

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA

Wednesday, 16th February 2022 at 7.15pm

**Council Chamber, Braintree District Council, Causeway House,
Bocking End, Braintree, CM7 9HB**

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**Members of the Community Development Scrutiny Committee are requested to attend
this meeting to transact the business set out in the Agenda.**

Councillor Mrs C Dervish
Councillor Mrs D Garrod (Chairman)
Councillor A Hensman (Vice Chairman)
Councillor Mrs A Kilmartin
Councillor W Korsinah

Councillor Mrs J Pell
Councillor Miss M Weeks
Councillor Mrs S Wilson
Councillor B Wright

Members unable to attend the meeting are requested to forward their apologies for absence
to the Governance and Members Team on 01376 552525 or email
governance@braintree.gov.uk by 3pm on the day of the meeting.

A WRIGHT
Chief Executive

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS – DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI), Other Pecuniary Interests (OPI) or Non-Pecuniary Interests (NPI).

Any Member with a DPI, OPI or NPI must declare the nature of their interest in accordance with the Code of Conduct. Members must not participate in any discussion of the matter in which they have declared a DPI or OPI or participate in any vote, or further vote, taken on the matter at the meeting. In addition, the Member must withdraw from the Chamber where the meeting considering the business is being held unless the Member has received a dispensation from the Monitoring Officer.

Public Question Time – Registration and Speaking:

The Agenda allows for a period of up to 30 minutes for Public Question Time.

Members of the public wishing to participate are requested to register by contacting the Governance and Members Team on 01376 552525 or email governance@braintree.gov.uk by midday on the second working day before the day of the Committee meeting. For example, if the Committee meeting is due to be held on a Tuesday, the registration deadline is midday on Friday, (where there is a bank holiday Monday you will need to register by midday on the previous Thursday). Public Question Time speakers may participate in person or virtually. Speaker preference must be indicated upon registration.

The Council reserves the right to decline any requests to register for Public Question Time if they are received after the registration deadline.

All questions or statements should be concise and should be able to be read within 3 minutes allotted for each question/statement.

The Chairman of the Committee has discretion to extend the time allocated for public question time and to amend the order in which questions/statements are presented to the Committee.

Public Attendance at Meetings:

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Public attendance is limited and will be on a first come first served basis with priority given to Public Registered Speakers. In order to maintain safe distances, the Council may have to refuse entry to members of the public. The public may not be able to sit in the Council Chamber, but will be able to observe the meeting from a public gallery through a large screen. Alternatively, the Council meetings are webcast and are available via the Council's YouTube Channel and can be viewed by the public as a live broadcast, or as a recording following the meeting.

Public speakers and public attendees are required to attend on their own, and where possible only one representative of any community group, family household or Company should attend. Members of the public intending to come to Causeway House to observe a meeting are recommended to watch the meeting via the webcast, or to contact the Governance and Members Team to reserve a seat within the public gallery.

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Documents: Agendas, Reports and Minutes can be accessed via www.braintree.gov.uk

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Comments and Suggestions:

We welcome comments to make our services as efficient and effective as possible. If you have any suggestions regarding the meeting you have attended, you can send these to governance@braintree.gov.uk

1 Apologies for Absence**2 Member Declarations**

1. To declare the existence and nature of any interests relating to items on the agenda having regard to the Code of Conduct for Members and having taken appropriate advice (where necessary) before the meeting.

2. To declare the existence and nature of any instruction given by or on behalf of a political group to any Councillor who is a member of that group as to how that Councillor shall speak or vote on any matter before the Committee or the application or threat to apply any sanction by the group in respect of that Councillor should he/she speak or vote on any particular matter.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Community Development Scrutiny Committee held on 27th October 2021 (copy previously circulated).

4 Public Question Time

(See paragraph above)

5 Scrutiny Review into Cycling and Walking in the Braintree District – Draft Report**5 - 25****6 Urgent Business - Public Session**

To consider any matter which, in the opinion of the Chairman, should be considered in public by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.

Agenda Item: 5

Report Title: Scrutiny Review into Cycling and Walking – Draft Scrutiny Report	
Report to: Community Development Scrutiny Committee	
Date: 16 th February 2022	For: Noting
Key Decision: No	Decision Planner Ref No: N/A
Report Presented by: Jessica Mann, Governance and Members Officer	
Enquiries to: Jessica Mann, Governance and Members Officer Jessica.mann@braintree.gov.uk	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To finalise the draft report for the Scrutiny Review into ‘Cycling and Walking’ prior to its submission to Full Council.

2. Recommendations

The Community Development Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- 2.1 Review the draft report and to finalise the content and draft recommendations to ensure that they are in keeping with the Terms of Reference of the Scrutiny Review and the evidence gathered.
- 2.2 Authorise the Chairman to finalise the draft report, prior to its submission to Full Council, and to give authority to Governance Officers to make any necessary administrative changes to the report.

3. Summary of Issues

- 3.1 Members of the Community Development Scrutiny Committee were tasked with conducting a Scrutiny Review into the topic of ‘Cycling and Walking in the Braintree District.’ The topic of ‘Cycling and Walking’ was originally submitted by the Chairman, Councillor Mrs Garrod, in response to the Government’s ‘Gear Change’ initiative which was announced on 28th July 2020.
- 3.2 It was recognised that a Scrutiny Review could examine the perceived ‘barriers’ to increasing cycling and walking in the District in conjunction with the action that was currently being undertaken by the Council in order to link in with ‘Gear Change’ and any other Local Authority initiatives, as well as the policies that the Council had in place in order to further support cycling/walking provision (e.g. within Planning policies, Local Plan, etc).

