

Minutes of the Meeting of the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force held on 17 January 2022 at 6.00 pm

- Present:** Councillors Fraser Massey (Chair), John Kent (Vice-Chair), Gary Byrne, Adam Carter, Sara Muldowney and Sue Sammons
- Apologies:** Councillor Daniel Chukwu
Peter Ward, Business Representative
- In attendance:** Colin Black, Interim Assistant Director Regeneration and Place Delivery
Lucy Tricker, Senior Democratic Services Officer
- Chris Stratford, Senior Consultant, Stantec engaged by Thurrock Council
- Laura Blake, Thames Crossing Action Group Representative
Robert Quick, Resident Representative
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Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being recorded, with the recording to be made available on the Council's website.

45. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting from the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force held on 18 October 2021, 15 November 2021 and 13 December 2021 were approved as a true and correct record.

46. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

47. Declaration of Interests

There were no interests declared.

48. Thames Freeport - Verbal Update

The Interim Assistant Director Regeneration and Place Delivery introduced the report and explained that it provided a brief update on the Thames Freeport and the effect this would have on the LTC. He stated that due to the size of the Freeport, Thurrock felt that LTC connectivity to the local road network should improve, and the Council had met with Thames Gateway, Port of Tilbury, and DP World to discuss the implications of the LTC and the Freeport, particularly the adequacy of the A13 Manorway junction. He explained that the amendments that National Highways (NH) were proposing

to the Orsett Cock roundabout would have implications on the A13 Manorway junction, and would therefore impact port traffic. He added that Thurrock were currently waiting for detailed traffic modelling of the Orsett Cock roundabout and how this would affect the A13 Manorway and the A13/LTC junction. The Interim Assistant Director Regeneration and Place Delivery added that officers from Thurrock Council had met with the Port of Tilbury last week to understand the alignment of the potential Tilbury Link Road and how this might connect to Tilbury town. He felt that the view of the Port of Tilbury was aligned with the Council's as both believed that the newly proposed junction would be a good step towards the development of the Tilbury Link Road, although the Council were still looking to understand how future connectivity would be delivered to the port. He explained that the new junction would be close to the port, but port traffic would still need to travel up the A1089 to the A13/LTC junction to then travel back down to the port. He stated that Thurrock Council would be pushing for the Tilbury Link Road at Development Consent Order (DCOv2) submission. He summarised and stated that NH were planning to start their next consultation on 24 March.

The Chair thanked the Interim Assistant Director for his report and stated that the red line boundary for the LTC and the Freeport would overlap. He queried whether traffic out of the Freeport would contribute towards LTC air quality statistics. The Senior Consultant replied that NH were currently updating their traffic model, and Thurrock had been informed that this should be ready by mid-March. He explained that at that point, NH would then begin to work on updating their noise and air quality modelling. He stated that as the consultation began on 24 March, this information would likely not be available pre-consultation. He added that the air quality threshold was also changing following the Environment Act, which would be implemented toward the end of October 2022. He commented that Thurrock had received no clarification from NH regarding how this change of threshold would affect the proposed scheme.

Councillor Muldowney questioned what was currently known about the proposed Tilbury Link Road. The Interim Assistant Director Regeneration and Place Delivery explained that the upcoming consultation would consult on modifications to the proposed junction. He explained that the proposed junction would only be for operational and emergency access, but could provide the basis for a future junction, although no current public access was proposed. He added that the proposed junction would be where the tunnel portal emerged on the north side of the river and would allow emergency vehicles faster access to the tunnel entrance in case of incidents. He stated that the new proposed junction could in future connect to Station Road, but it was not currently clear whether it would connect to the east or west of Station Road.

