

Lower Thames Crossing

5.4.5.2 Statement of Common Ground between (1) National Highways and (2) Forestry England

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Statement of Common Ground

- 1.1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared in respect of the Development Consent Order (DCO) application for the proposed A122 Lower Thames Crossing (the Project) made by National Highways Limited (National Highways) to the Secretary of State for Transport (Secretary of State) under section 37 of the Planning Act 2008.
- 1.1.2 This SoCG does not seek to replicate information which is available elsewhere within the Application Documents. All documents may be available on the Planning Inspectorate website.
- 1.1.3 The SoCG has been produced to confirm to the Examining Authority where agreement has been reached between the parties named below, and where agreement has not (yet) been reached. SoCGs are an established means in the planning process of allowing all parties to identify and so focus on specific matters that may need to be addressed during the examination.

1.2 Parties to this Statement of Common Ground

- 1.2.1 This SoCG has been prepared in respect of the Project by (1) National Highways, and (2) Forestry England.
- 1.2.2 National Highways became the Government-owned Strategic Highways Company on 1 April 2015. It is the highway authority in England for the strategic road network and has the necessary powers and duties to operate, manage, maintain and enhance the network. Regulatory powers remain with the Secretary of State. The legislation establishing National Highways made provision for all legal rights and obligations of the Highways Agency, including in respect of the Project, to be conferred upon or assumed by National Highways.
- 1.2.3 Forestry England (FE)F is a division of the Forestry Commission, responsible for managing and promoting publicly owned forests in England. Its mission is to connect everyone with the nation's forests by creating and caring for our forests for people to enjoy, wildlife to flourish and businesses to grow. It operates under the Forestry Act(s) and subsequent legislation and is part of the Civil Service and an Executive Agency of the Forestry Commission. Legal Title to Forestry Commission land is held by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural affairs.

1.3 Terminology

- 1.3.1 In the matters table in section 2 of this SoCG, “Matter not agreed” indicates agreement on the matter could not be reached, and “Matter under discussion” where these points will be the subject of on-going discussion wherever possible to resolve, or refine, the extent of disagreement between the parties. “Matter agreed” indicates where the issue has been resolved.
- 1.3.2 It is agreed that any matters not specifically referred to in Section 2 of this SoCG are not of material interest or relevance to Forestry England. As such, those matters can be read as agreed, only to the extent that they are either not

of material interest or relevance to Forestry England. However, if new matters arise Forestry England reserves the right to comment on those matters as it considers appropriate.

1.4 Overview of previous engagement

1.4.1 A summary of the meetings and correspondence undertaken between the two parties in relation to the Project is outlined in Appendix C.

1.5 Status of the Statement of Common Ground

1.5.1 It is agreed that this statement is an accurate description of the matters raised by Forestry England and the current status of each matter.

1.5.2 It is agreed that Appendix C is an accurate record of the key meetings and consultation undertaken between (1) National Highways and (2) Forestry England relation to the matters addressed in this Statement of Common Ground.

2 Matters

2.1 Matters agreed, not agreed or under discussion

- 2.1.1 Table 2.1 details the matters which have been agreed, not agreed, or are under discussion between (1) National Highways and (2) Forestry England.
- 2.1.2 It is acknowledged there are some matters where further discussion may take place during the detailed design stage of the Project to finalise detail, but the matter is agreed in principle.

Table 2.1 Matters

Topic	Item number	Forestry England comment	National Highways comment	Document Reference	Status
Need for the Project					
Need for the Project	2.1.1	Forestry England support the need for the Project.	Noted	N/A	Matter Agreed
Route selection, modal alternatives & assessment of reasonable alternatives					
Route Alignment	2.1.2	Forestry England agrees with the proposed route alignment.	Noted	N/A	Matter Agreed
Consultation and engagement					
Adequacy of Consultation	2.1.3	Forestry England is satisfied with the adequacy of consultation on the Project.	Noted	N/A	Matter Agreed
Land and Compulsory acquisition					
Broadfields Farm	2.1.4	Forestry England states that Broadfields Farm is their most important single land holding within Thames Chase, comprising established woodland surrounding the Thames Chase Forest Centre. The holding is already divided	National Highways recognise the importance of Broadfields farm and has sought to reduce the impact on this farm where possible. Replacement land for Broadfields (open space and habitat) has been	N/A	Matter Agreed

