

A12 Chelmsford to A120 widening

Frequently Asked Questions

Junctions 23 to 25

Highways England

2020

Frequently Asked Questions - junctions 23 to 25

The preferred route – background

How did you choose your preferred route?

Our preferred route is based on our 2017 consultation. It has been selected based on several factors, including environmental impact, journey times, complexity of build, affordability, feedback from the public, and of course advice given by the Planning Inspector on the joint Local Plan.

How many people supported this route?

53% of respondents (who expressed a preference for an option) supported route 2. We have provided a bypass between Feering and Marks Tey, and this was supported by 58% of respondents.

I don't agree with your preferred route. Can I object to it?

We will be holding a statutory consultation in 2021 where you can give feedback on the whole route (junctions 19 to 25).

A DCO (Development Consent Order) submission will then be made to the Planning Inspectorate, who will examine the application. The submission will include all the feedback we receive from the statutory consultation and our response to all the matters raised. The examination is likely to involve public hearings, and you can submit written representations. Following the examination, the Examining Authority will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport, who will decide whether the project will go ahead. We intend to submit our application in winter 2021/22 and if approved, we expect to start construction in 2023/24.

Why did it take you so long to make this decision?

Following our consultation on junctions 19 to 25 in 2017, the local authorities of Colchester, Braintree and Tendring put forward a joint Local Plan, including the Colchester Braintree Borders Garden Community. This affected the routes that we consulted on, specifically junctions 23 to 25. We were asked by government to consider the routes in this area, so in October 2019, we consulted on four additional routes. Since then, the Planning Inspector made his recommendation that the proposed garden community should be removed from the Local Plan.

As soon as that recommendation was made, we began the process for announcing a preferred route.

Now that we have announced our preferred route for junctions 23 to 25, we will combine that with our preferred route for junctions 19 to 23 (which was announced in October 2019). We will take this preferred route forward to statutory consultation and then make the DCO application as one scheme.

Can I see the results of both consultations?

Yes – both public consultation reports from 2017 and 2019 are on the project website.

www.highwaysengland.co.uk/A12/

Is the project definitely going ahead?

With a scheme of this size and cost, as you would expect it will be subject to continuous reviews throughout its development, to ensure that it presents good value for money to the taxpayer. However, this is a committed government scheme under the Road Investment Strategy (RIS2), and we expect that it will be delivered in its entirety.

How much does the scheme cost?

As a vitally important and considerable piece of infrastructure, the final project cost is expected to be close £1045 million. Of course, commercial estimates will continue developing until the scheme is fully designed and we will work hard to ensure that the proposals remain good value for money.

Junctions

What is the design at junction 23? How does the scheme connect with the A120?

We are considering whether we can remove junction 23, but with new link roads provided from Kelvedon to junction 22 and junction 24. The Government's Road Investment Strategy 2 (RIS2) stated that the A12 scheme will need to take into account the evolving proposals for the A120 Braintree to A12 improvements. We therefore may need to include scope for a potential future road link joining to the proposed improvements to the A120 road.

Why have you moved your junction 24 further south than you showed in 2017?

We listened to public feedback. Our new junction 24 will become an 'all movements' junction serving traffic in all directions with direct connections to Inworth Road. Our proposals provide access to the improved A12 from Inworth Road which will serve the communities of Kelvedon, Feering, Inworth, Tiptree and others.

What is the design at junction 25?

Prior to the existing junction 25, our new road will connect to the current A12. We propose to create new slip roads and a roundabout at this connection point. We will also modify and improve the existing junction to make a new junction 25. It will remain an 'all movements' junction serving traffic in all directions. Our proposals give access to Marks Tey, Copford and the A12, and provide a connection to the existing A12 road.

What will happen to the current A12 once the new road is built?

The existing A12 will be managed by the operations department at Highways England. Discussions between Highways England and Essex Highways will be held to devise a

strategy for the de-trunking (passing ownership of the road to the county council) of sections of the A12.

How does route 2 provide the least disruption during construction?