- 3.3 Management Board identified that the evidence gathered as part of the Scrutiny Review would also serve to compliment the findings of the Council's Climate Change Working Group, which came into fruition in response to the organisation's declaration of a 'Climate Emergency' in 2019. However, there was to be a clear distinction between the remit of the Scrutiny Review and that of the Working's Group's to as to avoid any duplication of work.
- 3.4 For information, the Terms of Reference for the Community Development Scrutiny Committee are as follows:-
- Community priorities and solutions;
 - Engaging and identifying needs of other Groups;
 - Building relationships to ensure policies are developed to empower and not constrain;
 - Reputation management through promotion, delivery and communication;
 - Town and Parish Council shared working (identifying opportunities whilst establishing priorities).
- 3.5 The first evidence gathering session of the Committee was held on 17th February 2021, with the final session held on 27th October 2021. Over the course of the Scrutiny Review, a range of internal and external invitees attended the evidence gathering sessions in order to support Members' findings and assist Members with identifying any further lines of enquiry.
- 3.6 Once all the available evidence streams had been examined and conclusions drawn, the Community Development Scrutiny Committee were asked to make their recommendations to Council and Cabinet. The recommendations of the Committee are set out in the main body of the report.
- 4. Options**
- 4.1 There two options available for Committee to consider:
- 1) Agree to finalise the draft report, subject to any minor amendments before submission to Full Council.
 - 2) OR Explore the topic of Cycling and Walking in further detail.
- 4.2 If Members are minded to proceed with Option 2, Members should have regard to the Terms of Reference and the timescale for completion of the Scrutiny Review within the current Civic Year.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 To review the draft report and make any final amendments to the contents before it is finalised and submitted to Full Council and Cabinet.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 Any financial implications arising from the recommendations to Cabinet will be considered as part of the Cabinet's response.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1 There are no matters arising out of this report.

9. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 9.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when the Council makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act;
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 9.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 9.3 Equalities and diversity issues are considered fully in the Council's key projects. Where appropriate, an equality impact assessment is prepared and considered for any key projects identified. There are no adverse impacts identified within the contents of the report.

10. List of Appendices

- 10.1 There are none attached to the main report.

11. Background Papers

11.1 Minutes and Agendas of Committee Meetings

[17th February 2021](#)

[7th April 2021](#)

[23rd June 2021](#)

[1st September 2021](#)

[27th October 2021](#)

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
SCRUTINY REVIEW INTO CYCLING AND WALKING IN THE BRAINTREE
DISTRICT 2021/22 (DRAFT SCRUTINY REPORT)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Members of the Community Development Scrutiny Committee were tasked with conducting a Scrutiny Review into the topic of 'Cycling and Walking in the Braintree District.'

For information, the Terms of Reference for the Community Development Scrutiny Committee are as follows:-

- Community priorities and solutions;
- Engaging and identifying needs of other Groups;
- Building relationships to ensure policies are developed to empower and not constrain;
- Reputation management through promotion, delivery and communication;
- Town and Parish Council shared working (identifying opportunities whilst establishing priorities).

The topic of 'Cycling and Walking in the Braintree District' was originally submitted by Councillor Mrs D Garrod, Chairman of the Community Development Scrutiny Committee, in response to the 'Gear Change' initiative which was announced by the Government on 28th July 2020. The initiative formed part of the of the Government's [Cycling and Walking Plan for England 2020](#), and sought to address issues surrounding both physical and mental ill-health by encouraging people to participate in cycling and walking activities and adopt healthier lifestyles, subsequently reducing pressures on the NHS. Management Board subsequently approved the topic for Scrutiny Review on 1st September 2020.

In order to facilitate the Scrutiny Review into 'Cycling and Walking,' Members of the Community Development Scrutiny Committee sought to address the following questions:-

- What are the perceived barriers to increasing cycling and walking provision for local residents and communities in the District? What are the limitations? (E.g. costs, look at 'E-Scooter' project results, etc)
- What action is currently being undertaken by the Council in order to link in with the Government's new cycling and walking initiative, 'Gear Change,' as well as other Local Authority initiatives? (Look at Dutch Roundabout.)
- What policies/criteria does the Council currently have in place in relation to cycling and walking, and is there a need for the Council to improve its policies

to further support the provision for cycling and walking in the District? (E.g. Planning policies, Local Plan policies regarding pedestrianisation/cycling, etc)

As well as examining town centre developments, it was highlighted that the scope of the Scrutiny Review could be expanded to encompass villages and development sites. The Review would also allow the Community Development Scrutiny Committee (the Committee) to explore the Council's objectives around 'Connecting People and Places' with regard to transportation links and 'Supporting Our Communities' in relation to health, wellbeing and the environment.

Over the course of the Scrutiny Review, Members of the Committee took part in five evidence gathering sessions on the following dates:-

- 17th February 2021
- 7th April 2021
- 23rd June 2021
- 1st September 2021
- 27th October 2021

A range of internal and external invitees attended evidence gathering sessions of the Committee in order to support the findings of the Scrutiny Review and help identify further lines of enquiry that Members could explore. The "invitees" included Officers from the Council's Planning Policy team, Officers from Essex County Council and representatives from the community who were involved in local cycling/walking initiatives.

Management Board agreed that the evidence gathered by Members as part of the Scrutiny Review would also help to compliment the findings of the Council's Climate Change Working Group, which had come into fruition in response to the organisation's declaration of a 'Climate Emergency' in 2019; however, it was not intended that the work undertaken by Members in their 'scrutiny' capacity would duplicate that of the Working Group's programme. In conducting a Scrutiny Review, Members would instead follow their own separate work programme with a distinct Terms of Reference.

INPUT FROM MR PETER KOHN - EARLS COLNE TO KELVEDON (EC2K) CYCLE WAY PROJECT

Mr Peter Kohn, Chairman of the Earls Colne to Kelvedon Cycle Way Project (EC2K) was in attendance at the meeting of the Community Development Scrutiny Committee on 7th April 2021. Mr Kohn was in attendance in order to share his experiences with the EC2K Project thus far, including the successes, challenges and future impacts. In his presentation to the Committee, Mr Kohn mentioned five key elements upon which the project had developed: "Understanding Local Government," "Project Management," "Advice," "Funding" and "Practical Issues."

In undertaking a project such as EC2K, Mr Kohn remarked upon the need for there to be a general understanding of the different tiers of Local Government and how these worked in conjunction with one another, as well as a general understanding of project management and the stakeholders involved. In relation to this, Mr Kohn had

undertaken a 'stakeholder analysis' exercise in order to help provide him with a clear picture of the different groups that would be involved with or impacted by the project.

