

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 **20 November 2017**

**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  
Peter Ward, Thurrock Business Representative  
Linda Mulley, Resident Representative

### Substitutes:

Councillors Chris Baker, Colin Churchman, Gary Collins, Joycelyn Redsell, Sue Sammons and Graham Snell

### Agenda

Open to Public and Press

	Page
<b>1 Apologies for Absence</b>	
<b>2 Minutes</b>	<b>5 - 12</b>
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force meeting held on 16 October 2017.	
<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</b>	<b>Actions from Previous Meetings</b>	<b>13 - 14</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Highways England Update: Scheme update and engagement &amp; consultation</b>	
<b>7</b>	<b>Council's Proposed Response to Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report</b>	<b>15 - 26</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Work Programme</b>	<b>27 - 30</b>

**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](mailto:direct.democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)

Agenda published on: **15 November 2017**

## **Information for members of the public and councillors**

### **Access to Information and Meetings**

Members of the public can attend all meetings of the council and its committees and have the right to see the agenda, which will be published no later than 5 working days before the meeting, and minutes once they are published.

### **Recording of meetings**

This meeting may be recorded for transmission and publication on the Council's website. At the start of the meeting the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is to be recorded.

Members of the public not wishing any speech or address to be recorded for publication to the Internet should contact Democratic Services to discuss any concerns.

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact Democratic Services at [Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)

### **Guidelines on filming, photography, recording and use of social media at council and committee meetings**

The council welcomes the filming, photography, recording and use of social media at council and committee meetings as a means of reporting on its proceedings because it helps to make the council more transparent and accountable to its local communities.

If you wish to film or photograph the proceedings of a meeting and have any special requirements or are intending to bring in large equipment please contact the Communications Team at [CommunicationsTeam@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:CommunicationsTeam@thurrock.gov.uk) before the meeting. The Chair of the meeting will then be consulted and their agreement sought to any specific request made.

Where members of the public use a laptop, tablet device, smart phone or similar devices to use social media, make recordings or take photographs these devices must be set to 'silent' mode to avoid interrupting proceedings of the council or committee.

The use of flash photography or additional lighting may be allowed provided it has been discussed prior to the meeting and agreement reached to ensure that it will not disrupt proceedings.

The Chair of the meeting may terminate or suspend filming, photography, recording and use of social media if any of these activities, in their opinion, are disrupting proceedings at the meeting.

## Thurrock Council Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi is available throughout the Civic Offices. You can access Wi-Fi on your device by simply turning on the Wi-Fi on your laptop, Smartphone or tablet.

- You should connect to TBC-CIVIC
- Enter the password **Thurrock** to connect to/join the Wi-Fi network.
- A Terms & Conditions page should appear and you have to accept these before you can begin using Wi-Fi. Some devices require you to access your browser to bring up the Terms & Conditions page, which you must accept.

The ICT department can offer support for council owned devices only.

## Evacuation Procedures

In the case of an emergency, you should evacuate the building using the nearest available exit and congregate at the assembly point at Kings Walk.

## How to view this agenda on a tablet device



You can view the agenda on your [iPad](#), [Android Device](#) or [Blackberry Playbook](#) with the free modern.gov app.

Members of the Council should ensure that their device is sufficiently charged, although a limited number of charging points will be available in Members Services.

To view any “exempt” information that may be included on the agenda for this meeting, Councillors should:

- Access the modern.gov app
- Enter your username and password

## 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 Lower Thames Crossing Task Force held on 16 October 2017 at 6.00 pm

---

<b>Present:</b>	Councillors Peter Smith (Chair), John Allen, Roy Jones, Steve Liddiard, Brian Little, Bukky Okunade, Terry Piccolo, Gerard Rice and Colin Churchman (Substitute)  Matt Jackson, Thames Crossing Action Group Representative Peter Ward, Thurrock Business Representative
<b>Apologies:</b>	Councillor Tom Kelly
<b>In attendance:</b>	Steve Cox, Corporate Director of Environment and Place Ann Osola, Assistant Director Highways & Transportation Ian Wake, Director of Public Health Dr Kim Yates, Independent Technical Advisor on Environmental Issues Charlotte Raper, Democratic Services Officer

---

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.

### **10. Minutes**

The minutes of the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force meeting held on 25 September 2017 were approved as a correct record.

### **11. Items of Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

### **12. Declaration of Interests**

Councillor Jones felt that all Members had an interest, in that they were representing their communities and the Lower Thames Crossing would have an enormous impact on all of Thurrock.

### **13. Election of Vice-Chair**

As Councillor B. Rice had stepped down from the Task Force it was necessary to elect a new Vice-chair.

