

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force held on 10 February 2020 at 6.00 pm

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- Present:** Councillors Gerard Rice (Chair), Luke Spillman (Deputy Chair) (*arrived 18.44*), Andrew Jefferies, Fraser Massey, (*arrived 18.44*), Allen Mayes and Sara Muldowney
- Apologies:** Councillors Terry Piccolo, Sue Shinnick  
Peter Ward, Thurrock Business Representative  
Westley Mercer, Thurrock Business Board Representative
- In attendance:** Anna Eastgate, Assistant Director of Lower Thames Crossing & Transport Infrastructure Projects  
Lucy Tricker, Democratic Services Officer
- Laura Blake, Thames Crossing Action Group Representative  
Robert Quick, Resident Representative
- David Manning, Highways England – LTC Development Director  
Sam Stopp, Highways England – Local Government Lead
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Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

### **39. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Terry Piccolo and Sue Shinnick. Apologies were also received from Peter Ward, Thurrock Business Representative and Westley Mercer, Thurrock Business Board Representative.

### **40. Minutes**

The minutes were approved as a true and correct record.

### **41. Items of Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

### **42. Declaration of Interests**

There were no interests declared.

### **43. Highways England - Scheme Presentation**

The HE Development Director introduced the presentation and stated that it presented the high-level changes that had been made following statutory consultation in 2018. He asked members of the public to come to the consultation events that were being held across the borough and respond to the consultation material. He stated that the government had rated the LTC as a Tier 1 project which meant it was a much needed piece of infrastructure, as it would reduce congestion and delays on the Dartford Crossing, but doubling river crossing capacity East of London. He commented that the LTC would remove 13 million vehicles from the Dartford Crossing in the first year of opening, and would improve the reliability of the M25 and surrounding roads.

The HE Development Director moved onto discussing the proposed tunnel which would hold the LTC, and stated that it would be the third largest bored tunnel in the world, and would still not be at capacity 25 years after opening. The HE Development Director compared this figure to the Dartford Crossing which was opened in 1993 and had almost reached capacity by 1997. He added that the LTC would provide better access for tankers and abnormal loads, as they would not have to be escorted through in convoy. The HE Development Director highlighted that 29,000 people had responded to the statutory consultation in 2018, and as there were 16 questions per response form, it had taken HE a long time to analyse them all. He added that since the close of consultation the mobile information unit had continued to visit areas across the borough and had received 7000 visitors. The HE Development Director then highlighted that since the close of consultation the team had been on site conducting ground investigations, which would last for one year, and were necessary to gather data such as soil quality, to be able to submit the planning approval. He added that the design had also been further developed to improve safety and reduce potential accidents along the route.

The HE Development Director clarified that the current round of consultation had started on 29 January and would last for eight weeks, and members of the public could fill the response form out online, or pick up a copy from the deposit locations. He added that numerous public information events were also being held across the borough, and questions could also be asked on the HE website. He mentioned that the main guide to consultation could be viewed online, or could be picked up from the foyer in the Civic Offices, and the response form also had a section for members of the public to add in any comments or concerns they might have.

The HE Development Director stated that there had not been much change regarding traffic updates, but HE had received new HGV data and port traffic data from government that had been included in the traffic model. He also added that an update to the Environmental Impact Assessment had been made, and it now focussed around air quality, as well as landscape, biodiversity and noise. The HE Development Director added that a utilities update was also included in the consultation as HE were working with the gas network and National Grid to better manage the scheme and limit service disruption and disruption to local roads. He stated that a special guide to utilities and LTC could be found online, as well as an easy read version. He commented that map books were also available, including route maps, a high-

level overview map, land-use maps, and engineering plan maps which described areas such as the proposed height of the route.

The HE Development Director then outlined the consultation events in Thurrock and stated that there would be five events across the borough, the first being held on 21 February in the Civic Offices. He added that a variety of technical experts would be attending to answer questions, and the events would go on all-day and into the evening. He added that a variety of events would also be held in Kent, and residents from Thurrock could also attend these if they wished. The HE Development Director described the mobile information centre that would also be travelling around the borough during consultation, and would hold four events. He mentioned that due to comments made at statutory consultation, a new location had been added in Stanford-le-Hope on 10 March, and this would be publicised on social media, and advertised through Thurrock Council. He commented that there were also five information points across Thurrock which contained information regarding the scheme, consultation documents, and response forms. He stated that consultation closed on 25 March 2020 and all consultation responses received by post, online or at public information events had to be received by this date. He stated that once this consultation had concluded, depending on the outcome, the project would then go to planning stage, or go out for additional consultation.

