

# A12 Chelmsford to A120 widening

Report on public consultation

05 May 2017

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## Appendix A. Additional Information

## Executive summary

### 1.1 Introduction and purpose of this report

In the presence of local councillors, officers and the media, on Monday 23 January we launched our options consultation for the A12 Chelmsford to A120 widening. The consultation ran for 6 weeks until Friday 3 of March and included 7 public information events. These events were really well attended and we wanted to thank everyone who took the time out of their days to come along, and to all those who helped us raise awareness of the events.

Through the formal consultation response channels we received some really valuable feedback not just on the options we presented, but also on the current concerns and issues that people have with the junctions along this stretch of the A12.

The purpose of this report is to outline how we consulted, whether it was effective, what we found out from the consultation and the next steps. This report provides a summary of the consultation responses we received and with this report we have published the independent response analysis completed by Dialogue By Design.

In addition to factors such as value for money, constructability, safety and meeting the scheme's objectives, the consultation responses assist us in identifying the preferred option as well as design requirements as the scheme approaches the statutory consultation and application for development consent (see section 10 for more information).

### 1.2 Context

Highways England's Project Control Framework sets out how we deliver a major highways scheme. The process is split into 8 stages. We are currently in Stage 2

- **Stage 0** (strategy, shaping and prioritisation) – problem definition, scheme requirements and strategic business case;
- **Stage 1** (option identification) – option identification and sifting out of options that are likely to perform less well compared to others;
- **Stage 2** (option selection) – detailed option assessment and selection of the Preferred Option, including detailed public consultation of the options;
- **Stage 3** (preliminary design) – scheme development including design of the Preferred Option in sufficient detail to produce draft orders and preparation of the Environmental Assessment;
- **Stage 4** (statutory procedures and powers) – gaining authority to construct the scheme through the normal statutory processes as laid down in legislation;
- **Stage 5** (construction preparation) – procurement of the construction contractor and detailed design of the scheme;
- **Stage 6** (construction) – construction of the scheme;
- **Stage 7** (handover and close-out) – project close out.

The development of improvements to the A12 Chelmsford to A120 were announced as part of the Government's December 2014 Road Investment Strategy 1 (RIS1) where the improvements were described as widening the A12 to three lanes between junction 19 (north of Chelmsford) and junction 25 (A120 interchange).

### 1.3 Consultation options

The flow chart below shows the process used to get to the 4 options presented at consultation (see section 2.2).



### 1.3.1 Option 1

Option 1 follows and widens the existing A12 corridor to 3 lanes in each direction between junctions 19 and 25. It would require land within the existing highways boundary and could require land immediately next to it, particularly between junctions 22-23 and 24-25.

### 1.3.2 Option 2

Option 2 would widen the existing A12 corridor between junctions 19-22 to three lanes in each direction. At junction 22, it leaves the existing corridor and creates a new 3 lane bypass in each direction to the south, running parallel to the existing A12. At around junction 23, it would re-join the current corridor. The existing A12 between junctions 23-24 would widen to 3 lanes in each direction. At junction 24, the road leaves the existing A12 and creates a second 3 lane bypass in each direction to the south, running parallel to the existing A12, re-joining at junction 25.

### 1.3.3 Option 3

Option 3 would widen the existing A12 corridor between junctions 19-22 to three lanes in each direction. At junction 22, it leaves the existing corridor and creates a new 3 lane bypass in each direction to the south running parallel with the existing A12 until junction 23 where it would re-join the current corridor. It then follows the existing A12 corridor between junctions 23-25 which would widen to 3 lanes in each direction.

### 1.3.4 Option 4

Option 4 would widen the existing A12 corridor between junctions 19-24 to 3 lanes in each direction. At junction 24 it leaves the existing corridor and creates a new 3 lane bypass in each direction to the south, running parallel to the existing A12 until junction 25 where it would re-join the current corridor.

### 1.3.5 Junctions

In addition to the route options listed above, we asked for what improvements respondents to the consultation felt were required at each of the 8 junctions along the line of route, including respondents' views on whether junction 20a and junction 20b should be retained and improved or removed with a new junction 20 being created. The information received helped to inform our junction strategy.

## 1.4 Consultation arrangements

The public consultation period ran from Monday 23 January 2017 to Friday 3 March 2017, a period of 6 weeks. During this time, 7 public information events were held in towns and villages along the A12.

To publicise the consultation we engaged a number of channels of communication. A letter of invitation was sent to 14,000 households and businesses within the immediate and wider communities along the A12 and updates were made to the Highways England and Government websites. An early warning press release and a scheme media pack was also issued to the local print and radio media, and a full colour half page right hand

side advert was placed in the Essex Chronicle, Braintree and Witham Times and the Essex County Standard. A poster campaign was used, distributing 300 posters to community hotspots, identified through community forums. An email was also sent to over 1000 stakeholders whose details had been obtained through early engagement.

The consultation material consisted of a consultation brochure and questionnaire, a consultation leaflet, exhibition boards available to view at the events, as well as the *Options Assessment Report* and *Traffic Data Collection Report*, with key documents being available on our website.

9 deposit locations were identified along the route where copies of consultation brochure and leaflet were available, as well as a large pull up banner advertising the consultation. The full suite of consultation documents were sent to all Parish Councils along the route, as well as local MPs.

Responses to the consultation were accepted through a number of channels:

- Online using the electronic feedback form
- By email to [A12chelmsfordA12wide@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:A12chelmsfordA12wide@highwaysengland.co.uk)
- By freepost to Freepost A12 Chelmsford to A120 Widening

## 1.5 Effectiveness of the consultation

The public consultation exhibitions received 1,853 visitors over the 7 public information events, with 89% of attendees giving positive feedback.

Our A12 Chelmsford to A120 widening scheme website recorded 10,424 page views, and the Government's A12 Chelmsford to A120 widening scheme website recorded 952 page views.

A total of 907 responses were received during the consultation period.

## 1.6 Consultation findings

Of the 907 responses that were received, 824 respondents expressed a preference for 1 of the 4 options or supported none of the options. Consultation Option 2 received the most support from respondents with 402 of the 824 (49%) expressing it as their preferred route option. The second most popular consultation option was Option 1 with 227 of the 824 (28%) expressing it as their preferred route option.

Some of the reasons given for supporting Option 2 were:

- It would provide the most capacity and would future proof the road
- It would cause the least disruption during construction
- It could improve the traffic flow through local villages
- It would be the most resilient
- It would improve safety by reducing accidents at local junctions onto the existing A12

The consultation also asked for views on the need to improve junctions. The majority of respondents felt that improvements were needed at all junctions from 19-25. This was particularly clear at junction 22 where 75% of respondents felt the junction was in need of improvements.

## 1.7 Next steps

The results of the consultation will be considered in the selection of the preferred option, along with other factors such as value for money, constructability, safety and meeting the scheme's objectives.

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 Background to the scheme

The A12 is an important economic link in Essex and across the East of England. It provides the main south-west/north-east route through Essex and Suffolk, connecting Ipswich to London and to the M25. The section between Chelmsford and Colchester (junction 19, Boreham interchange to junction 25, Marks Tey interchange) carries high volumes of traffic, with up to 90,000 vehicles every day.

Heavy goods vehicles account for between 8% and 12% of the traffic on this section, which highlights its importance as a freight connection, particularly to the ports of Felixstowe and Harwich. It is also an important commuter route between Chelmsford and Colchester and Braintree and Maldon.

The road suffers from a number of problems. By tackling these problems, we will be:

- Improving safety for drivers, especially at the junctions and slip roads through better design.
- Reducing the congestion routinely experienced by today's drivers by increasing capacity.
- Ensuring that the road can cope with predicted increases to traffic by increasing capacity. Forecasts show that by 2038, the road will operate above the capacity it was ever designed to handle if no improvements are made.
- Improving facilities for cyclists, equestrians, pedestrians and bus users to provide better connectivity and safer, more enjoyable journeys.

### 2.2 Developing options

In March 2015, the Government published its first Roads Investment Strategy (RIS1) with the simple premise: “a modern country needs modern roads”.

The strategy states that England's strategic road network requires upgrading and improving to ensure it can support the nation in the 21st Century. The strategy announced £15.2 billion investment in England's motorways and major A roads. In the east, over £2 billion is being invested to create better and safer journeys across the region, with improvements to the A12 and other vital transport links. In addition, the strategy includes proposals to widen the A12 from the M25 to Chelmsford (J11-J15) and the A12 Colchester bypass (J25-J29) in future road periods.

Since the Government's announcement, we have been looking at suitable solutions to address the problems on the A12 between junction 19 (Boreham interchange) and junction 25 (Marks Tey interchange).

The flow chart below shows the process we used to get to the options presented in this consultation.



### 2.2.1 Identify issues and objectives

A number of studies and consultations have taken place over the last decade on the A12, including the *A12 Commission Inquiry (2008)* and 2 studies by Highways England; *A12/A120 Route Based Strategy 2013* and *East of England Route Strategy, 2015*. These all recognised the need to improve the A12, noting the following issues; congestion, safety, resilience and reliability, substandard junctions, holding back economic growth and lack of provision for non-motorised users.

Against these issues 6 initial objectives for the scheme were set:

- Making the network safer
- Improving user satisfaction
- Supporting smooth traffic flow
- Encouraging economic growth
- Delivering better environmental outcomes
- Helping cyclists, walkers and other vulnerable users on the network

### 2.2.2 Long list of options

Once we understood the issues and objectives, we started to develop solutions with technical specialists and local authorities in summer 2015. This resulted in 15 highway improvement options, 5 public transport options and 3 collision reduction and incident management options.

