

A12 Chelmsford to A120 widening scheme

TR010060

5.2 Consultation Report Annex C: Copy of the draft SoCC provided to local authorities

APFP Regulation 5(2)(q)

Section 37(3)(c) of the Planning Act 2008
Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed
Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009

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A12 Chelmsford to A120 widening scheme Development Consent Order 202[]

5.2 Consultation Report

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CONTENTS

Copy of the draft SoCC provided to local authorities	3
1 Introduction	3
2 Our application.....	4
3 The proposed scheme	4
4 Preliminary Environmental Information Report.....	5
5 Consulting the community and previous consultations	5
6 About this next consultation	6
7 Who can take part?	7
8 How will we consult?.....	7
9 How to respond to the consultation:.....	15
10 Information available at local public information points	15
11 Next steps.....	18
12 Your data, your rights.....	18
13 Appendix A - event plans	19

APPENDICES

No table of contents entries found.

LIST OF PLATES

Plate 1 Mailout zone	7
Plate 2 Example of virtual event space.....	8
Plate 3 Public information points.....	16
Plate 4 Public information event locations	19

No table of figures entries found.

LIST OF TABLES

No table of figures entries found.

No table of figures entries found.

Copy of the draft SoCC provided to local authorities



Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) A12 Chelmsford to A120 widening February 2021

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Highways England is a government-owned company responsible for operating, maintaining and improving England's motorways and major A-roads. We are undertaking billions of pounds of investment on this strategic road network. The A12 Chelmsford to A120 widening is part of our ongoing investment and will improve journeys between junction 19 (Boreham interchange) and junction 25 (Marks Tey interchange).
- 1.2 We are consulting on this Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) to outline our approach to consulting with local communities for the above scheme. It provides details about how you, residents, businesses and interested parties, can take part and how feedback will be used to influence our proposed design.
- 1.3 To make sure we approach our consultation in the very best way for the local community, we are consulting on this document with the local authorities in the area of the proposed scheme:
- Braintree District Council
 - Chelmsford City Council
 - Colchester Borough Council
 - Essex County Council
 - Maldon District Council
- 1.4 We are formally issuing this draft SoCC to those local authorities in accordance with Section 47(2) of the Planning Act 2008. You have 28 days to respond to this document.
- 1.5 This document also gives you the background to the proposed scheme and how our application to build it will progress.

2 Our application

- 2.1 The proposed scheme is being developed under the Planning Act 2008 and we are publishing this statement under Section 47 (duty to consult local community) of that act.
- 2.2 Under the Planning Act 2008, we are required to make an application to the Secretary of State through the Planning Inspectorate for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to build this proposed scheme. The Planning Inspectorate will examine our application and the Secretary of State will decide on whether the proposed scheme should go ahead based on a recommendation made by the Planning Inspectorate. We anticipate that our DCO application for the proposed scheme will be submitted in spring 2022.
- 2.3 A key consideration for the Planning Inspectorate and the Secretary of State when assessing our DCO application is the National Policy Statement for National Networks. The statement sets out the need for development of road projects on the national networks and is the policy against which decisions on major road projects will be made.
- 2.4 When we submit our application, the Planning Inspectorate must consider whether our consultation has been adequate. The best time for you to have your say to inform our final design on this proposed scheme is now by taking part in this consultation.
- 2.5 You can find more information about the Planning Inspectorate and the Planning Act 2008 on their National Infrastructure Planning website: <http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk> or by calling the Planning Inspectorate on 0303 444 5000.