The HE Development Director then outlined the high-level changes that had been made following statutory consultation, and stated that if members of the public had any detailed questions they could talk to specific experts at the information events. He highlighted the key concerns that had been raised by Thurrock residents during the 2018 consultation and clarified the changes that had been made to the scheme because of this. He stated that Thurrock residents had showed concern for local connectivity to the LTC and clarified that the A13 and Orsett Cock roundabout had now changed and were connected to the LTC. He added that residents had also shown concern over the visibility of the scheme, and because of this, the proposed project would be better landscaped to hide the road from wider view. He stated that HE were also looking at longer-term investment to minimise local traffic impacts, and would try to minimise disruption during the construction phase, as this would last between five and six years. He added that HE were also looking at ways to get the local supply chain involved from a variety of fields, such as builders, caterers and recruiters.

The HE Development Director explained the changes that had been made since statutory consultation to the north portal, and clarified that the proposed Rest and Service Area (RASA) had been removed from the plans, partly due to the local viewpoint that it was not needed or wanted, and partly due to the strategic view that the route was only 14 miles long. He stated that because of the removal of the RASA, the junction at this point of the route could also be removed, and the viaduct could be reduced by 1.1 metres. He added that lorry movements would also be limited during construction as spoil would be used to hide the scheme from view, for local flood defence, and for landscaping on the north coast and portal.

*Councillor Spillman and Councillor Massey arrived 18.44*

The HE Development Director moved onto discuss the green bridges which had been added along the route, and highlighted that these would protect the environment, maintain bio-diversity, reduce visibility of the route, increase public access, and future-proof the route for non-motorized users. He stated that since statutory consultation some of the green bridges had doubled in size, such as the Muckingford Road bridge. He added that four bridges would also be used as green corridors, and footpaths along Brentwood Road bridge would be separated from live traffic by hard borders. He added that at the Chadwell link the route had been re-aligned 60m north to remove the need to move pylons, and therefore reduce cost, reduce the amount of work needed, and remove the likelihood of power outages and disruptions. He added that at Muckingford Road, the height had been reduced by 1.5metres, was largely in cutting and false cutting, and would be below ground level He added that by building green walls on this section of route, it would reduce noise pollution and visibility of the route for local residents.

The HE Development Director outlined the new proposals for the A13 junction and stated that slip roads had been moved and lowered due to concerns from local residents. He added that Rectory Road would now be the only road which would be above the A13, and every other road would be tunnelled underneath using pre-formed concrete tunnels. He commented that local access at the Orsett Cock roundabout would also be improved as there would now be access onto both the north and south-bound LTC. He commented that the realignment of Rectory Road also had an impact on the showground, as because of this change it no longer needed a road through the middle and could be reinstated to its current usage after construction. He added that HE would need continued access to the showground due to high-pressure gas mains that were situated there. He added that slip roads had also been realigned to give greater priority to access to the north-bound LTC and port traffic, which would increase safety due to the volume of traffic expected. He commented that HE had been working closely with cyclists and horse riders to improve shared facilities, and had therefore widened footpaths along the route.

The HE Development Director moved further along the route and described changes to the Ockendon Link. He commented that the Mardyke Viaduct had been lowered 100m, but had gotten larger due to the need to balance the flood plain with the size of the structure. He stated that this section of the route needed residents comment, as HE wanted to know what residents thought to the look of the viaduct and visibility. He added that HE had currently used a minimalist look to try and hide the viaduct, based on statutory consultation responses, but this could change due to new consultation responses. He explained that the next phase would be detailed design and architects would be looking to pick out key characteristics of Thurrock to use for design of the viaduct. He added that further green bridges had been added at Green Lane and North Road to ensure more meaningful access for non-motorized users. He stated that the route had also been moved 200m to

better manage high-pressure gas mains and the nearby Ockendon landfill site, which would reduce the programme for the scheme.

