



Purfleet-on-Thames Community Forum

For ease of reference topics appear as separate subjects rather than in the order discussed. Items do not appear in any order of priority, and may appear under an unlinked agenda item (e.g. AOB)

Meeting Minutes 27th November 2018

1. Welcome

John welcomed everyone to the meeting and drew attention to meeting etiquette

2. Apologies

Laurence Pitt; Adrian Hilsum; Cllr Victoria Holloway (train delay)

3. Guest Speakers

Cllr Peter Smith, Chair of Lower Thames Crossing Task Force and
Laura Blake, Vice Chair of the Thames Crossing Action Group

Please check TCAG's website/social media where there is a lot information available:

www.tcag.info www.twitter.com/tcaginfo www.facebook.com/groups/NoLTCHere

The LTC Task Force is a cross party organisation and includes a representative from the general public, Tilbury Port, Thurrock Business Board and Thames Crossing Action Group and work with groups from the wider area including Kent.

The proposal is for a 23km long 6 lane motorway with a 4km/50 foot wide toll tunnel under the Thames with a service station at East Tilbury and a convoluted junction stretching from Baker Street to the Orsett Cock roundabout.

The original criteria for the new river crossing was to fix problems currently experienced on the roads due to the QE2 river crossing operating at overcapacity and for economic and social benefits, but Tilbury Port will no longer be getting a link road as this has now been removed. When Highways England were asked how Thurrock would benefit from this scheme, they were not able to give an answer.

It was mentioned that both Dover and Felixstowe - ports which will benefit from the Lower Thames Crossing - have had a full information event run by Highways England but although we have a port at Tilbury a full information event has not taken place in the area, presumably because there is no benefit for Tilbury particularly as the proposed link road has been taken out of the scheme.

Full capacity on the QE2 crossing is 135,000 vehicles per day. Currently there are between 150-180,000 per day. Predicted growth in traffic is said to be 20% and the new crossing is expected to remove 22% traffic away from the current crossing. This means that in 10 years' time the current crossing will still be operating over capacity.

The project will be paid for by public money and is estimated to cost £6.8 billion + VAT. All 49 councillors are against the proposed crossing, along with the Port of Tilbury and Thurrock Business Board.

Within the current consultation there is no consulting on any alternatives - Highways England were taken to judicial review re Arundel Bypass which resulted in a new consultation with other options, and this course of action is under consideration. Southend has said that it is keen to have a crossing in their locale.

The area will become a rat run if there is a problem as everyone will be trying to access the alternative crossing and vehicles will have to travel as far as Stanford on the A13 before being able to turn off.



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Although the proposal states the M25 to the A2 has 3 lanes, in fact some areas reduce to 2 lanes which will cause bottlenecks.

The Action Group spoke about option A14, a 7-mile tunnel between junction 30 and junction 2 of the M25. As traffic would be using a tunnel air filters would clean the air, and flow of traffic would also lessen pollution levels.

Peter Smith confirmed that the Council have data to show that this area is one of the dirtiest outside London, with illegally high levels of air pollution.

After a collective request for a full health impact assessment from Essex County Council, Kent County Council, Thurrock Council and Gravesham Council Highways England have finally capitulated and agreed to provide an assessment.

It was asked if the Action Group have a preferred crossing option - yes, a variant on the A14, which can be seen on their website www.tcag.info

Due to the length of the proposed A14 tunnel the cost would be greater than that of the current proposal.

Highways England used one month's traffic data (March) for analysis purposes but they disregard any issues from the traffic modelling equation. The Action Group believes that data which includes accidents and breakdowns and other issues should be included within the modelling equation due to such issues happening on a regular basis, and if included the traffic data would reflect a truer picture.

The Council have not received up-to-date modelling data.

It is said that of national traffic, 40% will continue along the M25 after passing over the crossing.

Consultation cut-off date is 20th December. Be aware the first question asks if you agree or disagree that the Lower Thames Crossing is needed – this is not asking if you think another crossing is needed, it is referring to the proposed crossing in the document. If you are against the Lower Thames Crossing, choose one of the disagree options and then use the free text box to give your input e.g. to ask for other crossing options.

11th December Special Council Meeting - Council will give their response to the proposal

12th December – cumulative response will be presented to the Cabinet.

4. General Update

Speed Sensors

Over a 7-day period on the stretch of road by High House there were a total of 33,000 vehicle movements (but this did not break down into 50% in each direction). The average speed throughout Purfleet is 37mph, so not high enough to qualify for a speed camera but high enough for Highways to advise the Police that there is a speeding issue which needs their attention. In answer to a question it was explained that one fatality is not enough in itself to qualify for speed reduction schemes.

