

Thurrock: A place of opportunity, enterprise and excellence, where
individuals, communities and businesses flourish

Lower Thames Crossing Task Force

The meeting will be held at **6.00 pm** on **19 March 2018**

Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 6SL

Membership:

Councillors Peter Smith (Chair), Gerard Rice (Vice-Chair), John Allen, Roy Jones, Tom Kelly, Steve Liddiard, Brian Little, Bukky Okunade and Terry Piccolo

Matt Jackson, Thames Crossing Action Group Representative
Westley Mercer, Thurrock Business Board Representative
Linda Mulley, Resident Representative
Peter Ward, Thurrock Business Representative

Substitutes:

Councillors Chris Baker, Colin Churchman, Gary Collins, Oliver Gerrish, Clifford Holloway, Joycelyn Redsell, Sue Sammons and Graham Snell

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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3 Items of Urgent Business	
To receive additional items that the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.	
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Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

Please contact Lottie Raper, Democratic Services Officer by sending an email to direct.democracy@thurrock.gov.uk

Agenda published on: **14 March 2018**

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DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Breaching those parts identified as a pecuniary interest is potentially a criminal offence

Helpful Reminders for Members

- *Is your register of interests up to date?*
- *In particular have you declared to the Monitoring Officer all disclosable pecuniary interests?*
- *Have you checked the register to ensure that they have been recorded correctly?*

When should you declare an interest at a meeting?

- **What matters are being discussed at the meeting?** (including Council, Cabinet, Committees, Subs, Joint Committees and Joint Subs); or
- If you are a Cabinet Member making decisions other than in Cabinet **what matter is before you for single member decision?**



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

any of your registered interests and in particular any of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests?

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

- your spouse or civil partner's
- a person you are living with as husband/ wife
- a person you are living with as if you were civil partners

where you are aware that this other person has the interest.

A detailed description of a disclosable pecuniary interest is included in the Members Code of Conduct at Chapter 7 of the Constitution. **Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer about disclosable pecuniary interests.**

What is a Non-Pecuniary interest? – this is an interest which is not pecuniary (as defined) but is nonetheless so significant that a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard to be so significant that it would materially impact upon your judgement of the public interest.

Pecuniary

If the interest is not already in the register you must (unless the interest has been agreed by the Monitoring Officer to be sensitive) disclose the existence and nature of the interest to the meeting

If the Interest is not entered in the register and is not the subject of a pending notification you must within 28 days notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest for inclusion in the register

Unless you have received dispensation upon previous application from the Monitoring Officer, you must:

- **Not participate or participate further in any discussion of the matter at a meeting;**
- **Not participate in any vote or further vote taken at the meeting; and**
- **leave the room while the item is being considered/voted upon**

If you are a Cabinet Member you may make arrangements for the matter to be dealt with by a third person but take no further steps

Non- pecuniary

Declare the nature and extent of your interest including enough detail to allow a member of the public to understand its nature



You may participate and vote in the usual way but you should seek advice on Predetermination and Bias from the Monitoring Officer.

Our Vision and Priorities for Thurrock

An ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future.

1. **People** – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay
 - High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time
 - Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing
 - Communities are empowered to make choices and be safer and stronger together
2. **Place** – a heritage-rich borough which is ambitious for its future
 - Roads, houses and public spaces that connect people and places
 - Clean environments that everyone has reason to take pride in
 - Fewer public buildings with better services
3. **Prosperity** – a borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations
 - Attractive opportunities for businesses and investors to enhance the local economy
 - Vocational and academic education, skills and job opportunities for all
 - Commercial, entrepreneurial and connected public services

Minutes of the Meeting of the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force held on 19 February 2018 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Peter Smith (Chair), Gerard Rice (Vice-Chair), John Allen, Roy Jones, Tom Kelly, Steve Liddiard, Brian Little, Bukky Okunade and Terry Piccolo

Matt Jackson, Thames Crossing Action Group Representative
Westley Mercer, Thurrock Business Board
Linda Mulley, Resident Representative
Peter Ward, Thurrock Business Representative

In attendance: Steve Cox, Corporate Director Place
John Lamb, Interim Assistant Director - Lower Thames Crossing
Charlotte Raper, Democratic Services Officer

Robert Audsley, Highways England
Chris Marsh, Highways England

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

43. Minutes

The Thurrock Business Representative noted that, in discussions regarding the A1089 the minutes read "degradation of the rail network" rather than "road network".

The minutes of the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force held on 22 January 2018 were approved as a correct record, subject to this amendment.

44. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

45. Declaration of Interests

Councillor Jones declared that, as residents of Thurrock, all Members of the task force had an interest in the proposed crossing.

46. Update on liaison with Highways England

The Chair welcomed Westley Mercer, the newly appointed Thurrock Business Board Representative.

The Interim Assistant Director- Lower Thames Crossing presented a brief summary of contact with Highways England since the previous meeting of the Task Force. Meetings were held within the context that Thurrock Council was opposed to any new crossing however needed to liaise with Highways England to discuss technical issues. Highways England had also held a number of meetings with Ward Councillors and provided the Council with brief summaries of these meetings which had proven to be consistent with reports from those elected Members.

