

Frequently asked questions about the A120 Bypass (Little Hadham)

Why does the county council want a bypass for Little Hadham?

The A120 is an important east-west link in Hertfordshire's main road network. At Little Hadham there are often long delays because the traffic signals at the cross roads in the centre of the village can only allow traffic through in one direction at a time.

The queuing traffic also causes noise and air quality issues in the village. The traffic signals have been improved several times in the past, but there are no more ways to improve the current junction.

A bypass will remove congestion from the village, improve journey times along the A120 and improve quality of life for residents.

Why does there need to be a flood alleviation scheme?

Little Hadham suffers flooded often. The worst recent flooding was in 2001 when many homes in the village were flooded. There have been more floods since. In 2014 the floods which caused a lot of damage to homes and closed the A120. The embankments that the bypass will be built on give an opportunity to reduce the risk of flooding in the village by holding back storm water and releasing it slowly.

How has the scheme developed?

In 2007 Hertfordshire County Council consulted local people on six local bypass options, with the Environment Agency explaining the potential flood alleviation benefits of each option. The aim was to understand any local preferences or issues. Responses were looked at alongside other key objectives for transport, including economic and environmental assessments. Option 5 was identified as the initial preferred option, however further work was needed relating to issues raised through the consultation.

Based on further work, Cabinet approved amendments to the route in June 2008. These amendments resulted in less land take; less farm land being split up and lower overall costs. It also reduced environmental impacts compared to the original route option 5.

At this point there was no way of funding the project so it was put on hold.

There were new funding opportunities in 2014 which meant the project could be looked at again. More detail was added to the design, and the flood alleviation measures were designed into the project. In October 2014 this proposal was taken out to public consultation. Changes were made to the scheme based on comments from the consultation, and a planning application was submitted in November 2015.

While the planning authority were considering the planning application, comments were received about a protected species of bat, in particular about the mitigation included in the design for it. Changes were made based on more information about this and the application received planning permission in January 2017.

Why can't the bypass go further and bypass Standon and Puckeridge too?

In 2006 it was decided that we would focus on two separate local bypasses and Little Hadham was prioritised first. It was agreed to look at the options for Standon once the Little Hadham bypass had been delivered).

More recently a public consultation on potential bypass route options for Standon was undertaken in spring 2016.

The consultation asked for views on bypass options as well as improvements to the existing A120 through Standon. The consultation found that most residents preferred a bypass, but there was no agreement on whether it should go north or south of Standon. Improvements to the existing road were considered the most viable solution in the short to medium term. This approach was agreed by the Environment Planning and Transportation Panel of the County Council in June 2016.

The Highways Team will bid for funding in the 2017/18 financial year to do a more detailed assessment of ways to improve the existing A120 through Standon. Progress will be reported back to local County Councillors and the Executive Member of Highways.

We also got comments about the need for a more strategic review of the East West Transport corridors in Hertfordshire. These comments will feed into the [Transport Vision for Hertfordshire to 2050](#). The Transport Vision will identify and prioritise the key areas and corridors where transport improvements will be required in Hertfordshire from now to 2050. This Transport Vision could include schemes that promote both economic and social benefits.

What route will the Little Hadham bypass take?

The proposed bypass would be to the north of Little Hadham parish, along the boundary of Albury parish. There will be new roundabouts at either end to join the bypass to the existing A120. The eastern roundabout will be located between Hadham Park and Hadham Lodge. The western roundabout will be located between the existing traffic lights and Albury End Road junction.

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How are we reducing flooding (Flood Alleviation Scheme)?

When we build the new bypass, we have the chance to reduce flooding in Little Hadham too. The road embankments over the River Ash and Albury Tributary stream would act as dams and temporarily store storm water behind them.

This storm water storage helps to reduce the risk of flooding to the village. The collected storm water gradually drains away after the storm has passed. The rate at which the river water can flow is controlled by the size of outlet pipes through the bypass embankments. The outlet pipes are designed so that it only lets through the water that can be carried by the river channel. This means that the rivers downstream of the embankments should not over-top their banks until very extreme storm events. Normal river flows would be able to pass through the outlet pipes at their current rate.

In very extreme storm events there may be so much water that the flood storage area cannot hold it all. When this happens, excess water would pass over the embankments through a safe spillway and back into the river below. This could result in flooding downstream of the road embankments in such very extreme events.

The Lloyd Taylor Drain coming into the village from the west will be diverted around the edge of the field next to Lloyd Taylor Close. This will help to reduce flood risk at properties on Spindle Hill and around The Ash traffic lights.

How many properties would be affected by the Flood Alleviation Scheme?

Currently with no scheme in place there are 72 properties in The Ash and The Ford that have a 1 in 100 (1%) chance in any year of river flooding. We estimate that with the scheme all 72 properties would have a reduced risk of flooding. In particular, 69 would no longer be at risk from a 1 in 100 (1%) chance in any year of flooding. The other properties will still be at risk, but they are likely to flood less often and to a smaller extent.

