

Lower Thames Crossing Task Force

Highways England Closed Session – 5 March 2018

In terms of engagement ideas HE should produce a full information pack with a feedback form and pre-paid envelope included through every door in Thurrock. HE confirmed they would consider this. Members stressed the need to consult better than previously.

Members stressed that HE has already made the decision so the consultation will not be a question of whether it will be this route but the finer details. HE stated that the options phase closed down other routes so yes it will be the finer details around alignment, charging etc.

Where the road is raised to 7m near the A13 can the viaduct be built to cushion noise? HE confirmed the route is now going under the A13.

Where the route goes past major conurbations HE should investigate maximum protection for residents (tunnels, cut & cover etc.) HE stated this was a design consideration that would be considered during the project but it was not practical for the whole route.

Thurrock has the highest rate of COPD outside of London will HE provide a detailed HIA? HE stated that health is one component of the environmental impact assessment. HE confirmed they will present on health impacts at a forthcoming Task Force meeting. HE highlighted there will be particular focus on how particular social groups can live both during and after construction works. It is noted that Thurrock Council have formally requested a full and detailed HIA.

As part of the statutory consultation HE will have to demonstrate that this is the most viable route and how it's justified. How will you do that? HE stated that the statutory consultation does give people the opportunity to discuss the theme but for the closed session would rather discuss the PRA alignment and how to make it better rather than keep discussing other route options which have been ruled out.

When will Thurrock see information about a more defined route? Will it involve details of storage facilities, movements during the construction phase and the full impact? HE stated that this does pose a conundrum. HE wants to ensure the quality of data before it is shared but HE appreciate that lots of the scheme goes through Thurrock and therefore understand the importance of the Task Force and early feedback. HE will welcome feedback but won't be in a position to release information and go to the statutory consultation until such details have been decided.

HE apologised that about the Virtual Reality model not being ready as promised last month. It needs to be crisper and more accurate but even then it will not be the complete picture. It will be presented at the Task Force meeting on 19 March.

What impact will the route have on Lakeside traffic? How will it alleviate existing problems in Thurrock? Thurrock has already called for the East-facing slips. It's a

question of how we can help deliver an improved local network in advance of any LTC. HE stated that East Facing slips was outside the LTC project but had been heard across HE and DfT. Members underlined the fact that the relevant part of HE that deals with the current crossing must do more to manage flow control, incident management and customer information. HE stated that this was being brought to the attention of the relevant HE teams.

Are there going to be the same processes as the Dartford Tunnel to escort tankers? HE confirmed the current tunnel was Category 3 whilst the new tunnels will be Category A and therefore tankers will not require an escort. On opening of any new crossing –will HE ban fuel tankers on the existing arrangements? HE stated they could review this at that point.

Wales and Scotland have removed tolling as an economic benefit for the area. HE should consider with DfT the economic harm of tolling. HE said they would note this.

If there will be large numbers of workers staying for extended periods could HE build a hotel which could be retained for use as affordable housing afterwards; like with the Olympic village? HE stated that there must be a balance. We can try to repurpose existing buildings, if not suitable we will need purpose built sites but then the question remains what happens afterwards? We are anxious not to have a repeat of the O2 where it sat empty for a while.

How are HE dealing with property blight? Properties within the red-line boundary are “blighted” and Highways England can buy residents out now which is a standard process. For those properties just outside of the redline with an “urgent” need to sell residents can apply to HE but will need to show circumstances to justify.

In terms of Noise impact what are HE doing? Post Construction, once the scheme is up and running, residents can apply for compensation. Highways England will seek to be more proactive in their approach during the construction phase.

Significant attention needs to be paid to sound barriers and ensure they are visually sensitive. There should also be lots of trees to mask impacts. HE stated that Environmental measures do cost money but working to get embankment profiles in elevated sections of the route.

Will the road be a “smart road”? Technological advancements are coming for which provisions have to be made; this is normally just ensuring the ability to install cables etc. in future. We are expected to make allowances for perceivable advancements such as lorries which communicate with each other.

HE were asked about the ability to safeguard for rail and public transport. HE stated that their remit, at this stage, was set by the Secretary of state and rail was not currently a consideration.

Regarding the new link road into Tilbury that has emerged after the PRA announcement – as HE are promoting this it is assumed that this be delivered and funded as a core cost i.e. funded by HE.