3 The proposed scheme

- 3.1 The A12 is an important economic link in Essex and across the east of England, and part of the Highways England strategic road network. It provides the main south west/north east route through Essex and Suffolk, connecting Ipswich to London and to the M25.
- 3.2 This section between junction 19 (Boreham interchange) and junction 25 (Marks Tey interchange) carries high volumes of traffic, with up to 90,000 vehicles every day. Heavy goods vehicles are between 9% and 12% of the traffic on this section due to its important freight connection, especially to Felixstowe and Harwich ports which are key economic links between the UK and the global supply chain. This section of the A12 is also an important commuter route between Chelmsford and Colchester. The resulting congestion leads to delays and means that, during the morning commute, a driver's average speed is particularly slow in both directions for an A-road.
- 3.3 Our planned improvements to the A12 are great news for the national, regional and local economies. The improvements will help support the distribution of goods and services, link major regional commercial centres along the route, and provide better access to holiday destinations within the region. For commuters and residents travelling along the route between Chelmsford, Witham, Marks Tey and Colchester, the improvements will result in reduced

congestion, more reliable journey times, and a road that consistently meets modern design standards. The proposed scheme will also provide improved routes for walkers, cyclists, horse-riders by ensuring a range of routes are available to these groups and all local residents.

4 Preliminary Environmental Information Report

- 4.1 As part of this statutory consultation we have published a Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) on the proposed scheme website (at <http://www.highwaysengland.co.uk/A12>) as part of the consultation materials available. This gives information about the potential environmental effects of the proposed scheme and the measures proposed to reduce any significant adverse effects identified. It addresses the full range of environmental topics including air quality, noise, water, soils, landscape, biodiversity, heritage, population and health, and climate change.
- 4.2 The PEIR provides information at an interim stage in the Environmental Impact Assessment process and responses received will help inform the continued development of the proposed scheme and the production of a final Environmental Statement to support the application for development consent. We have also published a non-technical summary of the PEIR to better enable the local community to understand the environmental effects of the proposed scheme.
- 4.3 Additional information about the proposed scheme, including detailed maps/plans and associated benefits, will be included in our public consultation brochure. Hard copies and digital copies of the brochure will be accessible at local public information display points detailed in this SoCC during the consultation period. We will also look at providing documents on USB sticks.
- 4.4 You will also be able to access all this information online by visiting the proposed scheme webpage at www.highwaysengland.co.uk/A12. For an accessible version of the brochure, please call 0300 123 5000 and we will help you.

5 Consulting the community and previous consultations

- 5.1 In 2017, we consulted on possible route options to widen the A12. We presented four routes and had 907 responses. Consultees were asked for their views on four options, which included two online and two offline routes. They were also asked about individual junction improvements.
- 5.2 Following this, the local authorities of Colchester, Braintree and Tendring put forward a joint local plan, including the Colchester Braintree Borders Garden Community which affected the route options we consulted on in 2017. We therefore considered alternative routes between junctions 23 and 25 which took account of the area for the proposed garden community. However, in May 2020, the Planning Inspector made his recommendation that the proposed garden community should be removed from the joint local plan and the councils accepted this recommendation.
- 5.3 In August 2020, we therefore confirmed our preferred route between junctions 19 and 25 based on option 2 from the 2017 consultation.

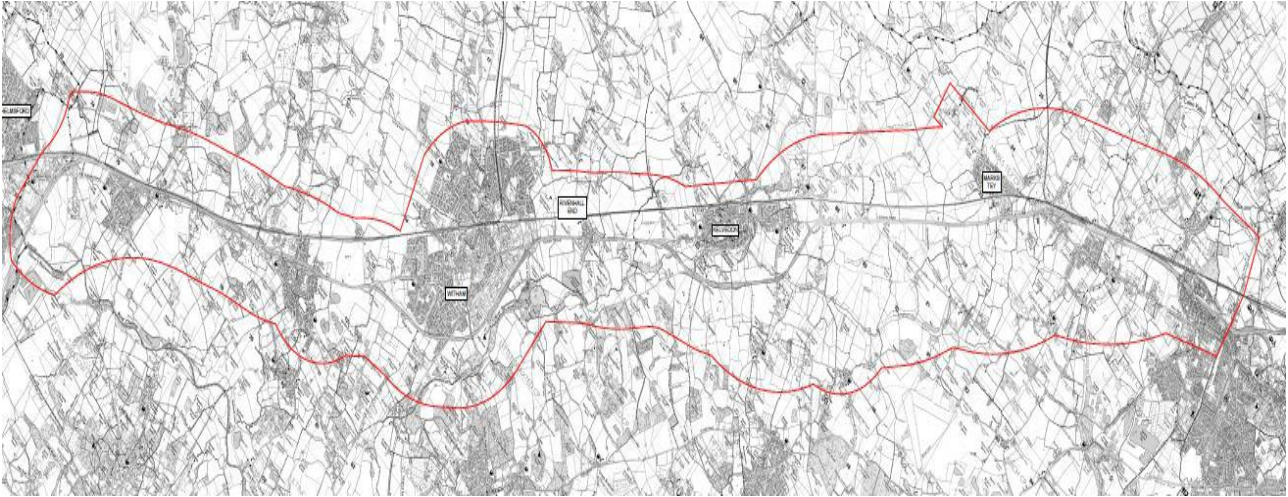
- 5.4 Since then we have held numerous meetings and workshops with local planning authorities, parish councils and customers.
- 5.5 More details, including the results of these consultations and how we decided to progress route 2, are included in the Public Consultation Report and Preferred Route Announcement leaflet, available to download from (www.highwaysengland.co.uk/A12).

