

THAMES CROSSING ACTION GROUP

www.thamescrossingactiongroup.com

Planning Application Reference: 20/00430/FUL

Proposal: Retrospective application for the temporary change of use of the existing coach /car park to a contractors compound (day and night) for five years for works associated with the proposed Lower Thames Crossing and associated highway and infrastructure works on the Essex side of the crossing.

Location: Coach Park Pilgrims Lane North Stifford

We wish to put it on record that we were given less than 3 hours to prepare and submit the following written statement. We do not consider such a short time frame adequate, but have done our best in preparing this statement in such a short time frame.

Our statement

Thames Crossing Action Group represents thousands of people who are strongly opposed to the proposed Lower Thames Crossing.

The fact that this application and another at the same location have been made retrospectively on behalf of Highways England speaks volumes to their lack of respect for procedure, our Council, and communities. A Government company/their agent would know the correct planning procedure, and we consider these retrospective applications to be blatantly disrespectful.

The application states the site is already in use and provides a date of 1st April 2020 as when it was first used, yet HE have admitted to us it has been in use since Dec 2019. Neither does there appear to be any mention of any new buildings on site, yet new structures can be seen from the road.

With that in mind it gives us no confidence that the applicant will have any level of respect if they were to be granted permission for these applications.

There is also the point that the original retrospective application was for a 3 year period, which has since been requested to be extended to 5 years, and further mention of perhaps up to 8-10 years. There is no clear indication in this application as to the true extent of impact to our local roads and communities.

We have concerns over the negative impacts this compound would have to traffic in an area that already has high levels of congestion.

The Transport Technical paper states that there would be 1,714 vehicle trips across a 12 hour day just connected to the parking spaces on the site, and not including things like HGVs, buses, coaches etc. This suggests we would easily be looking at around 2000 vehicle movements per day. We would also query what the proposed operating hours are for this site, as we know that HE/LTC propose 24/7 construction, so we would ask how much traffic should be expected in reality and not just the

THAMES CROSSING ACTION GROUP

www.thamescrossingactiongroup.com

hours the applicant has chosen to represent in the application. The original application states opening hours are not relevant, we beg to differ, and state that the opening/operational hours are very relevant and we have been unable to locate such detail.

We also point out that there is mention in the application of vehicles including 20 tonne lorries, as well as HGVs, buses, coaches etc, which are not mentioned in the proposed vehicle movements.

The applicant states the use of the site for "*Parking and storage of vehicles, plant, equipment and materials associated with construction of the Lower Thames Crossing.*" We respectfully remind members and the applicant that Highways England do not yet have permission for the proposed Lower Thames Crossing, so any construction until such time as a DCO is granted would be illegal. We are also unclear as to exactly what the applicant is proposing being stored at the site, and feel that more detailed information should be provided otherwise they could be using it for anything.

The Full Covering Letter (23 Dec 2019) states the distance between Pilgrims Lane and the security gates is just 5.2m, this is not long enough for HGVs, buses, coaches etc to clear the road/roundabout and footpath without obstruction. With the amount of proposed vehicle movements estimated we feel there is a clear indication that a route already heavily impacted with traffic issues would suffer even further and to an unacceptable level.

We would point out that previous applications on this site have been refused on the basis of it being a greenbelt site, and due to proposed traffic movements of other projects.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide this statement and are of course happy to comment/discuss further if required.