

# Meeting Minutes

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## Army and Navy Taskforce Meeting #11

**Project** Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package, Chelmsford

**Location** Virtual meeting                      **Date/Time** 9 April 2021

**Participants** Cllr Kevin Bentley **KB**  
Cllr Stephen Robinson **SR**  
Cllr John Spence **JS**  
Cllr Dick Madden **DM**  
Vicky Ford MP **VF**

	<p><b>Introductions</b></p> <p><b>KB</b> introduced the meeting and handed over to the project team who said the purpose of the session was to update on latest changes to the project.</p>
1	<p><b>Design updates</b></p> <p>The Taskforce was given an update on work which had taken place with regard to walking and cycling facilities. More priority was being given to pedestrians and cyclists, particularly with amendments to crossings and a reduction in the number of phases to cross the junction. The Department for Transport had informed the project that it wished to see the highest standards with regards to this. As a result, designs had been updated and the business case needed to be updated as well.</p> <p>It was firstly explained how this would affect the Hamburger roundabout option. This meant easier crossing, particularly for cyclists, by making the crossings more direct and reducing the number of phases.</p> <p><b>KB</b> drew attention to the proposed signalling, emphasising the need to ensure safety at all times.</p> <p>Design changes to the enlarged roundabout option and separate T-junction option were explained, again designed to improve the crossing for pedestrians and cyclists, reducing the number of phases and make the routes more direct.</p>
2	<p><b>Business case</b></p> <p>The project team described how the additional measures for cyclists and pedestrians affected the impact on the business case. In particular, this related to the effect on motorised vehicles and their journey times because of the way DfT requires that the benefits of proposed schemes are calculated.</p> <p>The Hamburger roundabout and separate T-junctions would still have strong business cases; however the enlarged roundabout design would now deliver only a minor improvement for cars, generating a very poor business case.</p> <p><b>KB</b> asked if there was, therefore, a case for removing the enlarged roundabout option and <b>JS</b> requested further clarity about the benefits of the various options.</p> <p>The project team re-iterated that the Hamburger roundabout and separate T-junction options still offered good value for money. The enlarged roundabout was unlikely to have a successful business case.</p>

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**JS** said it felt like there was little value in continuing with the enlarged roundabout.

**KB** said as a cyclist he liked what he was hearing.

A council officer stated that as a flagship project it was vitally important to demonstrate active and sustainable transport measures were at the forefront of the scheme and there were two very viable options for this.

**VF** said she was very pleased to see the updated design work. She requested further information about how pedestrians would cross the junction, pointing out the current underpass was becoming more and more dangerous with bikes and electric scooters rushing through it, requesting separation of pedestrians from cyclists.

The project team explained there would be no underpass under the proposals and that wide segregated cycle and pedestrian routes were included in the design.

**VF** said she was very happy with this but also requested the council looked at the current underpass situation.

**KB** said there was a general view that people preferred surface level crossings to using an underpass.

**JS** stressed the importance of cyclists observing signage, saying he had considerable correspondence on this issue from residents of Chelmer Village travelling towards the Army and Navy junction.

A council officer said she would follow up on this issue with **JS** in more detail but acknowledged it was a challenge because there were no laws to enforce cyclists following signage or wearing helmets. The DfT had announced enhanced improved funding for cycle training and awareness and the council was also looking at ways this might be incorporated into capital schemes.

The Task Force was told that the Hamburger and T-junction options could incorporate public realm enhancements, so people did not feel they were crossing a massive roundabout. Designs would incorporate aesthetic enhancements.

**JS** said it felt like there had been a significant shift with the designs of the options and their performance.

**SR** described the approach as radical for cyclists and pedestrians and questioned whether something more radical and further away from the junction through open land had been considered. He also requested further clarity about the cycle path as it moved away from the junction, suggesting it could be closer to the river and away from Parkway.

A council officer expressed concern this approach would look like putting the car first as opposed to encouraging active travel, which was the bold way to do things.

The project team explained the aim was to achieve really direct and safe cycle routes. Moving them away from the junction would make them less direct and less attractive to people. It was added the task force would not want to see a decrease in cyclists using the route because they felt it was out of their way. There would potentially be flooding issues also.