The HE Development Director described how traffic and connectivity had largely remained the same, and commented that members of the public could look at the traffic modelling data if they wanted more information. He stated that the scheme would provide relief for the majority of local roads in Grays, Tilbury and the westbound A13 when opened in 2027, as well as relief for the Dartford Crossing and junction 30 at the M25. He commented that the eastbound A13 might see increased traffic flow, but a separate study was being commissioned to look at traffic on the eastbound A13 to Pitsea, and would work with the Department for Transport (DfT), Essex County Council and Thurrock Council. He stated that HE continued to pressure the government to continue the project and generate a legacy, as the area was in need of infrastructure and support for growth of businesses and housing.

The HE Development Director then moved onto discuss the construction phase of the project, and commented that in 2018 it was predicted that the construction of the project would mean an extra 17,000 lorry movements per month, and this had been a concern for residents during statutory consultation. He commented that because of this HE had considered a variety of options to reduce lorry movements, such as river transport and the re-use of spoil, and had been able to reduce predicted lorry movements to 13,000 per month. He explained that although this figure was still high, HE would be working with Thurrock Council to develop a Code of Construction Practice to reduce disruption and noise, and this Code would form part of the Development Consent Order (DCO) and would be a legal commitment. The HE Development Director described how HE were also working with local businesses regarding employment and had held business events across the borough in 2019, with more planned for later in the month. He stated that they had spoken with 100 businesses from a wide spectrum of areas, such as travel agents, recruiters and builders. He stated that schemes of this size had to rely on local labour as there would be lots of demand during construction. He added that HE were providing lots of support for businesses that wanted to get involved, such as hosting webinars and workshops.

The HE Development Director summarised and described the next planned phases of the project. He explained that the high-level business case had been submitted to government in December 2019, which needed sign-off by the Secretary of State for Transport and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He stated that this business case did not give HE permission to build or provide funding, as this would only happen when the final business case was submitted in 18 months to two years' time. He added that DCO would hopefully be submitted later this year, and at this point marketing engagement would also begin, depending on the outcome of consultation. He added that the hope was to deliver the project in 2027, but before then the scheme would have to be assessed and examined by the Planning Inspectorate, with the recommendation from this going to the Secretary of State for final agreement. He stated that this would be a rigorous process as due diligence needed to occur, but throughout this time, HE would continue to engage with the public

and hold mobile information events. He stated that once the planning application had been granted in 2021/22, the aware of main works contracting would take place, and there would be a process of controls in place to ensure responsible delegation of functions. He added that it would take roughly six months to ensure all contractors and external partners understood their legal obligations. He outlined the next phase of development which would be tunnel excavation, which would be the longest construction phase and would take approximately four to five years to complete. He added that during the tunnel boring phase, work would also begin on the junctions at the A13, M25 and A2, as the majority of these could be completed offline, to ensure peak period capacity could be maintained. He commented that some night closures would be necessary for safety and build quality, and the HE Development Director recognised the impact these could have on people's lives. He added that the projected opening for the road was 2027, but additional consultation could still be required, and the outcomes of the ground investigation were not yet known. He stated that ground investigations could find low quality soil, heritage or archaeology findings, which could delay the scheme.

The Chair opened the debate and asked what members of the public could do to respond to the consultation, if they could not access the internet. The HE Development Director replied that there were consultation deposit locations in libraries and hubs across the borough, as well as public information events where consultation response forms could be collected. He added that at statutory consultation, residents had felt there had been a lack of coverage across the borough, so a new public information had been added for this consultation round in Stanford-le-Hope. The Chair stated that he had received a representation from a local resident in the high-rise flats in Chadwell St Mary, who was concerned about the proposed route coming within 500 yards of their house. The Chair asked what HE were doing to protect communities living near to the proposed route, particularly the Courtney Road estate and Orsett Heath, from the noise and air pollution the route could cause. He asked if HE were prepared to use cut and cover along the route to protect people's health, as Thurrock had the highest rate of COPD outside London. The HE Development Director replied that the route was positioned as low as possible in deep cutting, and the alignment had been moved due to gradients. He added that enhanced cutting would be used so the route could not be seen from ground level if you were at the flats in Chadwell St Mary. He added that the route could not be obscured from those living in higher levels of the high-rise flats. The HE Development Director added that wider structure had also been added to the route in Chadwell St Mary, such as additional footpaths for non-motorized users. He described how an Environmental Report had been carried out and showed that 50m away from the route, the impact on air quality due to the road had largely gone. He added that environmental experts from HE would be attending the mobile events, so more detailed questions could be answered there.