Topic	Item number	Forestry England comment	National Highways comment	Document Reference	Status
		<p>by the M25, with the majority of land (including the Forest Centre) to the west, and a further parcel to the east connected by an underpass.</p> <p>Forestry England states that the proposed land take is significant and will reduce publicly accessible land and sever a number of trails. It will also further separate the two parcels of land. The impact on the site would be reduced if severance of trails could be minimised, particularly in the western parcel which attracts high numbers of visitors.</p>	<p>identified in the DCO Application including the acquisition of Hobbs Hole Field and land adjacent Cranham golf course and freehold transfer to Forestry England. Discussions are ongoing regarding the suitability of this.</p> <p>National Highways have sent through detailed plans of replacement land and are awaiting confirmation that they are accepted transfer of the freehold.</p>		
Hobb's Hole	2.1.5	<p>Forestry England has several concerns about replacement land with third party ownership - located in the middle of the Hobb's Hole, they would like to reiterate these concerns.</p>	<p>National Highways state that the pond remains outside of the Order Limits as there is no legal justification for its compulsory acquisition; however, National Highways is aware of the estate management issues that could arise in future and so will progress discussions with the owner over its management and possible voluntary agreements.</p> <p>National Highways will continue to engage with Forestry England to explain any progress in estate management.</p>	N/A	Matter Not Agreed

Topic	Item number	Forestry England comment	National Highways comment	Document Reference	Status
Folkes Lane	2.1.6	Forestry England would like to draw attention to an area of land within Folkes Lane that is highlighted for permanent acquisition for environmental mitigation. This land is already partially planted with trees and is part of the open space designed into the site masterplan. Forestry England is keen that this area should not limit any flexibility for the future management of the surrounding woodland including future tree felling.	National Highways can confirm that the proposed use of the site for ecological mitigation will not limit Forestry England from any future management of adjacent woodland. National Highways propose to use this land for temporary possession with permanent right of access for environmental management purposes only. National Highways will continue to engage with Forestry England on this.	N/A	Matter Under Discussion
Hole Farm	2.1.7	Forestry England seeks clarification on the status of proposed replacement land at Hole Farm in Brentwood, Essex as compensation land due to impacts on Folkes Lane Woodland located in the different local authority area of, the London Borough of Havering.	Hole Farm inclusion in the Order Limits is to cover several functions required by the Project one of which includes compensation for loss of open space at Folkes Lane Woodland. National Highways purchased the site on the open market to create a large community woodland in partnership with Forestry England. National Highways confirmed at the Local Refinements Consultation (May 2022) that part of the site	N/A	Matter Agreed

Topic	Item number	Forestry England comment	National Highways comment	Document Reference	Status
			<p>would now be used for compensation for Nitrogen Deposition, which will be compensatory tree planting.</p> <p>A small part of the site will be classed as replacement open space land for that lost at Folkes Lane.</p> <p>National Highways intend to transfer the freehold of that part with the remainder of the site leased to Forestry England</p> <p>The masterplan for the entire site that is being developed in partnership with Forestry England and the wider Thames Chase Community Forest partners.</p>		
Utilities	2.1.8	<p>Forestry England states that although the new proposals released at the Local Refinement consultation will require less a smaller amount of temporary possession let of land, they oppose the introduction of two new, taller pylons. Clarification is sought on whether any trees in the orchard area are proposed to be removed and if so, what the compensation will be for this.</p>	<p>The proposal will remove the existing pylons so there will be no additional infrastructure with regards to this network, it requires a smaller working area and is quicker to complete compared to the undergrounding proposal previously proposed. National Highways has considered alternative options and the overgrounding of this network, on balance, is preferential to both the Project and to UK Power</p>	N/A	Matter Under Discussion

