

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

# Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The meeting will be held at **7.00 pm** on **2 March 2016**

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

## Membership:

Councillors Brian Little (Chair), Martin Kerin (Vice-Chair), Robert Gledhill, Steve Liddiard, Robert Ray and Peter Smith

## Substitutes:

Councillors Russell Cherry, Garry Hague, Barry Johnson and Michael Stone

## Agenda

Open to Public and Press

	<b>Page</b>
<b>1. Apologies for Absence</b>	
<b>2. Minutes</b>	<b>5 - 12</b>
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 9 February 2016.	
<b>3. Items of Urgent Business</b>	
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.	
<b>4. Declaration of Interests</b>	
<b>5. C2C train timetable changes - update</b>	<b>13 - 16</b>
<b>6. Work Programme</b>	

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Agenda published on: **23 February 2016**

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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.

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

To achieve our vision, we have identified five strategic priorities:

**1. Create** a great place for learning and opportunity

- Ensure that every place of learning is rated “Good” or better
- Raise levels of aspiration and attainment so that residents can take advantage of local job opportunities
- Support families to give children the best possible start in life

**2. Encourage** and promote job creation and economic prosperity

- Promote Thurrock and encourage inward investment to enable and sustain growth
- Support business and develop the local skilled workforce they require
- Work with partners to secure improved infrastructure and built environment

**3. Build** pride, responsibility and respect

- Create welcoming, safe, and resilient communities which value fairness
- Work in partnership with communities to help them take responsibility for shaping their quality of life
- Empower residents through choice and independence to improve their health and well-being

**4. Improve** health and well-being

- Ensure people stay healthy longer, adding years to life and life to years
- Reduce inequalities in health and well-being and safeguard the most vulnerable people with timely intervention and care accessed closer to home
- Enhance quality of life through improved housing, employment and opportunity

**5. Promote** and protect our clean and green environment

- Enhance access to Thurrock's river frontage, cultural assets and leisure opportunities
- Promote Thurrock's natural environment and biodiversity
- Inspire high quality design and standards in our buildings and public space

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 9 February 2016 at 6.30 pm

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**Present:** Councillors Brian Little (Chair), Martin Kerin (Vice-Chair), Robert Gledhill, Steve Liddiard, Robert Ray and Peter Smith

**In attendance:** Councilor John Kent, Leader of the Council  
Councilor Oliver Gerrish, Cabinet member for Highways and Transport  
Councilor Gerard Rice, Cabinet member for Environment  
Councilor Lynn Worrall, Cabinet member for Housing  
Councilor Tim Aker,  
Councilor Susan Little,  
David Bull, Director of Planning and Transportation  
Ann Osola, Head of Highways & Transportation  
Jessica Feeney, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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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.

### **29. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 20 January 2016 were approved as a correct record subject to amending Item 22 to read that Councillor Gledhill had a declaration of interest in respect of Agenda Item 5, C2C timetable changes as his partner was a C2C service user.

### **30. Items of Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

### **31. Declaration of Interests**

Councillor Smith declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to all items on the agenda as he received payments from Councillor Aker for various duties relating to Cllr Aker's role as an MEP although these were not related or linked to the Lower Thames Crossing.

The Chair of the Committee declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to all items on the agenda as most of the Lower Thames Crossing routes affected his ward, and various residents in his ward had received letters from Highways England.

### **32. Lower Thames Crossing Witness Session Update**

The Director of Planning and Transportation updated the Committee regarding the Lower Thames Crossing Witness Session which was held prior to the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Members were informed that businesses, residents, community forums and charities were given an opportunity to share their views on the new proposals. The following questions were raised by these groups at the witness session:

- Why option D was ruled out and could it be relooked at?
- Why the outer ring option was not being considered.
- What was the problem that the crossing was aiming to resolve? It was felt that the problem was revised as the consultation continued.
- How Highways England and the Government would ensure that community severance would not have a major impact on the local people and that people would not be isolated.
- Would houses be built next to the new road in the green belt?
- Would a 14% traffic reduction on the existing crossing be value for money?
- Would the new crossing require Police escorted tankers?
- Was there evidence that work had already begun on both sides of the river?

