

Minutes of the Meeting of the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force held on 16 September 2019 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Gerard Rice (Chair), Luke Spillman (Deputy Chair), Andrew Jefferies, Fraser Massey, Allen Mayes and Sara Muldowney

Laura Blake, Thames Crossing Action Group
Perry Glading, Thurrock Business Board Representative
Robert Quick, Resident Representative
Peter Ward, Thurrock Business Representative

In attendance: Anna Eastgate, Assistant Director of Lower Thames Crossing
Helen Forster, Strategic Lead Place, Environment and Community
Jenny Shade, Senior 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.

16. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Westley Mercer, Thurrock Business Board Representative with Perry Glading acted as his substitute.

17. Minutes

The Minutes of the Lower Thames Crossing held on the 15 July 2019 were approved as a correct record.

18. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

19. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

20. Health Impact Assessment Briefing Note

Helen Forster, Strategic Lead Public Health, stated that the Health Impact Assessment was not a statutory requirement in the planning process with its power to influence being limited to recommendations and material guidance. Helen Forster stated that the briefing note was self-explanatory and was happy to take any questions.

Councillor Muldowney questioned how the Health Impact Assessment would lead to mitigation of any further health issues. The Assistant Director LTC stated that there was a difference between mitigation that must be provided as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment and any voluntary additional mitigation that could be delivered and identified through the Health Impact Assessment

Councillor Rice stated to ensure Thurrock was ahead of the game before the scheme was up and running the option of cut and cover should be addressed. Councillor Rice stated that the Council should be more robust on Highways England and not take the option of cut and cover as too expensive and the Council owed it to the Thurrock younger generation to get this scheme right. The Assistant Director LTC stated there was very little opportunity in the borough for cut and cover and until the impact on noise and air quality was known, it would be difficult to be able to justify additional cut and cover.

Councillor Rice requested that a letter be drafted to the newly appointed Secretary of State for Transport, Grant Shapps, with reference that Option 3 should be revisited. The Assistant Director LTC agreed to draft a letter to the Secretary of State for Transport that all three group leaders could sign as with the protocol agreed.

Councillor Spillman questioned whether the light agenda reflected the current situation and asked whether any direction had been received from the Secretary of State for Transport. The Assistant Director LTC stated that there was no new information to share at this time but stated it would be Highways England's decision on what scheme to apply with the task force group shaping and influencing that decision.

Councillor Rice agreed that MPs may have changed their mind and that the Secretary of State for Transport should be made aware of those changes so that a review could be undertaken to ensure the best scheme was carried out.

21. Task Force Priorities List

The Chair questioned the Task Force whether there were any questions on the Task Force Priorities List.

Councillor Muldowney asked whether any data had been received from the transport modelling work. The Assistant Director LTC stated there was still a commitment to undertake the modelling workshop where discussions would take place on the Councils and Highways England interpretations of the transport modelling. A meeting between officers and Highways England was taking place in the next couple of weeks and a transport modelling workshop would be scheduled as soon as possible.

The Resident Representative, questioned when had the last weekly technical meeting taken place and would these weekly meetings continue. The Assistant Director LTC stated this had taken place in March 2019 and with no

agreement made in the programme of engagement for September had anticipated that these would start again in October 2019.

The Resident Representative, questioned whether any alternatives to the proposal had been considered. The Assistant Director LTC stated that the preliminary environmental information report which was published at consultation, set out the options considered and discounted previously.

The Thames Crossing Action Group Representative questioned at what stage a comparison would be undertaken on the best route. The Assistant Director LTC stated that Highways England consider the best option had been evidenced. For that to change there would need to be a substantial and fundamental change in circumstances for the promotor to go back and start again to look at preferred routes.

Councillor Mayes questioned the Tilbury Link. The Assistant Director of LTC stated that discussions had taken place and Highways England had confirmed that the Tilbury Link would not be funded as part of the scheme.

The Thurrock Business Board Representation asked whether there was any information on the Design School Scheme that Highways England had announced last week. The Assistant Director LTC stated this was a successful programme run by Highways England on the A14 in Cambridgeshire and it is proposed will run for LTC and would circulate further information out.

Councillor Rice asked whether there was an update in relation to the progression of the Local Plan. The Assistant Director LTC stated that officers had met with a Local Plan Inspector last week in an advisory role to discuss the challenge in bringing forward the Local Plan when there was still uncertainty about the LTC. Officers were looking at possible solutions but it was not an easy problem to solve.

Councillor Rice asked whether the motorway rest and service area was still proposed for the East Tilbury area. The Assistant Director LTC stated that no information was available in the public domain that could be shared at this time. The Resident Representative questioned when this information would be available to the public. The Assistant Director LTC stated that no date had yet been indicated.

The Chair questioned why Highways England has been seen on the Orsett Health Playing Field which was Council land. The Assistant Director LTC stated that Highways England had no access to that land as no licences had been provided.

The Thames Crossing Action Group Representative stated they had actually been Council workers marking out the football pitches who happened to have the same colour hi-viz as Highways England. Highways England had agreed to send photos of their hi-viz which would identify their logo so that residents could identify them.

22. Work Programme

The Chair questioned whether Highways England should attend the next meeting. The Assistant Director LTC stated that this would be dependent on whether Highways England had any new information to share and requested that questions be submitted in advance.

The Thames Crossing Action Group Representative stated that a meeting had been arranged with Highways England this Wednesday to look at the scheduling of a work programme.

The Thames Crossing Action Group Representative asked whether a statement could be provided from the Council on Climate Emergency. The Assistant Director LTC stated that she would take this task away and report back.

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**