Topic	Item number	Forestry England comment	National Highways comment	Document Reference	Status
			<p>Networks who will undertake the work, own and operate the network, Taller pylons will be required to achieve this.</p> <p>Based on the outline plan provided by Forestry England for the proposed Orchard it is likely the south-eastern corner will be impacted by the alignment of the diverted overhead powerlines and the location of the proposed pylon. The extent of which is unknown until the detailed design stage and will be based on UKPN's planting policies and guidance.</p> <p>It is of note that the eastern edge of the proposed Orchard would be impacted by the easement requirement and planting policy associated with the diverted water pipeline that runs north south through the region adjacent to the highway embankment.</p> <p>National Highways will continue to engage with Forestry England throughout the detailed design process in relation to impacts on the orchard.</p>		

Topic	Item number	Forestry England comment	National Highways comment	Document Reference	Status
Public Rights Of Way	2.1.9	<p>Forestry England do not accept a new designated bridleway way or permanent designated cycle route at Jeskyns Community Woodland due to pressure on busy recreation facilities and potential conflict between users.</p> <p>Awaiting new proposals and confirmation of durations of the temporary cycle diversion based on discussions about re-routing.</p> <p>This also is the same for Folkes Lane: new crossings over A127 welcome to improve access. Concerns about safety of access via Folkes Lane to the woodland footpaths. Forestry England would not accept a new designated bridleway through Folkes but seek to influence the connection to existing horse trails.</p>	<p>National Highways is working closely with Forestry England (FE) to ensure the Walkers Cyclist and Horse riders (WCH) proposed design is developed in a way that improves connectivity for all users through Jeskyns community woodland, whilst ensuring Forestry England's concerns are addressed.</p> <p>The Walkers Cyclists and Horse riders (WCH) proposed design has therefore been revised to limit interaction between users. Permissive pathways will be upgraded and for use by pedestrians and cyclists permitted with horse-riders using existing trails which connect to a short section of permissive bridleway leading to Henhurst Road. The proposed permissive pathways/bridleway for pedestrians and cyclists would be used temporarily as the National Cycle Route 177 diversion route required during construction works of the Project along the A2.</p> <p>National Highways welcomes Forestry England's approval of the new crossings over the A127 which</p>	N/A	Matter Under Discussion

Topic	Item number	Forestry England comment	National Highways comment	Document Reference	Status
			<p>will provide safe access for walkers cyclist , and horse riders connecting to the existing shared use route for pedestrians and cyclists, and to Moor Lane and Folkes Lane. It is noted that improvements to Moor Lane and Folkes Lane may be needed to upgrade the existing Walkers Cyclist Horse riders provision on the approach to the crossing. However, although improvements may be achievable on Moor Lane, this may not necessarily be the case for Folkes Lane, due to the narrow road and overlapping properties.</p> <p>National Highways is currently investigating the opportunity to include these as part of designated funding whereby a feasibility study would be needed to assess potential improvements to these existing Walkers Cyclist Horse riders routes leading to Folkes Lane Wood. Currently, the Walkers Cyclist Horse riders proposed design does not have any proposals within Folkes Lane Wood. However, we have noted Forestry England's position regarding horse-riding provision.</p>		

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			National Highway with continue to engage with Forestry England in relation to impact of the routes to the woodlands		
Design – Road, Tunnels, Utilities					
Impact of utility diversions (Landscape & Visual)	2.1.10	<p>Part of the land is for the temporary possession and permanent acquisition of rights for the installation of utility networks, as shown on the land plans. Forestry England agree that providing the utilities are located underground and that land subject to temporary use is appropriately restored then the impact will be reduced.</p> <p>Forestry England agree that providing the utilities are located underground and that land subject to temporary use is appropriately restored then the impact will be reduced.</p>	<p>National Highways considers that the routing of utilities in this area is the best viable option. National Highways has engaged with Forestry England to explain the constraints to the Utility routing and welcomes Forestry England acceptance of the necessity of rerouting the utilities, without undergrounding.</p> <p>National Highways acknowledges that Forestry England preference remains for all utilities to be undergrounded. National Highways cannot deliver this under the instruction of the asset owner</p> <p>The latest proposals were shown at Local Refinement Consultation; alignments were represented in Map Book 1: General Arrangements, and the associated land use shown in Map Book 2: Land Use Plans.</p>	<p>General Arrangement (Application Document 2.5)</p> <p>Land Use Plans (Application Document 2.2)</p> <p>Article 35 of the draft DCO (Application Document 3.1)</p>	Matter Not Agreed