In terms of advice, national policy such as 'Gear Change' and the associated LTN1/20 document provided the project team with invaluable technical guidance on the design of high-quality and safe infrastructure. The EC2K project had also received support from Essex Highways, where County Councillors had funded a feasibility study for the project, and from Sustrans (the national cycling network), who had provided approximately £800k of funding towards the provision of safe cycle route. The importance of funding for the project was underlined, as the new cycle way would represent a substantial piece of infrastructure for the District that needed to be accessible for various groups of people as such as cyclists and wheelchair users, and have multi-purpose usage for both leisure seekers, tourists and commuters, offering connections to facilities such as train stations and other cycle ways.

With regard to barriers, there were a number of perceived 'obstacles' along the cycle way route itself that required addressing, including the dangers posed by fast moving traffic along the A1124 Road in Halstead. Secured funding and support from public bodies such as Local Authorities could potentially unlock other sources of funding to help address such issues; for example, grant making agencies and schemes such as community fund raising with engagement from wider community groups. Practical issues associated with the implementation of the project included landowner disputes at different locations along the proposed cycle way route. In order to address this issue, effective negotiation with landowners was essential towards ensuring that the planned route could be implemented, as well of the offer of support (e.g. through 'set aside' schemes). It was also noted that maintenance of the cycle way was a vital aspect towards ensuring its longevity as part of the future infrastructure for Braintree and for Essex as a whole.

Further to a request from the Councillor Mrs Garrod, Chairman of the Committee, Mr Kohn kindly provided an update on the progress of the Earls Colne to Kelvedon (EC2K) project, with a particular focus on any funding opportunities, which had been previously been identified as one of the potential 'barriers' to the project's implementation. The Chairman was pleased to see that potential funding opportunities for the EC2K project were given consideration at the Braintree Local Highways Panel (BLHP) meeting held 30th September 2021, where it was proposed that the Panel should support the EC2K cycle route. At the Extraordinary Meeting of the BLHP held on 15th December 2021, it was recommended that a sum of £25k be allocated from the BLHP budget for 2021/22 to appoint Sustrans to undertake a feasibility study, including site survey and route options for the cycle way route between Earls Colne and Coggeshall.

INPUT FROM PLANNING OFFICERS

Following the meeting of the Community Development Scrutiny Committee on 7th April 2021, Members had collectively agreed that it would be useful to invite Officers from the Council's Planning Policy Team who could advise the Committee in respect of the Council's current and emerging policies around pedestrianisation, such as those within the Local Plan. Mr Neil Jones, Principal Planner and Mr Alan Massow,

Principal Planning Policy Officer, were subsequently in attendance at the meeting of the Committee on 23rd June 2021.

Local Plan and National Policy

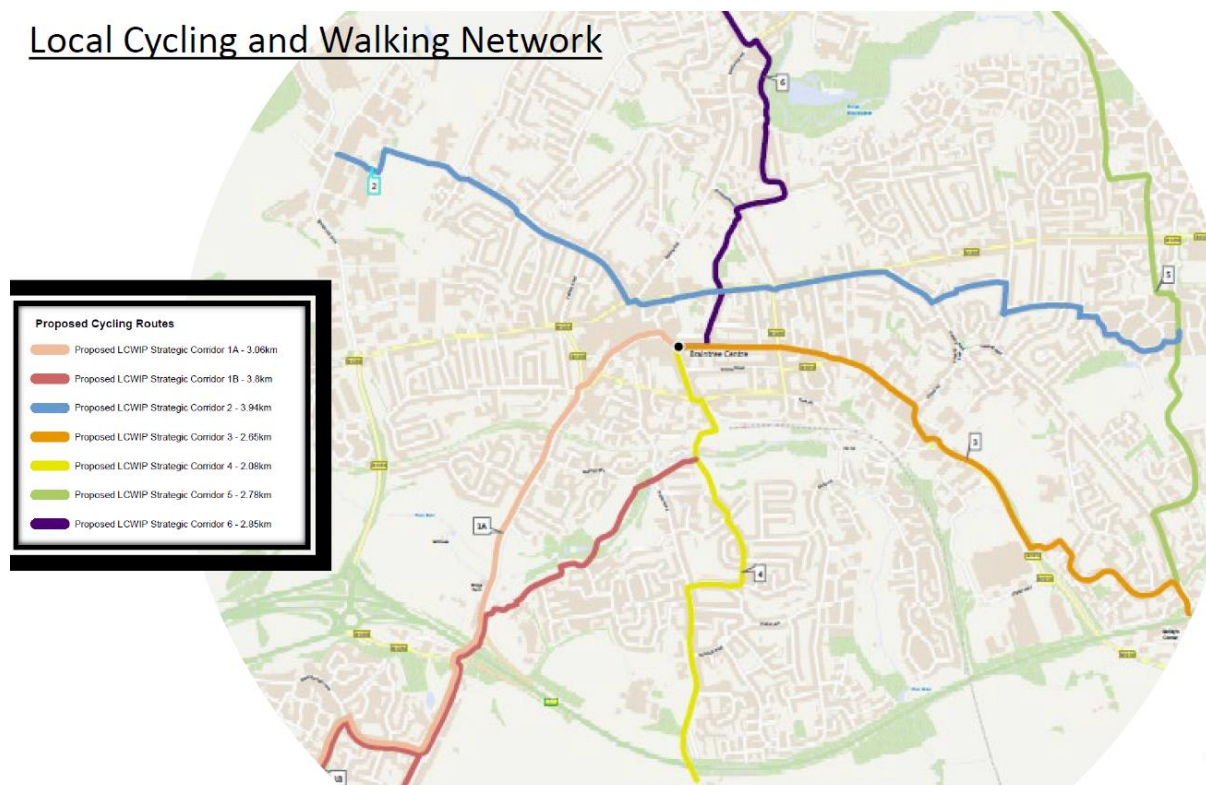
In respect of the Local Plan and national policy, factors such as cycling and walking were a high priority. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) set out a number of objectives for the promotion of cycling and walking, including the need to promote sustainable transport methods and healthy and active lifestyles. In line with the NPPF, the current Local Plan (2005) for the District was comprised of policies relating to transport assessment, as well as maps to help identify potential cycling routes. Alongside the Local Plan, the Council's Core Strategy (2011) included the policy 'CS7,' which sought to bolster cycling and walking opportunities and contribute to improvements to current facilities.