### 2.2.3 Shortlisting options

We assessed each option against the objectives to see which ones performed best. The first sift eliminated the 5 public transport options and 3 more efficient use of the current highway options. While these options could compliment any scheme taken forward, they did not meet the scheme objectives in their own right. The collision reduction and incident management options were also eliminated. These options included safety improvements, the removal and diversion of public rights of way and access for emergency vehicles but did not meet the scheme objectives in their own right.

9 highways options were also eliminated, including:

- A new parallel offline route from junction 19-25
- A parallel motorway M12 scheme
- Improving the existing carriageway and central reservation barriers
- Improving lay-bys and the existing road

The remaining 6 options were then assessed in more detail against further criteria such as:

- Is it the right strategic fit?
- Does it show value for money?
- Is there a financial and commercial case for doing it?
- Can it be delivered?

We eliminated the options that did not give the whole route improvements that were necessary. Another option eliminated was similar to Option 2 in this document but did not offer the same value for money. The full sifting exercise can be viewed in the *Options Assessment Report* which was published with this consultation. The report identifies the best performing options that provide good value for money, improved journey times and overall benefits for our customers.

#### 2.2.4 Select options for consultation

As more information became available, we reviewed and updated the scheme objectives:

- **A more free flowing network** – increasing the resilience of the transport network to cope with incidents such as collisions, breakdowns, maintenance and extreme weather. The improvements will also take into account the impact of other schemes developed in the region.
- **A safe and serviceable network** – improving safety for road users, road worker safety, removing private access to the A12 and providing alternative access to local roads.
- **Supporting economic growth** – supporting local growth plans by reducing congestion related delays, improving journey time reliability, increasing the overall capacity of the A12 and improving traffic flow across the highway network.
- **An improved environment** – improving the environmental impact of transport on those living along the existing A12 and by reducing the impact of new infrastructure on the natural and built environment.
- **A more accessible and integrated network** – providing a safe route between communities for cyclists, walkers, equestrians and other non-motorist user groups and address separation of communities and improve safety and access for public transport users.
- **Customer satisfaction** – improving customer satisfaction and support for the scheme and ensure that our Key Performance Indicators are achieved. Improved journey times and a better driver experience overall will lead to greater customer satisfaction.

We identified new options which we assessed against the objectives. From the sifting process, 4 options came out.

## 2.3 Consulted options

The consultation outlined 4 options which meet the scheme's objectives:

### 2.3.1 Option 1

Option 1 follows and widens the existing A12 corridor to 3 lanes in each direction between junctions 19 and 25. It would require land within the existing highways boundary and could require land immediately next to it, particularly between junctions 22-23 and 24-25.

### 2.3.2 Option 2

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## 2.4 Junctions

As part of the consultation, we also asked for people's views on the junctions 19-25. We asked whether respondents felt there was a need to improve individual junctions and to explain their reasons why. Work to date had shown there may be a benefit in merging junctions 20a and 20b into a new single junction 20 so we asked whether respondents felt both junctions should be retained and improved, whether they should be removed and merged into a new junction 20 or whether they support neither of these options.

The information received from respondents will help to inform the development of our junction strategy which will be released when the preferred route is announced.

## 3. Consultation arrangements

### 3.1 Information events

On Monday 23 January 2017, we launched the A12 Chelmsford to A120 widening consultation at the Civic Centre in Chelmsford. As part of the consultation 7 public information events were arranged in towns and villages along the A12, as well as in the city of Chelmsford. The locations of the events were established in collaboration with the A12 Members' forum, which includes elected representatives and officers from local authorities in the area, and the community forums which are attended by representatives of local parish councils.

#### 3.1.1 Locations and dates of events

The times of the events varied depending on whether they were weekend or week day events. Weekday events ran later into the evening to ensure that members of the public were able to attend after work. A risk assessment of each location was produced. In addition, we applied our building accessibility checklist to each location to make sure each venue was fully accessible.

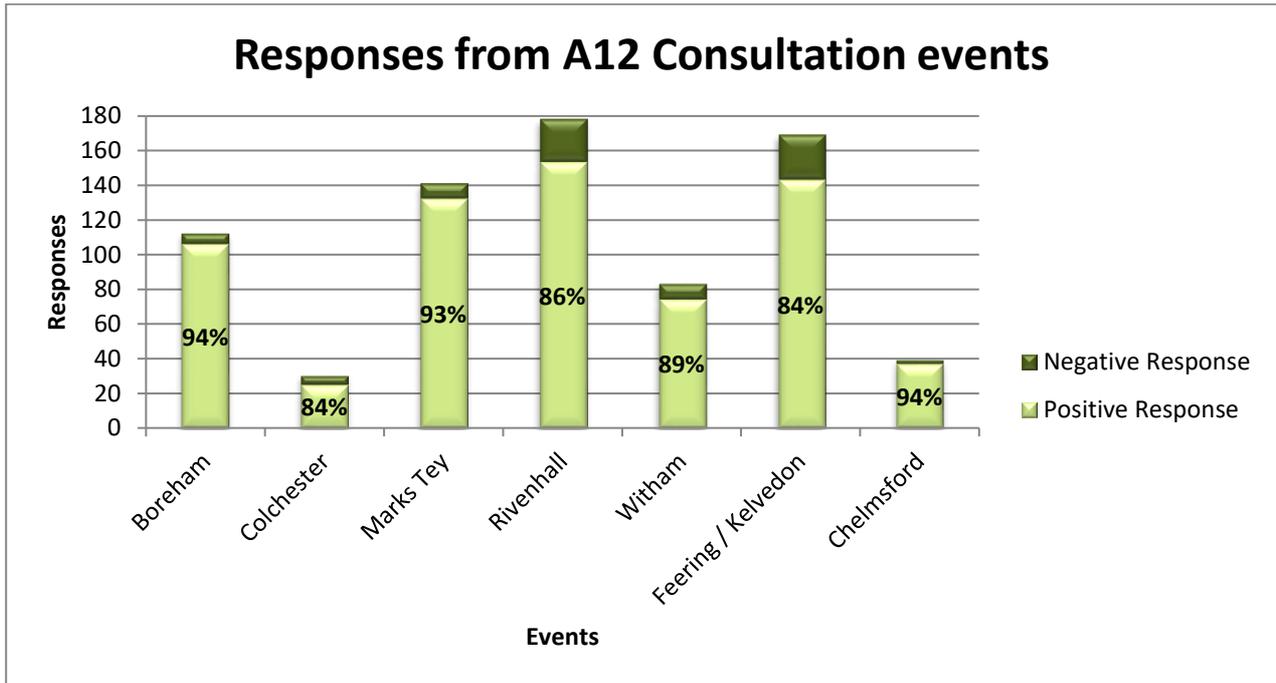
Location	Date	Time	Address
Boreham	Saturday 4 February	11am – 5pm	Boreham Village Hall
Rivenhall	Monday 6 February	1pm – 8pm	Rivenhall Hotel
Marks Tey	Tuesday 7 February	1pm – 8pm	Marks Tey Parish Hall
Colchester	Friday 10 February	1pm – 8pm	Charter Hall
Witham	Saturday 11 February	11am – 5pm	Spring Lodge Centre
Feering/Kelvedon	Tuesday 14 February	1pm – 8pm	Feering Community Centre
Chelmsford	Wednesday 15 February	1pm – 8pm	Civic Centre

#### 3.1.2 Event attendance

In total 1853 people attended the events over the 2 week period.

#### 3.1.3 Feedback of the events

On exiting the events, attendees were asked to rate the event on a 'smiley face' terminal. Those that rated the event were able to rate the event very positively, positively, negatively or very negatively. The chart below shows the number of people who rated the events and how they rated them.



In total 752 attendees provided event feedback across the 7 events, with 89% of those providing positive feedback.

## 3.2 Publicising the consultation

### 3.2.1 Launch event

On 23 January we held our launch event at the Civic Centre in Chelmsford. Local Members of Parliament, local councillors and council officers were invited to view a presentation by Richard Hofton, the Senior Responsible Owner at Highways England. The presentation provided an overview of the consultation and gave attendees the opportunity to ask questions.

### 3.2.2 Media engagement

2 press releases were issued during the consultation launch. The first was issued on the day of the launch, the second was issued on 16 February which confirmed there was 2 weeks left for individuals to contribute to the consultation. These press releases were sent to the Essex media distribution list which has 347 recipients and Suffolk media distribution list which has 215 recipients.

### 3.2.2 Online engagement

Dedicated web pages were set up in advance of the consultation period on the government's website and Highways England website.

### 3.2.3 Social media

Multiple tweets were issued on the day of the launch and throughout the consultation using the handle @HighwaysEAST.

### 3.2.4 Poster campaign

300 posters were sent to local community hubs. This included, 19 parish halls, 5 railways stations, 13 Post Offices, 16 supermarkets and shopping centres, 4 Jobcentres, 5 Citizens Advice Bureaux, 12 pubs and 12 health centres and hospitals.

### 3.2.5 Advertising campaign

A full colour half page right hand side advert was placed in the Essex Chronicle, Braintree and Witham Times and the Essex County Standard

### 3.2.6 Letter

14,000 letters were sent to households and businesses within the immediate and wider communities along the A12.

### 3.2.7 Deposit locations

9 deposit locations were selected along the A12. The deposit locations received 100 copies of the consultation brochure, copies of the leaflet and a 1 x metre pull up banner advertising the consultation. Of the 9 locations, 6 requested more copies of the brochure due to the popularity of people using the deposit sites. Additional copies were sent to them.

