

# A127 Engagement Group

September 2024



# Welcome and Introductions



## Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Overview
3. Policy Context
4. A127 Transport Improvements (Halfway House to Fortune of War)
5. A127/A130 Fairglen Interchange Improvements
6. Next Steps



# Overview



## A127 Engagement Group (formerly A127 Task Force)

- The A127 Task Force (now the A127 Engagement Group) was established in 2018 to develop a long-term vision for the A127 corridor and lobby for investment.
- The group consists of South Essex MPs, Essex County Council local members and leaders/cabinet members from the district, borough and unitary councils in South Essex.
- In 2020, the focus of the Task Force shifted to making the case for the A127 to be re-trunked. However, the DfT/National Highways have since said the A13 is a priority instead.
- The A127 Engagement Group is updated on current and proposed transport schemes relating to the A127 corridor and helps highlight the importance of the A127 in enabling growth across South Essex.



## Vision for the A127 corridor

The latest agreed vision for the A127 corridor is:

***'A high-quality and reliable corridor which provides good access for all customers whether travelling along or across the A127 (including sustainable and active modes), connecting our communities, reducing severance and supporting our ambitious plans for innovation and sustainable low-carbon economic growth across South Essex.'***



## Objectives for the corridor

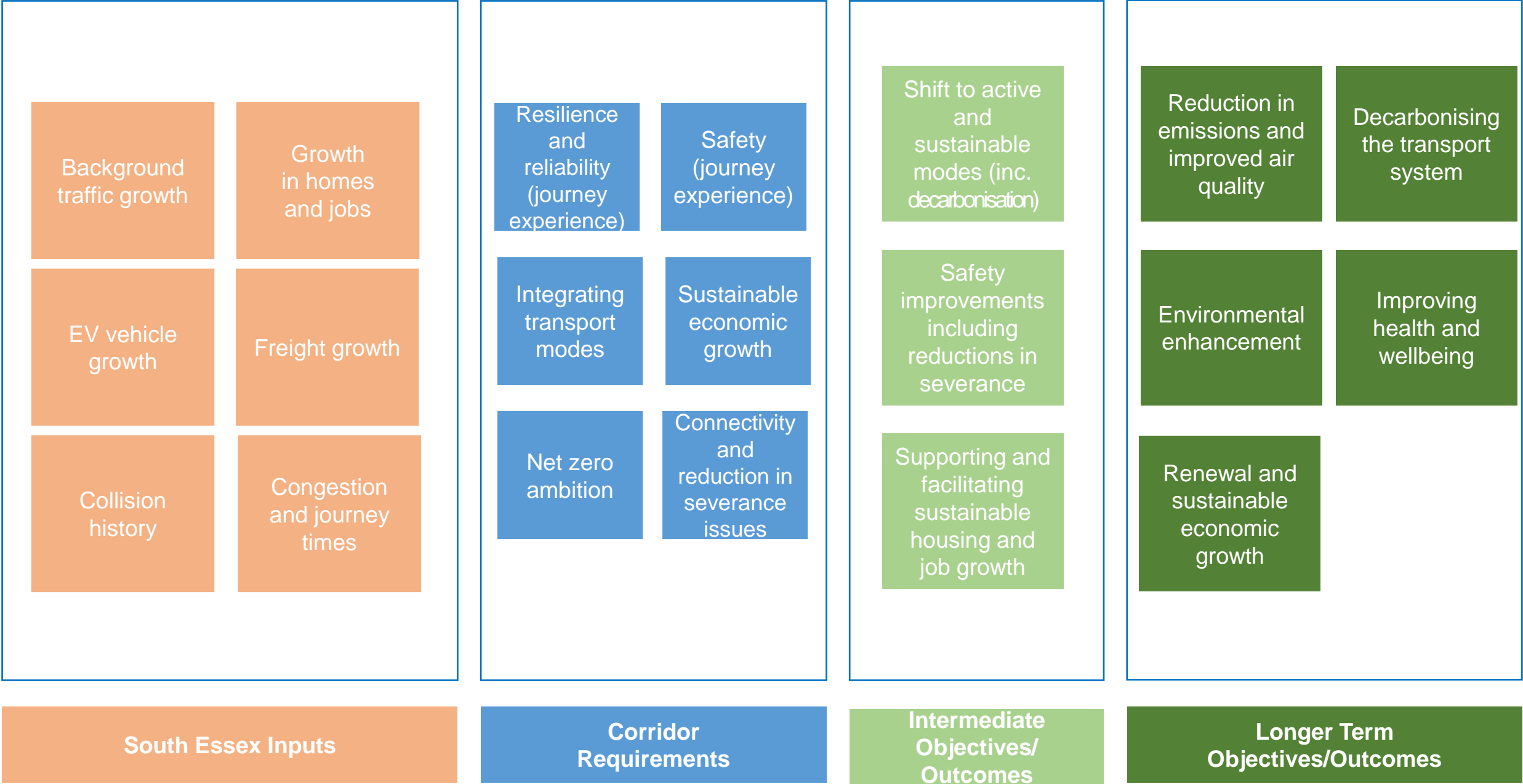
- Supporting and facilitating sustainable housing and job growth
- Improving safety, including reducing severance
- Supporting a shift to active and sustainable modes of transport, in line with local, regional and national decarbonisation priorities

The objectives will help contribute to five wider outcomes:

- Reducing vehicle emissions and improving air quality
- Decarbonising the transport system
- Improving people's health and wellbeing
- Enhancing the environment
- Supporting economic renewal and sustainable growth



# A127 objectives and outcomes





Central Government (Departments DfT, DBIS & DLUHC)