Councillor Liddiard nominated Councillor G. Rice, and this was seconded by Councillor Jones. There were no other nominations and therefore Councillor G. Rice was declared Vice-Chair.

#### **14. Terms of Reference**

The Chair asked whether any suggestions for amendments had been received by the Democratic Services Officer. It was confirmed the only request had been for clarification around substitutes, which was in progress with group leaders.

The Task Force agreed to continue with the existing Terms of Reference.

#### **15. Highways England Update**

The representatives from Highways England gave a presentation which outlined the process for surveys, including the varying types and explained why they were undertaken.

The Chair noted that residents had complained of noise in Gravesham and asked if the ground surveys were responsible. It was confirmed that ground surveys were currently underway and since the site was a fully active rifle range used by the Met Police it was only possible to carry out the works on weekends.

Councillor Jones stated that much of the land within the proposed route was farmland with good soil for crops. He queried what purpose the soil sampling served and what the outcome would be if the tests confirmed the land was ideal for farming; would the recommendation be to leave the land for its current purpose? Highways England would collect soil samples to form the baseline for their data which would be reported to the Secretary of State, who was responsible for assessing the scheme.

Councillor B. Little reiterated the point that the Council was against any further crossings within Thurrock. He added that the scheme should not simply rectify its own impact but improve the current situation in Thurrock.

The Vice-Chair understood the need for weekend works on the current site in Gravesham, but urged Highways England to reassure the people of Thurrock that works would be based on weekdays wherever possible, to limit the impact on residents' free time. The timetable for works was still in development; however the point was noted by Highways England.

The Thames Crossing Action Group Representative highlighted the poor air quality in Thurrock was well-documented. He sought clarification from Highways England as to how it would be possible to mitigate against air pollution on open air roads. Air Quality monitoring and traffic modelling would be undertaken to identify any expected impact, the areas covered would be wider than those monitored by the Council but the data would be comparable.

The Independent Technical Advisor on Environmental Issues asked whether noise monitoring would be spot checks or long-term data collection, and whether the Council could have input into the process. The details were still being discussed and the process would not commence until Spring 2018, but



Thurrock could express its views in the response to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report. The Independent Technical Advisor on Environmental also noted that ecology surveys were subject to time constraints and sought reassurance that it was all in hand. Ecology surveys required two years' worth of data and therefore they had been progressed earlier. All others had been well timetabled.

The Director of Public Health questioned the procedure if landholders refused consent for access for surveys. He also asked where the data results would be published and what type of result might impact upon the route choice. It was always the preferred procedure that consent was obtained from landowners; however under S53 of the Planning Act 2008 Highways England had certain powers if that consent was withheld. The results would be published as the Environmental Impact Assessment however could be shared with Thurrock Council in the interim. Ground conditions or particular species could impact upon the route; however there were no specific examples to illustrate the point.

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.

The Thurrock Business Representative queried when the EIA Scoping Report would be issued and it was confirmed that Highways England would send to the Planning Inspectorate at the end of October.

Councillor Jones stressed that the proposed route cut through Green Belt and agricultural land, as well as habitat for wildlife and asked why this was the favoured route, as he felt it would cause devastation for Thurrock. Highways England had provided a series of documents outlining the decision process during the options phase but these could be circulated to Members outside of the meeting.

Councillor Allen asked both the Director of Public Health and the representatives from Highways England what impact they felt the Lower Thames Crossing would have on air quality and the health and wellbeing of those in close proximity to the route and the surrounding areas.

The Director of Public Health outlined that the health effects of poor air quality were well documented. About 50% of the air pollution in the borough stemmed from London and was simply in the atmosphere, so Thurrock suffered from 'background' air pollution. The Dartford Crossing and proximity to the M25 only made matters worse. There were serious issues with respiratory disease and a negative impact on cardio vascular diseases. Noise

and air pollution were also known to prevent people going outside and all in all the effects were largely negative.

The representatives from Highways England advised they were responsible for carrying out an assessment to understand the baseline data and demonstrate the expected impact which would be presented to the Planning Inspectorate and the Secretary of State. The Director of Public Health asked whether a full Health Impact Assessment would form part of the Environmental Assessment. Highways England stated that it would form there would be noise pollution, air quality and community assessments. The Director of Public Health felt this would be inadequate and urged the team to perform a full Health Impact Assessment.

Councillor Allen asked for clarity; as he understood matters, the traffic modelling and air quality assessments would be based upon predictions. Predictions would be made regarding traffic flow, taking into account local development plans for Local Authorities and Government Guidance for traffic modelling.