The Draft Local Plan (2017) contained additional policies for the promotion of sustainable transport which sought the provision and contribution of cycle ways, and this was supported by the infrastructure delivery plan. Additional cycle routes had also been identified within the Draft Plan which had not previously been a feature of the 2005 Plan. Although not produced by the Local Planning Authority, neighbourhood plans could also help to identify potential cycle routes and include policies which were supportive of both cycling and walking.

Essex County Council (ECC) had produced the [Braintree Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan 2018](#) (LCWIP) which contained key walking and cycling routes; although these would provide a focus for future improvements, these routes were only in relation to the town of Braintree.

The image below shows the proposed LCWIP Cycle Network Map and Routes:-

Local Cycling and Walking Network



Development Management

There were a number of ways in which the Development Management team were involved with cycling and walking, including deciding where development happened within the District and ensuring that this was in a sustainable location through use of the Local Plan and the Spatial Strategy within the Plan. Planning conditions could be imposed during the granting of planning permissions in order to ensure that new developments incorporated features such as new cycle paths and cycle parking (e.g. as seen at Rivenhall Park in North East Witham). Planning obligations were a legal agreement which were used to secure improvements for cycling and walking, such as through the payment of a financial contribution to the District or County Council, or by imposing a requirement for the developer to undertake the necessary work instead (for example, highway works to create new cycle paths). Planning obligations could be secured through a Section 106 agreement.

With regard to Section 10 monies, certain requirements had to be met in order for such funds to be granted, which included a clear link for the proposed scheme to the development (as exemplified by the new cycle way and development at Forest Road, in Witham). The Council encouraged developers to consider where their residents might want to travel to (e.g. for work, leisure, commuter purposes, etc), what routes were already in place and how future demand could be met at the planning application stage.

In terms of barriers to increasing cycling and pedestrian facilities across the District, factors such as the availability of land for new or improved links beyond the original application sites, and the management of road space (e.g. tension with motorists vs. cycle users and pedestrians), were identified. On the topic of the Braintree District Cycle Action Plan, larger villages such as Sible Hedingham could also be considered for potential cycle routes as part of the Plan (along with the District's main towns). Primary responsibility lay with ECC as the Highway Authority, and any such considerations would be subject to a public consultation. There were also potential issues around a lack of financial resource to fund such schemes in addition to other resource barriers; for example, where Section 106 monies were secured from developers, there was a requirement that the value of the contribution, or the works to create a new cycle link, needed to be proportionate to the development.

With regard to opportunities for future development in the District, increased importance was being attached to walking and cycling by the Council, as well as transformational schemes such as the Emergency Active Travel Fund, acceptance of the need by some developers to promote active travel, potential future grant funding from central Government and planned agricultural reforms to encourage farmers to allow public access across their land in return for public subsidies.

INPUT FROM ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

Two Officers from Essex County Council (ECC) were in attendance at the meeting on 1st September 2021; they were: Ms Tracey Vickers, Head of Sustainable Development, and Mr Kris Radley, Cycling Strategy Lead at Essex Highways. Ms Vickers and Mr Radley had been invited to the meeting in order to share their

experiences and to provide the Committee with further detail on initiatives being undertaken at national and local levels in respect of cycling and walking and the design concept of highways in the Braintree District.

Sustainable Transport

In early 2021, ECC had agreed upon a 'new vision' for sustainable transport in order to deliver travel for Essex that was "safer, greener and healthier" for current and future users of the transport network. In doing this, it was not the intention to penalise car drivers but instead to emphasise the need for there to be a range of sustainable transport options available that catered to the needs of all residents via 'sustainable corridors.' The three main aims of increasing sustainable transport in Essex were to:-

- Limit unnecessary travel;
- Encourage residents to switch to more sustainable means of travel, such as cycling and walking, and;
- Improve current means of transport through methods such as vehicle electrification.

The benefits associated with increasing sustainable in the County included improvements to both physical and mental health; safer, quieter streets; improved air quality through reduced traffic congestion; revitalised High Streets, increased local jobs and, ultimately, a blueprint for future sustainable transport.

The Government was undertaking a number of initiatives to help increase cycling and walking nationally; for example, the cycling and walking budget had been increased to £338 million to help fund high quality cycle lanes, deliver walking schemes and make improvements to the National Cycling Network. The Highway Code was also to be updated in order to improve the safety of cyclists and walkers through the inclusion of a 'road-user hierarchy,' strengthening the priority to pedestrians, new guidance on 'safe-passing' distances/speeds and priority to cyclists and at junctions.

Other initiatives included the 'Network Management Duty Guidance' which acknowledged that there was sometimes difficulty with introducing new schemes, and that public reaction was not always positive. The guidance encouraged Local Authorities to allow time for new schemes to embed, rather than abandoning them too hastily, which could jeopardise any future grants. 'Gear Change' and 'Local Transport Node' ([LTN 1/20](#)) set out both the Government's ambitions and gave a clear picture for Local Authorities as to what high-quality cycling infrastructure should look like. Furthermore, there was the introduction of the e-cargo bike grant for businesses as a means of funding alternative delivery vehicles.

In line with Government initiatives, the following initiatives were being undertaken by ECC in order to increase cycling and walking:-

- Update Cycling Maps: The current cycling maps available for residents to use in order to identify suitable cycling and walking routes in their local areas

required updating. When revised, the maps would be available to access in libraries and as a download for smartphones;

- Community Rail Partnership: Branch rail lines, such as the Flitch Line between Braintree and Witham were referred to as “community rail lines.” These were often adopted by local residents who wanted to “drive patronage” and make stations more accommodating, attractive places to be (e.g. by providing space for cycling and walking);
- Cake Escape: A loyalty scheme for cycling offered at several cafes throughout the Braintree District;
- ‘Love to Ride Essex’ and ‘Go Jauntly’: Referred to respective cycling and walking partnerships which aimed to advise residents as to where they could take part in such activities and also build a sense of community within localised areas, and;
- Active Travel Fund (ATF) Braintree: The Government had previously allocated funding for improvements to the active travel scheme: one of the five schemes was in Braintree. Improvements made under the scheme were required to be transformational and in line with LTN 1/20 requirements in order to ensure that there was high quality infrastructure.