**A127 Engagement Group – Chaired by Councillor Sheldon**

- Members, MPs
- Businesses/Business Groups
- Project Support Team (ECC/EH)

*Lobbying and Strategic Negotiation*

**Local Member Update Forum – Chaired by Councillor Sheldon**

- ECC local Members
- District Members
- Town and Parish Councils
- Project Support Team

**A127 Officer Working Group - Chaired by Billy Parr (ECC)**

- Officers (County/District/Borough/Unitaries)
- Project Support Team (ECC/EH)

*Technical Workstreams*

Transport East:

1. TE Forum
2. Transport East Senior Officers Group (TESOG)

NH/ECC Strategic Collaboration Board

South Essex Councils (SEC - formerly ASELA)

Opportunity South Essex (OSE)

*Feeder Groups*

## Potential business representation on A127 Engagement Group

- Essex Chambers of Commerce
- Opportunity South Essex
- London Southend Airport

Potential additional local options for consideration:

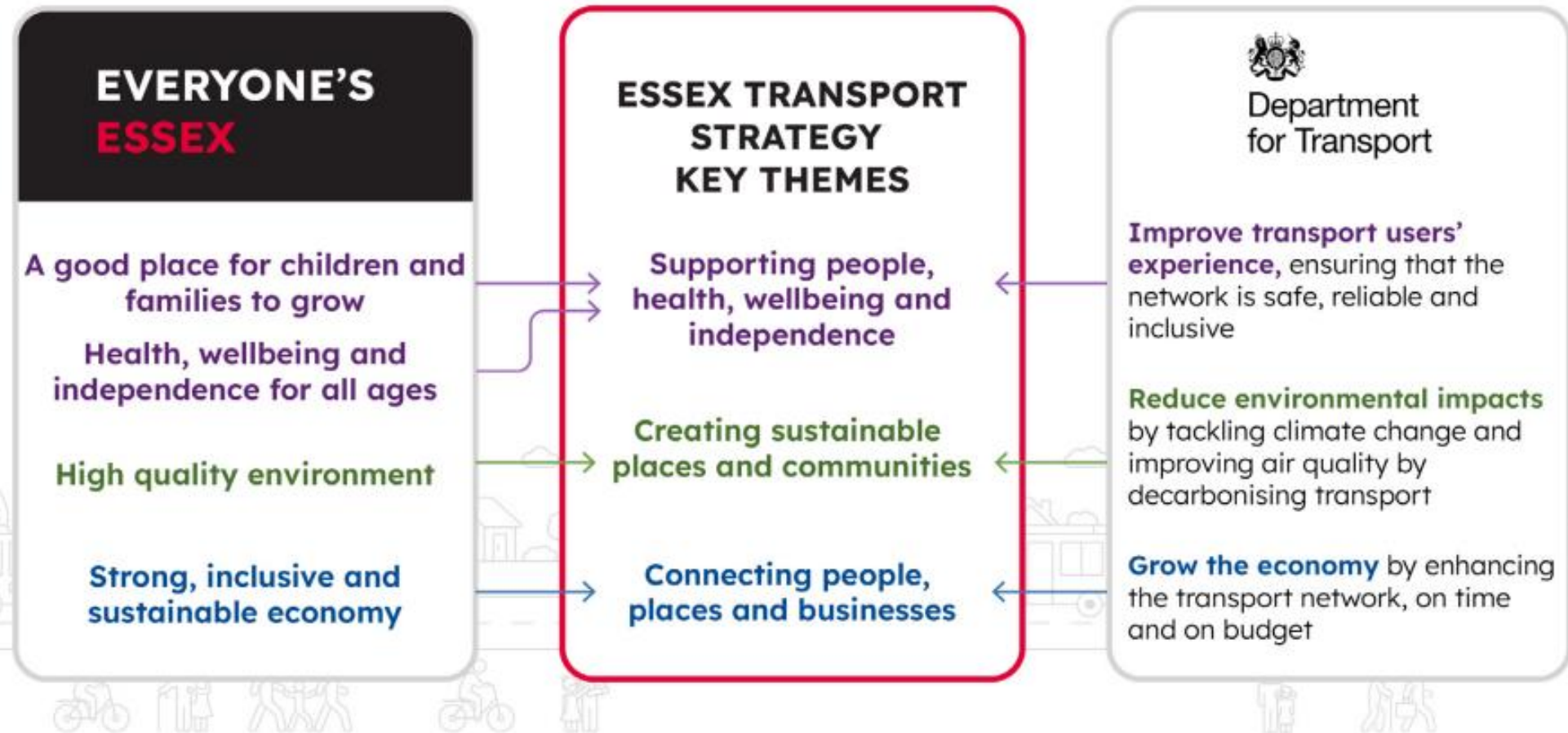
- Federation of Small Businesses (Essex)
- Basildon Business Group
- Brentwood Chamber of Commerce
- Southend Business Partnership
- Any others?



# Policy Context



### Links with local and national policy



# Local Transport Plan Outcomes

## Key themes and outcomes

### Theme 1

Supporting people, health, wellbeing and independence.



#### Outcomes

- People have inclusive and affordable access to key services.
- People enjoy improved physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- The transport network is safe, and feels safe, for all users.

### Theme 2

Creating sustainable places and communities.



#### Outcomes

- All places support the transport needs of all residents.
- New developments are designed to be sustainable from the start.
- Transport has a reduced impact on the environment.

### Theme 3

Connecting people, places and businesses.



#### Outcomes

- The business potential of Essex is maximised.
- People have inclusive and affordable access to employment, education and training.
- The transport network has a secure and long-term future.

