

Major A12 upgrade to speed up journeys and improve safety

Plans announced today (Monday 21 October) by Highways England will reduce congestion and accidents on the route – a key link between the East of England and London – by widening a 15-mile section of the road between Chelmsford and Marks Tey.

Today's announcement confirms a preferred option for widening the A12 between junctions 19 and 23, and sets out four new options for improvements between junctions 23 and 25, which take into account plans for a new garden community at Marks Tey.

Stephen Elderkin, Highways England project lead for the A12, said:

The A12 is a key route connecting the East of England to London. With the high levels of congestion, it's a route that Highways England and the Government are committed to improving. Our proposed improvements will increase safety and average speeds, so that someone travelling on the A12 daily can expect to save over an hour of travel time each week.

Roads Minister Baroness Vere said:

I want the A12 to be as safe as possible for the 90,000 people who use it each day. That is why we are committed to modernising this major road, supporting growth in the region and improving journeys for all

Currently rush hour congestion increases journey times by half, and the various local access points onto the road raise safety concerns, as collisions on this road are 20 per cent more likely to result in death or serious injury.

Although Highways England previously consulted on how best to upgrade this 15-mile stretch of Essex road into three lanes in 2017, plans were subsequently put forward for a proposed Colchester Braintree Borders Garden Community at Marks Tey which could impact on the suggested A12 route. Highways England believes it is important to ensure that the new road meets the future needs of the area, so it has since worked in partnership with the relevant local authorities to consider how the A12 could support the proposed housing growth.

Today Highways England is announcing its preferred route to upgrade the road between junctions 19 and 23 (which are to the west of where the new homes may be built), so that its work on the A12 can start while plans for the new

development are under discussion. The preferred route would widen the existing A12 corridor between junctions 19 and 23 to three lanes in each direction at key places, and would see a new three-lane bypass in each direction at Rivenhall End.

Highways England remains committed to upgrading the whole stretch of the A12 between Chelmsford and Marks Tey. A further non-statutory consultation opens today to gather public feedback on four new routes running between junctions 23 and 25 that could be used if the proposed garden community does go ahead. These are four alternative routes for this consultation, with those consulted on in 2017 remaining viable options for the route should the new development not go ahead.

Once the new three-lane A12 route is built, the existing road will be retained and handed over to Essex County Council for use by local traffic.

The new [public consultation on routes between junctions 23 and 25](#) is open for six weeks and includes ten events where people can find out more and put any queries to the A12 project team. The public can also give their views online at the consultation page, or by post.

The consultation closes at 11:59pm on Sunday 1 December.

Following this, Highway England expects to announce its preferred route between junctions 23 and 25 in summer 2020. A statutory public consultation to get feedback on its more detailed designs for the full stretch of road between junctions 19 and 25 will then be held, ahead of submitting an application for a Development Consent Order in 2021.

For more information on the scheme see [our website](#).

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[Currency trading boss banned after abusing clients' funds](#)

Frank Deal (41), formerly of Surrey, was the director of Foreign Exchange Limited, a company that facilitated currency trades for its clients.

Previously called Yenom Incorporated Limited, Foreign Exchange Limited was incorporated in September 2003 and based in Croydon.

14 years after incorporation, however, the foreign exchange company experienced trading difficulties and entered administration in November 2016 Limited before entering liquidation in September 2017.

An Insolvency Practitioner was appointed to handle the company's affairs before making the Insolvency Service aware of the conduct of the director, Frank Deal.

When investigators looked into the company's dealings, they uncovered that, between October 2013 and October 2016, Frank Deal had caused the company to misappropriate client funds totalling almost £2.5 million.

In total, 31 customers have approached either the police, administrators and the Insolvency Service claiming funds they had transferred to Foreign Exchange Limited never reached the intended recipient accounts and were never returned.

Additionally, at least seven clients said that Frank Deal provided fraudulent bank transfer remittance receipts showing funds transfers that, in reality, never took place.

On 6 September 2019, the Secretary of State accepted a 12-year disqualification undertaking from Frank Deal. Effective from 27 September, he is not able, directly or indirectly, to be involved in the promotion, formation or management of a company.