Topic	Item number	Forestry England comment	National Highways comment	Document Reference	Status
			<p>At Local Refinements Consultation (2022) an amended proposal for the existing overhead electricity lines was consulted upon, whereby the existing 132kV lines on pylons crossing through the site and over the M25 is to be diverted north of its current alignment via the construction of two taller pylons, one each side of the M25.</p> <p>The electricity lines currently overhead on poles is proposed to be diverted underground for the spans that cross the M25, via the new footbridge.</p> <p>There is no change to the proposals of the water pipeline that runs north south, west of the M25/LTC embankments.</p> <p>The Land Use Plans represent the limit of deviation and the associated land for the acquisition of Rights and it is envisaged that there will be a further reduction in the extent of the use of the 'blue land' during the operation of the LTC, once the pipeline alignment is known and will be developed within the detailed design stage.</p> <p>National Highways is subject to a legal requirement to restore land of which temporary possession has</p>		

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			been taken, as set out in article 35 of the draft DCO.		
Impact of utility diversions (Jeskyns Community Woodland)	2.1.11	<p>Forestry England states that a 200-space car park, café, accessible surfaced trails and a number of a natural play features within may be required for temporary acquisition for utilities. Diversions of utilities must include restoration to a specification that will enable continued uninterrupted use of the affected land and utilities should be located underground.</p> <p>In addition, the Utility diversion is of crucial importance to the existing and future areas of car parking. Any such diversions of utilities must include restoration to a specification that will enable continued uninterrupted use of the affected land for vehicle access and parking.</p>	<p>National Highways confirms that Forestry England will have continued uninterrupted use of the affected land for vehicle access and parking.</p> <p>National Highway will not be diverting any utilities within Jeskyn. The only works within Jeskyns are associated with the existing pylon east of the car park and are required for the restringing of the overhead powerlines north over High Speed1(HS1) and the A2 through to Thong Lane. To enable this, cable drums and winches will be located at the base of the pylon within the area contained within the Order Limits currently envisaged to be for a limited construction period.</p> <p>No other utility works are proposed within Jeskyns or the car park and the car park is only included to provide access to the pylon from Henhurst Road, the bellmouth is included to enable any vegetation treatment such as trimming to ensure a safe access and egress for the workforce and the public.</p>	N/A	Matter Agreed

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Impact of utility diversions (Access to Thames Chase)	2.1.12	Forestry England states that public access of the Thames Chase Forest site needs to be retained between the two parcels of land through retaining the existing underpass. FE's main concern is the area being taken for the UKPower Networks (UKPN) works which cut off the main path loop on the southern part of the site.	<p>National Highways confirms that the use of the existing underpass will be considered during detailed design</p> <p>National Highway will continue to engage with Forestry England on the existing underpass and proposed overbridge to minimise loss of public access to the east of the M25.</p> <p>The DCO Application provides the preliminary design for the Project and land required for the construction of the Project with detailed design and construction being undertaken by the Contractors. National Highways states access around the overhead powerline works would have to be considered at a later date with further construction knowledge received from UKPower Networks (UKPN's) appointed contractor. The concern is noted and would be considered as part of the planning; it would also need to consider the additional works completed by the Lower Thames Crossing in the area to see if a viable north south route</p>	N/A	Matter Under Discussion

