

# Meeting Minutes

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## Army and Navy Taskforce Meeting #12

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

**Location** Virtual meeting                      **Date/Time** 4 June 2021

**Participants** Cllr Lesley Wagland **LW**  
Cllr Stephen Robinson **SR**  
Cllr Anthony McQuiggan **AM**  
Cllr Marie Goldman **MG**  
Cllr Peter Sadowsky **PS**  
Vicky Ford MP **VF**

	<p><b>Introductions</b></p> <p><b>LW</b> opened the meeting and said she was delighted to be chairing the Taskforce, having been given the Economic Renewal, Infrastructure and Planning portfolio. She welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly the newly elected members joining the Taskforce. <b>LW</b> handed over to the project team and requested that the objectives of the meeting were made clear.</p> <p>The project manager explained that the aim of the session was to recap on the work completed to date, update the Taskforce on the latest technical work and then briefly discuss the proposed approach to the upcoming public consultation.</p>
1	<p><b>Project recap</b></p> <p>The project manager introduced a presentation, explaining the project was about more than just the Army and Navy junction and that it was now firmly focussed as the Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package. He then gave a brief overview of the Chelmsford Future Transport Network Strategy, explaining the zonal approach of this, stressing the key gateway element of the Army and Navy junction and the need to include sustainable transport improvements as part of the project.</p> <p>He said the project was about improving journeys for all modes of transport and that was what the project team were looking to achieve.</p> <p>The group was told that funding was being sought funding from the Department for Transport's (DfT) Major Road Network programme and the project team therefore needed to follow a specific, robust transport appraisal process.</p> <p>It was explained that stage 1 (establishing a case to make improvements) involved identifying problems (e.g. congestion, little capacity, poor journey time reliability, air quality issues, poor cycling and walking facilities), as well as a requirement to define clear objectives. The project manager also explained that there was a need to generate potential options during stage 1 and that about 100 different options had initially been identified. These were then split into four categories – major highways, minor highways, major sustainable and minor sustainable – before being ranked using the DfT's early assessment sifting tool to identify the best performing options in each category. The four best performing major highways options were selected, along with the best performing minor highways options which were combined together to form a fifth 'major' highways option. The best performing sustainable transport options were</p>

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	<p>combined and added as a package of sustainable transport measures to all five of the remaining highways options.</p> <p>The task force was told that three of the five initial options had since been ruled out, with the reasons to do so also explained. It was stressed that the assessment of the options and decisions made were – and had to be – in line with DfT guidance.</p> <p>In response to a question from <b>VF</b>, the project team confirmed that there was a flood risk with the enlarged roundabout option, which had been dropped. It was also confirmed that flood modelling was taking place for the remaining options. She added that timescales for this would be confirmed. <b>ACTION</b></p> <p>The project team explained Stage 2 (further appraisal), which was the current stage of the project, focussing on the Hamburger Roundabout (where the main road goes straight across) and the Separate T-Junctions options. These would be subject to public consultation.</p> <p>It was explained that funding would need to be approved before Stage 3 of the project to develop and deliver the chosen scheme.</p> <p>The project manager went on to explain the wider sustainable transport package, including expansion of Sandon Park and Ride and a new Park and Ride site at Widford, along with improved walking and cycling routes and bus priority measures.. It was explained that designs of both remaining junction options had recently been updated to account for the DfT's latest design guidance for cycling infrastructure and now included segregated walking and cycling around the junction and straight-across crossings. These would be shown clearly at public consultation, with visualisations to demonstrate how pedestrians and cyclists would cross at the junction.</p> <p>It was stressed the solution was about all transport modes and improving journeys for everybody.</p>
2	<p><b>Technical update</b></p> <p>The project team advised that the design of the Separate T-Junctions option was having to be reviewed following a conversation with the traffic signals team, which had expressed safety concerns relating to driver visibility of one of the crossings. As a result, the project team was looking to resolve this point, which may possibly involve adding an additional phase to the traffic signals or potentially some re-design. This would be done ahead of public consultation.</p> <p><b>VF</b> described this as new information and said any alternative route may well be a very long way around. The project team said any potential re-design and prevention of a certain traffic movement at one of the junctions would affect about two per cent of traffic during the peak hour but acknowledged the removal was not ideal and stressed again that the team was looking to resolve the issue.</p> <p><b>MG</b> requested further understanding of the visibility issue and the way traffic would need to travel. In response, the project team explained how signals at the junctions needed to operate to enable a smooth flow through the junctions for both traffic and pedestrians. <b>MG</b> said it was very important to explain about the necessary phasing of the signals at the junction and not just talk about the visibility issue. <b>ACTION</b></p> <p><b>VF</b> questioned whether it was possible to move the associated pedestrian/cyclist crossing. The project team said this would be very detrimental for walking and cycling</p>

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and it was important to keep routes as direct as possible, in line with DfT guidance. It was added that there had been a bold and consistent approach in delivering a sustainable Army and Navy junction, which firmly backed active travel. The Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package was described as a pragmatic solution to support walking and cycling while also keeping traffic moving smoothly.

**PS** questioned the implication of adding a bus lane to Parkway and was told the bus lane did actually work very well and that two lanes would be maintained for general traffic so there would be no loss of capacity.

**MG** raised concerns that people might attempt to cross without using the designated crossings when walking between Old Moulsham and Great Baddow, notably those walking to Sutherland Lodge Surgery. The project team advised that efforts were always made to make crossings as direct as possible but that adding additional crossings beyond those planned would cause additional queuing and there was always an element of compromise.

