

[Press release: Have your say on plans to widen A12 in Essex](#)

The project, which will see the widening of the A12 between junction 19 (Boreham interchange) and junction 25 (Marks Tey interchange) in Essex, will reduce congestion, improve safety and boost the economy. It is part of the government's record £15 billion investment in England's motorways and major A roads.

A Highways England consultation seeking public views on the proposals starts today and will run until Friday 3 March 2017.

Four options were shortlisted to be put forward to consultation:

- Option 1 – widening the existing A12 corridor (the online option)
- Option 2 – widening the existing A12 corridor between junctions 19 to 22 and 23 to 24 and two new bypasses between junctions 22 and 23 (Rivenhall) and between junctions 24 and 25 (Marks Tey)
- Option 3 – a variation of option 2 with only one new bypass between junctions 22 and 23 (Rivenhall)
- Option 4 – a variation of option 2 with only one new bypass between junctions 24 and 25 (Marks Tey)

Map showing the different options up for consultation on the A12 between junctions 19 and 25

Highways England programme leader Richard Hofton said:

Deciding how best to plan and carry out improvements along the A12 is vitally important and we've been working hard to identify a range of possible solutions to take forward.

There are important choices to be made and we are keen to get as many views as we can, so I encourage anyone who would like to find out more to check out the consultation materials online or come and see us at one of our public exhibitions.

People are invited to attend one of the seven public exhibitions, held at venues along the A12 route between Chelmsford and Colchester, to find out more and take part. A consultation into plans for proposed improvements on the A120, which is being organised by Essex County Council is also being run at the same time and some of the events will be run jointly.

All responses to the A12 consultation will help Highways England take the best possible improvements forward. For more information about our proposals and the public exhibitions, and to provide your views, please visit the [scheme 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.

[Greens call on Defra to improve air pollution alerts](#)



23 January 2017

Jenny Jones, Green member of the House of Lords, has responded to the latest air pollution episode which saw some areas of the country hit Defra's highest warning level [1].

The London Mayor issued a health warning to millions of Londoners – but the government continues to do nothing to alert people except tweet from its specialist @DefraUKAir account.

The official Defra alert page says that there are no alerts at this time, despite pollution being high or very high in the south and east of the country.

Jenny Jones said:

“The Mayor of London clearly cares about the health impacts of bad air on people living and working in the capital, but this government is letting everyone else suffer without any warning whats so ever. When air pollution episodes are capable of triggering an extra 300 deaths as well as hundreds of emergency admissions to hospitals around the country, I think that we have to consider emergency measures to discourage driving, encourage a switch away from diesel and promote less polluting alternatives.

“The government's sole aim is to downplay the whole thing. No press release. It doesn't even make the main DEFRA twitter feed, or use the NHS to reach out to vulnerable people. They want to tick the smallest of boxes by putting out the minimum of information. It is then up to those who are vulnerable to respiratory diseases and heart conditions to find that information. It is criminal neglect by a government that has lost two court cases over its inadequate plans.”

Notes:

1. <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/latest/>

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Press release: Waste site operation to protect workers and the environment

The Environment Agency has joined forces with the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) in the North East to carry out combined visits to check waste sites aren't flouting important legislation.

This ongoing multi-agency approach aims to improve working practices on regulated sites.

During the last series of visits at the back end of 2016, staff attended 13 sites across the region, with more visits proposed for the early part of the New Year.

To date the joint initiative has focused on sites that recycle, process or store waste metal, such as scrap vehicles and general waste metal. Operators use a variety of processes and equipment to strip, cut and burn waste to extract the key metal and components, work which has the potential to expose workers to risks to health and safety.

The aim of these visits is two-fold; to make sure the sites are operating within the conditions of their Environmental Permit to protect the environment and community, while ensuring the health and safety of workers isn't put at risk.

The Environment Agency's Ruth Tyson, Waste Team Leader, said:

We manage our permitted sites every single day to ensure they are operating within the law, to protect the environment and to minimise impact on the local community.

Health and safety is paramount when our officers are visiting sites and officers regularly contact HSE if they feel a site is unsafe.

These joint operations are a really good opportunity to share knowledge with other agencies and mean we look at the site from

different perspectives, ensuring any issues impacting on the environment and community can be looked at together with site safety.

Inspector Victoria Wise from the Health and Safety Executive added:

An average of 7 people are killed each year in the waste industry, this includes members of the public. The main causes of death are people being run over or struck by a moving vehicle or something unstable collapsing on them.

A high number of workers in this industry are also exposed to processes that cause irreversible ill health conditions. During the last joint initiative HSE found 8 sites visited to be in significant contravention of health and safety law with 7 Enforcement Notices served.

Joint operations such as this mean we can work alongside the Environment Agency to make sure those responsible for the sites are not exposing workers, members of the public and the environment to harm from the operations they undertake.

[Steering the economy through the turbulent times ahead is going to require the Government to be much bolder – Clive Lewis](#)

Clive

Lewis MP, Labour's Shadow Business Secretary, commenting on the launch of the Government's new industrial strategy, said:

"We welcome the Prime Minister's talk of government taking a 'new, active' role in backing businesses, but what we've heard today is full of rhetoric and thin on detail.

"From business rates to Brexit, many of businesses' most pressing concerns are currently going unanswered. Unless the Government puts a lot of flesh on

these bones this will be a strategy of spin rather than substance.

“All the signs so far are that the Government is not prepared to put its money where its mouth is. The money offered for skills falls far short of reversing the cuts to adult education since 2010, for example, while the “cash boost” for the North is a fraction of the budgets of Labour’s RDAs.

“For all the fanfare, reversing the economic damage done by the Tories and steering the economy through the turbulent times ahead is going to require the Government to be much bolder.”

[News story: Air pollution advice to the public](#)

Widespread moderate and high [air pollution levels](#) are currently being measured across many parts of the UK due to still and foggy weather conditions, with some isolated pockets of very high pollution mainly across southeast England but also possible for some urban areas of Northern Ireland, central and eastern England.

Some very high levels are also expected, mainly across southeast England but also possibly for some urban areas of Northern Ireland, central and eastern England. Air pollution is expected to remain low across Scotland.

Current air pollution levels are due to the continuing high pressure and associated light winds across the UK.

During periods of high air pollution adults and children with lung problems, and adults with heart problems, should reduce strenuous physical exertion, particularly outdoors, and particularly if they experience symptoms. People with asthma may find they need to use their reliever inhaler more often. Older people should also reduce physical exertion.

Anyone experiencing discomfort such as sore eyes, cough or sore throat should consider reducing activity, particularly outdoors.

For those parts of the country forecast to have very high levels of ambient air pollution, Public Health England is advising people to reduce physical exertion, particularly when outdoors and especially if they experience symptoms such as a cough or sore throat. Adults and children with lung problems, adults with heart problems, and older people, in areas where very high levels are recorded should avoid strenuous physical activity. People

with asthma may find they need to use their reliever inhaler more often.

Light winds and foggy conditions are expected to continue through Wednesday, especially across southern and eastern parts. This will lead to the ongoing risk of areas of moderate air pollution levels, along with isolated pockets of high levels. Meanwhile across the north and west increasing winds should lead to air pollution returning to low levels.

These low levels are expected to spread to all parts during Thursday and Friday as stronger winds extend east across the UK.

For the latest forecasts and health advice, please visit the [Defra UK Air website](#) and alerts for high levels of air pollution are issued by Defra via the Air UK Twitter account [@DefraUKAir](#).

Further information:

- The 5-day forecast of predicted air pollution levels is continually updated on the UK Air website, with advice from Public Health England to allow members of the public, particularly those who are most likely to be affected by air pollution, to take action.
- We also work with health charities to make sure vulnerable people are aware of any periods of low air quality.