The Vice-Chair confirmed that a meeting with Gary Hodge from Highways England had taken place in Chadwell Library in which it had been suggested that part of the route would be placed in deep cuttings. He reminded Highways England that residents of Thurrock already bore the brunt of two tunnels, the QEII Bridge, the M25, A13 and the dock approach road and felt that they had made their contribution to the national road network so urged for sections near major conurbations to be tunnelled.

Councillor Jones agreed but added that at the previous meeting the Task Force had been advised there were Project Led Decisions that could not be influenced which had been unsettling to hear. Tonight's presentation was due to include a visual model to help Members identify key areas but as yet Members were still unclear as to what they would be consulted upon, which was very disappointing. The Vice-Chair added that a map had been presented, which he had assumed had been shared with all Members, and requested a digital copy be provided urgently.

Councillor Allen expressed his view that Highways England were showing disregard and disrespect for Thurrock. They had been asked to provide visuals to help members of the Task Force understand the impact of the scheme and had failed to do so, to their shame. The Highways England Representative confirmed that the intention had been to present a visualisation to explain the scheme within the context of the local landscape. The quality of the presentation had failed to meet their standards for public release and therefore they had been unable to share it. He offered apologies but explained that a presentation of inadequate quality could be confusing and even misleading. The Task Force was assured that the presentation would be ready for the next meeting, scheduled in March.

The Chair reminded all present that the Task Force had been offered assurances before which had fallen through; would the presentation definitely be ready for the meeting in March? Members heard that there had been a problem with one of the suppliers, involving difficulty converting information. Designers had advised they were two weeks from completion therefore it would be certainly be available for the next meeting of the Task Force.

Councillor Jones recalled discussions around this presentation in November. At that meeting Members had been advised that details were not ready and should be expected at a later date, however Highways England presented details at a meeting in Rainham the very next day. Councillor Jones expressed his disappointment at Highways England's engagement.

The Thames Crossing Action Group Representative noted a 17 point document had been raised by the Council two years ago which had still not been answered, the Task Force had presented a document at Christmas which had not been answered and now Highways England had failed to provide their visualisation as expected. He queried how the Task Force were expected to trust Highways England given their failures time and time again, adding that all members of the Task Force realised that some information was not ready to be shared publically and could act accordingly. He confirmed that the Thames Crossing Action Group were also very disappointed in Highways England.

The Resident Representative stated that Highways England were a big enough organisation to be able to meet deadlines and agreed that their actions showed complete disregard for the Task Force and the Borough, which they intended to decimate. She quoted a previous Highways England publication 'The Road to Good Design' which read '*We need to design in a way that is sensitive to the context of a road's surroundings and responsive to the needs of those who use it and the communities through which it passes*'. She felt that so far, everything said and presented by Highways England, such as Project Led Decisions, blew that out of the water.

Councillor Little felt to say he was 'disappointed' was an understatement. He felt the issue was that at the previous meeting Members had been shown a rough diagram, which was understood to be indicative and open to change. For Highways England to attend tonight's meeting with nothing was bizarre. He asked how representatives could come to a scheduled meeting with an agreed agenda regarding one of the biggest issues to Thurrock, with a full public gallery, and not show anything. The whole matter was an embarrassment.

The Chair echoed that the failure was deeply disappointing and Highways England needed to 'pull their socks up'.

Councillor Allen felt that the Task Force had no influence with Highways England who were not engaging with them in any way. The Task Force represented those people who would have to live with the Lower Thames Crossing and Highways England were not playing ball.

The Vice-Chair stated that if no model was provided and the consultation was flawed then Thurrock Council might have to take Highways England to a judicial review. He felt the whole thing was scandalous. If Highways England were not willing to engage properly then there was a need to consider it carefully. The Council had to protect residents.

Councillor Jones explained that all the Task Force had ever asked for was what had been done in Kent with cut and covers, roads at ground level and in Highways England's words the design there would be 'pleasing to the eye'. Members simply wanted the same consideration for Thurrock residents. He was disappointed, at the last meeting Tim Jones had outlined Project Led Decisions, with no possibility of influence. If that was the case around

elevated sections, Members were wasting their time as that's what they were asking for. He quoted a speech by Tim Jones from December '*our designs have to be sympathetic, creative, enhancing, engaging and well thought through. I believe our transparency will give us authenticity as we stand in harmony and parity with local communities making them a better and healthier place to live*'. Councillor Jones could not see that elevated sections which would be seen, smelt and heard would make the borough healthier.

The Resident Representative agreed that the matter should be taken further. With Project Led Decisions the question remained what would Thurrock be consulted upon. Health and environment would be collateral damage and Thurrock needed to hear what to expect.

Councillor Okunade wondered why such short notice had been given that the visualisation would not be provided, and what confidence could Members give communities that Highways England would provide everything needed at the consultation stage.

Highways England Representatives explained that there had been a question of how long to work on the presentation in the hopes of being able to present it at the meeting, and understood the disappointment and frustration of the Task Force. There had been a question of how long to continue working to meet the deadline.

