

10 January 2018		ITEM: 15 Decision 0110457
Cabinet		
Lower Thames Crossing Task Force Update Report		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key	
Report of: Councillor Peter Smith, Chair of the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force		
Accountable Assistant Director: John Lamb, Interim Assistant Director Lower Thames Crossing		
Accountable Director: Steve Cox, Corporate Director of Place		
This report is public		

Executive Summary

In line with the Terms of Reference, the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) Taskforce is required to report to Cabinet on its work.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That Cabinet notes the work of the taskforce

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The Lower Thames Crossing Taskforce has met monthly since September 2017.

2.2 The cross party taskforce includes representatives from the local community including businesses and local residents. The Thames Crossing Action Group also has a representative to ensure the task force is as inclusive as possible.

2.3 In line with the Constitution the Task Force elected Councillor Peter Smith as Chair and Councillor Gerard Rice as Vice-Chair.

2.4 The Council remains opposed to any new Crossings in Thurrock and the Task Force has consistently sought to hold Highways England (HE) to account. A recurring theme has been the delay in obtaining responses and in some respect many questions continue to be unanswered.

- 2.5 As a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project within the Government's 'National Policy Statement for National Network' Project the proposed crossing will be considered by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS). Highways England has produced a 'Scoping Report' on what will eventually be included in HE's 'Environmental Impact Assessment' and this was sent by PINS to statutory bodies.
- 2.6 Thurrock Council received this on the 2nd November and subsequently responded on the 30th November. A copy of the Thurrock response is detailed in Appendix 1. The Scoping Report has been a substantive agenda item at the November and December meetings.
- 2.7 The main areas of challenge on their proposals since the first meeting in September have been set out below. The approach has included HE being invited to comment and answer questions, after which they then leave.

3. Substantive Items discussed within the Task Force

- 3.1 All LTC Taskforce sessions are audio recorded and available on the Thurrock website. The full minutes are attached in appendix 2.

The substantive discussion points have included:

- The purpose and structure of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
 - The Council's response to the EIA Scoping Report
 - The choice of this route as the preferred route and changes to the 'red line'
 - Environmental Impacts especially air quality and noise
 - The health impacts of the proposal on Thurrock residents
 - The method of consultation and engagement that Highways England has adopted
- 3.2 A list of actions for Highways England has been developed and this is attached as Appendix 3. It is notable that HE continues to be pressed for updates.
- 3.3 It is expected that each month there will be a deeper review of key specialist topics and Air Quality has featured as one example at the December meeting.
- 3.4 The resource implications of establishing the Task Force can be contained within the constraints of existing funding for 2017/18. In due course both the LTC project and the Task Force will need to consider in detail a range of highly specialist information in responding to Highways England. This will include detailed appraisal

of traffic impacts, health impacts, socio-economic changes and wider physical impacts of such a major development.

- 3.5 At the December Task Force meeting it was agreed that Task Force members would provide a list of specific issues relating to the scheme that they would like collated and submitted to Highways England for HE to address at the next Task Force meeting on 22 January.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 In line with the terms of reference the LTC Taskforce will update Cabinet.

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

- 5.1 Lower Thames Crossing Task Force.

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

- 6.1 None

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Sean Clark**
Director of Finance and IT

The Council currently budgets £50,000 per annum towards work on the Lower Thames Crossing. As the work of this Task Force develops, it is clear that additional funding will be required although, at this time, the level of additional funding has not yet been determined.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **David Lawson**
**Assistant Director of Law & Governance and
Monitoring Officer**

None arising directly from this update report

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

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

None arising directly from this update report.

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

None

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

- None

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 – Thurrock Councils Scoping report response letter
- Appendix 2 – LTC Task Force Minutes
- Appendix 3 – Action List for Highways England.

Report Author:

John Lamb

Interim Assistant Director Lower Thames Crossing

Gail Boyle
Senior EIA and Land Rights
3D Eagle Wing
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Bristol, BS1 6PN

Your Ref: TR010032-000007

Dear Gail

Re: Planning Act 2008 (as amended) and The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations) – Regulations 10 and 11

Proposed application by Highways England for an Order granting Development Consent for the Lower Thames Crossing

I refer to your letter dated 2nd November 2017 regarding the above matter and to your request that the local planning authority (LPA):

- inform the Planning Inspectorate of the information we consider should be provided in the Environmental Statement (ES); or
- confirm we do not have any comments.

Thurrock Council is a unitary authority in South Essex representing over 165,000 residents and is the recipient of nearly two thirds of the proposed development. The Council therefore have a number of comments in relation to the Highways England Lower Thames Crossing Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report dated October 2017. The Council's full response has been provided within a Schedule of Comments/Observations in Appendix 1 of this letter.

The following sections of this letter highlight the Council's key comments and/or concerns. However, it should be noted that these sections are solely a snapshot of the full response, and therefore it is important that the detailed comments given in Appendix 1 are taken into consideration. Moreover Highways England should also give regard to local policies to align with Thurrock's Local Plan.

- 1) In summary, Thurrock Council has not been given sufficient material from Highways England to allow the Council to determine how this scheme meets their declared objectives, nor the respective balance of priorities that resulted in the choice of crossing and chosen road alignment. Reflecting the scale and significance of this national project, a full and comprehensive understanding of the transport and land use implications is required. A robust and comprehensive analysis should be undertaken and presented within a standalone chapter within the ES. This would provide an understanding of

business case around choice of location and that proposals demonstrate the potential to unlock housing growth.

- 2) Thurrock Council has for a number of years stated that the need for a new crossing requires further evidence. Further work is required to explore alternative modes of travel. Therefore, it must be demonstrated how the need for providing or safeguarding additional capacity (passenger and freight) as part of the decision-making process has been considered in terms of alternative options. This must underpin assessment of the need for the crossing and choices around the need for two or three lanes of new motorway alongside appropriate improvements to local roads to bus services and rail networks. A thorough analysis of appropriate and acceptable options is required to evidence how proposals comply with Government Guidance to support sustainable travel and land use integration. A detailed and stand-alone analysis would reduce the significant risk in solely catering for road traffic to the exclusion of wider enhancements to transport and mobility that would better meet the wider Essex and Kent communities.
- 3) The environmental harm caused by the scheme has not been fully assessed, quantified or demonstrated as part of the announcement of the preferred route. This in turn has impacted this scoping report. This includes the impacts on health and local amenity, which may not be outweighed by any economic or transport benefits - clearly further work is required on air quality and public health before the Government makes a decision. It must be given weight alongside economic and transport benefits. The World Health Organisation has stated that there is no safe level for particulate matter given its carcinogenic properties. Despite considerable recognition [\[click\]](#) by DEFRA and Public Health England – with the Local Government Association; as Public bodies we are not demonstrating to our public how we are taking seriously the health risk associated with vehicle emissions. New analysis and added priority must now be given within the ES to PM_{2.5} particulate matter.
- 4) The Scoping Report does not acknowledge all of the concerns the Council faces in terms of the health and wellbeing of the communities we represent. Without clear evidence to the contrary, the Council is very concerned that life outcomes may be further impacted by the proposed crossing. This is particularly in relation to the variation experienced across the borough in terms of life expectancy, incidence of and premature mortality from cancer, hospitals admissions and premature mortality due to cardiovascular disease and respiratory illnesses. Therefore, the Council strongly request that a separate Health Impact Assessment is undertaken, the methodology of which should be agreed with the Director of Public Health in the Council and in liaison with all other impacted authorities' Directors of Public Health 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. Appendix 2 of this letter provides a full justification for the reasoning behind why a separate Health Impact Assessment should be undertaken for the project from a Thurrock perspective. The Council has also noted that precedents have been set by several Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs), such as the Silvertown Tunnel in London and the A14 in Cambridgeshire, which completed Health Impact Assessments as part of their applications.

Key General Comments:

- 5) The initial chapters reflect the current existing knowledge of the proposed project. The proposed scheme is continuing to evolve, and therefore it is essential the Council understand the reasoning for changes, and is genuinely consulted on changes to the Scheme design. Highways England should also give the Council the opportunity to inform the ongoing changes to the project design. Significant changes are being made by Highways England to the current preferred route that are in advance of any robust published traffic model, and therefore this appears to be occurring without a clear foundation i.e. it is unclear how Highways England are arriving at the decision for Route 3 as opposed to Route 4, and in turn how they are making significant changes to Route 3, in advance of an approved traffic model. This leads to significant concerns over the validity and robustness of their preferred route.
- 6) The wider impact on Thurrock's socio-economic mix has not been considered, for example the effect on housing delivery and how a Lower Thames Crossing will impact on future growth and investment. The existing and emerging Thurrock Local Plan sets out the basis on which growth is planned, to balance the opportunities of growth in homes and jobs. As the new Local Plan is progressed, the Council requests that an additional and standalone socio-economic study is undertaken to assess in detail the impact the Lower Thames Crossing would have on the Borough. This should also take into consideration the wider economic benefits/dis-benefits.
- 7) 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, worsen 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, and therefore the construction of this junction would have direct effects on (through the removal of) the scheduled monument. The significant adverse effects caused by this junction will need considerable mitigation e.g. tunnelling to ensure the effects are reduced and the introduction of the junction is acceptable.

In addition to the strategic routing model for traffic across the region, we expect Highways England to undertake a detailed micro simulation of this new junction and the local road network, to prove that the full impacts have been understood, and that it represents a workable solution compared to all other alternatives.

- 8) The Council would like to better understand Highways England consideration for a new direct spur into Tilbury, and the respective role of the current A1089. This new spur would re-route all of the Port of Tilbury traffic south of the town rather than through the town on the A1089. This new spur that Highways England have now included in their proposal, would introduce new residential receptors to air quality issues and expose new parts of the town to noise. This fails to recognise the ambition of the Council to better link Tilbury with the river. In addition to the strategic routing model, we expect Highways England to undertake a detailed micro simulation of the proposed road changes, to understand the impact on the local road network and the implication of changes to the local roads following any de-trunking.
- 9) 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'. Therefore, under these new regulations Highways England should undertake sensitivity testing to assess unusual but not uncommon traffic scenarios due to major accidents, e.g. the closure of both crossings, and the impact this would have on traffic/transport, noise, air quality, people, and communities. This assessment should be presented within the ES, and must recognise the impact of closures to the crossing on the jobs and livelihoods across the borough.
- 10) The Scoping Report does not fully justify the reason Location C was chosen as the preferred route. 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. The Council requests that full justification regarding the preferred route selection, which includes outlining a comparison of the environmental effects of each option to reach the decision on the preferred route, is provided in the ES.
- 11) The report mentions opportunities to deliver environmental enhancements, however there is no explicit mention of any enhancements that have been identified. Highways England need to consider and identify opportunities for enhancements throughout the duration of the design process, and include these in the ES. Opportunities should consider (but should not be limited to) enhancements to the existing public rights of way network, in line with Thurrock Rights of Way Improvement Plan (which is currently

in draft form), and enhancements to the landscape and air quality. Highways England need to demonstrate through their design principles how the earthworks and subsequent landscaping and planting will provide a new corridor for wildlife, and with it, a new route for non-motorised travel that brings together new and existing rights of way. Aside from direct opportunities through careful scheme design to build in future new connections, the Council also advises Highways England to utilise their Environment and Air Quality Designated Funds to ensure that environmental enhancements are delivered across the widest possible network of rights of way, in order to maximise local opportunities for reduced car travel; at least to the extent that it balances the increase in total traffic mileage generated by the new crossing and the new motorway.

- 12) The report states that the Lower Thames Crossing north of the Thames will be at grade or on embankments, however though the Kent section it 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, Highways England needs to provide plans showing which sections would be on embankments and which at grade. The Council would also like to see 3D visualisations for the Scheme.
- 13) 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 the Council do not have any space issues further down the line.
- 14) The Council has key concerns regarding the adverse visual, noise and air quality effects that are likely to result from the Lower Thames Crossing. The Council therefore believes that Highways England should evidence how and why it has chosen not to provide tunnelling beneath Thurrock, as this would alleviate these effects.
- 15) Due to the scale of the project, Highways England needs to demonstrate impacts through a thorough and comprehensive construction impact assessment, and include appropriate mitigation, for the project. The method of boring the tunnels has already been suggested as being from Thurrock southwards under the Thames. This creates air quality and noise implications. In addition, the majority of the new motorway is within Thurrock and this exposes residents to significant noise and air quality issues. Highways England has not demonstrated why this cannot be built from South to North.
- 16) Thurrock has been very successful in growing jobs within the Borough, and there is a continued need to accelerate housing delivery. Highways England need to demonstrate through a detailed standalone study how housing opportunities might in future be impacted by the adverse impacts of this new motorway i.e. noise, pollution and visual impact. The LTC could

further exacerbate negative perceptions of the Borough as a place to live, thereby harming the delivery of homes and, as a result, stifling economic growth.

Key Topic Specific Comments:

- **Air Quality** - The Council recommends that additional baseline air quality monitoring is established at sensitive receptors along the new proposed link road to Tilbury, just off the A1013 along Heath Road, and along Baker Street, including Baker St/ Heath Road at A13/A1089 junction. Additionally, as of November 2017 the Council, in response to the proposed crossing, has set up its own additional NO₂ diffusion tube monitoring sites in key locations. The data from these should be included within Highways England's air quality assessment for establishing a baseline and for model verification. Please see the Schedule of Comments/Observations in Appendix 1 for the location of these additional monitoring sites.
- **Air Quality** - PM_{2.5} needs to be considered within the air quality assessment. The evaluation of significance of this pollutant should also be assessed, particularly as it is the very fine elements of particulate matter (i.e. PM_{2.5}), such as brake and tyre wear emissions and diesel exhaust emissions that contribute to the bulk of PM_{2.5} emissions and it is this element which is most prejudicial to health.
- **Cultural Heritage** - Consideration needs to be given in the 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.
- **Cultural Heritage** - Tilbury and Coalhouse Forts as combined monuments, forming defensive structures along the Thames, should be considered as Very High Value receptors. This should be discussed with Historic England.
- **Landscape** - 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 a Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership scheme which should be considered as part of any landscape, ecology and cultural heritage assessment.
- **Landscape** - The Scoping Report provides no justification for the decision to adopt a 2km Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) for the landscape and visual impact assessment. This should follow standard best practice and identify a ZVI which is likely to be much larger. This is particularly important for the land to the north of the A13, which 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.

- **Landscape** - No methodology has been outlined for the production of the photomontages. These should be produced for year 1 and year 15, to show the future visual impact of the proposal. These should be produced for key views such as the proposed tunnel, the A13 and Tilbury junctions, the Tilbury loop railway and where the route crosses through the Mardyke Valley.
- **Landscape** - Highways England will need to agree any proposed viewpoint receptors with the Council, 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, 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.
- **Landscape** – Highways England suggest the construction of the tunnel under the Thames is likely to be from north or south. The basis for this assertion is unknown and Highways England need to set out why this is the case. This would result in large areas of land east of the power station site being set aside for construction purposes. This is adjacent to the Two Forts Way recreational route. The material extracted during the tunnel construction is likely to be stored in this area, which will have adverse visual effects for at least six years. The ES will need to take into consideration the maximum proposed heights of stored materials plus heights of machines etc. being used during the construction. It is also proposed that a substation will be required in this area. Again, the ES will need to take the size of this into consideration. The Council would like to see the heights of the stockpiles, machinery, and substation. The final restoration of this area will need to demonstrate landscape and ecological benefits with no spoil left in this area over the long term e.g. restoring the land immediately west of Coalhouse Fort as coastal grazing grass or wetland.
- **Landscape and Biodiversity** - The report recognises that the scheme would have a direct effect on the Orsett Fen Open Access Area. Highways England need to ensure that there is connectivity, and consider mitigation measures for landscape, ecology and water management that can be integrated to ensure that the historic fenland habitat can be recreated.
- **Biodiversity** - The report details a comprehensive list of protected species that are being surveyed. However, there is no mention of barn owls. Barn owls should be considered and surveys undertaken (if required), as barn owls have the potential to be impacted within a buffer zone of up to 1.5km from new roads.
- **Geology and Soils** – Highways England need to demonstrate that particular regard is given to the potential contamination at the former Goshems Farm landfill (THU0048) where the tunnel portal would be located. The Ground Investigation will need to fully determine the level of contamination present here.

- **Materials** - No methodology has been outlined for the materials assessment. The methodology needs to be fully defined within the ES to ensure full understanding of how the conclusions are reached. Consideration should be given to 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.
- **Noise and Vibration** - Highways England need to agree the locations of the noise surveys 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 the 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** - The people and communities assessment should also consider Coalhouse Fort within the community facilities assessment, the amenity of people living and working in the area and using established leisure facilities such as parks, and severance in the context of dividing the borough and creating two separate sets of communities.
- **People and Communities** - Highways England need to clarify 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. Highways England should also take into consideration Thurrock's Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan (which is currently in draft form).
- **Climate** - Embodied carbon from the use of materials within the construction needs to be considered within the climate assessment, as this makes up approx. 70-80% of the construction carbon footprint. Greenhouse gas emissions from the increased volume of traffic also needs to be considered within the operational assessment for climate.
- **Cumulative Effects** - Tilbury Energy Centre needs to be included within the assessment of cumulative effects (as well as Tilbury2). In addition, although DP World London Gateway has been developed, the capacity at this site will continue to increase. Therefore, the cumulative assessment within the ES should also take this into consideration; this is particularly important within the noise and air quality cumulative assessments.

Proposed Structure of the ES

The proposed structure and content of the ES is set out in Chapter 17 of the Scoping Report. However, it is noted that the structure of the topic specific chapters includes a 'Regulatory Framework/NPSNN requirements' section. However, Highways England should also give regard to local policies, to align with Thurrock's Local Plan.

Additionally, as noted previously, the Council does not believe that the topics listed (for inclusion within the ES) will enable a thorough and comprehensive assessment on health and wellbeing and on the local economy. Therefore, the Council requests that the following key areas must form distinct and standalone part of the Development Consent Order Application

- a standalone Health Impact Assessment
- a standalone Socio-Economic Study
- a standalone assessment of Transportation and Land use
- a standalone multimodal assessment
- a standalone assessment of the construction impacts

Summary

I trust that the comments and enclosures are of assistance. Again, I would like to reiterate that the information outlined in this letter solely highlights the key comments/concerns the Council has. Please refer to the Schedule of Comments/Observations contained in Appendix 1 of this letter, for the full detailed response from the Council.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the EIA Scoping Report. If you need any further assistance or wish to discuss any matters arising, please feel free to contact me.

Yours
sincerely,



Steve Cox
Corporate Director, Place

APPENDIX 1 – Schedule of Comments/Observations on the Lower Thames Crossing Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report

APPENDIX 2 – Justification for a full Health Impact Assessment

Minutes of the Meeting of the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force held on 16 October 2017 at 6.00 pm

Present: 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

Apologies: Councillor Tom Kelly

In attendance: 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**

Minutes of the Meeting of the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force held on 20 November 2017 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Peter Smith (Chair), Gerard Rice (Vice-Chair), John Allen, Roy Jones, Brian Little and Bukky Okunade

Matt Jackson, Thames Crossing Action Group Representative
Linda Mulley, Resident Representative
Peter Ward, Thurrock Business Representative

Apologies: Councillors Steve Liddiard and Terry Piccolo

In attendance:

Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive
Steve Cox, Corporate Director of Environment and Place
John Lamb, Interim Assistant Director - Lower Thames Crossing
Ian Wake, Director of Public Health
Helen Horrocks, Strategic Lead Commissioner for Public Health
Fred Raphael, Transport Development Manager
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.

19. Minutes

The minutes of the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force meeting held on 16 October 2017 were approved as a correct record.

20. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

21. Declaration of Interests

Councillor Jones outlined that all Members of the Task Force had an interest of some kind.

22. Actions from Previous Meetings

Councillor Little had previously requested that Highways England include a form with their letters to residents which would allow them to indicate that they were happy for their Ward Councillors to be told they had been contacted. This would allow Ward Councillors to be more informed about the needs of specific residents within their Wards, regarding the proposed Lower Thames Crossing. He asked whether this had been done. Highways England stated

that this would have to be subject to legal review within the organisation. Councillor Little emphasised that a simple 'opt in' arrangement would satisfy all Data Protection requirements such that Thurrock might readily understand comments being received and support the process of inclusive consultation that Highways England had claimed.

The Chair noted that the Lower Thames Crossing Action Group Representative had requested data around the difference in Air Quality impact between the proposed route 3 and the A14 option. It was confirmed that, to date, this information had not been received from Highways England.

Councillor Jones highlighted that Highways England were not engaging regarding information and the general feeling within Thurrock was that the scheme would go ahead without engagement with local communities.

The Vice-Chair referred to previous enquiries regarding the elevated sections of the proposed design, and he hoped that this would be touched upon in the update from Highways England later in the meeting, as it was of great importance for local residents. The Highways England Representative expressed that he would be happy to touch on the issue but a higher level of detail would require more time than their allotted time for the presentation. He indicated that it would be beneficial to hold a longer meeting in future to allow for greater depth. Councillor Jones interjected that there had been no response regarding the elevated sections within Thurrock, yet the report showed there would be more scenic options such as cut-ins in Kent. He felt Thurrock was already being neglected and would be happy for the meeting to run longer if it meant that concerns and queries could be answered.

The Chair echoed that there was an overall feeling of frustration amongst Councillors, officers, the Thames Crossing Action Group and residents as it appeared that Highways England were failing in terms of communication. He hoped there would be improved responses moving forward, and proposed that Actions 1-10 be covered at the current meeting.

The Highways England Representative asked if there were any specific responses which required further expansion.

Councillor Little echoed his earlier comments around contact with residents. It was confirmed that Highways England held a database of everyone who contacted them regarding the scheme though it was not certain that this could be sifted. With regards to sharing details of land owners and residents whom Highways England had contacted it was a matter of data protection laws. The professional opinion of a legal expert would be sought and a response brought back to the Task Force. The suggestion of residents allowing their details to be shared would be considered as part of this. Councillor Little again emphasised the option of a simple 'opt in' approach that would help Thurrock and demonstrate that Highways England were undertaking meaningful consultation and consideration.

The response to Councillor Piccolo's previous query around traffic originating in or destined for Thurrock indicated that the information would be available soon. Councillor Jones asked, on behalf of Councillor Piccolo, whether there was any estimate of when the information would be available. The final traffic model would be shared with Officers from Thurrock Council in December, and once they were satisfied it could be shared on a wider scale. Councillor Jones expressed his amazement that Highways England did not possess this data already, given the scale of the proposal. The Highways England Representative clarified that the majority of the data was complete, but projected freight movements were still awaited from the Department of Transport and it would be pointless to share incomplete data. It was also confirmed that the data from 2001 had formed the baseline but was now complete up to 2016.

The Vice-Chair noted that whether the route would be four or six lanes was still being reviewed. Given that the application was due to be with the Planning Inspectorate in the near future he felt that the design should be at a stage where they knew one way or the other. He asked for details around the cost increase between 2-lane traffic and 3-lane traffic. The Task Force heard that the scheme had been developed from the preferred route announcement in April and would continue to undergo investigation and scrutiny, particularly during the public consultation. The Vice-Chair again queried how Highways England could make informed choices regarding the route and two or three lanes without a traffic model that worked.

23. Highways England Update: Scheme update and engagement & consultation

The representatives from Highways England presented their plans for consultation and engagement as the scheme progressed.

The Chair stressed that information should not only be shared digitally, elderly residents and others without access to the internet must receive information at the same time as others. Highways England stated they were keen to represent everyone and would do their best to ensure information would be sent in the best way, taking guidance from Thurrock Council, as information should be open for access to all. There were currently 250-300 interest groups, stakeholders and businesses to be contacted and 47,000 responses had been received at the options phase. The Chair requested the data from the 47,000 responses and noted that Thurrock Council had not received a copy of the consultation report. These responses covered all stakeholders for the scheme but, following discussions around legal issues, a response would come to the Task Force. As for the consultation report, it had been published on the Lower Thames Crossing website as part of the preferred route announcement.

Regarding interest groups, the Director of Public Health noted that there was no mention of health agencies. Public Health England were mentioned however it was expected that Local Authorities would engage with more localised health authorities. The Director of Public Health reiterated that

Highways England should be engaging with local hospitals, the Clinical Commissioning Group and GP surgeries.

Councillor Okunade questioned whether landowners and property owners that were stakeholders had been identified. The Highways England Representative hoped that this had been fully completed, though there may be some whose property or land lay just outside the redline boundary that had not yet been contacted.

Highways England also held a profile sheet on Thurrock Council, as with all the major Local Authorities affected by the proposal, which was important for strong and direct engagement. Highways England had recently appointed a sole representative responsible for the interests of Thurrock Council, Ian Kennard, who would attend meetings of the Task Force moving forward.

Councillor Jones asked if the aim was to deliver objectives to the Council and local residents. Adjustments could be made taking on board issues concerning the local area.

The Thames Crossing Action Group Representative questioned how there could be a positive outcome with a route through Thurrock, given it was already one of the worst polluted areas with high levels of cardiovascular disease and cancer. The Highways England Representative advised that stationary traffic led to poor air quality therefore air quality should improve. Air Quality was a national issue and motorists needed to be smarter in their movements. A more detailed answer required the baseline to be completed and measured against the correct data but Highways England had already agreed to work with Thurrock giving joint instructions to consultants.

The Thames Crossing Action Group Representative highlighted that £10m had been spent on the current crossing. 86% of traffic was expected to remain and 14% would not reduce the traffic sufficiently to 'get Thurrock moving'. The proposed Lower Thames Crossing would do nothing to alleviate the stagnated M25 and problems at the Dartford Crossing. The Highways England Representative assured the Task Force that ways to help the existing crossing were being explored and there was a need to look at the wider network as a mature operator. The Department for Transport was also considering funding methods and a full commitment would be required to enable the road network to work all the time.

Councillor Allen requested that Thurrock be the first to know details of development within its boundary, including clarification of further steps so Councillors could keep residents fully informed and advised. Highways England should also consider sharing information through the local papers, social media and other methods.

The Resident Representative questioned how many roads in Thurrock were managed by Highways England. She noted that the table regarding air quality excluded any roads directly managed by Highways England and, given the high number of heavily congested roads within Thurrock which were managed

by Highways England, this data was a misnomer. She also requested that the information be made more understandable for local residents. The Highways England Representative agreed that information needed to be accessible and understandable, therefore as much analysis as was necessary would be undertaken to ensure this was the case.

The Vice-Chair stressed the serious situation around air quality, as the borough was the worst outside London. He continued that tunnelling was common in London and requested that Thurrock be given the same level of mitigation in areas of major population. The welfare of residents was a key responsibility and junctions elevated to 10m would not look after them. He asked that Highways England seriously consider redesigning the scheme so that the interchange would be underground.

Councillor Jones queried whether the traffic data regarding the A13 was up to date. Thurrock was often gridlocked at present and he felt that this problem would extend further into Essex if the crossing were to go ahead. The A13 was under a lot of pressure and the data around freight movements and London Gateway Operations were still required. The traffic model data was still incomplete and thus could not be released but once it was complete the aim was to offer relieve on the A13 and in the centre of Grays.

The Chair stressed that the Task Force and all elected Councillors, had a duty to residents and therefore would leave no stone unturned regarding proposals. Highways England aimed to ensure the scheme had as low an impact as possible and reminded the Task Force that the design was not final, there was need to listen to residents, the Council and other stakeholders to ensure the right solution.

The Highways England representatives outlined the design scheme including locations of cuttings, elevations and junctions. Councillor Jones queried the route through Tilbury and East Tilbury. The original scheme for the preferred route through Tilbury, East Tilbury and Linford had been higher. Now everything was ground level or lower with the exception of elevated sections crossing the Tilbury loop and Linford Road. Councillor Jones questioned whether tunnelling had been considered to address the visual impact, it had not at this stage.

The Resident Representative noted that the proposed areas to be in cutting were mainly in those areas with low population figures. She expressed the view that Highways England only seemed to mention Tilbury, and had paid no heed to communities of East Tilbury, West Tilbury and Linford which would see elevated sections in close proximity to residential properties. She asked why the route could not be tunnelled in those sections which passed by homes. Highways England were also considering these options as part of the design process, a model would help to make the design clearer and easier to understand.

Councillor Little noted the massive change in the proposed design since the last iteration seen by the Council. Some of the changes were pleasing but he

felt there was still a long way to go. He recognised that if the final decision was that the crossing should go ahead the Council should work to ensure the scheme had as little impact as possible on the local communities. He sought assurances that local roads, bridleways, cycle paths and similar routes would not be cut off. The Highways England Representative confirmed that all existing routes would have crossings to maintain access.

The Chair noted that a new tunnel had been announced as part of the design, though it was outside of Thurrock.

The Vice-Chair interjected that it might be helpful for the large-scale map to be emailed to Members. He was surprised by the proposal for crossing the railway at East Tilbury and added that, like those in London, tunnels would save the issues of up and down, and the impact on residents and the environment. He noted that 14% of traffic was expected to divert from the existing crossing however with 6,000 trucks coming from developments in Tilbury most would opt for the new crossing over Dartford. It would be impossible to provide an answer until the traffic modelling was complete, as a natural shift was expected for some traffic from the existing crossing but also there would be new movements not yet in place.

The Thames Crossing Action Group Representative sought clarification regarding the proposed interchange at Orsett, which appeared very complicated with elevated and lowered sections. He asked how local connections could remain intact. The amended scheme ensured that Baker Street would no longer be cut off and saw a roundabout introduced near Orsett to connect the A1013 and the A1089. The aim was to keep local connections separate from key points. The Thames Crossing Action Group Representative raised his concern about linking the A1089, albeit potentially declassified, with Stanford Road and urged Highways England to work to prevent the route being used as an 'escape point' in the event of accidents on the wider network.

The Chair also expressed concern regarding the net effect of the new crossing, which would see Thurrock entrapped between two routes and creating a huge problem of cross-borough traffic.

Councillor Allen felt the scheme would be devastating to Thurrock, both in terms of the visual impact and health factors. It risked driving a stake through the heart of the borough's areas of natural beauty and historic significance. He asked what mitigations would be in place for the elevated sections. He felt that acoustic fencing should be a minimum requirement but also requested that in areas of high population cut and cover be in place to reduce both noise pollution and impact on air quality. The Highways England Representative outlined that they had a duty to mitigate against all impacts and the scheme could provide benefits through local engagement. Much could be done to lessen the impact and enhance areas around infrastructure, providing an opportunity to invest in the future.

The Chair requested that large scale maps be provided to each elected Member of the Council and continued to question plans for the route across the Orsett fens. The design currently featured a simple structure though there was a minimum height for maintenance and to ensure traffic could still flow in adverse conditions, as the area was a flood plain. The Chair asked what height the structure would be and was informed that it would stand 5.5m above ground level.

Councillor Little urged Highways England to be explicit that proposals were not currently fixed and final to avoid a risk of miscommunication with residents. Highways England confirmed they were happy to share the current map but with the caveat that it was not set in stone. They hoped to find an appropriate way to display details of the scheme to everyone but there were questions about how to ensure everyone could see it. A virtual reality model would allow for improved understanding of elevations and sightlines, but not everyone had digital access. Thurrock Council's assistance would be welcomed in finding the best solution.

The Vice-Chair welcomed these assurances. He mentioned that parts of the A13 were covered with 'quiet tarmac' and asked whether it would be used for most of the route for the proposed crossing. The Task Force was assured that much could be done through civil engineering to make a scheme pleasing and low-noise surfacing was a Highways England standard.

Councillor Allen raised concern around the impact of construction and sought assurances that no works would be undertaken outside of normal working hours Monday to Friday to cause as little disruption as possible to residents. No definite commitment could be given around the construction of the tunnel itself but Highways England would work closely with the Council to achieve the best outcome for Thurrock.

The Representatives from Highways England left the meeting at this point.

24. Council's Proposed Response to Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report

The Corporate Director of Place introduced the report. At the previous meeting of the Task Force Members had covered the areas that mattered most to Thurrock. The Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report had been received by the Council on 2 November 2017 and a response from Thurrock Council was to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate within 28 days.

The Independent Technical Advisor on Environmental Issues gave a brief presentation which outlined the purpose of the scoping report, how it had been reviewed and key areas of note.

The Thames Crossing Action Group Representative noted there were three Grade 2 listed buildings by the proposed Orsett junction and asked what protections were afforded to them. The EIA Scoping Report had shown that

these were being assessed correctly but full details would not be known until the full Environmental Impact Assessment was completed. The Independent Technical Advisor on Environmental Issues expressed that it was more worrying that a scheduled monument would be dug up at Orsett, yet no reference was made to this within the scoping report.

The Thames Crossing Action Group Representative queried whether the 2km assessment for visual impact would be 1km from the centreline in either direction, or whether the 2km would be in both directions from the centreline. It was confirmed that the assessment area would cover 2km in either direction from the centreline of the proposed carriageway.

The Vice-Chair queried whether Highways England would be advised of the number of populous in areas of high population. This would be taken into account as part of the air quality assessment and significant weighting would be applied accordingly.

Councillor Little stated that he was impressed by the number of evidence-based objections that had been put forward. Section 3.61 of the report advised that Tilbury Energy Centre should be included within the assessment of cumulative effects and suggested that the response also note that DP World was not currently working at full capacity and therefore its traffic figures were still due to increase.

Councillor Allen questioned whether there was a clear trend within the air quality data within Thurrock over the past 20 years. The Task Force was advised that levels decreased quite quickly in the early years and then plateaued somewhat. The Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) still needed to be in place but levels were coming down overall. Councillor Little added that there were 17 AQMAs in Thurrock and it had been proposed to remove 7, however they would remain in place given the potential crossing.

The Chair noted that section 3.14 of the report advised that the DEFRA's Emission Factor Toolkit was likely to underestimate emissions and sought further explanation. The Task Force was advised that it was widely known that the toolkit underestimated PM2.5 and PM10, however methods were available to uplift figures to worse-case scenarios and this had been requested. The issue was beyond the realms of the software in use.

Councillor Okunade queried who would be the judge of whether mitigation was sufficient, as per 3.8 of the report. The Independent Technical Advisor for Environmental Issues clarified that if modelling suggested any worsening in noise levels and air quality the plan would need to be amended to mitigate those issues however it was the responsibility of the applicant not the statutory consultees to consider these issues.

The Resident Representative asked whether there was any significance to the fact that the DEFRA figures excluded roads managed by Highways England. The Independent Technical Advisor for Environmental Issues could not comment from the Council's perspective but would look into the matter further.

Councillor Little queried the mention of 'materials' but no section on 'construction'. The noise, vibration and air quality impact from lorries over a construction period of six years would be huge. The Task Force heard that data regarding vehicle movements would be captured within the remit of air quality and noise pollution. Details of the impact of the construction specifically had been requested but Highways England were looking into using the river and railways to deliver materials in an attempt to reduce vehicle movements.

Councillor Jones questioned why the scoping report did not fully justify the reason for the route chosen. Members were advised that the decision process would have been well documented however it had not been clearly brought out within the scoping report.

The Thames Crossing Action Group Representative stressed the need for joined up thinking at this stage to ensure issues within Thurrock, such as power networks and AQMAs by the dock, were properly addressed. He could think of no way to mitigate against 60,000 extra vehicles in the borough, bar continuous tunnelling. The Chair expressed quiet confidence that officers were experienced and would be on top of the situation. The Corporate Director of Place agreed that the cumulative impact of everything happening needed to be assessed. The traffic modelling data would take into account all extra development within the area up to 2026/2027.

The Chair noted that within the responses from technical advisors the question of the A14 route versus Route 3 was raised which showed a weakness in the scope.

Councillor Jones sought further information around the potential hazardous historic landfill at Goshem's Farm. The site predated restrictive legislation therefore could contain anything and there was a need to consider whether the impact of the development could cause hazardous chemicals to permeate.

The Chair summarised that Officers should revisit the scoping report to see if there was anything else to uncover to strengthen the Council's response. The proposal had been updated to include additional tunnelling outside of the borough so reasonably the same could be done within Thurrock and there were real concerns around the height of elevated sections.

Councillor Allen felt that Highways England were only focusing on the cost of the scheme without considering the health and wellbeing of Thurrock residents. He noted that the red line boundary covered a Victorian tip in Tilbury and questioned whether the proposed route would cut straight through. Details around portals were still very vague; both on the North and South side of the river, and this could be part of the reason for that.

The Chair noted that the A13 widening works had uncovered sites of archaeological significance, and given the scheduled monument already raised asked whether Mucking Excavation Group, the British Museum or other

agencies had been contacted to see what could be done. It was confirmed that the feedback from the archaeological specialist advised there were sites of national significance and the area had been on their radar for some time.

25. Work Programme

The Democratic Services Officer advised that the update listed for December would go to Cabinet rather than General Services Committee.

Councillor Little declared that he, and the other Members of the Task Force had received a letter from Stephen Metcalfe MP offering his assistance if required.

Councillor Rice requested that Officers liaise with Highways England to ensure Members received copies of the large-scale maps as agreed earlier in the meeting.

The Thames Crossing Action Group invited Members to their meeting to be held on Sunday, to reinforce the strength and show of united support within Thurrock for their cause.

The meeting finished at 8.30 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**

Minutes of the Meeting of the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force held on 25 September 2017 at 5.15 pm

Present: Councillors Tom Kelly, Brian Little, Terry Piccolo, Roy Jones, John Allen, Peter Smith, Barbara Rice and Steve Liddiard

Matt Jackson, Thames Crossing Action Group representative (Substitute)
Peter Ward, Thurrock Business Representative
Michael Loveday, Resident Representative

Apologies: Councillors Bukky Okunade

George Abbott, Thames Crossing Action Group Representative

In attendance: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive
Steve Cox, Corporate Director of Environment and Place
Ann Osola, Assistant Director of Transportation and Highways
Fred Raphael, Transport Development Manager
Robert Audsley, Highways England
Chris Marsh, Highways England
Tim Wright, Highways England
Lottie 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.

1. Appointment of Chair

The Corporate Director of Environment and Place welcomed everyone and introduced the meeting outlining the role of the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force. The Democratic Services Officer outlined the process for the nomination and election of Chair and Vice-Chair.

Councillor Kelly nominated Councillor B. Little as Chair; this was seconded by Councillor Piccolo. Councillor Allen nominated Councillor Smith; this was seconded by Councillor Jones.

Members were given the opportunity to vote. As there was an equality of votes, the matter was determined by the drawing of lots, in line with the Constitution. Councillor Smith was the successful nominee and the Committee were satisfied with the result.

2. Appointment of Vice-Chair

The Chair asked for nominations for the Vice-Chair position.

Councillor Liddiard nominated Councillor B. Rice, which was seconded by Councillor Jones.

Councillor Piccolo nominated Councillor B. Little, which was seconded by Councillor Kelly.

The Committee voted in favour of Councillor B. Rice.

3. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Highways England Presentation

Representatives from Highways England gave a presentation to the Committee which outlined key details of the design and process, including key dates to note in terms of decision deadlines moving forward.

The Thames Crossing Action Group representative asked what the expected capacity would be if three lanes were to be used, given that the expected capacity for two lanes was approximately 70,000. The Committee was advised that the increase was not linear as it would be a matter of how well the lanes were occupied. The expected figure was around 85,000-90,000.

Councillor Jones asked for clarification around the proposed height of the roads in the elevated sections. The route would be lowered where possible but it would need to be elevated in part to avoid landfill, flood risk areas and other roads. The section from East to West by North Ockendon would be 6m or 7m above ground level. Councillor Jones noted that it would be visible for miles due to its height.

The Chief Executive interjected that it was crucial that Highways England clearly outlined what aspects might be influenced by the Council and businesses and what would be beyond their control. Everyone involved was entitled to understand exactly what could be influenced before engaging with the public. The Highways England representative agreed that their intention was to make it obvious what could and could not be changed. At the time of the consultation the year before, the process was still in very early stages but now, with a more developed understanding of traffic movements, environmental issues and other factors it was possible to give a clearer picture around what aspects of the proposal could be influenced and altered.

The Chair noted that the data modelling for local traffic had been undertaken several years previously. Given the extensive works carried out along the A13, he queried whether it would be necessary to revisit this. The Task Force heard that this was definitely correct. Highways England had a requirement to

update their information regarding local traffic surveys and local plans. The forecast on both strategic and local road networks would be updated, with the last full year of data being 2016.

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.

Councillor Jones enquired whether this would include data regarding air pollution. Highways England were beginning their surveys around air quality presently and the data collected would form the baseline for all future information. It was their intention to share this information too. Councillor Jones wished to clarify the public consultations process as it had been somewhat vague in the last instance. The public consultation would include a period of engagement with local forums, information would be published online and in libraries and there would be public meetings to ensure residents could be heard.

Councillor Piccolo noted that the statutory consultation was listed for mid-2018 yet surveys were scheduled to be ongoing into 2019. He felt the outcomes of these surveys would be relevant to the consultation and it seemed strange to hold the consultation without some of the information. The Highways England representative outlined that the statutory consultation would provide a snapshot of the information obtained up to that point in time and more refined information, around ecology and other areas, would continue to develop overtime. The engagement process would be ongoing up to the submission of the Draft Development Consent Order (DCO). It was not unusual to gather data in a prioritised way and it would all be presented in the DCO.

The Vice-Chair stressed that Thurrock Council still held the official position that they wished for no further crossings within Thurrock. The Task Force had been formulated to better understand proposals and represent the interests of residents. She felt the presentation assumed that this would be the road forward and while Members wanted to ensure any development was made as easy as possible for residents, the Council's position had not changed. Residents should not be an afterthought, the key issues were what would be done for residents and how would their lives be impacted upon. It was understood that the Task Force represented strong views and Highways England were keen to engage regarding impact particularly around schools, road network and the local community.

Councillor B. Little requested that if letters were sent to residents affected by the scheme they could be asked if they were happy for the Council to be contacted. During the last consultation Councillors had no way of knowing which residents had been contacted and it had therefore been difficult to engage with the necessary residents within their wards.

The Chair encouraged Co-Opted Members to join the debate as their views were important.

Councillor Allen asked whether Highways England had an interest in the health and wellbeing of Thurrock residents, particularly in terms of air quality. Levels of above 40 parts/million were considered dangerous and certain areas within Thurrock already measured levels of 56 parts/million. An increase of vehicle movements throughout the borough would increase pollution levels and he wanted to know what would be done to protect residents. It was confirmed that Highways England's assessments would account for changes in vehicle movements and vehicle quality over time, as well as environmental factors. Forecasts would be carried out and the aim was to minimise effects on local residents and pollution as far as possible.

Councillor Allen continued that the air quality was 'to be predicted' but there was already evidence of poor air quality within Thurrock. The aim might be to minimise the impact but it was unlikely that vehicles would be stopped from using the new route and therefore there were no assurances for residents. He felt the situation would become increasingly worse. The Highways England representative recognised concerns and outlined that there was a duty to explain what they believed effects would be. There was a desire to work with residents and address their concerns.

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.

Councillor Kelly expressed his view that the group was somewhat restricted. While there was no desire to sound as though the Council's position had changed, Members also had to be pragmatic in their approach to ensure that, whatever the outcome, it was as beneficial as possible for Thurrock. He had a number of concerns regarding proposed Route 3, which he would raise at the next meeting.

Councillor B. Little highlighted that the construction phase would impact tremendously on Thurrock. If the development were to take place he asked that Highways England work to ensure the Council was comfortable with the impact and mitigation in place. The DCO had to be consulted with Local Authorities and residents. This would be a major project and therefore concerns regarding construction traffic, dust and noise would be mitigated as much as possible. There were intentions to use the Thames as much as possible to reduce the effects of construction traffic.

The Thames Crossing Action Group representative referred to the proposed elevated section at Baker Street which would be 60m high with high polluting HGVs. This section would run alongside a conservation area and he asked whether it would be possible for that section of the route to be tunnelled. He also noted that the proposed new junction in East Tilbury would have a huge impact on a small neighbourhood. 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. The Chair requested that a member of the engineering department attend a meeting in future to discuss possibilities.

6. Terms of Reference

It was noted that whilst the Terms of Reference were important, they were not completely defining of the Task Force.

Councillor B. Little raised the question of nominating substitutes and Councillor Piccolo agreed that he wished to discuss in more detail. The Vice- Chair also highlighted the possibility of inviting other parties to offer their input.

The Task Force agreed to discuss this item fully at the next meeting.

7. Governance and Decision Making

The Task Force agreed to discuss this item at the next meeting. Councillor Liddiard also proposed submission of written questions.

8. Any Other Business

There were no other items of business.

9. Work Programme

Officers noted that a number of items had been raised for the next meeting's agenda. It was agreed that a full work programme would be formulated then.

The meeting finished at 6.20 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

Lower Thames Crossing Task Force Action List

Action	Responsible	Completed?
September meeting		
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.	HE	We are currently reviewing the traffic data for the whole of Thurrock and we hope to be able to provide this as soon as possible.
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.	HE	We are currently reviewing the traffic data for the whole of Thurrock and we hope to be able to provide this as soon as possible.
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.	HE	<p>We are focused on developing the preferred route which was announced in April 2017. Further refinement work is ongoing.</p> <p>With the latest scheme the Orsett Cock roundabout movements are not affected because the A128/LTC junction link has been removed.</p> <p>The updated LTC/A13 Junction is located to allow for weaving on the A13 between adjacent junctions which are already at their minimum weaving length.</p>
October Meeting		
Updated Survey data	HE	The baseline surveys are ongoing and commenced in August. Once the traffic model is available the relevant air quality assessment and modelling will be undertaken, which we will then share.
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	HE	The LTC scheme is still under development and the vertical profile is being

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.		<p>reviewed to mitigate any potential local impact.</p> <p>Under the current scheme it will be dual 3 from the A2 up to the A13 junction; and dual 2 from the A13 to the M25. However, we are still reviewing the latest traffic model figures which will need to be validated.</p>
Link to documents outlining decision process	HE	Completed
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.	HE	Assessments would have been undertaken for the routes that were shortlisted, including route 3. However, the A14 was discounted at an early stage as it “performs poorly against the traffic and economic scheme objectives”. Further information will be provided next week.
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	HE	<p>We are focused on developing the preferred route which was announced in April 2017.</p> <p>The LTC route will bypass Chadwell St-Mary to the north and there will be a separate link road and junction to Tilbury to the south of Chadwell St-Mary. This will result in fewer HGVs using the A1089 and reduce the traffic.</p>
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	The visualisation shown at SAP is outdated as the project has developed. However, we have an updated visualisation which we plan to share at the next Task Force meeting.
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	HE	Highways England’s Dartford Crossing operations team is currently looking how best to invest the extra £10m

<p>Highways England than the Lower Thames Crossing team however an update could still be obtained.</p>		<p>the SoS announced is being made available to invest in short term improvements at and around the Dartford Crossing. Similarly, the same team is working on a medium term of improvements.</p>
<p>November meeting</p>		
<p>Brian Little raised the suggestion of an 'opt-in' system for residents to allow info to be shared with their Councillors. HE advised they would seek legal advice around possibilities.</p>	<p>HE</p>	<p>It is Highways England policy not to share individuals' personal data with local authorities unless there is a legal obligation to do so. This extends to entering into voluntary data sharing agreements, where the permission of affected landowners would need to be secured in order for their contact details to be shared.</p> <p>However, we are keen to explore how we can work together to help you achieve your objectives without the necessity to share personal data.</p>
<p>Gerard Rice requested large-scale maps be emailed to Members.</p>	<p>HE</p>	<p>Maps were shared with Thurrock Council on 06 December.</p>
<p>If the proposed crossing were to go ahead, Members highlighted the following essential mitigation measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More tunnelling to reduce impact • Use of cut and cover -especially adjacent to areas of population • Interchange with A13 to be put into Tunnel • Low noise surfacing • Acoustic Fencing • No out of hours working 	<p>HE</p>	<p>A series of meetings is currently being arranged between Thurrock Council and Highways England LTC technical teams (aiming for January 2018) to discuss several design development options and at these mitigation discussions can take place.</p>