The Chair then questioned if important access roads such as Heath Road, Brentwood Road and Hornsby Road would be closed due to the scheme. He asked how the impact of this would be mitigated if they were to be closed. The HE Development Director replied that Heath Road and Brentwood Road

would not be shutting as the alignment of the road had been changed after statutory consultation. He added that one of the proposals was to shut Hornsby Road, but HE wanted residents viewpoint on this, as they better understood this impact this could cause. He added that a live traffic count had been taken of Hornsby Road, and this information had been shared with Thurrock Council.

Councillor Spillman stated that he had received a representation from residents living in Linford and East Tilbury, who felt that during construction there would be increased lorry movements on the access roads into and out of the town, as there were limited access options. He felt that these increased lorry movements would cause a bottleneck for residents, which would be compounded by the proposed quarry in the area. He asked if HE would build new roads into East Tilbury to manage LTC construction traffic, to ease congestion which already built up due to the inconvenience of the railway line. The HE Development Director stated that HE had received lots of concerned residents representations regarding the proposed quarry, and the affect this would have on Linford. He commented that HE would try to keep lorries of the local road network, and they would have a separate entrance from Tilbury Port to A1089. He mentioned that lorry movements across the borough would be halved by using river traffic, and HE were currently in discussion with London Gateway and Tilbury Port to facilitate this. He stated that internal haul road would also be used to avoid using local roads, and spoil from construction would be used as false cutting near to where it was taken from to reduce lorries carrying spoil across the borough. The Assistant Director LTC highlighted that during peak construction it would not just be an increase in LTC lorry movements, but also an increase in commuters as 800 people would be working on the site. The HE Development Director responded that HE wanted to use local labour to reduce the number of commuters, and the key access to the site would be at the Port of Tilbury on the A1089. He stated that as well as this site, there would be satellite construction compounds across the borough to spread the workers out, and sustainable transport such as buses would be used to pick up workers across the borough.

Councillor Spillman asked the temporary haul roads would go through existing green-belt, and asked if the precise location of these haul roads was available for the public to view. The HE Development Director responded that the temporary haul roads were included in the temporary land and corridors needed during the construction phase, as well as the location for offices. He stated that if any temporary haul roads passed through green-belt, then once construction had finished HE had a duty to reinstate the green-belt to the quality it had been beforehand to ensure no net loss of bio-diversity. Councillor Muldowney asked a question on behalf of Councillor Shinnick, and asked if HE had considered holding an event in Ockendon, as the Brandon Groves event could not cover all residents, particularly those that lived on the other side of the town. The HE Development Director stated that he would look into this suggestion and would write back separately. Councillor Muldowney then asked if cycle ways that would be affected by construction would be replaced. The HE Development Director replied that it was the hope of HE not to lose any cycle networks, and where any existing routes did cross

the LTC, these would be replaced and improved. He commented that HE were working with Thurrock Council to ensure the LTC was multi-modal use and footpaths could be widened where suitable. Councillor Muldowney then questioned how the environmental impact of the route was being managed, and if in future, the road could be used for electric vehicles only. The HE Development Director responded that HE were working with government to get predictions on the future use of electric vehicles, particularly with the proposed ban on fossil fuels, although this had not been legislated for. He stated that HE wanted to work with Thurrock and government to ensure the route could be future proofed for electric vehicles and other technological developments.

The Resident Representative stated that Linford and East Tilbury would not be able to cope with an additional 13,000 HGV movements every month, and asked how drivers and lorry companies could be controlled to ensure they did not speed or drive dangerously. The Assistant Director LTC replied that Thurrock Council were working with HE on the Code of Construction Practice, which would be enforced by the Council. She added that although the detail of this still needed to be agreed, it would sit within the control of the Council. She commented that as the Code would be agreed at DCO, it would be a criminal offence to breach it, which would receive a minimum £25,000 fine, or unlimited fine if taken before Crown Court. The Resident Representative then asked if the movement of the road 60m northeast had been to save money due to the location of the pylons, and it had moved the road 60m closer to the residents of East Tilbury. The HE Development Director stated that this proposal was one being considered by the current consultation, and residents could have their say by filling out the consultation response document. He stated that if the power lines had to be moved it would increase disruption for residents as it would lead to power outages. He commented that additional mitigation would be done to protect the residents, as at planning stage every decision would need to be justifiable.