All interested parties were concerned about the flood risks and air quality impact on Thurrock residents' health and wellbeing. It was felt that the current options were not long term sustainable solutions to traffic growth and that the new routes would not reach their full capacity in the near future.

Interested parties highlighted that statistics used by Highways England were out of date and they alternatively raised many positive aspects of option D. Residents and communities feared that the only wildlife hospital in the region based in Orsett would be affected including rare wildlife. It was also felt that the green belt required to be preserved along with Grade 2 listed buildings.

### **33. Highways England**

The Chair of the Committee welcomed Highways England to make their presentation. The Highways England Group Leader opened the presentation to Members of the Committee highlighting the following key points:

- Development of the proposals were assessed through work with local authorities, environment bodies, commercial organisations and utility companies who were against the scheme objectives based on Economic, Transport, Community and Environment.
- Option C, route 3 was Highways England's proposed solution although routes 3 and 2 options south of the river were to be consulted on.



- It was explained that the new crossing would enable relief to the western end of A127 and A2 and significant relief to the existing Dartford Crossing Corridor, there would also be lesser relief to the M20.

The Committee were informed about the benefits of the proposed scheme, these included 5000 new jobs with £7billion contributed to the economy, unlocking the potential for investment in housing and regeneration. It was explained that the crossing would be a safer, faster and reliable route, which would offer value for money and provide a return on investment.

The Highways Group Manager informed Members that the 8 week consultation period was closing on the 24 March 2016. The Committee were informed that there were 24 information public events, digital and online consultations, public events and questionnaires.

Members were invited to ask questions to Highways England.

Councillor Kerin felt that the proposed Lower Thames Crossing options would not enable communities to flourish and would add significant pressures to the borough. It was stated that Highways England must have a full understanding of the impact. Councillor Rice explained how residents were upset that they had been issued with compulsory purchases. The Highways Group Manager explained that there was no correct time to share the unsettling news, but informed the Committee that 266,000 letters had been sent to make those that may have been affected aware of the consultation before it came to an end.

Councillor Smith shared that communities felt disappointed due to the lack of information specifically regarding air quality statistics. Highways England explained that air quality assessments had been carried out which demonstrated how the preferred options would reduce traffic and recover air quality levels at the QE2 Bridge. It was questioned further by Councillor Smith what was in place to manage the risk of two accidents occurring at both crossings at the same time. The Highways Group Manager explained that national safety improvement targets were incorporated into the plan.

Councillor Ray questioned why route 1 option A, a bridge adjacent to the current QE2 Bridge was discarded. The Highways Group Manager explained that the route was discarded due to the short life assessment which would not offer a substantial return on investment, it was added that the route would also require construction on live carriageways which would be dangerous for contractors. Councillor Ray queried if a tunnel had been considered instead of a bridge, it was confirmed that this was also discarded due to costs.

Councillor Gledhill questioned if the requested junctions for larger businesses such the Port of Tilbury would be included into the consultation. Highways England confirmed that there was a question in the consultation relating to this, Members were informed that this was a decision to be taken by Thurrock's Councillors. It was questioned further what had been put in place

to ensure that Thurrock benefited from the expected 5,000 jobs that were to be available from the Lower Thames Crossing nationally. Highways England informed the Committee that there had been discussion with contractors as to what they would do for local communities such as apprenticeships and training.

Councillor Gledhill queried if the 14% of traffic from the QE2 Bridge being deferred to the proposed Lower Thames Crossing would balance out traffic flow. Highways England explained that a second crossing would enable relief for the QE2 Bridge but would not equally balance out the traffic.

Councillor S Little explained that Orsett residents had received 300 letters from Highways England, it was felt that many other residents were still unaware of the proposals. Councillor Aker questioned if Highways England would post a letter with the consultation documents to every household in Thurrock with a free post return stamp. The Highways Group Manager agreed to look into this and informed the Committee that Highways had reached out to communities in other ways such as adverts, public consultations, and online consultations.

Councillor Snell queried how long it would be before the new Lower Thames Crossing would reach its full capacity. The Highways England Group Manager explained that route C would cope with traffic increases in the future however there was capacity to open a third lane.

