



OUR COLCHESTER

A BID to make new history

Overview of City Centre Masterplan

The BID is not against the Masterplan in full but does not and cannot support some aspects of it. It is pleased that it will be able to comment more fully for each element requiring its own separate planning permission or Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) and it reserves the right to do that as the plan is developed and progressed. The BID will always take the requirements of its levy payers and security of the City Centre's viability and economy into account when responding to specific elements.

It is the BID's view that this plan, as proposed, does absolutely nothing to promote or enhance retail operations in the City Centre, in fact it actually presents more challenges to current operators and does nothing to entice new enterprise with many more barriers to trade.

The BID asks:

- How will the impact on business be monitored during this process, and by whom?
- Is there a Future Transport Strategy in existence, if so can the BID please be provided with a copy.
- The BID understands that the CCTP needs to be submitted to the bus companies. What impact/weight will their comments have on the Masterplan and what steps will the council take to enforce any aspect on them if they won't accept the changes?

In the 'Profile' area of the Masterplan (pg 10) it refers to 'success critical', the BID makes the following comments:

- it is important that it understands how agreement on any monitoring and evaluation is carried out
- would insist that these strategies be agreed before any works start
- would like to know who will carry out the evaluations
- what happens if the effects are negative on the city

The BID is also very aware that there will be considerable disruption to businesses during the times of change and construction, therefore it would implore Essex County Council to fully engage with them ahead of works to allow discussions to take place around:

- Continuity of business deliveries
- Changes to delivery points including arrangements for temporary loading provisions
- To allow the businesses to be informed and able to operate with as little disruption as practically possible.
- Timings of schemes before they start in order to develop full communications to businesses. It would not want to see both ends of the city centre being affected by construction works at the same time and would implore a full strategic plan be developed to account for various construction schemes at an early stage.

The BID considers that the delivery of the RTS will be the most significant driver to the economy of the City Centre. It also considers that timings on the sale of the development sites at Vineyard and Britannia car parks for residential should be delayed until the major schemes have been delivered.



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Constraints and opportunities

Private car

The BID is disappointed that the council sees 'the removal of traffic in the City Centre as major retailers/chains are likely to be moving further out towards retail parks in urban periphery' as an opportunity. We would urge the council to do everything in its power to retain any retailer, be it chain or independent in the City Centre.

Servicing and deliveries

The perceived opportunity that 'city centre traffic restrictions still allow businesses in the centre to receive their deliveries during the overnight period' is ill conceived. A lot of City Centre businesses would be unable to influence when their deliveries are delivered. This 'overnight period' would be unworkable for all businesses, both large and small. There may very well be cost implications to having deliveries in this manner which the businesses may consider a burden and barrier to trade, consequently the centre may lose operators as a result.

Last mile delivery hubs would be impractical for small/independent and national businesses, please see comments at FL2/3 in the table for further comments on this.

The suggestion of implementing a service to book and manage kerbside deliveries is also unworkable for most businesses. The BID is of the opinion that this reference should be removed from the document.

Growth areas and transport

'Free parking is being offered at major retail hubs outside of the city centre, attracting retail users and reducing footfall and expenditure'. This is a real concern of most operators, large and small. There is a noticeable reduction in footfall with a lot of operators reporting the challenges they face on a daily basis. There doesn't appear to be any remedy in the Masterplan to counter this. Indeed, some of the Masterplan proposals would actually hinder these aspects and make the challenges even more acute.

Placemaking – Urban design strategy (pg 58)

Do the 5 documents referred to in this section exist? – could the BID please be provided with them.

Specific sites

St Johns Street

Please see comments AT8/ID6/ID5/ID3/ID4 of the attached table

Southway

- The BID would question why it is necessary to add pedestrian controlled crossing points over this road. It is a strategic A road constructed to alleviate traffic from the City Centre. It is heavily congested particularly at peak times with imposed restrictions on traffic flows from these crossing points, the road will be even more congested for longer periods. There are existing subways beneath the road, if these were improved as per AT1



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then they would be much safer. These subways also contain historic artworks by Henry and Joyce Collins, recently restored by the Civic Society with a grant from Heritage Lottery Fund.