Councillor Piccolo questioned how robustly the traffic modelling was checked against real-time data, such as the effects of a 2-lane accident on the current crossing or the M25. The model was calibrated against real-time data though it could not be guaranteed that it would capture data such as Councillor Piccolo suggested.

Councillor B. Little requested that all questions which had not been answered be sent to Highways England in one document.

## **16. Environmental and Air Quality Issues**

The Independent Technical Advisor on Environmental Issues and the Assistant Director of Highways & Transportation outlined the coverage of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report and its role within the national infrastructure planning process.

The Director of Public Health felt the Council should stress the importance of a full health impact assessment, rather than having it fall within the Air Quality and Noise Pollution assessments. The Thurrock Business Representative did not believe Highways England would be able to avoid a full assessment given the enormity of the project. The Independent Technical Advisor on Environmental Issues advised that this should form part of the Council's response to the EIA Scoping Report.

Councillor Jones agreed with the points highlighted as of importance to Thurrock and felt the scheme description would also be paramount, to understand the proposed location of slip-roads and junctions to fully assess the impact. He then asked who would be responsible for the placement of diffusion tubes. Highways England would select the locations but Thurrock Council could review the choices and request additional data if necessary. Councillor Jones felt it should be the Local Authority who decided the location

of diffusion tubes. Councillor B. Little requested clarification upon the length of time data should be collected via diffusion tubes. He had been led to believe data should be trended for 2 years. The Independent Technical Advisor for Environmental Issues confirmed that the tubes collected data one month at a time, and for the data to be statistically relevant it should be collected for at least a year. Sometimes data was only collected over three months however discussions with Highways England suggested data would be collected for a year. Councillor B. Little stressed that, given seasonal variation and the effects of different weather conditions, the assessment could not be fully carried out in three months.

Councillor B. Little also queried whether major issues such as high winds, significant congestion and the effects of Christmas shopping at lakeside, or security closures at the dock could be included within the scoping report. Though not every day occurrences they were frequent enough to be of note.

The Vice-Chair agreed that the scheme description would be of great importance to the Local Authority. He wanted to see tunnels in highly populated areas, Thurrock saw the worst air quality figures outside of London and there should be careful consideration. While it was accepted that the Council was fully against the proposal for an additional crossing it would be necessary to ensure that, were the project to go ahead, it was in the most beneficial way to Thurrock possible and for that Members required full details. He was keen to understand how many intersections would form part of the route. The Independent Technical Advisor on Environmental Issues advised that those details should be covered within the scheme description.

The Chair asked how the project would fit with Government regulations regarding Climate Change. The Task Force was advised that the impact on climate change and the carbon emissions should be assessed as part of the process, in line with Government plans.

Councillor Allen expressed his view that the proposed route had been chosen by the Government and Highways England as it was cheapest, since there were no tunnels involved. He also felt that, alongside the Government's requirement for Thurrock to provide 32,000 new homes, this route was designed to unlock Green Belt land. He continued that there had been an alternative option which had proposed an 8km tunnel under the borough which would have caused no impact on Thurrock, with the emissions filtered. He felt that the proposed route showed no regard for the people of Thurrock. The Independent Technical Advisor on Environmental Issues assured the Task Force that air quality would need to be considered and all findings would be presented to the Secretary of State.

The Thames Crossing Action Group Representative noted that Thurrock Council had undertaken air quality surveys in the borough for the past 20 years and there had been an increase each year in the number of problem areas. A Freedom of Information request had shown that the Council spent £33,000 a year on one person to resolve issues regarding air quality. The existing 17 poor quality areas needed to be addressed, the baseline data

needed to be reduced to address existing issues. The Assistant Director of Highways and Transportation advised that there had been progress regarding issues with initiatives for improving air quality. The aim was to distance traffic, particularly HGVs, from residential properties where possible. It was necessary to find a way to allow for industry growth in the borough, without it being at the detriment of residents. 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.

Councillor Okunade agreed that everyone was concerned about the health implications of the impact on air quality in the borough. She was unsure how 'distancing' HGVs from residential areas would have much effect, since particulates were in the air and would spread. Councillor Okunade queried whether the scoping report would target the worst affected areas and if topics were weighted in any way. She echoed the Vice-Chair's sentiments that, while she did not want the crossing to go ahead, it would be crucial to make a serious case for Thurrock if the proposal were approved. The Task Force heard that air quality had been focused on so far and other disciplines would be looked at. Any areas with significant impact would make it difficult for the Secretary of State to approve the scheme.

Councillor Allen asked if it would be possible for the 20 years of data on air quality, collected by the Council, to be presented to the Task Force as he did not believe, with more cars on the roads, how air quality could improve in the borough.

