

## **Minutes of the Meeting of the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force held on 14 November 2022 at 6.00 pm**

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- Present:** Councillors Fraser Massey (Chair), Gary Byrne and Kairen Raper
- Apologies:** Councillors John Kent (Vice-Chair), Sara Muldowney, Augustine Ononaji, and Sue Sammons  
Westley Mercer, Thurrock Business Board Representative
- In attendance:** Colin Black, Assistant Director Regeneration and Place Delivery  
Lucy Tricker, Senior Democratic Services Officer
- Chris Stratford, Senior Consultant Stantec, engaged by Thurrock Council
- Laura Blake, Thames Crossing Action Group (TCAG) Representative  
Robert Quick, Resident Representative
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Before the start of the meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being live-streamed and recorded, with the recording being made available on the Council's website.

### **8. Minutes**

Councillor Raper asked if a written response had been received from National Highways (NH) following a question regarding figures for economic growth asked at the previous Task Force meeting. The Senior Consultant Stantec replied that responses had been received from NH, but the team had sent responses back to NH and requested further clarification. He confirmed that once satisfactory responses had been received then these would be circulated with the Task Force.

The Thames Crossing Action Group (TCAG) Representative highlighted page 9 of the agenda and clarified that she had asked how an all-purpose trunk road designed to smart motorway standards would make the LTC safer than a smart motorway, rather than asking 'if the road would be safer if classified as a motorway'.

The minutes of the meeting originally scheduled for 19 September 2022 and held on 17 October 2022 were approved as a true and correct record, subject to the above amendment.

### **9. Items of Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

#### **10. Declaration of Interests**

There were no interests declared.

#### **11. Health Impact Assessment: Verbal Update**

The Senior Consultant Stantec explained that two presentations on this topic had recently been circulated to Task Force Members. He stated that NH had submitted their Development Consent Order (DCO) on 31 October 2022 and a new Health and Equalities Impact Assessment (HEqIA) from NH was available on the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) website. He stated that it was too large to circulate, but would be shared with the Task Force either as an online link or via SharePoint. He confirmed that if the DCO was accepted on 28 November, then the team would review and analyse all the documents in detail.

The Chair requested that a report be added to the Task Force Work Programme with more detailed feedback regarding the HEqIA. The Senior Consultant Stantec explained that the team would be reviewing all documentation between December and February/March, if the DCO was accepted, and a report could be added to the February or March Task Force meeting.

*Councillor Byrne left the meeting at 6.08pm.*

*The meeting was adjourned at 6.09pm.*

*The meeting was reconvened at 6.20pm*

#### **12. DCO Submission: Verbal Update**

The Chair explained that the meeting was now inquorate, but would continue as no recommendations or decisions were scheduled to be made.

The Senior Consultant Stantec stated that NH had formally submitted their DCO version 2 (DCOV2) on 31 October 2022, and therefore all documentation had been released onto the PINS website. He commented that there were 554 overall documents containing approximately 63,000 pages. He explained that Thurrock Council and other host local authorities now had to submit an Adequacy of Consultation (AoC) document to PINS by 16 November, who would then decide whether to accept the DCO by 28 November. The Senior Consultant Stantec described how if the DCO was accepted then the team would review all documentation, and PINS could ask for more information if they considered it necessary. He stated that the whole process would take approximately 15-18 months, and this would begin, if the DCOV2 application was accepted on 28 November, with PINS appointing five panel members in

early December, who would then have between 3 and 5 months to review all the documents. He explained that PINS would then set up a preliminary meeting, probably in April/May 2023 before the public Examination phase starting in approximately June 2023. He stated that PINS would ask questions of the applicant and stakeholders, once they had completed their review of the documentation, and responders would have approximately three weeks to respond. He commented that public and topic hearings would also be held during this time, and this Examination was expected to finish in December 2023. He explained that PINS would have three months to prepare their recommendations before the report was sent to the Department of Transport. He explained that the Secretary of State would then have three months to grant consent or not. The Senior Consultant Stantec explained that therefore a decision from government was expected in mid-2024. He stated that interested parties could make representations to NH either through written questions or at an in-person hearing, but these people/groups would have to register to become an interested party on the PINS website. He summarised and stated that Thurrock Council had now drafted the AoC and this was currently going through governance processes.

The Chair queried how long people would have to register and when they could do this. The TCAG Representative replied that people usually had at least 30 days to register as an interested party, but this could be longer. She stated that people could now register for updates, which would inform them via email when registration as an interested party was open. The Senior Consultant Stantec added that the Council would publicise on their website when registration as an interested party was open, and the PINS Advice Note had been published, giving advice to the public. The TCAG Representative highlighted that documents could be filtered and searched on the PINS website. The Chair queried who could register as an interested party. The Senior Consultant Stantec replied that any business, individual or group in the UK could register.

### **13. Work Programme**

The Chair stated that as the meeting was inquorate, the Task Force were unable to discuss the Work Programme.

**The meeting finished at 6.33 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](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)**