Location	Address
Essex County Council	County Hall, Market Road, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH
Chelmsford City Council	Duke Street, Chelmsford, CM1 1JE
Braintree District Council	Causeway House, Bocking End, Braintree, Essex, CM7 9HB
Maldon District Council	Council Offices, Princes Road, Maldon, Essex, CM9 5DL
Colchester Borough Council	Rowan House, 33 Sheepen Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3WG
Tiptree Library	Rectory Road, Tiptree, Colchester, CO5 0SX
Hatfield Peverel Library	The Street, Hatfield Peverel, Chelmsford, CM3 2DP
Kelvedon Library	Aylett's Foundation School, Maldon Road, Kelvedon, CO5 9BA
Witham Library	18 Newland Street, Witham, CM8 2AQ

### 3.2.8 Additional communication channels

The following communication channels were publicised as an alternative method for interested parties to contact the project team:

- Email: [A12chelmsfordA120wide@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:A12chelmsfordA120wide@highwaysengland.co.uk)
- Telephone: Highways England Customer Contact Centre 0300 0123 5000.

### 3.2.9 Forums

5 forums were set up in August last year. The purpose of these forums is to provide an overview of the scheme and provide updates to the forum members. 3 rounds of forums were held prior to the consultation. Both the

2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> round of forums were held in September and November 2016 raised awareness of the consultation and involved discussions around deposit locations for consultation material and locations for public events. The membership of the forums is as follows:

**Members** – Members of Parliament, council Members and officers from Essex, Braintree, Colchester, Chelmsford and Maldon

**Braintree and Chelmsford Community forum** – Parish council representatives from the district of Braintree and city of Chelmsford

**Colchester and Maldon** – Parish council representatives from the borough of Colchester and the district of Maldon

**Environmental forum** – local authorities, and local and national environment groups

**Economics forum** – local authorities, Chamber of Commerce, local enterprise partnership and local business interests

### 3.3 Consultation materials

#### 3.3.1 Consultation brochure and questionnaire

A consultation brochure was produced that provided concise information about the project, including the scheme background with the work done to date (“sifting”), a summary of the 4 consultation options, including the impacts and benefits known to date, and information on the safety and performance of each of the 8 relevant junctions. The brochure also included the consultation questionnaire which was used to understand the preferred option of respondents and views that respondents had on the current junctions. It also helped to measure the success of the consultation and to guide future engagement with the local and wider communities.

Interested parties were encouraged to complete the questionnaire and provide their views and opinions on key aspects of the consultation. The brochure and questionnaire were available online, at the public consultation events and at the 9 deposit locations.

#### 3.3.2 Exhibition panels

9 exhibition panels were displayed at the 7 public consultation events we held from Saturday 4 February to Wednesday 15 February. They showed the following:

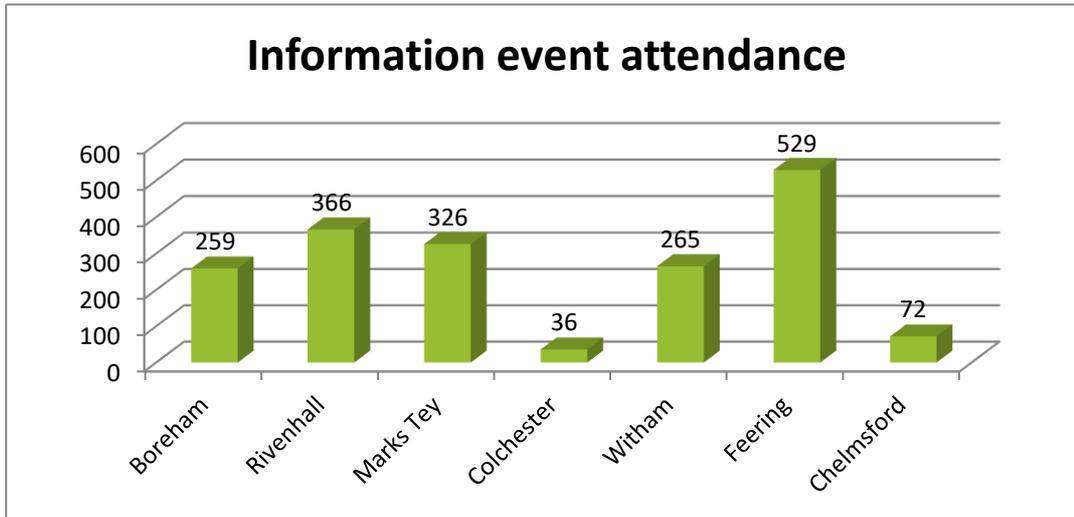
- Welcome to the event
- Why we need improvements to the A12
- Objectives of the scheme
- Developing options
- The consultation route options
- Junction improvements
- How to respond
- What happens next

### 3.3.3 Technical reports

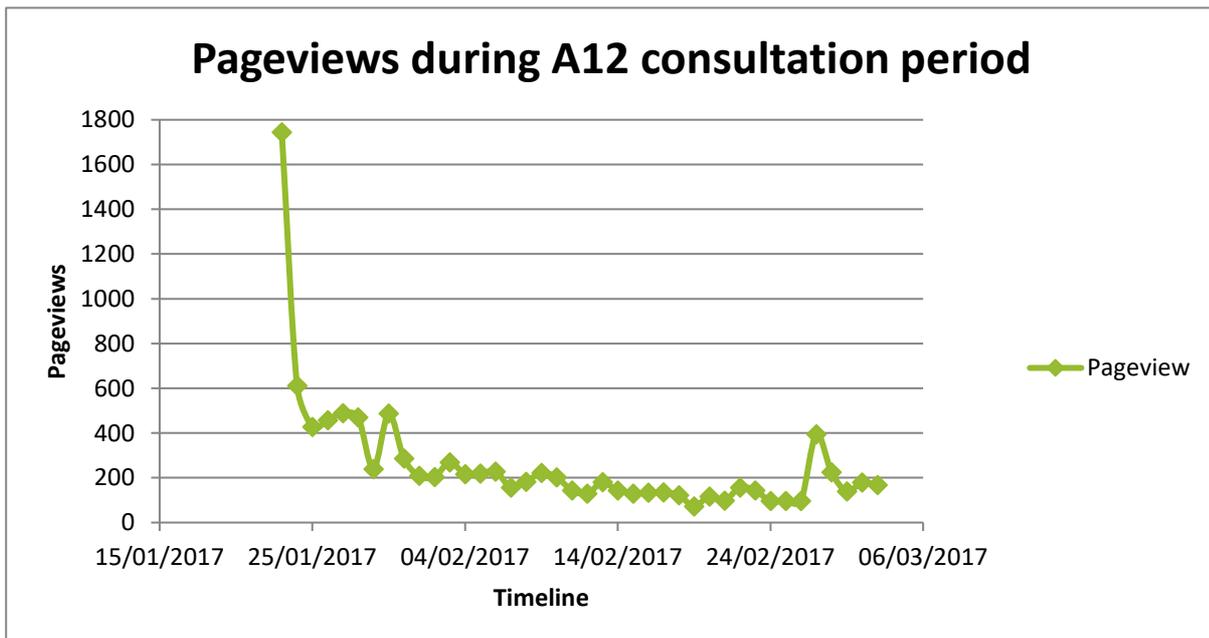
- *Options Assessment Report* - The *Options Assessment Report* shows the work that has taken place to identify the transport problem and identify the need for a scheme. The report then describes how a range of broad scheme options have been generated, assessed and prioritised into a short-list of better performing options. These options were the basis for the further development of the scheme.
- *Traffic Data Collection Report* - The *Traffic Data Collection Report* describes the collection and analysis of the traffic data that is required for the development of the scheme. The report summarises the data that has been obtained, its quality, and how it is being used to develop a traffic model.

## 4. Effectiveness of the public consultation

### 4.1 Public event attendance



### 4.2 Website hits



### 4.3 Social media

On consultation launch day, 3 pictures were tweeted to raise awareness of the consultation. These were retweeted 13 times. Further tweets were issued on 26 January, 6 February and 10 February. These were retweeted 10 times.

### 4.4 Press

The media monitoring service used is 'Kantar'. It showed that 35 stories about the A12 Road Investment Strategy were published between 17th Jan and 1st Feb. In addition, Richard Hofton, Senior Responsible Owner at Highways England, took part in interviews with BBC Look East, ITV Anglia News, BBC Essex radio, Heart Essex radio, East Anglian Daily Times, Essex Chronicle and Braintree and Witham Times.



## 5. Methodology

The consultation was managed by Jacobs on behalf of Highways England. Dialogue by Design (DbyD), an independent, specialist analysis agency, was commissioned to receive, analyse and report on responses to the consultation.

There are 4 stages to the processing and analysis of the consultation responses, which are discussed in more detail below:

- Data receipt and digitisation of all submissions
- The development of an analytical framework
- The implementation of the analysis framework
- Reporting

### 5.1 Data receipt and digitisation of all submissions

Submissions to the consultation were received via 3 different channels:

- **Online** - Respondents could submit responses via an online platform, 'CitizenSpace', developed by 'Delib' and managed by Highways England. DbyD accessed the web platform at regular intervals during the consultation period to securely download submissions received. These were then imported directly into the analysis database.
- **Email** - Consultation responses could also be submitted by email via the address [A12chelmsfordA120wide@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:A12chelmsfordA120wide@highwaysengland.co.uk). These responses were forwarded to a dedicated inbox at DbyD along with a weekly log used to confirm that all emails were received. From here, responses were processed and imported into the analysis database.
- **Freepost** - Consultation questionnaires and letters submitted via the freepost address were delivered directly to DbyD's offices. These responses were logged upon receipt before being scanned, data entered and imported into the analysis database.

### 5.2 Limits of information

This report and the independent *Consultation Summary Report* from DbyD published alongside it is based on the responses received to the consultation and therefore cannot be considered a technical assessment of the proposed options or the junctions from 19-25. The reports analyse the opinions stated by those who responded to the consultation, and as such is a self-selecting sample. Therefore, the information in this report is representative of the local residents and stakeholders who responded to the consultation. The value of the consultation is in identifying the issues and views of those who have responded and their perceptions of the proposals.

