

Minutes of the Meeting of the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force held on 20 June 2022 at 6.00 pm

- Present:** Councillors Fraser Massey (Chair), John Kent (Vice-Chair), Gary Byrne, Terry Piccolo, Kairen Raper and Sue Sammons
- Apologies:** Councillors Sara Muldowney and Augustine Ononaji
Westley Mercer, Thurrock Business Board Representative
- In attendance:** Colin Black, 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 live-streamed and recorded, with the recording to be made available on the Council's website.

1. Nomination of Chair

Councillor Fraser Massey was elected as Chair of the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force for the 2022/23 municipal year.

2. Nomination of Vice-Chair

Councillor John Kent was elected as Vice-Chair of the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force for the 2022/23 municipal year.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting from the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force held on 14 March 2022 were approved as a true and correct record.

4. Items of Urgent Business

The Chair explained that there was one item of urgent business regarding a letter that had been sent from the Council to the Treasury.

The Assistant Director Regeneration and Place Delivery stated that the Council had written to the Treasury as the value for money for the proposed Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) scheme had appeared to decrease, and the Council were requesting that this opportunity to modify the scheme to improve its value for money be explored more fully before Development Consent

Order (DCO) submission. The Chair welcomed the letter and felt it was detailed and clearly set out the Council's position. The Vice-Chair echoed these comments and felt that the best way to ensure that this scheme did not go ahead was to prove that it did not provide value for money. The Thames Crossing Action Group (TCAG) Representative thanked officers for their hard work on the letter and felt that it echoed the points that had been made by the Task Force over recent years.

The Chair reminded residents that the consultation was due to close at 11.59pm on Monday 20 June 2022 and urged residents to fill out the consultation.

5. Declaration of Interests

There were no interests declared.

6. LTC Consultation Response (to follow)

The Assistant Director Regeneration and Place Delivery explained that the document would outline the Council's response to the consultation and that it was agreed that it would be submitted to Full Council. He stated that National Highways (NH) had allowed the Council until 4 July 2022 to allow the response to pass through governance processes before submission.

The Senior Consultant Stantec stated that the consultation response was divided into four sections. He explained that the first section was a 10-page summary document and introduction, which would be presented to Full Council. He stated that the second section dealt with prematurity and adequacy of consultation. He stated that the team had considered the LRC consultation was premature as the Council had only just received the traffic modelling data; and no Health Impact Assessment (HIA) or air quality and noise assessment results had been received to understand impacts or mitigation. He stated that officers had also deemed the consultation as inadequate as there had been no consultation events in Chadwell St Mary or South Ockendon, and the consultation had only been for a period of five and a half weeks, rather than eight weeks, which was preferred by the Council and provided by NH in the previous consultation. The Senior Consultant Stantec explained that section three of the response provided a summary of technical issues, and section four dealt with the response to the 26 changes outlined in the consultation, of which 15 were in Thurrock. The Senior Consultant Stantec explained that this section responded to areas such as the Community Involvement Consultation response; modelling changes; changes to the A13/Orsett Cock junction; Tilbury Fields; Tilbury Operational Access; utilities; cyclists and horse-riders (WCH) rights of way; landscaping around the A13 Junction and North Road; air quality and noise impacts; land and property compensation; nitrogen impacts and mitigation; health, equalities and wellbeing; and climate change and decarbonisation.

The Chair thanked officers for their hard work in preparing the Council's response and asked if officers could submit the response as soon as possible

for Full Council, to ensure Members could read and make appropriate comment. The Chair queried how many changes to the scheme had been proposed since 2018. The Senior Consultant Stantec replied that most changes were outlined in the various consultation 'Guides', but approximately 100-150 changes had been made since 2018, with approximately 20-30 of these categorised as significant changes. The Assistant Director Regeneration and Place Delivery added that many residents appeared confused by the ad-hoc nature of the consultations and were unaware of the full scheme and its impact, and asked if Members could help ensure that their residents understood the potential impacts relevant to them.

The Chair queried the raised areas of land around the A13. The Senior Consultant Stantec stated that this was outlined in the Guide on page 65, but listed areas such as along Stifford Clays Road, where the earth bund would rise approximately 15m above existing ground level; and alongside the existing A13 where the earth bund would rise approximately 10m above existing ground level. He explained that the area to the east of the proposed relocated travellers' site would also contain a raised earth bund. He explained that NH had excess spoil to remove, due to the proposed shrinkage of Tilbury Fields, and these raised areas would be used for this spoil, as well as to mitigate noise impacts. The Senior Consultant Stantec added that officers were concerned regarding the height of the bunds, and whether or not planting would succeed due to their steepness. The Chair questioned if NH would pay Thurrock Council compensation if the LTC reduced capacity on the A13. The Assistant Director Regeneration and Place Delivery responded that the Council were involved in ongoing conversations with NH and the Department for Transport on this issue. The Chair queried if NH were proposing on making the A13 a trunk road. The Assistant Director Regeneration and Place Delivery stated that NH had proposed to trunk a section of the A13 and A1014, to make it part of the strategic road network. He stated that officers were currently seeking clarification of these proposals from NH.

The Resident Representative queried how spoil would be moved from the tunnel entrance to the proposed earth bund areas. He stated that at the recent consultation in East Tilbury he had questioned NH officers on the number of vehicle movements, and they had confirmed that there would be approximately 130 vehicle movements per day on East Tilbury Road and Muckingford Road into the construction area. The Resident Representative confirmed that this number would be double, as NH counted one round trip as one vehicle movement. The Senior Consultant Stantec stated that the greater proportion of the spoil would be used on Tilbury Fields, but any other spoil would be moved through internal haul roads. He explained that there were currently gaps in NH internal haul road plans, including at the railway line in East Tilbury. He stated that the Council had recently received an updated Construction Cordon Model and were working hard to review this data to determine impacts. The Assistant Director Regeneration and Place Delivery added that NH planned approach was to build the viaduct first, although this could take two years to complete. He stated that the Council were also promoting the idea of a new bridge at East Tilbury over the railway line, which

had originally been promised as part of the scheme, but had now been withdrawn due to funding issues within NH, although alternative funding mechanisms were now being investigated by NH.

The Chair summarised and stated that the Task Force agreed with the broad approach outlined by officers for the consultation response and urged residents to complete the consultation.

7. Work Programme

The Chair stated that NH would be invited to the July meeting, which could be an in-person meeting, and the Health Impact Assessment would be added as a verbal update to every future meeting.

The meeting finished at 6.49 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**