and parking at origin and destination will only go some way to encouraging the use of active travel modes. Encouraging adults, and the next generation of adults, to make active travel their preferred mode of transport will also be achieved through engagement with local communities, training and promotion.

The principles set out in this SPD relate to the whole of the Colchester City area

The following elements should be considered, where relevant, as part of any new development proposal:

- Provision of Good Quality Infrastructure in New Developments
- Improvements to Existing Infrastructure
- Cycle and Wheel Parking
- Other Sustainable Travel Measures, Promotion and Community Projects

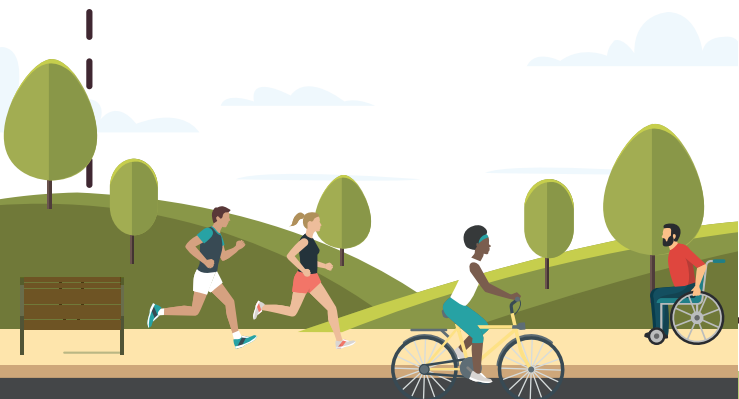
These elements are outlined in more detail below.

### Provision of Good Quality Infrastructure in New Developments

*Plan to accommodate active travel infrastructure to create an active sustainable development from the outset.*

Local Plan Policy DM21: Sustainable Access to Development requires that all new developments 'should seek to enhance accessibility for sustainable modes of transport.'

All new developments that are expected to increase the number of movements to and from the site will be required to provide quality active travel infrastructure, on the site itself and provide links to the nearest surrounding network, ensuring there are no gaps in the active travel infrastructure when linking the development to key local amenity destinations.



People will naturally choose a method of travel that is convenient, reliable, quick and safe. If this is the case for active modes of travel then more people are likely to use them, increasing physical activity, reducing congestion and improving air quality.

Walking, cycling and wheeling share many similarities including many of the barriers that impact on them being used as a mode of travel. However, there are also differences between them for design purposes and the distinct needs should be taken into account when designing infrastructure. Improving conditions for one active mode should not be at the expense of another.

The design of active travel routes and infrastructure is key to facilitating the change in how a community travel. If the active routes between origins and destinations are safe, continuous, direct and attractive to use, this will encourage more people to consider using them.

This will be achieved by ensuring all new active travel infrastructure is:

- **Accessible for all** – coherent; direct; continuous; and inclusive
- **Safe and Secure** – consideration of natural surveillance; lighting; well-designed routing; and personal security.
- **Comfortable** – e.g. adequate surfacing; well maintained; adequate widths; quality of the surrounding environment; seating (as rest points).
- **Attractive** – attractive public realm will encourage use.

## ‘Accessible for All’

Active travel infrastructure should be coherent, direct, safe and accessible for all users. LTN1/20 refers to the importance of accessibility for all as a requirement that should always be considered in relation to the principles representing the core requirements for people wishing to travel by bicycle or on foot.

- To encourage use, infrastructure should provide the most direct route between origin and destinations, making it the most attractive mode for shorter journeys.
- Routes should also where possible follow desire lines, minimise detours and be continuous (with no gaps in the provision of infrastructure). Routes within a new development should link with existing and proposed pedestrian and cycle routes outside of the development area, including those routes shown on the Colchester Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), and any refresh of this plan, therefore providing onward connections to key destinations.
- To ensure routes are accessible for all users, routes should be step-free and uncluttered. Unnecessary barriers should not be installed. Where barriers are required, they should be of a design to enable access for all intended users including buggies, wheelchairs, adapted bikes and cargo bikes.
- Severance can be a major obstacle in many parts of the city. Severance can be caused by busy roads, railway lines, rivers as well as large open areas that are difficult to cross. Where a route needs to cross a road, crossing facilities should be well-designed and on desire lines, and allow for direct crossing opportunities.
- Routes should be legible, easy to find, and easy to follow. Signage and wayfinding should be placed securely on posts, be continuous and legible providing information on key destinations and travel time. Signage can also act as a promotional tool to highlight the existence of active travel routes and shortcuts.