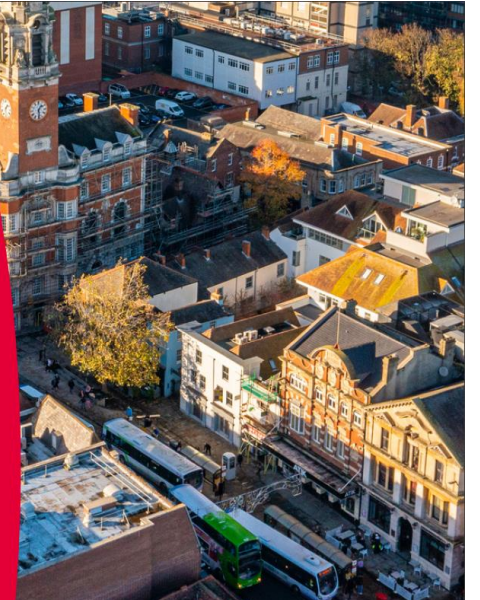
Essex County Council

## Essex Transport Strategy

Local Transport Plan

Public Consultation  
(Part One)

August 2024



## Future Transport Study for South Essex

- Developed alongside LTP4 (Essex Transport Strategy)
- Incorporates previous work looking at the A127 economic growth corridor
  - Plus ASELA (now SEC) Transport and Connectivity Workstream
- Interventions split into type of trip and mode, then prioritised according to strategic fit, cost and deliverability
- Workshops held with partners, including district/borough council officers, in early 2024
- The study will inform an Implementation Plan for South Essex as part of LTP4 (Essex Transport Strategy)
- Will also inform future Local Plans





# A127 Transport Improvements (Halfway House to Fortune of War)



# A127 Transport Improvements (Halfway House to Fortune of War)

## Scheme summary and latest progress

- A127 Transport Improvements (Halfway House to Fortune of War) is a proposed package of measures to improve key pinch points along the A127 corridor between the Halfway House and Fortune of War junctions.
- It is a crucial first step in addressing current issues along the corridor and will help reduce congestion, improve journey times and support growth across South Essex.
- Essex County Council is bidding for funding from the DfT's Major Road Network (MRN) fund. There is specific eligibility criteria for this funding, and it is specifically for enhancement schemes on the country's busiest and most economically important local authority 'A' roads.
- In June 2024, we submitted a Strategic Outline Case (SOC) to the DfT – the next stage of the bidding process for MRN funding. This is a significant milestone. However, it is not the final funding bid.
- Details of the proposals are still being developed and more developed designs and other information will be submitted as part of the Outline Business Case. Ahead of this, and subject to approval of the SOC, we will seek input from key partners and stakeholders, as well as the public through a public consultation exercise.