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			<p>can be provided at the extremity of the Works.</p> <p>It is envisioned that any impediment of the route associated with the overhead powerline works will be limited to a matter of weeks oppose to months during the removal and erection of the overhead powerlines that oversail the current path.</p>		
Impact of utility diversions	2.1.13	<p>Forestry England states that the plans show some of the proposed acquisition is for temporary possession of land and permanent acquisition of rights, for the diversion of utilities (namely water and power). Provided such utilities are located underground, land subject to temporary use is appropriately restored, and substations are not constructed, impact will be reduced.</p> <p>Access for contractors during utility works is proposed via Ockendon Road to the southwest area of the site, which will reduce the impact on the main visitor car park road but will require site security management at the access point. Clarification on whether this access point will be maintained to enable rights of access is required.</p>	<p>National Highways considers that the routing of utilities in this area is the best viable option. National Highways has engaged with Forestry England to explain the constraints to the Utility routing and welcomes Forestry England acceptance of the necessity of rerouting the utilities, without undergrounding.</p> <p>National Highways acknowledges that Forestry England preference remains for all utilities to be undergrounded. National Highways cannot deliver this under the instruction of the asset owner</p> <p>National Highways would like to clarify that the latest proposals were shown at Local Refinement Consultation (2022); alignments</p>	<p>General Arrangements (Application Document 2.5)</p> <p>Land Use Plans (Application Document 2.2)</p>	Matter Not Agreed

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			<p>were represented in Map Book 1: General Arrangements, and the associated land use shown in Map Book 2: Land Use Plans. These have not changed for the DCO Submission</p> <p>At the Local Refinement Consultation (2022) an amended proposal for the existing overhead electricity networks was consulted upon whereby the existing 132kV network on pylons crossing through the site and over the M25 is to be diverted north of its current alignment via the construction of two taller pylons, one each side of the M25. It is not feasible to underground these.</p> <p>The electricity network currently overhead on poles is proposed to be diverted underground for the spans that cross the M25, via the new footbridge.</p> <p>There is no change to the proposals of the water pipeline that runs north south, west of the M25/Lower Thames Crossing embankments</p> <p>The Land Use Plans represent the land required for the Project, the limit of deviation and the associated land for the acquisition of Rights.</p>		

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			<p>National Highways is subject to a legal requirement to restore land of which temporary possession has been taken, as set out in article 35 of the draft DCO</p> <p>National Highways confirms there are no substation to be constructed in this area</p> <p>National Highways welcomes Forestry England's agreement that access for contractors during utility works via Ockendon Road is appropriate</p> <p>In relation to permanent access via Ockendon Road, due to the proximity of both the railway bridge and the proposed project earthworks it may not be viable to maintain access from Ockendon Road in this location on which to develop a proposal of access for UK Power Networks (UKPN) and the other relevant utility owners. In the next stage of detailed design however this will be considered, along with Forestry England 's concerns over the current access arrangements. As grantors of the</p>		

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			utility related access Rights, Forestry England would be included in the outcome of the access discussions.		
Impact of utility diversions (Folkes Lane woodland park)	2.1.14	Clarification is required by Forestry England from National Highways, on the proposed duration and extent of the temporary utility hub at the Folkes Lane Woodland car park. Folkes Lane is also identified as a road to be used for utility works access. This road provides the only vehicular access to the woodland and our modest car park. Any such diversions of utilities must include restoration to a specification that would ideally enable continued uninterrupted use of the affected land for vehicle access and parking.	<p>National Highways clarifies that access along Folkes Lane, for the purposes of utility works, is only required for two elements of works; the diversion of an overhead electric line (Work No. MU92) under the M25 and the diversion of a high pressure gas pipeline (Work No. G10).</p> <p>Due to the isolated location of the works, and the materials and equipment needed to deliver it, Works No. G10 requires two Utility Logistics Hub (ULHs) to support the works, Beredens Lane ULH, to be the larger one, proposed on the eastern side of the M25 and the point from which most of the works will be managed and constructed, and Folkes Lane ULH, on the western side of the M25, which will support the construction of the pipeline west of the M25 and receive the machinery required to install the pipeline beneath the M25. Folkes Lane ULH is proposed to be</p>	N/A	Matter Under Discussion