6 About this next consultation

- 6.1 It is important to us that our consultation will:
- enable members of the public to influence our proposals
 - provide the opportunity for everyone, including hard to reach individuals, to give feedback on potential options
 - encourage the community to help shape our proposals to maximise local benefits and minimise any downsides by sharing their views
 - help local people understand the potential nature and local impact of our proposals
 - enable potential mitigation measures to be considered and, if appropriate, built into the project before an application is submitted
 - identify ways in which our proposals, without significant costs, support wider strategic or local objectives.
- 6.2 Your comments will help us achieve these objectives. We commit to listen to everyone's view, and we will consider all your opinions before we submit our DCO application.
- 6.3 The consultation will take place at the start of June. If the start date for the consultation is delayed, and moves further into the summer holidays, we will give consideration to this and the possibility of extending the eight-week consultation period by up to two weeks.
- 6.4 During the consultation period, we will be consulting on the following particular elements of the proposed scheme:
- the proposed junctions and designs
 - environmental assessments and potential environmental impacts
 - environmental mitigation measures
 - traffic modelling
 - potential provision for walking, cycling and horse riding.
- 6.5 Working with Braintree District Council, Chelmsford City Council, Colchester Borough Council, Essex County Council and Maldon District Council, we have developed a consultation target area for the distribution of our consultation materials. This is based on who we think will be affected by our proposals. We'll

let people living/working in this area know about our consultation by posting information in advance.

Plate 1 Mailout zone



7 Who can take part?

- 7.1 This is a public consultation. Anyone who is interested in this proposed scheme is welcome to take part. We welcome all views and will take them into account to help before we submit our final design.

8 How will we consult?

- 8.1 Our main focus will be on the virtual event space (pictured below). We will also be offering webinars and a telephone surgery throughout the eight-week consultation period.
- 8.2 If safe and appropriate to do so, we will look to hold public events during the consultation period. This decision will be reviewed on 1 April 2021, based on the government guidance on COVID-19 at that time. Please see Appendix A for information on where these may be held.

Plate 2 Example of virtual event space



8.3 We will use the following methods to promote our public consultation:

Method	Detail
Virtual exhibition 	<p>A virtual exhibition will be available online during the period of the consultation. This space will provide all the same information that a physical event would include, including maps, a flythrough and technical documents.</p> <p>We will also have webinar sessions and phone surgeries where members of the public can speak to our project team.</p>

Method

Proposed scheme webpage



Detail

The consultation will be hosted on the proposed scheme Citizenspace website and will provide a full summary of the proposed scheme. The website will display consultation materials including this SoCC, the consultation brochure, an online response form, the PEIR, a non-technical summary and plans showing the extent of the proposed scheme (red line boundary).

These documents will be available at www.highwaysengland.co.uk/A12

Method


Consultation brochure




Detail

Letters will be sent to local people within the vicinity of the proposed scheme and those directly affected by the proposed scheme. Copies of the consultation brochure and response form will be available to view at local public information points.