The 17 point document had been a few years ago so Highways England would go back through records to obtain responses.

While indicative maps had been provided previously it was important that information was not brought specifically to the Task Force that was not available elsewhere and of inadequate quality to provide understandable detail of the scheme.

While concerns around comparisons with Kent were understandable, Highways England had worked to lower the alignment of the scheme through Thurrock. Flood plains and infrastructure posed a number of limitations and other impacts had to be balanced.

Visual impacts, noise and air pollution would be set out within reporting though it had not been intended as part of the visual presentation.

The previously mentioned design philosophy was a guide for all of Highways England's work, it was their intention to follow these principles and representatives sought to assure the Task Force that this was how the design team worked.

The short notice regarding the presentation had been far from ideal; however the ongoing consultation would involve working with the Local Authority and community groups to ensure information would be both easily accessible and available to residents.

The Chair requested a response, outside of the meeting, to a question submitted by a member of the public. The route between North and South Ockendon had been amended to avoid the landfill site but now cut through historic woodland known as 'the wilderness', would it be possible to amend it again to preserve this site?

47. Highways England Action List

Representatives from Highways England presented the action list, drawing particular attention to those action points which remained outstanding.

The Chair requested clarification around details of the Orsett Cock junction. The action had been answered in November however the exact detail of the response given was not available to hand so would be confirmed outside of the meeting.

The Resident Representative noted that Air Quality surveys would end in August 2018 and queried how unmovable decisions had been made without the full data, given the level of concern; other areas would 'depend on noise and air quality' though the Task Force had already been told that the elevation of the route could not be changed. She also referenced "data processing bias adjustment" and the possibility to massage figures. She asked whether, looking at the proposed elevations and six lanes, representatives would choose to live in Thurrock alongside the pollution, noise and environmental upset it would bring. The representative from Highways England confirmed that the baseline survey was still ongoing and data was to be collected all year round to take into account seasonal variation. At the end of that time there would be data analysis which was expected to take 2-3 months, but given the vast quantities of data could take longer. He agreed that if he lived in Thurrock he would be asking the same questions posed by residents.

The Thurrock Business Representative reiterated previous comments that discussions around the declassification of the A1089 should not be undertaken now given the businesses which would be directly affected.

Councillor Jones queried how a public consultation could take place in spring, given that the Air Quality data would not be available by that time. The consultation was now expected to take place in summer to allow sufficient time for Local Authorities and environmental bodies to respond, given elections and break periods.

Councillor Little noted comments around Non-Disclosure agreements and queried who was at fault. The Corporate Director of Environment and Place believed that the agreement had been signed and sent to Highways England but it would be done again the next day. Members were reminded however that this only referred to the baseline data and not the traffic model, which it had already been confirmed would now not be available until summer.

Councillor Piccolo stressed the importance of ensuring that the public consultation was in plain English and that there would be adequate paper

copies for residents without internet access to complete. Paper copies would also be useful for community forum meetings as Members could provide them to residents and return on their behalf. The Task Force was advised that Local Authorities had to agree how the consultation would be carried out and were assured that it would be designed to be accessible and understandable to all.

48. Highways England Update - Visual Impact

The Thurrock Business Representative queried what format the Visual Impact presentation would take. It was confirmed to be a mixture of overhead map footage and rendered images.

The Thames Crossing Action Group Representative noted that the presentation might be ready in two weeks and asked whether it would be made available to the public prior to presentation at a meeting of the Task Force. He requested the opportunity for the Task Force to critique it first, otherwise Members were immediately on the back foot. It had always been intended that the presentation would be released on the Highways England website prior to presentation at the Task Force, to ensure transparency.

Councillor Rice recalled that during the previous consultation by Highways England boxes containing paper forms had been delivered late and sought assurances that this would not be the case moving forward. Representatives from Highways England assured Members that they would ensure sufficient forms were delivered on time.

49. Lower Thames Crossing Task Force Priorities Update

The Chair advised the Task Force that Item 9. Tolling should be amended to Charging.

Councillor Kelly requested additions in the event that the proposed crossing were to go ahead:

6. Incident Management

- b. A new state of the art traffic control centre is need now.
- d. As HE have now confirmed that tankers will have unescorted use of the use of any new crossing, can they confirm they will ban / restrict tankers using the current tunnels and thereby remove the delays currently seen?.

9. Charging

- a. Tolling has been removed in Scotland and the M4 Severn Bridge into Wales. This road should be free at point of use to.

It was agreed, at Councillor Jones' request, that these priorities become a standing item as they may need to be reviewed as information emerged from Highways England.

50. Lower Thames Crossing Resource Requirements

The Corporate Director of Environment and Place presented a briefing note regarding the Council's resource requirements to appropriately challenge the Lower Thames Crossing proposals.

The Vice-Chair requested the addition of a line within the budget for a judicial review, if necessary, as the Council had a duty of care to residents throughout the borough. Councillor Jones agreed and noted that A13 widening works had seen the sound barriers taken down offering a good example of what could be expected if proposals were to go ahead.

51. Work Programme

The Task Force agreed to amend the work programme, in light of the delayed presentation upon Visual Impact, to push each theme back one meeting.