In respect of the ATF, Members of the Community Development Scrutiny Committee noted the measures to be introduced in [Braintree](#) (e.g. such as a segregated cycle way on Station Approach) and looked forward to seeing the results of the schemes proposed.

The Department of Transport (DfT) was leading on the Spin E-Scooter trial. Only scooters that had been adequately assessed in terms of safety by the DfT in named locations and by approved providers, would be legalised; any scooters that did not meet with this criteria could be seized by the police. The trial had been undertaken in six locations across Essex, which included Braintree, although a different model designed around longer-term hire was being trialed. When compared with other usage rates across Essex, the uptake in the trial was generally low in Braintree, with only 14 members. The trial had been extended to March 2022, after which the results would be brought before Parliament for a decision. In addition to the DfT trial, a grant funded two-month trial for workers of businesses in Springwood Drive Industrial Estate, Braintree, was also launched in June 2021 and saw nine participants take part. The scheme was also due to complete in March 2022 and options were currently being explored to understand opportunities and different styles of future e-scooter trials.

Challenges to increasing active travel were associated with: entrenched beliefs around reliance on cars and other forms of transport/behavioural change; the availability and affordability of feasible alternatives, and a reliance by ECC on budgetary allocations from the DfT to fund new schemes and infrastructure. However, it was noted that the cycling and walking aspirations of ECC were gradually gaining increased recognition and prominence at Government level, which could lead to future funding opportunities. It was added that Authorities such as ECC would likely need to identify potential funding provisions from outside central Government as well to fund new or improved cycling networks; for instance, ECC could explore potential partnerships with other businesses, or look to develop an income stream from active travel.

Strategic Planning and Delivery on Initiatives

The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns had resulted in a national increase in active mode travel. In 2020, the sale of bikes increased by 40%, and the number of cyclists on roads increased to approximately 46% when compared with the numbers in 2019. As a result of the emerging trends regarding active travel, the Government was able to explore new funding schemes such as the Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF) and the Active Travel Fund Phase Two (ATF), as well as 'Gear Change' in July 2020. As of 2021, it was recognised that many of the schemes and initiatives that had emerged in response to the increase in active travel had been rapidly implemented; as such, a pursuant document, entitled 'Gear Change: One Year On,' was introduced in July 2021, which focused on the importance of best practice design for active mode travel in order to help ensure the longevity of new schemes.

In May 2020, the Government announced £2 billion of new funding for cycling and walking schemes over the course of the current parliament, which represented a significant increase in the amount of dedicated funding for active modes of travel. In order to ensure that the District Council's plans and objectives going forward were in alignment with that of the County's vision, ECC and Braintree District Council (BDC) had worked in partnership to produce their respective Cycling Strategies.

On the subject of Dutch Roundabouts, there were currently none in Essex. Although the Army and Navy Roundabout in Chelmsford was similar in that it included priority lanes for active modes, it was not classed as a Dutch Roundabout. A potential Dutch Roundabout had been given brief consideration for Braintree as part of the Active Travel proposal; ultimately, it was decided that such a scheme would not be feasible from both a location and budgetary perspective. However, consideration could potentially be given to the scheme again in future.

With regard to coherent networks, the purpose of the programme was to help ECC build upon the Cycling Action Plans commissioned by the District and Borough Authorities and develop network plans for both walking and cycling across Essex. The programme would enable ECC to prioritise investment decisions based upon a robust methodology which considered future demand and the propensity to both walk and cycle. The longer term vision was for Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) to be developed in all major urban areas across Essex as and when resources became available.

The current format of funding for cycling and walking infrastructure was on a one-year basis, and posed a significant challenge for the Authority. To help combat this, a key aspect of ECC's capital programme delivery was ensuring that advanced scheme designs were in place to help identify where design funding could be appropriately directed. There were a number of different funding streams that ECC could potentially utilise to help support its programme for delivery; these included: the EATF and ATF; Active Travel Fund 3; SELEP; developer contributions; ECC Capital Programme; external funding from Sustrans and Active Modes funding from the DfT of £2 billion. The Committee also noted that ECC was to receive revenue

funding of £352,249 from the new Local Authority Capability Fund towards a rural cycling plan and cycling training for residents.

In terms of 'barriers' to increased cycling, there were five key areas of concern highlighted by a survey conducted by Savanta in 2020 ([see survey results](#)); these were: cars; HGVs; poor road conditions; buses and a lack of appropriate cycle infrastructure. Other 'barriers' included: fears over safety; a perception that cyclists needed to be at a certain level of fitness; a lack of storage space on bikes themselves and accessibility.

INPUT OF THE COUNCIL'S CYCLING STEERING GROUP AND THE 'CYCLING STRATEGY 2021 - 2030'

At the meeting of the Community Development Scrutiny Committee on 7th April 2021, it was explained to Members that the Council's draft Cycling Strategy was due to be presented at the Special Meeting of Full Council on 20th September 2021, and would include the results of the public consultation exercise around this. As part of their 'Scrutiny' examination, Members of the Committee had previously indicated that they wished to undertake a survey on the subject of cycling and walking in the Braintree District; some draft questions were compiled, and Governance Officers had agreed to explore the means through which such a survey could be undertaken (e.g. through use of the 'People's Panel'). However, on the basis that there would be a much wider public engagement opportunity for the Council with regard to its draft Cycling Strategy, Members later agreed that any surveys should be delayed until the results of the consultation had become apparent.

In light of the developments around the emerging Cycling Strategy, Members determined that it would be appropriate to invite Councillor F Ricci, as the relevant Cabinet Member for the portfolio of Communities, to a future meeting of the Committee to discuss the Strategy (following its presentation at the Extraordinary Meeting of Full Council) and the feedback received from the consultation exercise in greater detail.

Feedback on the Cycling Strategy

Following the successful adoption of the Cycling Strategy on 20th September 2021, Councillor F Ricci was invited to attend the subsequent evidence gathering session of the Community Development Scrutiny Committee on 27th October 2021. Ms L Flavell, Economic Development Officer, was in attendance to support Councillor Ricci as the remit of her role encompassed that of infrastructure.

