



**Publication Draft Braintree, Colchester and Tendring Local Plans: Section One**

**Statement of Common Ground between Braintree District Council, Colchester Borough Council, Tendring District Council, Essex County Council, Greater Anglia and Highways England**

January 2018

**Colchester Borough Council, Tendring District Council, Braintree District Council**

**Statement of Common Ground**

**between**

**Essex County Council (Highways & Transportation), Highways England, and Greater Anglia**

**Introduction**

This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared between the three North Essex Local Planning Authorities (Braintree, Colchester and Tendring), Essex County Council (as Highways and Transportation Authority), Greater Anglia (GA – as the train operating company), and Highways England (HE). GA, and HE will provide separate signatures to this SoCG to represent their respective areas of responsibility. The purpose of this SoCG is to inform the Planning Inspectors and other parties of the agreed way forward on any issues that remain outstanding at the point of Local Plan examination. This SoCG focusses on the strategic routes of the A12, A120 and Great Eastern mainline railway. Details on how the participating authorities will continue to work collaboratively to address the identified issues are described below.

**Background**

As part of a Local Planning Authority's responsibilities under the statutory Duty to Cooperate (DtC), the three North Essex Authorities have held a series of discussions with the transport authorities, Essex County Council, Highways England, Greater Anglia and Network Rail concerning strategic cross boundary matters in the preparation of the respective local plans Strategic Section 1. The discussions have come in the form of face to face meetings and workshops, as well as written correspondence.

These meetings have been held to ensure that the respective transportation bodies are properly consulted and have been kept fully informed with how each authority Local Plan has, and is, progressed. All authorities have found these discussions valuable and productive and there is a welcome and ongoing commitment to continue this dialogue throughout the Local Plan and Development Plan Document preparation process to assist delivery and implementation.

The North Essex Authorities will continue to work closely with government departments, Highways England, Essex County Council, Network Rail, rail operators and other partners to:

- Maximise the opportunities for better integration of all forms of transport
- Promote interventions facilitating delivery of the proposed communities through the provision of improved roads, passenger transport and opportunities for cycling and walking

The authorities are taking this through:

- Engagement and cooperative working through the North Essex Garden Communities project, particularly the Transport Working Group
- Preparation of DPDs for the three Garden Communities
- Lobbying Government for the inclusion of the A120 in 'RIS 2' and funding for rapid transit.
- Creation of a Great Eastern Mainline Task Force to articulate the benefits of investment in rail to support growth
- Joint preparation and submission of Bids for funding towards infrastructure schemes, which assist the delivery of housing (eg Housing Infrastructure Fund)

Key projects during the plan period will see progression of transport schemes on the A12, A120, and Great Eastern Main Line including rail services, and provision of rapid transit connections in and around urban areas and the Garden Communities. An integrated and sustainable transport system is being developed and delivery will support economic growth and help deliver the best quality of life.

### **Strategic Cross Boundary Transportation Issues - Highways**

Essex County Council (ECC) and Highways England (HE) have not raised any concerns over the soundness of Section 1, but acknowledge the need to continue working collaboratively to evolve suitable solutions to both the local and strategic road hierarchy to facilitate delivery of the proposed garden communities. Separate to this workstream, HE are in the process of developing and delivering an upgrade to the A12 corridor through Essex and ECC are identifying opportunities to upgrade the A120 between

Braintree and the A12, both of which are aimed at alleviating known congestion issues across Essex. Both schemes will also facilitate economic growth in the region.

It is also noted that access to the strategic road network i.e. the A120 is relevant for both the West of Braintree and East of Colchester sites and the Transport Authorities will work jointly to produce a mutually acceptable solution, this may include junction improvements or a completely new junction(s). It is anticipated that the majority of funding for these improvements will be private investment and/or central government funded.

### A12 Trunk Road

The A12 provides the main south-west/north-east route through Essex and Suffolk, connecting Ipswich in the north with London and the M25 in the south. It forms a key part of the Strategic Road Network. It is of national strategic importance linking East Anglia and in particular the ports of the Felixstowe and Harwich to London and the South East. It is also of critical importance regionally and locally to the economic and social wellbeing of the towns and communities it serves.

In December 2014, the Department of Transport published the first Road Investment Strategy covering the Roads Period 2015-2020. It outlined a long-term vision for England's motorways and major roads, and included a multi-year investment plan that is being used to improve the network and create better roads for users.