The Thames Crossing Action Group Representative suggested Ward Councillors be updated prior to information going public to allow them to respond to any questions residents may have rather than being kept on the back foot. The Chair agreed that one of the biggest failures of Highways England had been that Group Leaders, Ward Councillors and Council Officers had been kept in the dark.

The Chair invited proposals for themes for meetings at the start of the new Municipal Year; however Councillor Jones suggested waiting until the Task Force had a better understanding of the visual impact of the scheme at the next meeting, to allow them to decide how they wished to proceed.

Councillor Piccolo requested sight of the proposed consultation prior to commencement, though he accepted this might only be feasible for elected Members and officers.

The meeting finished at 7.22 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk

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Lower Thames Crossing Task Force

Briefing Note: Update on liaison with Highways England

Purpose of the briefing note: To provide background on the ongoing engagement between Thurrock Council and Highways England. March 2018

- 1.1 Following the Preferred Route Announcement last summer, Highways England has had a series of ad hoc contacts with Thurrock Council. Thurrock has been keen to ensure appropriate, regular and consistent interaction in order to challenge and review substantive items. Since September 2017 the LTC Task Force has continued to reinforce to Highways England the requirement for their structured engagement.

Officers continue to emphasise concern to Highways England that the Preferred Route Announcement (PRA) choice was unsound and that there is no contemporary evidence base that justifies the scheme. Equally, Officers continue to demand that Highways England fully reflect local demands for better design, all appropriate mitigation and removal of harm caused by the scheme such that any eventual Application captures the full scheme impacts and cost to Thurrock.

1.2 Ward Member Meetings

Highways England has not advised of any meetings with Ward Councillors since the 19th February 2018.

1.3 Closed Session of Highways England to Councillors

Highways England offered to present to local councillors a range of contemporary information and facilitate debate on key areas of concern. This followed a session that HE held in December with Gravesham Borough Councillors. Contemporary material was shared and in depth conversations with relevant technical experts took place. A separate summary note has been produced.

1.4 Other contact with Highways England

Weekly 'Technical Meetings' are now being set up between Thurrock Officers and consultants working on behalf of Highways England.

The following relating to LTC has been considered at specific sessions since the last update:-

- Visual Impacts – following the delay this has naturally featured as a substantive theme.
- Community Consultation – how HE might undertake proper and meaningful consultation.

The content of these meetings will include all the respective priorities of the Task Force as well as specific items as demanded within the Planning process.

The above excludes various emails and ad hoc phone calls.

For any questions regarding this briefing note, please contact:

Name: Steve Cox, Corporate Director of Place
John Lamb, Interim Assistant Director – Lower Thames Crossing

Lower Thames Crossing Task Force Action List

Action	Responsible	Status	Due
September meeting			
Councillor B. Little asked if it would be possible for Thurrock to have access to information regarding its own areas. The information would be made available where possible, some could not yet be released as it was still undergoing Highways England's internal assurance policies.	HE	HE is currently reviewing the traffic data for the whole of Thurrock and we hope to be able to provide this soon.	The baseline data will be provided in mid-February, subject to the signing of the Non-Disclosure Agreement. Once signed this can be shared for Thurrock Council use only.
Councillor Piccolo requested data showing the figures for traffic originating in Thurrock or whose final destination was Thurrock, to assess the percentage of traffic that was actually related to Thurrock itself.	HE	HE is currently reviewing the traffic data for the whole of Thurrock and we hope to be able to provide this soon.	We will be able to share this information with you in the summer 2018.
The Orsett Cock roundabout would be used by DP World traffic too, so he asked whether it might be possible to move the junction further east to mitigate the number of HGVs forced onto the Orsett Cock roundabout and roads nearby. The Highways England representative agreed to liaise with the engineering department for a response to these points.	HE	<p>HE is focused on developing the preferred route which was announced in April 2017. Further refinement work is ongoing.</p> <p>With the latest scheme the Orsett Cock roundabout movements are not affected because the A128/LTC junction link has been removed.</p> <p>The updated LTC/A13 Junction is located to allow for weaving on the A13 between adjacent junctions which are already at their minimum weaving length.</p>	Answered 17.11.17 but can be discussed further at future technical meetings.

October Meeting			
Updated Survey data	HE	The baseline surveys are ongoing and commenced in August. Once the traffic model is available the relevant air quality assessment and modelling will be undertaken, which we will then share.	The collection of the air quality data is due to conclude in August 2018, with a further few months required for laboratory analysis and data processing (bias adjustment). Once this process is complete (anticipated for Autumn 2018) the information can be shared.
The Vice-Chair asked for clarification around the scheme design, such as the possibility of 'cut and cover' or tunnels. He felt the proposal to have sections of the route elevated to 5-8m would hardly be conducive to minimise the impact on residents. He also noted ambiguity as to whether there would be four or six lanes and requested that Highways England confirm these details. The representatives present were responsible for surveys and the EIA Scoping Report therefore did not have the requested information but it would be fed back outside of the meeting.	HE	<p>The LTC scheme is still under development and the vertical profile is being reviewed to mitigate any potential local impact.</p> <p>Under the current scheme it will be dual 3 from the A2 up to the A13 junction; and dual 2 from the A13 to the M25. However, we are still reviewing the latest traffic model figures which will need to be validated.</p>	A range of mitigation measures, e.g. local network Public Rights of Way connectivity, to be discussed at forthcoming technical meetings. Some measures are dependent on noise and air quality assessments.
Link to documents outlining decision process	HE	completed	Shared 30.10.17.
The Thames Crossing Action Group Representative requested data from Highways England as to the expected difference in air quality impact between route 3 and the A14 route.	HE	Assessments would have been undertaken for the routes that were shortlisted, including route 3. However, the A14 was discounted at an early	Answered 17.11.17.