The responses are taken as written, and while responses were analysed to draw together themes we have not interpreted the responses further than this.

### 5.3 Next steps

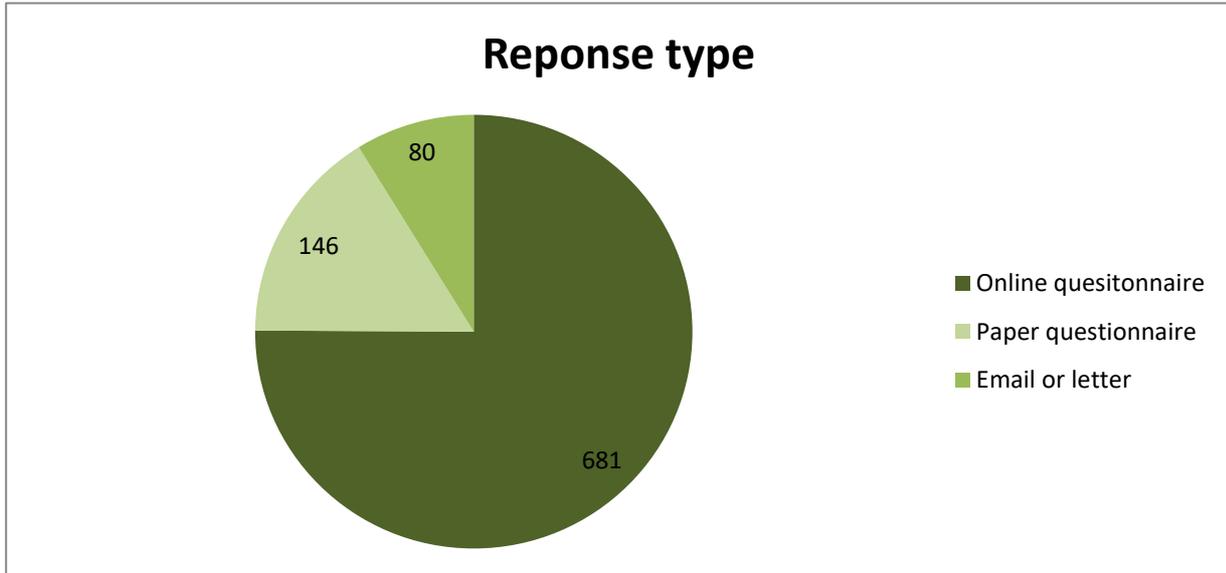
The results of the consultation will be considered in the selection of the preferred route option, along with other factors such as value for money, safety, constructability and meeting the scheme's objectives.

## 6. Responses received

A total of 907 responses to the consultation were received.

The feedback captured some analytical data from respondents to provide some background information about the residents and stakeholders who responded to the consultation. Shown below are key findings from this.

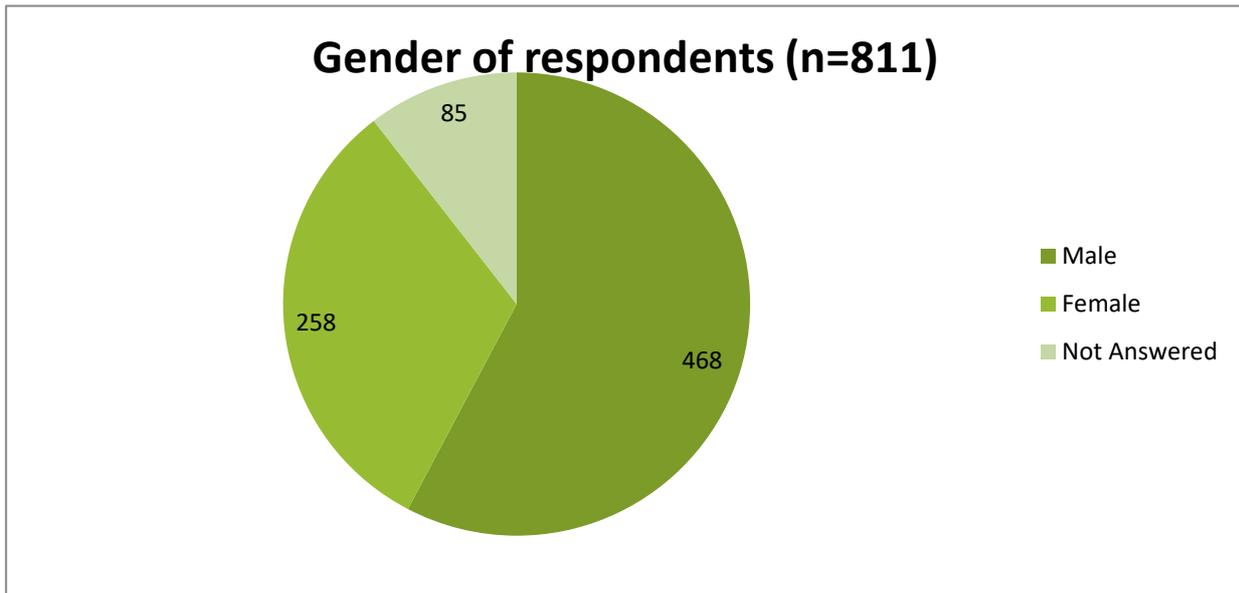
### 6.1 Responses by channel



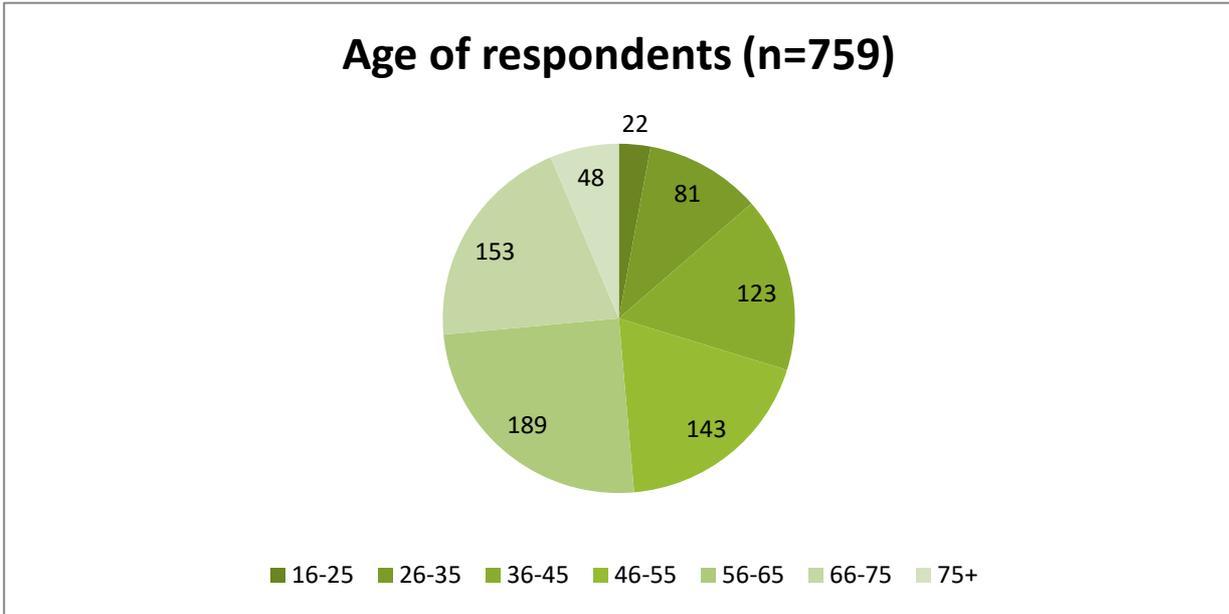
### 6.2 Demographic information

Our consultation asked respondents to answer a number of equality and diversity questions. This section outlines the responses we received.

