



Meeting note

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| Project name | Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) |
| File reference | TR010032 |
| Status | Final |
| Author | The Planning Inspectorate |
| Date | 29 April 2021 |
| Meeting with | Highways England (the Applicant) |
| Venue | Microsoft Teams |
| Meeting objectives | Project update |
| 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.

Resubmission timeline

The Applicant advised that it was aiming to submit its Development Consent Order (DCO) application in late Autumn 2021 following a consultation with stakeholders which was due to take place in July 2021.

Consultation proposals

The Applicant advised that an eight-week consultation was scheduled between 14 July and 8 September 2021. The aim of the consultation was to allow stakeholders to further understand the project and its impacts/ mitigations, and to ensure that any project refinements since the first application had been submitted would be consulted on. The Applicant advised that it had initiated engagement with local authorities (LA) on the consultation approach and was addressing their concerns where possible.

The Applicant summarised what it was working on in terms of consultation documents, including a 'You said; we did' (YSWD) document and a ward impact summaries (WIS) document to provide information on the environmental impacts/ mitigations for the project at ward level and indicate the effects of the scheme on specific communities akin to a communities impact report. The Inspectorate advised that the Applicant could carefully set out and justify the methodology for filtering down the comments to inform the YSWD.

The Applicant outlined its approach to consultation events, including the use of blended events. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to consider the feedback issued in

respect of the Public Sector Equality Duty when developing its approach to events. The Applicant advised that Traverse would assist in analysing the consultation data.

LTC and London Resort (LR) interface

The Applicant indicated that both LTC and LR were due to become fully operational in 2029 and several key events could overlap during the construction and operation phases of each scheme. The Applicant suggested that for the purposes of the LTC application the main interface would be the LTC construction phase, as this would overlap with the phased LR construction and its operational stages. Highway mitigation and use of the river during construction were stated to form part of the LR application, including use of the Port of Tilbury (PoT). The Applicant advised that Highways England had submitted a Relevant Representation in respect of its concerns regarding the LR Development Consent Order application.

The Applicant proposed to accommodate LR by presenting sensitivity analyses within the LTC DCO application and a qualitative assessment of the cumulative impacts of both schemes as part of its planned consultation. The Applicant stated that the LR data could not be directly transferred into the LTC modelling and therefore certain assumptions would be necessary. As part of the sensitivity analysis, the Applicant proposed to rely on the trip assumptions and data within the LR DCO application given the uniqueness of the LR scheme. LAs were stated to agree that the use of the LR data was the most pragmatic approach.

The Inspectorate noted that the LR scheme had been affected by Natural England's declaration of a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at a relatively late stage in the DCO application process. The Inspectorate also advised the Applicant that as part of the Examination, it would likely be required to confirm whether it had assessed the worst-case scenario regarding the LR and LTC interface and that the Applicant should be prepared to discuss construction phasing details and assumptions.

Stakeholder engagement

The Applicant provided some key updates regarding its stakeholder engagement plan. Feedback had been received from most LAs in respect of the first iteration DCO documents, and progress had been made with addressing Thurrock Council's Hatch Report requirements, running construction plan workshops, and organising a new Community Impacts and Public Health Advisory Group meeting for May 2021. The Applicant had also been working alongside Kent County Council to focus engagement on key topics.

The Inspectorate sought an update regarding engagement with PoT. The Applicant confirmed that it was holding frequent meetings with PoT focussed on the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG), technical engagement, and commercial matters. The Applicant also confirmed that it was regularly meeting with Port of London Authority to discuss key areas such as river restrictions and relevant articles within the DCO. The Applicant advised that good progress had been made, and the discussions were detail-focussed at this stage.

The Applicant advised that it was aspiring to submit as many signed SoCGs as was feasible with its DCO application.

The Sixth Carbon Budget (SCB)

The Applicant briefly addressed the relationship between LTC and the SCB. The Applicant advised that as the road would be operational during the sixth carbon budget (between 2033 and 2037), its focus was on the operational carbon emissions of the LTC scheme. It had set out a commitment to the use of renewable sources for the scheme's energy consumption in the Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC). The Applicant stated that it would be for the Department for Transport to determine the overall decarbonisation strategy for transport, including operational traffic across the country.

The Inspectorate noted that the current situation regarding the SCB was complex and uncertain, and acknowledged that the Applicant would be setting out the scheme's contribution to the SCB in its DCO application.