

Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
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Date: 1 December 2023

Dear Secretary of State for Transport

Essex County Council's response to the Secretary of State second consultation dated 20 November 2023

Thank you for consulting Essex County Council (the Council) and requesting for our comments on item 10 and 12 of the second consultation letter in connection with National Highways' application for development consent for the proposed A12 Chelmsford to A120 Widening Scheme.

Item 10: Article 16(1) (Speed Limits) and Part 6 of Schedule 3

The Council was asked to explain the five cases where the entry in column (3) of Part 6 of Schedule 3 specified "Removal of restricted road status", without any indication of what speed limit replaces it. In response, the Council found six cases where this was the case, and our comments can be found in the table below:

(1) Parish(es)	(2) Road name, number and length	(3) Speed limit	The Council's comments
Boreham CP	A12 Junction 19 (northeastbound) on-slip road from point A.064 to point A.065, a distance of 100 metres	Removal of restricted road status	This road forms part of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) maintainable by the Applicant and is the responsibility of the Applicant to specify an appropriate speed limit

(1) Parish(es)	(2) Road name, number and length	(3) Speed limit	The Council's comments
Hatfield Peverel CP	The New Hatfield Peverel link road (both sides) starting at Point A.153, 6 metres northwest of the centre point of the circulatory of the Junction 21 northern roundabout to point A.152, 12 metres northwest of the same point, a distance of 6 metres.	Removal of restricted road status	National Speed Limit (NSL)
Hatfield Peverel CP	Realigned Kennel access (both sides) starting at point A.016, 6 metres southeast of the centre point of the circulatory of the Junction 21 southern roundabout to point A.015, 62 metres southeast of the same point, a distance of 56 metres.	Removal of restricted road status	This road forms part of the SRN maintainable by the Applicant and is the responsibility of the Applicant to specify an appropriate speed limit
Hatfield Peverel CP	Realigned Witham link road (both sides) starting at point A.008, 6 metres northwest of the centre point of the circulatory of the Junction 21 northern roundabout to point A.017, 19 metres northwest of the same point, a distance of 13 metres.	Removal of restricted road status	NSL
Messing- cum- Inworth CP	A12 Junction 24 underbridge (southeastbound side), from point A.137, 6 metres north west of the centre point of the junction 24 southern roundabout to point A.138, 6 metres south east of the centre point of the junction 24 northern roundabout, a distance of 165 metres.	Removal of restricted road status	This road forms part of the SRN maintainable by the Applicant and is the responsibility of the Applicant to specify an appropriate speed limit
Copford CP	New Wishingwell Bridge Road (both sides) from point A.079, 16 metres south of the centre point of the Wishingwell Farm roundabout to point A.080, 83 metres south of the same point, a distance of 67 metres.	Removal of restricted road status	NSL

Item 12: The Council's comments on responses received to the first consultation letter issued by the Secretary of State dated 27 October 2023

Document title: *Response to Secretary of State Consultation - Response to SoS First Response 27.10.2023*

The Secretary of State should note that Appendix B of REP7-045 dated 3 July 2023 was based on the information available during the examination. Since then, new information has been become available meaning previous resolved issues needed to be reopened e.g., London Road Roundabout or that the Applicant has not yet fulfilled their commitment to propose amendments to encourage speed limit compliance e.g., B1024 Link Road and Braxted Road.

The Applicant tried to categories the issues into three main categories however the Council does not believe it accurately represents our concerns at the five key sections of highway (totally around eight kilometres in length):

- The de-trunked A12 from Witham to Rivenhall End (East)
- Braxted Road (south of the junction Henry Dixon Road, Rivenhall End)
- The new B1024 Link Road between Rivenhall End and Kelvedon
- The new Essex County Fire and Rescue Service Access Road
- The de-trunked A12 between Feering and Marks Tey

We have addressed the three issues mentioned by the Applicant in their response to the SoS first Consultation letter dated 27 October 2023 below, but this does not cover all our concerns within the mentioned five key sections:

1. Main Road – The Council does not object to the proposed 40mph speed limit as the Applicant has adopted many of our recommended mitigation measures within their draft *Requirement 14 Boreham operation phase traffic mitigation measures*, however we maintain that minor road narrowing is required to visually reinforce the need to travel at lower speeds.
2. De-trunked A12 – The Council are currently unaware of any further de-trunking measures being considered by the Applicant as part of detailed design. We do not believe measures, only up to and including a system of average speed cameras will satisfy the needs of the de-trunked section. According to *Setting local speed limits circular*, the enforcement of speed limits should only be considered after other measures such as changes to the road environment to ensure it better matches the speed limit. We maintain the Council's de-trunking proposals, as detailed in REP3-082, will help to realise more fully the traffic flows and speeds as set in the Applicants appraisal of the de-trunked proposals presented in the DCO.
3. Other areas
 - a. Braxted Road – The Council hasn't received the relevant detailed alignment information to verify this constraint between the existing A12 and Colemans Reservoir hence we are unable to comment on the accuracy of this statement. The detailed requested extends beyond the information provided in the Applicant's DCO submission. This is one of the locations where the Applicant has agreed to provide the rationale for their design decisions, which remains outstanding.

- b. Cranes Bridge – The Council is aware of some proposed design changes within this section which includes reducing the carriageway width to 6 metres, installing a new H4a barriers to protect the bridge piers and lowering the carriageway levels. We are reviewing the acceptability of a 30mph speed limit considering this new information as part of the Applicant’s detailed design proposal.
- c. Inworth Road Roundabout – The Council’s response to REP3-012 is documented in REP4-075 Page 22, where we outlined our case why the adoption of local road standards isn’t appropriate. As a result, we maintain the view that additional measures proposed in the Council’s Inworth, Messing & Tiptree Mitigation Options Technical Note [REP3-033] is required to mitigate the impact of the traffic flow changes in the vicinity of Messing, Inworth and Tiptree.
- d. London Road Roundabout – It was noted in Appendix B of REP7-045 that this was a National Highways asset however more recent discussions with the Applicant has indicated the 30mph section of the western arm of this roundabout belonged to the Council hence why this is now an issue. The Council is still waiting for the detailed horizontal alignment information to verify why 50mph is not appropriate hence we cannot confirm the accuracy of the Applicant’s statement at this moment in time. The rural nature and lack of frontages within this short section will mean vehicles will unlikely comply with the proposed 30mph speed limit.

The Council agrees the Road Safety Audit (RSA) process is one of the mechanisms to determine whether additional mitigation is required however there must be a requirement to ensure the Applicant liaise with the Council, as the local highway authority, before agreeing or discounting any recommendations that may impact the local highway network. This necessity arises because the DMRB GG119 road safety audit standard removed the need to produce an RSA exception report and does not explicitly require the Applicant (the Overseeing Organisation) to seek the views of the Council (the maintaining agent) prior to agreeing the RSA action with their designers. Whereas the RSA exception report process remains to be an integral part of the Council’s RSA procedure for any works that alters the local highway network, as referenced in the Council’s Development Control Manual. We have approached the Applicant with this request and understand that they currently considering this.

To conclude, the Council’s views remain that the four suggested changes to the DCO, as specified in our response to the first consultation letter dated 27 October 2023, are required to mitigate our speed limit concerns.

Yours sincerely

Billy Parr

Billy Parr

Head of Network Development, Highways and Transportation

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W: www.essex.gov.uk