Minutes of the Meeting of the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force held on 16 August 2021 at 6.00pm

Present:	Councillors Fraser Massey (Chair), John Kent (Vice-Chair), Gary Byrne *(arrived 7.47pm)*, Adam Carter, Daniel Chukwu, Sara Muldowney and Terry Piccolo
Apologies:	Colin Black, Interim Assistant Director Regeneration and Place Delivery Laura Blake, Thames Crossing Action Group Representative Robert Quick, Resident Representative Westley Mercer, Thurrock Business Board Representative Peter Ward, Business Representative
In attendance:	Lucy Tricker, Senior Democratic Services Officer Chris Stratford, Senior Consultant, Stantec engaged by Thurrock Council Tim Wright, Head of Consent Highways England Sam Stopp, Local Government Lead Highways England Sam Nolan, Local Authority Engagement Co-Ordinator Highways England Gary Hodge, Technical Lead Highways England

Before the start of the meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being live-streamed and recorded, with the livestream being available on the Council's website.

16. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Colin Black, Laura Blake, Westley Mercer, Robert Quick and Peter Ward.

17. Minutes

The minutes from the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force meeting held on 12 July 2021 were approved as a true and correct record.

18. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

19. Declaration of Interests

There were no interests declared.

20. Highways England Attendance: Community Impact Consultation and Progress on the Hatch Mitigation Measures Q&A Session

The Highways England (HE) Head of Consents began by providing an update to the ongoing community impact consultation, and explained that following a request from the Task Force, two new consultation events were being held in Thurrock. He stated that HE had also received a request from Thurrock and 3 other local authorities (Kent CC, Gravesham BC and LB Havering) to extend the consultation for 5 key reasons, and whilst HE understood the difficulties of holding a consultation during COVID and across the summer holiday, the consultation had already been extended from 6 weeks to 8 weeks and therefore would not be extended further. He added that the minimum statutory period for consultation was 28 days and 8 weeks far exceeded this, and the consultation so far had been extensive, including both in-person events as well as webinars, a phone call back service and hard copy materials.

The HE Head of Consents then explained that HE had so far received a significant response to the consultation, with 1,900 responses being received so far, of which only 7 were paper copy responses. He stated that this was a higher figure than both previous consultations when looking at the same timeframe. He explained that responses so far included areas such as the environment, air quality, mitigation, construction, and the cost to use the route once opened. He stated that 25 written questions had been received from the Task Force and he would work through these questions in order. The Senior Consultant Stantec clarified that the answers should also be written and circulated to Members.

The HE Head of Consents began by outlining the first question: *"since HE keep referring to the economic benefits of the proposed LTC, can they please provide an estimated figure on the current economic benefits of the proposed LTC?"* The HE Head of Consents replied that this information would be set out in the Development Consent Order (DCOv2), but was not included in the current consultation, as it focussed mainly on the community impact. He added that details of the economic benefit of the scheme had been outlined in the 2018 statutory consultation, and this document was currently being reworked and updated. He commented that the ward summaries in this consultation outlined on a ward level new job opportunities due to shortened commute times and reduced congestion, which would provide economic benefit.

Councillor Kent questioned if these would be new jobs, or existing jobs that would now become accessible for Thurrock residents. The HE Head of Consents replied that these were existing jobs that would become accessible. He added that there would be approximately 20,000 new jobs associated with the scheme, which would be good for local people and the local economy. He stated that reduced traffic on the westbound A13, southbound M25 and at the Dartford Crossing would improve journey times and therefore improve the

local economy.

Councillor Muldowney questioned how many of the 20,000 jobs related to the scheme would be based in Thurrock. The HE Head of Consents replied that a regional breakdown was not available, but would liaise with the team to find out if a written response could be provided. He stated that many of the major work sites and compounds would be based in Thurrock, which would increase the workforce within the area, and that jobs along the length of the route would be available to Thurrock residents too. He added that the highways contract had been granted for north of the river, and tunnel construction labour would be split between north and south. The Senior Consultant Stantec stated that targets for local employment and apprenticeships needed to be agreed and confirmed in the DCOv2, and needed to be committed to in control documents. He stated that as part of the Tideway project 25% of the workforce had to be from the local authorities affected, and although this had been hard to achieve, a 20% local employment target would be achievable. The HE Head of Consents replied that the HE team were currently in discussion with Thurrock officers regarding the Skills and Employment strategy and the role of targets. He stated that no commitment had been made yet, but HE were already working with local employers through workshops and for site investigations. He explained that if targets were included in the DCOv2 and then not met, this would be a criminal offence, and HE could not guarantee the engagement of the local workforce.

Councillor Muldowney expressed her concern over the hesitancy to commit to employment targets, and felt that even a 15% local employment target would be beneficial to local residents. The Senior Consultant Stantec added that employment targets are not necessary to be achieved, but would show a commitment by HE to try and employ local people and use local procurement. The HE Head of Consents replied that the conversation was currently ongoing between HE and Thurrock officers. Councillor Chukwu stated that there was currently a shortage of UK construction workers, and asked if HE would be providing training to increase construction workers in the area. The HE Head of Consents explained that not all 20,000 jobs on the scheme would be in construction, as the project required a number of different skillsets. He stated that the team understood there would be numerous different developments in the area, including the Thames Freeport and London Resort, and HE would work with organisations to provide the necessary support.

The HE Head of Consents moved onto question two: *“since HE have stated there won't be ventilation chimneys for the tunnel, can they please explain in detail how the tunnel would be ventilated? This is obviously a major concern especially for residents closest to the portals, both visually and in regard to air pollution.”* He responded that there would be fan ventilation along the length of the tunnel, but these would only be switched on if traffic became stationary, slowed or there was an incident. He explained that in normal circumstances vehicle movement would create airflow and disperse emissions out of the tunnel portals. He stated that the nearest home to the tunnel portal was along Station Road and was approximately 800m away. He stated that the air quality impact would only be felt approximately 50m from the tunnel portal,

and all emissions would be dispersed at around 200m from the tunnel portal.

Councillor Muldowney questioned why different ventilation systems would be used in the LTC compared to the Dartford Crossing. The HE Technical Lead responded that the LTC would be a more modern tunnel and would be much bigger than the Dartford Crossing. He stated that the team were currently working to assess airflows, but as the traffic travelled in the same direction, this should ensure necessary ventilation naturally. He explained that the ventilation fans would only be used if stationary traffic occurred. The Senior Consultant Stantec queried if there was a minimum length for a tunnel before ventilation had to be introduced. His understanding was that the LTC would be too short to introduce ventilation columns. The HE Technical Lead replied that the tunnel length as well as the gradient determined what type of ventilation was needed, but ventilation columns were not needed for the LTC.

Councillor Piccolo questioned if the fans would also be used when traffic was slowly crawling. He asked if monitors would be in place along the tunnel to ensure fans came on when necessary, even if traffic was not stationary. The HE Technical Lead stated that he would come back with a written response. The Chair questioned air quality surrounding Coalhouse Fort, which would be close to the north portal tunnel entrance. The HE Head of Consents stated that any air quality impacts would have been dispersed before reaching Coalhouse Fort, and was far enough away from the area of concern, which was 50m from the tunnel entrance. He explained that within 200m away from the portal, air quality returned to its normal levels. The Chair questioned if wind could impact on these areas of concern. The HE Technical Lead responded that wind would help to disperse particulates.

Councillor Muldowney questioned the plans to build a park (Tilbury Fields) by the tunnel portal, and asked if this would be within the 50m area of air quality concern. The HE Head of Consents commented that the 50m area of concern was a worst case scenario, and usually was only a concern if people had increased exposure, for example, lived within this area. He stated that if people were passing through there would be no ill effects on health. He added that the road would be in cutting in this area, and the park would be further south rather than adjacent to the tunnel portal.

The Chair questioned how air quality and noise would be monitored during construction and operation. The HE Head of Consents stated that air quality and noise would be monitored during construction to provide a baseline level of data, but would not be monitored during operation. The Chair questioned how air quality and noise would be compared pre-LTC and after route opening. The HE Head of Consents replied that HE would monitor traffic levels rather than specifically noise or air quality. The Chair requested that air quality and noise monitoring after route opening be included as part of the scheme. Councillor Piccolo echoed the Chair’s comments and felt that air quality and noise needed to be monitored after route opening to show if HE’s predictions were correct or not. He felt that monitoring would be the only way Thurrock would know if there was a problem with local air quality levels. The HE Head of Consents mentioned that there were a number of complexities

involved in air quality and noise monitoring, but would take this back to the team for their consideration.

The HE Head of Consents moved onto question three: *"have HE looked into The Wilderness in South Ockendon as an ancient woodland as we previously requested, if so what update is there?"* The HE Head of Consents stated that there was specific criteria for a woodland to be designated as ancient, as the woodland had to be in continuous existence since 1600. He stated that the team had studied historical maps of The Wilderness and records of its existence only went back as far as 1840. He mentioned that this area was still of importance to Thurrock residents, and the route alignment had been changed since statutory consultation to reduce the impact on the area by introducing a new retaining wall. He stated that a watercourse would also divert through the southern end of The Wilderness and new woodland would be planted to replace those trees lost by the watercourse. The Chair questioned if those replacement trees would be in the immediate vicinity. The HE Technical Lead replied that new planting would occur around the watercourse near to The Wilderness as well as to the south side of the LTC. The Chair questioned if the watercourse would be diverted near to the landfill. The HE Technical Lead explained that the watercourse would be split by the LTC, then diverted parallel to the route, and would reconnect on the eastern edge towards the landfill. The HE Head of Consents added that the watercourse would be designed in consultation with the Environment Agency, as there was a need to protect the landfill site, and ensure both the watercourse and landfill did not affect the other. The Chair asked if HE would undertake investigations into the landfill. The HE Head of Consents replied that the team had talked to the owner of the landfill and would investigate to ensure the proximity of the works did not bridge the contamination edge of the landfill site.

The HE Head of Consents moved onto question four: *"why did HE not update the map books etc. to properly show the extra slip road lane connecting the LTC to the A13/Orsett Cock for the consultation?"* The HE Head of Consents stated that the need for an extra slip road had been identified later on in the process and the map books had already been produced. He stated that a link on the website had been included and text had been updated in some documents, as well as being an area for discussion at in-person consultation events.

Councillor Muldowney stated that she felt concerned about engagement from residents with the consultation. She added that there were lots of detailed documents which contained complex information, and this made it hard for residents to understand. She felt that more information should be provided that was not as specialist and easier for residents to understand, including information on how the scheme would directly affect them. She added that Thurrock had also not received an updated air quality or noise assessment, and would not receive these until after the consultation had closed. The HE Head of Consents replied that air quality and noise information had been included in the consultation, but these were only preliminary works as the full assessment would not be agreed until DCO submission. He stated that the

team would continue to work on the full assessment alongside the development of the project, but the information in the consultation was representative of the impacts of the scheme. Councillor Muldowney asked how confident HE were that residents living within 250m of the route would not have any adverse health impacts due to air quality, both during construction and operation. The HE Head of Consents replied that he could not comment on individual cases, and some adverse effects would be felt by residents. He stated that these were listed in the consultation documents, but it was a complex field and HE were trying to help local residents understand the impacts.

The Senior Consultant Stantec queried the qualified text in section 1.6 of the ward summaries, and queried if further work was being undertaken to update this information. He felt that HE could not be confident in this information if it had not been updated and was still subject to change. The HE Head of Consents stated that HE were confident this information was representative. Councillor Muldowney questioned if a fund would be set up to assist residents who would be severely impacted by the scheme, for example, those with pre-existing conditions or vulnerabilities. The HE Head of Consents stated that compensation requirements were listed in the consultation material, but a specific fund was not currently being discussed.

The Senior Consultant Stantec added that Thurrock officers were currently reviewing the new HE non-statutory compensation document, but felt that it did not go much beyond what was statutorily required. He added that it was a new document and new policy that HE had released for the LTC, but felt that it did not go far enough. He stated that he would circulate it to those Members that wished to see it.

The HE Head of Consents outlined question five: *"can HE provide full details of how long they predict road closures to be for each road, as the info in the consultation materials seems to contradict itself? For example, page 321 in the Ward Impact Summary - North of the River Pt1 states the southern end of Baker Street being closed for 16 months, yet on page 354 in the same document it states the south end of Baker Street would be closed for 5 years. Would it be 16 months or 5 years?"* He stated that the road section of Baker Street would be closed for 16 months, and the footpath alongside Baker Street would be closed for 5 years. He stated that the footpath ran through a major construction area for the A13 junction and needed to be safe for residents to use, and therefore needed to be closed for the duration of construction. He understood that this was a significant Public Right of Way (PRoW) closure and the team would look into how this could be diverted along the A1013 and High Road. He added that the team were also considering how it could be maintained once open and this information was included in the consultation documents.

Councillor Muldowney questioned the closure of Brentwood Road, as the ward impact summary stated it would be closed for 12-14 months to move a gas main and other utilities. She asked if the road would be fully closed for 12-14 months or only a percentage of this time. She also sought reassurance

that residents along Brentwood Road would still be able to access their homes, and what mitigation would be put in place if they could not. The HE Head of Consents stated that he would reply in writing to the query. He commented that Brentwood Road would be closed due to specific utilities diversions, but residents would still have access to their homes.

The Senior Consultant Stantec stated that he had regularly raised the number of PRoW closures and the length of time they would be closed for without HE providing any suitable mitigation. He asked if HE could look at providing alternative routes and diversions. The HE Head of Consents replied that some areas would be closed for long periods of time, and the team were looking at diversions, but these might prove difficult due to construction areas.

Councillor Muldowney stated that areas such as Chadwell St Mary and Tilbury already had long wait times for emergency services, particularly ambulances that had to travel from Basildon Hospital. She asked if wait times for emergency services would worsen due to road closures, and what mitigation would be put in place to prevent this. The HE Head of Consents explained that this was set out in the outline Traffic Management Plan, which would be submitted prior to construction, and would be agreed in consultation with Thurrock Council and the emergency services. He stated that a detailed level of information could only be brought forward prior to construction. Councillor Muldowney also questioned the 3m high barriers along Godman Road, and queried if this would protect residents in the Chadwell St Mary high rise flats from emissions. The HE Head of Consents stated that he would reply in writing due to the specific nature of the request.

The HE Head of Consents moved onto question six: "*can HE explain how the AM peak traffic only has a 10-20% increase, yet PM peak traffic has a 20-40% increase, why? How can the peak hour traffic in the evening be twice as much as in the morning?"* The HE Head of Consents stated that traffic movement varied throughout the day, as not everyone undertook a regular commute. He explained that afternoon peak traffic increased due to HGV movements and people returning from shopping or visiting family, etc. Councillor Muldowney felt that a traffic increase along local roads such as A1089 and Brentwood Road would have a negative effect on the residents of Chadwell St Mary, including in terms of air quality. The HE Head of Consents explained that any traffic changes had been accounted for in the traffic model, which had then been used to inform the air quality assessment. He stated that air quality impacts would be relatively localised, and there would be no expansive air quality concerns. He stated that once the route was opened, air quality would improve in areas such as Dartford, as well as for residents living alongside the M25 and A13. He stated that the ward summaries highlighted the impact of the route for residents in Chadwell St Mary, as well as in other areas of Thurrock. He stated that there would be positive and negative impacts of the LTC and the planning process was designed to consider all aspects.

The HE Head of Consents outlined question seven: *"in relation to the 'volume to capacity' data, where can we find details of the capacity of the roads? Also, what is the design capacity of the proposed LTC?"* He stated that HE did not

normally report on route capacity, which was in line with design industry standards, as every element of the scheme would have a different capacity. He stated that the tunnel would have a passenger car unit (PCU) per hour capacity of 6,360. He explained that one PCU equated to one car, and one HGV equated to 2.5 PCUs. He stated that every slip road would have a different capacity, which could also be affected by gradients.

The HE Head of Consents outlined question eight: *"can HE explain why they are now only predicting a 21%, instead of 22%, decrease in traffic at the Dartford Crossing if LTC goes ahead, and would this figure drop again if things like London Resort was taken into account for traffic modelling? Can HE remind us why London Resort has not been included in the current traffic modelling?"* He explained that Figure 4.1 in the Operations Update provided updated traffic modelling information, which included new developments, such as the new Amazon depot in Dartford, and therefore changed the capacity at the Dartford Crossing. He stated that the change in opening year also had an effect on traffic figures. He then explained that the London Resort had not been included in the model as the scheme was highly complex and the level of detail required not yet been released. He commented that this information would be included at DCOv2 submission and a sensitivity analysis in terms of traffic in relation to the London Resort would also be undertaken.

The HE Head of Consents stated that question nine was a follow on question: *"why do HE predict it will drop further to just 14% by 2044?"* He responded that the forecast at Dartford reduced over time until 14% by 2044, due to increased population and new developments. He added that once the LTC was opened people would reroute their journeys and residents who live in Thurrock would increase the number of journeys they made south of the river. Councillor Muldowney queried if the new route would be a new mechanism to fill up roads, as it increased the number of journeys that could be made. She felt that due to climate change, new roads should not be built. She also questioned how the LTC would help the government meet its climate change ambitions, and how carbon release would be mitigated. The HE Head of Consents replied that the team had carefully considered if the LTC would induce new traffic, for example, through people making new trips, and the team had found that only a small percentage of journeys would be new. He stated that some people would choose new routes, which would increase the length of their journeys, and this also accounted for a small percentage of overall journeys made. He explained that the LTC would enable people to make different journeys rather than new ones. He added that the Department of Transport had recently published their Decarbonisation Plan, which identified road structure as critical to the government's climate ambition. He stated that if the LTC was not built, Dartford would remain an issue in terms of congestion and emissions. He stated that the team were currently looking at the carbon footprint of the LTC during construction and operation, and how these impacts could be lessened, for example, using renewable power sources. The HE Head of Consents added that there was currently no scheme in place for carbon offsetting, but HE's focus was to try and ensure all cars and HGVs produced no emissions, in line with the government's target of banning fossil fuel cars by 2030 and HGVs by 2040.

Councillor Kent sought clarification that there would be very few new journeys after the LTC opening, and the majority would be different journeys. He felt that travel patterns in Thurrock would change as the majority of people currently lived in Thurrock and worked in London, and this would change as job opportunities opened up in Kent. He felt that this would have an impact on climate change and carbon emissions. He added that currently residents could not use public transport to get into Kent, and this would not change once the route was opened. The HE Head of Consents stated that he would go back to the technical team for clarification. He stated that the team were also considering the role of public transport along the LTC.

The Senior Consultant Stantec added that Thurrock Council had made proposals about public transport to HE. He stated that under current plans buses could use the tunnel, but would need to take a circuitous route to areas where people could catch the bus to/from. He explained that if HE altered their plans for emergency access, this could increase the viability of a bus route between Thurrock and Kent. He stated that currently no bus operators would operate using the new LTC and people would be dissuaded from using public transport. The HE Head of Consents replied that public transport operators could use the route, and HE would also be developing the Tilbury Link Road to improve connectivity. He stated that due to a reduction of congestion at Dartford, buses would also see increased journey times which would improve connectivity.

Councillor Muldowney stated that the route would produce 3.2million tonnes of carbon during operation, and 2.2million tonnes of carbon during construction. She felt that bus companies should be encouraged to utilise the LTC and a route made viable. The HE Head of Consents replied that the team had already undertaken some preliminary work into bus travel across the route, but would undertake further study. The Senior Consultant Stantec added that Thurrock had also undertaken some preliminary market demand work, and had found that it could be possible and profitable for bus companies dependent on demand and routing.

The Chair stated that electric vehicles still produced brake dust and PM2.5. He added that at route opening the majority of HGVs would also still be using fossil fuels. He queried if HE planned to use electric LGVs during construction. The HE Head of Consents responded that HE would be using electric shuttle buses to get workers to their sites, and were looking into the possibility of using hydrogen technology too. He stated that there were lots of options, but not all vehicles would be zero emissions, as some would be too specialist. He stated that he would reply in writing regarding the use of electric LGVs.

The HE Head of Consents then outlined question ten: *“how can HE state on page 126 of the Operations Update that they predict traffic on the Dartford Crossing in 2029 to be 168,200 vehicles daily and 183,100 vehicles daily in 2044 (without the LTC), when in reality the Dartford Crossing is currently running between 155k and 180k vehicles per day now. Where do these*

predicted figures come from as they don't seem very realistic, especially when the predicted traffic growth between 2016 and 2026 has previously been stated to be between a 17-23% increase?" The HE Head of Consents replied that the transport model used an average weekly figure from a week in March. He stated that in heavily congested areas in Dartford, congestion would increase by 9% once the LTC had opened, and without the LTC this increase would be unconstrained.

The HE Head of Consents then answered questions eleven, twelve and thirteen: *"can we have further clarification on the 24/7 working hours?" "Why are they being detailed as 'new' in the consultation if it is something that would already have been happening for reasons of safety etc., and was outlined in the Supplementary Consultation?" "What protections will be in place to stop HE working 24/7 just to speed things up when and where it suits them?"* He stated that there would be 24/7 working at the tunnel launch site near East Tilbury as this would reduce construction risk, but this would be controlled. He added that it was standard practice to use 24/7 working in the tunnel as the boring machine needed to work continuously. He stated that there were also additional 24/7 working areas that had been identified and highlighted in the consultation. He stated that these were labelled as 'new' but this was because they had not been set out individually in a consultation before. He stated that 24/7 working would improve safety on the local road network and reduce the impact of construction on roads such as the A2 and A13. He explained that the team would work to ensure least disruption to residents, for example, by utilising overnight closures and these were set out in the consultation. He added that 24/7 working practices would also be included in the Code of Construction Practice (CoCP), and further, would need to be agreed by Thurrock Council as part of a section 61 consent.

The Senior Consultant Stantec stated that the areas of 24/7 working in roads were listed in the CoCP Section 6.4 as 35 locations overall, with 30 of these being in Thurrock; and, there were a further 35 areas for utility works of which 15 were in Thurrock. He stated that these areas had not been mapped and the reasoning for 24/7 working was not included in any of the consultation documents. The HE Head of Consents explained that the team could sit with Thurrock officers to outline the different locations to ensure full understanding of the reasoning behind 24/7 working. He stated that some sites were 24/7 due to directional drilling and the nature of the works. He commented that none of the 24/7 working sites were driven by the programme completion date.

The Chair sought clarification that 24/7 working would only be utilised in the locations listed, and other sites would follow normal working hours. The HE Head of Consents stated that he would provide a written response. The Chair also sought clarification regarding noise and vibration, and asked if HE could help residents understand the levels of noise and vibration, and how it would affect them. The HE Head of Consents stated that there was a graphic included in the ward summaries that provided an indication of noise level and highlighted the difference between a 5 decibel noise increase. Councillor Muldowney felt there was a big difference between a 5 decibel noise increase

during the day compared to overnight. She queried how long 24/7 working would need to be undertaken near Brentwood Road and Godman Road. The HE Head of Consents replied that he would provide a written response.

Councillor Byrne arrived 19.47

Councillor Chukwu stated that he lived close to the route and queried how noise and vibration might affect him. The HE Head of Consents stated that he could not comment on specific locations but urged Members to attend consultation events or call the contact line, who would be able to answer questions regarding specific locations. He stated that all disruptions would be carefully managed, particularly the delivery of the tunnel and portals. The Senior Consultant Stantec stated that section 7 of the ward summaries described the impact of noise and vibration, but did not include a list of works being undertaken in that ward, particularly 24/7 working areas. He asked where this information could be found. The HE Head of Consents replied that the ward summaries set out general locations, and more detailed information would be included in the CoCP.

The Chair questioned what would happen if HE breached their working hour's policies. The HE Head of Consents explained that the local authority could issue a stop work directive if working hours that were outlined in the DCOv2 and Control of Pollution Act 1974 (COPA) were breached. He stated that he would reply with a more detailed answer in writing.

The HE Technical Lead outlined question fourteen: *"HE gave us a presentation in January this year. On page 12 there are images of cross sections of the proposed bridges. Can HE please give us clarity and confirmation on what we can expect from these bridges, as we have since learnt during this consultation that those images are evidently not what we should expect in reality if LTC goes ahead? For instance the 'Green' bridge at North Road appears to show 2 lanes of traffic with a cycle lane running alongside, and then what looks like footpath to each side of the road/cycle path. Yet we are now being told that there would just be 2 lanes of traffic and a split footpath/cycle lane? If there is just one footpath and as we understand it that is to the east side of the road, can HE please clarify how pedestrians would cross safely to the north side of the bridge to use the proposed footpath that would run westwards on the west side of North Road up towards the M25/Thames Chase direction, as crossing the very busy North Road not long after a raised green bridge doesn't sound safe or sensible. We would obviously appreciate clarity on all proposed bridges as to whether any of the cross section images are actually accurate representations of what to expect please."* The HE Technical Lead responded that the pictures included in the presentation to the Task Force are a cross-section and provided illustrative figures, and are the same as outlined in the January 2021 presentation. He explained that the green bridge at North Road would not be for public access, but there would be a public pedestrian cycleway alongside North Road that would connect to a new footpath and would be extended from east to west. He stated that the team were currently working with Thurrock officers to consider the whole PRoW strategy and how footpaths would be used in

future, including any future controlled crossings.

The Senior Consultant Stantec added that the widths of all LTC crossings might be adequate, but that Thurrock officers were currently discussing how this width could be utilised. He stated that the majority are currently proposed as pedestrian/cyclist shared spaces, but Thurrock were requiring separate pedestrian and cyclist areas in accordance with DfT guidance LTN 1/20. He mentioned that Thurrock were currently developing their active travel strategy and were working with HE to ensure the strategy's success and did not want such crossings design to constrain future increased usage.

The HE Technical Lead then outlined question fifteen: *"on the topic of PRoW, could HE also please clarify how they can call the southern end of Rectory Rd in Orsett a new PRoW in consultation materials? Because if it is new I am not sure what I walk and cycle along there now and have been doing for years?! It is also a bit confusing as where they are showing the cycle route on the old A13 (A1013/Stanford Rd) as they show it on the north side of the road, when in reality it is to the south side. Could HE also clarify for us why the PRoW to the south side of the A1013/Stanford road is being shown as upgraded and what real benefit the suggested upgrade would actually bring us in reality, other than what I seem to remember as being a slightly wider bit of concrete/tarmac along what is already a reasonable width path, and appears would destroy more hedgerow and agricultural land. This is just an example and we are and will be reviewing other PRoWs in detail too, as it appears HE are simply trying to tick boxes and try and make their 'efforts' in regard to PRoW look better than they actually would be in reality if LTC goes ahead."* The HE Technical Lead stated that the PRoW would be upgraded to bridleway standard, and would include provision for use by cyclists. He stated that the team had investigated a link between the A127 and A13, but found that there was more east to west demand than north to south. He added that a north to south route would also not be safe as cyclists could not use the tunnel. He added that there had been proposals to use the service area beneath the tunnel for cyclists, but this would not be safe as cyclists could not be evacuated from this area if there was an emergency. He explained that the ferry provided a safer crossing for cyclists from a more central location.

The Chair questioned how cyclists currently got across the river, and asked if they could use the Dartford Crossing. The HE Technical Lead stated that there was a shuttle service to escort cyclists across the Dartford Crossing. The HE Head of Consents added that cyclists could arrive at a pick up point, phone the shuttle service, and a van would arrive to transport you and your bike through the tunnel. He explained that it would take approximately 15 minutes for the van to arrive, although this could be longer during peak hours and if there was congestion. He added that cyclists could also use the ferry as transport across the river. The Chair asked if a shuttle for cyclists could be introduced to the LTC. The HE Head of Consents responded that they were not currently considering a shuttle service as the ferry provided the best route across the river.

Councillor Muldowney stated that some PRoW in Chadwell St Mary would be

closed for four years and asked if some of these would be upgraded to bridleways. She asked if these PRoW would use target hardening to ensure anti-social behaviour with quadbikes and motorbikes did not occur. The HE Technical Lead replied that the detail surrounding prevention of anti-social behaviour would be considered at the detailed design stage. The HE Head of Consents added that this detail was required to be included in the Landscape Plan (the OLEMP), and target hardening would be considered as part of this. The HE Head of Consents added that at the previous Task Force Councillor Muldowney had questioned the cost saving benefit of removal of the Rest and Service Area (RaSA). He stated that the team had considered this question and had found that there had been no measurable cost saving from its removal as the land would still be utilised as a construction compound. He explained that it had been removed due to public feedback, feedback from Thurrock Council, and the practicalities of building on green belt, rather than as a cost-saving exercise. The Senior Consultant Stantec added that HE had also removed the route and junction at the same time as the RaSA, and felt this would have had a cost saving impact and the HE Head of Consents agreed to consider this further and reply in writing.

The HE Technical Lead then moved onto question sixteen: *"please explain what is happening at the Orsett Cock underpass? Will there be two or three lanes? Will this create a bottle-neck?"* The HE Technical Lead explained that three lanes would continue under the Orsett Cock roundabout. He explained that the section east of the A13 before the A1089 slip road would become two lanes as the LTC would utilise one as a slip road on both the east and westbound carriageways. He stated that this had been designed using the traffic model and would ensure smooth traffic flow.

The Senior Consultant Stantec queried how long the two lane section would be, and the HE Technical Lead replied that it would be approximately 600 yards long. Councillor Byrne questioned if the reduction from three lanes to two would create a bottleneck. The HE Technical Lead explained that due to the through traffic there needed to be a drop to two lanes. He stated that this was common practice and industry standard, and would allow traffic to pick up when joining the LTC. Councillor Piccolo questioned if the LTC slip road would be utilising the new lane currently being built on the A13 by Thurrock Council. The HE Technical Lead explained that HE would not be using the new lane between Orsett Cock and the Manorway, and this would remain three lanes. He added that the LTC would relieve pressure on the A13 as it would take traffic off before Dartford. The HE Head of Consents stated that this information was included on page 148 of the Operations Update, and page 149 highlighted the difference in traffic flow once the LTC had been opened. The Senior Consultant Stantec stated that the information only showed traffic data up until 2029, and queried what would happen in future, up until 2044. The HE Head of Consents stated that he would provide a written response.

The Chair and Task Force agreed to extend standing orders.

The HE Head of Consents then outlined question seventeen: "*There have*

been varying numbers of workers mentioned in connection with the project can you clarify: A) Numbers: as they will be spread along the route; B) Numbers: how they will be spread through the construction phase; C) And how the project will accommodate them over the lifespan of the construction period?" The HE Technical Lead stated that there would be approximately 22,000 jobs over the course of project delivery, but these were not broken down into area or phase. He stated that he would consult with the team to see if it was possible to provide numbers of workers by area, which would be included in the written response. He stated that there were currently no detailed forecasts about the numbers of workers at any one time on site, and these would be up to the contractor to work out.

The Senior Consultant Stantec stated that there approximately 18/19 compounds, and asked if HE had done an estimate on the number of workers in each compound. He stated that there would be approximately 3-4,000 construction workers overall, and the figure of 22,000 employees would be from across the country in all areas. The HE Head of Consents replied that he would work with the team and provide a written response to the number of workers in each compound.

The HE Head of Consents then outlined that some workers would be on site and others would be from across the region. He stated that HE were working with small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and urging businesses to sign up to the supply chain directory, to receive information directly about different contracts. He added that HE were also offering training to local businesses to ensure they had the skillset to work on projects and understand the procurement rules. He then answered part C of the question and stated that HE were currently developing a strategy to accommodate workers, but their first priority was using workers from the local area. He stated that for those who came into the borough for work, the team were assessing housing capacity in Thurrock, and would build 400 temporary accommodation units near the north portal. He added that some 80 workers would also be working under ground and would therefore need specialist pressurised accommodation.

The HE Head of Consents then answered question eighteen: "*how will residents along the proposed route know what design standards the contractors will have to meet to control noise, light and emissions impact, both during construction and afterwards? Additionally how will residents be made aware of actual performance on these measures vs the standards?"* He stated that controls on contractors would be set out in the DCOv2, and control documents such as the CoCP would set out in detail the requirements on contractors. He stated that these control documents would be signed off by Thurrock Council as well as the Secretary of State. He added that HE would monitor contractor's compliance, and publicise and maintain an electronic register of everything contractors were required to do. He stated that HE would also be undertaking regular site inspections and audits, and could be accompanied by Thurrock Council, the Environment Agency, and Natural England on request. The HE Head of Consents explained that HE would be undertaking a community engagement programme and would work with

residents to ensure contractors were complying with regulations. He stated that residents would also be informed of works through a variety of communication methods including through the Local Authority, forums, letters and social media. He summarised and stated that all contractors would need to meet the considerate contractor's regulations.

Councillor Muldowney stated that 10% of the adult population did not have access to the internet, and queried how HE were engaging with hard to reach groups, including those who were not online or had English as a second language. The HE Head of Consents replied that HE had followed procedures in terms of advertising in newspapers, letter drops across the region, a phone line, and in person consultation events for those not online. He added that if a resident needed translation services they should contact HE and these requests would be considered.

The HE Head of Consents outlined question nineteen: *"we have questioned at various meetings with Highways England our concern on both the choice of reflective sound barriers (fences) over modern absorbing material and the choice of clean root shrubs and trees over bigger, fast growing varieties. If your chosen materials do not perform satisfactorily what follow up will residents be able to have to correct the situation?"* The HE Head of Consents explained that HE would be introducing suitable noise mitigation such as noise reducing road surfaces, noise barriers, and vibration mitigation measures. He stated that the type and height of these mitigation measures would be determined through the use of models and would be installed in line with industry standards. He added that HE would also use tree planting for screening, and would use specific trees that would be native to the area, and easy to establish, even if weather patterns varied due to climate change. He stated that these measures would need to be DCO compliant, and if not then residents could contact the local authority or HE directly.

The Chair questioned how the Council would find out if HE were being compliant in terms of noise, as there would be no monitoring. The HE Head of Consents replied that although there would be no specific noise monitoring, HE would continue to monitor traffic after route opening. The Senior Consultant questioned how HE would know if these predictions on noise were right or wrong after the route had been opened. The HE Head of Consents explained that there were lots of uncertainties regarding traffic post route opening, for example, traffic levels, accidents and carbon levels, and these would be monitored one year and five years after route opening, with an overview report every two years.

The HE Head of Consents moved on to question twenty: *"the operational hours of the contractors shared during the consultation, were both very vague and not explicit over the length of the route. This is not satisfactory, please share more detail on the operational hours for the various segments of the route particularly those areas adjacent to residential blocks."* The HE Head of Consents stated that working hours had been set out in the consultation documents, but would be from 7am-7pm on weekdays, and 7am-4pm on Saturdays. He added that there would be an hour either side of these times

for setting up and closing down the site. He stated that in some instances, such as during earthwork season, these hours may be extended until 10pm, but these would be defined by contractors and agreed in a section 61 notice.

The HE Head of Consents then outlined question twenty one: *"during the consultation figures were given for HGV movements for various parts of the construction, it numbered them as round trips which made the actual numbers quoted seem like half the number. Residents will experience two movements of a HGV going through their area per trip. Please clarify the level of movements and what impact, if any, will the suggested use of Tilbury 2 have on reducing HGV movements."* The HE Head of Consents explained that HGV numbers referred to the number of HGVs, which had to make two trips. He added that the majority of excavated material from the tunnel would be used for landscaping, and construction materials brought onto the site could use the ports, and these had already been accounted for in the HGV movement figures. He mentioned that the ports could only be used for certain construction aspects, as if materials were brought by port that needed to be used south of the river or at the M25, this would increase the number of HGVs on the local road network and increase congestion.

The Chair questioned how much material would be brought into the ports. The HE Head of Consents replied that the majority of excavated material would be reused on site for landscaping banks, which would reduce the need for the ports or HGVs. He added that HE would also use haul roads along the route inside the construction area, which would reduce HGVs on the local road network and improve safety. He stated that HE would also be self-imposing HGV bans on certain local roads. The Senior Consultant Stantec added that the Outline Materials Handling Plan would include this information, and Thurrock Council were seeking commitments to river transport of materials. The HE Head of Consents commented that HE were also looking at other river locations in the wider area.

Councillor Muldowney asked if HE would be removing the HGV restriction on Brentwood Road to be able to access the utilities logistics hub. The HE Head of Consents replied that the scheme was a major project and would increase traffic and HGV movements during construction. He explained that HE needed to be safe during the construction phase, and would try and mitigate the impact of HGVs, but some areas would be more disrupted than others. He stated that these disrupted areas had not been ranked, but would mainly be near the A13 junction.

The HE Head of Consents then moved onto question twenty two: *"the driver for this project from the outset has been the need to relieve the congestion at not only the Dartford Crossing but also the surrounding link roads on both sides of the river. How do you plan to set up the communication of the worsening traffic volume during construction and hopefully alleviated traffic volume on completion so the residents can see that the pain they have to go through during construction has been worthwhile and that HE have been right in the route they have chosen?"* The HE Head of Consents stated that the route would be monitored during construction and for some time afterwards.

He stated that HE would be publishing an engagement strategy, which would be agreed by contractors in liaison with stakeholders, such as Thurrock Council. He added that reports would be undertaken for the first year after route opening, the fifth year after route opening, and at regular two year intervals to show how HE were meeting their targets.

The HE Head of Consents answered question twenty three: *"what role and involvement will HE have in LTC once all the contracts have been awarded?"* He explained that HE would have ultimate responsibility for the works and contractors, and would have oversight of communications and monitoring. He stated that the HE delivery team would regularly be on site and would produce progress reports. He stated that this was the biggest construction undertaken by HE, and the largest to happen in Thurrock for thirty years, so it needed to be right.

The HE Head of Consents moved onto question twenty four: *"there is a significant amount of land either side of the route that is designated as land for mitigation. Does this mitigation designate the land as protected for Special Scientific interest or similar and therefore permanently prevented from being purchased for building or development in the future? If not how long is it protected for?* The HE Head of Consents replied that once the site had been designated for mitigation, it had to be protected. He clarified that the sites would not be sites for special scientific interest. He then explained that the sites could be used for other purposes in future, but it would have to follow the necessary procedures and planning regulations, but would be protected for the duration of the project.

The Senior Consultant Stantec stated that not all land designated for mitigation was highway or ecology, but some was open space. He queried how this open space would be protected from development or other uses in future, for example, could a covenant be placed on the land. The HE Head of Consents replied that any future sites of this nature would have to go through Thurrock's planning process or DCO submission. He explained that HE were required to maintain the sites until either a planning process or DCO submission was completed.

Councillor Kent questioned how the verges along the LTC would be maintained and cleaned. The HE Head of Consents replied that HE would have operational controls in place, and would be managed accordingly once the route became part of the strategic road network. The HE Technical Lead replied that contractors would be employed to keep the verges clean, and HE would be enforcing this.

Councillor Muldowney questioned how HE were engaging with local farmers who were currently busy harvesting their crops. She asked if HE could look again at extending the consultation. She also queried if the phone line was a Freephone number, as some residents might not be able to afford phone charges. The HE Head of Consents replied that they had considered extending the consultation, but this was not being proposed. He mentioned that although the public consultation was not being extended, HE were in

discussion with local authorities regarding ensuring consultation responses could go through the relevant internal governance processes. He added that HE engaged with farmers through regular meetings and spoke with them directly. He explained that it was standard practice to use a paid phone service, but was free on mobiles as part of people's phone contracts and was a low rate if using landlines.

Councillor Piccolo thanked HE for running an additional consultation event in the Homesteads, but sought reassurance that it would be a full event. The HE Head of Consents replied that the event in Homesteads, and in Chadwell St Mary, would be the same standard as events elsewhere in the borough, and would be staffed by the full range of specialists. He explained that in previous years there had been duplicate specialists at one event, but due to COVID only one specialist was being provided this year. He stated that this was to ensure the team were not affected by the track and trace system if someone was pinged.

The Chair thanked HE for their attendance and asked if written responses could be provided by early the following week, and the HE Head of Consents agreed with this date.

The HE Head of Consents, Technical Lead, Local Government Engagement Co-Ordinator, and Local Government Lead left the meeting at 9.25pm.

21. Work Programme

The Chair stated that Transport Action Network would be invited to the September Task Force meeting, but was dependent on their availability as they were exceptionally busy at this time.

Councillor Kent asked for a report on the Skills and Employment Strategy. The Senior Consultant Stantec stated that he had received the updated version today, and could prepare an update report for October's meeting.

The meeting finished at 9.27 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE