

A133 Ipswich Road/Harwich Road Improvement Scheme, Colchester

Frequently asked questions – 9 November 2018

1. Why do you have to have so many barriers to close lanes when work is not taking place in that area?
Legislation dictates that when we have reduced lanes on a roundabout we must also reduce the approaches to the same number of lanes or fewer, this is for safety reasons for all network users (not only drivers) and without it collisions would be more likely due to rapid merging of lanes, bottlenecking or gridlocking of the junctions completely.
2. Why will it take so long to do the work?
There are various activities which need to take place before we can start building the roundabouts, widening the carriageways, works to strengthen the retaining wall between the road and the railway cutting (This in itself is a significant operation and will require the construction of a continuous new piled retaining wall behind the existing wall below the surface of the Ipswich Road roundabout) and improving the provisions not just for drivers but also for pedestrians, cyclists etc. Certain activities such as the ongoing utility diversions can take up to 8 weeks (for each group of service pipes or cables) and with such a large-scale scheme this greatly extends the project timescale, in a way not immediately evident to all road users.
3. Why can't you have more people working on more of the site to reduce the total time taken for the works?
The majority of the preparation works being carried out are by contractors on behalf of the various utility companies, particularly BT and Anglian Water. What this means is that they provide the resource they feel is required to complete the tasks we have requested. We are still continuously liaising with the utility's and have already been able to bring some additional resources in early and as a result avoided the requirement for them to come back in the new year.
4. Why do you think one roundabout will be more efficient and safer than the mini-roundabouts currently?
In terms of traffic capacity of the junctions, traffic modelling has been undertaken and demonstrates that the works will improve the overall junction capacity at both junctions. Regarding efficiency and operational benefits, the existing double mini-roundabouts necessitate two give-way points for the majority of movements and have more conflict points (when compared to the proposed), which leads to driver hesitation and consequently delay. With single, larger roundabouts, widened approaches and dual carriageway improvement between the two junction there will be more capacity and a less complicated arrangement, where all movements need to give way just once and drivers are able to access and egress the junction more efficiently. In relation to safety benefits, the proposed roundabouts provide overall geometric safety improvements (with deflection, etc.) and as it is a single roundabout, there will be less manoeuvres and conflict points between traffic when compared with the existing mini-roundabout arrangement.
5. Why can't you work nights and weekends to speed up the work and reduce delays?
Works are being undertaken at night and weekends where this provides meaningful benefit to the progress of the scheme and full road closures can be utilised. We are currently heavily restricted to limited working areas due to the considerable amount of utility diversions required to be completed first. In addition, due to the proximity of residual properties there are environmental considerations

associated with noise during the night which we need to abide by. As the scheme progresses and more working areas are available, the ability to increase resources and working hours will continually be evaluated with the intention to minimise the overall duration of the works where practicable.

6. Why can I often see no-one working on site as I drive past?

Due to the large amount of traffic management required to safely undertake these activities and dependant on where you are driving from and to and at what time you may not always see workers, we understand this can be frustrating however please rest assured that there are people working and this is being monitored daily. In addition to this there are currently utility engineers on site working underground and as a result are not immediately visible.

7. What sort of work do you have that add up to the works duration?

The works are much more complex than just widening and changing the roundabouts. The tasks involved to complete the project include: removal of existing structures; diverting utilities pipes and cables over several months; undertaking piling works for the Waitrose and Network Rail walls to allow space for improvements; (This in itself is a significant operation and will require the construction of a continuous new piled retaining wall behind the existing wall below the surface of the Ipswich Road roundabout), replacement of street lighting; building the new wider carriageway and pavements; renew and improve cycle paths; improve pedestrian controlled crossings; renew highway lining and signs; build new roundabouts and this is without any unforeseen engineering complications that may arise.

8. Where can I find out what you've done and what works will be happening next week and after that?

We will be regularly updating the progression of this scheme via this website, we will also be providing weekly updates via twitter and undertaking other communications activities (e.g. letter drops, public notices on site) dependant on what activities are being undertaken or coming up in the near future.

9. Did you plan for the level of congestion, disruption and delays affecting the area when you planned the scheme?

We always anticipated there was going to be disruption, particularly at peak times during the works. As a result, we are ensuring that suitable diversions are in place for road closures and that we are providing regular updates on the Essex Highways website and Twitter feed. It may be important to reflect that this was already a heavily congested area prior to works starting and as such works of any size were going to have an impact on the surrounding areas, please allow additional time when making journeys through the area and we ask you remain patient whilst we undertake these crucial works to help keep Colchester reliably moving for years to come.

10. Why can't you remove the barriers in one area of the site while you work on another?

For safety of the public and contractors' staff, as defined legally, we must maintain proper lane closures on the approaches to the junctions. However, we continuously monitor the site to find opportunities to adjust the traffic management barriers even if only for a short while.

11. What is the real cost of the scheme to ECC?

The main construction contract cost is £5.5m plus an additional £1m for utility diversion costs.