

Meeting Minutes

Subject: Army and Navy Taskforce

Meeting Date: Monday 4th February 2019, 9am

Meeting Location: County Hall Chelmsford

Participants:

Cllr Kevin Bentley

Cllr Roy Whitehead

Cllr Jenny Chandler

Cllr Peter Sadowsky

Vicky Ford MP

Apologies:

Cllr John Spence

Cllr Dick Madden

Notes

1 **Introductions from Cllr Kevin Bentley (KB)**

2 **Discussion**

The meeting started with an update of progress since the last Taskforce.

Funding opportunities were discussed in relation to the letter **Vicky Ford (VF)** sent to Chris Grayling. Essex County Council have written to Department for Transport (DfT) requesting further information regarding funding opportunities.

It was questioned as to whether the process will allow for a quicker scheme delivery.

KB clarified that we need to go through a robust process to assess all possible scheme options and to determine a preferred scheme. **KB** pointed out that Essex County Council are bound by the DfT process. He explained that the current timescale for submission of a Final Business Case for DfT consideration for funding is Spring 2023. **VF** and **KB** noted however that it was important to have a Final Business Case as soon as possible in order to press for earlier funding.

KB and VF to continue to lobby for funding.

The next item was to set out the challenges and opportunities with the junction highlighting specifically what kind of trips are made on the Army and Navy (A&N) Roundabout – 1/3 of travel from the A&N are travelling through the city without stopping in the city.

KB asked if the proposed Chelmsford North East Bypass will be factored into the traffic modelling as this would alleviate some of that through traffic. It was confirmed that this would be included in the traffic modelling of any future options.

A discussion about the wider Chelmsford's Future Transport Network strategy in terms of how sustainable transport can greatly assist with relieving congestion, especially when discussing short journeys from south east and south west Chelmsford. The Army and Navy junction lies within the Central and Mid Zones where the approach is to focus on bus, cycling, walking, public realm, parking and road network management.

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VF raised that at the last Taskforce meeting there was a discussion regarding the incoming housing developments in Chelmsford and how increased housing growth would automatically increase traffic numbers in and around Chelmsford. She said it was clear that a solution should support this growth in traffic numbers

It was discussed between the Taskforce the relationship between increased houses and cars, available capacity and encouraging sustainable travel.

VF asked why a specific solution at the Army and Navy junction could not be looked at in terms of providing more capacity. **Cllr Roy Whitehead (RW)** agreed. **KB** stated that the DfT Major Schemes process has to account for the wider impact of any scheme on the network across Chelmsford. This shows/supports the importance of identifying the right solution for the city as a whole.

It was discussed during the presentation that the solution may not be just be a single solution at the Army and Navy junction that it needs to consider the city as a whole and may be a combination of solutions.

VF stated that any long-term solution needs to allow for at least the existing traffic flow, plus expected growth.

JC said she agreed with **VF**

VF reaffirmed her desire to see a long-term solution to the Army and Navy Roundabout which was agreed by all members of the Taskforce.

VF asked for the Taskforce to commit to looking at all the structural options not solely the sustainable transport options. It was agreed that all available options will be looked at before sifting them down to the options which best fulfil the objectives of the scheme.

These objectives as agreed at the workshop with ECC technical leads on 16 January.

- Provide enhanced connectivity for communities within and beyond Chelmsford to support and promote sustainable housing, economic growth and regeneration both now and in the future.
- Offer inclusive, attractive and safe active travel measures (walking and cycling) across an improved and comprehensive network to encourage increased use.
- Improve safety and the perception of safety for all users on the Chelmsford City network to enhance and promote a safe travelling environment.
- Positively manage resilience and journey time reliability improving journey times for passenger transport services travelling into/out of the city centre core.
- Actively manage resilience and journey time reliability for private transport trips within the core urban area of Chelmsford and in particular management of through trips.
- Manage environmental conditions (Air Quality and Noise)
- Where possible increase the attractiveness of the gateway into the city centre through design and public realm enhancements.

It was noted that these objectives are in line with National, County and Chelmsford Future Transport policies.

RW stated that he could not disagree with anything in presented and there were no noted objections from the other Taskforce members.

KB noted that were the HIF bid for the Chelmsford North East Bypass successful it would be in construction at a similar time and that this be taken into consideration. However, it is pointed out that the majority of the North East Bypass scheme would be offline work and should not have too much of an effect on traffic movements.

The group then discussed **communications and engagement**.

It was discussed what had been progressed so far and focussed on the engagement workshops scheduled to begin in March 2019.

The communications objectives were set out as below

- One voice for Taskforce and Essex Highways Communications
- Raise awareness of the problems, challenges and constraints
- Determine information from interested parties which may enable or restrict the development of options
- Establish and develop relationships with businesses, organisations and residents in the local area. Understand their needs.
- Communicate an understanding of the need for short-term solutions and the case for more sustainable transport measures/behaviour change as a long-term solution to the city's transport needs.
- Understand public expectations about the project timelines for consultation, and delivery.

No objections were raised to this set of objectives.

The presentation then set out the structure of the workshops as well as high level list of possible invitees, it was agreed to make sure that invitations to the workshops were made to as wide a group of community representatives as possible.

KB asked that all members of the task force feed into the list of possible invitees. **RW** suggested other opportunities to engage the local business community and the Taskforce offered some suggestions for who should be invited. It was agreed that if they had any further suggestions that they be made to the team.

Cllr Peter Sadowsky (PS) raised the concern over starting times of the workshops given some may have to work as well as fulfil voluntary obligations. It was assured that the community workshop which would involve these people would be an evening session to allow for the most participation.

It was also noted that a councillor briefing would take place after the workshops.

VF asked whether any options would be shown at the workshops. It was set out that as the project is still at very early stages no options have been developed, however examples of approaches would be referenced to stimulate discussion regarding the types of possible options.

KB requested that the aims of the engagement workshop are communicated clearly to attendees. It was also highlighted that the timescale of the project needs to be clearly communicated at these events and to the wider public too.

KB highlighted that engagement is critical at earliest stages and DfT require this also.

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The Taskforce was then shown a timeline of dates for key communications milestones going forward, including key deadlines for outgoing information as well as dates of the workshops in order to complete them before the pre-election period for local elections.

The date of the next task force will be set for May after the pre-election period. This is to ensure all the workshops are completed and the resulting feedback can be presented to the Taskforce members.