

Summary of Essex-wide cycling and walking network plans

August 2025



INTRODUCTION

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans — known as LCWIPs — are strategic documents that set out a network of proposed cycling and walking routes which have been developed with local partners. The Essex-wide LCWIP aims to plan infrastructure for walking, cycling and wheeling across the county, with a focus on strategic and rural connections that support longer and/or mixed journeys with other sustainable modes e.g. bike-train-bike trips.

Given the mainly rural nature of Essex, the Essex-wide plan prioritises links between villages, towns and cities. The proposals aim to make use of off-road routes such as byways and bridleways, alongside innovative on-road cycling solutions on space-limited networks such as quiet lanes to deliver the LCWIPs. Essex County Council members and a wide range of stakeholders — including county-wide walking and cycling groups and council officers — will be involved throughout the project's lifecycle.

Agreeing on this plan will enable us to apply for local and central government funding to deliver new infrastructure across Essex which will support local communities and reduce congestion.

Examples of this infrastructure could include:

- Segregated (separate) cycle paths
- Dropped kerbs
- New or upgraded road crossings
- Wider pavements
- Speed reduction measures

Our ambition is to make Essex's streets safer, greener, and healthier for everyone — ultimately giving residents more choice in how they travel around the county.

Why we want to encourage walking, cycling and wheeling in Essex

-  Often the easiest to get around for shorter trips.
-  Improves the physical and mental health of our residents.
-  Improve air quality.
-  Reduce road congestion.
-  Support the county's net zero target.

SUMMARY

We conducted a comprehensive stakeholder consultation from 21st November 2024 to 10th January 2025.

How we engaged stakeholders

- Stakeholders were invited to share their views on proposed routes and active travel areas via the ECC consultation [website](#). A colour-coded system allowed them to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the proposals.
- We held in-person meetings with local stakeholders in three areas: **Chelmsford, Harlow, and South Benfleet**.
- To raise awareness and participation, the consultation was promoted through local social media channels, emails and community group outreach through in-person events across Essex for residents to engage with Essex County Council.