David Brooks, Chief Investigator for the Insolvency Service, said:

Frank Deal's clients expected a level of risk when making their investments but did not expect that risk to come from the company's director. Many lost tens of thousands of pounds as a result of Frank Deal's conduct.

This ban will prevent him from causing further financial harm for a significant period, and serves as a reminder to other directors that this conduct will not be tolerated.

Frank Deal is formerly of Surrey but currently of no fixed abode. His date of birth is May 1978.

Foreign Exchange Limited (Company number 04896909).

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings. Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of restrictions](#).

[Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to](#)

[complain about financial misconduct](#).

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

Local Government Secretary confirms new support for survivors of domestic abuse

- Government confirms plans for new legal duty for local authorities to deliver life-saving support to survivors of domestic abuse
- New move will end postcode lottery of support for those fleeing violent relationships
- Further £15 million for refuges and safe accommodation projects in 2020 to 2021

Survivors of domestic abuse will be provided with essential, life-saving support in safe accommodation thanks to new legal requirement upon every council in England from next year, Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick has confirmed.

As outlined in the Queen's Speech, the government intends to amend the landmark Domestic Abuse Bill to include for the first time a statutory duty on councils to provide support.

The Bill will transform the response to domestic abuse to better protect victims and their children, ensure they have the support they need, as well as pursuing their abusers.

Many councils are already providing tailored support to those in need, but this move will bring an end to the postcode lottery of support for those fleeing abusive relationships.

This step forms part of a wider government drive to bolster protection for survivors of domestic abuse including the landmark Domestic Abuse Bill which is currently before the House.

Local Government Secretary, Robert Jenrick MP, said:

Domestic abuse destroys lives and leaves victims living in fear in the place where they should feel most safe – their homes.

This duty upon councils will now be brought forward – ensuring survivors get the help they need wherever they are, so they can rebuild their lives away from the threat of abuse.

This government is determined to pursue abusers, better protect victims and their children, and ensure they have the support they need – so we can end this abhorrent practice for good.

Ahead of this new duty coming into force in 2021, the government has also announced a further £15 million in funding to run these essential services in 2020 to 2021 – a 20% increase on 2019 to 2020.

The duty will then be funded from April 2021, subject to future spending review discussions.

In addition, the Domestic Abuse Bill will bring about the first ever statutory government definition of domestic abuse to specifically include economic abuse and controlling and manipulative non-physical abuse.

The Bill will also establish a new Domestic Abuse Commissioner and prohibit the cross-examination of victims by their abusers in the family courts.

Local authorities will also be required to develop and publish strategies which set out in detail the range of support services available for those fleeing violent relationships – including refuge accommodation and specialist support from safety through to independence.

Sandra Horley CBE, Chief Executive of national domestic abuse charity Refuge, said:

This much needed change in the law could mean an end to the postcode lottery of finding emergency accommodation, and would ensure critical specialist services are on a much more sustainable financial footing.

We look forward to working with the government to make sure every woman and child can access the support they need, and that means sustainable funding that meets need and addresses current shortfalls.”

In November last year, ministers awarded a further £22 million for domestic abuse projects across England – ensuring thousands more survivors have access to the help they need as they move towards a safe and healthy future, free from domestic abuse.

Funding is helping to provide over 2,200 new beds in refuges and other safe accommodation, as well as access to education and tailored employment and life skills guidance.

All of this action will help more people understand domestic abuse better and ensure those that need it can access the support they need, while staying safe and protected from future abuse.

The launch of this [consultation](#) received widespread support, including from

Women's Aid, which said "We warmly welcome this announcement, which shows the government's commitment to the long-term funding of lifesaving refuges."

In November 2018, the government confirmed that [63 projects across England were to share £22 million](#) to help domestic abuse survivors.

That funding has helped to provide tailored support to more than 25,000 survivors and their families – including over 2,200 additional beds in refuges and other safe accommodation

The Domestic Abuse Bill had its second reading on Wednesday 2 October.

