

Meeting Minutes

Subject	Taskforce		
Project	Army and Navy		
File	Taskforce meeting minutes - 17.06.2019.docx	Date/Time	17 June 2019
Participants	Cllr Kevin Bentley KB Cllr Stephen Robinson SR Cllr Jenny Chandler JC Cllr John Spence JS Cllr Dick Madden DM Cllr Peter Sodowsky PS Vicky Ford MP VF Steve Berry (DfT) SB		

Notes

- 1 Introductions**

Councillor Kevin Bentley **KB** welcomed the Taskforce to the fourth meeting. He thanked Vicky Ford **VF** for getting the government's involvement in the scheme and noted that the junction is critical not just for Chelmsford but for Essex. **KB** welcomed Cllr Stephen Robinson **SR** as a new member of the Taskforce since the local elections in May 2019.
- 2 Project recap**

For the benefit of the new members of the Taskforce key background information was presented to ensure all members were aware of the issues, objectives and strategic approach for the scheme as well as a recap on the progress made to date. **VF** noted the importance of two key facts – that the cost of delay at the Army and Navy roundabout is £4.85m a year and that 60,000 vehicles a day use the junction. **KB** added that it is also important to note there is only 4% capacity left on the Chelmsford road network.
- 3 Presentation from Steve Berry – A Department for Transport representative**

KB introduced Steve Berry **SB** from the Department for Transport and thanked him for attending. **SB** began by assuring the Taskforce that the department is aware of the issues at the Army and Navy and thanking **VF** for raising it with the Secretary of State for Transport. For the government and the Department, the key issue is one of productivity as well as managing levels of congestion during peak times, the structural condition of the

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flyover, and the wider transport vision for Chelmsford set out in the Future Transport Network were also issues that the Department are aware of.

The Department is keen to look at all the issues and all possible solutions, **SB** noted that a like for like scheme may not be required.

It remains government policy to encourage walking and cycling as a natural choice for short journeys, citing the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy.

They would consider a package of measures for the junction and for the wider area with measures such as further park and ride, enhancements to cycling and walking.

SB gave an update that the next spending review is coming up. The case is being made by DfT to the treasury for public transport and highways measures.

In terms of current funding **SB** notes that it is currently oversubscribed due to projects all over the country with similar interests to the Army and Navy Junction.

The possible funding avenues for the scheme include:

- The Challenge Fund – for highway maintenance being allocated over the next two financial years.
- The Local Pinchpoint Fund – with focus on productivity and junction capability. What impact the project has on business. To be allocated 2022-2024.

DfT will be publishing criteria for both funds in Summer 2019 to give Local Authorities time to work up businesses case for bids.

DfT would want to see all options considered with or without a flyover. While it is a junction improvement bus priority schemes and a better bus flow works well to relieve congestion.

Noted a possibility of alternative approaches which tie into the Chelmsford Future Transport Network. However, DfT would not like the junction to be above capacity.

SB noted he was keen to see how our engagement had gone so far.

KB – noted the importance of talking about housing and infrastructure together not separately. He urged **SB** to take this message back.

KB also noted that although there is a move towards electric cars this would not solve congestion issues. To this end we need to encourage walking and cycling over small distances.

VF – agreed with **KB** and added that Chelmsford is one of the fastest areas of housing growth with 1000 homes a year in the City. Because of this standing still isn't an option. **VF** was interested to know where this traffic originates and notes that the railway station is currently at capacity given that it is the busiest two platform station.

KB – noted that existing work on infrastructure in Essex is £2bn behind before housing growth.

Cllr John Spence **JS** – agreed with encouraging cycling however made a point to note that we need to also discourage bad behaviour from some cyclists.

It was also raised that the proposed North East Bypass and Beaulieu Railway Station could take traffic away from the Army and Navy Junction.

It is noted that many pass through the Army and Navy junction because Sat Navs direct drivers that way despite the signage.

Cllr Dick Madden **DM** – noted that when schools are out there is less congestion. He hoped this had been taken into consideration in the assessment. He also noted that the Army and Navy had been congested for a long time and had to be solved.

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It was noted that Transport for the North have demonstrated a 6% difference in traffic in the school holidays. This offers up the possibility of an integrated solution.

VF asked if it would make a difference to funding chances if we could demonstrate developer or LEP contribution to the scheme. **SB** confirmed that it would be taken into account.

4 **Engagement activity summary**

Noted that the feedback fed into the generation of over 100 different options. There was a variety of feedback but there were also some common themes.

KB suggested running a further member drop in session for the new City Council members.

5 **Relative case study**

A relative case study of Belgrave flyover in Leicester was presented to the Taskforce to demonstrate how other authorities have approached similar projects.

The scheme was to improve connection, make it more visually attractive and open up regeneration for the area.

A walking and cycling link through the junction was created as part of their strategy and the percentage of walkers and cyclists increasing since the introduction of the scheme. Traffic has continued to flow with a 1% reduction in cars.

KB asked what happened to the traffic while the work was being carried out. He identified this time as a potential opportunity to encourage people to use transport alternatives. **VF** agreed.

It was noted that it took 9 weeks to demolish this flyover but that was a larger structure than at the Army & Navy and also solid concrete.

SB also noted that Liverpool have also decided to demolish two of their flyovers and this isn't expected to have major disruption on other routes as long as minor enhancements are made at other junctions.

VF noted the significant delay and congestion caused when the flyover was closed in summer 2018.

6 **Other discussions**

DM asked if we would be working within the existing Army and Navy junction footprint?

It was confirmed that the options being considered would not be constrained by the current footprint.

VF noted that the public would want to see more than one option go to consultation

The project team acknowledged they were working on numerous high level options. Discussion will allow them to bring this down to a reasonable number on which detailed work will take place. Public consultation will then take multiple options.

VF asked what were the obstacles to funding?

SB noted that they would need business support, community engagement, a realistic option which had been through economic appraisal and provided value for money.

7 **AOB**

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Next Taskforce meeting set for 15 July