Councillor Piccolo enquired as to whether there was any way to confirm the accuracy of the data collected over the past 20 years, as it would need to be verified to prevent Highways England discounting data if they saw fit. The Independent Technical Advisor on Environmental Issues had been reviewing the data and so far was pleased that it had been intelligently used, and verified on a yearly basis. Any issues within the monitoring, such as tubes near traffic lights or road works, would be visible through monitoring data trends.

Councillor Allen sought clarity around how Highways England's findings would be verified. Both the Lower Thames Crossing team and Thurrock Council would collect data from three diffusion tubes next to a continuous monitor for comparison. Councillor B. Little asked for an explanation of the different monitoring systems, as he felt some Members of the Task Force might be unaware of the differences. It was confirmed that there were several types of monitors. Diffusion tubes were most commonly found on lampposts throughout the borough and collected data a month at a time. There were also continuous monitors that collected data around chemiluminescence and nitrogen dioxide levels. There were currently four continuous monitors in the borough, against which the diffusion tubes were normalised.

## **17. Key Milestones and Points of Influence**

The Corporate Director of Environment and Place presented the Task Force with the Key Milestones and Points of Influence to clearly outline the route of progression.

The Chair asked for an explanation of the Community Consultation response scheduled for spring 2018. This would provide the Council with an opportunity to respond to the consultation works statement provided by Highways England, to outline whether the process was sound and voice any concerns. Councillor Piccolo sought further clarification as the response would precede the actual consultation. It was confirmed that it would be an opportunity to respond to works up to that point and the plans for the consultation process moving forward.

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.

The Assistant Director of Highways & Transportation advised Members that the Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping report would possibly be accompanied by a revised redline boundary.

## **18. Work Programme**

The Chair opened the item by asking the Task Force to confirm their preference for start time moving forward. It was agreed that 6pm was ideal for all Members and Co-Optees.

The Task Force discussed the need for Highways England to be present at each meeting, and who the best representative would be. The Chair commented that there should be a range of specialities present to ensure all questions raised could be answered. Councillor Little reminded the Task Force that the final decisions would be down to Highways England and therefore they should be present at all meetings, with a regular, senior representative. Councillor Piccolo agreed it would be helpful for a senior representative to be present to provide consistency and ensure that if there were any questions which needed to be answered outside of the meeting it could be monitored by Highways England.

The Thames Crossing Action Group Representative felt that there should be an agreed response date for Highways England, as some questions had been raised at the previous meeting which remained unanswered. The Assistant Director of Highways & Transportation highlighted that some queries should be answered within the Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping report which was due to be received at the end of October, however there were some issues raised which would not be covered.

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 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.

The Chair also suggested other outside bodies might be invited to the Committee, such as Campaign to Protect Rural England, Friends of the Earth and similar organisations. The Vice-Chair added that it might be beneficial to invite Buglife for their ecological views.

**The meeting finished at 7.42 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)**

## Lower Thames Crossing Task Force Action List

Action	Responsible	Completed?
<b>September meeting</b>		
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.	Highways England	
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.	Highways England	
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.	Highways England	
<b>October Meeting</b>		
Updated Survey data	Highways England	
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.	Highways England	
<b>Link to documents outlining decision process</b>	<b>Highways England</b>	<b>completed</b>
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.	Highways England	
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	Highways England	

approved		
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.	Highways England	
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.	Highways England	



<b>20 November 2017</b>	<b>ITEM: 7</b>
<b>Lower Thames Crossing Task Force</b>	
<b>Council's Proposed Response to Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report</b>	
<b>Report of:</b> Steve Cox, Corporate Director of Place	
<b>Accountable Directors:</b> Steve Cox, Corporate Director of Place	
<b>This report is Public.</b>	

## Executive Summary

This report sets out the key points of the proposed response to the Planning Inspectorate on the Highways England's Lower Thames Crossing Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report (the Scoping Report). The Council received a copy of the Scoping Report on 2 November 2017 and has been given 28 days to submit a formal response to the Planning Inspectorate. This report provides a summary of the proposed technical response to the Environmental Scoping Report, which includes baseline information, scope and methodology proposed for the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) (which will be presented within an Environmental Statement (ES)).