The Bill includes measures such as introducing a statutory definition of domestic abuse, Domestic Abuse Protection Orders and banning the cross-examination of victims by their perpetrators in family proceedings. We have already appointed a Designate Domestic Abuse Commissioner, who will promote best practice and highlight the plight of some of the most vulnerable victims.

Statutory guidance also now strongly encourages councils to prioritise domestic abuse survivors who are ready to move on from refuges when allocating social housing, to free up valuable refuge spaces for others who may need them.

The government published its [response to the consultation](#) on 14 October.

The new £15 million fund will ensure vital safe accommodation services including refuges are maintained ahead of the new duty coming into force.

This builds on other actions being taken by the government to end domestic abuse and tackle violence against women against girls, supporting survivors and ensuring offenders are prosecuted. Such as:

- the criminalisation of forced marriage and the introduction of new stalking laws
 - a national roll-out of domestic violence protection orders and the domestic violence disclosure scheme
 - the £15 million 3-year Violence Against Women and Girls Service Transformation Fund
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Work paused on the Carlisle flood risk management scheme for the winter

Since construction started in July 2019, we have encountered the wettest August and September in the last 30 years according to the Met Office. This has made working conditions for machinery and Environment Agency teams on the ground difficult for both the in river works and embankment construction.

Works to date have been focussed in the Warwick Road area. The decision to pause has not been taken lightly and the Environment Agency consider it will be of greater benefit in the long run to pause rather than attempt to carry on through winter when we are likely to make little progress. Much of the plant and equipment will be moved from Melbourne Park from the end of October and will return in 2020.

The change in the works timetable will not increase the flood risk to the local area. In addition to this flood scheme the Environment Agency have been preparing for the wetter winter period. Their 2019 winter readiness plans remain unchanged and include: replacing flood gates at the Caldew Maltings; control panel repairs at Little Caldew pumping station; repairs to flood embankments at Willowholme and Parham Beck; repairs to Durranshill flood storage basin; as well as regularly removing blockages and debris that would have increased flood risk.

Stewart Mounsey, flood manager for Cumbria, said:

I would like to reassure people that pause doesn't mean stop. We will be busy behind the scenes working with our designers and contractor to plan our works for an accelerated start in spring 2020. Although we won't be building embankments in the winter the public may see some activity in the winter months that will be supporting the accelerated return.

The pause does not affect the completion of our works which were originally planned for spring 2020 to enable the new defences to be built ahead of winter 2020. Pausing main construction works in winter 2019 will not affect our 2020 winter readiness or our ongoing preparations for delivery of Phases 2 and 3.

The Environment Agency can never fully protect people from future flooding, so they are asking residents at risk of flooding to prepare in advance by going [online](#) and signing up for free flood warnings. Alternatively, they can telephone the Environment Agency Floodline on 0345 988 1188 and find out what they can do to protect themselves and their property when flooding hits.

[FIFA Club World Cup Qatar 2019](#)

[Sign up for email alerts](#) and receive updates on travel advice for Qatar.

The FIFA Club World Cup will kick off in Qatar on 11 December. A large number of fans are expected to attend the tournament. Here are some tips to help make your visit safe and enjoyable.

Before you go

Below is information to help you plan your visit to Qatar. Subscribe to our [travel advice](#) and follow our social media channels for important updates.

Facebook: [@UKinQatar](#) Twitter: [@UKinQatar](#)

Travelling to and staying in Qatar

There may be an increased demand for flights and hotels during the games. Plan ahead and book as early as possible to avoid disappointment. For further information check the FIFA [official website](#) and useful information from [Visit Qatar](#).

Passports and visas

You can get a 30-day tourist visa-waiver on arrival in Qatar, but your passport should be valid for at least 6 months from your date of entry. If you hold one of the [other types of British passport](#), you must get a visa before you travel.

If you plan to visit any other countries in the Middle East on your trip, be sure to check the passport validity requirements and visa requirements of each country.

You should carry your passport with you at all times. If you lose your passport, you'll need to get an [Emergency Travel Document](#) from the British Embassy in Doha.

