Section 1. Context

1. How does your proposal demonstrate delivery of the 2050 Ambition?

The proposal is to review the existing cycle network in the borough and identify opportunities to join up gaps in the network, looking particularly at north–south links which have been identified in public consultation as a priority for action. The first phase will be the Airport to Pier cycle route. New and improved cycle paths will have enhanced lighting, signage, promotion and marketing in order to increase take up of cycling. The development of enhanced cycle route provision directly contributes to the delivery of a place that is ‘easy to get around’ through improved connectivity and making cycling a safer option for residents, visitors and commuters. It also contributes to the ‘active and involved’ agenda by encouraging greater exercise and the ‘safe and well’ agenda buy both improving the safety of cyclists (and other road users) and promoting a mode of transport that improves users health and well-being.

2. What evidence have you got that this approach will deliver of the outcome?

Levels of cycling and walking in England have declined over the past three decades to the point where we have some of the lowest rates in Europe. With about two thirds of all journeys being less than 8km (5miles), walking and cycling should be an everyday way of getting around. Furthermore, it is recommended that each adult should do 30 minutes of activity for at least five days a week to maintain good health. Walking and cycling can make a significant contribution to this, and it is particularly important for older people.

Survey data has shown that over a third of adults in the Borough own a cycle, but only 2% of all journeys are made by bike. The Council will continue to encourage cycling and walking as a sustainable way to travel, and promote the health benefits that can be delivered through an increased take up of these modes, particularly for shorter distances of up to 5km (3miles) where the journey is up to about 15 minutes.

Southend Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation (Spring 2019) revealed that north–south cycle links were highlighted as a priority to address gaps in the existing cycle network in the Borough.

A 2015 meta-analysis summarised key studies on how bicycle paths and lanes affect cyclists’ exposure to physical activity, air pollution, and road safety. The health impact was modelled using all-cause mortality as a metric for a scenario with new bicycle lanes and paths in a hypothetical city. The outcomes of the study suggest that, based on currently available research, a reduction of all-cause mortality is to be expected from building bicycle lanes and paths along busy roads with mixed traffic. Increased physical activity through more time spent cycling (physical activity) is the major contribution, but is also the
most uncertain aspect. Effects related to air pollution and cycling safety are likely to reduce mortality but are small. The overall benefits are large enough to achieve a high benefit-cost ratio for bicycle infrastructure.

3. What are the measures of impact, success and how will you embed learning?

There are a number of KPIs and targets associated with cycling embedded in the Local Transport Plan 3, Public Health Outcomes Framework and other documents. The most pertinent measures are:

- To increase the number of children walking, cycling and using public transport particularly to school;
- To increase the number of adults who walk, cycle and use public transport to work; and
- To increase the number of people who walk, cycle and use public transport for leisure.

There are also some potential impacts regarding economic development, with research from Transport for London suggesting that increasing walking and cycling to high streets increase retail sales by up to 30% and increase frequency of visits to the high street.

Learning from this business case can inform future planning policy and practice and support further development of cycling infrastructure across South Essex.

Section 2. Aims, Objectives & Collaboration

4. What are the key aims and objectives of the proposal?

The key aim of the proposal is to provide safe cycling routes within the Borough, commencing with the main north/south spine from London Southend Airport to the Pier. The provision of this route, alongside a general improvement in the physical infrastructure for cycling in the Borough, will increase cycle usage with the objectives of:

- encouraging modal shift thereby alleviating pressure on the Borough’s roads;
- encouraging the use of a more sustainable mode of transport;
- encouraging physical activity;
- connecting with existing east-west cycle paths along the Prittle Brook and Seafront

Improving cycle infrastructure with a focus on North/South connections can improve the use of existing East-West infrastructure. It also can improve access and utilisation of existing assets in the Borough such as parks, open spaces and leisure facilities.

5. Who else have you involved in discussions and how have the helped to shape the proposal?

To date discussions have predominantly been undertaken with colleagues within the relevant service area although discussions have also taken place with the outcome leads for outcome AI5.2 ‘Improved physical infrastructure for cycling’ to merge the objectives of this outcome into this proposal.

6. What are the links and dependencies with the other outcome proposals?

Enhancing the physical infrastructure for cycling within the Borough, particularly through the creation of a north/south route linking the airport with the central seafront clearly links with, and supports, outcomes CS2.2, CS2.3 and CS3.3 within the Connected and Smart theme.
It also supports the range of proposals for outcome 5 within the Active and Involved theme ‘more people have active lifestyles and there are significantly fewer people who do not engage in any physical activity’.

7. Who are the partners (or potential partners) and how to you envisage their role(s) in collaborating to delivering the proposal to achieve the outcome?

There is existing capital funding for works to Cinder Path between Chalkwell Station and Bell Wharf - to fill the gap in Sustrans National Cycle Route from Benfleet Station to Shoebury Garrison, but there is potential for other improvements that are not already fully funded. Some additional revenue funding will be needed to prepare a strategy for cycling infrastructure and to identify other priority routes and connections, but this is likely to be covered under existing budgets/staff already in place. Once the strategy has been produced there will be a clearer picture on priorities and thus the likely capital cost to 2023.

Whilst the creation of the physical cycle connection from the Airport to the Pier will be delivered through the Council (probably using funding from the Local Transport Plan) there will be opportunities to work with community groups, schools and other organisations to promote an uptake in the use of cycling as a means if travel and for exercise and leisure purposes.

8. What potential challenges do you anticipate in respect of a) implementing this proposal, b) caused by this proposal once implemented?

Whilst work has previously been undertaken to identify options for the creation of a north/south cycle route through the centre of the Borough a number of developments and changes have taken place, or been proposed, since this work was completed.

Looking at the network as a whole, a key challenge will be improving the legibility of the existing north - south route from Southend Victoria Station to the Seafront, and investigating the potential of a direct route through Southend High Street in terms of the benefits and adverse impacts on shoppers, workers, residents and visitors (both cyclists and non-cyclists).

Section 3. Social Value

9. How could the proposal deliver social value - in terms of the local community, businesses, economy and environment and what will the specific impact and benefits be?

Increasing the proportion of residents, employees and visitors travelling in Southend by bicycle will increase physical activity rates and lead to better health outcomes, and reduction in traffic congestion, carbon emissions and air pollution, and promote tourism.

Encouraging better use of environmentally-friendly and sustainable modes of transport clearly supports environmental targets, whilst the provision of better cycling facilities could benefit large elements of the community, providing improved health and wellbeing for users of the route, and providing improved connections between homes and key employment sites for cyclists. It also supports modal shift thereby reducing pressure on the local road network and supporting business investment.

10. What is the perceived impact the proposal will have on groups with ‘protected characteristics’?

Evidence suggest cycling is of particularly important for older people in terms of maintaining good health whilst it is also shown to be an effective method for engaging young people in physical exercise thereby improving health and wellbeing.

11. What is the proposal’s potential direct or indirect impact on the wider community?
Enhancing cycling infrastructure can provide benefit to a wide spectrum of the local community delivering an important asset that may be used by people of all ages both improving connectivity and encouraging exercise. Indirectly, the provision of improved cycling infrastructure encourages modal shift thereby reducing car journeys, improving journey times, reducing pollution and thus improving air quality.