

Environmental and Air Quality Issues



Lower Thames Crossing
Task Force

16 October 2017

Background and Introduction

- At the September meeting of the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force, Highways England set out their timeframe for progressing the scheme.
- The first formal response from Thurrock Council in this process is to comment on an Environmental Impact Scoping Report, which we expect to receive at the end of October, and to which we will have 28 days to respond.
- In preparation, the Council has engaged Independent Technical Advisors to support the Council in this process, and to help ask the challenging questions which will ensure that the full impact of any future Lower Thames Crossing on Thurrock's communities is documented and understood.

Dr Kim Yates

- An Environmental Specialist with a background in Air Quality and PhD in Atmospheric Chemistry.
- Over 20 years' experience working in industry and carrying out research in academia in the UK and Europe
- Team includes a variety of environmental specialists, including air quality specialists, landscape architects, ecologists, environmental planners and noise and vibration specialists.
- Extensive experience in Environment Impact Assessments (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessments, including infrastructure projects of national significance



Development Consent – for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Schemes (NSIP)

- The DCO process was introduced by the Planning Act 2008 to streamline the decision-making process for nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs), with the intention of making the consenting process fairer and faster for communities and developers alike
- It replaces the public inquiry with a more written process and issue specific hearings – called examination in public
- Managed by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS)
- All environmental assessment needs to be completed, as well as all design. Nothing left to be discharged as a “condition”.

The application process.

The six steps

The Inspectorate, on behalf of the Secretary of State, has **28 days** to decide whether the application meets the required standards to proceed to examination including whether the developer's consultation has been adequate.

You can send in your comments in writing. You can request to speak at a public hearing. The Inspectorate has **6 months** to carry out the examination.

There is the opportunity for legal challenge.

Pre-application

Acceptance

Pre-examination

Examination

Decision

Post-decision

Look out for information in local media and in public places near the location of the proposed project, such as your library. The developer will be developing their proposals and will consult widely.

You can now register as an interested party; you will be kept informed of progress and opportunities to put your case. Inspectors will hold a Preliminary Meeting and set the timetable for examination.

A recommendation to the relevant Secretary of State will be issued by the Inspectorate within **3 months**. The Secretary of State then has a further **3 months** to issue a decision on the proposal

Lower Thames Crossing Project Timeline

- Pre-application (Now until mid-2019)
 - Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report
 - Statement of Community Consultation
 - Pre- Application Statutory Consultation
- Application Submission – Mid 2019

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report – What is it?

‘a process for agreeing which environmental topics are to be examined in statutory Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) and non-statutory Environmental Impact Assessments, and the level of assessment to be undertaken – either a Simple or Detailed Assessment’

For Lower Thames Crossing, everything should be assessed at ‘Detailed’ level

EIA Scoping Report Chapters

- Introduction
- Scheme Description
- Consideration of Alternatives
- Environmental Assessment Methodology
- **Air Quality**
- Cultural Heritage
- **Landscape**
- Biodiversity
- Geology and Soils
- Materials
- **Noise and Vibration**
- **People and Communities**
- Road Drainage and the Water Environment
- Climate Change
- **Human Health and Wellbeing**
- **Combined and Cumulative Effects**
- Outline Environmental Management Plan
- Conclusions

Preparation Currently Underway

- Establishment of response team, including external experts
- Collation of baseline data
- Engagement with local stakeholders to highlight key issues
- Discussions with Highways England technical team regarding assessment process (including air quality monitoring and modelling)

Council Resolution on Air Quality (July 2017)

‘That the Council ask Highways England to jointly establish with the Council a process for independent air quality testing and to provide the Council with access to all data used to reach decisions’

AQ Resolution – proposed steps to ensure it is carried out

Thurrock will:

- undertake a review of HE's LTC Air Quality study area that will be modelled to ground truth using local knowledge.
- review additional monitoring sites that have been established by LTC to establish if in appropriate locations.
- review additional LTC Air Quality monitoring data results on a monthly basis (when it becomes available) as issued by the independent accredited laboratory which has been commissioned to analyse results.
- review traffic data and compare with Local Traffic Model (enhanced model for Thurrock, picking up full detail of local highway impacts)
- review the LTC Air Quality modelled data as it becomes available, prior to finalising.

Next Steps and Timescales

- Detailed proposal for independent air quality testing to be formally put to Highways England (subject to Task Force agreement)
- EIA Scoping report expected at end of October
- Proposed response to be presented to Lower Thames Crossing Task Force at its meeting of 20 November