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			<p>constructed, operated and demobilised over a 12-month period. Due to the nature of the works, it is likely that this will be one whole calendar year, and that year is to be programmed in accordance with the utility networks own considerations and the LTC construction programme, once that is developed.</p> <p>Folkes Lane ULH is very limited in its options for location in the region - it needs to be accessible by HGVs from the highway, in proximity to the works and is constrained by the surrounding ecological and environmental features, all of which need to be considered in the construction of the ULH also. The car park location, and existing hard standing, provides the best location on which to propose it with factors considered. Any works to the car park to establish the ULH will be restored to its original standard. Folkes Lane and the car park is not envisaged to be impeded by the utility works beyond the 12-month construction period in accordance with the current gas industry standards so continued vehicle</p>		

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			<p>access and parking would be permissible.</p> <p>National Highways acknowledges Forestry England have raised concerns regarding the use of the car park for access to its own vehicles for the maintenance of the region and has raised concerns on the restrictions for the users of the region. These have been discussed with the relevant utility company that require use of the ULH to complete works to their asset within this area and investigations are ongoing.</p> <p>Based on a further understanding of the works required, the discussions propose a modified ULH size, configuration and potentially an independent access at the car park entrance to permit continued use of access through the site for pedestrians so they can transit from the A127 northbound through the region and head east over the existing footbridge to the Hole Farm region. The discussions also include the request of Forestry England to permit a provision for their own maintenance vehicles to attend the car park and wider region, which</p>		

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			<p>National Highways are keen to ensure is continued unless on the grounds of safety. These conversations are ongoing and are being developed by the utility company and their designers and at such point a modified proposal is received and has been considered by the Project, this will be made known to Forestry England for their comments. This is estimated to be in the next 3 months.</p>		
Environmental mitigation	2.1.15	<p>A small area of land adjacent to the Forest Centre buildings is highlighted for environmental mitigation. FE require clarification on exactly what type of mitigation is proposed. This area should not limit FE's flexibility for the future management of the surrounding woodland including future tree felling.</p>	<p>National Highways states the area of land is in the Order Limits as part of its great crested newt (GCN) mitigation work. GCN are present in this area and National Highways will need to move them from the construction zone. Any animals trapped will need to be released into suitable habitat close to the breeding ponds in that area. That is what this area of land provides. National Highways is not planning on changing the habitat in that area, but only secure it to enable the release animals there. This will not affect future management as the constraint of GCN presence already exists.</p>	N/A	Matter Under Discussion

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Utilities	2.1.16	Clarification From National Highways is required to Forestry England on this modification and the proposed duration and extent of the temporary utility hub at the Folkes Lane Woodland car park in the Local Refinement consultation it was mentioned <i>"Following discussions with UK Power Networks regarding the diversion of part of its network, National Highway have made a minor modification to the Order Limits at Folkes Lane. This would reduce the impact on existing vegetation within Folkes Lane woodland."</i>	<p>The minor modification to the Order Limits at Folkes Lane is due to a diversion of the existing electricity network that crosses the M25 north of the M25 j29 (Work No. MU92). The design and its associated construction requirements have been developed by UK Power Networks in the time since Community Impacts Consultation and as such this enabled the proposals to be considered in the context of the Order Limits. This has resulted in an extension in some areas and a reduction in others to reflect the proposals.</p> <p>National Highways clarifies that the Utility Logistics Hub (ULH) is unrelated to work No.MU92 . It is associated with the gas works work No.G10 within the area further north - the western ULH work No. ULH 2 is proposed to be constructed, operated and demobilised over a 12-month period. Due to the nature of the works, it is likely that this will be one whole calendar year, and that year is to be programmed in accordance with the utility networks</p>	N/A	Matter Under Discussion

