



A120 Strategic and Business Meeting 20 November 2020

Securing the dualling of the A120 and replacing the single carriageway stretch of road between Braintree and the A12 junction at Marks Tey is one of the most important infrastructure projects in Essex and the East of England. The road is a major economic corridor linking Stansted Airport to Harwich Port but has been beset with delays, congestion and accidents. It is one of the most dangerous stretches of road in England with far too many fatal and serious accidents taking place on it while the extent of delays and congestion has a significant economic impact on our businesses.

Getting the road dualled has been an issue I have been campaigning on over the last decade since being elected Witham's MP. During that time, I have been working closely with Essex County Council, including Cllr Kevin Bentley, to secure a Government commitment to progress this scheme. Funding came from the Government and the Council to support work to develop proposals and following this activity a clear favoured route has emerged.

The proposals put forward for dualling the A120 are considered by many to be the strongest and most robust of any road improvement plan put forward to the Government. After extensively lobbying the Government, including meetings Cllr Bentley and I have held with Ministers, they have indicated that this is a scheme that could be included in the pipeline for RIS3, the Road Investment Strategy from 2025. It is good news that the Government is aware of the importance of dualling the A120 but there is more work to do to ensure a fully funded scheme can be delivered this decade.

With there now being an end to the delays caused to the A12 Widening Scheme by Colchester Borough Council's flawed housing plans, further planning can take place to get the A120 dualled and to align and sequence that work with the A12 Widening Scheme. I am pleased that Highways England are working closely with the Council on these plans and this is strengthening and refining the case for the A120.

The role of businesses in Essex and the East of England and stakeholders in local communities supporting this scheme cannot be underestimated. The overwhelming support for the A120 has helped get the proposals this far and we need to continue to work together and collectively to push the A120 even higher up the Government's agenda. We need to continue to demonstrate and show that we are all behind this vision of a dualled A120, which will act as an enhanced economic corridor for our region and boost our businesses.

Our country's recovery from the coronavirus pandemic and our future prosperity as a global trading power post-Brexit will depend partly on us having the right infrastructure to support business growth and investment. Our County is well-placed strategically with its connections to trading hubs and is already an engine of economic growth. But we all know Essex has so much more to contribute. That's why securing new investment to dual the A120 will turbo-charge our County, add billions of pounds in inward investment, help with housing growth and bring in thousands of new jobs.

I will continue to work closely with the Council and with business to keep making the case to Government and keep pressing for the commitment we want to get the A120 dualled.

*with our good wishes,
P. Patel*

Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Member of Parliament for Witham