## **‘Safe and Secure’**

Active travel infrastructure should be designed to be safe, and perceived to be safe, if it is to be inclusive and support active travel for all.

- Routes should be designed to encourage natural surveillance, and where appropriate lighting should be provided.
- LTN1/20 refers to the importance of inclusive design. Accessibility should run through the core design principles and designers should always aim to provide infrastructure that caters for the broadest range of people.

## **‘Comfortable’**

- It is recommended that , pedestrians, cyclists and traffic should be segregated in line with guidance in LTN 1/20. The appropriate type of segregation will depend on the location, type of road, volume and flow of traffic.
- Active travel routes should be constructed to appropriate widths, considering comfort for all users with differing speeds and room for safe overtaking. More information is available in LTN1/20.
- Surfacing should be level, smooth and well maintained. Adequate drainage should also be ensured to avoid standing water.

## **‘Attractive’**

The attractiveness of the route and its surroundings will affect whether users choose to use it and choose active travel as a means of transport. Infrastructure and the surrounding environment should therefore be well-designed to encourage use.

- Active travel infrastructure can also help to deliver public spaces that are well designed and finished so that people want to spend time using them.
- Within larger developments and communities, creating neighbourhoods where speed limits are low, or where through traffic and ‘rat runs’

are discouraged on residential streets through filtered permeability can also encourage the use of active travel as a means of transport.

## **Active Travel Provision around Schools**

Large scale developments where a school is proposed should consider the location of that school within the new community to ensure it is accessible and central to the local community (along with other key local amenities depending on the scale of the development).

All new schools should be located within largely traffic free ‘school zones’. Of prime importance is the area outside the main pupil entrance, which must be entirely traffic free. Such pedestrianised public areas provide a space for children, parents and younger siblings to congregate safely at the beginning and end of the school day and foster a sense of community. Such spaces should be well connected to walking, cycling and bus routes that make sustainable modes of travel attractive. In addition to the environmental benefits, there is a clear link between active travel, health and well-being.

The School Design Guidance contained in the Essex Design Guide provides additional information, ensuring health and wellbeing principles are applied to development including features to support sustainable accessibility across all user groups.

## **Further Guidance**

This section outlines the design guidance that form the basis for delivering good quality active travel infrastructure in new developments and should be designed in accordance with the principles laid out in the guidance.

For more detailed design guidance, the following guidance documents and any updates should be taken into account:



- National Design Guide
- Essex Design Guide
  - New Schools
  - School Design Guidance
  - Health Impact Assessments
- DfT Inclusive Mobility: A guide to Best Practice
- CIHT Planning for Walking
- Sport England's Active Design Guidance
  - Foundation Principle
  - 3 principles around Active Travel (Walkable communities, Providing connected active travel routes & Mixing uses and co-locating facilities)
- Healthy Streets 10 Indicators
- Active Travel England guidance notes
- LTN1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design
- Manual for Streets
- Sustrans traffic-free routes and greenways design guide

## Improvements to Existing Infrastructure

*Safeguarding and improving the existing active travel network in Colchester*

Local Plan Policy DM20: Promoting Sustainable Transport and Changing Travel Behaviour encourages development that reduces the need to travel and improvements to sustainable transport to provide better connections between communities and their needs. It states this will be achieved by safeguarding existing and proposed routes including for walking, cycling and green infrastructure. It also states 'New development will be expected to contribute towards maintaining continuity and enhancing these connections where appropriate.'

The existing active travel infrastructure is described in Chapter 5 and consists of a network of footways and cycle routes across the Colchester area, in addition to the wider Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network and the Colchester Orbital.

Much of the existing cycle infrastructure is focussed on the urban area of Colchester with a

network of on and off-road routes. However, many of the dedicated cycle routes are unconnected and there are gaps and barriers along the network that impact on the continuity of routes. In addition, many current routes in the city were constructed a number of years ago and do not meet current LTN1/20 standards or may require maintenance or improvement to bring them up to current standards and encourage use.

It is important that the existing active travel network is safeguarded and that gaps in provision and any improvements to the network are, where appropriate, delivered as part of new development proposals to create a coherent network that is accessible by all, safe and secure, comfortable, and attractive and thereby encourages future use.

## Cycle Parking

*Provide cycle parking that is convenient, covered, safe and secure*

The provision of safe, convenient and secure cycle parking will support the development of the cycle network in Colchester, enabling and encouraging residents, employees and visitors to use bicycles and wheeled vehicles and safely store them. New developments will be expected to incorporate cycle parking both at the point of origin (normally a dwelling) and at destinations to link into current infrastructure.

