



## Meeting note

<b>File reference</b>	Lower Thames Crossing - TR010032
<b>Status</b>	<b>Final</b>
<b>Author</b>	The Planning Inspectorate
<b>Date</b>	4 March 2021
<b>Meeting with</b>	Highways England
<b>Venue</b>	Microsoft Teams
<b>Meeting objectives</b>	Project update meeting
<b>Circulation</b>	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 explained that it had produced an addendum to its consultation approach document (Statement of Community Consultation) which had been circulated to the local authorities for review. Although the deadline for response was yet to elapse, the Applicant summarised the feedback that had been received to date, which included a request for more detail on the final scheme design to be included in the consultation documentation. The Applicant also noted that due to the effects of the pandemic, it may be that the definition of hard to reach groups might change.

The Applicant set out that it was in the process of revising its pre-application programme and, having considered comments expressed by some stakeholders about consultation timing and content, was planning to carry out its consultation after the 2021 election period had finished. The Applicant outlined that it proposed to go back to the local authorities before the consultation to circulate a revised consultation plan to ensure the authorities were sighted of the approach.

The Applicant shared its stakeholder engagement plan and provided brief updates on ongoing engagement with Natural England (NE), the Department for Transport (DfT), the Environment Agency, Historic England, the Port of London Authority (PoLA) and Port of Tilbury. The Applicant noted engagement with NE and DfT in respect of Highways England's Design Manual for Roads and Bridges standards (DMRB); an update on the discussion would be provided at the next meeting with the

Inspectorate. The Inspectorate reflected that shipping and navigation issues had been pertinent in recent NSIP applications and examinations and the Applicant confirmed that it was continuing to work with PoLA.

## **Control Plan**

The Control Plan sets out how the Applicant proposes to agree and establish controls on the powers granted in the Development Consent Order (DCO) to ensure that the project is constructed and operated within the parameters of the assessment undertaken. The Applicant set out its strategy to update its Control Plan in light of the changes made in its updated application. The changes included: Updating Schedule 2 of the draft DCO to include additional certified application documents; consideration of the status of the 'Preliminary Navigational Risk Assessment'; and the need to update PoLA Protective Provisions. The Applicant also noted it had reviewed recent made Orders as well as NIPA best practice tool kits.

The Applicant briefly set out how it proposed to discharge the Requirements within the DCO and provided an overview of who it had been engaging with on the Control Plan; the only comments it had received to date were provided by NE and Thurrock Council. The Applicant concluded going forward that it would be sharing its updated Requirements with stakeholders for technical review and that the consultation material would include high-level narrative on the Control Plan.

The Inspectorate acknowledged the Applicant's draft Requirement wording in respect of archaeological remains and highlighted it had been a contentious issue on High Speed 2 (HS2). The Applicant noted ongoing dialogue with the local authorities on the matter. The Inspectorate noted the draft Requirement wording for the replacement travellers' site in Thurrock and queried whether the replacement land was in line with the Local Plan. The Applicant explained that it was working with the community and Thurrock Council and that the replacement land aligned with the emerging Local Plan.

In respect of discharging requirements and any appeal mechanism, the responsibilities of Secretary of State for Transport and Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy were discussed (the latter being a consideration in respect of elements of the scheme that related to utility diversions). The Inspectorate noted the benefits of a streamlined approach.

## **Risk Assessment Framework**

The Applicant provided an overview of the preliminary risk assessment framework, which was a useful tool by which to generate discussion. The framework seeks to identify issues and risks and provide a brief narrative on the strategy, approach or actions to be considered against each issue.

The Applicant discussed three risks as examples - wider network impacts; route selection; and Special Category Land - to demonstrate how it had represented these topics within the framework. The Inspectorate advised it was helpful to understand the interpretation of the various columns within the framework and the inter-relationships between issues and risks. The Inspectorate hoped that the process added value to the Applicant.