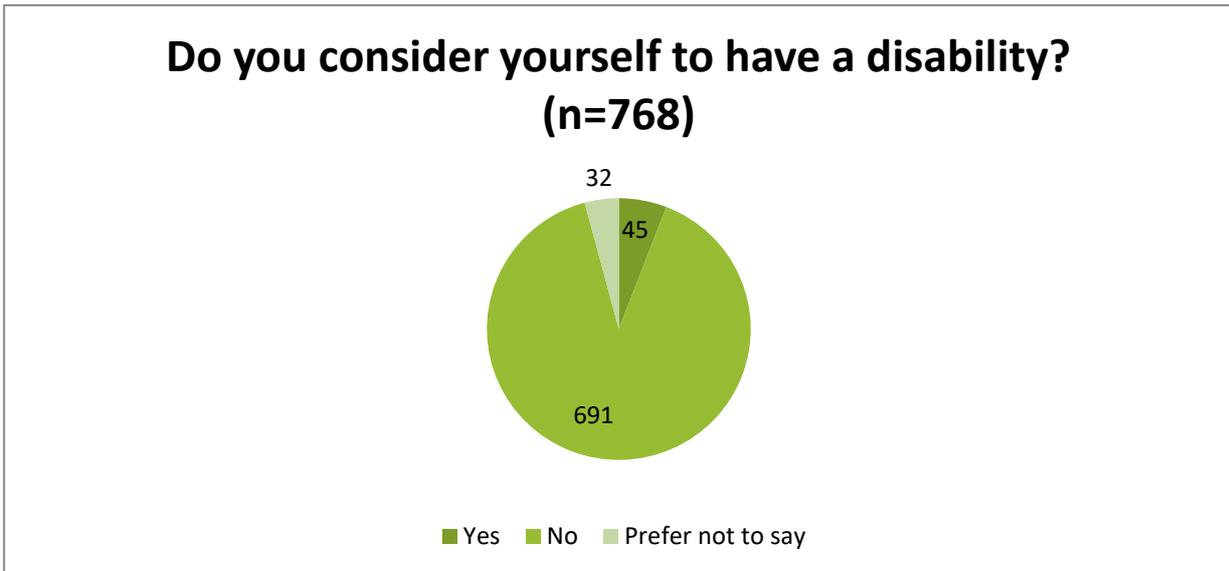
#### 6.2.1 Gender



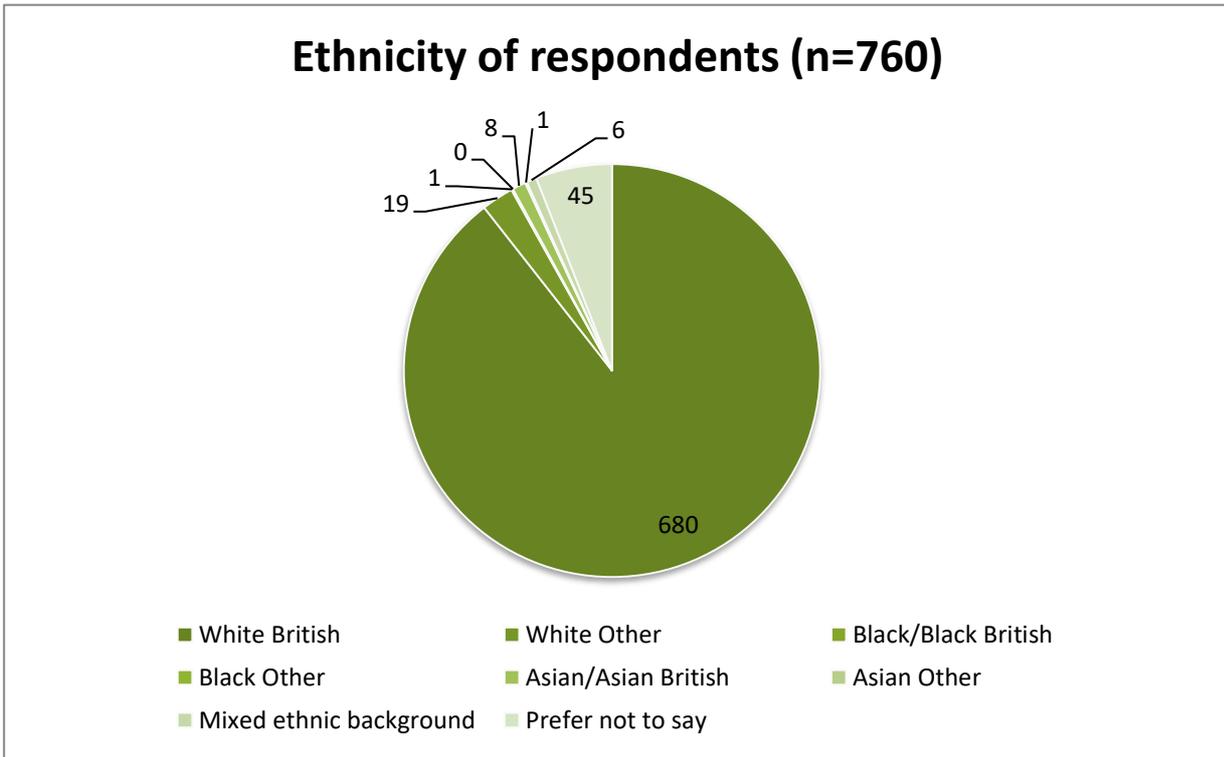
### 6.2.2 Age



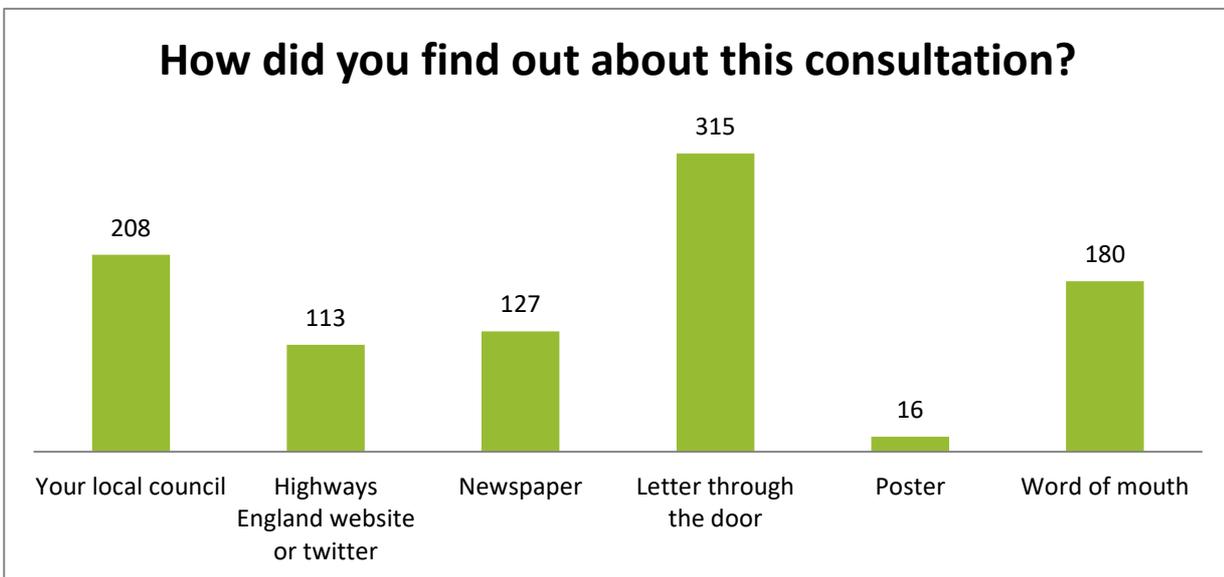
### 6.2.3 Disability



### 6.2.4 Ethnicity



### 6.2.5 How respondents heard about the consultation



In addition to the options listed in the consultation, a number of respondents stated that they had heard about the consultation through social media. Most of these respondents said it was Facebook where they had heard about it either through posts from friends or on community or village Facebook pages.

## **6.3 Feedback from consultation**

### **6.3.1 Channels of communication**

As part of the consultation questionnaire, we asked respondents to suggest how we can communicate better and the largest number of responses identified email as a preferred form of communication. Other forms of communication included:

- Letters
- Social media
- Local press
- Public events
- Local council
- Telephone
- Website

### **6.3.2 The consultation process**

A small number of respondents provided feedback on the consultation and the consultation materials. A few of those respondents provided positive feedback on how the consultation and engagement to date had been conducted. A few others outlined dissatisfaction with the amount of information provided and the clarity of the consultation brochure.

A number of those respondents provided suggestions on how the consultation process could be improved such as extending the area that letters advertising the consultation are sent to.

### **6.3.3 Our response**

We are grateful for the feedback and appreciate the positive comments that we received. We do recognise there is always room for improvement so we will consider how to incorporate the suggestions as the scheme progresses. In particular, we are committed to holding an event at Hatfield Peverel during the statutory consultation expected in autumn this year.

## 7. Analysis of responses

This section provides an overview of the consultation responses received. The full independent *Summary Report* undertaken by DbyD is published alongside this report

### 7.1 A12 widening options - general

#### 7.1.1 Comments in support

Many respondents are supportive of the proposed widening of the A12 between Chelmsford (junction 19) and the A120 (junction 25), with local authorities being particularly supportive mentioning, amongst others, the following:

- The need to increase capacity on the A12 and the economic benefits of doing so
- The need to increase traffic flow and reduce congestion
- Environmental benefits associated with a better functioning road system
- Driver/user satisfaction and improved journey times

Some respondents refer to current issues, such as congestion, on this stretch of the A12 in their discussion of why widening is needed.

Safety is another major concern raised, particularly the volume and rate of accidents and safety issues at junctions. Finally, the condition and surface of the road is another aspect of the current A12 about which concern is expressed.

#### 7.1.2 Comments in opposition

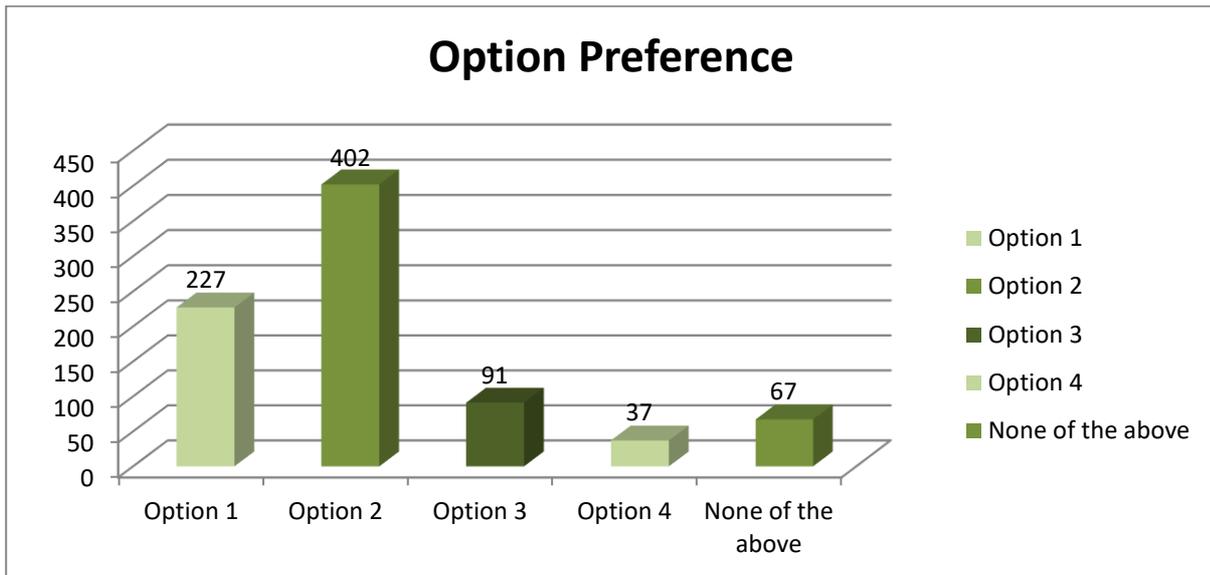
A smaller number of respondents expressed opposition to widening. Those who oppose widening mention, amongst others, a number of reasons for their opposition:

- A negative effect on a community
- Environmental impacts, such as the noise and air pollution, the character of Blackwater Valley and the setting of Braxted Park
- Compulsory purchase and impact on property value
- Impact on historic buildings

A few respondents felt that widening between junction 19 (Boreham interchange) and 25 (Marks Tey interchange) would not solve the current issues as it would push the problem elsewhere. In addition, some felt that improvements would encourage more traffic and another small number felt that improvements would encourage development and more traffic.

