



Meeting note

Project name	Lower Thames Crossing
File reference	TR010032
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate)
Date	24 July 2019
Meeting with	Highways England (the Applicant)
Venue	Temple Quay House
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.

Project update

The Applicant provided an update on changes to the proposed project, these included widening and lengthening the A2 to the east of the junction with the new road; streamlining the junction of the new road and the A13; and the removal of the Port of Tilbury link road. The Applicant explained that these changes streamlined the scheme, focusing it on its strategic priorities.

The Inspectorate queried the difference between the current scheme and that subject to the Preferred Route Announcement (PRA) of April 2017 in terms of the red line boundary and the land subject to safeguarding notification procedures with the relevant local planning authorities and the anticipated submission of the Development Consent Order (DCO) application. The Applicant replied that there had not been much alteration to the route itself over that time. The Inspectorate noted that where there had been changes to the red line boundary the Applicant should ensure that it didn't trigger any additional consultation bodies such as Parish Councils etc.

The Inspectorate noted that in light of the size and complexity of the scheme, consideration is required of how many other Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) would be contained within the application. The Applicant replied it would consider this and confirmed the Environmental Statement covered the scheme in its entirety.

The Applicant confirmed ground investigation was ongoing to inform the application and would continue through the examination.

Consultation overview

The Applicant spoke about the statutory consultation it had undertaken, noting that it had received over 28,000 responses, many of which were detailed and extensive. The Applicant said it was pleased with the level of engagement and explained that about 15,000 people had attending their exhibitions/events.

The Applicant discussed how it could best represent the volume of consultation responses in the Consultation Report. The Applicant noted that it was aware of how other applicants had sought to provide such information. The Inspectorate queried whether the relevant local authorities might provide some thoughts on how the information could be presented. The Applicant invited the Inspectorate to provide any advice it thought useful on this matter after the meeting; the Inspectorate agreed.

The Applicant said it would continue to update its record of land interests, noting that evolving land interests was to be expected for a scheme of this scale.

Stakeholder engagement

The Applicant explained how it had been engaging with stakeholders, particularly Local Authorities, for whom it had Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) running until submission of the DCO application. This included sharing data sets with them so they could look at traffic impacts in their local area and holding regular meetings. The Applicant indicated that it had drafted a plan for future engagement with local authorities which it was aiming to agree with them soon.

The discussion noted that the DCO may contain protective provisions with some statutory bodies. The Inspectorate noted that any such schedules should be populated on submission and recognised that often these can take some time to agree with relevant parties.

Programme update

The Applicant said it aimed to submit the Development Consent Order (DCO) application in Q3 2020. The Inspectorate asked whether the anticipated programme included time for the Inspectorate to review draft documents. The Applicant said it hoped to submit a draft DCO and possible other draft documents to the Inspectorate in early 2020. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to provide early notification of the submission of draft documents for resource planning purposes and to make the process as smooth and efficient as possible.

Specific decisions/ follow-up required?

The following actions were agreed:

- The Applicant to provide tables showing the regard to consultation responses in two different formats for the Inspectorate to comment on.
- Quarterly meetings to be arranged going forward.
- A discussion on which draft documents would be submitted to be held at the next meeting