# A127 Transport Improvements (Halfway House to Fortune of War)

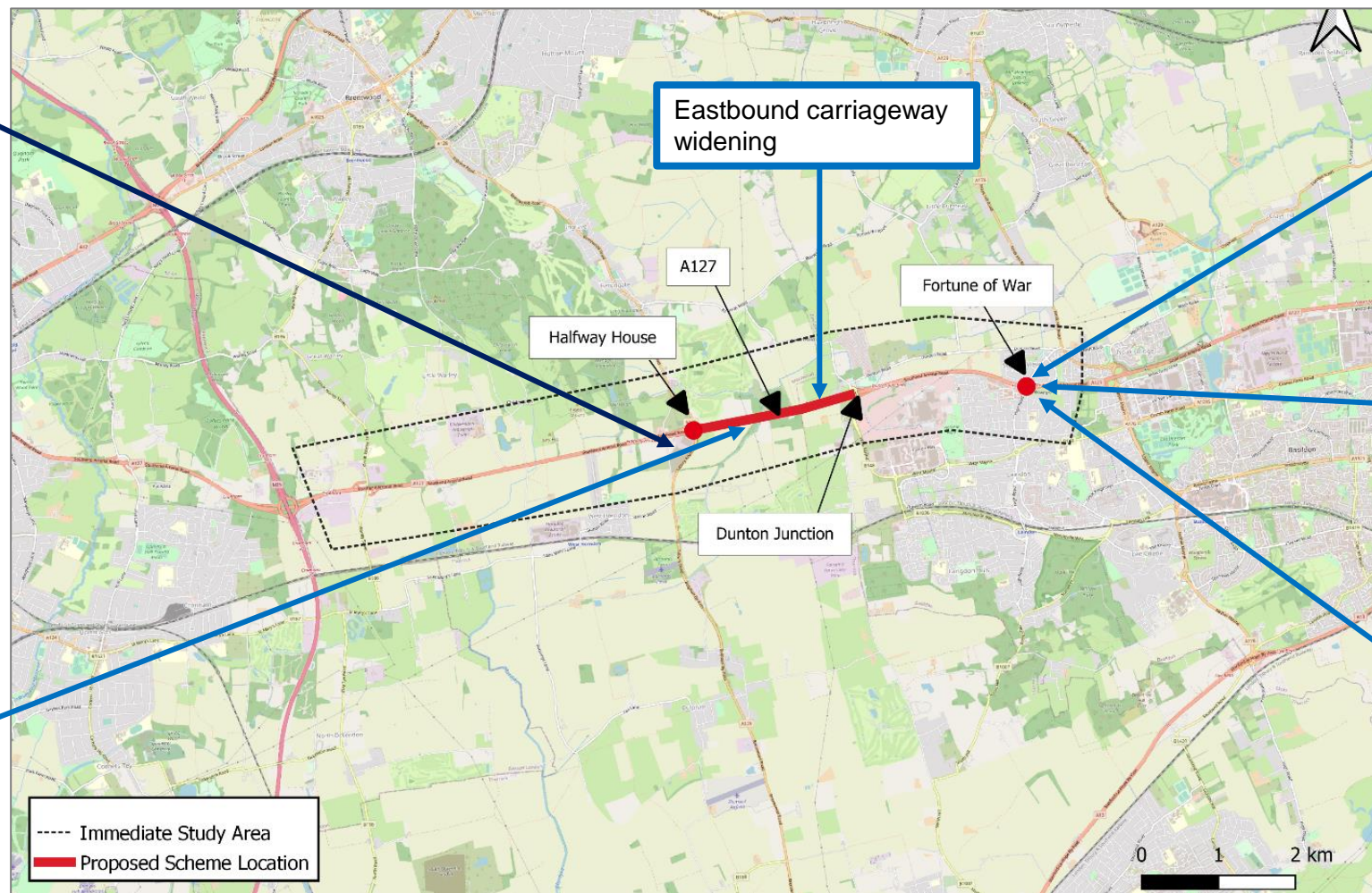
## Background

- **November 2019** – ‘pre-Strategic Outline Case (SOC)’ MRN bid proposal submitted to the DfT for improvements to the A127 from the Fortune of War junction to the M25.
- **March 2020** –pre-SOC MRN bid approved to proceed to SOC, as confirmed in the spring budget.
- **Summer 2020** – work started on SOC to evaluate the impacts of proposed improvements at Warley, Halfway House and Fortune of War junctions.
- **2021 - 2022** – work on SOC paused because of insufficient benefits from Warley junction proposals and lack of information to assess the Fortune of War proposals because of impacts of COVID-19 on normal traffic flow conditions, meaning business case very unlikely to be successful using initial approach. Change in emphasis from DfT on MRN objectives, assessment criteria. Lessons learned and review of alternative opportunities using outputs from updated model.
- **2023** - Work on SOC resumed using an alternative benefits strategy.
- **Late 2023** – A127 Engagement Group (formerly A127 Task Force) updated on latest proposals ahead of planned submission of SOC.

# A127 Transport Improvements (Halfway House to Fortune of War)

Dunton Hills developer proposal – signalisation of Halfway House

Active travel improvements to existing shared use path adjacent to southern carriageway between Halfway House and Fortune of War, including improved connectivity to existing bus stops



Eastbound carriageway widening

Replacement of existing active travel bridge to meet current design guidance

Improved active travel connectivity between West Mayne/St Nicholas Lane and the A127

Straightening of Fortune of War and improvements to merges and diverges

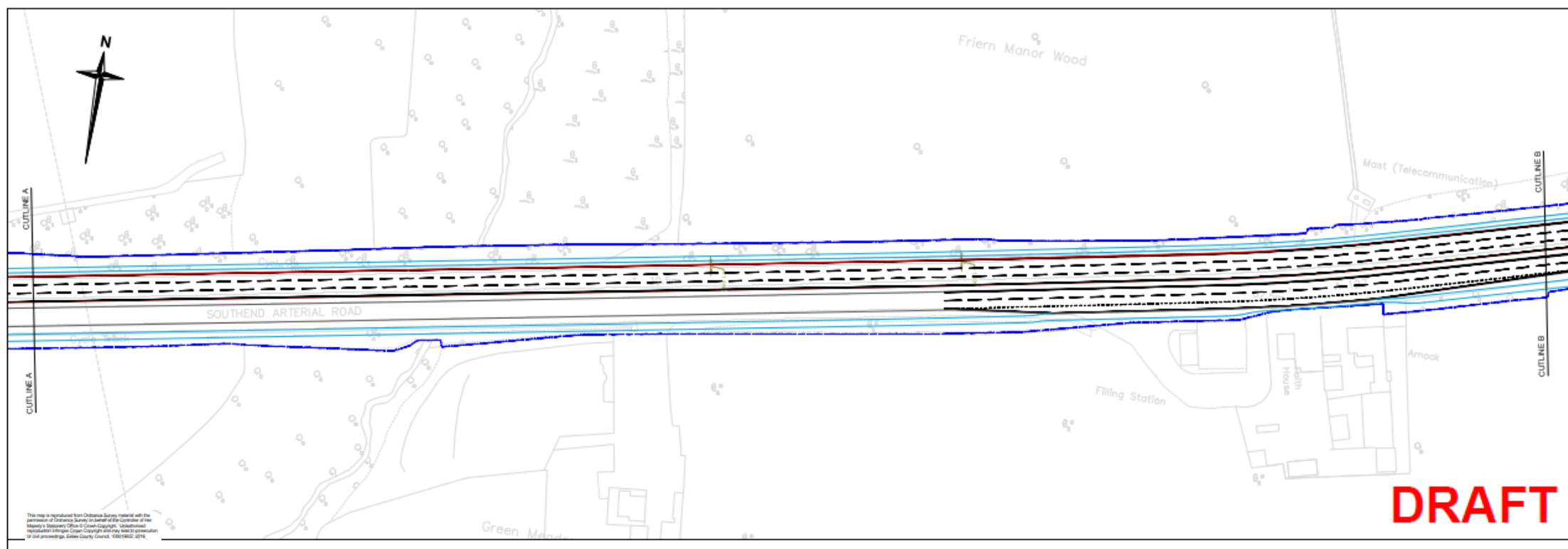
## Scheme objectives

# A127 Transport Improvements (Halfway House to Fortune of War)

- **Manage journey time reliability and improve resilience to** maximise the efficiency of the road network and reduce transport costs through change in average delay through Fortune of War and the A127 between Halfway House and Dunton.
- **Support the delivery of housing and employment.** High active mode share for proposed development enabled through connections created by the scheme.
- **Improving connectivity and access for sustainable modes** on and across the A127 corridor. Ensure that holistic and high-quality cycling, walking and public transport measures are embedded in the scheme. Design a scheme that provides safe and comfortable routes for cycling and walking along and across the A127 and explore options to provide bus priority wherever possible.
- **Manage air quality** Provide infrastructure that permits sustainable travel, including walking, cycling and public transport, to remove cars from the road and reduce air pollution.
- **Manage the carbon footprint** to support decarbonisation.