Councillor Jefferies agreed with Councillor Shinnick's request for an additional consultation mobile event on the other side of Ockendon. He felt that the route would provide no benefits for the residents of Ockendon as they would be in the middle of a 'toxic triangle' of the LTC, A13 and M25. He stated that residents would be circled on all sides by major roads, as well as the landfill site, and asked if the route could go into a tunnel when it passed near Ockendon. The HE Development Director stated that if residents felt that mitigation did not go far enough, then this should be included on their consultation forms. He added that the green bridges along the route would be the second largest in Europe, and significant investment would be taken to ensure walkers, horse-riders and cyclists could benefit from the route.

The Thames Crossing Action Group (TCAG) Representative asked if the LTC would be classified as a smart motorway by HE, and also asked how the M25/A13 southbound LTC junction would go from five lanes down to two, as this would cause significant bottlenecks, particularly when there was an incident on the Dartford crossing. The HE Development Director replied that HE were still in talks with government regarding the classification of the road,

and it would either be classified as a motorway or an all-purpose trunk road, and this would be decided at the planning application stage. He responded to the TCAG Representatives' second question and stated that there would be reduced demand on the LTC/A13 southbound so only two lanes would be necessary. He mentioned that incidents on the Dartford Crossing that led to closure only happened on average of six times per year, but the environmental footprint of the route had to be balanced against the route capacity. He stated that increased capacity at this point in the LTC would hold traffic in Thurrock, and could cause lots of other bottlenecks on local roads, compared to current proposals which would spread traffic out over the network. The Assistant Director LTC added that the route could not be completely future-proofed as all decisions had to be justified as necessary, particularly when HE had to use Compulsory Purchase Orders, so if there was only a need for five lanes during occasional incidents, it would not be agreed at DCO. The TCAG Representative felt that HE should have a duty of care to ensure that traffic could migrate easily onto the LTC, but there were currently not enough adequate connections. She felt that incidents occurred at the Dartford Crossing more than six times per year. The HE Development Director responded that incidents would reduce at Dartford once the LTC had opened as reliability would improve, the number of HGVs would decrease, and the number of abnormal loads convoys would also decrease. He added that traffic modelling data showed a relief on local traffic once the LTC opened. He stated that currently 200,000 vehicles used the Dartford Crossing per day, when capacity was only 125,000, so incidents would reduce.

Councillor Massey stated that residents of East Tilbury already felt worried regarding the access that would be needed for LTC construction lorries. He asked if a detailed 3D model or physical model would be produced for areas along the LTC, particularly the new proposals at Muckingford Road, or if a model could be produced that would show the view from residents homes of the proposed road. The HE Development Director replied that as this was only a small consultation, those graphics would not be produced, but would be available at the planning application stage. He added that the static images would be blown up and on display at the public information events, as well as engineering viewpoints. He stated that some feedback from residents highlighted their concerns over the proposed height of the route and clarified that the numbers shown were the height from sea-level rather than ground-level.

The Chair asked why the route could not be placed further east, for example on Canvey Island, as that location had routes onto the A130, A12, A120, M11, A14 and A1/M1. The HE Development Director stated that consultation response forms had a section at the back for any other comments, and comments about the route location could be raised there. He added that there may be future crossings further East due to growth in South Essex, but one of the reasons for the proposed location of LTC was to reduce East to West travel. The Chair felt that the proposal was London-centric and added that with the advent of climate change, more incidents may occur at the Dartford Crossing due to increasingly periods of high winds and heavy rainfall.