Councillor Worrall stated that information regarding the consultation materials and crossings had not been publicised correctly, Councillor Worrall felt that Councillors were carrying out work for Highways England to ensure that their wards were provided with the correct information. The Committee requested that all consultation materials were provided to Thurrock Councillors and residents.

Councillor Gerrish questioned what consultation response was required to discard the Lower Thames Crossing Options. Highways England informed the Committee that an independent consultation analysis by Ipsos MORI would be carried out then a consultation report would be posted to the Government.

The Leader of the Council highlighted that the 300 letters had been sent to residents without any warnings or indication to the Council beforehand. Highways England explained that arrangements were shared as much as possible.

Councillor S Little stated that the out of date statistics used to form the proposals were a risk in relation to the cost and scale of the project.

#### **34. Members Statements**

The Chair of the Committee welcomed group representatives to make their statements. It was explain that the group opposed to any new crossings in the borough, The Leader of the Council felt that all options were an economical

and environmental problem. It was highlighted to the Committee that all routes relied on M25 traffic and that a solution away from the M25 must be considered. It was added that an 8 week consultation period for a £6 billion project was felt to be too short for many due to the lack of materials and statistics and outdated resources. The Leader explained that there was no evidence that traffic growth assumptions had been considered, economic data and job agreements. The Leader felt that a £1.2 million investment per job was not good value for money in context of the 5,000 jobs created for the £6 billion project.

Councillor S Little spoke on behalf of the Conservative Group. During the statement it was highlighted to the Committee that the group was firmly against any new crossing in Thurrock, it was added that the crossing to the east of Thurrock 'option D' would have facilitated the additional crossing capacity and would enable an additional route off to Canvey. It was added that a scheme of such tremendous cost and scale must be 100% certain of what it was intended to do. It was highlighted that the effects of the £100million improvements at J30/31 and the £80million widening of the A13 must be considered before proposing the project. It was stated that Highways England proceeding with full knowledge of the air quality issues already present in Thurrock was not good governance.

Councillor Aker spoke on behalf of the UKIP Group it was explained that UKIP opposed the new Thames Crossing and believed it would harm way of life in Thurrock. It was felt that there was no budgeting in the Treasury to fund the crossing and that the only alternative would be to find a foreign investment, meaning almost certain tolling and consequent congestion. Councillor Aker stated that Thurrock had some of the worst air pollution in Europe and that the Lower Thames Crossing would add to this as Thurrock would become the bottleneck of the county losing green belt and homes. The subject of a local referendum was raised to act as a definitive consultation on the matter. It was firmly believed by UKIP that Thurrock must use the options open to do everything in their power to stop the crossing. It was suggested that at the upcoming elections in May, Thurrock should have another ballot paper asking whether Thurrock support the Government's proposed Thames Crossing or not.

The Chair of the Committee welcomed Cabinet Members to make their statements all Cabinet Members were against the Lower Thames Crossing proposals and the following key points were made:

- The concerns over air quality issues and the effects on Thurrock residents' health and wellbeing.
- The loss of green belt throughout the borough
- Impact on communities and the segregation of towns and villages.
- The formation of the proposals on outdated statistics.
- Concerns were raised how some plans at junctions had been instigated although no crossing had been confirmed.
- The request for a longer consultation.

The Chair of the Committee invited Councillor S Little to speak as a ward Councillor on behalf of Orsett. Councillor S Little was against any new Crossing in Thurrock. With regards to option D she felt that Highways England, if they were to proceed, should consider building 3 lanes or more rather than dual carriageways because it anticipate further traffic growth. It was highlighted that option D would have delivered the crossing with ease due to the additional open space which would have prevented segregating communities. Councillor S Little urged that the Council and Members of Parliament insist that Highways England, if deciding to continue with option C, immediately set aside funds to pay for Compulsory Purchase Orders. It was also urged that Highways England visit the widening compensation packages along the route. Councillor Little summed up the three proposed routes explaining that all routes would destroy homes, cycle paths, bridleways, footpaths and other community pastimes and rural green belt. It was added that the crossings would have a major impact on the road network during construction and route 2 and 3 would cause flooding of the fens and the Mardyke Valley.