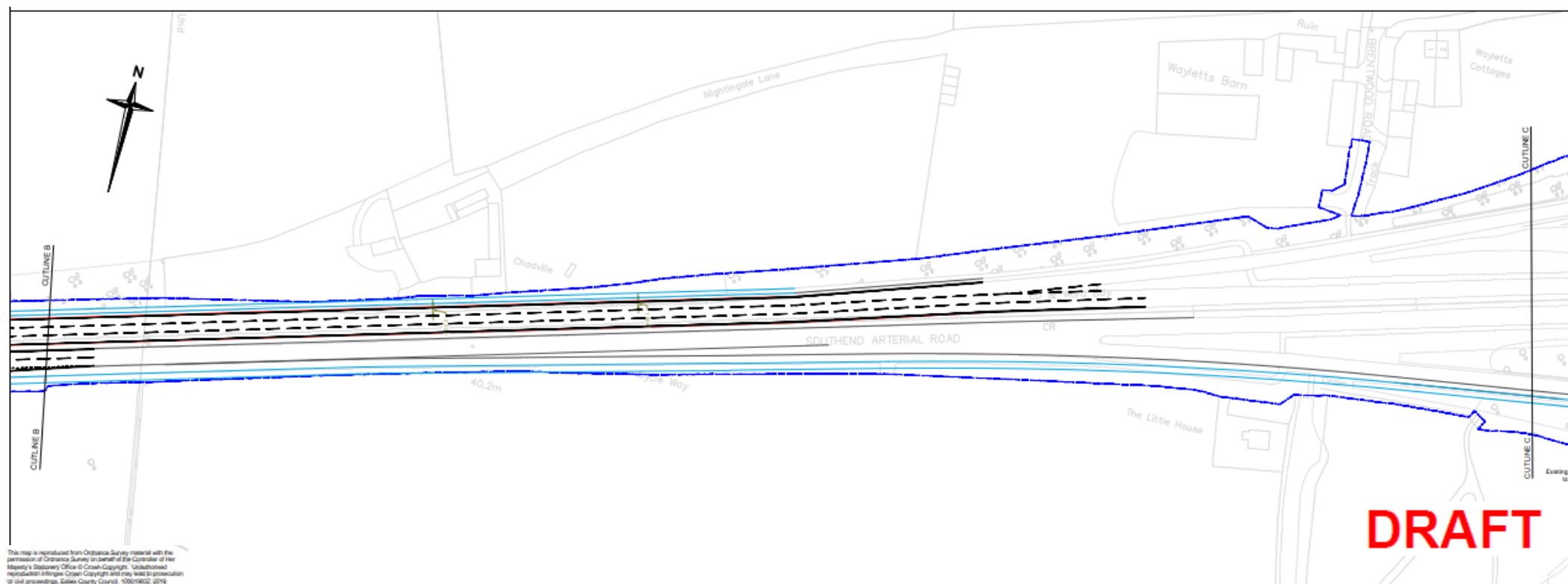


## East of Halfway House



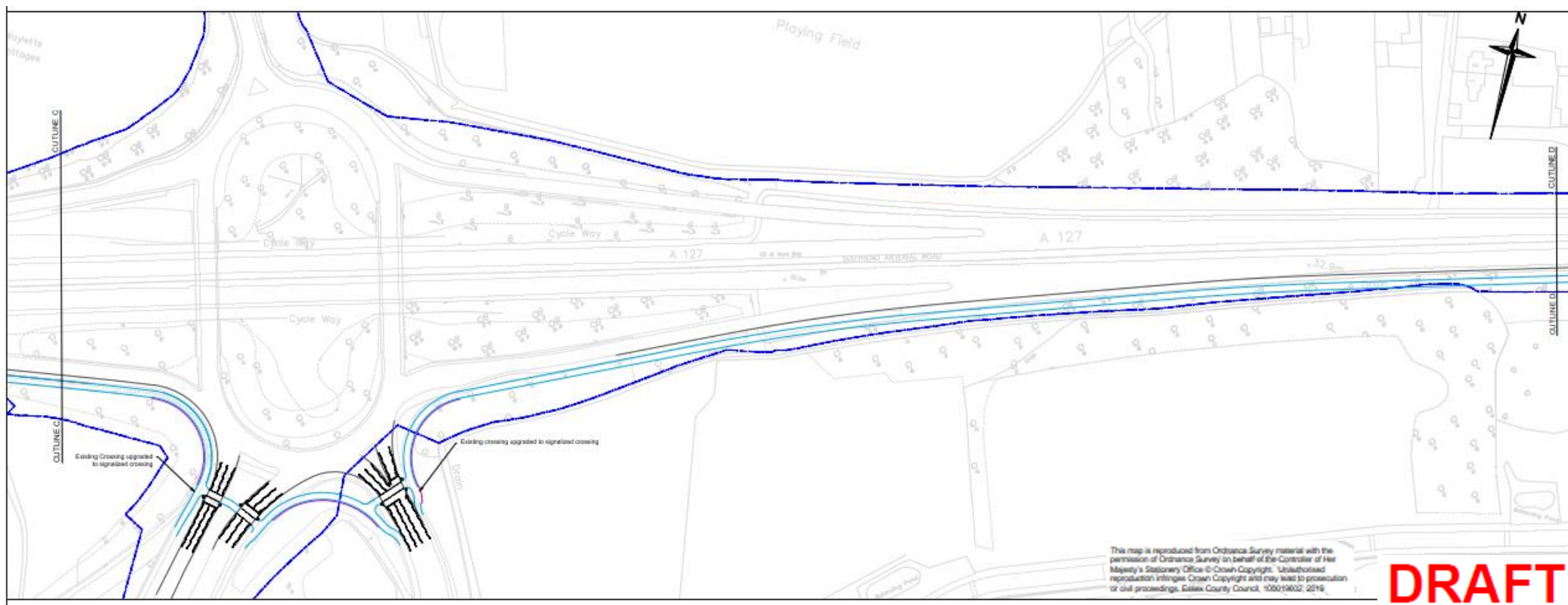
Proposed additional eastbound lane and active travel and public transport improvements, as described previously.

