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Your Reference:
TR010032

KCC Interested Party
Reference Number:
20035779

Date: 26th May 2023

Dear Rynd,

RE: Application by National Highways for an Order Granting Development Consent for the Lower Thames Crossing - Kent County Council's Submission to Procedural Deadline B

As outlined within the Draft Examination Timetable (Annex D of the Rule 6 letter (PD-013), this letter is Kent County Council's Procedural Deadline B submission which provides the following:

- Post-event submission, including written submissions of oral comments made at the Programming Meeting on the 16th May 2023
- Written submissions on the Examination procedure and draft timetable
- Requests to be heard orally at the Preliminary Meeting Part 1

Post-event submission, including written submissions of oral comments made at the Programming Meeting

At the Programming Meeting on the 16th May 2023 KCC officers verbally presented the key points outlined within our Procedural Deadline A Submission - Written submissions in advance of the Programming Meeting (PDA-002). These points focused on the arrangements KCC needed to participate in the Examination. KCC officers made clear at the Programming Meeting that KCC as a host authority will endeavour to do its best to respond to the Examination within the means of our current resources, however for completeness the following points of concern were raised:



1. Firstly, our request for an enhanced Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) with the Applicant. We appreciate PPAs are not within the gift of the Examining Authority, but we would like to bring to your attention our concerns regarding the Applicant's inconsistent approach to PPAs, and the need for local authority PPAs to be urgently reviewed to ensure a fair and equal approach is being adopted. Local authorities are under significant budget and resource pressures, and sufficient financial support from the Applicant will ensure we have the capacity and capability to respond in a meaningful and timely way throughout the Examination. KCC does have a PPA in place with National Highways, but it does not currently cover us for work in preparing our Written Representation, Local Impact Report or responding to the Examining Authority's questions. Only our costs incurred in dealing with issues in the Applicant's Statement of Common Ground are reimbursable. The existing PPA also funds study work into the wider network impacts arising from National Highways' scheme.
2. Secondly, our request to reduce the need for additional consultation during the Examination. Whilst we recognise the importance of consulting statutory bodies and local communities on proposed changes to the application, additional consultations place further burden on local authorities to review the proposed changes, and provide a meaningful response within the limited timeframes. Therefore, we would fully encourage the Applicant to reduce as much as possible the need to undertake additional consultations throughout the Examination.
3. Thirdly, our request for advanced notice of the issues to be discussed at each Issue Specific Hearing. We recognise the importance of local authority officer attendance at Issue Specific Hearings and will endeavour where possible to attend these. However, as the timing of the Examination means some of the deadlines and hearing dates fall over the school Summer holiday period, we would welcome advanced notice of the exact dates and topics to be discussed at each Issue Specific Hearing. This will assist us in planning resources to ensure there is representation by Kent County Council at relevant hearings.
4. Finally, we would like to politely request for the Examining Authority to consider the issue of local authority officer availability, when seeking responses to written questions and comments. It would be welcomed if the Examining Authority could be mindful of the number of questions being issued at once, to each particular authority, and ensure that the questions are as clear as possible. In addition, it would be welcomed if Deadlines 2 and 3 could be extended into September to give a better chance of staff availability for providing responses.

Local Impact Report

We appreciate the Local Impact Report is a significant piece of work, so in light of this KCC officers have already started preparing this submission. However, we would like to highlight the importance of an enhanced PPA with the Applicant to ensure a comprehensive report can be prepared within the required timescales.

Written submissions on the Examination procedure and draft timetable

With regards to the proposed Examination procedure and draft timetable, KCC has already raised various points at Procedural Deadline A and the Programming Meeting. In addition to the points already raised, we also wish to ask for greater clarity on the issues identified



within the Initial Assessment of Principal Issues (Annex B of the Rule 6 Letter (PD-013). More specifically, clarification is needed on the following:

- *Project Definition – The scope of and security for highway development:* clarity is needed as what is meant by this issue and if it refers to whether highway improvements outside of the current development boundary should be included within the scope of the LTC proposals.
- *Traffic and transportation – Operational effects – the effect of LTC on the local road network north and south of the river:* clarity is needed as to whether this would also cover construction impacts and highway mitigation measures for both operational and construction effects.

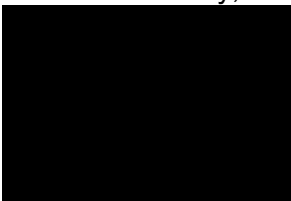
Furthermore, Annex E of the Rule 6 Letter (PD-013) outlines the Examining Authority's intentions to hold the third Open Floor Hearing (OFH 3) at the Dartford Bridge Hilton Hotel. KCC would encourage the Examining Authority to also hold at least one other Open Floor Hearing within the Gravesham Borough to allow local communities most affected by the proposals the opportunity to attend and participate.

KCC would also request for the Examining Authority to ensure hard to reach groups have ample opportunity to respond and participate in the Examination. Furthermore, careful consideration needs to be given to the accessibility of venues to ensure no Interested Party is prohibited from participating in the Examination.

Requests to be heard orally at the Preliminary Meeting Part 1

KCC would like to take this opportunity to confirm our intention to attend in person and request to be heard orally at the Preliminary Meeting Part 1 on Tuesday 6th June 2023. This request has also been submitted via the online Event participation Form.

Yours sincerely,



Simon Jones
Corporate Director – Growth, Environment and Transport