		stage as it “performs poorly against the traffic and economic scheme objectives”. Further information will be provided next week.	
The Vice-Chair wished to ask Highways England whether the route would need to go by Chadwell-St-Mary if there were a roundabout at Tilbury, as this would serve the docks. He reiterated that the Council opposed the proposed crossing, but stressed that these questions would need to be asked if the proposal were approved	HE	<p>HE is focused on developing the preferred route which was announced in April 2017.</p> <p>The LTC route will bypass Chadwell St-Mary to the north and there will be a separate link road and junction to Tilbury to the south of Chadwell St-Mary. This will result in fewer HGVs using the A1089 and reduce the traffic.</p>	Answered 17.11.17.
The Thames Crossing Action Group representative requested the Task Force be shown a virtual reality model of the proposed route; which had been presented to other parties.	HE	The visualisation shown at SAP is outdated as the project has developed. However, we have an updated visualisation which we plan to share at the next Task Force meeting.	Information shared at a recent business event is available on the LTC website. In addition, a visualisation is due to be shared at the Task Force of 19.02.18.
He also requested full details regarding monies for remedial works on the current crossing to offer better scope on its usage. The Assistant Director of Highways & Transportation clarified that those funds would be the responsibility of a separate division of Highways England than the Lower Thames Crossing team however an update could still be obtained.	HE	Highways England’s Dartford Crossing operations team is currently looking how best to invest the extra £10m the SoS announced is being made available to invest in short term improvements at and around the Dartford Crossing. Similarly, the same team is working	Answered 17.11.17.

		on a medium term of improvements.	
November meeting			
Brian Little raised the suggestion of an 'opt-in' system for residents to allow info to be shared with their Councillors. HE advised they would seek legal advice around possibilities.	HE	HE hope to get a response to you on this by the end of the week.	Answered 08.12.17.
Gerard Rice requested large-scale maps be emailed to Members.	HE	Maps will hopefully be shared with you tomorrow.	Shared 06.12.17.
<p>If the proposed crossing were to go ahead, Members highlighted the following essential mitigation measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More tunnelling to reduce impact • Use of cut and cover -especially adjacent to areas of population • Interchange with A13 to be put into Tunnel • Low noise surfacing • Acoustic Fencing • No out of hours working 	HE	A meeting is currently being arranged between Thurrock Council and Highways England LTC technical teams to discuss several design development options; Mitigation measures will form part of these discussions.	Answered 05.12.17.
December Meeting			
Are Ground Surveys underway in Baker Street?	HE		Answered 17.01.18. General information provided in survey schedules which are shared approximately once every fortnight.
Small updates around any changes under consideration to be presented at each meeting rather than an entirely changed diagram in 3-6m.	HE		Answered 17.01.18.
Response to Business Case as to why a crossing further East was discounted	HE		Answered 17.01.18.
Opportunities to influence route / design; where, when, how. A detailed map with possible areas of influence	HE		Discussed at Task Force meeting of 22.01.18.

Technical Design Team to attend January Meeting of TF	HE		Attended Task Force meeting of 22.01.18.
Tim Jones – to update progress around declassification of A1089	HE		Date to be advised.
Calendar of surveys, works etc	HE		Ongoing – survey schedules are shared approximately once every fortnight.

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Thurrock Business Board – requests of Highways England (Draft)

Representatives of Highways England's project team for the Lower Thames Crossing recently presented to the Thurrock Business Board.

The requests of Thurrock businesses centred around two key areas.

- Firstly that the network was better managed up to any new crossing
- Secondly that any new crossing was able to benefit the local Thurrock economy – through jobs and an improved economy – as well as genuine improvements to transport.

Network Management up to 2027

HE stated that – whilst this scheme would not have the impact a crossing at Dartford would have done. There are interventions that will happen on the A13, on the M25 in and around Thurrock and on the A2 and M2.

- Against a backdrop of 38% increased traffic between now and 2027 more is needed to manage the current crossing and adjacent roads
- Intu stated “245 stoppages on the crossing”
 - The precise cause of each incident and an understanding of how these occurred and might be better managed in future were key
 - HE suggested work already completed in Dartford might be applied in Thurrock ‘collective traffic management’ and better signal management.
 - A new Wind Speed Model had been devised to understand how to minimise the closure
 - A better clearance plan must be established... bodies on the ground to clear blocked junctions.
 - Traffic Officers and Police must play bigger role in re-opening roads and managing flows.
- There must be no distinct between the Strategic road network and those junctions and roads that create the network people and business use (i.e. J30 & J31) and all the key roads across West Thurrock / Lakeside.
 - Traffic management with neighbouring councils was essential
- Key and historic pinch points in the area needed to be addressed.
- East Facing Slips continues to be a massive priority and need urgent remedy.
- HE study into Short / Medium term measures must be practical and tackle long standing operational and capacity issues – prior to any new crossing.
- Construction impacts between 2021 and opening in 2027 must safeguard the current network.