During construction, route 2 is likely to cause less disruption than the other route options would have. This is because building bypasses away from the A12 will be safer than having operatives working alongside live lanes of traffic. Likewise, route 2 will involve the least road works and disruption to motorists from road closures, as the sections not on the current A12 can be constructed with minimal disruption to motorists.

Are you working with local authorities and communities on the design of the junctions?

Yes. We are working closely with Essex County Council and the local planning authorities on the design of the junctions. We have held workshops with Essex County Council, Braintree District Council, Chelmsford City Council and Maldon District Council so far, as well as meeting parish councils to get feedback on our designs. We will continue to work with stakeholders as the junction designs evolve, all the way up to our application for development consent.

Landowners

I am a landowner and have received a letter saying I am affected.

As part of our preferred route announcement, you should have received a letter offering you a one-to-one meeting with our project team. We would encourage you to accept this invitation, and our experts will be able to talk you through what the road improvements mean for your particular situation, and the next steps.

I am a landowner close to the road but have not received a letter. I think I may be affected.

As part of the preferred route announcement, all landowners who are either permanently or temporarily affected were sent a letter offering a one-to-one meeting with the project team. If you believe you should have received a letter, please contact us at A12chelmsfordA120wide@highwaysengland.co.uk and we will investigate your concerns.

You can view more information on compulsory purchase, discretionary purchase and blight in the documents section on our project page.

www.highwaysengland.co.uk/A12/

Safety

What changes will you be making to walking, cycling and horse-riding routes?

We will provide alternative routes where any public rights of way are affected by the A12 proposals. If possible, we will also try to improve rights of ways and paths between communities that already are affected by the existing A12 road.

We will be creating safe links to and from the existing shared pedestrian and cycle paths, particularly along the old A12 once it is bypassed, and enabling pedestrians and cyclists to reach key locations, such as Marks Tey Railway Station.

What safety issues you are trying to address?

Safety is our highest priority, and the A12 scheme has an objective to improve safety on the A12 as part of our strategic objectives. We want to improve safety for road users, especially at the junctions and slip roads through better design.

We want to remove private access to the A12, provide alternative access to local roads and minor road junctions will be bypassed. We want to reduce the number and severity of accidents and incidents on the road to make it safer for motorists, make it safer for construction workers and reduce the number of collisions on the parts of the road where there is currently congestion.

Although the accident rate (fatal weighted injury rate) between junctions 19 and 25 is currently only slightly above the national average, we are concerned that some sections of the road have a higher than average proportion of people who are killed or seriously injured.

How are you improving link roads?

We received a suggestion for link roads to be provided, including linking the A12 to Maldon Road. As the authority for major roads and trunk roads in England, our remit does not include local roads. While this suggestion will not be actively pursued as part of the A12 scheme as local roads are outside of our remit, we will discuss it with the relevant local authorities and consider whether our junctions can help connect to the link roads that have been suggested.

Traffic

How much will journey times improve between junctions 19 and 25?

The current two-lane dual carriageway A12 between junction 19 and junction 25 is expected to be operating at its capacity for traffic by 2021, with particularly slow and unreliable journey times in the morning and evening peak hours. Given the significant housing and business growth expected in Essex, journey times are expected to get longer. It is expected that the proposed investment in the A12 will save a daily peak time commuter over an hour of travel time each week in 2042.

What is a traffic model?

We used transport modelling to estimate the number of vehicles or people that use or will use a road, both now and in the future.

How will traffic be taken off Kelvedon High Street?

While we are still at an early stage of design, we are confident we will see reduced levels of traffic on Kelvedon High Street in our 'do something' as opposed to our 'do minimum' scenario, which means without the A12 improvements.

This is because our new 'all movements' junction 24 allows people to access the A12 more directly. For example, traffic from Feering wanting to go southbound on the A12 currently needs to travel via Kelvedon High Street to reach the existing junction 23. Instead they could use the new junction 24 to join the A12 southbound, removing the need to travel through Kelvedon.