### 1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That the Task Force Members flag particular issues for officers to take on board in the response to the Lower Thames Crossing Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report.**
- 1.2 That the Task Force Members endorse the Council's proposed response to the Lower Thames Crossing Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report, for submission to the Planning Inspectorate by the deadline of 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017.**

### 2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 On 12 April 2017 the Secretary of State for Transport announced the preferred route for the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC). On 2 November 2017 Thurrock Council received the Lower Thames Crossing Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report (the Scoping Report) from the Planning Inspectorate. The Planning Inspectorate have invited Thurrock Council to provide comment on the Scoping Report. This report therefore has been prepared to outline the main points of Thurrock's proposed technical response to the information outlined in the Scoping Report.**

- 2.2 The aim of a Scoping Report is to identify and report the baseline conditions of the existing environment, to determine which (if any) environmental topics are to be further examined in the EIA, and to outline the methodology proposed for further assessment. The purpose of submitting a Scoping Report is to give the applicant the opportunity to ask the Secretary of State for a formal written opinion on the information to be included within the EIA. This is known as the Scoping Opinion. The Secretary of State must consult with the prescribed consultation bodies (which includes Thurrock Council as the Local Planning Authority) and incorporate their responses within their Scoping Opinion.
- 2.3 This gives Thurrock the opportunity to comment on, at an early stage, the information that should be included in the assessment as part of the EIA.
- 2.4 The Scoping Report is structured in the following way:
1. Introduction
  2. The Project
  3. Consultation
  4. The Reasonable Alternatives Considered
  5. Environmental Impact Assessment Method
  6. Air Quality
  7. Cultural Heritage
  8. Landscape
  9. Biodiversity
  10. Geology and Soils
  11. Materials
  12. Noise and Vibration
  13. People and Communities
  14. Road Drainage and Water Environment
  15. Climate
  16. Cumulative Effects
  17. Proposed Structure of the Environmental Statement
  18. Transboundary Screening
  19. References
  20. Abbreviations
  21. Appendices
- 2.5 The Scoping Report has been reviewed by various specialists within the Council as well as by third parties on behalf of Thurrock. The Council also engaged the services of Independent Technical Advisors to provide technical support with the coordination of and input into the Council's response to the Planning Inspectorate. A summary of the review is presented in Section 3 of this report and the full review comments from specialists are provided in Appendix 1.

### 3. Review Summary and Issues / Comments Identified

#### Overview

3.1 The table below provides a Red Amber Green (RAG) analysis of the acceptability of the information provided within the Scoping Report:

- Green identifies that the information is comprehensive and does not require modification;
- Amber identifies that the information is generally acceptable with minor modifications or recommendations by the Council; and,
- Red identifies that the information requires major modifications.

Topic	Baseline Information	Study Area	Methodology	Scope of Assessment
Air Quality				
Cultural Heritage				
Landscape				
Biodiversity				
Geology and Soils				
Materials				
Noise and Vibration				
People and Communities				
Road Drainage and the Water Environment				
Climate				
Cumulative Effects				

#### Commentary: Issues / Recommendations

3.2 The following section outlines the key issues the Council has identified and/or the key recommendations the Council wishes to make. It has been subdivided into the discipline headings, as per the Scoping Report.

3.3 It should be noted that overall the Scoping Report followed best practice for the methodology proposed and no topics/aspects have been scoped out of the final EIA assessment.

#### General Comments / Recommendations

3.4 The Council strongly request that a separate Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is undertaken, the methodology of which should be agreed with the Council and Public Health England. This will ensure that any negative consequences

of the development are identified and mitigated and that opportunities for improving the well-being of the community are maximised. Full justification is provided in Appendix 2.

- 3.5 The initial chapters reflect the current existing knowledge of the proposed project and Thurrock Council should be consulted on any updates to the Scheme design and project information that take place following the issuing of this EIA Scoping Report.
- 3.6 It is a requirement of the new EIA regulations (Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017) to assess 'the expected significant effects arising from the vulnerability of the proposed development to major accidents or disasters that are relevant to the development'. The EIA regulations do not set out what is meant by the term 'major accident or disaster', therefore it is assumed that both man-made and natural accidents/disasters would qualify under this term. We therefore want to use this as a platform to suggest that sensitivity testing should be undertaken to assess unusual but not uncommon traffic scenarios due to major accidents, e.g. closure of both crossing, and the impact this would have on traffic, noise, air quality, people and communities.
- 3.7 The Scoping Report does not fully justify the reason why Location C was chosen as the Preferred Route from an environmental perspective. The reasons provided focus on the Scheme objectives and cost and do not take into consideration the effects on the environment / communities / Thurrock's Strategic Growth Plans. I would expect to see full justification regarding the Preferred Route selection from an environmental perspective, outlining a comparison of the environmental effects of each option to reach the decision on the Preferred Route.
- 3.8 The Council has major concerns regarding the proposed junction with the A13 and the A1089. This is likely to be significantly elevated, which would be very prominent in the landscape. The elevation in combination with the complex arrangement is also likely to cause adverse visual effects, decrease air quality and increase noise levels significantly. As noted in the Cultural Heritage section below, the junction is also located on a nationally significant Scheduled Monument, the construction of this junction would have direct effects (through the removal of) the Scheduled Monument. The significant adverse effects caused by this junction will need significant mitigation to ensure the effects are reduced and to ensure the introduction of the junction is acceptable.
- 3.9 The report mentions opportunities to deliver environmental enhancements, however there is no explicit mention of any enhancements that have been identified. Opportunities should consider enhancements to the existing public rights of way network in line with Thurrock Rights of Way Improvement Plan which is currently in draft form, as well as enhancements to the landscape. It is recommended that an application for Highways England Environment Designated Funds is sought for the Scheme, to finance the environmental enhancements/improvements, to ensure the Scheme delivers better environmental outcomes.

