

# THAMES CROSSING ACTION GROUP

[www.thamescrossingactiongroup.com](http://www.thamescrossingactiongroup.com)  
[admin@thamescrossingactiongroup.com](mailto:admin@thamescrossingactiongroup.com)

Thames Crossing Action Group represents thousands of people along and from the surrounding areas that the entire proposed Lower Thames Crossing will impact.

We would like to state immediately that we do not feel that the length of the Lower Thames Crossing Statutory Consultation has been long enough for us to be able to read the unprecedented amounts of documents supporting the consultation, to have time to digest that info, get answers to any questions we have had, and to then be able to have the time and information to be able to respond adequately to this consultation. We will go into further detail later.

**Thames Crossing Action Group strongly disagree that the proposed Lower Thames Crossing is needed.**

Whilst we agree that there is a need for another new crossing, the proposed Lower Thames Crossing is not needed, as it fails to remedy any of the reasons that warrant a new crossing being needed, and would in fact actually make things worse.

The reason we need another new crossing (but not the Lower Thames Crossing) is because the current Dartford Crossing is way over capacity and there are so many issues and incidents at and around the current crossing.

As well as sheer volume of traffic there are many other problems with the Dartford Crossing. The fact that the traffic is stopped every 15 mins by the red traffic lights before the northbound Dartford Tunnels to allow hazardous vehicles to be escorted through one of the tunnels, thus reducing lane capacity by 50 %, down to just two lanes is ludicrous.

The M25 has never been completed as an orbital motorway which means the A282 section bottlenecks the traffic flow of what should be an orbital motorway. The speed limit drops to 50mph from the national limit, again impacting the traffic flow in a negative way.

Highways England showed poor lack of judgement and planning when building J1a, and that also applies to the local authorities and anyone involved in allowing the development in that area without an adequate road system to take the load. The simple fact is, that junction should never have been built so close to the tunnel portals as it creates a huge problem with traffic trying to join the crossing right on top of the portal. The traffic flow here is greatly impacted by poor road and development design. The great concern is that you are looking to do similar again with the Tilbury junction of the Lower Thames Crossing, putting it too close to the tunnel portal. You need to learn from your previous mistakes. The answer that it is within industry standards is not good enough.

The junction at 1a was within industry standards when built, and now look at the terrible problems it brings. You should be looking at real solutions, including proper forward thinking, not just working within industry standards that will soon, if not already, be outdated.

Along with the terrible management and maintenance of our roads that Highways England need to be held accountable for. How long does it really take to reopen lanes or a road after an incident? Fair enough there are times that it may need a little while, after fatalities or when emergency services are responding, barrier replacement or resurfacing after a spillage etc. However, the length of time taken is often way longer than necessary. Just the other evening there was a broken down vehicle in the left lane in the middle of the bridge. Highways were with them, hazard lights flashing, but appeared to just be sitting waiting for a breakdown company to attend. Your Land Rovers are more than adequate to tow such vehicles off the road and to safety, and quickly clearing the road for road users. Why does it take so long when these incidents occur for things to be cleared, not only for traffic flow, but also for the safety of all road users, those who have broken down, and removing the potential of accidents that are caused when lane blockages occur.

How often are road signs turned on or left on even where there is no incident on the road? HE are like the boy who cried wolf, nobody believes your signs now, because of this, which causes further incidents to occur.

The poor maintenance is also a huge issue. Potholes creating damage to cars that then often need road side assistance due to flat tyres and damage meaning they are stranded in often dangerous situations causing blockages on roads, which impacts the traffic flow. Things like potholes should be repaired before they get so bad that issues are caused. Incidents such as the huge pothole on the M25 clockwise carriageway between the exit and entry slip roads at J31 West Thurrock, A1306, which recently had to be repaired causing massive delays on the M25. Why are such potholes left to get so bad, and why are they not being fixed adequately. There is obviously some kind of fault inherent in this section of road that keeps creating the potholes there, do a proper fix instead of just keep whacking the tarmac in and over it, so it keeps causing the same issues.