The suite of documents will include the PIER and a non-technical summary which will set out environmental impacts and possible mitigation measures.

Method	Detail
<p data-bbox="204 360 576 461">Council and community forums</p> 	<p data-bbox="655 360 1417 573">We commit to carrying out two district, county and community forums before and after our consultation.</p> <p data-bbox="655 629 1417 887">We will also be holding workshops with a wide range of local and national businesses across the route to ensure everyone who is affected is included in our consultation.</p> <p data-bbox="655 954 1417 1167">We will also be gathering views from neighbouring authorities to ensure we take into account any impacts in these areas.</p>

Method	Detail
<p data-bbox="204 1447 472 1615">Establishing stakeholder groups</p> 	<p data-bbox="655 1447 1417 1615">We have established stakeholder forums at county, district and community levels.</p> <p data-bbox="655 1671 1417 1939">We have also been engaging with parish councils, walking, cycling and horse riding groups, road users and businesses across the proposed scheme.</p>

Method

Statutory notices



Detail

Statutory notices to publicise the proposed DCO application and the SoCC will be issued:

- Proposed DCO application - once in a national newspaper and the London Gazette and twice in The Essex Chronicle, Braintree and Witham Times and the Essex County Standard.
- Publicising the SoCC - once in The Essex Chronicle, Braintree and Witham Times and the Essex County Standard.

Method

Media adverts and press releases




Detail


We will advertise the consultation by placing adverts in the London Gazette, The Essex Chronicle, The East Anglian Times, The East Anglian Daily Times, The Colchester Gazette, Braintree and Witham Times, Essex County Standard and The Maldon and Burnham Standard.

Adverts will be placed in local newspapers to promote the launch of the consultation period and will include details of the consultation events.

Press releases detailing the consultation period and how members of the public can get involved will be used.

We will also put features into the Edge and City Life magazines.

Method	Detail
Social media	<p>The public consultation will be advertised on the proposed scheme website, the Planning Inspector website, Facebook and Twitter (@HighwaysEast).</p>
	<p>We will make information available for use on local planning authority and parish council websites, Facebook and Twitter sites to share this information.</p>
	<p>We will also look at paid advertising on Facebook, TikTok and Instagram.</p>

Method	Detail
<p>Other forms of advertising</p> 	<p>We will provide information for parish council newsletters to advertise the consultation.</p> <p>We will also use the Highways England engagement van as a billboard.</p> <p>If open, we will provide posters and banners in community spots including shops and the village halls.</p>

- 8.4 Where possible, any activity(s) that cannot be undertaken due to circumstances beyond our control (such as severe weather conditions) will be substituted with similar activity(s) and advertised in local newspapers (via a press release) and on our social media channels and website at www.highwaysengland.co.uk/A12.

