

Meeting Minutes

Army and Navy Taskforce Meeting #6

Project Army and Navy Junction, Chelmsford

Location County Hall, Chelmsford.

Date/Time 27 September 2019

Participants Cllr Kevin Bentley **KB**
Vicky Ford MP **VF**
Cllr Stephen Robinson **SR**
Cllr John Spence **JS**
Cllr Dick Madden **DM**
Cllr Jenny Chandler **JC**
Cllr Peter Sadowsky **PS**

Notes	
1	<p>Welcomes and Introductions</p> <p>KB began the meeting by welcoming all participants. He stated that he and VF had met with the Secretary of State for Transport, Grant Shapps, and Transport Minister, Baroness Vere, and had made the case to them that this is an emergency situation for Chelmsford and Essex. He reported that this was a very successful meeting and that Baroness Vere has agreed to meet with KB and VF soon to discuss the situation in greater detail.</p>
2	<p>Project recap</p> <p>KB highlighted the fact that since the Taskforce had last met, he had made the decision not to reopen the flyover at all due to ongoing safety concerns. He continued by stating that the next step was to remove the flyover structure.</p> <p>VF reiterated that there have been very positive meetings with Secretary of State and Transport Minister and said there was an expectation that a solution should be executed at pace. VF added that she would like to see a funding bid made by the new year.</p> <p>KB mentioned that the A120 work has been taking place for 4-5 years so far and that the Army and Navy was a similar project trying to be completed in a much shorter time.</p> <p>The Taskforce was advised that there are Department for Transport processes that have to be followed and DfT approval would be needed to shorten those processes.</p>
3	<p>Discussion about current situation</p> <p>VF noted that she intends to request a meeting with the operator, First Bus. VF made clear that she had received a number of emails from constituents who are suffering with traffic problems and congestion in the city. She cited examples of doctors not being able to get to the hospital; and commuters considering leaving their jobs in London because the junction was disrupting their journey to work so significantly.</p> <p>VF suggested that phasing the traffic lighting at the pedestrian crossings close to the roundabout would make a considerable influence on the current levels of traffic at peak times.</p> <p>JS mentioned that he has heard from residents in his ward that part of the problem was that traffic lights almost immediately changed from green to red as soon as a pedestrian</p>

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	<p>pushes the button and that this was a cause for the current high levels of congestion at peak times.</p> <p>SR suggested that the bus services should be promoted more widely to relieve congestion and that greater publicity was needed to encourage people to use the bus network instead of using private vehicles.</p>
4	<p>Update on progress</p> <p>A presentation was provided by the Essex Highways Transport Planning Team which provided an update on the options assessment process. This reiterated the amount of work that had been undertaken to date and highlighted the amount of work still to be undertaken to assess the options at this early stage.</p> <p>The group was informed that the Department for Transport had specified that each option for the junction must be complemented by sustainable solutions which enable people to switch to alternative methods of transport instead of using private vehicles in order to alleviate pressure on the road network.</p> <p>The options were presented to the Taskforce individually and the initial results following part of the options assessment process were presented. The likely advantages and disadvantages of the various options were considered, including the impact on traffic and congestion elsewhere on Chelmsford's road network. It was reiterated that there is currently only a finite capacity on Chelmsford's road network.</p> <p>JS asked that when the Chelmsford North-east Bypass is built, will this offset current levels of traffic entering the Army and Navy, to which it was responded that it would have an influence but a minor one.</p> <p>KB said that he has had feedback that the public are not in favour of a new flyover and VF responded by saying that there is no reason currently to take the option off the table.</p> <p>It was stated that a Bus Rapid Transit solution would be beneficial and it would have an impact across the city, however it was likely to be too costly and take too long to implement to be considered a solution in its own right.</p> <p>A package of potential sustainable transport improvements which would complement the final scheme at the junction were outlined. The Taskforce were told there was a need for a significant shift towards sustainable transport in Chelmsford, regardless of the Army and Navy. KB remarked that in many ways the Army and Navy scheme could therefore act as a catalyst for change.</p>
5	<p>Programme</p> <p>The programme for the coming months was set out.</p> <p>SR stated that if we remove the flyover, we can include a new bus lane.</p> <p>VF asked if the removal of the old flyover would be carried out over night and was reassured that it would be a priority to minimise disruption as much as possible whilst the flyover is being removed.</p>

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	<p>SR highlighted the importance of the public consultation process to allow local residents to help determine the future of this piece of vital public infrastructure.</p> <p>VF suggested that to show immediate progress, the removal of the flyover should commence as soon as possible. It was stated that this procedure was due to start soon.</p> <p>It was stated that information on the initial options for the junction would be shared with the public in November 2019.</p> <p>SR asked KB if there were any Local Highways Panel schemes that could be brought forwards to help with the situation while a long-term solution at the junction is developed. KB agreed to look into this.</p> <p>VF stated that it would be good to have more clarity over the improved cycle routes that are being discussed and where they will be.</p>
6	<p>Key Risks</p> <p>Key risks were identified and presented to the group as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The floodplain (potential impact of options on the floodplain and amount of environmental work required to ensure that any option that affects the floodplain gets through planning);• Utilities within the junction (there are numerous different utilities that are likely to be affected and could have long lead in / works programmes);• Constructability of the options (i.e. length of time and traffic management measures required to build each option). <p>VF requested a list of all utilities companies that operate in the area for her to contact prior to construction.</p> <p>VF requested an engineer's response to be prepared to explain why a tunnel under the road was not considered as an option as she felt this might have been a popular option amongst constituents.</p> <p>It was reiterated that there are very particular rules and regulations set by the Department for Transport to ensure that any modelling is robust and these processes cannot be rushed. Although it was noted that officers are in discussion with the Department for Transport about what could be done to speed the process up.</p>
7	<p>AOB</p> <p>There was no other business and so the meeting was drawn to a close.</p>