### **35. Additional Evidence**

The Chair of the Committee read a written statement to Members which was produced by the South Basildon and East Thurrock Member of Parliament Stephen Metcalfe.

The statement highlighted that the objections in principle shared concerns over air quality, environment and the out of date evidence base for the proposals. The MP's statement specified that he remained firmly opposed to all the options, however if following the consultation Highways England were determined to press forward with a new crossing in Thurrock, it was stated that Thurrock must have confidence that this was a genuine consultation and not a public relations exercise.

The MP's statement explained that he remained committed to getting the best deal for Thurrock and promised to do the very best he could to work with all involved to make the best of a very difficult and unsettling situation. The Committee were informed that the MP would be holding a number of drop-in session events for residents to bring their concerns directly, Members were informed that the details for these would be made public in the near future.

### **36. Lower Thames Crossing Consultation Options**

The Director of Planning and Transportation explained that questions raised from both the afternoon and evening session had been recorded and that all queries would be answered. The Committee agreed that the following points from the Witness Session and Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be used to form a report to Cabinet in March:

- The Committee notes the strength of feelings and concerns shown by all interested parties.
- Seeks better engagement and consultation with the public.

- Seeks improved availability of consultation material to all interested parties.
- Seeks an extension of the consultation period.
- Agrees that consultants specifically look at the effects of the 3 proposals on congestion within the borough and the impact on the Strategic Road Network, particularly in the east of borough. Notes concerns were raised regarding M25 congestion.
- That the Scrutiny report would investigate issues around air quality, noise, environment degradation, loss of green belt and impact on health in the borough.
- Issues in relation to the Business Case would be linked into a review of data and whether the proposals would be value for money.
- Consultants would investigate strategic issues in relation to the 14% of traffic rerouting from the Dartford Crossing that would use the Lower Thames Crossing and how quickly the former would reach its full capacity.
- Further details would be sought from Highways England as to local traffic generation and route allocation.
- Notes concern that no considerations had been given to the alternative modal options. The Minister at the Select Committee on Crossings specifically said that sustainable transport and integrated land use and multi module options would be considered. It was explained that Officers would be seeking through their consultants to see if this had taken place and how it would affect decision making when moving towards the preferred option in the future.

The Leader of the Council enlightened the Committee that all interested parties had been informed that there was a 15 working day delay before receiving any response regarding consultation materials from Highways England. The Highways Group Leader explained that all consultation materials were individually franked and had seal numbers. It was added that the service level agreement was 15 working days and that Highways England was unable to promise that papers would be distributed any sooner than that timeframe.

**RESOLVED:**

1. **That the Committee noted all representations from interested parties and reported their views which would be incorporated into a report to Cabinet in March as part of the development of the Council's response to the Lower Thames Crossing Consultation.**
2. **That the Director of Planning and Transportation would liaise with the Highways England to ensure that Lower Thames Crossing**

consultation materials and maps are made available to Thurrock Council, members of the public and Councillors.

3. That the Chair of the Committee in agreement with Group Leaders would write a letter to the Secretary of State for Transport. The letter would request that the 300 addresses of residents whom received letters regarding their property being lost/affected would be provided to the Council. The letter would also evidence and request an extension to the consultation period and raise concerns over the inadequate information.

**37. Work Programme**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Work Programme be noted.**

**The meeting finished at 9.00 pm**

Approved as a true and correct record

**CHAIR**

**DATE**

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Democratic Services at [Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)**

<b>2 March 2016</b>	<b>ITEM: 5</b>
<b>Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	
<b>C2C train timetable changes - update</b>	
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Key
<b>Report of:</b> Cllr. Oliver Gerrish, Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transportation	
<b>Accountable Head of Service:</b> Ann Osola, Head of Transportation and Highways	
<b>Accountable Director:</b> David Bull, Director of Planning and Transportation	
<b>This report is Public</b>	

## Executive Summary

At the last meeting, the Planning, Transport, Regeneration (PTR) Overview & Scrutiny Committee were informed of the changes to c2c train timetable and of plans for further amendments following demands from various stakeholder groups. The Committee has asked the c2c representative to come back to the March Committee meeting and provide a further update. Therefore, this report summarises the question and answer session of the 9 February 2016 Committee.