- 3.10 The report states that the LTC north of the Thames will be at grade or on embankments though the Kent section will be in a deep cutting which is likely to lessen its visual effects. The reasoning for this will need to be clearly presented and fully justified. To assess the landscape and visual effects the Council will need plans showing which sections would be on embankments and which at grade. The landscape and visual effects of the road, especially where the road will be located on embankments, needs to be fully assessed within a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). The Council would like to see 3D visualisation for the Scheme to ascertain the visual impact on the landscape.
- 3.11 The tunnel construction will result in large areas of land east of the power station site, adjacent to the Two Forts Way recreational route, being set aside for construction purposes, which is a concern. The final restoration of this area will need to demonstrate landscape and ecological benefits e.g. restoring the land immediately west of Coalhouse Fort as coastal grazing grass or wetland.
- 3.12 The report recognises that the scheme would have a direct effect on the Orsett Fen Open Access Area, so it will be necessary to ensure that there is connectivity and how mitigation measures for landscape, ecology and water management effects can be integrated to ensure that the historic fenland habitat can be recreated.

#### *Air Quality*

- 3.13 The Council recommends that additional baseline monitoring is established at sensitive receptors along the new proposed link road to Tilbury, just off the A1031 along Heath Road, and along Baker Street, and that the additional monitoring, which has been set up by the Council in November 2017, should be used in the air quality assessment.
- 3.14 It is well known that emissions from vehicles, in particular diesels, do not perform to their prescribed European emission standards and any modelling using DEFRA's Emission Factor Toolkit V7.0 (EFT 7.0) is likely to underestimate these emissions considerably. The Council recommends a conservative approach should be adopted, in particularly the upscaling of diesel emissions should be undertaken.
- 3.15 Any sensitive receptor that is predicted to experience an increase of  $>2 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$   $\text{NO}_x$  and  $\text{PM}_{10}$  should be considered in the evaluation of the significance of effects, not just the receptors which exceed the Air Quality Standards / Objectives (i.e. annual mean of  $40 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  for  $\text{NO}_2$  and  $\text{PM}_{10}$ ).
- 3.16  $\text{PM}_{2.5}$  should be considered within the assessment, as this is known to have adverse health implications.
- 3.17 As the construction period will last 6 years, the Council recommend that full Detailed air quality modelling and assessment should be undertaken for construction.

### *Cultural Heritage*

- 3.18 Consideration needs to be given in any EIA for the appropriate recording of the scheduled monument (Crop mark complex, Orsett) at the junction with the A13 and A1089 considering the extensive damage that will be caused. Consideration needs to be given to undertaking a total excavation of the scheduled area and associated elements of this nationally important complex.
- 3.19 A Heritage Statement should be undertaken and reported in compliance with Historic England Good Practice Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets 2015.
- 3.20 Tilbury Fort and Coalhouse Fort should be classified as a Very High Value resource rather than High Value and should be discussed with Historic England.
- 3.21 Trial trenching should be used in its own right for buried archaeology, not just related to geophysics. For those areas where geophysics cannot be used a general trial trenching evaluation at 5% should be considered.
- 3.22 Thurrock Council, as curators, should be undertaking monitoring visits to all of the sites investigated.
- 3.23 Consideration should be given to using side scanning sonar for the Thames.

