

Meeting Minutes

Subject	Inaugural meeting of the A127 Economic Growth Corridor Task Force	
Project	A127	
Prepared by	Rosie Maloney	Date/Time 30 November 2018
Location	Holiday Inn Southend	
Participants	<p>James Duddridge MP (JD) MP for Rochford and Southend East</p> <p>Stephen Metcalfe MP (SM) MP for South Basildon and East Thurrock</p> <p>Cllr Mike Steptoe (MS) - (Task Force Chair) Deputy Portfolio Holder at Essex County Council and Deputy Leader for Rochford District Council</p> <p>Mark Robinson (MR) – Principle Transport and Infrastructure Planner, Essex County Council</p> <p>Alan Lindsay (AL) - Transportation Planning and Infrastructure Manager, Essex County Council</p> <p>Cllr Richard Moore (RM) – Chair of Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee, Basildon Borough Council</p> <p>Matthew Winslow (MW) – Strategic Planning and Housing Strategy, Basildon Borough Council</p> <p>Cllr Chas Mumford (CMum) - Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Castle Point Council</p> <p>Cllr Andrew Sheldon (AS) - Deputy to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Castle Point Council</p> <p>David Marchant (DM) – Chief Executive, Castle Point Borough Council</p> <p>Emma Clay (EC) Interim Senior Planning Policy Officer, Havering Council</p> <p>Cllr Terry Cutmore (TC) Leader of the Council, Rochford District Council</p> <p>Cllr James Courtenay (JC) - Cabinet Member for Growth (Deputy Leader), Southend Borough Council</p> <p>Cllr Andrew Moring (AM) – Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Southend Borough Council</p> <p>Navtej Tung (NT) – Principal Transport Planner, Thurrock Council</p> <p>Adam Duff (AD) - Performance and Planning Manager, Transport for London</p> <p>Ian Lewis (IL) – Programme Manager, Opportunity South Essex</p> <p>Sean Perry (SP) - Divisional Director, Essex Highways</p> <p>Cliff Malone (CM) - Outside Sales Manager, Jacobs</p> <p>Phil Harrison (PH) - Stakeholder Engagement Manager, Jacobs</p> <p>Rosie Maloney (RMal) – Stakeholder Engagement Graduate, Jacobs</p>	

Notes	Action
<p>1 Introduction by Cllr Mike Steptoe, Chair.</p> <p>MS welcomed attendees. Introductions were made, health and safety points covered.</p> <p>MS explained purpose of meeting was to agree how to deal with the major problems of the A127 going forward. It was agreed by all that an upgrade is required and overdue.</p> <p>The A127 provides an important link to key destinations and major businesses, including London Southend Airport and Ford's UK headquarters. Around 70,000 vehicles, including</p>	

	<p>major freight businesses such as Stobart, use the road daily, and the road is a vital link to the rest of the road network in South Essex.</p> <p>It was agreed that it is important the A127 Task Force engages with businesses of different sizes.</p> <p>MS asked members to ensure any businesses they know of are involved.</p> <p>Discussion on local plans and the South Essex 2050 Vision, and that they should be considered when discussing future plans for the A127. It was agreed that groups such as The Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) should have a representative in the Task Force.</p>	<p>Task Force to agree who should represent ASELA at next meeting.</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>Purpose of the Task Force</p> <p>Proposed vision for discussion and debate:</p> <p>“Agree in principle to collaborate and contribute towards a long-term vision for the A127 economic growth corridor. This work will be carried out through proactive engagement with local residents, businesses and transport users to ensure we develop a solution which works for everyone.”</p> <p>TC noted that the A127 has an impact that extends further than people who live near to the A127. It should be extended to more than local and the word local should be removed from the vision.</p> <p>A vote was initiated. The group voted and agreed that the vision was suitable if the amendments were made.</p>	<p>Amendments to be made to the vision and then distributed to the members.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Setting the scene</p> <p>SP presented.</p> <p>He noted that Jacobs is supporting Essex County Council on the project.</p> <p>SP went through the timeline of the A127 and some key facts about the current road, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The road carries more than 70,000 vehicles a day, more than many trunk roads. It costs the tax payer £34 million for accidents and £10 million for delays (annual figure). • Minor junctions often come straight out onto the road, which is dangerous; looking at the future growth predictions they will not be fit for purpose anymore. • There are several pedestrian crossings along the route so there is a need to cater for all types of transport; many incidents occur when people cross the road. <p>Current challenges and opportunities facing the A127:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A127 acts as an artery, linking 600,000 people to work • Air Quality Management Plan being developed – to improve air quality in Basildon and Rochford 	

- Basildon enterprise corridor
- Key businesses such as London Southend Airport and Port of Tilbury needs to be able to grow as they are key contributors to the economy of Essex
- Congestion issues
- Accident statistics – the route is very sensitive to incidents and this impacts on other road issues
- Other road users – usage is low for pedestrians but if there is a collision, it is often serious.
- Unclear signage on A127 – not an attractive route for pedestrians and cyclists.

Role and function of A127.

- The A127 has a varied role – sometimes it is a residential distributor other times it is a key strategic route; the Task Force needs to be aware of its many functions when any decisions are made.

A growing corridor

- Planned growth in the coming years is both a challenge and opportunity
- The 2050 vision group, A127 Task Force and other strategic groups need to act as one unit to attract central Government funding and to protect growth and existing businesses
- The ambition of the group needs to extend beyond places on the A127 to Chelmsford and further afield, i.e. nuclear power station.

Opportunities for the future

- Need to take into account how both technology and how people travel will be transformed in future and prepare for it.