- The BID is of the opinion that any new or existing traffic light installations on Southway are significantly logic and sequenced so as not to work against each other, thus allowing the continuous flow of traffic along the road.

- The BID would welcome the opportunity of working with partners to establish a strategic study of this area, addressing the congestion and opportunities before any works are undertaken. The implication on the traffic cannot be underestimated at this location, if it is more difficult for people to access the city centre and these crossings are an increased barrier, then visitors/shoppers will go elsewhere.

-The suggestion at item 12, page 71 implies that existing buildings along this route will be redeveloped. This will be a decision wholly for the premises owner unless the council intends to purchase these under a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO). Is it the council's intention to do this?

St Botolph's

- This is the subject of a separate consultation, the BID will respond to that separately.

High Street

- The suggestion to have all bus stops situated near the Spar shop would be insufficient space for the quantity of buses currently stopping in the High Street. Is it envisaged that the Park and Ride, and later the RTS buses, use this space also, or will they be maintained on the stands they are today?

- The suggestion to relocate the taxi rank from outside ex M&S to the loading bay outside of the Town Hall will not work. The loading bay outside of the Town Hall holds a maximum of 4 vehicles, 3 comfortably. The number of taxis on the rank outside ex M&S is often upwards of 10 as they dual park along that stretch. Coupled with this the loading bay is required for the businesses of the High Street to achieve deliveries/collection.

- The BID would welcome a detailed study into ensuring sufficient blue badge parking is provided/maintained.

- The potential widening for the first 30-40m to avoid loading bays dominating the gateways to High Street is not welcome if it removes the loading facilities for businesses. The BID suggests that a full study is commissioned of the businesses that trade on the High Street as to where they load so that any changes to loading provisions can be effectively planned and sufficient space allocated.

- The suggestion of an east-west cycleway for the south side of the street is impractical as this would remove all loading provisions. The suggestion that Culver Street be used could be possible, except that is a pedestrian zone between 11am-4pm (10am-4pm on Fridays). Is the council suggesting that this effectively becomes 'shared space', which would by its very nature present its own problems and challenges with particular reference to the vulnerable, infirm, and visually impaired visitors.

Queen Street pg 73



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– ‘Public realm design to allow for necessary deliveries’ the BID would like to understand what this classification actually means. Deliveries for businesses in this area must be considered and provided for.

- The ‘strictly controlled for authorised users only ‘ what is the determination of an authorised user and who will enforce any restrictions in this area?

Vineyard Street car park area

– The proposal doesn’t seem to take account of the newly installed cycle track in this location.

Osborne Street car park Pg 71

- The suggestion of developing a ‘waiting area for delivery drivers’ infers that deliveries vehicles will be expected to park here and walk/barrow deliveries to businesses, or that businesses come to collect from the trucks. This is impractical and would be a barrier to trade in the city centre.

Former bus station site Pg 72

-The suggestion that a new fully accessible pedestrian link through the Roman Wall be created is bizarre bearing in mind the majority of the Masterplan is to promote the city’s heritage. The BID would suggest that this aspect be removed from the plan and another route established.

- The ‘strictly controlled for authorised users only ‘ what is the determination of an authorised user and who will enforce any restrictions in this area?

Crouch Street West and East

The plan shows cycle track provisions along these streets. The proposed scheme under TRAF-7880-Revision 1 has been stopped by Essex County Council very recently following a public consultation. Does the Masterplan mean that the businesses and residents are again under the threat of this scheme without amendments, or will a new scheme be found that provides for both businesses and residents groups comments and objections to the original proposal to be negated and that allows all parties to achieve a workable solution.