

Minutes of the Meeting of the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force held on 10 June 2019 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Gerard Rice (Chair), Luke Spillman (Deputy Chair), Andrew Jefferies, Sara Muldowney, Terry Piccolo and Sue Shinnick

Laura Blake, Thames Crossing Action Group Representative
John Speakman, Thurrock Business Board Representative

Apologies: Councillors Gary Byrne, Tom Kelly, Allen Mayes
Westley Mercer, Thurrock Business Board Representative
Peter Ward, Business Representative

In attendance: Mat Kiely, Strategic Lead Transportation Development
Leigh Nicholson, Interim Assistant Director of Planning,
Transport and Public Protection
Luke Tyson, Business Manager
Lucy Tricker, 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.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absences were received from Councillor Allen Mayes, Councillor Tom Kelly and Councillor Gary Byrne, as well as Westley Mercer, Thurrock Business Board Representative. Peter Ward, Thurrock Business Representative also sent his apologies and sent John Speakman as his substitute.

2. Nomination of Chair and Vice-Chair

Councillor Rice was nominated as Chair by Councillor Shinnick and this was seconded by Councillor Muldowney. This was agreed by the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force. Councillor Spillman was nominated as Vice-Chair by Councillor Shinnick and this was seconded by Councillor Jefferies. This was agreed by the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force.

3. Minutes

The Chair highlighted the section of the minutes on page 7 of the agenda regarding the software licence which HE had promised to send in February, and asked if this had been received yet. The Strategic Lead Transport Development replied that this had been received, and would provide a full update later on in the meeting.

The minutes of the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force meeting held on 11 February 2019 were approved as a correct record.

4. Items of Urgent Business

Councillor Spillman raised one item of urgent business regarding Councillor Massey, the newly elected Independent Member from East Tilbury, and his participation in the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force. He asked if it was possible to amend the Terms of Reference so Councillor Massey could sit on the Task Force. The Democratic Services Officer replied that although this was possible, the Terms of Reference would have to be updated, and then be agreed upon at General Services Committee, which was not yet planned for this municipal year. Councillor Spillman then asked if he could withdraw Councillor Gary Byrne from the Task Force, and gift his seat to Councillor Massey. The Democratic Services Officer commented that this was possible, although this could not be confirmed at this LTC meeting. She clarified that Councillor Spillman would have to announce this at Full Council so the Appointments Booklet could be updated and all elected Members could agree. Councillor Spillman confirmed that this was the option he would be pursuing, and would announce the gifting of the seat at the next Full Council meeting.

5. Declaration of Interests

There were no interests declared.

6. Terms of Reference

The Chair asked if any Members had any comments regarding the Terms of Reference. The Thames Crossing Action Group (TCAG) Representative replied that the Terms of Reference listed her group as the 'Lower Thames Crossing Action Group', but the official name was the 'Thames Crossing Action Group' and asked if this could be changed.

Councillor Jefferies highlighted the frequency of meetings, and asked if monthly meetings were necessary, and if it would be more productive to meet on an ad-hoc basis. The Chair answered that it was useful to have dates in diaries, so Members could be aware of upcoming meetings, but if no substantial business was on the agenda then meetings could be cancelled. Councillor Piccolo added that the LTC Task Force should fall in-line with other Committees and not hold an August meeting. The Chair commented that the LTC Task Force was different to other Committees as it was reliant on Highways England (HE) communicating and providing information, and as this happened throughout the year, an August meeting was necessary.

7. Task Force Priorities List

The Strategic Lead Transport Development introduced the report and stated that there were no fundamental changes to the Priorities List, and was on the agenda for the Task Force to note. He stated that HE were currently analysing 26,000 consultation responses, and that because of this the Council were unlikely to hear from HE until later on in June. He elaborated that HE were currently looking at the scheme design, but the Council had not received detail on this. The Strategic Lead Transport Development then added that HE had provided the data sharing agreement and cordoned model, and these had been separated into two sections. The first section related to 2036-2041 and had been sent over on 13 May 2019; and the second section related to 2031-2051 and had been sent over on 6 June 2019, and the Council's consultants, PBA, were currently analysing the data. He moved onto discussing the Health Impact Assessment (HIA), which was being progressed and officers had now agreed to its scope. The Strategic Lead Transport Development finished by stating that the Council were expecting an announcement from HE in the next few weeks, which would allow for matters to be progressed further.