Accommodation

Qatar's hotels accommodate around 25,000 rooms and most of the properties are located in central Doha. In the run-up to the tournament, accommodation options might fill up. If you haven't secured accommodation, you should aim to do so quickly. Please check the [Where to Stay](#) section of the Qatar National Tourism Council website that can help you with your search.

Transport

Qatar is a compact country and fans travelling to attend the tournament will

have a number of options to access venues. These include buses, taxis and car hire. Check the National Tourism Council's [Getting Around](#) page for further information. Popular ride hailing apps are also widely used. The new Doha Metro partially opened in early 2019 and offers limited travel to certain areas. You can check routes and plan your trip on the [Metro](#) website.

Driving

Car hire agencies are numerous and many are located at Hamad International Airport. If you plan to hire a vehicle during your stay, check the [safety and security](#) page of our travel advice for information on road safety and driving licence requirements in Qatar.

[Video on driving](#)

Insurance

Make sure you have comprehensive travel insurance that covers pre-existing conditions and accessible funds to cover the cost of any medical treatment abroad and repatriation. In some hospitals you may need to pay in advance before claiming back from your insurance company. Find more advice on [getting the right travel insurance](#).

Local laws and customs

Travel global, think local

[Video on prohibited items](#)

There may be serious penalties for doing something that might not be illegal in the UK. You are strongly recommended to familiarise yourself with the [local laws and customs](#) section of our travel advice.

- Be responsible and respectful. Certain behaviour considered normal in the UK may cause offence in Qatar.
- Dress modestly and avoid public displays of affection. Women should ensure shoulders and knees are covered in public.
- Sexual relations outside of marriage are not permitted. Opposite-sex couples checking into hotels may be asked to provide a marriage certificate if sharing a room.
- Alcohol cannot be brought into Qatar and must only be consumed on licensed premises. Public intoxication and rowdy conduct is not acceptable and may lead to arrest.
- There is a zero tolerance towards drugs. Bringing drugs to Qatar or being in possession of drugs will result in a lengthy prison sentence.
- Be mindful when taking pictures. Sensitive sites like government buildings, embassies, mosques and construction sites are off-limits. Some Qatari females may object to being photographed. If in doubt, seek permission.
- Make sure any hotel, car hire or other bills are settled before you

leave. Non-payment of debt in Qatar is a criminal offence punishable by imprisonment.

Cash

Credit and debit cards are widely accepted in Qatar. ATMs are available and should accept most overseas credit cards, although the amount of cash per withdrawal may be limited. You might want to advise your bank you are travelling abroad to ensure your cards will be operational in Qatar.

Diversity

As the population of Qatar is predominately expatriate, it is home to people, languages, and cultures from all over the world. Arabic is the official language but English is widely spoken in most contexts.

Homosexuality is illegal in Qatar. See our [information and advice page](#) for the LGBT community before you travel.

Prescription and over-the-counter medicines

Most common over-the-counter medicines are available at pharmacies in Qatar. If you need to bring prescription medication with you during your trip, make sure you carry the prescription with you. Check the [health](#) page of our travel advice for further information.

Climate

Although a desert climate, winter in Qatar tends to be relatively mild with temperatures averaging around 20 degrees Celsius. A sweater or jacket for the evening is recommended. Rainfall is scarce, though on average one damp day during December can be expected. Heavy rainfall may result in some flooding to roads.

Air quality is low by UK standards and strong winds can often raise dust and sandstorms so those with respiratory problems should take care.

Official Website

Information on venues, matches and ticketing can be found on the official [FIFA Club World Cup Qatar 2019](#) website. You can also follow the official FIFA social media channels for information during the tournament.

Facebook: [@fifaclubworldcup](#)

Twitter: [@FIFACOM](#)

Emergency contacts

Most visits to Qatar are trouble free but if you do need emergency assistance, call 999 for police, ambulance or fire services.

Links

Disclaimer

This information is provided as a general guide and is based upon information provided to the embassy by the relevant local authorities and may be subject to change at any time with little or no notice. The FCO and the British embassy will not be liable for any inaccuracies in this information. British nationals wishing to obtain any further information must contact the relevant local authority.