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			own considerations and the LTC construction programme, once that is developed.		
Construction					
Construction	2.1.17	Forestry England states that a new maintenance access track is proposed which extends from the visitor centre complex and follows a route north across the site, adjacent to the M25 towards the existing culvert. The location of this needs to be confirmed with Forestry England. The maintenance track should not be closed off to public access and form part of the site's publicly accessible path network.	National Highways would like to clarify that the track in question is for the purpose of accessing the culvert structure once the Project construction works are complete. Vehicular access to the track would be required on an infrequent basis for the purposes of surveying and maintenance. The new maintenance track will remain within the permanent boundary of the Project, however the Project shall be looking to enter into agreement with local authorities and other partners to ensure the management and maintenance of the track. The track would not be closed off and can be used as part of the publicly accessible path network	Design Principles (Application Document 7.5)	Matter Under Discussion
Landscape and visual					
Acoustic bund	2.1.18	Forestry England requests that acoustic bund earthworks should extend and be positioned along the entire length of the eastern edge of the western land parcel, adjacent to the M25, to reduce noise and visual impact.	National Highways has agreed with Forestry England that the acoustic bund earthworks are located along the eastern edge of the Forest Centre to provide visual and noise screening and transition south until	N/A	Matter Agreed

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			the adjacent carriageways are in cutting at the depth equivalent to the acoustic bund. The acoustic bund extends north to the culvert beneath the M25.		
Population and human health					
Non Motorised Users (NMU) - Bridge design	2.1.19	Thames Chase Forest Centre: Forestry England states that public access needs to be retained between the two parcels of land through retaining the existing underpass.	<p>National Highways confirms that public access will be retained between the two parcels of land.</p> <p>The culvert that is used as an underpass between the two parts of Thames Chase Forest Centre is retained in the proposal although this will need to be closed during works to widen the M25. In the proposal a new bridge is provided across the M25 and slip roads to improve connectivity between the two land parcels. A temporary route that crosses the M25 at St Mary's Lane will ensure connectivity while neither the underpass nor new bridge are available, so connectivity will remain at all times.</p>	N/A	Matter Agreed
NMU - Bridge design	2.1.20	Forestry England supports the proposed new pedestrian footbridge suitable for bridle users connecting the eastern and western land parcels. It is of strategic importance to link the Forest Centre with	National Highways states that the bridge at Thames Chase has been designed to meet the DMRB (Design Manual for Roads and Bridges) standards for width of a	Design Principles (Application Document 7.5)	Matter Not agreed


Topic	Item number	Forestry England comment	National Highways comment	Document Reference	Status
		<p>longer distance pedestrian routes and public rights of way. FE requires operational vehicle access for its land parcel to the east of the LTC route and Thames Chase Trust (TCT) would support this. FE has a preference for a vehicular bridge due to concerns for public safety if the site east of M25 is opened to more public access. Emergency vehicles, FE vehicles and contractor vehicles currently access eastern site via third party access route, any injured person would remain stranded in the event of an injury.</p> <p>Equally given the height of the bridge measurers would need to be taken to prevent suicide attempts.</p>	<p>cycle-equestrian bridge. Although in the context of the relatively large span it may appear narrow, the bridge has a width of 4.5m.</p> <p>The bridge will also meet the higher equestrian design standard relating to solid parapets as secured in the Design Principles (Application Document 7.5). This increased height will protect walkers, cyclist and horse riders from falling on to the road below and will also act as a deterrent for those contemplating suicide.</p> <p>Regarding vehicular access to the land parcel on the eastern side of Thames Chase, the existing track from Ockendon Road to the south-east corner of this land parcel shall provide emergency vehicular access, as it does at present.</p> <p>National Highways recognises the strategic importance of Thames Chase in developing the Public Rights of Way network in this area and improving access to the countryside east of the M25, principally by forming connections between Thames Chase and South</p>		

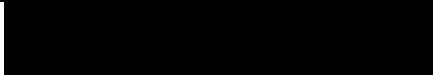
Topic	Item number	Forestry England comment	National Highways comment	Document Reference	Status
			Ockendon via Foot Path 135 and Foot Path 232.		

3 Agreement on this Statement of Common Ground

STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

This Statement of Common Ground has been prepared and agreed by (1) National Highways Limited and (2) Forestry England.