Local Plan Policy DM22: Parking requires that 'secure cycle parking should be incorporated into all residential development proposals and should be accessible, convenient to use, well laid out and used exclusively for cycle parking.'

Cycle parking needs to be located as near to the entrance of a building as possible, under surveillance, and be safely, directly and easily accessible from the surrounding cycle and wheel network. Well located cycle and wheel parking, conveniently close to the destination, plays a significant role in minimising journey times.



## Cycle Parking in New Development

Developments including residential development across different typologies, flats, offices, leisure facilities and other places of work, should provide long-stay secure, covered cycle parking facilities for residents and users of the development.

Cycle parking facilities should be convenient to access (at grade or via a ramp) and where possible should be integrated into the building. If external storage is provided then these must be convenient, covered, secure and overlooked.

In addition to provision for long-stay users (eg residents and staff) all development should include secure, covered visitor cycle parking close to visitor entrances. In larger developments with a number of units, this parking should be provided in separate units across the site close to all entrances.

### Key principles:

- All cycle parking should be well signed.
- Charging provision for electric bikes should also be considered, particularly at longer stay parking.
- In designing cycle parking, consideration should be given to non-standard and inclusive cycles that may be used, such as, cargo bikes, tricycles, bicycles with trailers, recumbent bikes, wheel-chair friendly bikes and scooters. For example, leaving a larger gap at the end of a row of Sheffield stands and offsetting further from the wall will allow larger bikes and trikes to make use.
- There should be adequate cycle parking to meet demand. The appropriate quantity and type of cycle parking differs between locations.
- Schools should have sufficient areas dedicated to cycle and wheel parking within their premises. Existing schools without these facilities could benefit from having this planned into future infrastructure to enhance their active travel offering.

## Cycle Parking in the Public Realm

Provision of cycle parking will be encouraged across the City Council area. Within existing residential neighbourhoods where residents don't

have anywhere to store their bikes, the provision of secure, covered cycle parking in appropriate locations will be supported where a need is identified locally.

Provision of cycle parking within larger car parks in the city centre and beyond will also be encouraged.

### What is 'Secure' Cycle Parking

Consider:

- Location of the cycle parking within the property or development.
- Levels of visibility and lighting.
- Quality and security of cycle parking stands and locks – embed cycle parking equipment in the ground, use tamper proof fixings.
- Is the facility open to the public or restricted to selected users.
- Consider secure access to parking compounds (eg by app or fob) for residents, employees and those parking for longer periods.

Further information can be found on the Secured by Design website: <https://www.securedbydesign.com/> which is the official police security initiative that works to improve the security of buildings and their immediate surroundings. Further guidance and standards can also be found in LTN1/20 and in Secured by Design Homes (2023) and the Bicycle Association - Standards for Public Cycle Parking (June 2021).

### Further Guidance

Guidance on the quantity of cycle parking, in addition to further information on standards and design guidance, can be found in the Essex Parking Standards.

LTN1/20 provides further guidance on the design of cycle parking and this, and any future guidance, should be taken into account.



## Sustainable Travel, Promotion and Community Projects

*Additional considerations to encourage the use of active travel for journeys in and around the city*

In addition to specific active travel infrastructure, there are other sustainable travel elements that can complement the infrastructure and encourage the use of active travel modes. These include shared transport; integration with public transport; travel plans; promotion and training; and engagement and community projects. Further information can be found on the [Colchester City Council website](#) and on the [Essex County Council Sustainable Travel webpage](#).

### Shared transport

Shared transport includes car clubs, shared bikes, e-bikes and e-cargo bikes and mobility hubs. Further information on shared travel can be found on the CoMoUK website and information on shared travel in Colchester can be found on the [Colchester City Council website](#).

**Car clubs** allow users to access a vehicle without owning one and can offer a flexible, cost effective alternative to private first or second car ownership. Car clubs therefore have potential to have a significant impact on reducing car ownership when provided in or close to residential developments, particularly in city centre locations. They provide socially inclusive, low emission mobility which helps to break dependency on private car ownership and enhance use of active travel modes. The inclusion of a car club within a new residential site can also be an attractive feature for prospective residents.

Local Plan Policy DM22 states that in appropriate circumstances, namely urban locations ‘... parking standards may be relaxed or car free development may be acceptable in order to reflect accessibility by non-car modes, and/or to enhance the character of sensitive locations. The use/establishment of a car club may be required.’