In particular the Strategy includes:

- A12 Chelmsford to A120 - widening the A12 between junction 19 and junction 25 to three lanes
- Developing for the next Road Period
  - A12 Colchester bypass - widening the A12 between junctions 25 and 29 to three lanes
  - A12 M25 to Chelmsford – widening to three lanes between the M25 and the Chelmsford bypass (junctions 11 to 15),

Currently start of works for the A12 Chelmsford to A120 widening is programmed for 2020/21. A public consultation was held in Spring 2017 at which four options to upgrade the A12 was presented, the outcomes of which will inform a preferred route announcement expected in spring 2018/19. A plan showing the options is at Annex A

## A120 Trunk Road

The A120 is the primary route linking the A10 at Hertford in the West to the port of Harwich in the East, roughly following the original Roman Road corridor, Stane Street. In the 1970's and 1980's road improvements provided bypasses of Bishops Stortford, Great Dunmow and Coggeshall and the line of the A120 around Colchester was diverted to follow the A12 via its upgrades at Stanway and the Colchester Northern Bypass, together with a completely new alignment to Harwich, east of Colchester. Following completion of the dualling of A120 between the M11 at Junction 8 (Stansted) and Braintree in July 2004, the A120 from M11 to the A12 (Junction 25) was added to the trunk road network. The section from the A12 (Junction 29) to Harwich also forms part of the trunk road network.

The upgrading of the A120 between Braintree and the A12 Junction 25 does not feature in the current Road Investment Strategy at present.

Given the standard (single carriageway passing through semi urban/residential areas) and congestion/capacity issues associated with this corridor, ECC have been undertaking a feasibility study looking at the opportunity for upgrading and dualling this section of the A120. This initiative has been supported by government with a commitment given in the 2015 Autumn Statement for match funding, with HE engagement in the process provided throughout. The study resulted in a public consultation in spring 2017 on five options. The outcomes of the consultation together with the work undertaken provides an evidence base to support the inclusion of dualling of this section of the A120 in a future Road Investment Strategy and has been submitted to DFT for their consideration. Further technical studies and a business case will be submitted this year to further support the proposed dualling

Highways England can confirm that the feasibility study has followed and is fully aligned with its usual product control framework processes for development and delivery of major schemes.

## Matters to Progress in collaboration

The final boundaries and scale of the Colchester Braintree Borders Garden Community are proposed to be fixed in the forthcoming Development Plan Document process. A draft document (Issues and Options) is currently out for consultation. Delivery of the garden community will be in phases and further work will be required and is ongoing to understand the level of impact of the

development, what highway infrastructure including highway capacity and junction location (both local and strategic) will be required to support delivery and how that affects the merging preferred scheme option for the A12 widening.

The North Essex Authorities, together with ECC (as local highway authority) and Highways England will work together to ensure that the development of the garden community will facilitate and be coordinated with the A12 widening proposals and not delay the current proposed programmed start of works of 2020/21. The emerging highway design of the A12 and its junctions will be coordinated to ensure that they can allow for and accommodate future additional infrastructure will may be required to enable future expansion and completion of the garden community as well as other connections to the strategic road network. It is agreed that any additional funding necessary for the ongoing delivery of the garden community will lie outside the funding of the A12 Chelmsford to A120 widening scheme as detailed in the Road Investment Strategy.

As with the final A12 alignment, any proposed preferred option for the A120 will need to be taken into account in settling the detailed boundaries and scale of the proposed garden community. The North Essex Authorities, together with ECC and Highways England will continue to work together to ensure the A120 preferred route option and the planning for the Colchester Braintree Borders Garden Community takes place in a coordinated manner.

**Signed:**

**Sean Perry**  
**Essex County Council**

**Simon Amour**  
**Highways England**

## **Strategic Cross Boundary Transportation Issues - Railways**

### Great Eastern Mainline Railway as well as associated branch lines (Braintree, Sudbury and Colchester – Clacton)

The Essex rail network is a major artery linking London to East Anglia. An efficient rail network is essential to help Essex businesses to be productive, innovate and grow, and to attract investment and unlock sustainable growth opportunities particularly within the emerging Garden Community proposals. It provides access to wider employment opportunities for residents, enables local businesses to trade with London based businesses, and encourages new businesses to establish in Essex benefitting from our proximity of London. The economy of London also benefits by having access to the labour market from Essex. The 2011 Census records over 16,000 people across the three North Essex areas reporting that their main mode of travel to work was either the train or the underground, representing just over 7% of people travelling to work. Network Rail's Market Study predicted demand for rail travel on the Great Eastern mainline to increase by 75% by 2043 (arriving at Liverpool Street in the morning peak).