Councillor Spillman commented that congestion on the Dartford Crossing were predominantly northbound, with the majority of the A13 running freely. He felt that the proposed LTC roundabout at the A13 would create pinch points along the A13, and would affect the quality of life for people living in Stanford-le-Hope, East Tilbury and other areas around the borough. The HE Development Director replied that the route would be rigorously tested at examination phase. He added that members of the public and Councillors could also make representation to the Planning Inspectorate. The Assistant Director LTC added that HE had to meet the standards of as responsible promoter, by meeting the standards laid out in the National Policy Statement (NPS) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). She felt this bar was relatively low when considering the affect the route would have on people's lives, and there was a gap in the duty of care between policy standards and the moral responsibility towards residents. She felt that this difference was not necessarily the fault of HE, and was a systemic and policy fault. She explained that companies such as National Grid took a different approach to HE and took social responsibility for their projects by attaching a moral value.

Councillor Spillman asked how the route would benefit people living in the East of the borough, as he felt the majority of mitigation was planned for the West. The HE Development Director replied that by the time the LTC was completed in 2027, traffic would have increased across the borough, particularly east to west traffic due to port expansion and traffic using the A1089. He felt that without the relief provided by LTC, this traffic increase would increase delays and journey times. The HE Development Director clarified that there would be hotspots for traffic in the East of the borough, but HE had been open and transparent and were working on solutions. He added that HE were currently lobbying for further schemes to improve traffic across south Essex.

Councillor Muldowney asked what developments had occurred regarding the Health Impact Assessment (HIA), as a briefing note had been provided to the Task Force, but no updates had been received. The Assistant Director LTC replied that she felt the HIA was moving at a relatively slow-pace, although meetings were still happening quarterly, with the next meeting planned for the end of February. She stated that the CIPHAG meetings had currently agreed methodology and the approach for the HIA, but added that the work needed to increase in speed to ensure the HIA fed into the PEIR. Councillor Muldowney felt that as Thurrock had increased health inequalities compared to other boroughs, and increased rates of COPD, the HIA could help to mitigate the potential health effects of the route. She asked if an update could be provided on the HIA to the Task Force, to which the Assistant Director LTC agreed.

The TCAG Representative asked if HE were planning to send leaflets to houses to inform them of the mobile information events, as not everyone had internet access. She also asked if the large amounts of mud on Brentwood Road were due to HE archaeological surveys. She added that there had been problems with HE ground investigation lighting blinding oncoming drivers, but this had been dealt with. The HE Development Director replied that leaflets had been dropped to 4000 houses as they were affected landowners, but he

would double check regarding a general mobile information event leaflet drop. He stated that the mud on Brentwood Road presented a concern and would be looked into. The Assistant Director LTC added that a meeting was due to take place with Thurrock Council officers regarding the planned survey works, so would highlight the problem of mud on Brentwood Road during this meeting. The TCAG Representative explained that she had also received feedback on HE recruitment events and had received mixed messages from the attendees. The HE Development Director responded that HE received feedback on their recruitment events, and would look into these concerns.

The Resident Representative asked if the proposed route had been finalised, and queried why the route further east, which linked with the A14, had not been considered, as this could be put in a tunnel for its entirety and not affect peoples lives. The HE Development Director replied that during traffic modelling, an A14 route further East only provided short term traffic relief, and had been shut-down by the Treasury as it did not provide value for money. He added that the current proposed route improved journey times for a variety of local and major roads. The Assistant Director LTC stated that HE needed to balance a combination of measures, for example environmental concerns, and asked why no public transportation links had been proposed for the route. She also asked for clarification regarding construction hours, as these were listed as 7am-7pm with an hour either side for site set-up and closure, and queried whether these were during weekends and during all seasons. The HE Development Director replied that talks were currently underway with bus companies, as journey times for buses would be improved on arterial roads due to the LTC. He added that the route would be future-proofed for non-motorized users, and would contain extra capacity for electric vehicles and digital era cars. He explained that the tunnel would also include information and signage for drivers which would warn about incidents and emergencies along the route. The HE Development Director added that HE were also considering rail links through the tunnel to cope with the increased use of rail freight. The HE Development Director then answered the question regarding construction hours, and stated that 7am-7pm was the maximum working hours, which had to be included in the planning application. He stated that some sections of the route were far away from residents' houses, so these hours would be adhered to, but construction hours would be tailored when work commenced near residences. He clarified that the construction hours would be included in the Construction Code of Practice and will limit disruption to members of the public.

