Active & Sustainable Travel in East Suffolk Environment
Priorities for East Suffolk.

Report by Jane Healey on behalf of Greenprint Forum Steering Group

1. Introduction

It was previously agreed that this meeting would focus on Environment and sustainability within the context of local priorities being worked on through the Greenprint Forum – in particular the focus on active travel for 2019-20. This has a good fit with the major objective of the Strategic Business Plan 2017-20 which focusses the Board’s effort on ensuring that growth in East Suffolk is inclusive and takes account of the wider determinants of health.

In particular this meeting is intended to continue the discussion on how the Board will deliver the following of the ESP’s major goals:

- Encourage self-help and more physical and social activity that reduces social isolation and loneliness and promotes healthy ageing.
- Encourage the growth of sustainable tourism which values and, where possible, improves the natural environment and supports a commercial all year round tourism package for East Suffolk.
- Maximise the health and wellbeing benefits of access to the natural environment and natural assets.
- Enable people to make positive differences for themselves, their families and their communities through effective, joined up support to frontline voluntary and community groups.
- Share learning from place-based work, including in our market towns, that brings partners from across sectors together to test new ways to achieve shared priorities and build strong, economically viable and distinctive places.
- Connect key organisations, individuals and communities together through community action to support a greener economy whilst sustaining and improving the environment of East Suffolk.

2. Context

Travel and movement of goods are inextricably woven into the wider mechanism on which modern society is based. However, the huge benefits that the expansion of car ownership and use has unlocked have also been accompanied by negative impacts. We have congestion contributing to climate change emission and impacting on business efficiency, whilst active travel has declined in many areas, contributing to the obesity crisis compounding the health impacts of poor air quality for example through asthma. As roads become busier, the perception that they are too dangerous to travel on them by any means other than by car increases – a self-reinforcing loop.

3. Current Activity

Local authorities across the UK, including Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council as well as parish and town councils including Felixstowe, Woodbridge and Lowestoft, have acknowledged the wider environmental crisis by making Declarations of a Climate Emergency and any answer to this needs to consider travel and how the modal shift away from single-occupancy private motor dependency to active and sustainable travel alternatives can be enabled.
Individuals, community groups and organisations are independently taking action or calling for change on a wide range of environmental and social issues in East Suffolk. The Greenprint Steering Group focus in 2019 is to work with partners to help inform the local debate and help, where possible, to steer action in a useful and sustained way so that behaviours will become embedded and become sustainable.

Greenprint held a public forum on active and sustainable travel on World Environment Day, 5th June 2019. The event was attended by over 40 delegates representing a range of communities and statutory bodies across East Suffolk to enable a conversation around the issues and help the Steering Group to identify priorities where we have the ability to deliver tangible outcomes to increase uptake of green travel in East Suffolk.

4. What the Board is being asked to do

Members of the Board are asked to identify how the ESP can continue to contribute to this agenda.

The Board is also asked to consider a proposal under 3.4 on the agenda to spend ESP funds to:

- implement more Quiet Lanes to promote a safe environment for non-motorised road users
- provide cycle tuition to children and parents in a safe environment
- establish walking buses to provide schools pupils with an active travel alternative
- produce a case study into current 20mph zone projects in Southwold and Woodbridge to inform other communities considering following suit
- Identify additional volunteers to improve the resilience of existing Community Transport schemes.

The impact of this work is aimed at reducing dependency on private car journeys through encouraging and enabling greater uptake of alternative active and sustainable travel.