Rail provides an essential link to and between numerous economic centres within the County and to the City of London. The UK's second largest airport for freight and third largest for passenger travel at Stansted is in west Essex. Presently 50% of Stansted passengers arrive by public transport, the highest of any major UK airport, but increased capacity, faster services and earlier departures from London are all required if the airport is to grow and maximise the potential of its direct link to the heart of the City of London. Colchester railway station is a key interchange between intercity and outer suburban trains to Clacton, Walton and Ipswich. The station is located between Colchester town centre and the North Colchester Growth Area where again significant growth is planned. The University of Essex Knowledge Gateway, to the east of Colchester is a dedicated research park offering the potential for 400,000 sq ft of mixed commercial space and up to 2,000 high value jobs linked to research strengths at the University.

The importance of rail travel to Essex extends beyond the larger towns and cities to many smaller towns and interchanges that have benefitted from good rail links to London. Marks Tey is a typical example with in excess of 500,000 passenger movements from the station each year. The station itself provides an important interchange with the Sudbury branch. Braintree is served by rail from Witham station on the main line. Through trains to and from London run the peak hours with a shuttle service in the off peak. The four stations on the branch generate approximately 910,000 passenger movements per annum, with nearly 800,000 movements through Braintree station.

Investment in the Great Eastern mainline is a priority for all communities along the route. In 2009 this led to the establishment of the GEML Vision Group led by Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk County Councils and the Greater Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership. The Vision Group identified the need for investment in a package of linked infrastructure and service improvements to deliver increased capacity, reduced journey times and an improved travelling experience for all passengers.

This led to the publication in 2012 of “Once in a generation - A rail prospectus for East Anglia” authored and supported by a strong cross-party and multi-agency alliance of MPs, county councils, , other local authorities, businesses and rail user groups – across the four counties of Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire. The prospectus was produced in close consultation with Abellio Greater Anglia and Network Rail to ensure the proposals are practical and deliverable.

More recently this work has been taken on by the Great Eastern Main Line Taskforce, led by local Members of Parliament, that has further developed the strong economic case for investment in the line. The GEML Economic Benefits study underpins the work of the Taskforce and identifies more than £4bn economic benefits related to the delivery of a package of infrastructure improvements, additional services and faster trains benefitting all passengers using the line. Key infrastructure schemes include:

- Trowse Swing Bridge doubling
- Haughley Junction doubling
- Passing loops south of Colchester
- Digital signalling south of Chelmsford
- Liverpool Street station improvements and associated Bow Junction improvements

The Anglia Route Study was published by Network Rail in March 2016. The Route Study sets out a vision for the next 10 to 30 years of a much busier railway, with investment enabling faster, more frequent and more reliable journeys. It presents choices for funders to meet this future demand. Improvements are also identified for the Ely area which allows the opportunity for more freight to pass this way in the future.

A new franchise has been awarded to Greater Anglia for passenger services in the region. The franchise includes a commitment to replace the entire train fleet during by the end of 2020, which in combination with a new timetable, will significantly increase



passenger capacity; typically increasing capacity by 55%, 32,000 extra seats into Liverpool Street in the morning peak. Work is progressing on developing the new timetables..

### Matters to progress in Collaboration

Network Rail has commenced the development of its maintenance and renewals programmes for Control Period 6 (2019 to 2024). Projects for capital investment in enhancements to the local rail network will be progressed by Network Rail governed by a new process outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding agreed with the DfT and developed in line with the Governance for Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) process. Similarly to the strategic road network, sound strategic, outline and final business cases needs to be presented at key decision points for projects to receive further development funding and to progress to delivery. Network Rail has expressed a willingness to work with third parties to develop and fund enhancement projects.

The Anglia Route Study shows that improvements are required along the Line to promote growth and provide a faster more competitive service across the region. The Study identifies a package of improvements necessary to respond to the need for increased capacity, which are seen as priorities to enable growth, improve services and journey reliability. These will be progressed by Network Rail.

