



Meeting note

Project name	Lower Thames Crossing
File reference	TR010032
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	28 April 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”) is progressing towards a non-statutory consultation due to commence on 12 May 2022. The Applicant expects to submit an application for a development consent order (DCO) for the Lower Thames Crossing (“the proposed development”) by Autumn 2022.

What has happened since we last met?

The Applicant informed the Inspectorate of receipt of multiple Freedom of Information requests, including requests from Thames Crossing Action Group and Transport Action Network. The Applicant explained that the requests are largely focused on carbon matters.

The Applicant noted two proposed schemes in the vicinity of their proposed development: the Thames Gateway Tramway and East Anglian Green. The Applicant stated that the latter potentially overlaps with the proposed development and is therefore likely to be included within the Applicant’s Inter-relationship Document.

The Applicant is continuing to provide responses to issues raised by Local Authorities.

The Inspectorate noted the decision of 21 April 2022 on the M54 to M6 Link Road by the Secretary of State for the Department for Transport. The Applicant indicated that it was considering any relevant matters arising from the decision.

Local refinement consultation scope and approach

The Applicant plans to conduct a non-statutory consultation on further limited changes to the proposed development. The Applicant explained that, following feedback from Local Authorities, the duration and timing of the consultation have changed. The consultation is expected to run from 12 May 2022 to 20 June 2022, with local authorities having an additional one-week period to allow for internal governance to finalise their responses.

The print material will be available at deposit locations and information points and will also be orderable online. The material will include a single guide to consultation which includes a project overview, 'you said, we did', changes since the community impacts consultation, and nitrogen deposition (with appendix). The Applicant expects to hold nine public information events, from 19 May 2022 to 13 June 2022. The Applicant is consulting on 26 refinements including changes to Tilbury Fields, additional environmental mitigation and habitat creation, Walking, Cycling and Horse-Riding, special category land, private recreational facilities, the A13 new slip road and, utilities diversions.

The Applicant provided an overview of the format, structure and style of the consultation material.

Landowner engagement and minor refinements document

The Applicant explained that the landowner engagement and minor refinements document does not form part of the upcoming consultation.

This document will summarise what the Applicant considers to be a number of minor, localised changes that have been made to the project since the community impacts consultation. The Applicant explained that the changes are a result of feedback from affected landowners and others with an interest in land, ongoing design work and a greater understanding of technical constraints.

The Applicant explained that, due to the limited nature of these changes, it is presenting them for information purposes only. The document will be published digitally at the launch of the local refinement consultation.

Stakeholder Actions and Commitments Register (SAC-R)

The Stakeholder Actions and Commitments Register (SAC-R) is a new proposed control document in the DCO application. Following engagement with stakeholders, the Applicant explained there was a perception that some of the commitments asked will not fit into the wider control plan framework.

The proposed document provides a securing mechanism for Interested Party requests of actions and commitments in the DCO application. The Applicant explained that the document is akin to the Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) and is similar to the HS2 register of undertaking and assurances.

The Applicant explained that these commitments would be implemented during either the construction or operation of the proposed development. These would not be commitments

required to mitigate the environmental effects of the proposed development (which are already secured).

The Applicant explained that the document intends to reduce the need for legal agreements by providing a mechanism to provide legally secured commitments which has the effect of: assisting stakeholders by obviating time associated with legal requirements; speeding up the resolution of issues during examination; provides sight to the Examining Authority for how issues have been resolved; and creates a mechanism for enforcement Local Authorities (rather than relying on breach of contract).

