

Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package Meeting Minutes

Project:	Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package		
Meeting title:	Army and Navy Task Force Meeting		
Date:	20/01/23	Time:	12:00-13:00
Location:	Microsoft Teams		
LW	Cllr Lesley Wagland	Cabinet Member (ECC)	
MG	Cllr Marie Goldman	Member (ECC)	
AM	Cllr Anthony McQuiggan	Member (ECC)	
SR	Cllr Stephen Robinson	Member (CC)	
VF	MP Vicky Ford	MP for Chelmsford	

Agenda Item	Item
1.	<p>Opening remarks</p> <p>LW opened the meeting and welcomed attendees before handing over to VF to summarise a recent meeting with the Roads Minister.</p>
2.	<p>Minister meeting update</p> <p>VF advised she had written to the Secretary of State for Transport, and both she and LW had met with the Roads Minister after the Christmas break. She commented that it was a very positive meeting and the Minister had clearly been well briefed about the project. VF said the Minister fully understood the importance of the project to Chelmsford and wider Essex area. She commented that various Chelmsford infrastructure projects were also discussed and it was made clear that improving the junction at the Army and Navy was key to delivering those other infrastructure projects and improving transport across the Chelmsford area, as well as unlocking planned growth.</p> <p>VF said the Minister had specifically commented on the level of public support for the proposals and the number of people who had taken part in the consultation, as well as the shared support from both Essex County Council and Chelmsford City Council. She remarked that it was important this shared support continued.</p> <p>VF said the Minister had also noted the high benefit-cost ratio of the scheme and remarked that this clearly showed that the infrastructure would support economic growth.</p> <p>While the meeting was very positive, VF noted that the Minister himself would not make the decision on whether to approve the Outline Business Case and that, ultimately, the project would be weighed up against other schemes from across the country. VF said she would like to arrange for the Minister to visit the junction and meet those who had been involved in developing the scheme, and that he was interested in doing so.</p>

Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package Meeting Minutes

	<p>LW reiterated that the meeting with the Minister was very positive and that he had indicated there were a number of projects being promoted by districts but without highway authority support and vice versa, so it was a major positive this scheme was supported by all involved.</p> <p>BP mentioned that officers had recently met with DfT and they too had reported that the meeting with the Minister was very positive and he was very keen to visit the site.</p> <p>VF replied that she also wanted to arrange for the Rail Minister to visit the Beaulieu Station site and that was her current focus.</p> <p>VF noted she would follow up with the Roads Minister about potential dates for a site visit.</p>
3.	<p>Chelmer Valley Park and Ride expansion – public consultation</p> <p>A member of the project team gave an overview of the background to the consultation and the need to consult specifically on the Chelmer Valley Park and Ride proposals. He explained that as part of the planning process, there was a requirement to submit a statement of community involvement for each different element of the Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package.</p> <p>It was noted that because the Chelmer Valley proposals had been added to the proposed package after the original public consultation, there had been no formal consultation on this element and little engagement other than with the landowner and those involved in the development of the proposed garden community. He said there could be a risk to the planning application and to the overall package if the project went ahead without having any engagement or further consultation on the expansion.</p> <p>It was noted that the team had briefings scheduled with key partners ahead of the consultation launching at the end of the month, with a councillor briefing session on 25 January and a briefing session for other stakeholders (businesses and transport groups) on the 26 January.</p> <p>The task force was told the consultation would run for six weeks and would primarily be digital. However, it was noted that hard copies of the consultation brochure and survey would still be available at various locations so there would be an opportunity for written responses to be submitted via a freepost address. Two in-person drop-in consultation events were also planned at High Chelmer Shopping Centre.</p> <p>SR commented that Chelmsford City Council saw the Chelmer Valley Park and Ride as having massive potential, despite lower current usage and that he saw the site as having the potential to be an integrated transport hub as part of the proposed garden community. He said he would like to have a meeting with Cllr Scott (ECC cabinet member for Park and Ride) and the developer consortium. He said he felt the Park and Ride was an essential part of ensuring the garden community was a sustainable neighbourhood.</p> <p>VF commented that she recently visited Anglia Ruskin University and students were very pleased to hear the Park and Ride was going to be expanded. She asked that the team engaged with student union to encourage comments from students during the consultation. She noted that the Park and Ride closes early</p>

Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package Meeting Minutes

	<p>for students who may be staying late at university. The project team replied that they had contacted colleagues at the university to discuss how they could utilise university channels to help promote the consultation to both students and staff.</p> <p>VF noted she had contacts for student union representatives which she could share with the project team.</p> <p>The project team continued the presentation, explaining the narrative for the consultation. It was noted that the key message was around future demand and growth rather than the existing usage and it was acknowledged that there were likely be questions on this during the consultation. The team noted that usage had been increasing month on month and that passenger numbers were expected to recover over time. It was also stated that significant growth was planned north of Chelmsford and within the Braintree district, where it is was expected future Park and Ride demand would come from.</p> <p>The team shared the latest visualisation of the Park and Ride expansion proposals, commenting that it was a work in progress. They asked for support from the task force in helping to promote the consultation to residents. The team stated they would send information and images which could be used. (Action)</p> <p>MG asked if the project team had been in touch with the Chelmsford City Council communications team to help. The project team responded that they would contact the CCC communication team. (Action)</p> <p>SR queried that the visualisation appeared to primarily show cars and suggested it should show a desired new multi-modal approach, suggesting it would be good to show elements such as cycle hire facilities and Amazon delivery lockers. The team said that more integrated facilities such as those could potentially be incorporated as part of later phases of the proposed garden community, but not through this scheme.</p> <p>VF suggested asking people about the opening hours of the Park and Ride as part of the consultation, commenting that there may be some later evening demand.</p> <p>The project team said they would raise the query with the passenger transport team, noting there was an ongoing Park and Ride strategy, which included operating hours. (Action)</p> <p>The team responded to a comment in the chat from SR, stating that the visualisation was a working draft and there were still additions and changes needed, including adding cyclists.</p>
4.	<p>Van Diemens Road/Lady Lane Update</p> <p>The team presented latest changes to the proposals for Van Diemens Road and Lady Lane following the feedback which had been received. It was explained that there were concerns raised about the potential loss of green space on the corner of Moulsham Chase and an alternative design was now being investigated to try and retain more of the green space, while still providing a safe route for pedestrians.</p>

Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package Meeting Minutes

	<p>MG thanked the project team for taking comments from the resident on board and said she felt that with good planting, pedestrians could be encouraged to stick to the footway rather than attempting to cross in other areas.</p> <p>VF questioned if there were still the same number of northbound traffic lanes along Princes Road and Van Diemens as currently. The team clarified that there was proposed to be one lane southbound and one lane northbound, flaring to two at the junction.</p> <p>MG commented that having a dedicated right hand turn lane for Lady Lane would make a big difference, particularly from a safety perspective.</p> <p>The team responded to questions in the meeting chat to clarify that permit parking bays on Van Diemens Road would be retained and just slightly realigned.</p>
5.	<p>Progress Update</p> <p>The team provided a summary of latest progress relating to the Outline Business Case, which was submitted in October. They noted that there had been positive discussions with the DfT following their initial review of the Outline Business Case and they had requested clarification on a few matters and some additional information, which was provided promptly.</p> <p>It was noted that all deadlines had been met, some well in advance, and that the team understood the DfT to be taking the Outline Business Case to its investment committee imminently, before it would then go to Ministers and Treasury for final approval. It was expected a decision would be made by April, but noted that it could be later in the Spring.</p> <p>VF said she was not expecting a decision before the pre-election period.</p> <p>The team went on to provide a reminder of what was included in the proposed Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package and associated MRN bid.</p> <p>SR asked whether bus priority lanes would go in on Parkway ahead of major works starting.</p> <p>The team advised that the left turn slip across the flood plain would likely be one of the first elements to be constructed because it could be completed with very little traffic management. It was explained that the team were currently looking at required utility diversions and drainage requirements, so the phrasing could change. However, the team said that Parkway was currently expected to be part of the third phase of construction, but there would always be a bus lane and a general traffic lane available on Parkway at peak times throughout the works.</p> <p>SR suggested it would be good to acknowledge that there would be further delays, noting previous discussions with First Buses who had commented on the closure of New London Road which had not helped matters.</p> <p>The team responded that the New London Road closure was picked up separately and would be fed back to the construction team.</p> <p>The team mentioned that a quality review panel, led by experts in different design areas, would be providing feedback on the current scheme design. It was</p>

Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package Meeting Minutes

	<p>noted that the critical activity for planning submission was the flood modelling and Environment Agency review periods for the flood models could be up to eight weeks. The team questioned whether any political pressure could be applied to the Environment Agency to encourage them to meet their own review timescales.</p> <p>The team provided an update on latest surveys and site investigations, noting there were two outstanding which should be completed in the next few months.</p> <p>VF confirmed she was happy to pick up with the Environment Agency about its review timescales and to stress the importance of the project. (Action)</p> <p>VF commented that the main issue for buses was they were unable to get around the Odeon Roundabout due to cars blocking the circulatory so it was suggested by operators to take action to prevent this. She asked if the matter could be taken offline and picked up by ECC. (Action).</p>
6.	<p>Next Steps</p> <p>The project team summarised the next steps for the project, including the Chelmer Valley Park and Ride consultation and the submission of planning applications – the timescales for which it was reiterated was currently dependent on the Environment Agency.</p>
7.	<p>Programme</p> <p>The project team outlined the wider programme, referencing that the project currently had a 3 month delay because of the Environment Agency reviews, but that the team was working hard to bring the programme back on schedule.</p>