## 7.2 Analysis of options

Of the 907 responses that were received, 824 respondents expressed a preference for 1 of the 4 options or none of the options presented in the consultation. Consultation Option 2 received the most support from respondents, with 402 of the 824 (49%) expressing it as their preferred route option. The second most popular consultation option was Option 1 with 227 of the 824 (28%) expressing it as their preferred route option.



### 7.3 Consultation Option 1

Option 1 follows and widens the existing A12 corridor to 3 lanes in each direction between junctions 19 and 25. It would require land within the existing highways boundary and could require land immediately next to it, particularly between junctions 22-23 and 24-25.

Option 1 is the second most popular consultation option amongst those that expressed a preference, with 227 of 824 (28%) expressing it as their preference.

#### 7.3.1 Comments in support

Reduced impact was by far the most prominent reason respondents gave for supporting Option 1. This included respondents commenting on the limited land take and the natural beauty or environmental importance of the local countryside. Those who support Option 1 also mention, amongst others, a number of reasons for their support:

- Reduced impact on ecology or wildlife corridors
- Reduced impact on existing flood plains
- Less impact on settlements, including avoiding some residents having the existing A12 on one side and the new bypass section of the A12 on the other
- Less impact on potential undiscovered archaeological sites

#### 7.3.2 Concerns

Some respondents, including some local businesses, commented on the impacts of Option 1 on local residents and their properties, with some focusing their concerns on potential demolitions of homes and businesses. Those who have concerns about Option 1 mention, amongst others things:

- It will not provide enough capacity in the long term
- Whether it will reduce the frequency of accidents
- Whether it is feasible
- The potential removal of the Rivenhall End junction

## 7.4 Consultation Option 2

Option 2 would widen the existing A12 corridor between junctions 19-22 to 3 lanes in each direction. At junction 22, it leaves the existing corridor and creates a new 3 lane bypass in each direction to the south, running parallel to the existing A12. At around junction 23, it would re-join the current corridor. The existing A12 between junctions 23-24 would widen to 3 lanes in each direction. At junction 24, the road leaves the existing A12 and creates a second 3 lane bypass in each direction to the south, running parallel to the existing A12, re-joining at junction 25.

Option 2 is the most popular consultation option amongst those that expressed a preference, 402 of 824 (49%) expressing it as their preferred route option.

### 7.4.1 Comments in support

Many of the respondents that choose Option 2 do so as they believe that it would be the most efficient and feasible option. Some respondents specify that other widening options will not fully address the areas of worst congestion, especially Rivenhall, and that both bypasses are required. Those who support Option 2 also mention, amongst others, a number of reasons for their support:

- It would be the most future-proof
- It would cause the least disruption during construction
- It would be more resilient
- It will have the least impacts on local residents

### 7.4.2 Concerns

Some respondents feel that it would be more environmentally damaging than other options, as too much green belt land will be required. Those who have concerns about Option 2 also mention, amongst others, a number of concerns:

- Potential impact on the Scheduled Monument of Rivenhall Long Mortuary Enclosure
- Potential impact on various heritage assets including Grade II listed Registered Park and Garden of Great Braxted Park and a number of listed buildings at Braxted Mill
- That a bypass is unnecessary
- Direct impacts on homes

## 7.5 Consultation Option 3

Option 3 would widen the existing A12 corridor between junctions 19-22 to 3 lanes in each direction. At junction 22, it leaves the existing corridor and creates a new 3 lane bypass in each direction to the south running parallel with the existing A12 until junction 23 where it would re-join the current corridor. It then follows the existing A12 corridor between junctions 23-25 which would widen to 3 lanes in each direction.

Option 3 is the third most popular consultation option amongst those that expressed a preference, with 91 of 824 (11%) expressing it as their preferred route option.

### 7.5.1 Comments in support

Respondents who indicate support for this option do so primarily because it allows the village of Rivenhall End to be bypassed. Those who support Option 3 also mention, amongst others, a number of reasons for their support:

- It would prevent the loss of direct private access onto the A12
- It would alleviate congestion through nearby local communities
- It would improve safety at the Rivenhall End A12 junction
- It would reduce the potential for compulsory purchase

### 7.5.2 Concerns

Respondents expressed concerns about the additional land take required for this option and the impact on the surrounding countryside. Those who have concerns about Option 3 also mention, amongst others, a number of concerns:

- Loss of farmland
- It would not provide a long-terms solution
- It would only delay the need for an additional bypass
- It would impact on wildlife habitats and protected species

## 7.6 Consultation Option 4

Option 4 would widen the existing A12 corridor between junctions 19-24 to 3 lanes in each direction. At junction 24 it leaves the existing corridor and creates a new 3 lane bypass in each direction to the south, running parallel to the existing A12 until junction 25 where it would re-join the current corridor.

Option 4 is the least popular consultation option amongst those that expressed a preference, with 37 of 824 (4%) expressing it as their preferred route option.

### 7.6.1 Comments in support

Of those who support this option, some express general support saying that this would be the most effective option.. Those who support Option 4 also mention, amongst others, a number of reasons for their support:

- Less impact on the environment compared to other bypass options (Option 2 and 3)
- Least impact on residents
- It will alleviate congestion at peak times for Marks Tey/A120 interchange
- It could be compatible with a junction linking Tiptree to the A12

### 7.6.2 Concerns

Respondents expressed concerns that the construction of Option 4 would be disruptive and could be unnecessary given the possibility to widen along the existing road (between junction 24 and 25). Those who have concerns about Option 4 also mention, amongst others, a number of concerns:

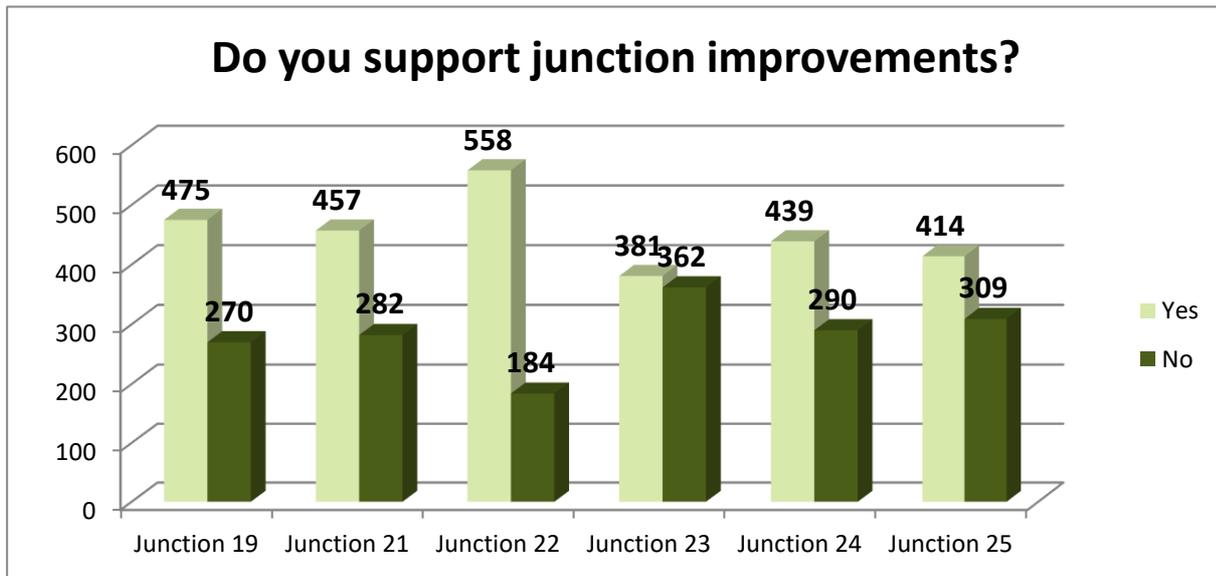
- Would do little to address congestion issues which are more pressing further along the A12