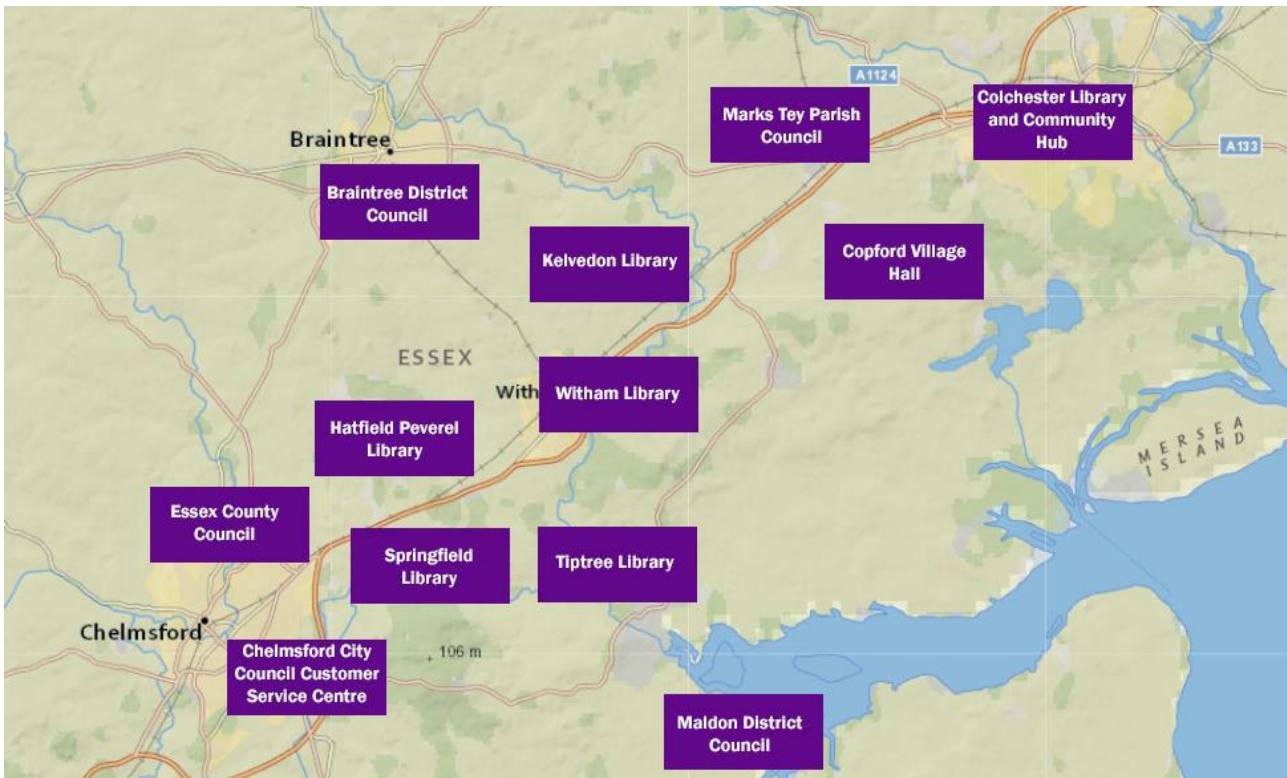
9 How to respond to the consultation:

- 9.1 A consultation response form will be produced to help you provide comments on the proposed scheme design. All consultation responses must be made in writing by:
- Completing the online response form at www.highwaysengland.co.uk/A12
 - Pick up a paper copy at one of our public information display points, which can be posted back to us via freepost to the **FREEPOST A12 WIDENING** or
 - Alternatively, you can:
 - email A12chelmsfordA120wide@highwaysengland.co.uk or
 - write to us FREEPOST A12 WIDENING
- 9.2 All responses must be received by the end of the eight-week consultation period

10 Information available at local public information points

- 10.1 The documents detailed below will be made available for information and to help inform your consultation response:
- public consultation brochure and response form
 - PEIR and non-technical summary.
- 10.2 Paper copies of the brochure and response form will be available free of charge at the public information points below during the consultation period. Additionally, we will provide digital copies of the materials at the locations below.

Plate 3 Public information points



- 10.3 Please note that these public information points locations are subject to opening times and restrictions and will be kept under review:

Public information points*	Opening times
<p>Braintree District Council Causeway House, Bocking End, Braintree, CM7 9HB</p>	<p>Monday to Friday – 9am – 5pm</p>
<p>Chelmsford City Council Customer Service Centre, DukeStreet, Chelmsford, CM1 1JE</p>	<p>Monday to Friday - 8.45am – 4.45pm</p>

Colchester Library and Community Hub Colchester Library, Trinity Square, Colchester, CO1 1JB	Monday to Friday – 9am – 5pm
Copford Village Hall Copford, Colchester CO6 1BX	Open for certain events
Essex County Council County Hall, Market Road, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH	Monday to Friday - 8.30am – 5pm
Hatfield Peverel Library The Street, Hatfield Peverel, Chelmsford, CM3 2DP	Tuesday and Thursday - 1pm - 5pm Wednesday and Saturday 9am – 1pm
Kelvedon Library Aylett's Foundation School, Maldon Road, Kelvedon, CO5 9BA	Monday and Thursday 1pm – 5pm Saturday 9am – 1pm
Maldon District Council Council Offices, Princes Road, Maldon, Essex, Cm9 5DL	Monday to Friday - 8.30am – 5pm
Marks Tey Parish Council Old London Road, Marks Tey, Colchester, CO6 1EJ	Tuesday and Thursday 9.30am and 3.30pm
Tiptree Library Rectory Road, Tiptree, CO5 0SX	Monday 2pm – 5pm Tuesday 10am – 1pm, 2pm – 5pm Thursday 10am – 1pm, 2pm – 5pm Saturday 9am – 1pm
Springfield Library St Augustine's Way, Springfield, Chelmsford CM1 6GX	Tuesday 10am – 5pm Thursday 10am – 5pm Friday 10am – 5pm Saturday 10am to 1pm