These problems need to be addressed and improvements made.

The proposed Lower Thames Crossing is not in the right location. We were not given adequate choices of location for the Lower Thames Crossing either. The 2016 consultation focused on Options C2, C3, and C4, all of which came through the river at the same point, which offers no real choice at all. It can be compared to asking someone if they want a cheese, cheese and pickle, or cheese and tomato sandwich, when they don't like or want cheese! The 2016 consultation was flawed and did not give adequate options; it was presented in a way that gave biased to a route at this location, as opposed to any real choice of alternatives.

The location is in completely the wrong place as it creates a detour of around 17 miles for those simply wanting to use the M25. At what point do you decide to detour that far as an alternative? By the time it is already chaos and you have no other option. This means it is not a good alternative option to ease things at the Dartford Crossing, as people who want to just go around

the M25 will continue to use the Dartford Crossing to avoid a 17 mile detour.

The proposed Lower Thames Crossing is outdated before it's even built, and the Dartford Crossing will still be over capacity even if the proposed Lower Thames Crossing is built. The current crossing runs between 155,000 to 180,000 vehicles per day (*as per your 2017 Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report 1.2.5, and your Case for the project page 19 6.2.32*). Predicted traffic growth will be between 17-23% (*as per your case for the project page 19 6.2.37, the 2017 Environmental Impact Assessment – Scoping Report 1.2.5. The estimated reduction in traffic at the Dartford Crossing if LTC open is 22% (as per your Guide to consultation page 22)*). The Dartford Crossing is designed to take 135,000 vehicles per day (*as per your Guide to consultation page 20*).

Therefore, if you take each figure that the current crossing is running at now, add the 17% or 23%, or take an average of 20% then take the 22% reduction off these are those figures and show that the Dartford Crossing will still be over capacity of what it is designed to take.