The Chair asked if the LTC Task Force would be able to take part in a traffic modelling workshop, as this had been mentioned in a previous meeting. The Strategic Lead Transport Development replied that this could now be progressed and a suitable date could be identified. He clarified that PBA would need to analyse the data first, but at the July meeting of the LTC Task Force, a discussion could take place regarding a date for the workshop.

The Vice-Chair asked if officers were waiting on any information from HE that they had requested and not yet received. The Strategic Lead Transport Development replied that they had been waiting for the cordoned model, but there had been a legal delay in signing the data sharing agreement. He commented that the Council had no other data issues and were content with the information HE had made available, although it had been delayed.

The Chair questioned the HIA, as this would feature heavily in the design. He asked when the Task Force would be able to see this document. The Strategic Lead Transport Development replied that an item would be coming to the July Task Force when Members could talk about it with officers from the Public Health team.

The TCAG Representative provided an update from the Thames Crossing Action Group (TCAG) as HE had been in communication and stated they were starting pumping works north and south of the river which would run until late August. The TCAG Representative also stated that HE had announced they would be boring 700 holes in 400 locations north and south of the river, and had invited the TCAG to view the works.

The Chair then drew Members attention to page 18 of the agenda and asked how the project would be funded. The TCAG Representative replied that she believed that HE would be funding the project entirely through public money, which had not been allocated yet. The Chair mentioned that the deadline for central government funding was October 2019, and this would not be open again for another 5 years. He felt that if HE could not meet this deadline, then

the scheme could not go ahead as planned. The TCAG Representative commented that the A303 at Stonehenge were in the same process, but were at examination phase, and could prove to be a good comparator. The TCAG Representative asked if the cordoned model only provided traffic modelling for the proposed route C3. The Strategic Lead Transport Development replied that it provided a baseline for the current proposal of LTC.

The Chair asked the Thurrock Business Representative if the Port of Tilbury had received any response from HE regarding their consultation submission, or any news on the proposed Tilbury Link Road. The Thurrock Business Representative replied that although the Port of Tilbury had spoken with HE, they had been provided with no clear answers.

The Chair commented that it was important to mitigate against the scheme and protect urban areas. The TCAG Representative stated that during the construction of HS2, many trees along the route had started to die and needed replacing. She commented that she did not want this to occur during construction of the LTC, and the route needed proper screening. The Chair also asked what arrangements were being made to protect Coalhouse Fort. The Strategic Lead Transport Development replied that he would email a response to Task Force Members.

The Vice-Chair drew the Task Force's attention to page 34 of the agenda, and the section relating to engagement with stakeholders. He asked if the Council were joining forces with other major stakeholders, such as the Port of Tilbury, to formalise their complaints and experiences dealing with HE. The TCAG Representative added that this was an important suggestion as other stakeholders were experiencing issues with other projects, as well as LTC.

8. Work Programme

The Chair stated that a report updating the Task Force on the progress of the HIA would be coming to July's meeting. The Vice-Chair asked officers to put pressure on PBA to analyse the data, so a workshop could be organised for the Task Force. He also asked if a formal complaint process could be drawn up against HE, although he understood the Council were currently in a waiting period.

THE TCAG Representative stated that she anticipated HE would be undertaking further targeted consultation relating to Orsett Showground and the changing route, and wanted the Task Force to advertise if additional consultation occurred, so people could fill out the consultation response form. She also stated that the TCAG were willing to meet with new Councillors to inform them of their work and answer any questions they may have.

The Chair asked if copies of the minutes could be made available to HE, so they can see discussions that take place at Task Force meetings which they choose not to attend.

The meeting finished at 6.40 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**