Through collaboration with both Network Rail (rail infrastructure owner) and Greater Anglia (current Train Operating Company) the North Essex Authorities and Essex County Council will seek to understand more fully the impact on the rail network as a result of the growth planned in the North Essex Garden Communities and most certainly the Colchester Braintree Borders Community given its proximity to Marks Tey Railway Station and the Colchester Tendring Borders Community given its proximity to the Clacton Branch Line linking with Colchester Town and Colchester Mainline Stations.

Working collaboratively the partners will seek to identify and agree the rail interventions necessary in terms of infrastructure investment and timetable modifications necessary to support the sustainable growth aspirations underpinning the North Essex Garden Communities, and to identify potential sources of funding to support their timely delivery.

**Signed**

**Sean Perry  
Essex County Council**

**Jonathan Denby – Head of Corporate Affairs  
Greater Anglia**

## **Areas of Uncommon Ground**

None

## **Conclusions and further work**

The North Essex Authorities will continue to work closely with government departments, HE, ECC, Network Rail, rail operators and other partners (including developers) to better integrate all forms of transport and improve roads and public transport and to promote cycling and walking. This will be done through:

- Lobbying Central Government through the Great Eastern Mainline Task Force for investment in rail
- The Planning Authorities and ECC to continue to lobby Central Government for the inclusion of the A120 in RIS2.
- Engagement and cooperative working through the North Essex Garden Communities project.
- Preparation of DPDs for the three Garden Communities.
- Preparation and submission of Bids for funding towards infrastructure schemes, which assist the delivery of housing (eg Housing Infrastructure Fund).
- The traffic impact of the new communities will need to be assessed, and mitigation developed , on the A12, A120 and their junctions

The North Essex Authorities, Essex County Council, Highways England, Network Rail and Greater Anglia agree that in respect to each authority's emerging Local Plans and the specific cross boundary matter of Strategic Transport, compliance with the obligations under Duty to Co-operate have been met satisfactorily.

All Local Authorities acknowledge that the Duty to Cooperate is not just a mechanism for cross-borough engagement during a Local Plan process. It is an ongoing activity that will continue beyond individual districts/boroughs submissions, and eventual adoption of a Local Plan. All parties remain committed to continue to work together outside of the Local Plan process on these important strategic matters.

**Signed**



**Karen Syrett  
Colchester Borough Council**

**Emma Goodings  
Braintree District Council**

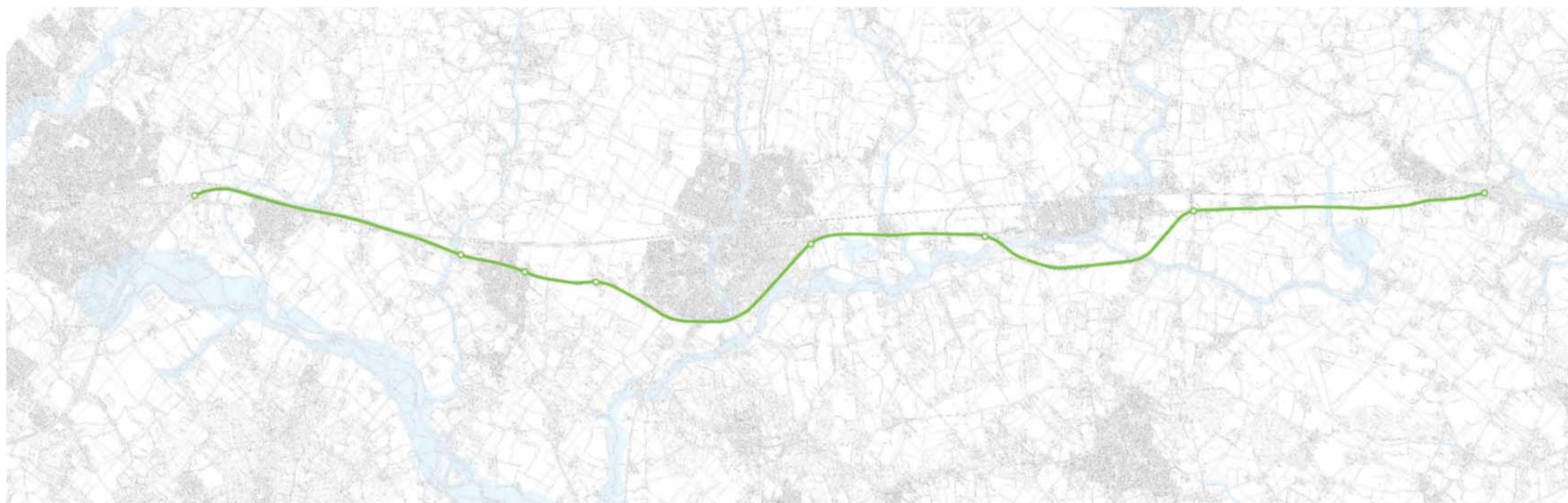
**Catherine Bicknell  
Tendring District Council**

