



Meeting note

Project name	Lower Thames Crossing
File reference	TR010032
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	2 April 2020
Meeting with	Highways England
Venue	Online meeting via Teams
Meeting objectives	Project update regarding HRA
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 talked through the approach to its shadow HRA

- 1) HRA process
- 2) Draft results
- 3) Consultation to date
- 4) Proposals for draft documents consultation with the Inspectorate and Natural England (NE)

Draft Stage 1 Screening is being undertaken in parallel with a draft stage 2 Appropriate Assessment. An evidence base has been developed in excel which has made for easier sharing of information with NE. The Applicant explained that consultation with NE was ongoing and currently NE has commented on an early draft of the screening report.

The Applicant summarised the elements of the HRA work, including which sites had been identified as potential functionally linked European sites. Air quality modelling is also being undertaken to establish potential likely significant effects. Work to identify the Affected Road Network and the scope of the in-combination assessment for air quality effects is being discussed with NE. Work on screening has included habitat loss, disturbance and species loss. The Applicant stated that groundwater modelling work is in progress.

As the Applicant explained that the screening assessment would not be ready until May, it is running the Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment as a parallel process. As proposed design and other topic assessments are finalised, this information will be used to assess adverse effects on integrity.

The Applicant stated that consultation with NE is taking place on a monthly basis and that the Statement of Common Ground with NE will provide a record of all communication between the parties.

The Inspectorate highlighted the need for the HRA to provide a clear justification of each stage of the process and consultation which has taken place. The proposed consultation final draft is anticipated in Summer 2020 and this will be sent to the Inspectorate and NE.