There will still be a risk of flooding from other sources such as ground water or surface water from field drainage.

Separate to the A120 project, there have been multi-agency meetings to understand flooding from surface water and land drainage in the Hadham Ford area.

Could the flood alleviation scheme be provided without the bypass?

Technically you could build a flood alleviation scheme in Little Hadham without the bypass, but it would need much more non-Government funding. This is because you would still need to construct embankments to hold back the water instead of using the proposed road ones, so the costs would be higher for a stand-alone flood alleviation scheme.

The number of properties protected is relatively low for the cost of the large scheme needed to reduce the risk of flooding to the village. Working in partnership means that the Environment Agency and Hertfordshire County Council can pool resources to make the project cost efficient and affordable.

What effects will there be on places downstream or upstream of the flood alleviation scheme?

The flood alleviation scheme will reduce the amount of water flowing down the River Ash in Little Hadham during storms. This means that there is likely to be a benefit on water levels downstream. As the river flows away from Little Hadham other watercourses join the River Ash so the benefits of the scheme lessen as you travel further away from it.

The Environment Agency has looked at detailed flood models upstream of the flood alleviation scheme. These showed that the proposals will not increase flood risk upstream of the scheme outside of the flood storage areas.

The Environment Agency is not able to look at wider flood management issues in the surrounding areas as part of this project because they are not connected to the bypass proposals. Any other flood alleviation measures in the surrounding area would need their own justification for funding based on the number of properties that would have a reduced risk of flooding.

Have you thought about the environmental impact?

A full Environmental Impact Assessment was included with the planning application for the project as an Environmental Statement. This is in line with the Town and Country Planning Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (2011).

The contents of the assessment were agreed with the planning authority and the way we did the assessment was commented on by specialist bodies including local wildlife groups, Hertfordshire Gardens Trust, Natural England, and English Heritage.

The topics that were assessed are:

- ecology and nature conservation
- landscape
- cultural heritage
- geology and soils
- road drainage and the water environment
- noise and vibration
- air quality
- effect on pedestrians, equestrians, cyclists, drivers, etc
- community and private assets

The completed environmental surveys include:

- Landscape summer viewpoints
- Landscape character analysis
- Geophysical surveys (partially complete)
- Ground investigation
- Soil quality analysis
- Baseline sound monitoring
- Baseline air quality monitoring
- Traffic counts including public right of way surveys
- River channel surveys
- Topographic surveys
- Species and habitat surveys

What mitigation has been included to reduce environmental impacts from the scheme?

Landforms known as environmental bunds have been included in places to mitigate noise and visual impacts. These bunds vary from 2m and 4.5m high and will be planted so they merge into the landscape.

Ponds and wildlife habitat areas are proposed for Great Crested Newts. Underpasses and culverts provide safe crossing points for bats, badgers and other species.

Hedgerows and other planting is included to link the habitats that are split by the scheme. This planting can also help the scheme blend into the landscape.

The submitted planning application includes diversions for all severed public rights of way. These were discussed with Hertfordshire County Council Rights of Way team. Two farm bridges are included to the east of the project which will also carry a footpath and bridleway.

A pedestrian route will also be included under the road at the Albury Tributary flood storage area beside the flood storage area's relief channel. This gives an alternative to crossing the bypass at road level.

A full description of all environmental mitigation is set out in the Environmental Statement.

How did you work out what would happen to the traffic?

Hertfordshire County Council regularly count traffic flows. Traffic data was collected specifically for the project in 2013 and 2014 for the business case and traffic model.

The traffic for the scheme was assessed using a computer generated traffic model. The model covers the area around Harlow and Bishop's Stortford, up to the M25, M11, A10 and A505. It also includes the area around Stansted Airport. The model was updated with the traffic data from the 2013 and 2014 surveys and used to develop the project's traffic predictions for after the scheme is in place.

The model includes projected traffic growth in the future using planning data from Hertfordshire, Uttlesford and Harlow.

What public consultation has there been and what happened to my feedback?

The Statement of Consultation contains details of the public consultation we did, the responses we received, and the changes we made to the scheme because of it. This was submitted as part of the planning application.

We made a number of changes to the scheme after the pre-planning consultation which are shown on our pre-submission leaflet. More detail about feedback is included in the [Statement of Consultation](#) which was submitted with the planning application.

Planning permission has been received for the scheme so there will not be any more formal chances to comment. Once works start on site the contractor will appoint a key contact for any questions you have about the construction of the scheme.

How will the scheme be constructed?

Most of the scheme can be built without making any changes to the existing road. This will minimise disruption to people using the existing A120.

It is likely that the more disruptive works to build the new roundabouts on the existing road will be close to the end of the construction period. It is likely that the Albury Road realignment would be near the beginning of construction.

We will use traffic management methods to minimise disruption. All traffic management will be advertised in advance of construction periods in line with Hertfordshire County Council guidance.

The main construction compound is expected to be located to the north-west of the western roundabout.

Construction impacts will be managed by the contractor through a Construction Environmental Management Plan which will be agreed by the relevant authorities.