

Meeting Minutes

Army and Navy Taskforce Meeting #13

Project Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package, Chelmsford

Location Virtual meeting **Date/Time** 2 July 2021

Participants Cllr Tom Cunningham **TC**
Cllr Stephen Robinson **SR**
Cllr Anthony McQuiggan **AM**
Cllr Marie Goldman **MG**
Cllr Peter Sadowsky **PS**
Vicky Ford MP **VF**

	<p>Introduction</p> <p>TC introduced the meeting, giving apologies from Cllr Lesley Wagland. Cllr John Spence also sent apologies.</p>
1	<p>Technical update</p> <p>The project team outlined the agenda for the meeting, explaining there would be a brief update on the latest technical work and a large focus on the upcoming public consultation, including the proposed questions, plus an update on landowner discussions.</p> <p>The Task Force were told that there had been some design changes to the Separate T-Junctions option following latest discussions with road safety which meant that vehicles would not be able to turn right out of Baddow Road towards Essex Yeomanry Way or Chelmer Road. It was explained that the number of vehicles currently making this movement was relatively low. A latest design drawing was shared on screen to explain the issue and the required change in design.</p> <p>PS requested a travel count of Baddow Road to Chelmer Road and was told this could be provided. ACTION</p>
2	<p>Public consultation</p> <p>The project team provided details of pre-consultation briefing sessions for key partners over the coming weeks, including councillors, community groups, businesses and transport groups. They went on to outline the planned consultation approach, which would be mainly online, but with two roadshow-style face-to-face events. This would take place from August to October over an extended period of eight weeks to allow for the summer holidays.</p> <p>The Task Force was told about wide range of publicity that would take place for the consultation to help make sure people were very aware of it and have the opportunity to take part. There was also a focus on engaging with young people via schools, with STEM-based sessions offered to secondary schools.</p> <p>VF and PS questioned the area that would be covered by any printed letters or leaflets, suggesting the Greater Baddow area would be appropriate. The project team said</p>

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there was a balance to be struck between notifying people appropriately and churning out large amounts of printed material. The exact breadth and scale of the distribution was still being discussed. However, focus was on digital channels.

VF requested notice of when the consultation would be publicised to enable her and colleagues to also publicise it. **ACTION**

The project team also reassured the Task Force that an explanation of the reasons for dropping other options would be included within the consultation. Members of the Task Force were encouraged to use their own social media channels to help publicise the consultation further.

MG suggested it was necessary to send a leaflet to 'everybody' because not everyone was on social media. The project team stressed that traditional communications channels, such as newspaper and local publication adverts and editorial content, would also be used – an approach supported by **VF**, **PS** and **MG**.

The project team introduced material that would form part of the consultation, initially showing a visualisation of the hamburger roundabout option, essentially showing how the option would work in reality and the key features of the option, with people using the main road through the roundabout for journeys between Essex Yeomanry Way and Parkway and the roundabout for other arms of the junction. It was explained that similar visualisations were also being produced for the Separate T-Junctions option but had been delayed by the design change. Separate visualisations would also show the options from the perspectives of different transport users and the proposed layouts for the Park and Ride sites.

MG approved of the visualisations but commented that people may well focus on traffic queues that were shown. It was explained that traffic modelling had been used to reflect predicted future travel levels at peak times and provide a realistic picture. There was an improvement, but queuing would not be eliminated altogether whatever was done at the junction.

The project team emphasised the focus on sustainable transport and the aim of making improvements for all users of the junction, not just cars. It was added that the options provided benefits for walking, cycling and buses.

VF questioned the clarity of the visualisations in showing traffic coming down the Baddow Road. She also said that it was not just a question of traffic being in a queue but how quickly the queue moved and that was an important point to get across where possible. There needed to be a balance in delivering acceptable wait times for all users.

The project team advised that within the content there would be information about journey-time implications for all junction users, including during morning and evening peaks. They acknowledged that the objective was to achieve a balance. **VF** suggested using wait-times for users, for example, how many light changes would a car driver expect?

Council officers commented that it was important to represent journey times for all users. The Army and Navy would not be just a road junction anymore but a sustainable route for buses, bikes and pedestrians.

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AM commented about breaches of Highway Code in the visualisation, suggesting these should be reviewed and resolved. He also said there were instances of buses not moving and cars being stationary, so suggested a wider period of time was covered. The project team said poor driver behaviour was included in the simulation but stressed the visualisation was still work in progress and individual aspects would be amended where possible.

MG advised that the information used for the visualisation should be fully spelt out i.e. that real traffic information and modelling was used. The project team said that this type of information would be included.