### *Landscape*

- 3.24 The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment should have regard to the new (currently draft) "Landscape Character Assessment for Thurrock" and the "Land of the Fanns Character Assessment" which covers a large proportion of the affected landscape north of the Thames. The Land of the Fanns is an Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership scheme which should be considered as part of any landscape, ecology and cultural heritage assessment.
- 3.25 The Scoping Report provides no justification for the decision to adopt a 2km Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) and should follow standard best practice and identify a ZVI which is likely to be much larger. While this is not too much of an issue for the land south of the A13 the land to the north is much more open. It is likely that the route (which is likely to be elevated through this area) would be very prominent from a long distance e.g. from Thorndon Country Park in Brentwood.
- 3.26 The report makes no mention of the relative tranquillity of the upper Mardyke Valley where there are few dwellings and no street lights. This area should also be assessed for the combined effects of noise and visual intrusion in the same way as the Thames Estuary.
- 3.27 The methodology for production of photomontages is lacking. These should show the landscape as it is now and should be produced for year 1 and year 15 to show the future visual impact of the proposal.

- 3.28 Reference should be made to the Thames Estuary Path (including the Two Forts Way) and Grangewaters, which is a recreation site close to the proposed route.
- 3.29 Mitigation measures should also include opportunities to restore/recreate historic landscape features such as marsh and fen which would link to biodiversity and water management mitigation. Green bridges will be important for public rights of way and biodiversity mitigation and the Council will wish to see several provided.
- 3.30 The Council will need to agree any proposed viewpoint receptors in advance of the assessment commencing. These will need to ensure that all settlements are assessed, as well as sites used for public recreation, cultural heritage assets and public rights of way and existing transport routes. Long views will also need to be assessed e.g. from Thorndon Park in Brentwood. Some future baseline viewpoints will also need to be considered.

#### *Biodiversity*

- 3.31 The report details a comprehensive list of protected species that are being surveyed. However, there is no mention of barn owls, which should be surveyed, as these may be impacted within a buffer zone of up to 1.5km from new roads.
- 3.32 Sufficient weight should be given to the potential severance of ecological corridors for species such as bats.
- 3.33 It is important that any surveys take into account the ways animals move through the area and what effects the new route would have, therefore consideration should be given to conducting crossing point surveys and landscape scale transect surveys for bats.
- 3.34 Ecological corridors/networks should also have regard to the landscape character and seek to restore/enhance landscape features.

#### *Geology and Soils*

- 3.35 Geologically designated sites and sites of special scientific interest need to be considered within the EIA.
- 3.36 The assessment needs to consider impacts relating to the generation of excess geological materials.
- 3.37 A key concern of the Council's is the potentially hazardous historic landfill where the tunnel portal would be located (Goshems Farm (THU048)). The Ground Investigation needs to fully determine if significant contamination is present here.

## *Materials*

- 3.38 No methodology has been outlined. The methodology needs to be fully defined to ensure full understanding on how the conclusion regarding effects will be reached. This should also consider the calculation of the embodied carbon emissions of the materials required to construct the Scheme, as a good benchmark for comparison against other similar road schemes.
- 3.39 A clear understanding of the potential effects for Thurrock needs to be provided, e.g. increased mineral extraction, storage/disposal of material arising from tunnelling and wider construction.

## *Noise and Vibration*

- 3.40 The locations of the noise surveys need to be agreed with the Council, although the indicative noise monitoring locations outlined in the Scoping Report are generally in satisfactory locations. The Council would recommend a long-term monitor is set up in Baker Street, as this would be closest to the proposed southbound road to A13 eastbound slip. Further monitoring may also be necessary in the south of Tilbury where the link could be preferentially used by the existing Tilbury port traffic rather than the A1089 dock access road.

## *People and Communities*

- 3.41 There is no mention of non-motorised user surveys. The Council recommends that these should be undertaken.
- 3.42 Strategic sites in the new (draft) Local Plan and the Council's regeneration strategies (which promote growth in locations) need to be considered in the assessment of impacts on development land. This assessment should also consider how the proposed development could increase attractiveness of some development land and reduce attractiveness of others.
- 3.43 Coalhouse Fort needs to be considered within the community facilities assessment.
- 3.44 Severance should also be considered in the context of dividing the borough and creating two separate sets of communities.
- 3.45 Amenity of people living and working in the area and using established leisure facilities such as parks should also be included in the scope.
- 3.46 The Local Study Area (200m) needs to be more flexible, some of the impacts could be outside of this zone such as the severance of catchment areas for community and private assets, and changes in traffic flows.
- 3.47 Clarification is required regarding how the impacts on public rights of way will be mitigated. The use of green bridges and underpasses to replace any public rights of way that are permanently affected by the development would be beneficial.



- 3.48 Impacts on public rights of way should take into consideration Thurrock's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (currently draft), particularly the aims to improve east to west connectivity for equestrians. Opportunities to enhance existing rights of way should be considered.
- 3.49 The Scoping Report does not acknowledge all of the concerns Thurrock faces in terms of health and wellbeing which could be further impacted by the proposed development. A full Health Impact Assessment should be undertaken. Appendix B provides full justification for this.