Colchester’s first all-electric car club vehicle launched in 2023 and is located in Priory Street Car Park in the city centre. This is the beginning of the provision of a network of car club cars across Colchester that will be rolled out over the next few years.

The provision of a car club space, recharging infrastructure and financial support to provide vehicles for a period of time until established, plus marketing and incentivisation of membership, should be considered as part of residential development proposals, particularly in urban areas. Car clubs are best located in areas where there are good public transport links and active travel infrastructure. Guidelines will be produced to support the provision of car clubs including information on the type and scale of development that could support a car club.

Further information can be found in various guidance including the [DfT Guidance Car Clubs: local authority toolkit](#) and through the national charity for shared transport [CoMoUK](#).

**Bike Share** is any scheme where bikes, e-bikes, cargo or e-cargo bikes are available to multiple users. This can include public bike share schemes or other forms such as workplace pool bikes or community led shared bike schemes. Benefits of bike share schemes include encouraging lapsed cyclists back into cycling, providing a sustainable means of transporting children or bulky/heavy goods, providing access to a range of sustainable transport without the cost of ownership and interchange with public transport.

The City Centre shared eBike Hub, located in the Secure Bike Park in Portal Precinct (off Sir Isaac's Walk) has a range of different electric bikes available on a pay as you go basis. The bikes are available to book by the hour. Further information can be found on the Colchester City Council website and on the [Cycle Colchester website](#).

New development proposals could consider providing space or support to help facilitate further Shared Bike schemes where appropriate.

**Mobility Hubs** provide co-location of a variety of transport facilities that can extend travel choice beyond the private car, promoting active and sustainable travel. Mobility hubs bring together various forms of shared transport, public transport and active transport in spaces designed to improve the public realm. This can offer sustainable, flexible, accessible and cost effective 'first or last mile' connections to the nearest bus or railway services.

Larger developments could consider adopting a mobility hub approach, which co-locates mobility options and other community facilities. This could include bicycle and vehicle parking and access to a range of shared electric vehicles including e-cars, e-bikes and e-cargo bikes, in order to encourage use for longer journeys whilst offering a viable alternative to personal car use and ownership. Guidance is also available in the Essex Design Guide and further guidelines will be produced to support the provision of mobility hubs and when and where these may be appropriate.

## Integration with public transport

Many journeys are short, and the entire trip can be made by active modes. Some longer journeys can combine active travel with public transport, thus reducing dependency on the private car. To encourage integration with public transport, bus



stops, interchanges and stations require high quality active travel routes to them that are well signposted. As with other infrastructure, routes should be as direct as possible, well-lit and well maintained.

Bus stops should be designed so that they can be easily accessed by people of all abilities. The design of the space around existing and new bus stops should be considered when designing active travel routes so that any potential conflict between users is minimised. Public transport interchanges should be designed using the principles outlined above to ensure that they are accessible for all, safe and secure, comfortable and attractive.

Bus stops along main public transport routes that are well connected to the cycle network may benefit from dedicated cycle parking. Any parking provided should be secure to allow for varying length of stay and a variety of different sized bikes and should not restrict the space available for other users.

Further information on the Essex Bus Strategy and the Bus Service Improvement Plan can be found on the Essex County Council website [Getting Around in Essex Bus Strategy | Essex County Council \(essexhighways.org\)](#).

## Travel Plans

Travel plans aim to promote the use of more sustainable modes of travel. They are long term management strategies for integrating proposals for sustainable transport into the planning process. They are based on evidence of the anticipated transport impacts of development and set measures to promote and encourage sustainable travel (including active modes).

Travel Plans can be useful tools to help people make active choices in their daily travel. Travel Plans should provide information and support

for new residents and employees to help them find local active travel routes and facilities, and information on schemes and any discounts available.

Local Plan Policy DM21: Sustainable access to development requires 'All non-residential developments that generate significant amounts of movement will be required to produce a Travel Plan in accordance with Essex County Council Travel Plan Framework guidance and where appropriate will be required to become members of the Colchester Travel Plan Club.' The Policy also requires 'All new residential developments and schools will be required to produce a Travel Plan or provide Residential Travel Packs in accordance with Essex County Council Travel Plan Framework guidance.'

- Residential Travel Plan – A document containing a mixture of measures to encourage sustainable travel by residents and visitors to and from the site alongside discouragements to driving.
- Business Travel Plan – maybe required if the development will have a significant impact on the local road network and/or if there are existing transport, infrastructure, congestion or pollution problems.
- Travel Plan Co-ordinator – A permanent member of staff with the appropriate skills, budgetary provision and resources to produce and update the Travel Plan and manage the continued implementation of the Travel Plan.

