



Meeting note

Project name	Lower Thames Crossing
File reference	TR010032
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	23 September 2020
Meeting with	Highways England
Venue	Microsoft Teams
Meeting objectives	Project update meeting
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed and advice given

The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) advised that a note of the meeting would be taken and published on its website in accordance with section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (the PA2008). Any advice given under section 51 would not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) could rely.

Programme update

The Applicant confirmed that it remained on target for submission of the application on 23 October 2020. The Inspectorate noted that the anticipated submission date was a Friday and that any submission received after 5pm on a Friday would be dated as received on the following Monday.

The Inspectorate confirmed that it would write to all relevant local authorities before the application was submitted to provide them with advanced notice of the invitation to make an Adequacy of Consultation Representation; the formal request for which would be sent to them upon receipt of the application.

The discussion noted the steps that followed formal submission and the Inspectorate enquired as to the anticipated likely level of interest in the scheme from individual members of the public, organised interest groups and specialist and local media. The Applicant provided an overview of its engagement and indicated how and when it was looking to signpost to relevant advice and guidance on the National Infrastructure Planning website.

Environmental points

A discussion was held around the environmental matters associated with the Proposed Development, including in relation to the matters highlighted in the Applicant's supplementary consultation documents. These matters included impacts to landscape, designated nature conservation sites, Ancient Woodland and protected species. The

Inspectorate asked the Applicant about the presentation of the application documents including the Environmental Statement (ES) and any documents setting out mitigation measures on which the assessments in the ES rely and how these measures are proposed to be secured. The Applicant responded by stating that an Environmental Masterplan, a Code of Construction Practice and Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) would be submitted with the application. The draft Development Consent Order (DCO) would contain requirements which would require the production of an Environmental Management Plan (Second Iteration) which would reflect the mitigation measures in the REAC, and the Code of Construction Practice (this being the first iteration of the environmental management plan). The DCO requirements would also require the production of a landscaping scheme which would also have to reflect the mitigation measures in the REAC (in this context, it was noted that a Landscape Environmental Management Plan (LEMP) was a measure set out in the REAC) and the Environmental Masterplan.

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) within the draft Order

The Applicant confirmed that the draft DCO would seek consent for six NSIPs:

1. The construction of a highway under s14 and s22 PA2008 (1x NSIP).
2. The installation of an electric line under s14 and s16 PA2008 (1x NSIP).
3. The diversion of gas pipelines under s14 and s20 PA2008 (4x NSIPs).

The Applicant acknowledged that the highway-related NSIP would engage the National Policy Statement for National Networks; the electric line diversion would engage the Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) and the National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5); and the gas pipeline diversions would engage the EN-1 and the National Policy Statement for Gas Supply and Gas and Oil Pipelines (EN-4). The Applicant would set out in its Planning Statement compliance with each relevant NPS(s).

The Applicant confirmed that negotiations around its proposed interference with utility assets were ongoing with the owners/operators of the affected electric line and gas pipelines (National Grid and Cadent Gas).

Overview of the Consents and Agreements Position Statement

The Applicant summarised the content of the application document which would set out its intended strategy for obtaining necessary consents and agreements outside of the powers of the DCO. Engagement with relevant bodies was ongoing, with a number of legal and commercial agreements already in place.

The Applicant would be seeking letters of no impediment from relevant bodies on a timeline to inform the examination and was working towards reaching agreement with various Statutory Undertakers. Statements of Common Ground (SoCGs) were being progressed with a number of relevant bodies. Whilst it would be unlikely that signed versions of any SoCGs would be submitted with the application, the Applicant was confident that they could be submitted early in the examination.

AOB

The Inspectorate acknowledged receipt of the Applicant's draft Electronic Application Index and would provide feedback on its compatibility in due course.