## West of Dunton Junction



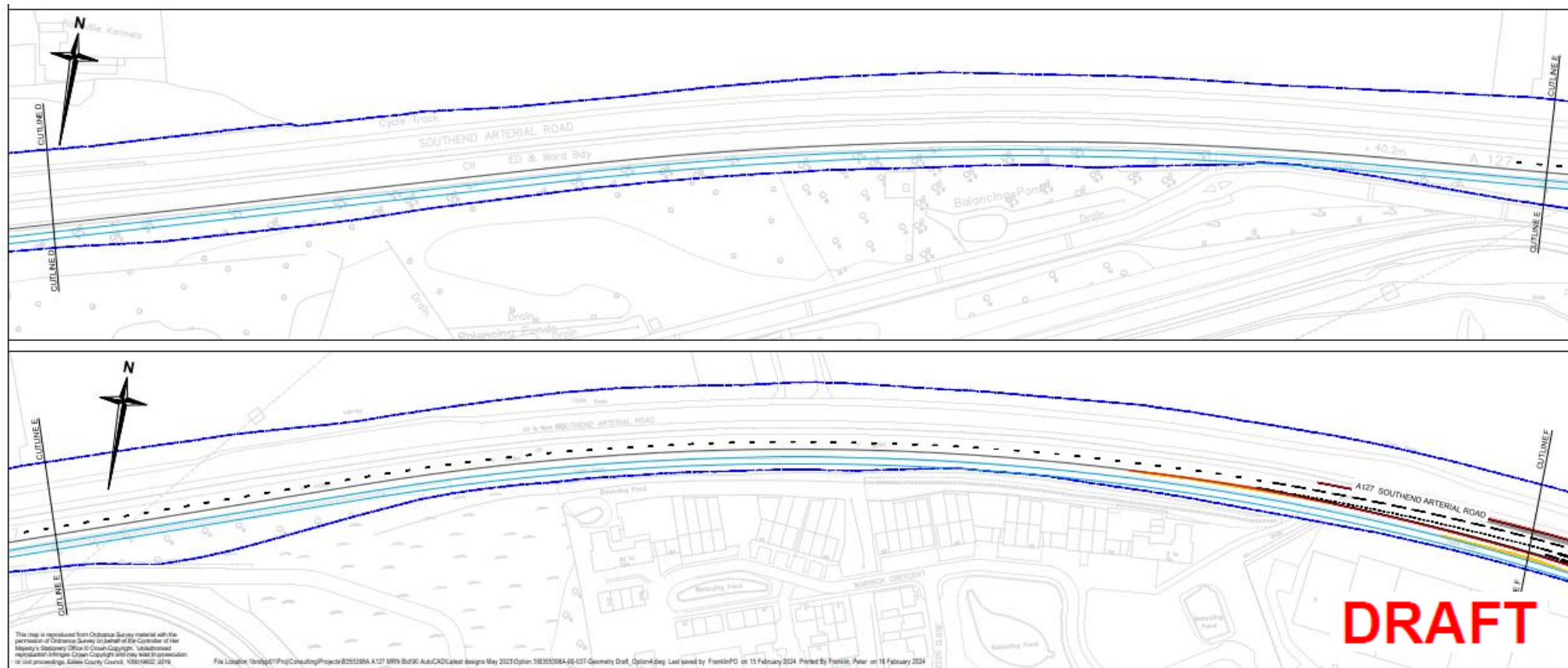
Proposed additional eastbound lane and active travel and public transport improvements, as described previously.

## Dunton Junction



Improvements to existing shared use path adjacent to southern carriageway to provide betterment to active travel including new shared use path on slip roads and additional safe crossings of side roads to prevent unsafe crossing of slip roads.