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	<p><b>DM</b> emphasised his support for active travel, but that it must not be forgotten that the junction was a major pinch point and the consequences and impact of facilities for cyclists and pedestrians must be heavily considered against the need to keep traffic moving. He questioned whether pedestrian/cyclist bridges could be incorporated.</p> <p>The project team confirmed that a three-way overbridge had been considered, connecting Van Diemens Road, Meadgate Terrace and Chelmer Road, however, the connection into Van Diemens would not be granted planning permission because it would obscure daylight from people's properties. There was also a view that not all people would wish to use an overbridge so at-grade crossings would still need to be offered. It was also emphasised there would be an issue with the space that would be required for the ramps needed for an overbridge.</p>
3	<p><b>Public consultation</b></p> <p><b>VF</b> said it should not feel that the scheme was a 'done deal' when it went to consultation and that it was important to take people through the options, so they understood the logic behind them and how they performed.</p> <p><b>KB</b> emphasised that the council would do the scheme with people and not to them.</p> <p>A council officer emphasised the need to balance the need of motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. He said it was unwise to make walking and cycling routes unattractive and long because they would not be used and people would revert to using cars.</p> <p><b>JS</b> agreed with the intended approach to present options at the consultation, and, potentially, also include the reasons for abandoning the option of a new two-flyover.</p> <p>The project team agreed options should be presented on a level playing field. The current intention was to consult on two options and the sustainable transport measures, with reference to the discarding of previous options. However, this was subject to the view of the Task Force.</p> <p><b>KB</b> said that having dropped the two-way flyover he felt the enlarged roundabout should be included in the consultation, but with an explanation of why it did not meet the necessary criteria.</p> <p><b>VF</b> said there should be a strong steer about the benefits of the remaining options but the reasons for dropping the two-way flyover and enlarged roundabout should be fully explained so people had a clear understanding of why those options did not work.</p> <p><b>SR</b> said all the evidence about the remaining options and how they perform should be presented clearly to the public.</p> <p><b>JS</b> said the project team should take people on the journey, demonstrating why one option after another had been dropped and explaining the reasons, including the two-way flyover.</p> <p><b>DM</b> said he was comfortable putting forward two options, with full explanation of why the other options were not as good.</p> <p>A council officer urged that consultation should not re-open any debate about the flyover. There was a need to focus on the remaining options and why they were valid.</p>

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	<p>The project team said the discarded options could be briefly referenced and why the decision to reject them had been taken, while the consultation focussed on the two options.</p> <p><b>VF</b> requested sight of a draft of the consultation proposals and materials.</p> <p><b>KB</b> said there was now agreement to consult on the Hamburger and T-Junction options but also briefly re-emphasise the reasons behind dropping other options.</p> <p>The project team detailed the consultation plan, including an 8-week period to allow more time for people who may be on holiday during August/September. There would be a digital focus with a virtual exhibition space, live web-chat sessions, and Teams broadcasts. Accessible arrangements for the consultation would also be made.</p> <p><b>JS</b> suggested display boards could be used at County Hall or the Civic Centre for information and education.</p> <p><b>KB</b> suggested using a vacant shop window.</p> <p>The project team said this could be looked at.</p> <p><b>VF</b> supported advertising suggestions and also suggested the extended consultation period should be emphasised. She said that additional online briefings could be held if they proved particularly popular.</p> <p><b>DM</b> requested direct communication with the Chelmsford Business Improvement District.</p> <p>The project team said that utilising partners was a key part of the communications programme and pointed to a number of groups and organisations. They went on to describe how visualisations and an animation would be used to deliver a full understanding of the proposals as well as the intention to involve young people via schools and the Science Technology Engineering and Maths programme. They also described the various communications channels that would be used to maximise reach, including the potential use of banners or signs at the junction itself.</p> <p><b>KB</b> said that contact with local groups and parishes was important and useful. It was confirmed by the project team that this was part of the overall plan.</p>
4	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>KB thanked the project team and communications team for the huge effort in moving forward the project as he closed the virtual meeting.</p>