

Frequently Asked Questions

Chelmsford City Growth Package: Baddow Road Bus Gate

1. How will the bus gate work?

The bus gate will use a camera to prohibit northwest bound Baddow Road traffic from traveling past the turning for Meadgate Avenue and only allow buses, taxis, motorcyclists and cyclists to pass this point. All vehicles leaving the Army & Navy roundabout will be unaffected. Residents who live past the bus gate (between Meadgate Avenue and the Army & Navy roundabout) will still be able to access the roundabout as they do now.

Due to feedback from the public, the bus gate will now only be in operation between 0700-1000 and 1600-1900 on weekdays. The road will operate as normal outside of these times.

2. When is the bus gate proposed for?

It is not proposed to install the bus gate until Summer 2019 at the earliest; at least 18 months away. Essex County Council is using this time to offer further engagement with residents, businesses and stakeholders.

3. Why are you limiting access to the Army & Navy roundabout?

Improving Air Quality – Baddow Road is currently within a designated Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and we must try to act to improve air quality for the many residents living along the road.

Improved Army & Navy Operation – By effectively removing one arm of the roundabout during peak hours (the hours with the worst congestion) the roundabout works more efficiently as traffic on Baddow Bypass and Van Diemens Road can get onto the roundabout more easily.

Improve the quality of public transport options – One of the fundamental principles of Chelmsford's Future Transport Network and the Chelmsford City Growth Package is to make sustainable transport a realistic and credible choice for all residents of Chelmsford. Currently this is not possible on Baddow Road due to its use as a through traffic commuter route as opposed to other major routes. Buses are experiencing average delays of 6 minutes in the morning peak and it is known to be far greater. The bus gate will give buses priority and increase their attractiveness for users.

4. What are the effects of traffic re-routing onto other routes?

There are 338 vehicles (taken from 2011-2016 October counts, Mon-Fri) using Baddow Road to enter the Army & Navy roundabout between 8am and 9am. Traffic modelling has indicated that, based on a modelled flow of 390 vehicles, following the installation of the bus gate, 26% (102 vehicles) will reroute to A1114 Essex Yeomanry Way (Baddow bypass), and 12% (48 vehicles) will travel towards the Army and Navy roundabout via Princes Road. The remainder of the vehicles will further dissipate around the network.

Many vehicles will not reach the Meadgate Avenue / Baddow Road junction as new advanced direction signage will inform them when and where the restriction will affect their journey, allowing them to divert from further away. For example, traffic approaching Baddow Road from Beehive Lane will be directed towards the A1114 when the Baddow Road bus gate is in operation. There will be additional signage further afield which will intercept through traffic.

The Baddow Bypass is a more appropriate route and is expected to be able to accommodate the additional traffic highlighted above. Both the A1114 and Van Diemens Road will benefit from the improved flows at the Army and Navy roundabout (achieved by reducing the number of vehicles entering one of the 5 arms of the roundabout).

Due to the challenges in precisely modelling how drivers will react to the bus gate, it is proposed to be installed under an experimental order.

5. *Won't the traffic on Maldon Rd and Meadgate Avenue increase?*

We do not predict increases in traffic on Meadgate Avenue in the peak hours. Traffic going towards the Army and Navy will no longer use Meadgate Avenue to avoid the queues in Baddow Road, and while some will travel towards Maldon Road instead, most traffic will divert via other routes. There is likely to be some increase in traffic on Maldon Road towards the bypass and a reduction of traffic travelling towards Baddow Road during the hours of operation of the closure.

6. *What is an 'Experimental Order'?*

An experimental order sets out a trial process to allow the effects of a scheme to be closely monitored. Baddow Road bus gate is proposed under an 18-month trial period to allow drivers to adjust and then the true effects to be monitored. Any complementary schemes can then be identified if required by the changes in the way the network operates. Before the end of the 18-month period, the success of the scheme will be assessed and a decision will be made on whether the scheme is made permanent.

7. *How have residents been consulted?*

Extensive engagement and consultation events were held throughout the Spring and Summer of 2017 regarding Chelmsford's Future Transport Network and the Chelmsford City Growth Package (which includes the bus gate proposal for Baddow Road). These were widely publicised in the local press and on social media. This included a local event in Great Baddow Parish Hall on 7th August from 1pm to 8pm which was very well attended. The next phase of this is to engage with local residents, businesses and stakeholders to provide more scheme-specific focus where the consultation has highlighted it is required.

8. *What are you doing about the cost and quality of the bus service?*

The bus gate proposals should provide substantial improvements to the length and reliability of bus journey times. Combined with proposals along Parkway this will provide an end-to-end sustainable corridor. ECC have already started working with the bus companies to maximise quality of services however this scheme should enable such improvements to be considered. We recognise that further work is needed and ECC will continue to work with the bus companies.

9. *Why is a two-way replacement flyover of the Army & Navy not being progressed as part of this package?*

Replacing the flyover with a two-way structure was discounted in the short term due to the estimated cost significantly exceeding the budget available over the next 3 years. However, this option is being considered as part of an ongoing feasibility study.

10. *Where can I find out more information?*

For further information, please refer to the Chelmsford City Growth Package website:

www.essex.gov.uk/chelmsfordtransport