

## A12 Chelmsford to A120 widening scheme

### Accommodating Water Voles & Reptiles

#### Background

The A12 Chelmsford to A120 widening scheme is now in the Examination Stage which started in January 2023 when the Planning Inspectorate accepted our Development Consent Order (DCO) application. Following the examination, the Planning Inspector will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport, who will decide if the DCO should be granted so that the project can move into construction. If granted, construction is due to begin in 2024.



Preparations for an ecological area on a similar scheme.

#### **Why we need to complete work in advance of the Development Consent Order (DCO) decision.**

If the DCO is granted, we must be ready to start construction on time. To avoid delays and extra costs, there is some work we can do in advance. This includes preparing wildlife habitats to maintain populations of protected species in the area and help to enhance biodiversity. It will be done by agreement with landowners of the areas we need to prepare and is reversible if the scheme does not go ahead as planned.

#### **Ecology Area for Reptiles and Water Voles**



**Aerial image of an area ready for reptiles and water voles on a similar scheme.**

---

The pictures above show the types of areas we'll create for water voles and reptiles, including common lizards, grass snakes and slow worms.

We'll create ponds with very shallow, gently sloping banks, on which we'll grow water plants to provide shelter habitat for insects such as dragonflies and small animals such as frogs.

The soil removed to create the ponds will be left on site and landscaped.

To enhance the area for reptiles, special shelters (called hibernacula), will be created. These will be less than 1 m high and made from small piles of logs, dead wood and stones, covered with topsoil and seeded, as shown in the picture below:



**A hibernaculum from a similar scheme**



**Slow worm**

As well as sowing a rich mixture of grassland and wildflower seeds, we'll also plant different types of native trees and shrubs in small woodland blocks. The area will be protected by temporary fencing suitable to allow reptiles and other small animals through. The work will be carried out by a small team using a tracked mini digger and a dumper truck.



**Tree-planting on a similar scheme**

**Reinstatement**

If the DCO is not granted, ponds will be refilled with the soil left on site and the plants and hibernacula will be removed to return the area to its original condition.

#### **A Water Vole**



#### **A Great Crested Newt**



## **Get in contact with us**

If you'd like more information about this work, then please call the 24/7 National Highways Customer Contact Centre on 0300 123 5000, or email [info@nationalhighways.co.uk](mailto:info@nationalhighways.co.uk)