



## Chelmsford City Council Cabinet

12 October 2021

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### Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package Consultation

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#### Report by:

Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development

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#### Officer Contact:

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#### Purpose

To agree the City Council's consultation response to the Army & Navy Sustainable Transport Package consultation.

#### Options

The following options are available:

- a) Agree the consultation response
- b) Not agree the consultation response
- c) Agree the consultation response, with amendments

#### Preferred option and reasons

Option a) is recommended.

#### Recommendation

It is recommended that the City Council's response to the Army & Navy Sustainable Transport Package consultation is as set out in this report at paragraphs 4.2 - 4.10 and that the Director of Sustainable Communities is authorised to submit this consultation response to Essex County Council.

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## 1. Introduction and context

- 1.1 The Army & Navy junction is a key gateway into the City Centre of Chelmsford. Pre-COVID 19, in the region of 70,000 vehicles were using the junction per day. It provides a key route into the City Centre from the south and east of the City Council's administrative area and is a key route through which the residents of the neighbourhoods of Great Baddow, Moulsham Lodge, Chelmer Village, and other villages to the south and east of the City Centre access the City Centre for work, shopping and leisure purposes.
- 1.2 In 2018 an Army and Navy Taskforce was established to consider a long-term solution for the junction. This is led by Essex County Council and has representation from the City Council, Great Baddow Parish Council and Chelmsford's MP.
- 1.3 In Summer 2019, the Army and Navy Flyover was closed as it was no longer fit for purpose. It was removed in April 2020.
- 1.4 Essex County Council, in consultation with the Taskforce, has developed a range of options for the long-term solution at the junction.
- 1.5 The solutions go beyond a revised junction arrangement and include a wider package of sustainable transport measures aligned with the objectives Essex County Council's Chelmsford Future Transport Strategy.
- 1.6 This has culminated in a range of options being narrowed down to the two options currently being consulted on as follows:
- 1.7 A hamburger roundabout and separate T junctions, with both options including the following:
  - a) Enhanced walking and cycling
  - b) Improved bus priority measures
  - c) Improvement and expansion of Sandon Park and Ride
  - d) A new Widford Park and Ride site (two potential locations are identified)
- 1.8 The consultation period is open until 3rd October (Essex County Council has agreed to accept the City Council's consultation response following consideration by Cabinet on 12th October), after which further assessment will be undertaken before a preferred option is selected and a full business case developed for submission to the Department for Transport for scheme funding.

## 2. What is proposed?

- 2.1 The proposed Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package has four key elements:
  1. Improvements for all users of the Army and Navy junction: enhanced walking and cycling facilities; improved bus priority measures; two

distinct new junction layout options (Hamburger Roundabout and Separate T-Junctions)

2. Improvement and expansion of Sandon Park and Ride
3. A new Park and Ride site in Widford, with two site options presented in the consultation
4. Additional connectivity improvements across the walking and cycling networks

### 3. What is the Programme for the delivery of the Scheme?

3.1 The full programme for the delivery of the Scheme is set out below:

- a) Consultation 9th August to 3rd October
- b) Preferred option selection Winter 2021/2022
- c) Outline business case to DfT Spring 2022
- d) Planning Winter 2022/2023
- e) Full business case to DfT Spring 2024
- f) Construction Autumn 2024 to Autumn 2026

### 4. Key issues for consideration

4.1 The following are the key issues that the City Council consider should be considered by Essex County Council in selecting the preferred option and developing the full business case for the Scheme:

#### **Scheme principles**

4.2 The City Council recognises the importance of the Army & Navy junction to local and sub-regional traffic flows and supports the principle of a sustainable package of improvements that balance car usage with opportunities for active travel and public transport to maximise environmental benefits. A fully functioning Army & Navy junction is of key importance to the City's economy, reduction in congestion and improved air quality. The City Council also recognises the importance of a full sustainable package being developed if Department for Transport funding is to be secured for the Scheme's implementation. The City Council would expect the walking, cycling and public transport elements of the Scheme to be further enhanced as the preferred option is developed through its business case development.

