



Meeting note

Project name	Lower Thames Crossing
File reference	TR010032
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	17 February 2022
Meeting with	National Highways
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

National Highways (“the Applicant”) proposes to include Hole Farm into the scheme for nitrogen deposition compensation and are to identify the potential for community use in the area. The Applicant explained that part of Hole Farm has always been proposed to be used as replacement land; the inclusion refers to all other parts of Hole Farm. The Applicant is to launch an information campaign on Walking, Cycling and Horse-riding (WCH) considerations across the entire scheme.

Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) engagement

The Applicant noted that local authorities were being consulted on the SoCC.

To continue the feedback loop from the Community Impacts Consultation, the Applicant is producing a ‘Response to Community Impacts Consultation’ document. This will be available online ahead of the consultation, with alternative formats available upon request. The document provides a response to issues, signposting to changes proposed in the upcoming refinement consultation.

The ‘You Said We Did’ chapter of the consultation will also provide a high-level summary of feedback from the Community Impacts Consultation. The chapter will introduce some changes that are proposed following the feedback and will describe changes made as a result of the Applicant’s ongoing engagement.

Matters subject of consultation

The Applicant provided a brief overview of some matters that would be subject to further consultation including: land changes at the Southern Valley Golf Club following discussions with local landowners; inclusion of improved bridleway connections around the A2 junction and A226 for WCH users; re-orientation of Tilbury Fields due to the land take required for the future development of Thames Freeport and the Applicant's permanent access arrangements for the surrounding area; the design of the A13 junction; and landscaping proposals around the proposed route including the creation of new landforms and earth bunds to reduce noise and visual impacts.

The Applicant is consulting on its further refinement of utility works to enable the project to be built. There was a discussion as to whether any of the works would constitute a entirely new NSIP, or an amendment to already proposed diversion works which would consequently meet the relevant criteria for an NSIP.

The Applicant provided further information on additional environmental compensation and the provision of mitigation land. It reminded the Inspectorate of the latest government guidance on the measurement of nitrogen deposition in relation to ammonia. The Applicant is proposing to compensate for the potential impacts of nitrogen being deposited in soils of ecologically sensitive areas. The upcoming consultation will outline the proposed mitigation and compensatory measures.

Consultation Report: Approach to Adequacy of Consultation Responses

Ongoing updates to the Consultation Report include considering how best to address the Adequacy of Consultation Representations (AoCRs) provided by Local Authorities in response to the Applicant's first application. The Applicant believes it is important to acknowledge the role that Local Authorities played in the pre-application consultation phase and the specific ways in which they informed the Applicant's approach to consultation.

The discussion noted the way in which a Consultation Report could look to address such comments, either through a point-by-point summary and response of each matter raised in the AoCRs or a high-level narrative description of the key themes raised through the AoCR.

New Application Document: 5.2 Statement of Engagement

The Applicant outlined a new document in development that sought to evidence the strategy to engagement since its preferred route announcement (PRA), and what engagement has been undertaken and the Applicant's response to the issues raised. The new document would be more focused on engagement and would sit alongside the Consultation Report.

The Statement of Engagement would signpost to other application documentation including the Statement of Reasons (in relation to landowner engagement), Statement of Common Ground, the Inter-relationship Document and Consultation Report. The Applicant is conscious of seeking to avoid repetition. There was a discussion on whether

the document would be shared with stakeholders, with the Applicant noting it would discuss the application document with statutory environmental bodies and Local Authorities.

What has happened since we last met

The Applicant discussed the changes that have occurred since the last meeting including the revised Tilbury Fields. In October 2021, a new Freeport area was designated on land to the east of the Port of Tilbury. The Applicant explained that a portion of the Freeport is located within the proposed Order Limits for Lower Thames Crossing. It added that much of the area is intended to be used by LTC on a temporary basis to aid construction works, however there is also an impact on land that was to be permanently acquired for the creation of Tilbury Fields. In order to facilitate development, National Highways have reviewed its proposals for Tilbury Fields and have proposed an alternative solution thereby removing the conflict in connection with the permanent land take.