For reference, the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Full Council on 20th September 2021 can be found on the [Council's website](#). See below Minute Extract:

"The Cycling Strategy set out a long-term plan which it was hoped would lead to a significant and sustained increase in cycling by residents and visitors in the Braintree District, and assist in tackling problems associated with poor health, inequality of opportunity, pollution and traffic congestion."

Having been adopted by Council, the [Cycling Strategy 2021](#) (the Strategy) was now at the delivery stage. Before its adoption, the Strategy had been through the Council's various governance and management structures, which included consideration by a Cycling Strategy Steering Group (the Steering Group). The Steering Group was comprised of Members of the Council from across the political spectrum, as well as public figures such as Mr P Kohn, Chairman of the Earls Colne to Kelvedon (EC2K) Cycle Way Group, representatives from the voluntary sector and businesses. Through the medium of the Steering Group, a series of public engagement questions were established around what the District would like to see as part of a 'cycling' strategy and then circulated in 2021 as part of a consultation. It was reported that the response to the consultation had been very positive, with feedback received from residents, Parish and Town Councils, clubs and groups from across the District. The feedback received was then factored into a draft strategy and implementation town, which was later presented at Full Council.

In terms of building policy, the new Strategy incorporated elements such as behavioural change in order to cultivate a mindset for cycling, such as increased accessibility to bikes through affordability and schemes such as the E-Cargo bikes. The Strategy also addressed issues raised previously by objectors to cycling and aimed to quantify the benefits of increased cycling activity.

Some of the plans and ambitions within the Strategy were dependent on the Council working in partnership with the relevant Planning Authority. With regard to partnership working, the Council had expanded upon this by working with representatives from Essex County Council (ECC). The Council's Cycling Strategy was in alignment with that of ECC's own Strategy (see [Essex County Council Strategy 2016](#)), which allowed the two Authorities to compliment individual project resources and funding and thus experience shared benefits (e.g. match funding, increased funding, grant funding, etc) towards the delivery of some of the projects, including those in relation to infrastructure. It is noted that ECC

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Open Access Land

As part of the Committee's explorations within the scope of the Scrutiny Review, the Chairman, Councillor Mrs Garrod, raised a query with the Governance team about whether it would be possible to identify areas of Open Access Land (OAL), both within the Braintree District and wider Essex area.

Link to definition of OAL:-

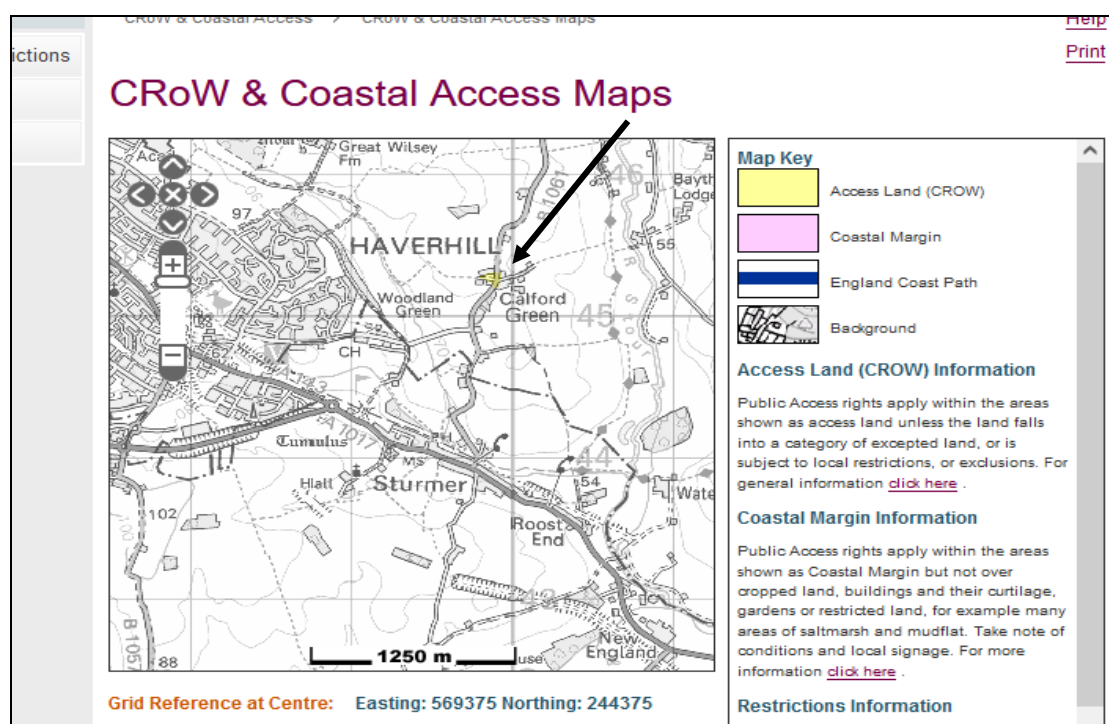
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-access-land-management-rights-and-responsibilities>

In respect, the Governance team contacted Mr S Taylor, Public Rights of Way (PROW) Enforcement and Liaison Officer, at Essex Highways. Mr Taylor advised that although he chaired meetings of the Essex Highways PROW User Group, the Group was chiefly concerned with maintenance and obstruction issues on the PROW network.

The Chairman subsequently contacted Mr Taylor directly and was provided with the following link to an ordinance survey map from Natural England (which Governance Officers had also identified during their research):-

<http://www.openaccess.naturalengland.org.uk/wps/portal/oasys/maps/MapSearch>

The maps requires users to enter a postcode from the area in which there are looking to identify an OAL. Having entered her own postcode, the map only identified one such location outside of the Essex area (marked with a small, yellow dot), as shown in the image below:-



From the research undertaken into the Chairman's query, there did not appear to be a definitive list of OAL held on either the Braintree or Essex County Council websites, and it was difficult to identify where such places were located.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW

Following the conclusion of their Scrutiny Review into Cycling and Walking, Members of the Community Development Scrutiny Committee (the Committee) recognised that many of the areas identified for exploration within the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Review had already been examined by the Cycling Strategy Steering Group, which first met in October 2020, in order to develop the draft Cycling Strategy (the Strategy) for the Authority. As a result, many of the recommendations within the Strategy were expected to deliver on the questions raised within the Committee's TOR.

