

11 November 2020		ITEM: 10
		Decision: 110534
Cabinet		
Lower Thames Crossing Task Force Update Report		
Wards and communities affected:	Key Decision:	
All	Key	
Report of: Councillor Fraser Massey, Chair of the LTC Task Force		
Accountable Assistant Director: Anna Eastgate, Assistant Director - Lower Thames Crossing and Project Delivery		
Accountable Director: Andy Millard, Director of Place		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

In line with the Terms of Reference, the LTC Task Force 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 Task Force has met on a monthly basis since September 2017. Cabinet received a previous update on 15 January 2020.

2.2 The Council remains opposed in principle to any new crossing in Thurrock and the task force has consistently sought to hold Highways England to account. The long-held concern regarding obtaining responses and key information continues to hamper the Council's ability to properly assess and scrutinise the scheme.

2.3 Highways England conducted a statutory consultation on the scheme which ended on 20 December 2018. Details of the Task Force's discussions following the consultation to date are detailed below. The DCO application Was submitted by Highways England on Friday 23 October 2020.

3. Task Force Meetings

3.1 All Task Force meetings are recorded and available on the Thurrock Council website. Since the impacts of COVID-19 the meetings have been held

as hybrid meetings on Microsoft Teams.

- 3.2 Full minutes of the meetings are also available on the website. Below is a summary of the discussions at each meeting:

February

- 3.3 Highways England presented on the proposed changes to the scheme following statutory consultation in 2018. Supplementary consultation commenced on 29 January 2020 and would run for eight weeks until 25 March 2020
- 3.4 The Chair ran through the Priorities list where questions of clarification were asked and addressed.

March

- 3.5 The March meeting of the Task Force considered the Council's draft supplementary consultation response in advance of the final report being considered at General Services Committee.

July

- 3.6 Councillor Massey was elected to the Chair with Councillor Gerard Rice as the Deputy.
- 3.7 Highways England were invited to present the Design Refinements Consultation materials. This consultation was taking place during the Covid 19 pandemic, was virtual only and was open for comments for a 30 day period only closing on 12 August 2020. Officer took notes of the concerns raised by the Task Force members to incorporate into the Council response given the short period within which to respond.
- 3.8 The Chair ran through the priorities list which had been reviewed by officers since the previous meeting.

3.9 September

Highways England attended and were requested to present on feedback to Design refinements consultation and provide further information in relation to the concerns expressed by the Task Force with regard to noise barriers, their locations, scale and size as well as materials. HE also confirmed proposals for worker accommodation to be provided on the main construction site but little other detail so as to understand what is proposed.

- 3.10 The Chair ran through the work plan.

3.11 October

Officers produced a report updating the Task Force Members on the health impact assessment. The discussion concluded that the work had not progressed as much as officers would have liked and there was still a lot of information to be reviewed once the DCO application was submitted. Highways England are expected to submit the DCO application on 23 October 2020 and Officers confirmed that notification had been received from the Planning Inspectorate.

- 3.12 Officers presented a further report relating to the emerging economic impact

phase 2 work and the summary mitigation list that had been worked up. Officers answered some questions of clarification and suggested any detailed feedback be sent through by email.

- 3.13 Officers discussed the next steps in the DCO process and the timing for registering as an interested party. Officers agreed to circulate a guidance note produced by the Planning Inspectorate that would be helpful for the Task Force members and residents to understand the next steps.
- 3.14 There was discussion regarding the submission of the DCO and the fact that moving into this next stage meant that the ability to change or influence the scheme is now much diminished.
- 3.15 Task Force members agreed to cancel the November meeting as Officers would be working on the Adequacy of Consultation response and reviewing application documents should the DCO be accepted.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 In line with the terms of reference the LTC Task Force 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: **Laura Last**
Senior Management Accountant

There are no specific financial implications arising from the report and the work is funded from within existing budgets.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Tim Hallam**
Deputy Head of Law and Deputy Monitoring Officer

This is an update report from the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force and there are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer

There are no diversity implications arising from this 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

- None

Report Author:

Anna Eastgate

Assistant Director – Lower Thames Crossing and Project Delivery Place