Lower Thames Crossing

- HE stated that “This is the biggest project in Highways England ‘by some margin’”.
- It was welcomed and was to be hoped that any new crossing would genuinely improve network conditions and not simply spread the gridlock across the Borough
 - Assurance was sought that queues up to Dartford (that back up J29) will not fowl the operation of the LTC.
 - TBB stated that were not in a position to comment on any proposed Road changes or indeed classification changes until such times as we all have a better understanding of the consequences positive or negative.
- Procurement process – how do local business get on the list? Plant, construction, training, colleges, universities.
- The supply chain arrangements must not be left to a ‘Main Contractor’ and ancillary elements that local suppliers are restricted to
- References to the Olympics “compete for” were welcomed (with some positive involvement) but local experiences are that tendering can be a foregone conclusion in contrast to issues seen with the lack of transparency and the Thames Tideway and M25 DBFO.
- Regional involvement in the works was welcomed but local supply chain was far more important in supporting local businesses and reducing travel impacts.
- In respect of “it is a little bit early to be involved in this first step of initial market engagement” Thurrock Businesses emphasised their desire to be involved at the earliest opportunity.
- Local Supply Chain opportunities must be embedded at every tier of the supply chain

Skills, Training and Apprenticeships

This was recognised by all as being very significant and a number of contributors called for more detailed discussion on how we formalise and embed these for the local community.

- Contractors often give generic statements of how many apprentices and instead they must state how many local apprentices
- All supply chain tiers must seek to train, and then recruit from, local people.
- Local Schools and Colleges have already started to raise awareness but they need to be aligned with the procurement route of Highways England.
- Apprenticeships and courses need to have approaches to learning and skills that will support innovation and changes to construction over the years and decades to come (e.g. off-site construction techniques) and ever changing demands “we are guessing at the moment but if it takes 5-6 years to train civil engineers we need HE to be supporting us now”.
- Despite the uncertainty on delivery models Thurrock students must be able to pay their part in the future pipeline major construction leading up to LTC including HS2, Thames Tideway, nuclear
- The ‘Rules and regulations as to how the market can deliver the project’ risk reducing the ambition and potential of the local community.

Need for Rail

A final challenge included the need to consider the potential for rail which continues to be overlooked in adding yet more lanes for cars. “This is a real opportunity being missed and you should make the tunnel a little bigger to accommodate future rail services”

Lower Thames Crossing Task Force

Highways England Closed Session – 5 March 2018

In terms of engagement ideas HE should produce a full information pack with a feedback form and pre-paid envelope included through every door in Thurrock. HE confirmed they would consider this. Members stressed the need to consult better than previously.

Members stressed that HE has already made the decision so the consultation will not be a question of whether it will be this route but the finer details. HE stated that the options phase closed down other routes so yes it will be the finer details around alignment, charging etc.

Where the road is raised to 7m near the A13 can the viaduct be built to cushion noise? HE confirmed the route is now going under the A13.

Where the route goes past major conurbations HE should investigate maximum protection for residents (tunnels, cut & cover etc.) HE stated this was a design consideration that would be considered during the project but it was not practical for the whole route.

Thurrock has the highest rate of COPD outside of London will HE provide a detailed HIA? HE stated that health is one component of the environmental impact assessment. HE confirmed they will present on health impacts at a forthcoming Task Force meeting. HE highlighted there will be particular focus on how particular social groups can live both during and after construction works. It is noted that Thurrock Council have formally requested a full and detailed HIA.

As part of the statutory consultation HE will have to demonstrate that this is the most viable route and how it's justified. How will you do that? HE stated that the statutory consultation does give people the opportunity to discuss the theme but for the closed session would rather discuss the PRA alignment and how to make it better rather than keep discussing other route options which have been ruled out.

When will Thurrock see information about a more defined route? Will it involve details of storage facilities, movements during the construction phase and the full impact? HE stated that this does pose a conundrum. HE wants to ensure the quality of data before it is shared but HE appreciate that lots of the scheme goes through Thurrock and therefore understand the importance of the Task Force and early feedback. HE will welcome feedback but won't be in a position to release information and go to the statutory consultation until such details have been decided.

HE apologised that about the Virtual Reality model not being ready as promised last month. It needs to be crisper and more accurate but even then it will not be the complete picture. It will be presented at the Task Force meeting on 19 March.

What impact will the route have on Lakeside traffic? How will it alleviate existing problems in Thurrock? Thurrock has already called for the East-facing slips. It's a

question of how we can help deliver an improved local network in advance of any LTC. HE stated that East Facing slips was outside the LTC project but had been heard across HE and DfT. Members underlined the fact that the relevant part of HE that deals with the current crossing must do more to manage flow control, incident management and customer information. HE stated that this was being brought to the attention of the relevant HE teams.