The Sandon Park and Ride expansion proposals were outlined to the Taskforce. It was explained that electric vehicle charging points were included, along with a relocated terminal building to the centre of the site and enhanced walking and cycling connectivity. A visual image of this was being drawn up for the public consultation.

The project manager described the Widford Park and Ride proposals, explaining the two sites under consideration (Greenbury way and London Road). The Greenbury Way site was constrained by a neighbouring flood-risk zone. A five-arm roundabout on would provide access to the potential Greenbury Way site, with a centrally located terminal building and designated electrical vehicle, parent and child and disabled space. It was added that a walking and cycling route from the site into the city centre was being explored.

The proposals for the potential London Road site were outlined, with a signalised junction providing access and, again, a centrally located terminal building and designated parking spaces being provided. It was explained that a potential walking and cycling route from the site into the city centre had been identified and that a bus lane would be created on London Road on the approach to Widford Roundabout.

**SR** questioned how it would be decided which option would be best and was told there was very little difference in terms of pros and cons, including from an environmental perspective. Both sites could accommodate 1,000 spaces and both were in the green belt. Land purchase arrangements could potentially be the deciding factor, but a decision framework would be developed and used to decide the preferred option.

It was noted that, more widely, Park and Choose sites were being considered as part of the Essex Climate Commission's work.

**SR** asked whether the timescales for identifying a preferred Widford Park and Ride site was the same as for the Army and Navy junction options and was told that clarity was needed from the DfT but that the project team was working to the assumption that a decision would be made at a similar time.

**PS** questioned the effect of Sandon Park and Ride expansion on the Manor Farm development and was told that land had been safeguarded in the Local Plan for the expansion and developers were aware of this. It was added that the project team would continue to work with developers and the intention was to include connections between the Park and Ride site and the new development.

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	<p><b>PS</b> pointed out that public transport was not a cheap option in Great Baddow and asked about the possibility of fares being reviewed. <b>VF</b> agreed with this comment. It was explained that the Government's Bus back better strategy was looking to make improvements to bus services nationwide and that the passenger transport team at Essex County Council was looking at this from an Essex perspective.</p> <p>The project team described the various wider potential cycle route options under consideration, including from the Park and Ride sites, Great Baddow to the Army and Navy junction and from the junction to the city centre. It was explained that designs were still at an early stage, with feasibility work continuing.</p> <p><b>PS</b> advised that one of the Sandon cycle route proposals would be at risk of flooding, while <b>VF</b> suggested a pedestrian/cyclist overbridge was considered across Essex Yeomanry Way to help connect Sandon Park and Ride and Great Baddow. <b>MG</b> recommended the route should be accessible and beneficial to as many as possible, which the project team agreed with and said would be considered as designs progressed.</p> <p><b>SR</b> suggested that some of the route options from the potential Greenbury Way (Widford) Park and Ride served different purposes and a combination should, therefore, be considered. <b>MG</b> agreed with this point and suggested improvements to existing routes be considered. She also questioned what cycling infrastructure improvements would be required further along the routes towards the city centre and was told this would be assessed as part of the feasibility studies.</p> <p><b>AM</b> suggested a route following the contour line of the river be considered to avoid inclines and make the route easier. The project team said this could be considered, balanced against the need to deliver the most direct routes, in line with DfT guidance. Lighting and safety along a potential river route would also be important and the project manager suggested Chelmsford City Council was keen the route was explored as more of a leisure route.</p>
3	<p><b>Public consultation</b></p> <p>The project team then addressed the public consultation proposals, which would seek views on the overall package and the two specific junction layout options, including the benefits for people using all forms of transport, and whether the improvements would support people in considering travelling differently. Feedback would also be requested on the proposed walking and cycling improvements and whether any other routes should be considered. In addition, a view on a preferred Widford Park and Ride site would be sought, as well as the potential expansion at Sandon Park and Ride ahead of works at junction.</p> <p>It was explained the consultation approach would be online over eight weeks in August and September - an additional two weeks to acknowledge the timing of school holidays. This would be supported by online chat sessions and online broadcast presentations. Demand would dictate the number of these. Printed materials would also be made available, including an easy-read brochure and collaboration with Chelmsford Talking Newspaper.</p> <p>Visualisations would help demonstrate the junction options, including from the varying perspectives of different transport users. Images would also show the intended layout of the Park and Ride sites and walking and cycling routes.</p>

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	<p>The project team said the intention was to engage with young people, working with schools and colleges and offering them STEM careers and active travel challenge sessions to help encourage engagement.</p> <p>An animation would be created to set the scene and context, encouraging people to participate in the consultation, while a virtual exhibition would be used to outline the proposals.</p> <p><b>VF</b> supported the planned approach and suggested pre-media work to highlight the upcoming exhibition and consultation. <b>ACTION</b></p> <p><b>AM</b> stressed the importance of visualising the improvements from the point of view of all travellers, using all modes. <b>MG</b> stressed questions should not be leading.</p> <p><b>VF</b> said it was very important that people understood it was not a 'done deal' and they had an opportunity to have their say and felt listened to.</p> <p><b>LW</b> stressed the importance of not asking leading questions at consultation because people must not feel that things had been pre-judged.</p> <p>The project team said that it would be clear that decisions have yet to be made about preferred options and enough information would be provided at the consultation for people to provide an informed view, which was important in informing the decision making process.</p>
4	<p><b>Risks</b></p> <p>The taskforce was given an overview of risks to the project, including possible flood risk mitigation issues, land negotiations, funding and complications relating to required utility diversions.</p>
5	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>The project team confirmed the next meeting was scheduled for July 2.</p> <p><b>LW</b> thanked people for attending and then closed the meeting.</p>