How will traffic be reduced on The Street in Hatfield Peverel?

The removal of junction 20a and 20b will redirect the traffic moving between Maldon Road and the A12 into the new all-movements junction 21. Traffic coming from Maldon Road wishing to access the A12 southbound will now turn right at Wellington mini roundabout and join the A12 at the new junction 21, instead of turning left and travelling through The Street in Hatfield Peverel to access junction 20a.

Environmental

How will you protect the wildlife in the local area?

Ongoing surveys will help us assess the scale of the impacts. Our ecologists will then design mitigation to minimise the impacts as far as possible.

Will the proposed work result in increased noise levels?

Where the A12 is widened along the existing route, the carriageway will be brought closer to some residential properties. The proposed scheme will ensure that various mitigation measures are implemented so noise levels remain under an acceptable threshold. These mitigation measures have not yet been identified as the required noise evaluation surveys and noise modelling have not yet taken place.

Will the proposed road have a quiet noise surface?

While the design has not yet reached the stage of proposing a certain type of surfacing, low noise surfacing will be investigated. Low noise surfacing, due to its material properties, needs more ongoing maintenance compared to standard surfacing, and that means more roadworks and increased costs. All these aspects will be considered.

You can hear the noise from the A12 from my house. How will you reduce the noise?

Predicted noise levels will be part of the project's environmental assessment. This will consider existing noise levels and existing noise 'hot spots'. Noise barriers will be considered where there are residences along the proposed route.

Will this scheme have an impact on local air quality?

The scheme could potentially impact on local air quality. For example, pollutants could increase where traffic flows increase, or reduce where traffic is moved away from the existing A12 (i.e. where the new bypass is proposed). Changes in pollutant level will be assessed in a local air quality assessment. Preliminary air quality modelling indicates that no breach of air quality standards is predicted.

How will the impact on air quality be measured?

There are standard tools and techniques for measuring air quality. We will review the traffic modelling results to understand the potential risk to air quality and identify whether further detailed air quality modelling is required. This is similar to the traffic modelling, where data is used to predict how the air quality is likely to change as a result of the new road. Scenarios with and without the changes to the road are modelled for the opening year, as well as 15 years later.

Next steps

When can we next make comments on the proposals?

We will hold an eight-week statutory consultation in 2021 where you will have the opportunity to have your say again. At this point, we will be able to give more detailed road designs and layouts for you to provide comments on. In the meantime, we will continue to work with stakeholders, including Essex County Council, local authorities and parish councils to develop the designs.

Following this, local residents and stakeholders will have the opportunity to express any concerns once the application for DCO (Development Consent Order) has been submitted and accepted.

We always welcome comments, so please email A12chelmsfordA120wide@highwaysengland.co.uk.

What is the process for making a Development Consent Order?

A Development Consent Order (DCO) application can only be made once a full Statutory Consultation has been undertaken. We will publish plans for this consultation in a Statement of Community Consultation, which is expected to commence in 2021.

After the consultation, and once designs are completed in sufficient detail to understand impacts and confirm land requirements, an application for a DCO will be

made to the Planning Inspectorate. This application will include full details of the scheme, including its environmental impacts in an Environmental Statement.

The Planning Inspector has 28 days to accept the application. During this period, the Planning Inspector will confirm all statutory processes have been properly followed leading to the application. Once accepted, the Planning Inspectorate has 12 months to examine the application and make a recommendation to the Secretary of State. During this examination, the Planning Inspector will examine the proposals in detail and, as part of this process, they will accept representations from supporters or objectors to the proposals. At the Planning Inspector's discretion, some of this examination may be held in public.

The Planning Inspectorate will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State who will then decide whether or not to accept the recommendation. If a recommendation to allow the DCO is accepted by the Secretary of State, the Orders will be made, and notices issued to all affected persons.

Find out more about the DCO process on the Planning Inspectorate's website.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/planning-inspectorate>

When will construction start?

We plan to commence construction in 2023/24.

When will the road be open for traffic?

We plan to open the road for traffic in 2027/28.

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