Re-trunking the A127

- Need to provide DFT with evidence for re-trunking the A127. Further investment could be possible through roads investment fund. Regardless, the A127 is a vital route.

Major scheme funding and timeliness

- Objectives and solutions to be prioritised
- A127/A130 Fairglen has bid for local enterprise funding. Other areas on the A127 could do the same.

DM said being collaborative in the project is the best way to create meaningful solutions. If we are only taking traditional funding routes, there will not be enough funding from government to provide us with what we would like for the scheme. It is too narrowly focused on one growth corridor, it would be good to focus the connections between strategic routes across the network which would transform routes around Essex particularly north to south.

However, we also need to make sure we don't send a complicated message to funding partners and make sure we aren't competing for funds against one another.

	<p>SP said it is better to talk about wider issues of transport and to look beyond local plan processes / motorists as the A127 is a corridor not a road and has a large sphere of influence.</p> <p>JD mentioned that we should be looking at how the different transport modes fit together, asked if we should be seeking funding on both the rail and road network. Also, should the ambition of the development of the A127 be to make it a motorway and become the M127 in certain places along the route.</p> <p>Communications Strategy</p> <p>PH noted that the Task Force should unite as a single voice. As part of this we must engage with residents and businesses. From next year we want to proactively talk to users of the road; if members of the Task Force have an opinion on who should be engaged they should share it.</p> <p>A127.co.uk will be the official website for the scheme.</p> <p>After the second meeting in Jan/Feb there will be a media launch to engage with businesses in the local area.</p>	
4	<p>Task Force aims and Terms of Reference</p> <p>MS presented.</p> <p>TC nominated Cllr Mike Steptoe as Chair. Members agreed.</p> <p>DM highlighted that local authorities have a big input into highways, but it is Essex County Council and others who are the Highways Authority and have the decision-making power. It was noted that local authorities should always have a representative at the meetings to make sure all views are incorporated.</p> <p>IL said it is key to ensure we are not doubling up; if there is work going on in other authorities we need to make sure we are not duplicating.</p> <p>As a next step there is a need to get businesses involved in the Task Force through organisations such as Opportunity South Essex (OSE)</p> <p>IL mentioned that OSE could start initial engagement with local businesses.</p> <p>SS noted on the ToR that it needs to reflect that the A127 is just one of a number of key corridors in Essex and needs to connect with the others, Task Force needs to make sure it is connected.</p> <p>AM proposed adding “safer” to the description of what the A127 should be in the ToR.</p> <p>SM noted that in the future MPs should still be invited but not all are likely to attend. It is possible at some point a single person could attend as the representative for all.</p> <p>AS said trunking of the A127 would block some current access for residents and businesses. Would need to ensure local districts and ward members are aware.</p> <p>CM warned that we want to make proposals that are achievable. What are the cost differences between a trunking and M127 aspirations?</p> <p>JD said we must make sure that any work on the A127 is future-proofed to allow the possibility of three lanes in the future.</p> <p>DM noted we may be trying to talk about the solution before we have talked about the problem. Whole range of solutions,</p>	<p>ACTION: Edit ToR to include 'safer' wording</p>

	<p>something fit for 2050 could look completely different from what we think of now due to change in transport over the coming decades.</p> <p>TC said we need to think about how to take the plans forward, take into account what's going on in Essex, business park at the airport, Dartford Crossing etc. Lots of people locally divert onto other routes to avoid congestion on the A127. Not just looking at A127, looking at local routes.</p> <p>AL said we need to focus on bidding for funding from the right place.</p> <p>SM said we will need joined up thinking on this, considering developing the A127 being a motorway as a potential.</p> <p>MS noted bridges are wide enough for a third lane. Some of the land along A127 was purchased to widen it.</p> <p>TC noted cycle routes alongside the route are not well-used.</p> <p>JD said it would be appropriate to trunk the road as it is the key route to a London airport. Does this group want to include an option for an 'outer relief road' from A130 Rochford into Shoeburyness?</p> <p>MS noted a previous similar 'purple route'.</p> <p>TC said a further route from the A130 would encourage more investment. Many local businesses are small and must be considered. How do they get around, how you make sure those businesses have their say?</p> <p>PH noted that current work on air quality management plan in Basildon and Rochford has shown that businesses are keen to engage and will proactively encourage workers to get involved.</p> <p>SM noted we must engage the Federation of Small Businesses and Chamber of Commerce too.</p> <p>IL said this can be done through local economic development teams.</p> <p>MS asked the Task Force can we accept ToR with amendments? All agreed.</p>	
5	<p>Press release</p> <p>JD raised the point about whether the M127 should be mentioned in the press release to show our ambitions for the road.</p> <p>RM noted that this could create an expectation with residents that this could happen soon despite the fact this is a long-term project where change may not be immediate.</p> <p>It was agreed that it is vital that we maintain people's expectations while also making sure the need for change is recognised by government, residents and businesses.</p> <p>PH noted whether a second line about the history would be good to add.</p> <p>Agreed MS will be quoted in press release as chairman.</p> <p>AD asked for release to be sent to Evening Standard and Metro. This was agreed.</p> <p>DM asked who the main contact for the group would be.</p> <p>SP responded himself, MR or MS.</p> <p>AS asked for the website to be launched asap.</p>	

	PH confirmed it should be live or going live that afternoon at www.a127.co.uk .	
6	Next meeting Friday 25 January at Holiday Inn, Southend Airport (subject to availability)	(This was changed to 15 February 2019)
7	AOB	