In light of their evidence gathering for the Scrutiny Review and the inferences drawn, Members did not feel it was necessary for the Committee make a large number of recommendations to the Executive, although there were a few areas identified for

further consideration. Members would therefore like to make the subsequent recommendations:-

Recommendation 1

The Council conducts a periodic 'health check' on the progress of the Cycling Strategy (e.g. every six months) to help ensure that the organisation delivers on its objectives for the District.

With reference to Councillor Ricci's presentation at the Extraordinary Meeting of Full Council on 20th September 2021, it was proposed that progress against the actions identified within the Implementation Plan to accompany the Cycling Strategy should be reported to Full Council on an annual basis. A periodic report to Full Council on the progress of the Cycling Strategy would serve to compliment this work and would help provide reassurance that the Council's objectives were being met in line with the initiatives of the Government and other Local Authorities. Furthermore, regular updates would help the Committee to identify any topics for potential Scrutiny Review in future, should there be a need determined. With regard to combating 'barriers' to increased cycling and walking, a specific element of the Strategy that the Community Development Scrutiny Committee would like to see implemented going forward was improvements to education for local residents on the benefits of undertaking such activity (e.g. on mental/physical wellbeing, reduced climate emissions, etc).

Recommendation 2

It is recommended that progress relating to the Earls Colne to Kelvedon (EC2K) Project be noted and reported back to Full Council periodically. In view of the size and likely cost of this project, it is also suggested that the Council offers assistance in the sourcing and application of funding opportunities (e.g. National Lottery), where appropriate and in agreement with the relevant partners.

The feedback received by Mr Peter Kohn on 1st February 2022, and the Braintree Local Highways Panel's (BLHP) financial investment into the Earls Colne to Kelvedon Cycle Way feasibility study by Sustrans at the meeting on 15th December 2021, is noted. The published study was to be reported back to the BLHP for consideration; in light of this, the Chairman felt that progress relating to the study should be monitored on a periodic basis by the Council and fed back to Members.

Recommendation 3

The Council should link information on its website in relation to tourism and the 'Live Well' campaign in order to improve accessibility to sources of information relating to cycling and walking; this would involve regular updates and maintenance of these webpages by the appropriate Council officers/services to ensure that such information remains up to date and relevant, especially in line with the Authority's Climate Change and Cycling Strategies. Links could also be included for residents to other sources of information on cycling and walking (e.g. links to webpages on County Council website, GIS maps, etc). Alongside this, the Council should encourage Parish and Town Councils to participate in the provision of local

information. It also is recommended that the 'TrailTale' platform be considered as a potentially useful contributor to the Council's commitment to providing and publishing information for wellbeing and tourism activities.

Accessibility to information was acknowledged by the Committee as a barrier that could hinder to increasing cycling/walking activities in the District. For example, information which related to publicly accessible land suitable for cycling/walking activities on the respective District and County Council websites was difficult to locate. Other such information (e.g. regarding local activities events) was often out of date. The Committee acknowledges the Council's commitment to wellbeing in line with its 'Live Well' campaign and requests that this page be linked with the tourism page of the Council's website (www.visitbraintree.co.uk) in order to make such information available in one central location, thus improving accessibility for members of the public and helping to promote tourism within the District (e.g. through the 'Cake Escape Trail'), as well as advise residents on the benefits of physical activity.

In respect of the 'TailTrail' app, it is noted that the Essex Association of Local Councils promoted this platform in their bulletin to Parish Councils during January 2022. 'TrailTale' is a mobile device app, featuring over 100 walking routes in Great Britain and provides a platform for developing and publishing heritage trails in historic towns and villages. 'TrailTale' has worked with many parishes to create and publish their paths, encourage people to visit them and consequently help regenerate the high streets. The National Association of Local Councils has also published information on this.

Recommendation 4

With regard to publicly accessible land, it is recommended that an online document which provides a comprehensive list of Open Access Land (OAL) within Essex is created, perhaps with sub-headings to distinguish between wider District and Ward areas. This document should be provided on both the Essex County Council and Braintree District Council websites and distributed to relevant partners.

It appears that there is not a definitive list of OAL held at either Braintree or Essex County Council, and it is difficult to identify where such places are located. It would be helpful if it were easier for residents to find information about their local OAL. As such, it would be helpful for an online document to be produced which contained a list of information to assist the public with determining suitable locations for walking and/or cycling, including: the size of land; coordinates; where to gain access; what can be expected on a visit; a map and perhaps photographs. An extra 'layer' could also be added to the GIS mapping system used by the Council for the specific purpose of highlighting areas for public rights of access within the Braintree District which would be safe for use as cycling and walking routes and help to promote tourism.

Recommendation 5

Should the Cycling Storage Grant Scheme be repeated in future, it is recommended that the Council offers grants to a wider range of industrial premises, commercial

offices and villages in order to enable more businesses to participate and reduce their carbon emissions.

At the meeting of the Community Development Scrutiny Committee on 27th October 2021, the Chairman raised concerns about the limited cycle storage (safe parking) available in towns and employment sites and was pleased that the Council had initiated the Cycling Storage Grant Scheme soon afterwards. However, the Scheme prioritised businesses in the industrial areas in Braintree, Earls Colne, Great Yeldham, Halstead and Sible Hedingham and appeared to exclude smaller industrial areas and rural villages.

A lack of suitable storage facilities at workplaces for bikes was a deterrent for many cyclists. The total budget for the Cycling Storage Grant Scheme was £60k, with Capital grants of up to £2,000 offered by the Council as part of the Scheme to businesses who were willing to invest in on-site cycle storage facilities; however, businesses who could apply were limited to those with fewer than 250 employees, and were also dependent on their geographical location within the District's industrial estates.