Regeneration

A formal presentation was made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and John, on behalf of the forum, gave a passionate speech in support of the scheme which received a round of applause, a rare occurrence.

Outline planning has now been in for a year and suffered several delays due to government departments raising queries resulting in further periods of consultation. The application is being resubmitted to cover objections raised and answer Highways England's latest query as to what impact our project will have on J30 of the M25.



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It was mentioned that the local port wants to expand by 400%, vessels will be 30m longer (100+ additional cars onboard), cars are travelling across from Kent, multi-storey car decks have been granted planning, but it appears that none of this traffic has been considered or queried by Highways England.

A letter was read out from Ken Dytor of PCRL outlining what has been happening: Safeguarding agreement made with Environment Agency for 2.5 hectares of land following their objection, despite the original builder of the Thames Barrier stating it would last for another 100 years. Peter Smith said he had been in talks with PCRL and there is a good likelihood that the borough may have something temporary on this parcel of land which could then be handed back to PCRL in the future.

Network Rail - closure of crossing and new bridge, hopefully to go to Planning in the New Year.

Highways England - final remodelling to be completed next week.

5. Matters Arising and AOB

Name Change

700+ signatures in support, 2 opposing.

The petition will be presented to Full Council on 30th January.

The Council will look for an officer to be assigned to then take it forward.

Battle's Over

John hoped that everyone who came to the event felt it had been worth attending.

Photographs taken at the event to be included in a book by Trevor, available to purchase.

Christmas Lights

Thanks to Ensign, who speedily responded and gave a significant donation toward the cost of the lights.

Thanks also to Lynn and Moira for all their hard work raising just over £1,000 towards the lights from functions at Mulberry Drive and the quiz night.

Following the Christmas Fayre at St Stephen's the Christmas lights will be switched on at 5pm, with mulled wine and mince pies being served.

Superfast Broadband

Murray would like any applications to be submitted via the forum as this will carry more weight. Forum to look to see if they can pursue funding for superfast broadband where it is not already available. If you have poor connectivity please email John at chair@purfleetcf.org.uk

Cllr Gerrish Updates

Orsett Hospital – the decision to close the hospital is being reviewed. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee are considering referring to the Secretary of State to review the decision, questioning the quality of decision making and consultation process issues. Southend have already referred the plan to the Secretary of State due to concerns. There is a CCG report saying the viability of the hubs are in question regarding taking up the clinics.



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Local Plan – going before Council in December. Issues and Options Stage 2 is asking for feedback from residents, e.g. are you happy with the types of developments and their locations e.g. one new community, a town in the north of the borough with 15,000 dwellings; the target of providing 32,000 dwellings over the next 20 years yet only locations for 8,000 dwellings have been identified, use of brown field sites.

Waste Collection – collection targets have been missed for the third quarter in a row. Collections start on a Monday in the east and move across the borough westward during the week, meaning properties in the west can be missed due to missed collection catch-ups taking place during the week.

Redevelopment of Civic Offices – capital money will be used, i.e. money not able to be spent on the day-to-day running of services. Querying whether this is the right use of resources.

Anti-social Behaviour - there is a disturbing trend of an increase in violent crime across the borough over the last 6 months including a recent incident involving a serious attack on parking enforcement officers outside Purfleet Primary School.

Essex Police put in for an increase in the Council Tax to finance more officers, but the number of officers may be less than those anticipated.

A Police representative is due to start attending forum meetings again, but this will be dependent upon their shift pattern.

In the past the forum looked at joining the Neighbourhood Watch scheme, but this never got off the ground.

In response to a question Cllr Gerrish said that policing is data led (patterns are looked for within reports of crime) and the Police also respond to partner requests such as the one approximately a year ago concerning the Garrison estate, and theoretically there should be more patrols. It was said that solutions were needed, not extra police. Cllr Gerrish responded that improvements have been made to the lighting and security doors fixed.

The Chair intervened to bring the topic to a close saying anti-social behaviour is not just found on the Garrison and that a lot of problems come from outside, including London gang involvement.

The meeting was informed crime figures can be obtained from police.uk and that local crime figures (West Thurrock) can be accessed via a link within the Community Info tab on the forum's website.

6. Next meeting and AGM

Tuesday, 29th January, 19:30 at St Stephen's Church

Please email any expressions of interest to sit on the committee to chair@purfleetcf.org.uk