As requested, c2c delegate will inform the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the actions taken to date and any planned for the future in response to stakeholder demand to the changes to c2c train timetable.

### 1. Recommendation(s)

**That Committee:**

#### 1.1 Receive the c2c update and respond thereto.

### 2. Introduction and Background

2.1 On 13<sup>th</sup> December 2015, c2c changed the train journey times in order to increase capacity on their service and accommodate 3,000 more passengers during the morning peak. The benefits of the new timetable are more likely to be experienced by the passengers of Basildon, Benfleet, Chafford Hundred and Ockendon stations.

2.2 The timetable was changed because over the past 25 years regional population has increased 15% and 15% increase on passenger demand over

the past 5 years, and with more people working in London there is a need for better connectivity. In response to this increasing demand the c2c invests £12 million in refurbishment programme.

- 2.3 The changes to train timetables are also a part of plan to increase capacity of c2c service. The new timetable accommodates additional 3,000 passengers on short trips and 1,400 more seats available to long distance passengers travelling during the morning peak hours into London. The new timetable changes improved the Sunday service including half-hourly trains via Rainham into central London.
- 2.4 The timetable was since further amended due to stakeholder demands in response to the changes and there are further plans of adjustments to accommodate user needs in ongoing timetable development process.
- 2.5 As requested by the previous meeting, this Committee's meeting will be attended by c2c representative who will provide further update on c2c's work to date and take questions from Members to further clarify any concerns.

### **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 3.1 The timetable change implemented in December 2015 was the biggest one for many years which was necessary to increase the capacity. However, the capacity had already been met, but trains would be extended and more frequent due to a GPS breaking system that could be introduced in the future. c2c were looking to purchase further 16 – 20 carriages for this purpose.
- 3.2 The c2c reviews the passenger count on each service. The c2c believes that the load weigh data on each train is accurate and which produces an accurate number of people on each train at each stop. The accuracy is further supported by c2c and network rail employees who regularly carry out spot checks. The load weight data would be available on the website in the future to inform passenger what trains were less compacted.
- 3.3 All passengers and all areas mattered to c2c and the passengers from stations with long commutes deserved a seat, and c2c take them into account and strive to add more seats to trains to accommodate their needs.
- 3.4 c2c were informed of many complaints from passengers in Tilbury following the changes to the timetable and that due to the growth and regeneration taking place in Tilbury the service would need to cater for these changes.
- 3.5 The comparison of passengers between autumn 2015 and January 2016 is not an accurate reflection and there are more issues with the timetables other than seasonal use.
- 3.6 c2c are undergoing a survey carried out by national passenger service over the next seven months



#### **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 4.1 To collect the Committee's feedback on the timetable changes to inform c2c's ongoing timetable development and c2c response plans to stakeholders demand.

#### **5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

- 5.1 The Committee is one of the c2c's stakeholders and thus the report presents a form of consultation.

#### **6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact**

- 6.1 The changes to the c2c train timetable support the Thurrock Council Corporate Vision:

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

And support the following Corporate Priority to:

*"Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity."*

#### **7. Implications**

##### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Jonathan Wilson**  
**Chief Accountant**

This report is for information only and does not contain any financial implications.

##### **7.2 Legal**

Implications verified by: **Vivienne Williams**  
**Planning and Regeneration Solicitor**

This report is for information only and does not contain any legal implications.

##### **7.3 Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**

## **Community Development and Equalities Manager**

The changes to the c2c train timetable impact upon the local community within Thurrock. This report provides an opportunity to ensure that community priorities are incorporated into planning for future timetable provision.

**7.4 Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

None

**8. Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- <http://www.c2c-online.co.uk/travel-information/timetables-trains/timetable-next-steps/>
- PTR Overview & Scrutiny Committee 20 January 2016 report: c2c Train Timetable Changes
- PTR Overview & Scrutiny Committee 20 January 2016 minutes

**9. Appendices to the report**

- None

**Report Author:**

Ann Osola

Head of Service

Transportation & Highways