

# Chelmsford North East Bypass

Frequently Asked Questions  
July 2020

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## **1. What is the main purpose of the scheme?**

The Chelmsford North East Bypass, running between the A12 and A131, will provide a strategic link between Chelmsford, Braintree, London Stansted Airport and the wider east and south east of England, including South Essex and the Lower Thames Crossing.

The new Beaulieu railway station will provide access to the Great Eastern Main Line (GEML). It will relieve crowding at Chelmsford railway station and act as a transport interchange to encourage sustainable travel by bus, cycle, electric vehicles and on foot.

The bypass will enhance access to and increase the catchment area of the station - it is therefore vital that these pieces of infrastructure are delivered at the same time.

## **2. Can the scheme ease traffic congestion?**

Yes. Prior to covid-19, there was only 4% space left on Chelmsford's roads during the morning and evening peak periods. The bypass will help to relieve traffic congestion on local roads, enabling them to facilitate key sustainable transport movements along their corridors. Meanwhile, the new station will reduce the need for commuters to access Chelmsford station, removing around 900 journeys into the city centre each morning peak.

The scheme will also support the 7,000 journeys made from Braintree to Chelmsford each day by making it easier to access the A12 and the rail network and helping to reduce traffic within local villages.

## **3. Why is this still needed?**

Essex County Council proposed the bypass between Boreham Interchange on the A12 and Deres Bridge junction on the A131 to close the gap in Essex's strategic road network. The Chelmsford North East Bypass will provide a strategic link between Chelmsford, Braintree, London Stansted Airport and the wider east and southeast of England, including South Essex and the Lower Thames Crossing. The mid and north Essex strategic road network has an essential role in supporting local businesses, jobs and future.

The bypass will also assist to ease congestion and reduce journey times in and around Chelmsford now and in the future. In addition, as Beaulieu railway station is only forty minutes from Liverpool Street, it will provide a better, more resilient and flexible service with three platforms, car parking, a public transport interchange, cycling facilities and new track for passing trains.

#### **4. Why was the scheme put on hold?**

The scheme was put on hold in 2008 due to economic challenges and reduced funding for local authorities. However, £218million funding has now been awarded (August 2019) via the government's Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) and we are now progressing with the design of the scheme.

#### **5. Why were improvement works undertaken on Sheepcotes roundabout A130/A131?**

The improvements works were necessary to address the immediate traffic congestion issues on this route.

#### **6. Has the safeguarded route / corridor changed?**

No. The preferred route alignment is protected and remains as selected in 2007. The decision on the final junction layouts are still being refined. There have been no fundamental changes to the safeguarded corridor, however some updates were made in 2018 to ensure there is sufficient space for the scheme and that no land is safeguarded unnecessarily. Please see the Chelmsford North East Bypass website for the Local Plan 2018 - Safeguarded Corridor document.

#### **7. What work is currently happening on site?**

In August 2019 the Council was awarded funding through the Housing Infrastructure Funds (HIF). Further design of the scheme therefore needs to be progressed and so during this phase, Essex County Council will undertake various site surveys to continue to inform our design. Many environmental surveys are seasonal, so must be undertaken at certain times of the year

Some initial surveys will be undertaken on foot, (commenced in October 2019), and will require several visits over the year to ensure that seasonal variations are accounted for. Over the next 9-12 months further surveys – environmental and otherwise are expected to be required. The ecologists and support team are undertaking this work with the permission of the landowners.

## **10. Has the Chelmsford North-East Bypass been consulted on already?**

Consultation on the route options and junction layouts took place in 2006, 2008 and 2018 respectively. The preferred route was determined in 2007 following consultation in 2006 but no decision has been made on junction layouts.

## **11. Will there be further consultations?**

The last series of consultations took place in 2018 which was the last opportunity to comment on the proposal for the safeguarded corridor updates. However, we will continue to engage with the community and partners via the website and there will be further opportunity to comment via the formal planning application process which takes place in 2021.

## **12. What are the next steps now funding has been granted?**

The scheme can now move forward towards the submission of a planning application. Further design work is currently being undertaken, including a number of surveys to inform the design.

When the scheme is presented in detail as part of any formal planning application, there will be an opportunity for further comments to be made and assessed.

Public engagement events were cancelled due to the current coronavirus situation.

However, the virtual exhibition is available until 21<sup>st</sup> August. Please visit [www.essex.gov.uk/chelmsford-north-east-bypass](http://www.essex.gov.uk/chelmsford-north-east-bypass) to watch the scheme film.

## **13. When will the scheme be delivered?**

Following submission of formal planning permission, the HIF monies will provide the first phase (Phase 1) of the bypass by March 2024. This will consist of two sections: Section 1, a single carriageway between Beaulieu housing development and new connections to A131; and Section 2, dualling of A131 between new roundabout and Great Leighs Bypass.

Please go to see the scheme film found on the following website:

[www.essex.gov.uk/chelmsford-north-east-bypass](http://www.essex.gov.uk/chelmsford-north-east-bypass).

## **14. Why is the scheme delivering a single carriageway first?**

A single carriageway is what is required to meet the traffic demands for the next 15 years or more. The design is purposely sympathetic to being widened to dual carriageway to cater for increases in demand in the future.

## **15. How much is the scheme costing and how is it being funded?**

Essex County Council was successful in being awarded £218M funding for the bypass and station from Homes England as part of the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF). This funding complements the existing £22M funding from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership and £12M from Countryside Zest towards Beaulieu Station. The money will enable construction of the Bypass and Beaulieu railway station.

## **16. Will there be parking for Beaulieu station users?**

We're working with Network Rail and train operators to ensure the number of parking spaces for station users is adequately flexible to accommodate any longer-term changes in demand. Transport hubs (which could include bus or train stations) are identified in national planning policy and will connect to new and existing bus, footway and cycling networks.

## **17. Can I cycle to the new station?**

Yes. There will be accommodation to store cycles. Alongside the station, a transport interchange will connect to new and existing bus, footway and cycling networks.

## **18. Will this affect housing in the area?**

This infrastructure will maximise the housing and economic opportunity in the area and sustain the continued delivery of hundreds of homes each year. The bypass and the railway will unlock 9,000 new homes in this corridor in the period up to 2036 and provide the potential for a further 5,000 new homes in the longer term.

## **19. What is being done to protect the environment and residents?**

Essex County Council is committed to protecting the environment and minimising the overall impact and we will be in discussions with national bodies and local parties throughout the ongoing development of the project. [Further information can be found within the Virtual Exhibition – at the website below.](#)

## **20. When can I see the plans?**

Now! Current proposals via the Virtual Exhibition are available on the Essex County Council website: [www.essex.gov.uk/chelmsford-north-east-bypass-until-21<sup>st</sup> August 2020](http://www.essex.gov.uk/chelmsford-north-east-bypass-until-21st-August-2020). You can find a download version of the material listed on the above website at the bottom of the page.



Chelmsford Local Plan can be found through this link:

<https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy-and-new-local-plan/new-local-plan/local-plan-examination/>

### ***21. How do I find out more information?***

You can follow developments on the Essex County Council's dedicated website for the project: [www.essex.gov.uk/chelmsford-north-east-bypass](http://www.essex.gov.uk/chelmsford-north-east-bypass).

Alternatively, contact the Essex Highways customer contact centre on 0345 603 7631 or email [CNEB@essexhighways.org](mailto:CNEB@essexhighways.org).