

A12 widening - Open Hearing 1, 12th January 2023

My apologies for the lateness of this submittal which is due [REDACTED]. Thank you for the opportunity to speak at the open hearing. This is a written account of what I said on behalf of Boreham Parish Council.

Linda Reed – Chairman, Boreham Parish Council

Boreham Parish Council recognises the potential benefits of widening the A12. We anticipate that widening the road will make it safer and improve A12 traffic flows. However, we represent the specific interests of residents of Boreham and many residents have expressed concerns, both at meetings with National Highways representatives and as relevant representations under this DCO process. This project, by the applicant's own assessment and admission, will have a negative impact on the village of Boreham – in terms of increased traffic through the village, increased road noise and reduced air quality. This is in addition to already increasing traffic volumes and congestion with, as an example, delays of up to 30 minutes on Waltham Road towards Main Road during the morning rush hour.

The objective of the A12 widening is to remove traffic from country roads onto the A12. In the case of Boreham, this objective will be failed. This is mainly due to the closure of Junction 20 north and south bound. It is recognised in the DCO application that some traffic, particularly the southbound traffic from Maldon, on entering Hatfield Peverel is likely to turn left onto the B1137 (Main Road) through Boreham to access the A12 at Junction 19 rather than turning right (north) to access the A12 at the new Junction 21. This will increase the traffic through Boreham.

The developer's proposed solution is to make it unattractive for traffic to head towards Junction 19 through Boreham by using signage, and various traffic control measures are advocated through Boreham village. In our opinion, such measures would be required on Main Road as well as at key junctions with Waltham Road, Plantation Road and Church Road. We require a great deal more information about measures which may be implemented to mitigate the impacts of increased traffic through Boreham in order to ensure that these will be effective and provide safe crossing places on Main Road, without further negative impacts on our residents.

Currently, delays and lane closures on the A12 drive northbound traffic off the A12 at Junction 18 onto Hammonds Road to Church Road and through Boreham causing traffic jams throughout the village. Southbound traffic follows the opposite route. One potential benefit of widening the A12 is that this is likely to reduce the number and impact of road incidents on the A12. However, this benefit may be short-lived because it is a stated aim of the A12 widening project to increase the amount of traffic on the A12. As traffic volumes increase, incidents will increase and once again, drive traffic onto the country lanes. This will inevitably lead to even greater congestion through Boreham. Furthermore, Hammonds Road joins Church Road in Boreham. This is a protected lane and is unsuited to increased traffic. There need to be measures in place to ensure that the volume and type of additional traffic through the protected lane is controlled.

Our preference would be for the decision to close junction 20 to be reconsidered if at all possible. Retaining this junction would alleviate pressure on Boreham village. In the absence of Junction 20, we will require more information about the possible measures to mitigate the impacts of increased traffic through our village on Main Road and traffic from the adjoining roads. Such measures should consider the appropriate use of speed restrictions, traffic lights and mini roundabouts and safe crossing places for Boreham residents.

With regard to increased traffic noise, we would like the developer to consider extending the use of noise reduction surfacing to cover both carriageways of the A12 rather than just the southbound carriageway as proposed.