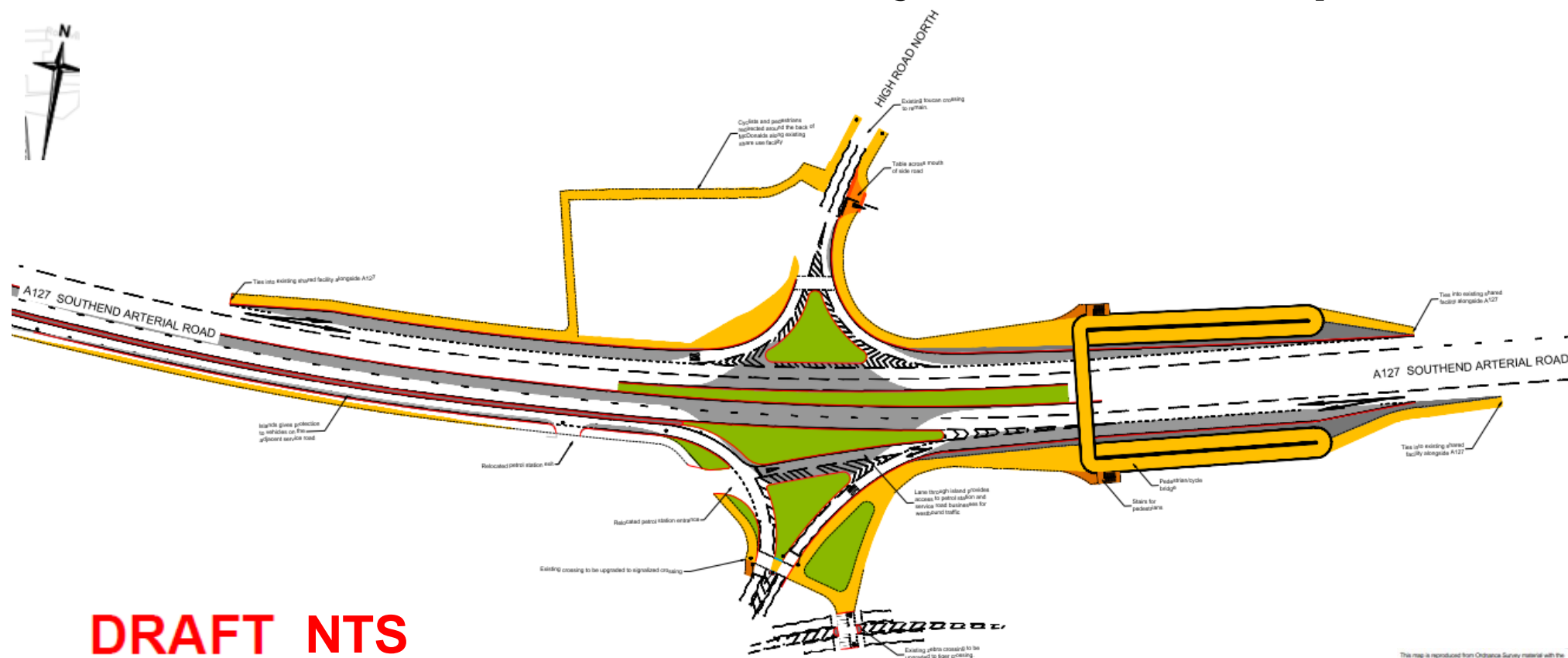
## Dunton Junction to Fortune of War



Improvements to existing shared use path adjacent to southern carriageway to provide betterment to active travel.



## Fortune of War junction Concept



**DRAFT NTS**

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Straightening of Fortune of War Junction, including improved merges and diverges and provision of new westbound service lane and active travel and public transport improvements, as described previously (including new replacement active travel bridge crossing the A127).



### Benefits of the scheme (\*at SOC stage)



#### Supporting growth



Unlocks economic and job creation opportunities by improving journey times for all users



Direct increase in UK GDP



Improved connectivity between key urban areas and employment sites in South Essex. Better access to the Strategic Road Network via the A127 corridor to the M25.



#### Safer, Greener, Healthier



£18.5m worth of economic benefits from active mode improvements



Health benefits valued at £9.17m



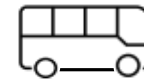
193% increase in daily cycling trips and 148% increase in daily walking trips



A 16,732-tonne reduction in greenhouse gases due to increased walking, cycling and bus travel



#### Improved journeys



Reduced congestion and improved journey time reliability for vehicles



Up to 5% journey time savings by 2028



User benefits of £19.4m



Improvement in walking and cycling journey times

## Indicative Programme

- Strategic Outline Case (SOC) – June 2024
- Public consultation – Early 2025
- Outline Business Case (OBC) – June 2025
- Full Business Case (FBC) – Late 2026
- Start of works – Spring 2027
- Completion – Spring 2029
- Work will be split into phases