Detailed guidance can be found on the ECC planning and sustainable travel website: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/sustainable-travel>. This includes guidance on residential travel plans, business travel plans and school travel plans.

Travel Plans should be considered in parallel to development proposals and be readily integrated into the design and occupation of a new development rather than retrofitted after occupation; they should incorporate ambitious but achievable mode share targets and contain details of the monitoring process and what further measures will be required if the targets are not met.

Colchester Travel Plan Club was first formed in 2004 by local organisations to manage their demand for car parking and who were concerned about the impact of local traffic congestion on their business, the community and the environment. Since then, the Colchester Travel Plan Club has expanded its network of businesses and organisations committed to promoting active and sustainable travel. The Colchester Travel Plan Club offers experience and expertise in creating positive travel behaviour change, resources, ongoing support and benefits that can be passed on to staff.



## Promotion and Training

In addition to infrastructure, working with communities to remove barriers and change perceptions about active travel is important. Provision of training and the marketing of active travel modes to illustrate the ease and benefits of using these modes of travel to make short journeys is important. New developments should provide a package of measures as part of their travel plans to encourage new residents, visitors and employees to use active travel modes. This could include:

- Maps showing the existing active travel networks in the area
- Specific marketing material for new developments
- Personalised travel planning
- Cycle training
- Led rides
- Cycle maintenance hubs and training
- Provision of discount vouchers for purchases or for bike hire
- Information on local support network including voluntary organisations such as Bike Kitchens

The Council can provide further advice on appropriate packages to suit individual development proposals.

## Community Schemes and Projects

A big challenge to active travel is perception. Projects and schemes that promote active travel should take account of the needs of different members of the community and create local solutions that address and meet local community needs, enabling residents and local communities to help shape the way they interact with their local environment. However, this can only be achieved through meaningful engagement with residents and stakeholders to understand their wants and needs in this regard.

Working and engaging with communities and stakeholders is the best way to understand their needs and the issues where they live. Identifying key gaps in existing local active travel networks and areas where new infrastructure and other projects would benefit that community and encourage active travel as part of everyday life are important.

Similarly, active travel projects should be promoted in local communities, particularly those that are local to those communities. Travel Plans could consider introducing community schemes and projects, in partnership with those communities, to further encourage the use of active travel as part of everyday life.





# Chapter 7:

## Planning Application Expectations

The Council expects applicants to demonstrate how the active travel principles set out in this SPD including the provision of good quality infrastructure, improvements to existing infrastructure, cycle and wheel parking proposals and other sustainable travel measures, have been incorporated into the design of the development proposal. Where relevant, compliance with the principles set out in this SPD should be shown on the relevant application plans, e.g. the location and type of cycle parking.

Applicants must submit the Climate Emergency Checklist in support of their application. This Checklist covers the issues included in this SPD, the Climate Change SPD and the Biodiversity SPD. It is a means for applicants, Development Management officers and Planning Committee Members to understand the measures that have been incorporated into a development proposal to ensure compliance with the three Climate Emergency SPDs and the policies they build upon, and to demonstrate that they have been considered.

Opportunities to promote active travel modes should be identified at the earliest stages of development proposals.

### Developer Contributions

Developer contributions is a collective term mainly used to refer to Planning Obligations (commonly referred to as Section 106 or S106 obligations after S106 of the Planning Act) and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). At present Colchester City Council does not charge a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The Colchester Local Plan contains

policies setting out contributions expected from development. These policies (Section 1 Policy SP5 Infrastructure and Connectivity; and Section 2 Policy SG7 Infrastructure Delivery and Impact Mitigation) ensure new development supports delivery of required infrastructure.

Essex County Council (ECC) is the Highway Authority for the Colchester City area, and Colchester City Council consults ECC on planning proposals that affect the highway network. ECC provide advice on the scope of obligations for highway infrastructure works where it is considered that there is a need to mitigate the impact of new development on the highway network. Development proposals need to mitigate their own impact through the provision of appropriate measures which may include footway and cycle links, crossings and contributions to car clubs. The Essex County Council 'Developer's Guide to Infrastructure Contributions' provides details of the impacts that development may have on ECC services and infrastructure.