Councillor Muldowney described how an accident had occurred along Brentwood Road during the time the HE security lights were blinding drivers, and although the police had not yet linked the two, the Councillor felt it was worrying. She asked how residents could contact HE directly if they serious concerns. The HE Development Director replied that HE had a 24-hour hotline that could be used if drivers were in distress or safety issues occurred. The Assistant Director LTC added that she felt the hotline was not very efficient as it could take days for a response, and asked if a dedicated email address could be set-up which would be actively monitored. The HE Development Director replied that during construction phase a dedicated email address

would be set-up.

The Chair then queried the cost of the scheme, and asked how much it would cost to put cut and cover along the entire proposed route. The HE Development Director replied that introducing cut and cover along the entire route would cost HE between six and twenty times more than the current scheme, which would push the scheme outside the budget envelope, and potentially shut the project down. He stated that the LTC would solve problems that currently occurred at the Dartford Crossing, and would reduce journey times across the borough. The Chair stated that there was concern across the borough, particularly in East and West Tilbury and Linford, and asked for the exact costs of additional cut and cover, as he felt that a price could not be put on peoples' lives, particularly with the high rates of COPD in Thurrock. The HE Development Director stated that he would take the question away and reply in writing. The Chair highlighted that the Task Force would speak to the boroughs MPs, Prime Minister, and Secretary of State, to ensure the necessary safeguards were in place for residents of both Thurrock and Kent.

Councillor Spillman asked HE how the commitment to using local labour would be formalised to ensure that local people and businesses were employed. He asked if LTC workers would be subsidised to ensure money was spent in Thurrock businesses. The HE Development Director replied that he felt use of the local labour force was important to the success of the scheme. He explained that employment law meant that HE could not mandate just local workers for the scheme, but HE were working to ensure that local businesses had the opportunity to participate in the scheme. He highlighted that HE were currently promoting local supply chain events, which offered free training for employers, and ensured they had the correct 49 policies in place which would allow them to work on the scheme. He described how all contractors that worked for a government agency on a scheme such as the LTC needed a variety of policies in place, such as sustainability and anti-slavery policies before they could be offered contracts. He stated that free training would be offered to help businesses write these policies, and these training sessions had already proved successful on the A14 scheme. The Assistant Director LTC added that to secure DCO, there were limits that HE had to follow in regard to local labour. She felt that although HE were making efforts for training, it was slightly late, as current school leavers would need training now to ensure they had the right skills to work on the project. The Assistant Director LTC highlighted that Thurrock currently had low unemployment levels, which would mean that some workers would have to travel into the borough, and would therefore need accommodation, which would be difficult to provide due to the shortage of houses. Councillor Spillman stated that although employment was low, many people in Thurrock were on minimum wage jobs, and asked what training would be provided to upskill those people, such as apprenticeships. The Assistant Director LTC replied that discussions were taking place, and Thurrock Council officers were attending workshops to set-up the necessary apprenticeships. The HE Development Director added that central government mandated that 5% of all workers be apprentices, and HE would be working with the Port of Tilbury to

ensure that apprentices and workers could continue working once the scheme had been completed. Councillor Spillman felt this was positive as, due to the scheme length, it would allow new apprentices to become qualified by the time the scheme was finished. The Assistant Director LTC asked if the Task Force could see statistics regarding workers from the A14 scheme, and the HE Development Director replied that HE could share video testimonies from current workers.

The Chair welcomed the news that the proposed RASA would be moved away from Tilbury, and asked HE to consider a site near Brentwood on the M25, as it was before the Thurrock Services and the junction with the LTC. The Assistant Director LTC clarified that this area has been considered by HE, but was designated as a new employment centre by Brentwood Council. She added that it was not under the remit of the HE LTC team to decide the location of the RASA, and was decided by the HE policy team. The HE Development Director also responded that numerous areas had been considered for the RASA, but they had to be located roughly every 26 miles.

#### **44. Task Force Priorities List**

The Assistant Director stated that once the HE consultation had finished, the document would be updated.

Members had no comment on the Task Force Priorities List.

#### **45. Work Programme**

The Assistant Director LTC stated that the Council's consultation response would be considered at the March Task Force meeting, and the April meeting would discuss updates to the HIA.

Members had no comment on the Work Programme.

**The meeting finished at 8.03 pm**

Approved as a true and correct record

**CHAIR**

**DATE**

Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact  
Democratic Services at [Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)