

Meeting Minutes

Subject	Taskforce #5		
Project	Army and Navy		
File	Taskforce #5 meeting minutes - 15.07.19	Date/Time	15 July 2019
Participants	Cllr Kevin Bentley KB Cllr Stephen Robinson SR Cllr Peter Sadowsky PS Vicky Ford MP VF Cllr John Spence JS Cllr Dick Madden DM		
Apologies	Cllr Jenny Chandler Steve Berry (DfT)		

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- 1 Introductions**

Cllr Kevin Bentley (**KB**) welcomed the Taskforce to the fifth meeting. He gave Steve Berry's apologies and noted that while Steve could not be there in person, this project was very much on Department for Transport's (DfT) radar. **KB** stated in the meeting that he would like to thank Steve Berry for his hard work so far.
- 2 Recap of approach**

The taskforce was given a reminder of the strategic approach to the future of transport in Chelmsford which sets out a zonal approach to transport measures and the specific objectives for the project.

Vicky Ford (**VF**) noted that despite the Army & Navy's location on the edge of the central zone, the Army & Navy junction was of strategic importance and therefore any solutions must take this into consideration.

VF requested that the objectives specifically mention the need to accommodate population and economic growth.
- 3 Presentation**

A presentation was given which explained the process of how all the ideas generated by the public, councillors and officers had been sifted down to potential options that require further assessment.

Peter Sadowsky (**PS**) asked what year the data used in the assessment of options was from. It was explained that the potential options had not yet been assessed in detail, however when assessing them, where possible, the latest data available would be used and that several future year forecasts would need to be assessed, covering the local plan period and beyond.

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KB asked whether the Chelmsford North East Bypass would be factored into the assessment. It was confirmed that it would be.

VF asked whether the potential options would be able to be assessed over at least the next 20 – 30 years. It was confirmed that the potential options would be assessed to the Local Plan period and up to a period of 60 years after opening as per DfT requirements.

KB stated that he wanted public involvement in the decision making when choosing a preferred option.

VF stated that the assessment of options should consider the impact of the flyover closure in 2018. Cllr Dick Madden (**DM**) agreed, however stated that other historic closures should also be reviewed. It was confirmed the impacts of the 2018 closure had been assessed and that this would be taken into consideration in the assessment of potential options.

VF queried whether the potential options were standalone. **KB** confirmed that elements of different options could be combined following the detailed assessment. Cllr John Spence (**JS**) stated that the best solution may end up being several of the options.

PS asked how much it would cost to maintain the flyover in an operational condition and make improvements to the existing junction as no costs were included in the principal inspection report. It was acknowledged that while this work had not been undertaken, it would be undertaken as part of this project, as it would form the “Base Case” scenario in the business case against which potential options will be assessed.

KB stated that there have always been significant maintenance costs associated with the flyover and he does not want to pass on this burden to his successor.

JS noted that Highways England are looking to complete the A12 widening by 2027 and Essex County Council (ECC) are pushing for J19 at Boreham to be completed early in the programme, therefore we must be wary of the amount of works that may be going on at a similar time if funding for a solution for the Army & Navy junction is successful.

KB agreed and stated that ECC will need to work on careful phasing of any solution in the context of others. He went on to add this was a countywide issue with potential projects like the A120 and A127 on the horizon.

Cllr Stephen Robinson (**SR**) added that some solutions may be more disruptive than others, and therefore the assessment should consider construction impacts.

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Other discussions

JS noted that some members of the taskforce had more exposure to and knowledge of transport modelling and therefore requested that the project team hold a workshop for taskforce members, if they wanted, to attend to better understand transport modelling.

VF stated that we hear that there is 96% capacity left on the city's road network and queried what roads this applied to? It was confirmed this applied to the city centre road network (broadly the area covered by the central zone in the Chelmsford Future Network Strategy). It was also stated that outside of this, levels of congestion varied.

VF went on to question how population and subsequent traffic growth would be considered given the current capacity. It was explained that this was a complex challenge, given that ideally the capacity of the road network should be reduced to around 90% to improve resilience while at the same time accommodating all the growth planned around Chelmsford. The assessment of the potential options will use

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a transport model that will look at people's choices as the levels of delay change with growth.

KB stated that the County Council wished to proceed with their Park & Ride Strategy, which would see the implementation of a third Park & Ride at Widford.

Discussion was held around the current bus contract and whether anything meaningful could be done to change this. **JS** noted that the encouraging improvements to the bus services may require subsidisation in order to put better services in place to build up usage.

KB noted that people were unlikely to use a bus unless it offered a better choice than using their car.

SR referenced the success of the no. 57 bus, subsidised by Countryside where usage has been 40% higher than originally anticipated.

PS stated that it was cheaper for a family to get a taxi from the Baddow area than it is to take the bus as a family.

VF agreed that buses are not affordable and stated that we should be looking to get improvements to the services. **VF** also stated that she felt we should already be doing more to provide people with alternative methods of travel, such as by implementing a bike hire scheme and making safety improvements across the city to enable people to cycle. Similarly, **VF** stated that we should be looking at incentives to encourage people to cycle and also provision of infrastructure to support electric vehicles, such as charging points.

The next taskforce meeting is expected to be end of September, given the summer period.