

<b>11 January 2023</b>		<b>ITEM: 10</b> <b>Decision: 110633</b>
<b>Cabinet</b>		
<b>Lower Thames Crossing Task Force Update Report</b>		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Key	
<b>Report of:</b> Chair of the LTC Task Force		
<b>Accountable Assistant Director:</b> Colin Black, Interim Assistant Director – Place		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Mark Bradbury, Corporate Director of Place		
<b>This report is Public</b>		

## **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 Task Force.**

### **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 in October 2022.

2.2 The Council remains opposed in principle to any new crossing in Thurrock and the task force has consistently sought to hold National Highways to account. A new team at National Highways has meant that in recent months there has been a greater level of information sharing and improved collaboration between the parties

2.3 National Highways conducted a statutory consultation on the scheme which ended on 20 December 2018, two subsequent consultations (Supplementary and Design Refinements) in 2020 and then a Community Impacts Consultation in July-September 2021. Details of the Task Force's discussions following the consultations to date are detailed below.

2.4 National Highways submitted its first Development Consent Order (DCO) application in October 2020 and the Council submitted an adequacy of consultation (AoC) response at the request of the Planning Inspectorate and

submitted a joint AoC with Gravesham Borough Council and the London Borough of Havering, which were instrumental in the subsequent actions of the Planning Inspectorate and in National Highways decision. As a consequence of these issues raised with the application and consultation, National Highways took the decision to withdraw its application in November 2020.

- 2.5 Since that time, National Highways has been amending its proposals, adding further mitigation, preparing new documentation, liaising with stakeholders (including Thurrock), involving many technical meetings.

### **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 either hybrid or virtual meetings on Teams, but recently meetings have been held in-person and via Teams.

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

#### **April – May 2021**

- 3.3 No meetings were held just prior to and following local elections.

#### **June 2021**

- 3.4 There were nominations and voting for the Chair and Vice Chair. A report on current progress on the Hatch Report measures was discussed and a review of the work programme was undertaken.

#### **July 2021**

- 3.5 National Highways officers gave a presentation and answered questions on the forthcoming Community Impacts Consultation. A Technical Paper on progress with the Health Impact Assessment (HEqIA) was presented and technical questions answered, and a review of the work programme was undertaken.

#### **August 2021**

- 3.6 National Highways officers gave a presentation and answered questions on progress with the Community Impacts Consultation and progress with the Hatch Report measures and a review of the work programme was undertaken.

#### **September 2021**

- 3.7 The draft Community Impact Consultation response from Thurrock Council was presented and discussed, prior to consideration by full Council and all recommendations were approved unanimously.

#### **October and November 2021**

- 3.8 Both meetings were postponed and held at the December meeting.

#### **December 2021**

3.9 This involved dealing with all three meetings from October, November and December and involved presentation and discussion of the following key matters:

- Employment and Skills Strategy Paper commenting on their draft 'control' document
- Health Impact Assessment verbal updates
- DCO Submission verbal update
- Transport Action Network (TAN) presentation and discussion
- Hatch Report Update Paper and discussion

#### **January 2022**

3.10 There were two verbal updates relating to the Thames Freeport and the Health & Equalities Impact Assessment.

#### **February 2022**

3.11 The CBRE Paper on Compensation was presented and discussed and there was a verbal update on the Health & Equalities Impact Assessment.

#### **March 2022**

3.12 There were three verbal updates relating to the Orsett Cock/A13 Junction, the forthcoming NH Local Refinement Consultation and the Health & Equalities Impact Assessment.

#### **April – May 2022**

3.13 No meetings were held just prior to and following local elections.

#### **June 2022**

3.14 The Assistant Director Regeneration & Place Delivery explained that the Council had written to the Treasury about the value for money of the LTC and this was discussed. Also, the Council's draft Local Refinement Consultation response was presented and discussed, and the broad approach was agreed.

#### **July - September 2022**

3.15 No meetings were held over the summer period.

#### **October 2022**

3.16 This was the reconvened September meeting. A National Highways senior officer gave a presentation on project changes over the last year, current engagement and the DCOv2 programme. He then answered questions on a range of topics, including local road network impacts and monitoring, air quality and noise and health impacts, emergencies/incidents, lack of relief to Dartford Crossing, traffic modelling data, value for money/cost of the project and its Business Case, TLR, smart motorways, decarbonisation and public transport provision and preferred delay to DCOv2 submission.

3.17 Subsequently the Council submitted written questions to National Highways, which were responded to and then the Council submitted follow-up questions to which responses are awaited.

- 3.18 In addition, the Council representatives outlined the DCO process once the DCOv2 had been submitted and how individuals/groups/communities can get involved. There was also a verbal update to the limited progress on the health impacts.

**November 2022**

- 3.19 Following the DCOv2 submission on 31 October, there was a verbal update on the health impacts included within the DCOv2 submission and subsequently when the meeting was not quorate, there was a verbal update on the DCOv2 submission and the subsequent process.

**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: **Jonathan Wilson**  
**Interim Director - Finance**

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: **John Jones**  
**Director of Legal and Governance, and**  
**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 Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, and Impact on Looked After Children

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:**

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Interim Assistant Director – Place