

Project progress – April 2021

Our recent investigations have established there are a number of utility services in the vicinity of North Hall Road, including Openreach cables and water main running alongside the river. Gigaclear cables have been identified in the adjacent carriageway and we are aware of a major pipeline in the area. This information will support our future investigations, as well as design and construction works as the apparatus will need to be avoided to protect supplies to surrounding properties, as well as the safety of our workforce.

Before physical works are carried out we will liaise with the relevant utility companies. This process is expected to take some time to complete and may involve their future co-operation on site regarding possible diversion of supplies, if required.

Essex Highways will be tendering these works as a Design and Build contract which will be commissioned for design in the 2021/22 financial year. Tenders are currently being prepared and once awarded various surveys including topographical, soil and borehole investigation works will be planned when various permissions and legal agreements are in place.

When we have a design which meets Technical approval as well as permission from the Environment Agency as the agency class the River Cam as a 'Main River' and have all the necessary consents to proceed, we will be in a position to plan and undertake construction works.

We have a duty of care to the travelling public to ensure the design of the replacement retaining wall meets national design standards to support the appropriate highway loading. We are unable to reopen the road until the repairs are complete as the wall is approximately 2m high and there is insufficient distance between the wall and the carriageway to safely support highway loading. The road will remain open for use by pedestrians and dismounted cyclists.

We have recently been made aware of flooding issues north of the closure and damage to the verges on the diversion route. We are investigating these issues and will also explore the possibility of placing temporary signage at the start of North Hall Road to reinforce the message that the roads are narrow. We are unable to change the diversion route due to a low railway bridge which would be difficult for large vehicles to manoeuvre.

The most up to date information about our plans will continue to be shared on our dedicated webpage <https://www.essexhighways.org/north-hall-road-little-henham>, as well as local parish councils. Please be aware, however that there are many elements to this project which make it more complex than what first might appear. We would, however like to reassure you that we are carrying out the required investigations to enable us to provide a long-term solution for the site.