**Sean Perry  
Essex County Council**

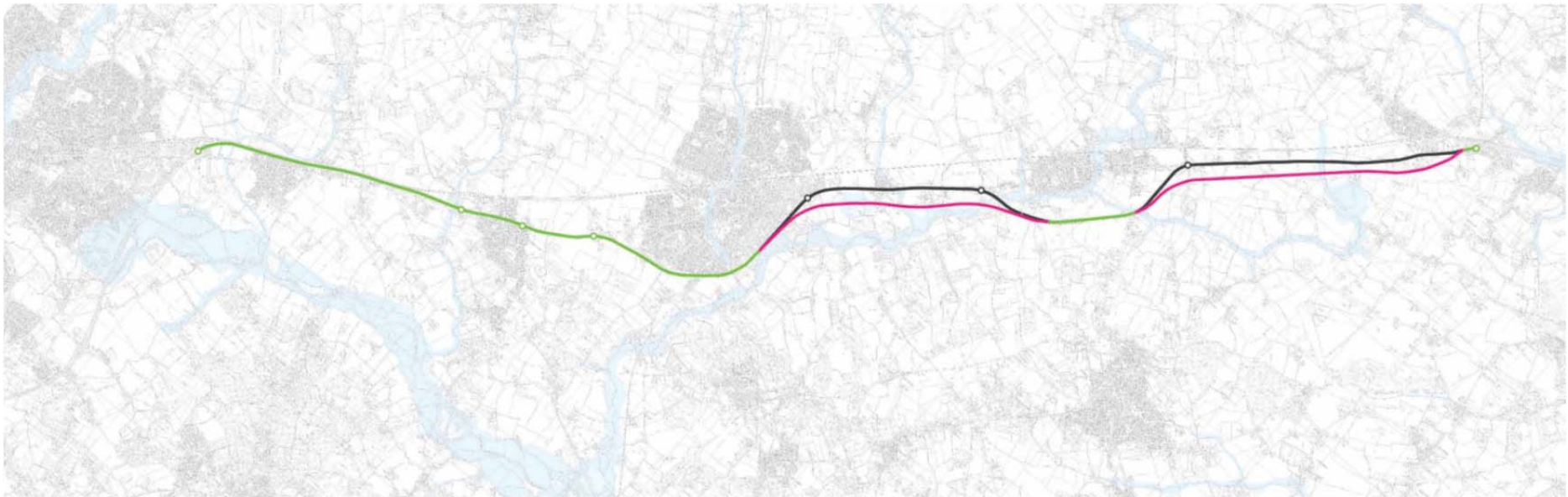
## Annex 1: Detailed Background on Strategic Transportation (Highway Matters)

