

Brentwood Borough Council response to the Highways England M25 Junction 28 Improvement Scheme Statutory Consultation

December 2018 – January 2019

1. The Council submitted representations to the previous M25 Junction 28 consultation in 2017. We note that since then the preferred route has been announced and that this consultation is regarding technical aspects of that preferred route. This response continues to raise the strategic issues that the Council raised in 2017, where relevant. No specific comment is made regarding the detail of the preferred route other than where this relates to key strategic issues.
2. The Council support the need for improvements to M25 Junction 28 (Brook Street roundabout). Evidence and local experience indicate that this junction is heavily congested. This not only delays journeys but also has a negative impact on Brentwood Borough, and both the local and national economies.
3. The Council support the preferred route that provides a loop road to increase capacity of the junction by removing traffic travelling from the M25 anti-clockwise onto the eastbound A12 carriageway. However, this does not address wider congestion issues at the junction/roundabout, such as queuing traffic originating from the A1023, Brook Street. The traffic modelling for the area identifies that when the signalised junctions at Mascalls Lane and Nags Head Lane operate over capacity during peak times this causes queues onto Junction 28 and then the A12 and M25. This problem is likely to continue considering the proposals do not address the issue, adding to the existing air pollution at the junction. It is acknowledged that the A1023 is not within the control of Highways England and further work with Essex County Council (local highway authority) is required to consider an appropriate solution.
4. The Council responded to the previous consultation regarding the need for more wholesale improvements across the junction, dealing with all issues together and consolidating the inevitable disruption caused by construction activity. This view is repeated, although it is understood why this scheme has come forward first in terms of secured funding. Nevertheless, the Council is concerned by the likelihood of multiple and long-term disruption in the area as a result of numerous improvement projects.
5. The Council support revised proposals for the point at which the new loop road meets the A12 eastbound, requiring less realignment on the A12 and thereby reducing construction activity and disruption. The efforts to minimise disruption are welcomed and encouraged across the scheme wherever possible.

6. While it is acknowledged that a solution is required to address vehicle congestion, the junction is also the location for a Byway which crosses the southern end of the A1023, runs south of The Poplars and then crosses the M25 slip-road onwards to Putwell Bridge Farm and Oak Farm, to the south of the M25. The Council is working with Essex County Council on improving the Borough's cycling networks and looking at solutions to overcome major road and infrastructure barriers to connect to wider cycling / walking networks across Essex. These types of considerations will also need to be considered when looking at improvements to the junction, as part of a more comprehensive scheme.
7. The importance of the Green Belt in this area should be considered, given the separation provided between the edge of the Brentwood urban area and Greater London, specifically Harold Park (London Borough of Havering). Whilst there is already an existing road structure the addition of a large loop road presents a new incursion into the Green Belt which will impact on openness.
8. The Council notes joint working that has taken place with Highways England as part of preparing the Brentwood Local Development Plan, including transport modelling that has informed the Brentwood transport evidence base as well as assessments that informed Highways England proposals. Continued joint working is required to understand the implications of growth in the wider area on the strategic highway network.
9. We thank Highways England for involving the Council in this key public consultation and note the effort that has gone into preparing consultation material and holding public information events. The Council looks forward to continued dialogue on the project.
