

Meeting Minutes

Subject	Second meeting of the A127 Economic Growth Corridor Task Force	
Project	A127	
Prepared by	Rosie Maloney	Date/Time 15 February 2019
Location	Holiday Inn Southend	
Participants	<p>James Duddridge MP (JD) MP for Rochford and Southend East</p> <p>Cllr Mike Steptoe (MS) - (Task Force Chair) Deputy Portfolio Holder at Essex County Council and Deputy Leader for Rochford District Council</p> <p>Mark Robinson (MR) – Principle Transport and Infrastructure Planner, Essex County Council</p> <p>Alan Lindsay (AL) - Transportation Planning and Infrastructure Manager, Essex County Council</p> <p>Anthony Buston (AB) - Senior Transport, Strategy and Engagement Officer, Essex County Council</p> <p>Cllr Andrew Baggott (AB) – Leader of the Council, Basildon Borough Council</p> <p>Cllr Richard Moore (RM) – Chair of Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee, Basildon Borough Council</p> <p>Christine Lyons (CL) - Head of Planning, Basildon Borough Council</p> <p>Cllr Norman Smith (NS) – Leader of the Council, Castle Point Council</p> <p>Cllr Andrew Sheldon (AS) - Deputy to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Castle Point Council</p> <p>Ian Butt (IB) – Head of Place and Policy, Castle Point Council</p> <p>Daniel Douglas (DD) – Transport Planning Team Leader, Havering Council</p> <p>Cllr Terry Cutmore (TC) - Leader of the Council, Rochford District Council</p> <p>Shaun Scrutton (SS) – Managing Director, Rochford District Council</p> <p>Cllr Andrew Moring (AM) – Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Southend Borough Council</p> <p>Neil Hoskins (NH) – Interim Group Manager – Major Projects & Strategic Transport Policy, Southend Borough Council</p> <p>Adam Duff (AD) - Performance and Planning Manager, Transport for London</p> <p>David Burch (DB) - Director of Policy, Essex Chambers of Commerce</p> <p>Denise Rossiter (DR) – Chief Executive, Essex Chambers of Commerce</p> <p>Ian Lewis (IL) – Programme Manager, Opportunity South Essex</p> <p>Sean Perry (SP) - Divisional Director, Essex Highways</p> <p>Phil Harrison (PH) - Stakeholder Engagement Manager, Jacobs</p> <p>Rosie Maloney (RMal) – Stakeholder Engagement Graduate, Jacobs</p>	

Notes	Action
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1	<p>Introduction by Cllr Mike Steptoe, Chair.</p> <p>MS welcomed the attendees, made introductions and covered health and safety points.</p> <p>Explained purpose of the meeting was to discuss the major issues and opportunities of the A127, the proposed vision for the A127 corridor and next steps for the project.</p>	
2	<p>Minutes/Actions</p> <p>MS asked attendees for comments or corrections to the minutes and Terms of Reference of the inaugural Task Force meeting.</p> <p>IL asked that Opportunity South Essex be added into the Terms of Reference (ToR). A point in the ToR was changed to reflect that groups such as OSE should be invited to the Task Force meeting when agreed appropriate by members.</p> <p>The TOR was accepted by all, pending above changes and circulation via email.</p>	

