



**REPORT of  
DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY, PERFORMANCE AND GOVERNANCE**

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**to  
STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
15 JULY 2021**

**A12 CHELMSFORD TO A120 WIDENING SCHEME - RESPONSE TO HIGHWAYS  
ENGLAND PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON 'PRELIMINARY DESIGN'**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 Highways England has published a public consultation on its 'Preliminary Design' for the A12 Chelmsford to A120 Widening Scheme (the Project) between Junction 19 Boreham Interchange, Chelmsford and Junction 25 Marks Tey A120 Interchange, Colchester. The Public Consultation commenced on 22 June 2021 for eight weeks to 16 August 2021. Maldon District Council is a Statutory Stakeholder and consultee in the Project as a small section of the A12 is within the District at its very northern tip. The Project is a NSIP (Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project) under the Planning Act 2008. Engagement with the Council has been via their Highways England A12 Team.
- 1.2 Members and officers have attended statutory stakeholder meetings, workshops and Member Forums arranged by the Highways England A12 Team over the past year, which were also attended by Essex County Council, Braintree District Council, Chelmsford City Council and Colchester Borough Council leading up to the Project reaching this 'Preliminary Design' stage public consultation.
- 1.3 Maldon District Council has used the statutory stakeholder meetings, workshops and Member Forums to discuss opportunities that the Project could realise and to raise concerns regarding the impact of the Project on the local road network connections that are relied upon by Maldon District residents and businesses to reach and access the existing junctions on the A12.
- 1.4 Maldon District residents and businesses connect to and from the A12 national road network at Boreham, Hatfield Peverel, Witham, Kelvedon and via Tiptree on the local road networks within the District (A414, B1018, B1019, B1022) where the Project proposes significant changes to the access arrangements to the existing A12 junctions and creates new junctions as a major part of the Project.
- 1.5 Essex County Council Highways and Transportation is responsible for the local road network that will carry traffic to and from the District to connect to the new and improved A12 Junctions at Boreham Interchange (Junction 19) via A414; to the new Junction 21 east of Hatfield Peverel (existing Junctions 20a and 20b in Hatfield Peverel to close) via B1019; to Witham (Junction 22) via Little Braxted Lane and B1018 and to Junction 24 via Kelvedon.
- 1.6 Two new bypasses are proposed at Rivenhall End between Junctions 22 and existing Junction 23 (Junction 23 to be removed) including a new link road from Inworth to Junction 24 (to relieve Kelvedon of traffic from Tiptree accessing A12) and between Junctions 24 and 25 Kelvedon to Marks Tey.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

### To the Council:

That the response to the Highways England Public Consultation for the 'Preliminary Design' of the A12 Chelmsford to A120 Widening Scheme (**APPENDIX 3**) is approved.

## 3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The engagement is with Highways England A12 Team working up the preliminary design of the Project highlighted opportunities and concerns that fall to the responsibility of Essex County Council Highway and Transportation, who manage the local road network connections to the Project.
- 3.2 Essex County Council (ECC) wrote to Maldon District Council (MDC) on 26 April 2021 (via Councillor Kevin Bentley to the Leader of the Council) (**APPENDIX 1**) to draw together thoughts on the design options being discussed at a final round of workshops during early May 2021: *'It would be good to contact Highways England ahead of the final set of workshops and the statutory consultation due in June this year because it allows Highways England to have early warning of our concerns and maybe if brought to the attention to senior officials may result in some changes to current proposals'*.
- 3.3 A response was sent from the Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance, MDC to the Director of Highways and Transportation, ECC on 13 May 2021 (**APPENDIX 2**) setting out this Council's concerns and missed opportunities to the junction design options presented by Highways England during November 2020 to May 2021.
- 3.4 The A12 Chelmsford to A120 Widening 'Preliminary Design' Public Consultation documents have not taken account of the concerns and missed opportunities continually raised by the Council to improve local road connections, address known congestion hotspots and improve air quality issues caused by traffic originating from the Maldon District to access and connect to the A12 junctions that are the subject of the public consultation.
- 3.5 The Maldon District residents and businesses rely on the local road network to access national road and national rail connections. Lack of investment and improvements to the local road network within the Maldon District to connect efficiently to the A12 will impede existing and future growth scenarios and the ability to address environmental impacts caused by traffic congestion in our own District and in neighbouring authority areas.

## 4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Project acknowledges the A12 is an important economic link in Essex and across the east of England and provides the main south-west / north-east route through Essex and Suffolk connecting Ipswich to London and to the M25.
- 4.2 It is apparent that the Project will improve journey times once on the A12 and will reduce congestion on local roads when the A12 has had to close due to accidents. However, the 'Preliminary Design' has missed the opportunity to improve

connections to the A12 from within the Maldon District, working with ECC, at known congestion hotspots set out in **APPENDIX 2**.

- 4.3 The Council's response (**APPENDIX 3**) to the A12 Chelmsford to A120 Widening Scheme 'Preliminary Design' has replicated and reinforced the points set out in **APPENDIX 2**. These points made have been cross referenced to the evidence set out in the Public Consultation documents to give further weight to our concerns of increased traffic congestion and longer waiting times at known hotspots on the local road network that connect to existing and the new junction designs.

## **5. IMPACT ON STRATEGIC THEMES**

- 5.1 The response to the A12 Chelmsford to A120 Widening Scheme 'Preliminary Design' supports the Strategic Theme Place by reducing the environmental impact of pollution on the environment and to deliver new infrastructure through development.
- 5.2 Good transport connections support the Strategic Theme Prosperity by enabling future investment and new jobs.
- 5.3 Reducing the environmental impact of pollution and access to local jobs, facilities and services, generally supports health and wellbeing objectives in the Strategic Theme Community.

## **6. IMPLICATIONS**

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – The Council's response is representative of resident and business interest.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – The Council's response is representative of all.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – None. The Council's response is as a Statutory Stakeholder in the Project.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – None.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – None.
- (vi) **Impact on the Environment** – The Council's response has considered existing and future impacts on the environment.
- (vii) **Impact on Strengthening Communities** – Good transport links are vital to resilient and strong communities.

### Background Papers:

Link to A12 Chelmsford to A120 Widening Scheme Public Consultation documents:

<https://highwaysengland.co.uk/our-work/east/a12-chelmsford-to-a120-widening-scheme/>

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