

## **HA Response**

### **Stansted Generation 2 Airport Access from M11 and A120**

The Highways Agency has asked the County Council as Highways Authority for Essex for comments on the draft Orders they have prepared as part of the Surface Access Strategy to accompany the BAA Stansted G2 development proposal. This proposal is for a second runway and terminal plus other airport related facilities which will allow a significantly increased throughput at the airport.

Essex County Council would wish to make it clear that it is opposed to this development at Stansted Airport and that any comments on the draft Orders must be read in the light of this.

The HA draft Orders are for a new junction, Junction 8B, on the M11 and a new junction from the A120 East. Both Junctions are proposed to be located in Essex and comments on the specific environmental impact of the proposals are reserved until a later date. However the new junction arrangement on the M11 has significant implications for flows through the existing Junction 8 where capacity limitations are and will continue to be of great concern to Essex County Council.

Junction 8B would be located north of Junction 8 and linked to it as an extension to that junction. It would be constructed at the same time as the new runway, should that development be permitted, and it is understood would be operational along with the new runway.

It is recognised that the proposed Junction 8B is put forward as a strategy to provide additional access to the airport from the M11 (north and south) while reducing pressure on the existing junction. However the County Council is not satisfied that this strategy is adequate to deal with the existing and forecast future problems on Junction 8 from the background traffic and the additional airport traffic using it. The opportunity to relieve the pressures on this important gateway is being deferred or lost because it is linked to Stansted G2.

The existing Junction 8 will continue to be used by through traffic on the A120, airport traffic for the new terminal on the A120 west and for movements to and from M11 north on to the A120 east and west and between the M11 south and the A120 west (as well as the Motorway Service Area. In addition, Hertfordshire traffic to and from the airport and on the A120 east and M11 will continue to use Junction 8.

Junction 8 already shows problems of lack of capacity at peak times. The situation has been helped by improvements to the junction's traffic lights system but future background traffic growth will further impact on available capacity.

The proposed strategy of Junction 8B can only be judged in the light of its adequacy in reducing traffic at the existing Junction to ensure its acceptable operation. There are no proposals to improve Junction 8 itself. The G2 development will mean more traffic accessing Junction 8 and this increase in traffic will reduce the available capacity of the Junction.

One specific weakness with J8B strategy is that vehicles on the A120 east will still have to use J8 to make the right turn to reach the M11 north. If these vehicles were removed as part of the strategy, such as by having a link between the Thremall Avenue roundabout on the A120 and the north bound carriageway of the new proposed road to the Welcome Roundabout and thence J8B there could be a valuable reduction in vehicles circulating J8.

Essex County Council remains unsatisfied that the proposed road developments which are the subject of HA draft Orders are sufficient to meet the likely capacity problems at Junction 8 on the M11. Given the importance of this Junction and the problems it already faces (in which both the Airport and the Motorway Service Area feature) Essex County Council object to the draft Orders.