

21 March 2017

Planning and Licensing Committee

**Response to Highways England A12 Chelmsford to A120
Widening Scheme Consultation**

Report of: *Phil Drane – Planning Policy Team Leader*

Wards Affected: *All Wards*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Highways England has consulted on options for widening the A12 between Junction 19 (Boreham interchange north of Chelmsford) and Junction 25 (Marks Tey interchange with the A120). Proposals relate to widening a number of lanes and possibly building new sections of road. Views have been sought on four potential options.
- 1.2 In response to the consultation, a holding response has been made on behalf of the Council and is provided with this report for approval (see Appendix A). Although the proposals related to this consultation do not directly impact on Brentwood, it is one part of several major national infrastructure projects to invest in the A12. There are wider implications for the Borough when considering outcomes from these proposals plus other future A12 projects. It is important that the Council express a view about the wider strategic importance of A12 investment projects to expand capacity and relieve congestion.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 To approve the response to the Highways England A12 Chelmsford to A120 widening scheme consultation as set out in Appendix A.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 Highways England consulted on options for widening the A12 between Junction 19 (Boreham interchange north of Chelmsford) and Junction 25 (Marks Tey interchange with the A120). The improvements aim to reduce congestion and increase safety along with economic growth.

- 3.2 Up to 90,000 vehicles travel between Junction 19 and 25 every day. Forecasts reveal that the traffic on the A12 will exceed capacity by 2038. Due to congestion, motorists regularly experience delays during peak times. There are also safety concerns. In the past five years, the junctions along this stretch of the A12 have experienced three fatal collisions and 12 serious accidents.
- 3.3 Although this scheme does not directly involve stretches of the A12 through Brentwood Borough, the proposed options may have an impact on future infrastructure improvements and how they are considered. This consultation to invest in improvements north of Chelmsford is one part of required intervention across the A12. In addition to this consultation there are two other projects with confirmed allocated budget from Government; A12 widening south of Chelmsford to the M25 (partly through Brentwood Borough), and improvements to M25 junction 28 at Brook Street, Brentwood. It is important that these separate projects are planned and undertaken in unison to avoid disruption, deliver economic growth, and provide necessary improvements for the wider area.
- 3.4 A response has been submitted on behalf of Brentwood Borough Council to meet the Highways England consultation deadline. This is now subject to the recommended approval of Planning & Licensing Committee.

4. Options

- 4.1 The Government announced its decision to improve the capacity in the stretch between Junction 19 and Junction 25 of the A12 in the Roads Investment Strategy 2015. After local engagement, a number of options have been developed to improve safety and reduce journey times.
- 4.2 A shortlist of four options has been drawn up by Highways England to solve identified capacity issues that will worsen over time if not resolved. The options look at either widening the A12 to three lanes in each direction across the entire section, or widening part of the A12 and building new sections of road at key points.
- 4.3 Maps of each shortlisted option proposed by Highways England (Option 1, 2, 3 and 4) are set out in Appendix B.
- a) **Option 1:** Widens the A12 between junctions 19-25 (Boreham to Marks Tey/A120) by using the existing highway boundary or adjacent land.

- b) **Option 2:** Widens the road along the existing A12 except where widening could have a high local impact. Two new bypasses would take traffic off the A12 and onto a newly created A12 between junctions 22-23 (Colemans to Kelvedon South) and junctions 24-25 (Kelvedon North to Marks Tey/A120).
- c) **Option 3:** The same as Option 2, but with one new bypass between junctions 22-23 (Colemans to Kelvedon South).
- d) **Option 4:** The same as Option 2 but with one new bypass between junctions 24-25 (Kelvedon North to Marks Tey/A120).

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 Brentwood Borough Council's proposed response to the consultation is set out at Appendix A. The response asks Highways England to consider the wider infrastructure implications that any option would have on the entire A12 Corridor and surrounding areas as a whole.
- 5.2 The Council has a specific interest in the stretch of A12 south of Chelmsford, which flows through Brentwood Borough before reaching the M25 junction 28 (Brook Street). As the Council is at an important stage in the plan-making process, which includes meeting challenging development and infrastructure needs, it is important that congestion is reduced between the A12 and M25 in order to facilitate economic growth in Essex.
- 5.3 Brentwood Borough Council is not directly impacted by the proposals north of Chelmsford and so no preference is expressed with regard to the four options. However, the response sets out support for the need to create additional capacity along this section of the A12, and asks that Highways England does so while also considering the need to improve capacity and junction safety on the rest of the A12. It is critical that development proposals are mindful of the need for future works south of Chelmsford as well as proposals at M25 junction 28.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Highways England undertook public consultation between 23 January and 3 March 2017. Responses will be analysed and incorporated into a consultation report before confirmation of a selected option.

- 6.2 Copies of consultation materials, maps and questionnaires are available to view online at <https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a12-chelmsford-to-a120-widening-scheme/>

7. References to Vision for Brentwood 2016-19

- 7.1 The proposed improvements to the A12 represent a scheme with impacts on one of the major routes into, out of, and through Brentwood Borough. Although there is no direct reference made in the Council's 'Vision for Brentwood' Corporate Plan 2016-2019, the project has implications for the Local Development Plan and other Council priorities, including supporting economic growth.

8. Implications

Financial Implications

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- 8.1 There are no financial implications for the Council arising from this Highways England consultation.

Legal Implications

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- 8.2 There are no legal implications for the Council arising from this Highways England consultation.

9. Background Papers

- a) A12 Chelmsford to A120 widening scheme brochure (January 2017) (available to view at: https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a12-chelmsford-to-a120-widening-scheme/supporting_documents/S1600566%20A12%20Execuative%20Summary%20Report.pdf/)

10. Appendices to this report

Appendix A -Brentwood Borough Council response to the A12 Chelmsford to A120 Widening Scheme Consultation

Appendix B -Maps of Highways England A12 Chelmsford to A120
Widening Options 1, 2, 3 and 4

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