10.4 Additionally, the following documents will be available on the proposed scheme consultation website (Citizenspace) at www.highwaysengland.co.uk/A12:

- Public Consultation Brochure and response form route map showing the full area of the proposed scheme on a red line boundary plan
- Section 48 Notice Development Consent Order leaflet explaining the planning process in more detail
- previous consultation brochures
- Report on Public Consultation

- proposed area of development boundary
- PEIR

11 Next steps

- 11.1 Where we consider it appropriate, and before submitting our DCO application, we may choose to undertake further targeted consultation on certain changes to the proposed scheme made in response to consultation feedback or updated technical information. This may only relate to a particular locality. Such consultation will be for a minimum of 28 days and will be publicised using similar techniques set out in this document, including the local newspaper notices.
- 11.2 We will record and carefully consider all responses received during the consultation. All responses will be taken into account in finalising our application before we submit it to the Planning Inspectorate.
- 11.3 We'll summarise our findings in a Consultation Report which will include a description of how our application was informed by the responses received, and outline any changes made as a result of consultation. The Consultation Report forms part of our submission to the Planning Inspectorate.
- 11.4 The Planning Inspectorate will decide whether the application meets the required standards to proceed to examination. It will also determine whether our consultation has been adequate.
- 11.5 For more information, visit our proposed scheme webpage at www.highwaysengland.co.uk/A12, where you can also sign up for email alerts whenever the webpage is updated. If you have any queries about this proposed scheme, please contact Highways England by calling 0300 123 5000, emailing A12chelmsfordA120wide@highwaysengland.co.uk or writing to us at FREEPOST A12 WIDENING.

12 Your data, your rights

- 12.1 On 25 May 2018, the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) became law. The law requires Highways England to explain to you – consultees, stakeholders and customers – how your personal data will be used and stored. Highways England adheres to the Government's consultation principles, the Planning Act 2008 as required, and may collect personal data to help shape development of highways schemes. Personal data collected by the project team will be processed and retained by Highways England and its appointed contractors until the proposed scheme is complete. Under the GDPR regulations you have the following rights:
- Right of access to the data (Subject Access Request)
 - Right for the rectification of errors
 - Right to erasure of personal data – this is not an absolute right under the legislation
 - Right to restrict processing or to object to processing

- Right to data portability

- 12.2 If, at any point, Highways England plans to process the personal data we hold for a purpose other than that for which it was originally collected, we will tell you what that other purpose is. We will do this prior to any further processing taking place and we will include any relevant additional information, including your right to object to that further processing.
- 12.3 You have the right to lodge a complaint with the supervisory authority, the Information Commissioners Office.
- 12.4 If you'd like more information about how we manage data, or a copy of our privacy notice, please contact:
DataProtectionAdvice@highwaysengland.co.uk

13 Appendix A - event plans

- 13.1 We will primarily use our virtual exhibition which will be available throughout the whole consultation.
- 13.2 However, if it is safe to do so, we plan to hold public information events at the below locations. We will review the situation in April in line with government guidelines on COVID-19.
- 13.3 If the events are held, members of the public will be able to attend an event at one of the below locations during the consultation period. At these events, we will have technical specialists available to talk through maps and answer your questions. We will have large banners detailing various aspects of the design including environmental, walking, cycling and horse-riding routes and traffic information.

Plate 4 Public information event locations