The Thames Crossing Action Group (TCAG) Representative asked how long the new consultation would run, and if this would fall during the purdah period. The Senior Consultant stated that the consultation would conclude on 22 April and would fall completely during purdah. He stated that therefore the Council would need to either submit a draft consultation response or wait to submit

until after purdah had finished with Council endorsement. Councillor Muldowney queried when the Council would receive feedback from the last consultation. The Interim Assistant Director Regeneration and Place Delivery replied that a summary of changes following the consultation would be provided, but NH would not be able to reply to all consultation responses before the start of the next consultation in March. The Senior Consultant replied that there would be no technical documents for the next consultation and that all information would be contained within the consultation guide, plus the usual three map books.

The Resident Representative queried how the new Freeport would affect the proposed Tilbury Fields area. The Senior Consultant explained that the Freeport would receive priority over the Tilbury Fields area, and therefore the western half of Tilbury Fields had been given to the Freeport. He explained that the new plan increased the northern and eastern sections of Tilbury Fields, but this was still smaller in size than the original plan. He added that this could cause issues for NH, as NH originally planned for the spoil to be used in Tilbury Fields. He explained that as Tilbury Fields would now be much smaller, the level of the ground could be higher. He stated that part of the proposed consultation would be regarding the updated plans for Tilbury Fields.

49. Health Impact Assessment - Verbal Update

The Senior Consultant explained that no new information had been received on the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) since the last meeting. Councillor Muldowney asked if the Task Force could get sight of the HIA document. The Senior Consultant replied that the only HIA document that Thurrock Council had received was from DCO v1, which included the draft Health and Equalities Impact Assessment (HEqIA), but this could be circulated to the Task Force for information. He explained that nine local authorities, including Thurrock, had commissioned an independent assessment of the methodology of the HIA, and many points raised by this assessment would hopefully be included in the next version. He stated that Thurrock had received the full contents list from the next version of the HIA, but would only receive the final document at DCO submission.

The Resident Representative asked when the updated traffic model would be available, and if this would include traffic data from the Dartford Crossing. The Senior Consultant replied that the updated traffic model data would not be available until mid-March, at which point Thurrock would get the opportunity to analyse the data. He explained that Thurrock Council had only received the cordon model and not received full access to the previous full traffic model, so therefore could only make assumptions regarding traffic in certain areas. The Interim Assistant Director Regeneration and Place Delivery added that the new consultation was being called a Local Refinement Consultation by NH, and therefore they would only consult on areas of change, for example Tilbury Fields. He stated that Thurrock were pushing for NH to consult on a wider variety of aspects.

Councillor Muldowney asked if the Council could push to move the consultation so it did not fall within purdah. The Senior Consultant replied that officers would be raising this with NH, and the Chief Executive was also aware. He suggested that the Task Force could also raise this with NH to provide a political standpoint. The Chair suggested that he would write a letter and circulate it to the Task Force for their agreement and signature, to urge NH to postpone the consultation until after the purdah period had finished.

The TCAG Representative added that NH had recently submitted a retrospective planning application for a site on Pilgrims Lane. She stated that she was reviewing the planning application that NH had submitted, and had found that it contained unreliable data, for example it stated that no trees would be destroyed, but she felt that the area contained lots of trees that would need to be destroyed for the proposed coach park. Councillor Byrne stated that the planning application for Pilgrims Lane would be brought before the Planning Committee, so he could update the Task Force as to the outcome of that discussion.

The TCAG Representative added that she had also raised the issue of smart motorways with the relevant Select Committee, local MPs, and NH, as she felt the LTC scheme should be paused, in line with the pause to smart motorways. She explained that although the LTC would be an 'all-purpose trunk road', it was being designed to smart motorway standards. The Interim Assistant Director Regeneration and Place Delivery added that Thurrock Council had also written to NH regarding the pause of the smart motorway programme, as the LTC was being designed to almost identical standards.

50. Work Programme

The Chair asked that NH be invited to an upcoming meeting of the Task Force to discuss the new consultation. The Senior Consultant replied that he would liaise with NH and would invite them at the next appropriate meeting.

The meeting finished at 6.42 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**

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