#### **Traffic modelling assumptions**

4.3 The baseline traffic data for the options is October 2019. As this is pre-COVID 19, the City Council would expect some re-modelling will be needed to take into account changing work patterns, park and ride usage, other public transport usage and commuting patterns. In recent weeks the junction has returned to close to pre-COVID congestion levels, particularly in the pm peak period, and it is important that the preferred solution is based on the most robust and up to date data available. The traffic modelling does not take into account fully the proposed new car parks at Beaulieu Station, which are now more certain in the design process. This will need to be re-tested as a

preferred option for the Army & Navy. In addition, further scheme modelling will be necessary to take into account local modelling intelligence and the expected DfT post-COVID 19 traffic forecasting data which is understood to be due for release in the next few weeks.

### **Park and ride**

- 4.4 The City Council recognises the vital role that Park & Ride plays in contributing to sustainable transport options and the reduction of traffic into the City Centre.
- 4.5 At the present time, the two park and rides at Sandon and Chelmer Valley have not recovered to their post-COVID 19 usage. In the light of revised traffic modelling assumptions, a clearer and up to date set of data is required to inform the demand for the expansion of Sandon Park and Ride and a new Widford Park and Ride.
- 4.6 The City Council recognises that a third Park and Ride at Widford is proposed within the adopted Chelmsford Local Plan. Should the demand exist for a third Park and Ride site at Widford, both of the two proposed locations require further assessment in terms of green belt impact, flood risk, landscape, heritage and ecology and impact on other uses in the locality of each site (for example access to Widford Lodge School's playing field). At this stage, both options should be retained for further full assessment and appraisal.

### **Cycling and walking**

- 4.7 The City Council supports the objective of the Scheme to enhance cycling and walking connectivity and encourage alternative methods of transport into the City Centre for shorter trips, minimising car usage. The City Council recognises that the walking and cycling routes through the junction are enhanced and this is supported.
- 4.8 However, the Scheme does not go far enough in terms of enhancing cycling and walking connectivity and further enhancement of this objective should be developed during the next stage of the Scheme's development, both through the junction and from the Park and Ride sites. The City Council would expect comprehensive routes for cycling and walking from the Park and Ride locations designed and delivered within the Scheme.
- 4.9 Specifically, the consultation lacks detail on the cycle connectivity from the City Centre and both the Sandon Park and Ride and the proposed new Park and Ride at Widford. If objectives such as "park and pedal" are to be realised, these routes should be designed in detail at the next stage. Specifically, the connection from Sandon Park and Ride should be developed as a route between the development in East Chelmsford, through the proposed new country park, along the river valley to the Army & Navy. This would be a far more attractive and safer route than through the Meadgate Estate.

### **Public transport**

- 4.10 The City Council supports the objective to enable bus priority measures through the junction. Specifically, the preferred solution should not impact on buses using Baddow Road and alternative routing of services that currently use either Baddow Road or Essex Yeomanry Way may need to be considered in consultation with the bus operators.

### **Local impacts**

- 4.11 The City Council recognises that the Army & Navy junction is a strategic transport hub. In considering the next stages of development of the Scheme, the County Council should ensure that the impact on the journeys of the local communities of Great Baddow, Chelmer Village and Moulsham Lodge into the City Centre are not compromised. The City Council requests that a mechanism to fully involve local residents and ward Councillors in the detailed design stages is established.
- 4.12 From the City Council's initial assessment of the two junction options the Hamburger roundabout is the preference in terms of impact on local journeys, particularly journeys out of the City Centre.

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#### **List of appendices:**

None.

#### **Background papers:**

Chelmsford Local Plan, Army & Navy Sustainable Transport Package consultation documentation/information.

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#### **Corporate Implications**

At this stage there are no corporate implications for the City Council in responding to this consultation

Legal/Constitutional: See above

Financial: See above

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: See above

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: See above

Personnel: See above

Risk Management: See above

Equality and Diversity: See above

Health and Safety: See above

Digital: See above

Other: See above

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**Consultees:**

Chelmsford Improving Movement and Access in the City Centre Working Group.

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**Relevant Policies and Strategies:**

Chelmsford Local Plan

Our Chelmsford Our Plan

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