### A12 Chemsford to A120 – Public Consultation Options

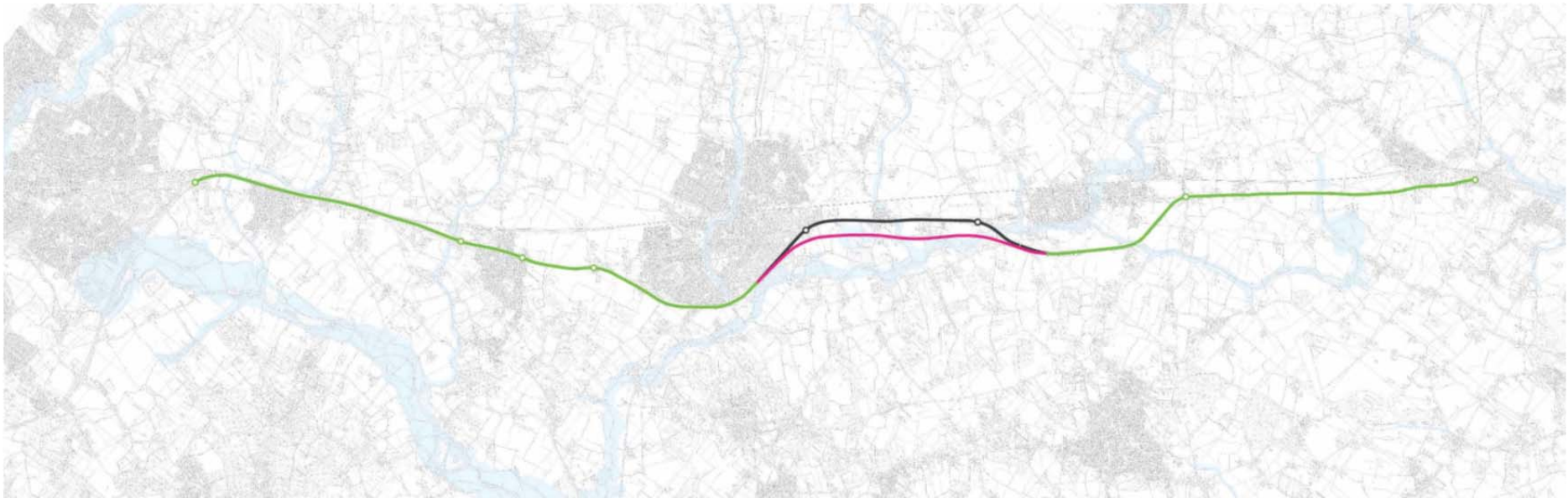
**Option 1** would follow and widen the existing A12 corridor to three lanes in each direction between junctions 19 and 25. It would require land within the existing highway boundary and could require land immediately next to it, particularly between junctions 22-23 and 24-25.



**Option 2** would widen the existing A12 corridor between junctions 19-22 to three lanes in each direction as with option 1. At junction 22, it leaves the existing corridor and creates a new 3 lane bypass to the south, running in parallel with the existing A12. At around junction 23, it would re-join the current corridor. The existing A12 corridor between junction 23-24 would widen to 3 lanes in each direction. At junction 24, the road leaves the existing A12 and creates a second 3 lane bypass to the south, running in parallel with the existing A12, re-joining at junction 25.