Are there going to be the same processes as the Dartford Tunnel to escort tankers? HE confirmed the current tunnel was Category 3 whilst the new tunnels will be Category A and therefore tankers will not require an escort. On opening of any new crossing –will HE ban fuel tankers on the existing arrangements? HE stated they could review this at that point.

Wales and Scotland have removed tolling as an economic benefit for the area. HE should consider with DfT the economic harm of tolling. HE said they would note this.

If there will be large numbers of workers staying for extended periods could HE build a hotel which could be retained for use as affordable housing afterwards; like with the Olympic village? HE stated that there must be a balance. We can try to repurpose existing buildings, if not suitable we will need purpose built sites but then the question remains what happens afterwards? We are anxious not to have a repeat of the O2 where it sat empty for a while.

How are HE dealing with property blight? Properties within the red-line boundary are “blighted” and Highways England can buy residents out now which is a standard process. For those properties just outside of the redline with an “urgent” need to sell residents can apply to HE but will need to show circumstances to justify.

In terms of Noise impact what are HE doing? Post Construction, once the scheme is up and running, residents can apply for compensation. Highways England will seek to be more proactive in their approach during the construction phase.

Significant attention needs to be paid to sound barriers and ensure they are visually sensitive. There should also be lots of trees to mask impacts. HE stated that Environmental measures do cost money but working to get embankment profiles in elevated sections of the route.

Will the road be a “smart road”? Technological advancements are coming for which provisions have to be made; this is normally just ensuring the ability to install cables etc. in future. We are expected to make allowances for perceivable advancements such as lorries which communicate with each other.

HE were asked about the ability to safeguard for rail and public transport. HE stated that their remit, at this stage, was set by the Secretary of state and rail was not currently a consideration.

Regarding the new link road into Tilbury that has emerged after the PRA announcement – as HE are promoting this it is assumed that this be delivered and funded as a core cost i.e. funded by HE.

Lower Thames Crossing Task Force

Summary of Key Priorities

While Thurrock Council remains opposed to the proposed Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) being developed by Highways England in the Borough, as part of the response to the Preferred Route Announcement, Thurrock Council established a cross party 'Lower Thames Crossing Task Force' which included representation of local residents, the business community and the local action group opposing the scheme.

The following list captures some of the most frequently raised concerns, issues and priorities associated with the project to date. Thurrock Council and the Task Force remain opposed to the Highway England development of a crossing in this location. However the list below is intended to illustrate the real cost of the LTC on Thurrock and its communities and if Highways England take these seriously and factor the cost of remedy it will fundamentally affect the Business Case for the scheme. This can be read in conjunction with the Thurrock response to PINS.

It is without prejudice and those attending the Task Force will keep this list under review as and when HE provides additional information.

1. Business Case

- a. How much of this scheme is
 - i. Time savings for trips already on the road network?
 - ii. Real jobs and growth and how much of this will be in Thurrock?
 - iii. Simply creating more journeys by car and longer trips?
 - iv. If jobs was the highest priority (not a few minutes shaved off M25 journey times) how would this scheme compare to say a Crossing at Canvey?
- b. Who is to fund the entirety of the scheme?
- c. Tilbury Docks link road
 - i. Is this confirmed as part of the core 'funded' project?
 - ii. HE must design – for genuine consultation – a dual carriageway
 - iii. There are notable views as to the relative merits of downgrading the A1089. What are HE proposals and how will HE manage this sensitivity.
- d. When can local contractors access all current and future HE contracts?

2. Involvement of Thurrock Council

- a. HE to commence full and detailed technical assessment with Thurrock Officers and how each and every scheme aspects is genuinely captured by HE and local harm fully mitigated and costed in their current understanding of their proposal.

- b. As a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project HE must
 - i. Accept that this scheme must be scrutinised in exactly the same manner as other NSIP's such as Purfleet, Tilbury 2 etc. albeit the sheer scale, impact and potential lack of benefit to Thurrock makes this all the more concerning.
 - ii. As developer, understand the full and significant impacts on Officer resources and democratic time and our ability to respond in advancing *any* Application of a DCO.

3. Alternatives to this proposal

- a. The Planning Inspectorate has demanded these be set out – when will HE share with Thurrock how they intend this respond?
- b. All the historic crossing capacity (1963, 1980, 1991). This crossing will last 120 years at least. Will there ever be anything other than more and more roads when there is a need to safeguard and future proof for alternatives modes.

4. What is the scheme and how will the network operate?

- a. When will we know the precise capacity of the crossing? This has already become 3 lanes through the tunnel, then up to the A13 but no detail thereafter.
- b. What is the capacity of the Tilbury Docks Link road and will the proposed design work?
- c. M25 / A2 Junction will be diversion point for the LTC; then back on to the M25. Can you prove that the entire network will be able to cope and that LTC does not simply create a new connection but with roads and junction either side at gridlock?