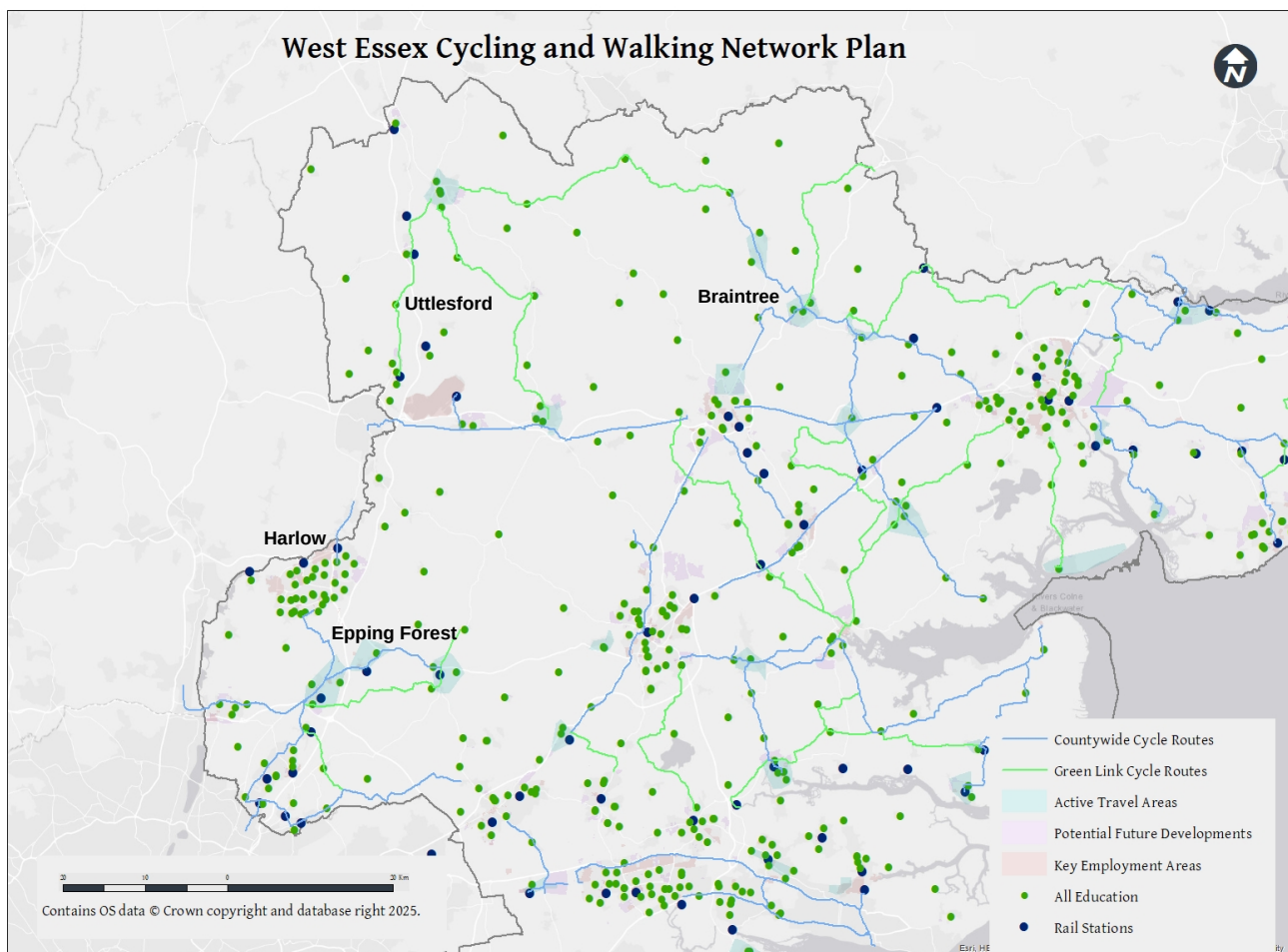
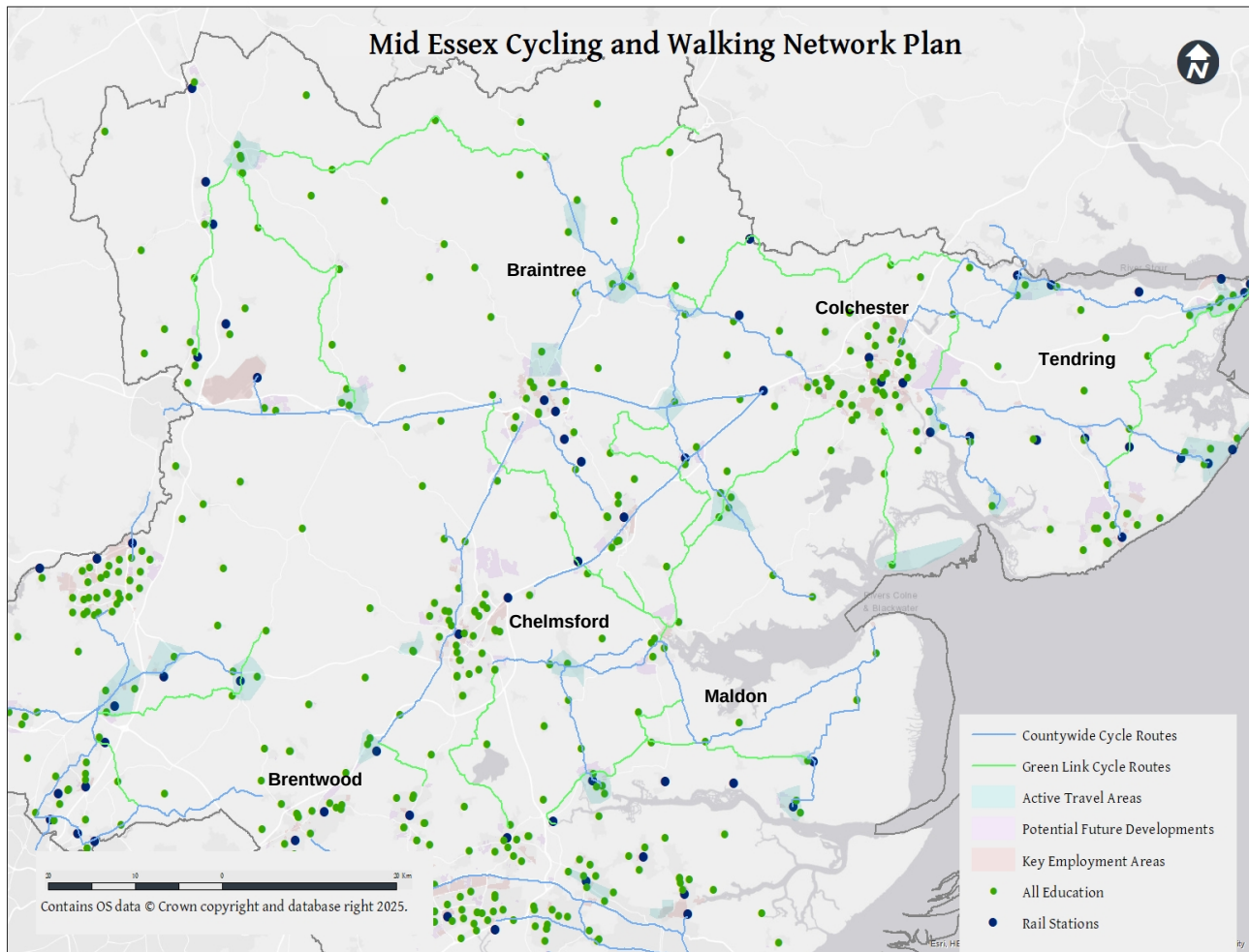
We received **562 responses** to the countywide consultation.