Name	Evelyn Ismail
Position	Community Engagement Lead
Organisation	National Highways
Signature	

Name	Charles Ashley
Position	Area Land Agent
Organisation	Forestry England
Signature	

Appendix A Documents considered within this Statement of Common Ground

N/A

Appendix B Glossary

Term	Abbreviation	Explanation
Design Manual for Roads and Bridges	DMRB	A comprehensive manual which contains requirements, advice and other published documents relating to works on motorway and all-purpose trunk roads for which one of the Overseeing Organisations (National Highways, Transport Scotland, the Welsh Government or the Department for Regional Development (Northern Ireland)) is the highway authority. For the A122 Lower Thames Crossing, the Overseeing Organisation is National Highways.
Development Consent Order	DCO	Means of obtaining permission for developments categorised as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) under the Planning Act 2008.
Forestry England	FE	A division of the Forestry Commission, responsible for managing and promoting publicly owned forests in England.
Great Crested Newts	GCN	Great crested newts are a European protected species. The animals and their eggs, breeding sites and resting places are protected by law.
Heavy Vehicle goods	HGV	A large, heavy motor vehicle used for transporting cargo.
High Speed link 1	HS1	A 109km high-speed railway between London and the UK end of the Channel Tunnel. The line carries international passenger traffic between the UK and continental Europe; it also carries domestic passenger traffic to and from stations in Kent and east London, as well as Berne gauge freight traffic.
Lower Thames Crossing/The Project	LTC	A proposed new crossing of the Thames Estuary linking the county of Kent with the county of Essex, at or east of the existing Dartford Crossing.
National Highways	National Highways	A UK government-owned company with responsibility for managing the motorways and major roads in England. Formerly known as Highways England.
Non- Motorised users	NMU	Users of non-motorised vehicles (eg cyclists, horse riders) and pedestrians.
Public Right of Way	PRoW Network	A right possessed by the public to pass along routes over land at all times. Although the land may be owned by a private individual, the public may still gain access across that land along a specific route. The mode of transport allowed differs according to the type of Public Right of Way, which can consist of footpaths, bridleways and open and restricted byways.
Statement of Common Ground	SoCG	A Statement of Common Ground is a written statement containing factual information about the proposal which is the subject of the appeal that the appellant reasonably considers will not be disputed by the local planning authority.

Term	Abbreviation	Explanation
Thames Chase Trust	TCT	Thames Chase Trust was established in 1990 to improve landscapes in East London and South Essex. It is one of the twelve Community Forests set up across England to regenerate and enhance the natural environment
United Kingdom Power Networks	UKPN	An energy network operator. Owns and maintains the electricity cables in South East England, the East of England and London.
Utility Logistics Hub	UHL	The ULH receives, stores and distributes the plant machinery and materials for specific utility works

Appendix C List of engagement activities

C.1.1 A summary of the meetings and correspondence undertaken between the two parties in relation to the Project is outlined in Table C.1 below.

C.1.2 It is agreed that this is an accurate record of the key meetings and consultation undertaken between (1) National Highways and (2) Forestry England in relation to the matters addressed in this SoCG.

Table C.1 Engagement activities between National Highways and Forestry England.

Date	Form of contact/ correspondence	Key topics discussed and key outcomes
13.05.2020	Meeting	To review and progress with SoCG issues
01.12.2020	Meeting	To review and progress with SoCG issues
24.02.2021	Meeting	To review and progress with SoCG issues
1.04.2021	Meeting	To discuss construction SoCG issues
12.08.2021	Meeting	To review and progress with Public Rights of way SoCG issues
10.05.2022	Meeting	To review and progress with SoCG issues
29.06.2022	Meeting	To discuss SoCG issues on PRoW
29.07.2022	Meeting	To discuss SoCG issues on PRoW
7.10.2022	Meeting	To review final comments on DCO

C.1.3 In addition to the meetings listed in Table C.1, there has been ongoing regular engagement between (1) National Highways and (2) Forestry England since in 2018. This includes project update meetings, attendance at consultation events and numerous telephone calls and email updates on all project developments and survey works.

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