<p>3</p>	<p>Planning Update</p> <p>MS asked attendees to share any local plan updates that relate to the A127.</p> <p>Local Plans update</p> <p>JL noted that Bell junction will have a general improvement / upgrade budget. Fairglen Interchange has also had funding agreed, allowing improvements to go forward as planned.</p> <p>DD mentioned that Gallows Corner could be considered as part of the Government's major roads fund. TfL is in discussion with the DfT regarding a business case to replace the flyover.</p> <p>JL added that Gallows Corner needs a major and high standard improvement.</p> <p>DD noted that Havering Council welcomes DfT discussions for this major transport structure. Havering are seeking more than improvements to the flyover – its crucial air quality is improved.</p> <p>JL added that funding could come through LEPs as well as government. There are key businesses that would benefit from the road improvements, so it is in their interest.</p> <p>JD added that over the years many people in government have raised the A127 improvement question. There is a need to understand what priority the Government places on the A127. In order to make a valid case for funding you need to be clear on your objectives.</p> <p>NH stated that Southend Council does not currently have a scheme that would fit the parameters but presenting a series of complementary schemes together might be a way of getting the right funding to the right schemes. The A127 would not necessarily have to take the whole pot. Currently the Government is looking at highways bypass schemes, not improvements to a corridor.</p> <p>TC noted that London Southend airport, a business that relies on the A127, expects its number of passengers to increase to five million by 2023.</p> <p>Joint Strategic Plan update</p> <p>SS discussed the process of the South Essex Joint Strategic Plan. A major study will be taking place. The next steps are an options paper, which will be considered before Parliament's summer recess. A public consultation is likely to happen in September 2019.</p>	
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<p>4</p>	<p>Scheme Progress Update</p> <p>SP discussed the progress updates since the inaugural meeting held on 30 November 2018 and detailed the issues and opportunities before opening a discussion about the suggested vision of the A127 going forward.</p> <p>Issues</p> <p>Sustainability – there is a need to provide sustainable alternatives to road travel.</p> <p>JL mentioned that at the Rochford business breakfast on 13 February, attendees raised that many road users avoid the A127 because of congestion. This suggests behavioural change is an issue that needs addressing.</p> <p>SP followed up by stating that a crucial part of the improvements is about getting the right traffic on the right roads.</p> <p>JL raised a lack of capacity for current traffic, which will continue to worsen and will limit potential growth of business in the area if not addressed. We need to look at ways to engage government and ensure we are looking at innovative approaches.</p> <p>IB noted that noise pollution is another key issue that needs addressing.</p> <p>CL initiated a discussion about air quality issues. The environment and poor air quality are crucial drivers of change. There are air quality issues in Basildon that need to be addressed.</p> <p>JD also brought up issues around speed control on the A127. There needs to be more consistency along the road, although consideration should be given to having varying speed limits at different times of the day, e.g. in peak times, speed limits should be reduced to control the flow.</p> <p>IL said there is a need to look at wider transport solutions in addition to the A127.</p> <p>CL spoke about how the Lower Thames Crossing project (LTC) will impact on future travel across Essex. The A13 could become a key route for all vehicles. A rail travel connection across the Thames that does not go into or through London could be crucial to the future economy of Essex.</p> <p>JL stated that as it is unlikely that we are going to have more north/south rail routes in the near future it shouldn't become a focus, as it detracts from the priority of the A127 improvements.</p> <p>SP noted that different planning scenarios are possible as we have access to the modelling tools that have been used for the LTC, which will help with the planning stages going forward.</p> <p>NH raised the need for a co-ordinated approach to rapid transit/light rail. There could be a joint light rail / A127 submission when looking at technology that could drive the project.</p> <p>NS stated that LTC is going to have an indirect impact on the A127. Traffic models show the traffic going onto M25, but it is likely to go through north and south Essex as an alternative route. Any developments should be in conjunction with A127 improvements.</p> <p>SP noted it is vital we get smaller projects such as Fairglen right - they are key pinch points along the route.</p>	
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IB mentioned the nuclear power station project at Bradwell-on-Sea, and the opportunities South Essex could realise from it. It demonstrates why we need to factor in north/south developments as well as relationship with ports and London. Improvements around Chelmsford, and traffic movements from north to south will have as big an impact as how people move east to west. Noted that Howe Green junction is important for both Chelmsford and the rest of Essex.

Opportunities for the A127

SP explained the current and future opportunities of the A127.

TC mentioned that Ford Dunton, a key business and technology innovator, is on the route. Are there any innovations they can add to the planning process?

PH said that Ford Dunton will be approached to hold the launch event, and to provide a speaker to share their insights.

CL noted that the A127 (like the A1) changes character - from semi-urban to two lanes of fast-moving traffic, before becoming an urban road again in London. This needs to be factored in.

SP presented on the proposed vision and asked for feedback.

SP said these build into the strategic plan. A127 could drive growth predictions / infrastructure. Needs to be a joined-up story which focuses on economic prosperity for Essex.

JD proposed an alternative vision which was “delivering people and goods from city to the sea, faster, more reliably, more sustainably to fuel greater economic growth”. It was argued that the vision needs an overarching statement to tie all the different ones together.

SS added that the vision needs to be simpler and one sentence rather than five separate vision statements.

Members agreed the best to take forward and adapt was “a route that serves the current and predicted regional growth and supports the economic prosperity of the area.”

CL suggested the word “Corridor” should be added to A127 as it is not just a road project.

IB said that the phrase “route supports” or “corridor serves” should be used. Ambition is also needed in the agreed vision statement.

SP - Private business needed to help lobby for investment from central Government as well as to help with the design process. Connectivity is also crucial. The project team is looking at modelling and diversion routes and whether they could be done more sustainability.

Environment

PH noted that we need to champion innovation but also ensure we work constructively with it so sat navs don't encourage people to take inappropriate roads.

AD stated that in London, TfL works with sat nav companies to improve user experience.

IB said it's important to ensure the management system of the route is the most efficient possible and is designed in from the beginning. Also asked that the word “promote” be removed from the objectives.

	SP finished by stating that the topic for next Task Force is to look at possible solutions in more detail.	
5	<p>Programme update/Engagement Plan</p> <p>PH detailed future updates with timescales with the Task Force attendees. He noted that we need support from public and businesses, which would be initiated at the launch event scheduled for June.</p> <p>IL - There is a good reach of people through local authorities and key business groups in Essex.</p> <p>An online engagement form is being developed to get additional feedback from the public. Task Force members were asked to share any questions they would like covered.</p> <p>The brochure for the event will focus on innovation rather than current issues.</p>	
6	<p>Current projects update</p> <p>Fairglen Interchange – this is currently scheduled to complete by 2022.</p> <p>AQMP – currently exploring potential solutions and will update ahead of the summer.</p> <p>Bradwell power station – construction 5-7 years away</p>	
7	<p>Next meeting and AOB</p> <p>Agree date of next Task Force meeting (June)</p>	