The principles outlined in the previous sections provide the basis for ensuring that good quality active travel infrastructure is proposed and provided as part of new development. In addition to the provision of infrastructure, contributions where appropriate towards active travel infrastructure on site as part of the development proposal, and a contribution where appropriate towards provision or enhancement of facilities off site to ensure that the development is linked to the existing walking and cycling networks may be required. The precise level of any contribution will depend on the size of the development and the infrastructure required.

# Further reading and references

## Local Plans, Strategies and Guidance

- Colchester Local Plan <https://www.colchester.gov.uk/local-plan/>
- Colchester Cycling Delivery Strategy (January 2012) <https://www.colchester.gov.uk/info/cbc-article/?catid=adopted-guidance&id=KA-02222>
- Colchester Transport Strategy (July 2022) <https://www.essexhighways.org/uploads/colchester%20future%20transport%20strategy%20-%20march%202022.pdf>
- Colchester Cycling Action Plan (CCAP) (January 2018)
- Colchester Orbital <https://www.walkcolchester.org.uk/the-colchester-orbital>
- Shared travel in Colchester (CCC website) <https://www.colchester.gov.uk/sustainability/green-shared-travel-hubs/>
- Essex County Council: Essex Cycling Programme <https://www.essexhighways.org/getting-around/cycling/cycle-programme>
- Draft LCWIP Summary: <https://www.essexhighways.org/uploads/lcwip-summary-august-2022.pdf>
  - Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) (2021)
  - LCWIP Summary for Basildon, Braintree, Chelmsford & Colchester (August 2022)
- The Essex Transport Strategy LTP (June 2011)
- Essex Cycling Strategy (November 2016)
- Essex Design Guide <https://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/>
- Essex Walking Strategy (October 2021) [https://www.essexhighways.org/uploads/road-strategies/walkingstrategy\\_october2021\\_final-web.pdf](https://www.essexhighways.org/uploads/road-strategies/walkingstrategy_october2021_final-web.pdf)
- Vehicle Parking Standards <https://www.colchester.gov.uk/info/cbc-article/?catid=adopted-guidance&id=KA-02222>
- ECC Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions (Revised 2020) [Planning advice and guidance: Guidance for developers — Essex County Council](#)
- Essex County Council Sustainable travel website <https://www.essex.gov.uk/sustainable-travel>



## National Policy, Strategies and Guidance

- Highway Code <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code/road-users-requiring-extra-care-204-to-225>
- Government Net Zero Strategy Build Back Greener (October 2021) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/net-zero-strategy>
- Government Transport Decarbonisation Plan: Decarbonising Transport A Better, Greener Britain (2021) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transport-decarbonisation-plan>
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework-2>
- Planning Practice Guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>
- DfT First Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (April 2017) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy>
- DfT Gear change (2020) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-plan-for-england>
- DfT Second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (July 2022) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-second-cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy>
- Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20 'Cycle infrastructure design' (July 2020) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-120>
- Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/07 'Traffic Calming' (March 2007) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/traffic-calming-ltn-107>
- Active Travel England (launched 2022) <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/active-travel-england>
- Standing Advice Note for Active Travel and Sustainable Development <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/active-travel-england-sustainable-development-advice-notes> (July 2023)
- Development management procedural note for local planning <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/active-travel-england-development-management> (July 2023)
- Manual for Streets <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/manual-for-streets>
- MHCLG National Design Guide 2021 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>
- DfT Inclusive Mobility; A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure (December 2021) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-mobility-making-transport-accessible-for-passengers-and-pedestrians>
- CIHT Planning for Walking (March 2015) and Designing for Walking (March 2015)
- DfT Guidance Car clubs: local authority toolkit (April 2022) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/car-clubs-local-authority-toolkit>
- Public Health England: Health matters (July 2016) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-getting-every-adult-active-every-day/health-matters-getting-every-adult-active-every-day>



- Public Health England: Spatial Planning for Health (June 2017) [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/729727/spatial\\_planning\\_for\\_health.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/729727/spatial_planning_for_health.pdf)

## Other Guidance and References

- CoMoUK: the national charity for shared transport <https://www.como.org.uk/>
- Transport for New Homes: <https://www.transportfornewhomes.org.uk/>
- Sport England 'The 10 principles of Active Design' <https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design>
- Secured by Design <https://www.securedbydesign.com/>
- Bicycle Association - Standards for Public Cycle Parking (June 2021) <https://www.bicycleassociation.org.uk/parkingstandard/>
- Sustrans traffic-free routes and greenways design guide <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/for-professionals/infrastructure/sustrans-traffic-free-routes-and-greenways-design-guide/>