5. Design of the new Crossing

- a. HE to provide detail of when and where Thurrock can genuinely influence HE proposals. HE must demonstrate where we can or cannot influence the scheme. The DCO process demands genuine consultation rather than keep telling us what you have decided.
- b. The tunnel portal as currently described is within the SSSI. HE must undertake full assessment (now) to adequately consider and respond to demands that it stay in tunnel until North of the railway line (*a key concern of the taskforce*).
- c. HE must provide alternative options for tunnelling and cut and cover at all junctions and sensitive areas. These worked up options to be discussed in detail with Thurrock Council prior to the Application for the DCO.
- d. All slips to have detailed designs developed for cut and cover as now being developed north of Thurrock on the M25. These designs to be open for genuine consultation and consideration by Thurrock Council.

- e. The legacy impact of road elevations – especially over the MarDyke valley needs to be fully recognised and addressed. A detailed understanding of the potential for cut and cover instead of highly elevated structures is needed including areas such as Chadwell St Mary, Orsett, Baker Street, Stifford Clays / Blackshots, Ockendon, Bulphan.
- f. More detail is needed beyond the current red line boundary and we need to have guarantees that HE is designing in robust mitigation including significant planting (5-10 metres) either side of the road (for masking the road, wild life protection, and creation of new community links for cycling, walking and equestrians).
- g. Where is HE's construction plan in terms of access routes / haul routes to enable construction to commence.

6. Incident Management

- a. Action is needed now on current gridlock – can HE lobby DfT for strategic action reflecting the local observations that the actual need is for better management of the current crossing rather than any suggestion of a new crossing.
- b. A new state of the art traffic control centre is need now. Why is it worth spending £6bn for a new crossing but not £60m for state of the art integrated traffic control 24/7 covering the current crossing and local roads either side. Robust network management is now needed as any crossing is a decade away and once in place would secure additional capacity that supposedly is only possible with a £6Bn LTC. The incident management, delay in response and absence of smart management (including alerts, roadside information, recovery) is not as good as elsewhere in the country (i.e. as now being developed in the West Midlands).
- c. Full Borough wide traffic micro-simulation is needed to understand the knock on effect of incidents on either network. Any new crossing is a decade away – so requires action now, especially with planned housing growth.
- d. As HE have now confirmed that tankers will have unescorted use of the use of any new crossing, can they confirm they will ban / restrict tankers using the current tunnels and thereby remove the delays currently seen?.

7. Environmental, ecological and health impacts

- a. The severance of the new road – visual and communities will create separation and segregation especially in historic settings such as Coal House Fort.

- b. Construction impacts of noise, dust and road traffic need to be fully mitigated especially given the prevailing SW wind.
- c. The visual intrusion demands a maximum tunnelling and the remainder fully screened.
- d. More road trips will result in greater pollution than would otherwise be the case and an air quality assessment must be undertaken.
- e. A Full Health Impact Assessment must be produced by HE to consider the full health impact of the proposed route on local populations.
- f. Pollution models for noise, air, light and vibration must be set out for the community.
- g. How much of the Greenbelt will be lost to this scheme and how might HE mitigate the risk of making the Borough being less attractive to house builders.
- h. Each and every community, and heritage asset Including Coal House Fort, Tilbury Fort and East Tilbury Village will be irreplaceably damaged – where has HE experienced and mitigated this across its many years of experience.

8. Consultation

- a. HE has adopted approaches to consultation that removed over 10,000 voices against this scheme. Can HE confirm that they will work more transparently in the future to ensure genuine consultation and show how Thurrock can genuinely influence the scheme?
- b. HE has yet to produce a detailed consultation timeline and the approaches to the Council and local community have lacked any visible plan, and appear ad hoc. When can we have presented a clear communication strategy?
- c. When will HE provide a basic 'fly through' of the current proposals as used in other schemes? Even if this subsequently changes it has been six months since the PRA.
- d. When can detailed drawings be presented to allow local communities to be informed?

9. Charging

- a. Tolling has been removed in Scotland and M4 Severn Bridge into Wales. LTC should be free at point of use to benefit the local economy and business on both side of the crossing.
- b. The Thurrock Community that will be impacted by nearly 2/3 of the scheme in the event of charging a share of the proceeds must go to those communities who suffer the ongoing harm.
- c. The Dartford Crossing has already paid for itself and local residents and businesses should receive toll free crossings.

**Lower Thames Crossing Task Force
Work Programme
2017/18**

19 March 2018		
Update on Liaison with HE	Steve Cox / John Lamb	Members
HE Action List	Highways England	Members
Thurrock Business Board Requests of HE	TBB Rep	Officers
HE Closed Session – 5 March 2018	Steve Cox / John Lamb	
HE Update – Visual Impact	Highways England	Officers
LTC Task Force Priorities	Steve Cox / John Lamb	Members
Work Programme	Democratic Services	Officers
23 April 2018		
Update on Liaison with HE	Steve Cox / John Lamb	Members
HE Action List	Highways England	Members
HE Update – Health Impact	Highways England	Officers
LTC Task Force Priorities	Steve Cox / John Lamb	Members
Q1/2018 report to Cabinet	Chair	Members
Work Programme	Democratic Services	Officers

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