## Key Uncertainties

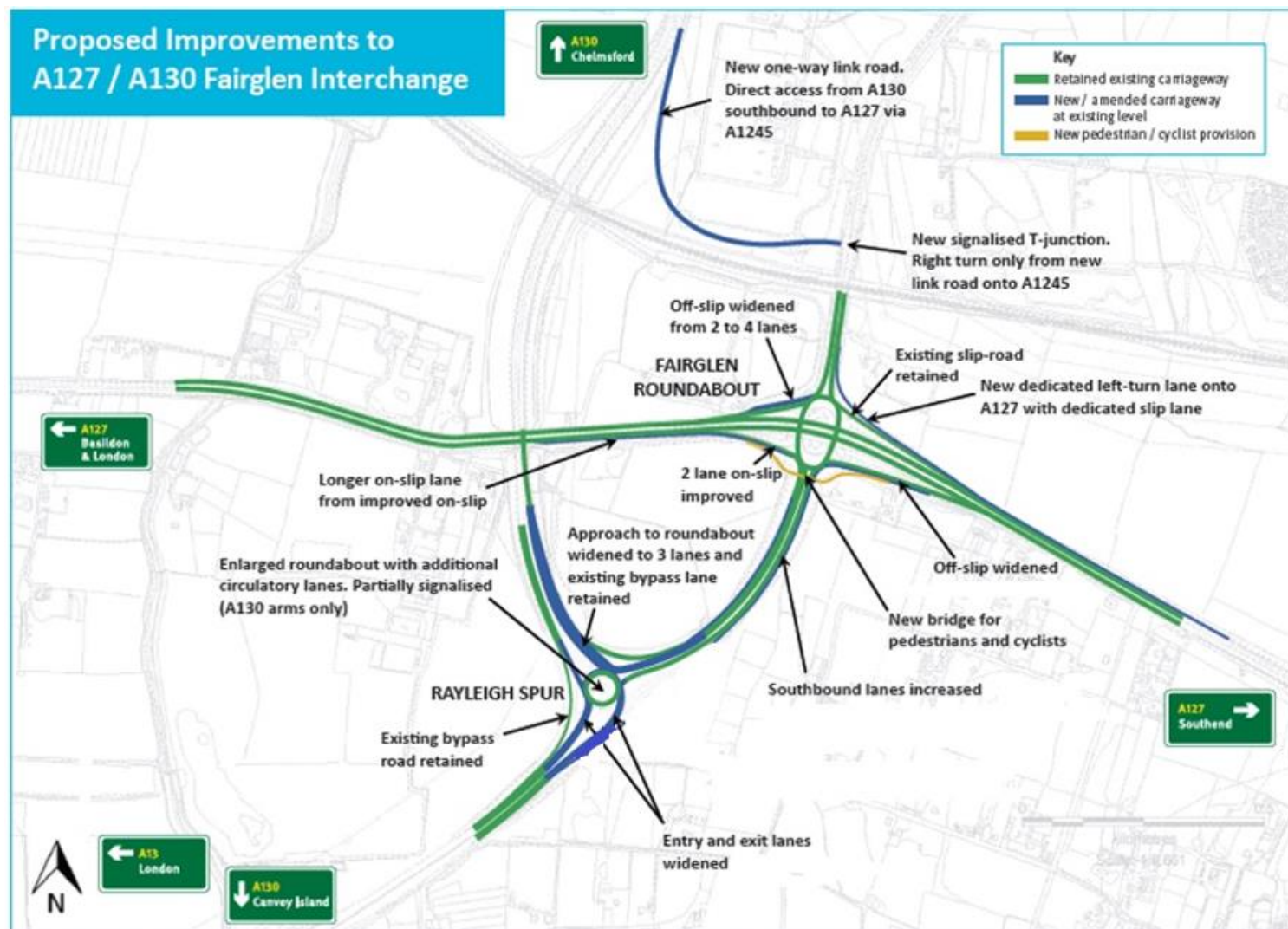
- **Programme** - Challenging overall delivery programme that includes:
  - DfT review periods
  - Planning Application(s)
  - Uncertainties of Government funding
- **Costs**
  - ECC secures all funding to deliver scheme
- **Scope**
  - Uncertainty around development proposals



# A127/A130 Fairglen



### A127 Fairglen Interchange



## Indicative Programme

- Tenderers Reconfirm Pricing – March 2024 ✓
- Issue Final Business Case to DfT– Autumn 2024
- ECC Cabinet Meeting – Autumn 2024
- Contract Award – Late 2024
- Confirmation of Construction Timetable – early 2025
- Current assumption is 2 years to construct



# Next Steps



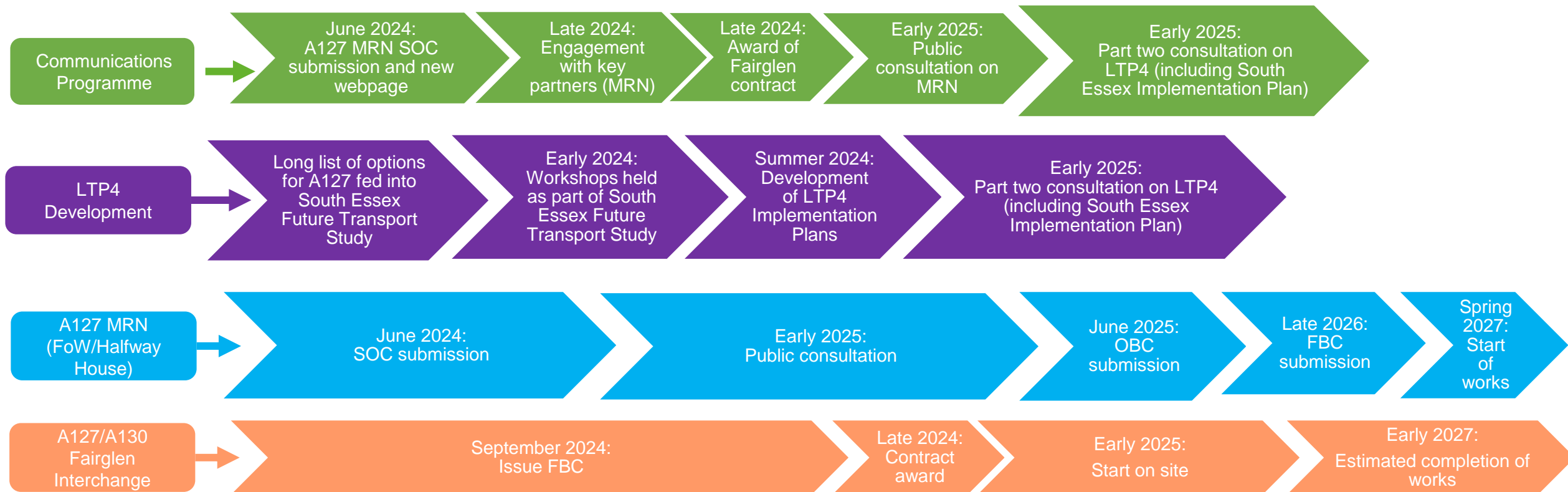


## Next Steps:

- Continued development of Local Transport Plan 4, including part two consultation
- South Essex Future Transport Study and draft Implementation Plan (part of LTP4)
- Development of Outline Business Case for A127 MRN scheme, including public consultation (subject to approval of SOC)
- Submit Final Business Case for Fairglens
- Next dates for the A127 Engagement Group and A127 Local Member Forum TBC



## Indicative Programmes





**SAFER / GREENER / HEALTHIER**