The Scheme was offered to the following locations:-

- *Springwood Industrial Estate*
- *Lakes Industrial Park*
- *Lynderswood*
- *Skitts Hill Industrial Estate*
- *Earls Colne Business Park*
- *Huntable Industrial Estate*
- *Bluebridge Industrial Estate*
- *Swanbridge Industrial Park*
- *Waterside Business Park*
- *Swan Vale Industrial Estate*
- *Rosewood Business Park*
- *Rippers Court*

At the time of writing this report, only two applications for the Cycling Storage Grant Scheme had been received: these were in respect of Park Drive Industrial Estate and Lynderwoods Farm, although the Committee notes that the Scheme is currently ongoing. The Committee noted that the offer of the Scheme did not extend to the District's villages.

The Committee believes that these restrictions discourage any increases in cycling and walking amongst employees from further afield who need the incentive to travel to work in this way. Furthermore, businesses in other, harder to reach locations that are perhaps smaller or not as congested, are excluded. The evidence from studies carried out by Essex County Council is that cycling and walking as modes of travel need to be made a more accessible life-choice with facilities in the District that assist the public to do this.

Recommendation 6

Concerns were discussed surrounding the forthcoming changes to the Highway Code on 29th January 2022, which would affect the hierarchy of road users, and the lack of publicity in the months leading up to this. There is new guidance about routes and spaces which are shared by people walking, cycling and riding horses. The Committee was pleased that the Council had listened to these concerns and proactively implemented awareness campaigns prior to 29th January 2022. Given this, the Council should also recommend that the Highway Authority conducts more awareness campaigns to promote safer cycling, both for cyclists and other road-users. Any such campaigns should be incorporated within the Cycling Strategy going forward.

The Committee have given consideration to the perceived ‘barriers’ to increased cycling and recognise that the dangers posed to cyclists on the road, especially by other road users, is a notable deterrent. Further awareness campaigns conducted by the Highways Authority, in conjunction with the District Council and targeted at both cyclists and other road users, would help to address some of the concerns identified and bolster the confidence of would-be cyclists (e.g. distinguish ‘recreational’ cycling from ‘commuter’ cycling). Various community-based groups could also be contacted and become involved to help promote awareness campaigns: for example; local schools; Essex Police; Parish and Town Councils and driving instructors. The Committee also suggests that an awareness ‘event’ is held alongside any such campaigns, and relevant safety information, including guidance from the Highway Code, could be promoted on social media forums such as Twitter and YouTube in order to ensure that as many age groups as possible are engaged. The Committee noted that the [updated Highway Code](#) was to come into effect on 22nd January 2022, and would include notable changes for motorists around cyclists and pedestrians. Listed below are examples of some of the changes:-

- *Hierarchy of road users (road users considered most at risk will be at top of hierarchy);*
- *People crossing roads at junctions (e.g. motorists will be required to give way to pedestrians at junctions);*
- *New guidance around walking, cycling or riding in shared spaces;*
- *Positioning in the road when cycling, etc.*

Recommendation 7

Although there was a degree of ‘cycling training’ referred to in the Council’s adopted [Cycling Strategy](#) (e.g. see the ‘Bikeability’ scheme), it would be useful for the Council to ensure that this training includes further information for cyclists relating to the maintenance of bikes and bike security. It is recommended that the Council liaises with Essex Police to obtain information held about bike security on their website in advance and advertise their events (e.g. such as Bike Marking Events) on social media forums such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to promote this good work and encourage participation.

There should be a degree of “confidence building” in order to promote safer cycling, which could be incorporated by way of short, practical classes for cyclists, both new

and more experienced. Furthermore, improvements to cycle security should be made through the promotion of cycle shops, online resources and tools such as cycle 'marker pens.' On this subject, it is noted that Essex Police provide excellent 'Protect Your Bike From Theft' advice, 'Registration of Bikes', and 'What To Do If Your Bike Is Stolen' information on their website. They also hold Bike Marking Events: at their event at The Booking Hall Café, Flitch Way, Rayne in January 2022, officers managed to postcode 42 bikes. Essex Police intend to run more of these events across the District.

On the subject of confidence building, short, practical classes of help to negotiate cycle ways, as well as roads, could help to lessen 'wobbling' and improve steering. Cycling can be dangerous and skills in safety could be life-saving. However, the Committee acknowledges that pages 32 and 33 of the Council's adopted Cycling Strategy do make reference to the national 'Bikeability' scheme around cycle training and links in with various partners and community groups to encourage cycling.

In regard to improving bike/cycle security, cycle shops and online resources are recognised as effective ways through which options can be investigated; for example, tools such as marker pens for bikes can be used to assist with the recovery of stolen bikes which have identifiable postcodes.

Recommendation 8

The Committee requests that all Members receive an update from the Cabinet as to the conclusions drawn or outcomes found of the Spin E-Scooter trial which was being led by the Department of Transport (DfT), and due to end in March 2022. Should the scheme be legalised going forward, a periodic update should be received from the Cabinet on its progress.

The DfT trial was launched on 30th March 2021 and allowed residents to rent an E-Scooter for £55 per month. The subscription included the Spin scooter that the rider would have exclusive access to, including insurance, helmet, charging cable, 24/7 customer support and maintenance. The trial been undertaken in six locations across Essex, which included Braintree, although a different model designed around longer-term hire was being trialed. Uptake in the trial was generally low in Braintree when compared with other locations. The trial had been extended to March 2022, after which the results would be brought before Parliament for a decision.

LINKS TO MINUTES AND AGENDAS OF MEETINGS

- [17th February 2021](#)
- [7th April 2021](#)
- [23rd June 2021](#)
- [1st September 2021](#)
- [27th October 2021](#)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Members of the Community Development Scrutiny Committee would like to thank the following individuals for their contribution to the Scrutiny Review:-

- Mr Peter Kohn, Chairman of the Earls Colne to Kelvedon Cycle Way Project (EC2K)
- Mr Neil Jones, Principal Planner (Braintree District Council (BDC))
- Mr Alan Massow, Principal Planning Policy Officer (BDC)
- Mr Simon Taylor, Public Rights of Way (PROW) Enforcement and Liaison Officer (Essex Highways)
- Ms Tracey Vickers, Head of Sustainable Development (Essex County Council)
- Mr Kris Radley, Cycling Strategy Lead (Essex Highways)
- Councillor Frankie Ricci, Cabinet Member for Communities (BDC)
- Ms Louise Flavell, Economic Development Officer (BDC)
- Ms Danielle Putt, Economic Development Officer (BDC)