

Highways England: A12 - Chelmsford to A120 Widening Scheme Supplementary Design Consultation – November to December 2021

The Scheme

Highways England (HE) propose to widen 15 miles (24 kms) of the existing A12 between Junction 19, the Boreham Interchange and Junction 25 at Marks Tey to three lanes in each direction and create a three-lane bypass in each direction at Rivenhall End. HE state that this preferred route was selected based on several factors, including environmental impacts, journey times, complexity of build, affordability, feedback from the public and advice given by the Planning Inspectorate on the joint Local Plan for the area.

Reasons for the Supplementary Consultation

In August 2021, HE's statutory consultation ended. HE received 794 responses and over 2,000 people visited their virtual event space. Since this consultation closed, HE have undertaken further design work, as well as considering the feedback they received during the statutory consultation and this supplementary consultation presents that work. The changes are mostly of a minor nature.

Comments from Essex Area Ramblers

Essex Area Ramblers responded to the Statutory Consultation in August 2021, and their response in August 2021 is still valid. This response to the Supplementary Consultation only comments on the changes that impact on the walking cycling and horse riding (WCH) facilities and should be read in conjunction with our response to the Statutory Consultation.

Wellington Bridge Changes

In accordance with the feedback HE received, their updated design has removed the southern link road to the proposed junction 21. Instead, vehicular traffic will use a new and enhanced northern link road to access the proposed junction 21. To allow this, Wellington Bridge will no longer only be a bridge for just WCH. It will now allow for all types of vehicles to travel both ways over it. To ensure WCH facilities are maintained, a route will be provided alongside the new connection to allow for the same WCH journeys that were proposed as part of their statutory consultation.

Essex Area Ramblers Comment: With this bridge now being used by vehicular traffic and WCH users, it is essential that the WCH facilities are adequately designed and segregated from the vehicular traffic.

Cadent Gas Main

At statutory consultation, while HE mentioned the possibility of a high pressure gas main diversion being required, they had not completed the necessary work to understand the extent of the gas main, whether it would require a diversion and where the diversion may go. HE have carried out further work on possible corridors which could accommodate this pipeline. This work has identified five corridor options where the gas main could be diverted. As part of the proposed scheme, HE will need to reroute part of the high pressure gas pipeline.

HE are therefore asking for opinions on each of the possible diversion corridors. It is important to note that the decision on which route which will be taken forward will be a decision for Cadent Gas Limited who operate and maintain the gas distribution network, but any comments could influence the decision that they make.

The gas corridors identified will temporarily impact a number of PRowS. These will remain accessible during the works but may require some rerouting temporarily. HE's proposals for a WCH bridge which connects Maldon Road to Olivers Drive (PRow 121_95) remain unaffected by the proposed gas diversion works.

Essex Area Ramblers Comments: Whichever route is chosen, the Ramblers request that any temporary rerouting of PRowS is minimised and the Ramblers are consulted on these proposals.

Graham Reeve

Area Walking Environment Officer
Essex Area Ramblers

17th December 2021