

MALDON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Princes Road
Maldon
Essex CM9 5DL

www.maldon.gov.uk



13 May 2021

Andrew Cook
Director of Highways and Transportation
Essex County Council
Market Road
County Hall
Chelmsford
Essex CM1 1QH

Enquiries to: Paul Dodson
Email: paul.dodson@maldon.gov.uk

Dear Andrew

A12 Widening Project and Engagement with Highways England

Thank you for your letter referencing the engagement to date with the Highways England A12 Team on the current design options to feature in the public consultation in mid-June 2021.

Maldon District Council (MDC) Members [Cllr Mark Durham (also ECC Member); Cllr Richard Siddall and Officers have attended all engagement sessions, workshops and Member Forums and have raised similar concerns on certain aspects of the project relating mainly to the local road network connections to the A12 Widening Project from within the Maldon District. The central, north and west parts of the District rely on the A414, B1018, B1019 and B1022 local road network to connect to the A12 via Danbury, Hatfield Peverel, Witham and Tiptree/Kelvedon where current junctions will be changed by this project. We acknowledge the local road network is managed by ECC Highways and Transportation and not Highways England.

At the 'preferred route' stage and before any design options were presented, Officers informed the A12 Team, when they presented at MDC offices early in 2020, that our strategic housing growth (South Maldon Garden Suburb and North Heybridge Garden Suburb) and economic regeneration at The Causeway rely and impact on the B1019 connection via Hatfield Peverel to connect to the A12. It was felt, at that early stage, that design/investment opportunities could be taken forward by Highways England, working with ECC Highways and Transportation, Maldon District Council and cross-boundary with Braintree DC, to improve known congestion issues at the B1019 Maldon Road/Duke of Wellington mini roundabout in the centre of Hatfield Peverel 'village' that access A12 Junctions 20a and 20b. These known congestion issues were confirmed by Christopher Stevenson, ECC, at a recent workshop as being of some 30 years standing.

I refer to your second bullet point:

Hatfield Peverel: the closure of junctions 20a and 20b and replacement of new junction serving all local connections including Witham, Hatfield Peverel and Maldon

At an early stage in the design process, Officers asked Highways England if the mini roundabout at B1019 Maldon Road/Duke of Wellington T-Junction has the capacity to cope with existing traffic (HGVs, vans, cars) from the A12 irrespective of the proposed new junction serving all local connections, including Maldon, and the known housing/economic growth expected in the Maldon and Braintree Districts. The recent 'made' Hatfield Peverel Neighbourhood Plan highlights the issue of '*high traffic flows on Maldon Road and The Street that are both narrow roads.*'

During recent engagement and workshops, Highways England has '*investigated possible improvements at the Maldon Road/Duke of Wellington mini roundabout*' and presented these at workshops '*with a signalised T-Junction arrangement; two lane approaches for 30m/50m stacking capacity*' and '*two lanes for The Street approach from J21 with 30m stacking capacity; one lane approach from Hatfield Peverel and Maldon Road approaches and signalised T-Junction arrangement with banned turning movements*'.

It remains unclear what improvements to the existing Maldon Road/Duke of Wellington mini roundabout will be taken forward to public consultation and who is responsible for delivery, ECC or Highways England? It is important to note that these 'improvements' still result in a Level of Service (LOS) F grading at the junction to access the A12 as it is now. The 'improvements' presented by Highways England will impact on the residents of Hatfield Peverel with loss of pavement space at the Maldon Road/Duke of Wellington junction and safe access to everyday facilities and services on The Street and Maldon Road including a nursery school.

During workshops, Braintree District Council alluded to applying for SHIF funding for a Maldon link road/Hatfield Peverel bypass with an arm from the new proposed Junction 21. Highways England stated at the workshop on 11 May 2021: *'the design of the new junction 21 will not preclude a future 'Maldon link road/Hatfield Peverel Bypass'*. However, we should ensure our concerns and the thought process through our engagement on the design of Junction 21 is not lost to the public consultation documents.

I refer to your third bullet point:

Witham North: the revised junction with connections to Little Braxted Lane

Little Braxted Lane is a single lane route with passing places and single lane bridge crossing (Grade II Listed) to reach the A12 junction at Witham North from within the Maldon District. It is suitable for cars and small vans only. The gravel extraction plant has a 'right turn only' junction to the A12. Highways England sought the view of the Parish Council to close Little Braxted Lane access to Witham North Junction despite Maldon District Council stating it was an important local road network link to access the Eastways Business Park in Witham, immediately adjacent the A12.

It should be made clear on the A12 leading up to the new Witham North Junction, that Little Braxted Lane is unsuitable for HGVs and the bridge crossing on Little Braxted Lane has a weight limit to protect its listed status.

I refer to your fourth bullet point:

Kelvedon/Feering: the removal of junctions to the north and south of the villages and these and Tiptree served with a new junction off the Inworth Road. Also, the potential for a future junction to serve the RIS 3 scheme for the A120

See bullet point 2. We question the similarity of this scenario to relieve the impact of Tiptree traffic through Kelvedon and Feering with a new junction off the Inworth Road to Hatfield Peverel needing a Maldon link road/Hatfield Peverel Bypass from the new proposed Junction 21. This would relieve the impact of Maldon District traffic impacting on the Maldon Road/Duke of Wellington mini roundabout in the centre of Hatfield Peverel village and improve connectivity for Maldon District residents and businesses to the national road network?

Local Growth proposals

Maldon District Council is reviewing its LDP commencing March 2021 – 2023 and has published a 'Call for Sites' consultation that runs to 21 May 2021 to allocate potential sites in a new LDP. The ECC/MDC LDP Review Liaison Group will be meeting regularly every 6-8 weeks from 19 May 2021 to discuss transportation and highway matters associated with existing and future local growth proposals.

Sustainable Transport

MDC continues to work with ECC, SELEP and Transport East on sustainable transport options to relieve the environmental impacts of the District's high reliance on the motor vehicle by residents, visitors and businesses.

Air Quality/Environmental Mitigation

MDC is concerned at the recent (2019) declaration of Air Quality Management Areas in Maldon and Danbury, both on the A414. Whilst we acknowledge the A12 Widening project will alleviate some congestion on local roads (caused when the A12 is closed), the District's residents and businesses rely on these local roads to connect to the A12 national road network. MDC is concerned at the environmental impacts of congestion and pollution in Hatfield Peverel village originating from the Maldon District. How can we improve local air quality caused by congestion and queuing traffic on local road connections if the local road connections are not improved to connect to the A12?

These thoughts and concerns have been repeatedly raised through engagement with Highways England and we agree they should be emphasised prior to the public consultation and before the DCO submission when as you say, things get trickier to resolve.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Dodson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Paul Dodson
Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance