

3 August 2020		ITEM: 6
General Services Committee		
Lower Thames Crossing Task Force		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key	
Report of: Councillor Mark Coxshall, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration		
Accountable Assistant Director: Anna Eastgate, Assistant Director Lower Thames Crossing & Major Transport Projects		
Accountable Director: Andrew Millard, Director of Place		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

In July 2017, Council considered a report which provided an update on the LTC scheme. As part of the consideration, a recommendation was made to invite General Services Committee to establish a task force or working group with suggested terms of reference.

The Lower Thames Crossing Task Force was established consisting of 9 elected members (3 conservative, 3 labour and 3 independent) as well as four co-opted members including a resident, business community, Thurrock Business Board and opposition group representation.

The LTC Task Force has provided input into the Statutory Consultation in December 2018, Supplementary Consultation in March 2020 and latterly the Design Refinements Consultation in July 2020. As the DCO application is expected to be submitted in September 2020, the opportunity to influence as the project moves into examination phase is extremely limited and key components of the scheme will be fixed. The Council will continue to play a role in the DCO process as an affected local authority however, it is considered that as the final consultation will be concluded in August 2020, the work of the LTC Task Force is complete. In the unlikely event of further public consultation, this can be addressed by a further report to General Services Committee.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That the General Services Committee agrees in accordance with the terms of reference of the LTC Task Force that it be disbanded upon the completion of business as a result of the final consultation on the LTC**

scheme being complete in August 2020 and feedback having been obtained from the LTC Task Force meeting held on 20 July 2020;

- 1.2 That the General Services Committee notes and thanks the members of the LTC Task Force past and present for their contribution to shaping the proposals.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 In July 2017, Council considered a report which provided an update on the LTC scheme. There were a number of recommendations but pertinent to this report, a recommendation was agreed to set up some form of cross party group in order to respond to the LTC proposals as soon as possible.
- 2.2 A report was considered at a General Services Committee on 24th August 2017, where options were considered to either set up a task force or to establish an overview and scrutiny committee. It was resolved to establish the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force consisting of 9 elected members (3 conservative, 3 labour and 3 independent) as well as co-opted members including a community representative who may or may not be opposed to the scheme, a business community representative and a representative from the Lower Thames Crossing Action Group but whom also must be a resident. The Committee also approved the terms of reference for the task force, a copy of which are set out at Appendix 1 to this report.
- 2.3 The first meeting of the LTC Task Force took place on 25 September 2017. Since that time, the Task Force has met 23 times where there has been relevant business to discuss. Of particular note was the involvement of the Task Force in providing input into the Council's Statutory Consultation response in December 2018, Supplementary Consultation in March 2020 and latterly, input into the Design Refinements Consultation in July 2020.
- 2.4 The most recent meeting of the LTC Task Force was held on 20 July 2020, where the Design Refinements Consultation was presented and discussed to obtain feedback from the Task Force for input into the formal Council consultation response, a draft of which is also being considered as part of this meeting of the GSC.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects such as the LTC fall to be determined under the Planning Act 2008 and the relevant National Policy Statement. Scheme development on this scale is an iterative process and can often take time to move through the various stages of early consultation, preferred options and scheme consultation before it moves into the next phase of development consent order application (DCO) and examination in public.

- 3.2 The Task Force has played a valuable role in helping to formulate the Council's input and response to the DCO process and in particular the statutory consultation, supplementary consultation and most recently the Design Refinements Consultation. The views of its members, the business community, residents and the LTC Action Group led to the writing of the mitigation list which was used as a keystone document in the consultation response and in the production of the Economic Impact Report which was published in February 2020.
- 3.3 The Design Refinements Consultation underway is the final round of consultation before Highways England submits its DCO application which is anticipated to be made in September 2020.
- 3.4 Once the DCO application is submitted, the opportunity to influence the scheme is very much limited. This is because the process is designed to ensure detailed and public engagement through the iterative stages of scheme development. Once the application is made, many components of the design and the scheme are fixed including the red line boundary, key design elements, the environmental statement and any necessary mitigation.
- 3.5 The terms of reference of the LTC Task Force provided for it to continue indefinitely or until all business was complete. The decision to disband the LTC Task Force sits with the General Services Committee or with the Chair upon request.
- 3.6 In light of the LTC scheme moving through to the next phase of the DCO process with all consultation now about to be concluded in August and having particular regard to the information set out in this report, it appears appropriate to now consider that the work of the LTC Task Force is complete.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The LTC Task Force work is considered to be complete as a consequence of the engagement and involvement in the Statutory Consultation, the Supplementary Consultation and most recently, the Design Refinements Consultation.

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

- 5.1 There has been no consultation on this report

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

- 6.1 Lower Thames Crossing will have a significant impact on the emergent Local Plan as well as associated policies and documents. The scheme is moving through the statutory application phase of the scheme and the Council has a

role to play in responding to that scheme to secure the most appropriate outcome for the community.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**
**Senior Management Accountant Environment,
Highways & Counter Fraud Directorate and
Place**

All costs of the LTC Task Force have been met from existing budgets..

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Tim Hallam**
**Acting Head of Law, Assistant Director of Law
and Governance and Monitoring Officer**

There are no legal implications as a consequence of this report.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Smith**
**Strategic Lead, Community Development and
Equalities**

There are no diversity or equality implications as a consequence of this report.

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

There are no other implications as a consequence of this report.

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):

- Thurrock Council Report 26 July 2017, Lower Thames Crossing
- GSC Report 24 August 2017

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – LTC Task Force Terms of Reference

Report Author:

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