

Report to Neighbourhoods Select Committee

Date of meeting: 28th June 2016

Subject: M11 Junction 7A (and widening of Gildea Way)

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Committee Secretary: A Hendry (01992 56 4246)



Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) To respond to Essex County Council's consultation on M11 Junction 7A (and widening of Gildea Way) in the following terms:**
 - (a) That the Council strongly supports the provision of a new junction 7A on the M11, as it would greatly improve the transport network and traffic management for the area, and it is necessary to support the growth of homes and jobs in the forthcoming Local Plans of EFDC and the other three West Essex/East Herts authorities; and**
 - (b) That Essex CC should consider the phasing for delivery of the 'future-proofing' spur and roundabout as the need for this will be determined by the District Councils' Local Plans which are not yet available.**

Report:

Background

1. Essex County Council is currently consulting on the provision and design of a new junction 7A on the M11, and the related widening of Gildea Way. The consultation is open until the 6th July 2016, and full details can be found on the Essex CC website here: https://app.citizenspace.com/essexcc/m11junction7a/consult_view. This consultation follows several years of work by the County Council in assessing various options to improve congestion, and also in assessing possibilities for junction 7A design and location.

The current consultation

2. The County Council's own strategic options appraisal has shown that a new junction 7A is the best solution to overcome problems on the transport network in the area, particularly in and around Harlow. It is felt that this would not only benefit the residents, workers and visitors of Harlow, but also those of neighbouring areas such as Epping Forest District, as traffic congestion relating to accessing and exiting the M11, has long been a problem in the local area.
3. The proposal is for the new junction 7A to sit between junctions 7 (Harlow) and 8 (Bishop's Stortford), to the north east of Harlow town, on land within Epping Forest District. Specifically, the western half of the junction and the access roads into Harlow would sit within Lower Sheering ward, and the eastern half of the junction would sit just within Hastingwood, Matching and Sheering Village ward.

Figure 1 - The proposed scheme



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Accessed at - https://app.citizenspace.com/essexcc/m11junction7a/consult_view.

4. Essex County Council's appraisal has taken into account current traffic congestion, but also future congestion and pressure on the network resulting from housing and employment growth to be provided through Local Plans. The main consultation document states that the provision of junction 7A and the widening of Gilden Way will:
 - create a key link for traffic travelling to and from Harlow to the M11;
 - reduce congestion on the key routes through Harlow and towards Junction 7; and
 - provide opportunities for new homes and economic growth.

Response to the consultation

5. It is recommended that this Council states that it strongly supports the provision of junction 7A on the M11, as it would greatly improve the transport network and traffic management for the area.
6. The provision of junction 7A has also been proved essential, through transport modelling carried out by Essex County Council for the four West Essex/East Herts authorities, to support the growth of homes and jobs in the forthcoming Local Plan. The need for junction 7A was discussed in a recent meeting between Members and senior officers of the four authorities and the Transport Minister Andrew Jones, and is a key element of the Strategic Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) Spatial Options work commissioned by the Co-operation for Sustainable Development Member Board. Without firm plans for junction 7A this Council's Local Plan would likely face serious problems at Examination in Public, risking that it may not be found 'sound'.
7. EFDC Members have previously raised concerns over the timing of the 'future-proofing' spur and roundabout which form part of Essex County Council's proposals. It is suggested that the Council includes these concerns in its response, suggesting to Essex County Council that the phasing of delivery for these elements would need to be determined by the individual Districts' Local Plans, which are not yet available.
8. It is not proposed to make any specific comments relating to the widening of Gilden Way or other smaller scale road changes within Harlow District, as it is felt that these

are specific to Harlow, and will be commented on by Harlow's Councillors and residents.

Next Steps

9. Essex County Council has set out the following broad timetable in relation to their proposals:
 - Summer 2016 - Analysis of consultation responses, and scheme refinements;
 - Autumn 2016 - Preferred route announcement;
 - Winter 2016 – Planning application to be submitted;
 - Early 2019 – Start of construction, lasting about 2 years.
10. Officers and Members will continue to engage with Essex County Council (and Highways England) on junction 7A through formal consultations such as this one, and also, more regularly, through the Co-operation for Sustainable Development Member Board and the Co-operation for Sustainable Development Officer Group.

Reason for decision: For the reasons stated in this report, it is felt that Junction 7A on the M11 would be very beneficial, as it would greatly improve the transport network and traffic management for the area, and it is necessary to support the growth of homes and jobs in the forthcoming Local Plan, for EFDC and for the other three West Essex/East Herts authorities.

Options considered and rejected: Not to respond to the consultation, however, this would risk the Council's views not being heard on an important strategic transport matter.

Resource implications: Consideration of this consultation has been undertaken within the existing resources of the Planning Policy Team.

Legal and Governance Implications: Essex County Council, as the local Highways authority, has responsibility for transport matters in this area. Highways England has responsibility for the Strategic transport network.

Safer, Cleaner Greener Implications: The potential impacts of Junction 7A and the widening of Gilden Way, including assessment of environmental impact, have been carried out by Essex County Council as the responsible Highways authority.

Consultation Undertaken: Informal consultation with the Planning Policy Portfolio Holder and the Director of Neighbourhoods has taken place. The recommendations of this report and the Council's response to the consultation will be considered by the Neighbourhoods and Communities Select Committee on 28th June 2016.

Background Papers:

M11 Junction 7A (including Gilden Way) Consultation Document, Essex County Council (June 2016) – available at

https://app.citizenspace.com/essexcc/m11junction7a/consult_view.

Other supporting documents and appendices, Essex County Council (June 2016) – available at https://app.citizenspace.com/esssexcc/m11junction7a/consult_view.

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management:

Equality: There are no equality implications arising from the recommendations in this report, as the provision of Junction 7A on the M11, and the widening of Gilden Way, would not impact people with the protected characteristics (under equality law) any differently than the rest of the population.