- Could lead to demolitions in the Rivenhall area
- Impact on agricultural land

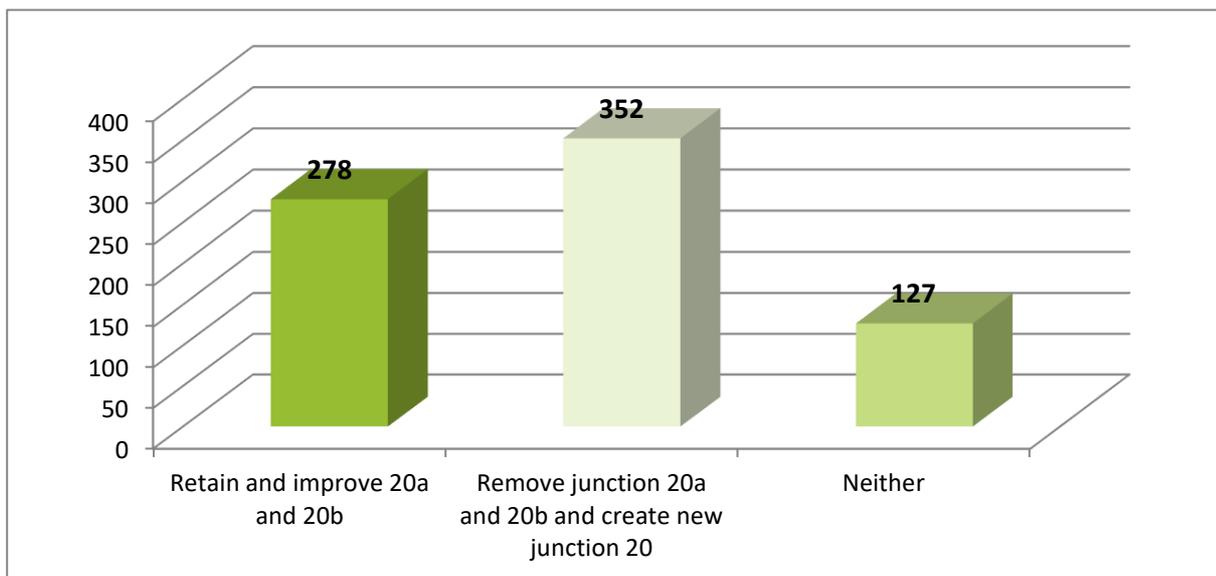
## 7.7 Junctions

As part of the consultation, we asked for respondents to comment on whether they felt improvements were necessary at each junction from 19-25 and to explain their reasons why. The purpose of this question was to help us inform the junction strategy that is being completed and will be incorporated into whichever of consultation options 1,2,3 or 4 is taken forward.

Questions 2 through to 9 in the consultation questionnaire asked respondents for their views on whether improvements were needed for each junction. The chart below shows the responses.



For junctions 20a and 20b, we asked whether respondents believed that the junctions should be retained and improved, or whether they should be removed and a new junction 20 be created. The chart below shows the responses.



Across all junctions, there were common issues that arose. Safety, congestion and short slips roads were consistently mentioned.

## 7.8 Junction 19

Of the 745 who responded to the question on junction 19, 475 (64%) felt that improvements were required.

Many respondents provided comments on the current issues at junction 19. In addition to the common issues of safety, congestions and short slip roads, respondents mentioned, amongst others, the following issues that they believe the junction currently experiences:

- Blind bends and a narrowing of the road at this point
- Poor visibility
- A complicated layout

Of those respondents who felt that improvements were not necessary, many stated that they did not experience issues at the junction, with a small number commenting that the junction works well in comparison to the other junctions.

## 7.9 Junctions 20a and 20b

Unlike the other junction questions asked in the consultation questionnaire, question 3 asked for respondents to comment on an option to merge junctions 20a and 20b – early work that had taken place had shown that there was a good opportunity to rationalise these junctions and to reduce “swerving” that can occur when 2 junctions on a trunk road are too close together.

Of the 757 who responded to the question on junction 20a and 20b, 278 (37%) felt that the junctions should be retained and improved, 352 (46%) felt that the junctions should be removed and a new junction 20 should be created and 127 (17%) did not support either option.

### 7.9.1 Current issues

Many respondents felt that junction 20a is currently satisfactory and that the safety issues lie at junction 20b. In addition, a few respondents felt that accidents at 20a are as a result of the road merging from 3 to 2 lanes and that widening could improve safety. However, there were general issues raised about congestion at both junctions and the amount of traffic passing through nearby towns and villages, such as Hatfield Peverel.

Many respondents express the view that junction 20b is particularly dangerous when compared to 20a with the slips roads being viewed dangerously short, and many commenting that this causes traffic to build up and slow down. In addition, respondents list, amongst others, the following issues they believe junction 20b experiences:

- Tight bend
- Poor visibility
- Exposed footpath with no barrier from traffic
- Unclear signage

### 7.9.2 Retain junctions 20a and 20b

Of the respondents that support retaining and improving the junctions, some comment that it would maintain familiarity for road users and would be less disruptive and more cost efficient than a new junction. A few also suggested that 2 junctions provide more options in the event of disruption or an accident. The most common

concern about removing them is that it would result in more congestion and longer journey times in local areas such as Hatfield Peverel and Witham.

### 7.9.3 Remove junctions 20a and 20b and create a new junction 20

Of the respondents that support removing the junctions and creating a new junction 20, a number commented that it would cause the least disruption as driver could use the existing junctions until construction is complete. Most respondents felt replacing junctions 20a and 20b is required to improve safety. Other respondents felt it was the only practical solution as the junctions are too close together and some specified that in general there are too many junctions along this stretch of the A12.

### 7.9.4 Alternative suggestions

Respondents to question 3 also offered a number of alternatives to merging junctions 20a and 20b or retaining and improving junctions 20a and 20b. These are listed in more detail in section 8 of this report. However, the key alternatives were:

- Merge junction 20b and 21
- Close junction 20b
- Merge junction 20a, 20b and 21

In addition to the above, there were a number of respondents who suggested creating a link road from a junction to the east of Hatfield Peverel to Maldon Road (B1019). It is believed that such a link would reduce traffic through Hatfield Peverel.

## 7.10 Junction 21

Of the 739 who responded to the question on junction 21, 457 (62%) felt that improvements to junction 21 were required.

Many respondents provided comments on the current issues at junction 21. In addition to the common issues of safety, congestions and short slip roads, respondents listed, amongst others, the following issues that they believe the junction currently experiences:

- Tight bends, poor visibility, and unsuitability for industrial vehicles
- Impact on Witham town centre
- Lack of direct access to Maldon Road
- The need for improved crossing points for pedestrians and cyclists

Of those respondents who felt that improvements were not necessary, many stated that the junction generally works well and they experience no issues with it. Some respondents felt that the junction is not currently too busy and that recent improvements meant no additional improvements were necessary.

## 7.11 Junction 22

Of the 742 who responded to the question on junction 22, 558 (75%) felt that improvements to junction 22 were required.

Many respondents provided comments on the current issues at junction 22. In addition to the common issues of safety, congestions and short slip roads, respondents listed, amongst others, the following issues that they believe the junction currently experiences:

- Width of access and exits, especially for HGVs
- Poor visibility
- Unclear signage and road markings
- Proximity to the Rivenhall End junction

Of those respondents who felt that improvements were not necessary, many stated that they did not experience issues at the junction, or that it currently works well. A few respondents commented that it is not too busy and that recent improvements have been made.

## 7.12 Junction 23

Of the 743 responses to the question on junction 23, 381 (51%) felt that improvements to junction 23 were required. This made it the junction along the scheme where the most people felt there was no need for improvements.

Many respondents provided comments on the current issues at junction 23. In addition to the common issues of safety, congestions and short slip roads, respondents listed, amongst others, the following issues that they believe the junction currently experiences:

- Increasing congestion in Kelvedon
- Poor visibility
- The speed of cars exiting the A12
- Poor signage

Of those respondents who felt that improvements were not necessary, many stated that they did not experience issues at the junction, or that it currently works well. A few respondents commented that the slip roads are long enough, that visibility and lighting are adequate and it compares favourably to the other junctions along the route.

## 7.13 Junction 24

Of the 729 responses to the question on junction 24, 439 (60%) felt that improvements to junction 24 were required.

Many respondents provided comments on the current issues at junction 24. In addition to the common issues of safety, congestions and short slip roads, respondents listed, amongst others, the following issues that they believe the junction currently experiences:

- Use by HGVs
- Increasing congestion in Kelvedon
- Accessing the A12 due to the high speed of traffic on it
- Ability to cope with planned development in the area

In addition to the above, there were a number of respondents who suggested moving the junction further south and creating a link road from junction 24 to Inworth Road (B1023). It is felt that a link road would reduce traffic through Kelvedon.

Of those respondents who felt that improvements were not necessary, many stated that they did not experience issues at the junction, describing it as “adequate”, “satisfactory” or “acceptable”. A few respondents commented

that the slip roads are long enough, that visibility and lighting are adequate and it compares favourably to other junctions.

## 7.14 Junction 25

Of the 723 responses to the question on junction 25, 414 (57%) felt that improvements to junction 25 were required.

Many respondents provided comments on the current issues at junction 25. In addition to the common issues of safety, congestions and short slip roads, respondents listed, amongst others, the following issues that they believe the junction currently experiences:

- Ability to cope with planned development in the area
- Use by HGVs
- Traffic accessing Marks Tey railway station

Of those respondents who felt that improvements were not necessary, many stated that they did not experience issues at the junction, describing it as “adequate”, “satisfactory” or “acceptable”. A few respondents commented that depending on the outcome of the A120 scheme, it may be unnecessary to improve junction 25.

## 8. Alternative options received as part of the feedback

As part of the consultation we presented 4 options. While most respondents commented on just the options presented, a number of respondents provided alternative options. This section outlines the main alternatives and our response to them.

### 8.1 Hatfield Peverel bypass

#### 8.1.1 Consultation response

Create a bypass at Hatfield Peverel.