Council officers said transparency was hugely important, stressing the scheme would not remove queues. However, it would improve things for all users, rather than just focus on single a route or mode. It was stressed that queues on Baddow Road would continue. To remove them would affect the efficiency of all other parts of the proposed roundabout. Overall, there was a need to encourage active modes of travel and Park and Ride. That said, there would be improvements on Baddow Road journey times. However, as things improved on Baddow Road, it would also mean more traffic being attracted the route.

MG advised that the modelling should consider current Active Travel proposals in Chelmsford. She was advised that this could be considered ahead of a final decision if the measures were approved and confirmed. However, it was not feasible to include these in the assessment of the options and the information in the public consultation because it was not a committed scheme. **MG** advised there would be public questions about this aspect.

AM suggested information about the number of vehicles using the junction would be useful, compared with historic data, and was told this was being considered. Council officers said this should include all modes of transport.

PS warned of a bottleneck at Odeon roundabout.

The project team presented the information boards that would form part of the virtual exhibition, which were described by showing an image of a similar exhibition held for the A12 Highways England scheme. Members of the Task Force were shown information that had been prepared for the exhibition: scheme background, Chelmsford Future Transport Strategy, project objectives, summary of proposals, development of the options (including the discounting of options), the Hamburger Roundabout option, the Separate T-Junctions option, the performance of the options, impacts of the options, walking and cycling improvements, Sandon Park and Ride, the two Widford Park and Ride sites, consultation events (web chats, web casts, drop-in events) and next steps. In response to a question from **MG**, they said that the boards were still being developed and subject to change.

A council officer pointed out that the maps would be presented in high resolution, including making available larger copies if required. **AM** suggested that the diagrams should show road markings.

PS noted that a cycling route from Great Baddow was still awaited and also questioned the impacts of a bus lane in Parkway on general traffic. The project team said that exact cycle routes were still being explored and that they could share current 'thoughts' off-line. **ACTION**. It was explained that the bus lane on Parkway could be accommodated while still maintaining two lanes for general traffic.

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	<p>A council officer said that parking and storage provision for bikes should be included on the Park and Ride information and was advised this was included and would be made clearer. MG suggested e-scooters could be included as well.</p> <p>SR questioned whether anything would be communicated to landowners about the Park and Ride sites and when. The project team said that they had been written to and briefing sessions were also planned., including with Chelmsford City Council officers.</p> <p>PS requested a copy of the latest minutes and was advised these would be published, along with any missing from previous meetings. ACTION.</p> <p>VF said it was important to stress that this was a genuine consultation and people's views really would be considered on what were proposals and not final plans. A council officer said the fact that 'We are listening' would be re-iterated throughout the consultation and pointed to the dropping of the Baddow Bus Gate proposal as an example of the council listening. Task force members were also asked to re-iterate this message.</p> <p>MG suggested using Slido for questions during planned online broadcasts during the consultation. SR agreed. The project team said this was a good suggestion and would be considered.</p> <p>A council officer suggested it was necessary to explain how funds were spent and make clear this spend (on the junction improvements) did not take away money from spend on issues like potholes.</p> <p>MG said the Essex County Council contact centre should be made aware of the consultation. She was told this happened as a default action, but the team would make sure it took place.</p> <p>The project team presented a draft of the scheme brochure, which referenced the virtual exhibition and explained the proposals in a similar way. A council officer suggested adding an executive summary with high-end impact numbers, explained in a visual way. VF said it was important to emphasise the objectives.</p> <p>A selection of the proposed consultation questions: preferred scheme, junction options, walking and cycling, Park and Ride and overall package, were shared with the Task Force.</p>
3	<p>Landowner update</p> <p>An update was given on landowner negotiations for the junction itself – further discussions required - and the Park and Ride sites, for which responses were awaited. The project team pointed out that protracted negotiations could delay the scheme.</p> <p>VF commented about land directly east of Aldi, saying she understood the landowner's concerns and asked for consideration of other areas for flood alleviation and site compounds. The project team said this was under way. VF offered to help with any required mediation.</p>
4	<p>AOB</p>

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MG raised the common current issue of standing water as people tried to cross the junction on Parkway saying it was really important that the new junction was not affected by this problem.

TC thanked everyone for their contributions. He asked for Chelmsford City Council agreement to include its branding on the consultation and associated publicity to emphasise a 'one team' and collaborative approach. **SR** said he heard the request but stressed a partnership would need to be a 'genuine partnership'. **TC** urged consideration of the request.

VF thanked the team for all the work being done.

TC closed the meeting.