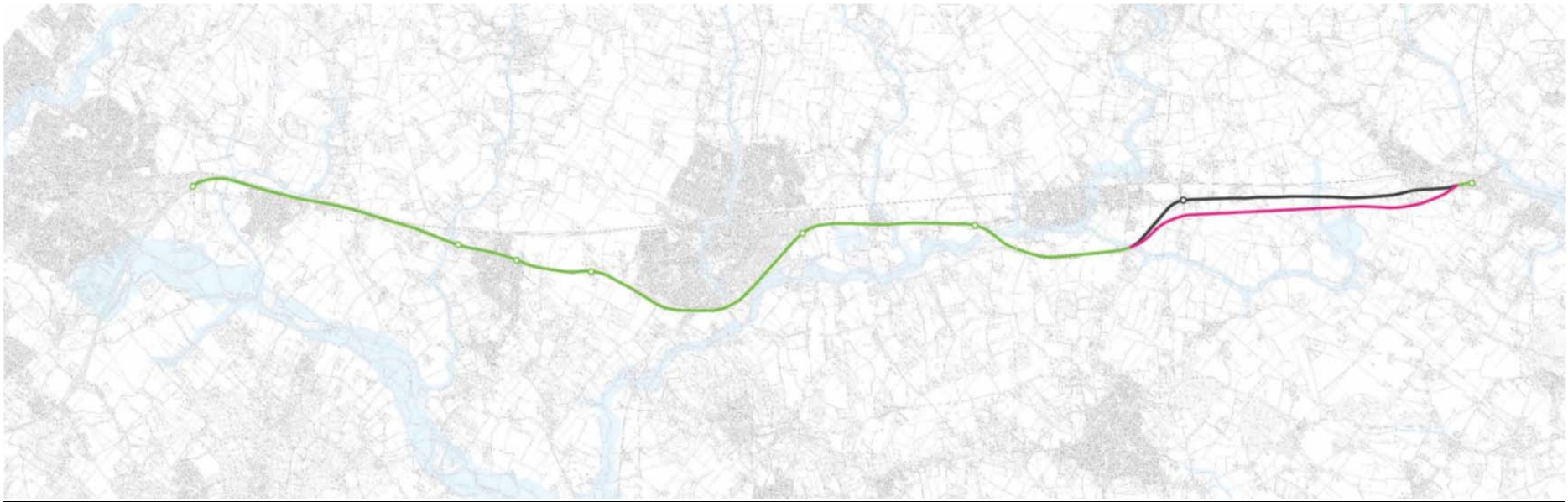


**Option 3** would widen the existing A12 corridor between junctions 19-22 to three lanes in each direction. At junction 22, it leaves the existing corridor and creates a new 3 lane bypass to the south running in parallel with the existing A12 until junction 23 where it would re-join the current corridor. It then follows the existing A12 corridor between junction 23-25 which would widen to three lanes in each direction



**Option 4** would widen the existing A12 corridor between junctions 19-24 to three lanes in each direction as with Option 1. At junction 24 it leaves the existing corridor and creates a new 3 lane bypass to the south, running in parallel with the existing A12 until junction 25 where it would re-join the current corridor.





### A120 Trunk Road

The A120 is the primary route linking the A10 at Hertford in the West to the port of Harwich in East, roughly following the original Roman Road corridor, Stane Street. In the 1970's and 1980's road improvements provided bypasses of Bishop's Stortford, Great Dunmow and Coggeshall and the line of the A120 around Colchester was diverted to follow the A12 via its upgrades at Stanway and the Colchester Northern Bypass. Finally a completely new alignment for the road to reach Harwich itself was constructed east of Colchester. In the early 2000's the Braintree to Stansted Airport dual two carriageway bypass was opened providing a high quality link between the two destinations as well as providing additional relief for settlements along the existing alignment.

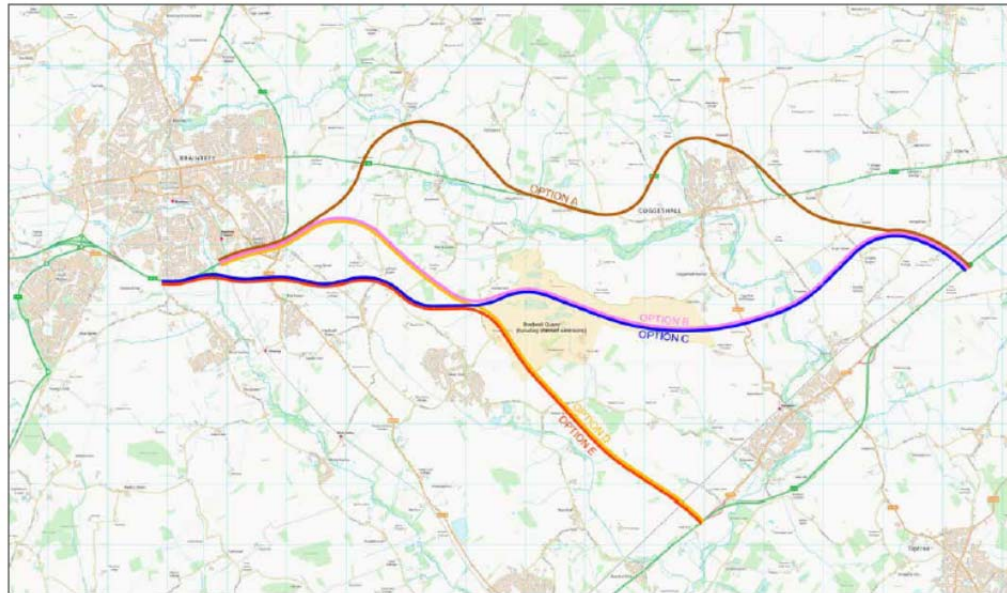
### Progress to Date and Development of Options



On 7<sup>th</sup> March 2005 the Secretary of State for Transport made the A120 from the M11 to A12 J25 (Marks Tey) part of the Strategic Road Network in recognition of its essential role in supporting long distance travel and commerce in the East of England. As a result the A120 performs a number of functions:

- At the strategic level the corridor provides access to Stansted Airport and the Haven Ports, in particular Harwich International Port, for the movement of international freight and passengers.
- At the regional level the corridor provides access to regional centres such as Colchester.
- At the local level the corridor provides the only access for many villages and towns along the route to essential services and employment.