#### 8.1.2 Our response

The option of bypassing Hatfield Peverel was previously considered. It is referenced in section 8.2.2 of the *Options Assessment Report* published with this consultation under options HI-01 and option HI-02. Bypassing Hatfield Peverel was, however, considered unfeasible and unlikely to be deliverable. The reasons for this were the length of route required to bypass Hatfield Peverel sufficiently to avoid properties, the impact on farmland plots and splitting of land holdings, the number of road crossings and associated structures that would be required, and the space available to either side of the current A12.

### 8.2 Northern bypass

Create a bypass to the north of the current A12 from junction 19 to junction 25.

#### 8.2.1 Our response

The option of creating a northern bypass has been previously considered. It is referenced in section 8.2.2 of the *Options Assessment Report* published with this consultation under option HI-01. The reasons for this were that delivery of this scale of project was considered unfeasible and unlikely to be delivered. The option would require two extensive railway bridges that would create strong negative visual impacts given the character of the surrounding landscape. It would also place a large new road in a landscape, to the north of the railway, which currently does not have a road of this scale, which could create considerable negative ecological impacts. The potential to improve and reuse the existing A12 was considered a better option as works would still be required here to improve the existing carriageway and drainage.

### 8.3 M12

Create an M12.

#### 8.3.1 Our response

We are grateful for the suggestions we received to turn the A12 into an M (Motorway) road. The option of doing this was previously considered. It is referenced in section 8.2.2 of the *Options Assessment Report* published with this consultation under option HI-11. Creating an M12 was, however, considered unfeasible and unlikely to be deliverable. The reasons for this were because the work required to convert the entire length of the A12 to a motorway standard are beyond the scope of the government announcement made in Road Investment Strategy 1.

### 8.4 Merge junctions 20b and 21

#### 8.5.1 Consultation response

Many respondents felt there are no major issues at junction 20a. However, many did feel there are issues with junction 20b and due to its close proximity to junction 21 the best way to address those issues is to merge junction 20b with junction 21.

### **8.5.2 Our response**

We are reviewing the junctions at this location and welcome the suggestions we have received. As part of that review we will investigate how traffic will spread itself over the network if junction 20b and 21 were to be merged. This will help us to consider whether merging 20b and 21 is a possible alternative to merging 20a and 20b. In addition, we are also reviewing the engineering standards of the junctions at this location to see whether an alternative to merging 20a and 20b is possible. The final outcome of this analysis will have to ensure that whatever solution is selected, it will solve the current level of safety issues and congestion. Once the modelling of the traffic redistribution has been completed we will be in a position to confirm the solution in this area.

## **8.5 Merge junctions 20a, 20b and 21**

### **8.6.1 Consultation response**

Some respondents suggested that 20a, 20b and 21 should be combined into one larger capacity junction.

### **8.6.2 Our response**

As mentioned above, we are reviewing the junctions at this location and we are grateful for the suggestions we have received. As part of that review we will investigate how traffic will spread itself over the network if junction 20a, 20b and 21 were to be merged. This will help us to consider whether merging 20a, 20b and 21 is a possible alternative to merging only 20a and 20b or merging 20b and 21. In addition, we are also reviewing the engineering standards of the junctions at this location to see whether an alternative to merging 20a and 20b is possible. All necessary additional links that this solution would require to maintain access to and from Hatfield Peverel, south Witham and the A12 are being investigated to assess the full impact of this potential solution on the wider road network.

## 9. General issues raised

In addition to comments on the proposals and questions posed in this consultation, there were also a number of general issues raised. This section will provide a response to those issues:

### 9.1 Compensation and blight

We recognise that when an infrastructure project is proposed it can cause concerns for those whose property is potentially directly affected. As such, at the public consultation events we ensured that property specialists were on hand to speak to any concerned residents, landowners or business owners. We also arranged a property surgery after the events to provide an opportunity for concerned residents, landowners and business owners to meet with property experts. Where those with concerns could not attend the surgery, telephone calls from our experts were made.

With the project at an early stage of design and with different route options being considered, there is a resulting level of uncertainty. However, as the scheme develops and the preferred route is announced there will be a lot more clarity on what land is required for the scheme. Once this is clear, direct engagement will take place with those landowners and property owners directly affected.

More information can be found <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/your-property-and-blight>

For those whose property or land is not required for the scheme, it may be that they are entitled to make a Part 1 compensation claim. Part 1 compensation comes into effect one year after the scheme becomes operational: More information can be found <https://www.gov.uk/compensation-road-property-value/overview>

### 9.2 A120

We are working closely with Essex County Council as it develops its proposals for the A120 scheme and builds the case for its inclusion in the Road Investment Strategy 2. A joint board has been set up with senior members of each project (A12 and A120) to ensure that both schemes are fully considered in conjunction with each other and by each team. We held a number of joint forums in the run up to the consultation which we also held together at 6 venues. We will continue to work closely to ensure the best outcome for both projects and ensure that our scheme could facilitate the A120 proposals.

### 9.3 Rivenhall junction

While the Rivenhall junction is a well-used local junction and provides access to the A12, improving this junction does not fall within the remit of the proposed scheme and it was for this reason that it was not included within the consultation.

If either option 2 or 3 (bypassing Rivenhall) becomes the preferred route, this junction could be retained and provide access to the existing A12. However, if option 1 or 4 (widening the existing A12 through Rivenhall) is chosen as the preferred route, this junction would have to be closed off. Direct access from this junction onto a trunk road is far from ideal and has safety implications attached to it. As such, alternative access would need to be provided to the A12 from either junction 22 or junction 23.

### 9.4 Link roads

We received two main suggestions for link roads to be provided, one linking the A12 to Maldon Road, and another linking the A12 to Inworth Road. As the authority for major roads and trunk roads in the UK, our remit does not extend to providing local roads. While they will not be actively pursued as part of the A12 scheme as local roads are outside of our remit, we will discuss these suggestions with the relevant local authorities and consider whether our junctions can facilitate the inclusion of the link roads that have been suggested, in the event that the local authority wishes to pursue them.

## 9.5 A12 junctions 11-15 and junctions 25-29

The Government's Road Investment Strategy 1 included commitment to develop proposals for:

- A12 Colchester bypass – widening of the A12 between junctions 25 and 29 to three lanes and improvements to local junction layout, to relieve congestion and improve access between London and Ipswich.
- A12 M25 to Chelmsford – widening to three lanes between the M25 and the Chelmsford bypass (junctions 11 to 15), improving a road, which is a patchwork of smaller-scale improvements, to a modern, safe standard.

Both these schemes are at very early stages of development. If they progress through development stages successfully they will be considered for the Government's Road Investment Strategy 2.

## 9.6 Mitigation measures

Due to the early stage of the project we have not identified mitigation measures. However, once the preferred route is announced, we will be clear on which option is being taken forward and can begin detailed landscape, archaeological and ecology surveys. We will produce a 'Scoping Report' which will outline in detail the expected significant environmental effects of the preferred route and start to outline specific mitigation measures that could reduce those effects. Mitigation measures could include, for example, landscaping and noise fencing.

## 10. Conclusion

The public consultation process received a large amount of responses and we are grateful to all those who took time to come to our information events and respond to the consultation. We are also grateful to all the local councillors who raised awareness of events and the consultation in their local communities. This consultation was the first of a number of opportunities stakeholders will have to formally feed into the development of the scheme and we are committed to continued engagement.

In total 1,853 visitors attended the public information events and 907 completed a questionnaire or provided a response via letter or email. This rate of response demonstrates the high level of local interest in the scheme.

From the results obtained, 92% of those who supported a consultation option expressed a preference for Option 1, Option 2, Option 3 or Option 4, with only 18% expressing no preference. Of those who expressed a preference for a consultation option, Option 2 received the most support with 402 of the 824 (49%) expressing it as their preferred route option. The second most popular option was Option 1 with 227 of the 824 (27%) expressing it as their preferred route option. Option 3 was supported by 91 (11%) of the 824 and Option 4 was supported by 37 (4%) of the 824.

Support for Option 2 was provided for a number of reasons. The key themes for support from the consultation included its resilience, minimised disruption during construction, being future-proof, and the avoidance of Rivenhall End. There were a number of concerns about Option 2 which included land take, visual impacts, the potential impact on archaeological assets and Blackwater Valley.

Responses show that improvements are felt to be needed at all junctions. This was particularly clear at junction 22 where 75% felt improvements were needed. Improvements at junction 23 received the least support, but still a slight majority of 51% felt improvements were necessary. There were also some key concerns that run across all the junctions such as congestion, safety and short slip roads. Concerns about visibility at junctions, signage and tight bends were also raised.

A number of alternatives were provided. While some of these alternatives have already been considered and ruled out, the comments we received particularly in relation to junctions 20a, 20b and 21 are being considered in detail with an open mind and will help us to inform our consultation strategy.

89% of those who attended and rated our consultation events rated them positively. We received constructive feedback from a few respondents who have suggested how communications and the consultation could have been better. We always strive to improve so we will consider how we can incorporate those suggestions into our engagement going forward. This includes our commitment to hold a public event for the statutory consultation in Hatfield Peverel.

As mentioned above, this is the first of a number of opportunities that stakeholders will have to formally feed into the scheme. We have concluded that the information we received at this consultation is sufficient for this stage and as such we will now move onto the next stage of the scheme. Below outlines the next steps:

- We will continue to consider the information we have received during this consultation as we move into detailed design of the preferred route
- We will hold a statutory consultation in autumn. The statutory consultation will provide detailed information on the preferred route. It will show the footprint of the scheme, including what land is required, junction layouts, how the scheme will affect local traffic flows, and what the specific environmental effects will be and how we could mitigate them
- We will analyse the feedback we receive from the statutory consultation and show how we are taking that information to incorporate it into our application for a Development Consent Order
- We will submit an application to the Planning Inspectorate for a Development Consent Order (DCO). More information on the DCO process can be found at: <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/the-process/>