Key findings

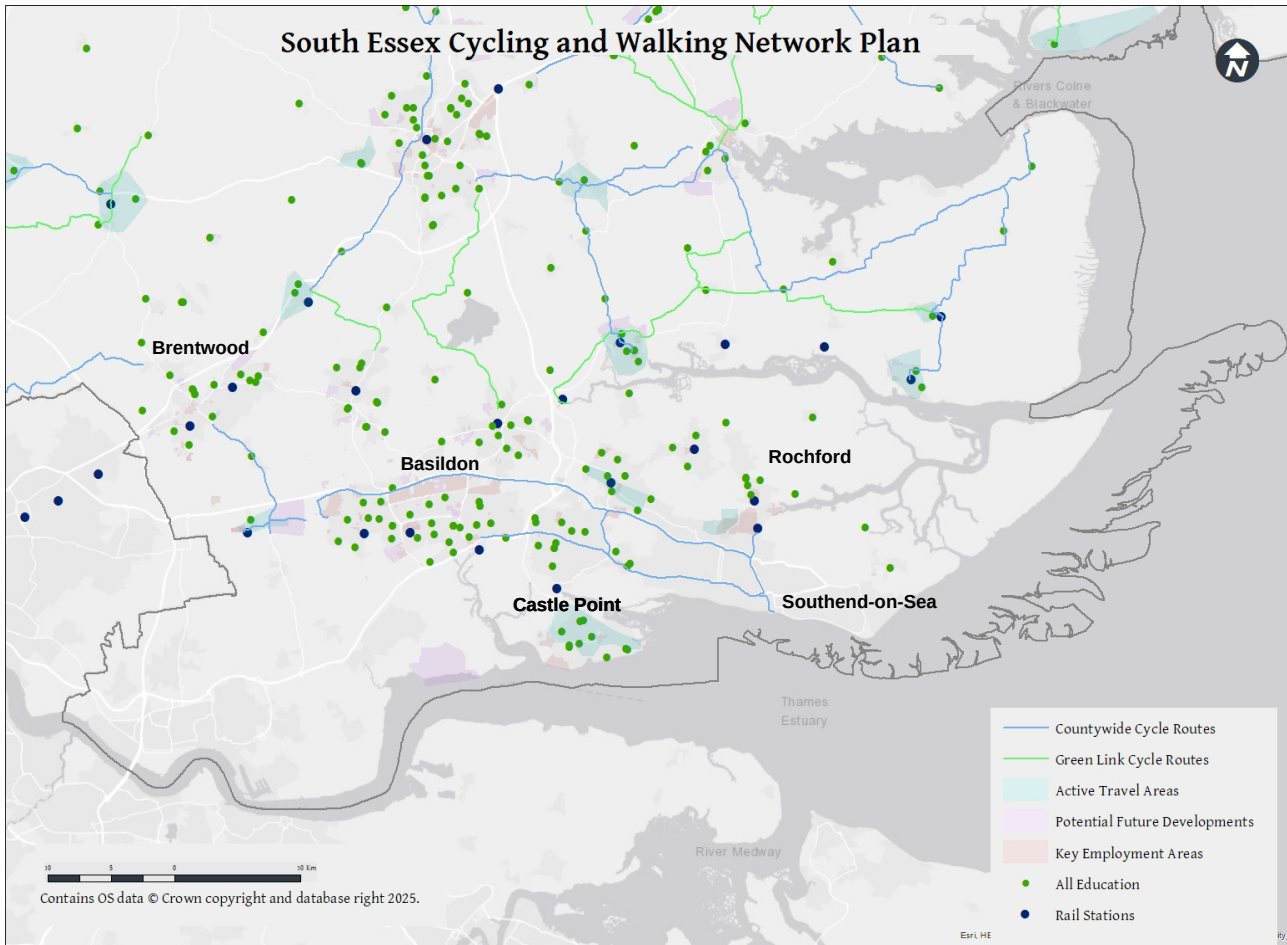
- Most respondents voted that they felt the proposed network was somewhat connected, and some offered feedback for missing links in the network.
- A significant number indicated that safer cycleways and footpaths would encourage them to walk and cycle more frequently.
- On average, people are willing to cycle for **16–30 minutes** and walk for **21–30 minutes** for short daily trips, including access to public transport.
- Nearly half of respondents currently cycle at least once a week and many would do so more often if routes were safer and more convenient. A majority already walk weekly and would increase this if conditions improved.
- New route suggestions emphasised alignment with existing development plans, such as the **Epping Forest District Council Local Plan** and **Tendring Garden Community**, aiming to improve leisure, reduce congestion and enhance connectivity to key services.
- Safety remains a top concern with strong support for integrating safety measures into existing plans — especially along roads with heavy traffic.



ESSEX-WIDE ROUTE MAPS 2025



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For a full description of each cycling route in the network, please refer to the route descriptions document.

NEXT STEPS

We will now consider how the Essex-wide LCWIP will be integrated into local policy and strategies and will focus on the following key actions:

- We will establish an internal delivery group who will be responsible for the integration of the LCWIP outputs into local policy. This will help ensure that emphasis is given to cycling and walking within both local planning and transport policies, strategies and delivery plans. Reflecting the LCWIP in local policy will also help to make the case for central government funding.
- We will explore various funding sources, including local and developer contributions and central government schemes like Active Travel Fund.