#### *Road Drainage and the Water Environment*

- 3.50 A key concern the Council has is that the redline boundary only takes account of the road area itself and does not consider the space that will be required for attenuation storage and flood zone compensation. It is critical to consider this as early as possible to ensure we do not have any space issues further down the line.
- 3.51 Infiltration testing and groundwater testing should be conducted.
- 3.52 It must be insured that flood risk or water pollution is not increased off site.
- 3.53 Sustainable Drainage Systems should be located outside of undefended Flood Risk Zones.
- 3.54 The value of the River Thames Estuary and the Mardyke River should be considered High or Very High.
- 3.55 Heavily Modified Waterbodies need to be identified and considered within the assessment.
- 3.56 The Thames Local Flood Risk Management Strategy including the Critical Drainage Areas included in this document should be considered.
- 3.57 Detailed analysis of the impact of the proposed development with reference to the latest surface water modelling in the Surface Water Management Plan should be undertaken.

#### *Climate*

- 3.58 The baseline needs to consider actual weather conditions (temperature, rainfall, wind etc.) as well as observed changes, so that the impact of Climate Change can be fully assessed.
- 3.59 Embodied carbon from the use of materials within the construction needs to be considered, as this makes up approx. 70-80% of the construction carbon footprint. Ensuring a low carbon design should be considered throughout the project.
- 3.60 Greenhouse gas emissions, from the increased volume of traffic needs to be considered within the operational assessment.

## *Cumulative Effects*

- 3.61 Tilbury Energy Centre needs to be included within the assessment of cumulative effects (as well as Tilbury2).
- 3.62 The study area for the initial identification of the 'other developments' to include in the cumulative assessment needs to be clarified, and whether this has been aligned to the traffic model study area or not.
- 3.63 The methodology for the approach to the cumulative effects assessment of air quality and noise and vibration should be clarified. Operational assessments for air quality and noise and vibration are often already included within the assessment due to the use of the traffic forecasts. If this is the case, this needs to be included for clarity.

## **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 4.1 The reasons for the recommendation is so that the Council can provide a response to the Planning Inspectorate on the Lower Thames Crossing Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report by the deadline of the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

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

- 5.1 Various council officers with lead responsibility for thematic areas within the EIA have been consulted.

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

- 6.1 The Lower Thames Crossing is the Council's most important priority and has an impact across all aspects of the Council's corporate priorities.

## **7. Implications**

### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**  
**Management Accountant**  
**(Environment and Place)**

The activities set out in this report will be funded from existing budget allocations.

### **7.2 Legal**

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

The activities set out in this report support the Council in discharging its obligations as statutory consultee under the 2008 Planning Act.

### 7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**  
**Community Development Manager**

Diversity and Equality impacts will fall within the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report, and will form part of the Council's formal response.

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

There are no other implications.

### 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):

- Highways England's Lower Thames Crossing Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report  
(<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/south-east/lower-thames-crossing/?ipcsection=docs>)

### 9. **Appendices to the report**

Appendix 1 – Statement of Comments and Observations  
Appendix 2 – Request for Health Impact Assessment Justification

### **Report Author:**

Dr Kim Yates

Independent Technical Advisor on Environmental Issues

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Dates of Meetings: 16 October 2017, 20 November 2017, 18 December 2017, 22 January 2018, 19 February 2018, 19 March 2018, 23 April 2018

Topic	Lead Officer	Requested by Officer/Member
<b>16 October 2017</b>		
Terms of Reference	Democratic Services	Members
Environmental and Air Quality Issues	Ann Osola	Members
Key Milestones and Points of Influence	Steve Cox	Members
Highways England Update	Highways England Update	Officers
Work Programme	Democratic Services	Officers
<b>20 November 2017</b>		
Response to Environmental Impact Scoping Assessment Report	Ann Osola	Officers
Highways England Update	Highways England Update	Officers
Work Programme	Democratic Services	Officers

Updated: August 2017

<b>18December 2017</b>		
Highways England Update	Highways England Update	Officers
Work Programme	Democratic Services	Officers
Q4/2017 report to general services		
<b>22 January 2018</b>		
Highways England Update	Highways England Update	Officers
Work Programme	Democratic Services	Officers
<b>19 February 2018</b>		
Highways England Update	Highways England Update	Officers
Work Programme	Democratic Services	Officers

---

**19 March 2018**

Highways England Update	Highways England Update	Officers
Work Programme	Democratic Services	Officers
Q1/2018 report to general services		

**23 April 2018**

Highways England Update	Highways England Update	Officers
Work Programme	Democratic Services	Officers

This page is intentionally left blank