Although the A120 is part of the Strategic Road Network operated by Highways England, in 2015 the Government agreed that Essex County Council could undertake feasibility work on an improvement between Marks Tey and Braintree. In the last year the County Council following Highways England processes identified 68 options, and reduced these to the five best performing options. This culminated in a public consultation which took place for 8 weeks from 17 January 2017 to 14 March 2017. Eleven events were held in a number of local locations across North Essex. As there was a parallel consultation being undertaken by Highways England (A12 widening project as indicated above) the opportunity to host both exhibitions at the same venue was taken. Seven of the eleven venues hosted both of the exhibitions. The following diagram displays the five best performing options for an improved A120 from Braintree to the A12.



### Consultation Process and Results

The consultation process itself resulted in nearly 2,800 responses with 82% of respondents feeling that the A120 needs to be completely upgraded between Braintree and the A12 in order to meet future demand. Respondents were asked to rank the five options presented from 1 to 5 with 1 being the first preference and 5 being the last preference. Option C received the most responses as first preference when compared across options with 29%, closely followed by option E with 27% and then option A (17%), option D (14%) and option B (13%). The public consultation results are one of many criteria that must be considered by Highways England when making decisions on preferred route. A decision making framework has been developed to assess the relative performance of the A120 route options against the five DfT cases. The criteria assessed include economic growth, local environment, value for money, public acceptability, capital costs and over cost risk. The overall results of the Decision Framework using a simple average of all criteria concluded that:

#### *Option D:*

- Is the **best performing option**. It represents the **best value for money** (currently has highest BCR), is the **lowest cost option**, and is considered the **lowest risk** option with respect to both practical feasibility and overall cost risk. It provides significant, although not the highest, journey time savings and economic benefits.
- It is considered to have impacts which may be less onerous to mitigate when compared to the other routes.
- It was ranked 3rd by those responding to the consultation.

#### *Option E*

- Is a slightly higher cost option compared to Option D but also has marginally higher benefits and economic impact, in particular higher capacity around Braintree.
- The higher cost currently results in poorer value for money than Option D but better than Option C.
- Ongoing appraisal for Stage 2 of the Highways England process could potentially result in this option replacing Option D as the best performing option.
- It was ranked 2nd by those responding to the consultation

#### *Option C*

- Is the option with the highest transport user benefits and impact on economic growth. However, it is also the highest cost option with the lowest estimated value for money.
- Based on the currently available data, the additional benefits associated with Option C are not sufficient to compensate for or justify the additional capital cost in terms of value for money compared to the other options.
- Along with Option B and A, it is considered to have impacts which may be more difficult to mitigate than other routes.
- It is considered that the outcome of Stage 2 appraisal could result in this option replacing Option D as the best performing option, although this is less likely than for Option E.
- Option C was ranked 1st by those responding to the consultation

#### *Option B*

- Is similar to Option C but with a different starting point that moves eastwards and grade separates the existing Galley's Corner junction.
- It has slightly lower costs and benefits than Option C and a similar level of value for money.

- Along with Option C and A, it is considered to have impacts which may be more difficult to mitigate than other routes.
- It is considered unlikely that Stage 2 appraisal would result in this option replacing Option D as the best performing option.
- Option B was ranked 4th by those responding to the consultation

#### *Option A*

- Has the middle value with respect to costs and benefits and is second best with respect to value for money.
- However, it has the highest level of opposition from the public consultation and the lowest public acceptability when using the top three preferences as a measure.
- Along with Option B and C, it is considered to have impacts which may be more difficult to mitigate than other routes.
- It also provides the lowest increase in capacity, the least improvement in resilience and the most design safety issues of all the options.
- It is considered very unlikely that Stage 2 appraisal would result in this option replacing Option D as the best performing option.

The results of the consultation and the outcomes of the Decision Framework have shown that there are at least three route options that show an economic case for consideration in RIS2. It is therefore not possible to identify at this stage which option is likely to be chosen by the Department for Transport as their preferred route (in conjunction with HE) and whether this enters RIS2. It was therefore recommended at Essex County Council's Cabinet on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017 that the most appropriate response to recent findings is for the County Council to state that it has no single favoured route and that a number of options are still being considered. Although consensus has not yet emerged, the feasibility results and consultation feedback have combined to produce two broad corridors of further study:

- A central corridor comprising routes B and C
- A southern corridor comprising routes D and E
- Route A has been discounted from the process