$155,000+17\% = 181,350$  /  $181,350-22\% =$  **141,453** vehicles per day

$180,000+17\%=210,600$  /  $210,600-22\%=$  **164,268** vehicles per day

$155,000+23\%=190,650$  /  $190,650-22\%=$  **148,707** vehicles per day

$180,000+23\%=221,400$  /  $221,400-22\%=$  **172,692** vehicles per day

$155,000+20\%=186,000$  /  $186,000-22\%=$  **145,080** vehicles per day

$180,000+20\%=216,000$  /  $216,000-22\%=$  **168,480** vehicles per day

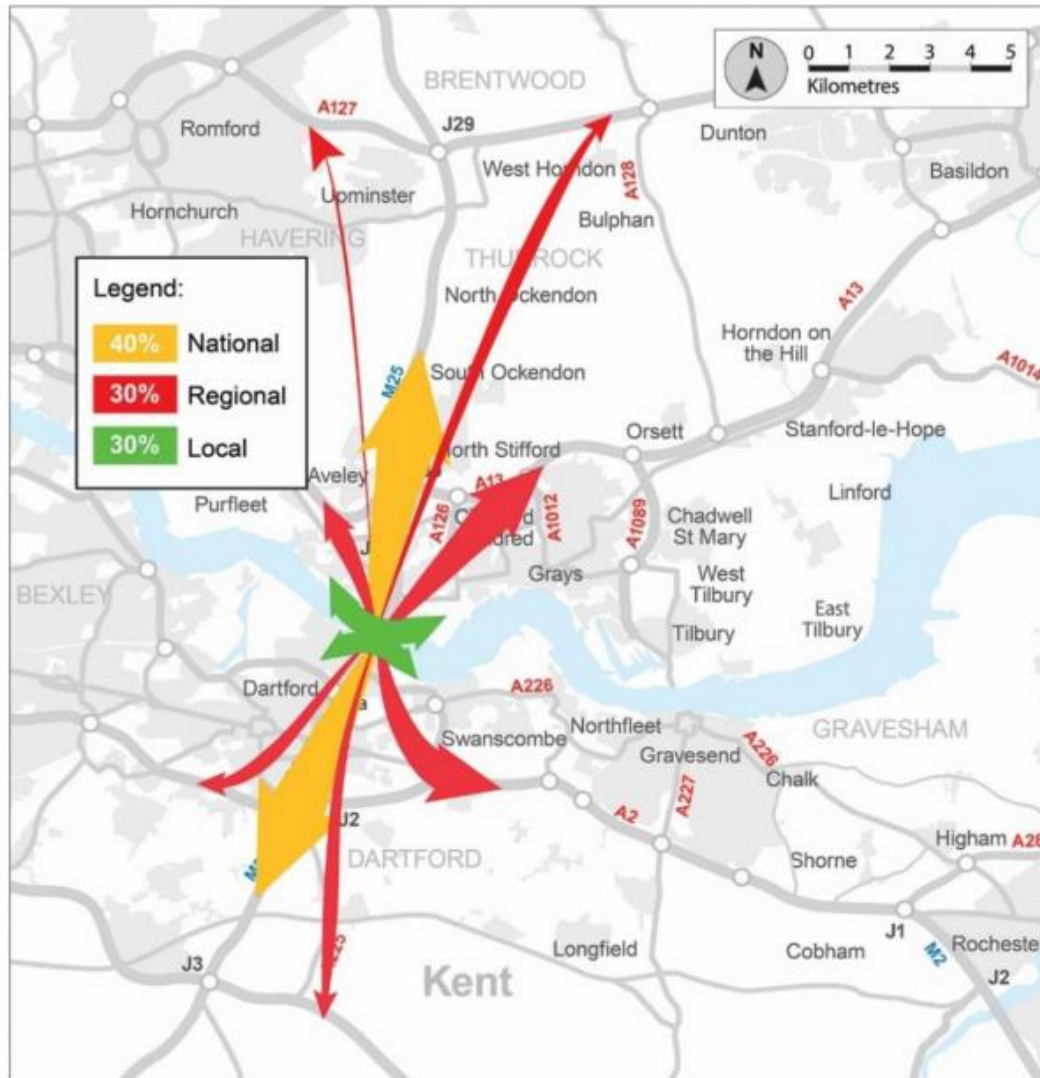
All these calculations, using Highways England's own figures, show that the Dartford Crossing will still be above the capacity that it is created to take, which is **135,000** vehicles per day.

This is not a solution and there are better alternatives out there, alternatives that Highways England have hidden away in previous consultations. Option A14 (or a variant) for example. A tunnel from around junction 2 on the M25, through to between junction 30 and junction 29. Finally completing the M25 as a true motorway orbital. If designed correctly it would take at least 40% of traffic away from the Dartford Crossing, as all National traffic that uses that section of the M25 would simply bypass the Dartford Crossing by taking the new Option A14 route (the M25 express way). The air in the tunnels would be filtered which would improve air quality. The speed limit could be the national limit, no need to drop to 50mph as happens at the current crossing. Also since it would be built to the latest standards there would be no need to escort hazardous vehicles, which is one of the worst offenders for causing issues at the current crossing with the traffic lights being turned red every 15 mins.

We have been told this option, A14, was one of the favourites of Highways England staff until they ran traffic modelling data through it, which they alleged showed it didn't take enough traffic away from the existing crossing. This leads us to question their traffic modelling as if Option A14 (or a variant) were designed and built correctly it would simply take all the national M25 traffic, which

according to HE's own data would be at least 40% of traffic. This data can be found in the *2016 Lower Thames Crossing*

*Pre-Consultation Scheme Assessment Report Volume 2: Introduction and Existing Conditions*



This would leave the current crossing for local and regional traffic. A far better alternative to take away at least 40% of traffic rather than 22% that the Lower Thames Crossing is predicted to take away from the current crossing.

The proposed Lower Thames Crossing does not allow for anything other than motorised vehicles, which in this day and age where we need to be taking climate change into account should definitely be something that is taken into account.

We have been told there will be no provision for pedestrians or cyclists to cross the River Thames via the Lower Thames Crossing, as there will be no service similar to the one offered at the Dartford Crossing. Surely the Government should be considering more sustainable solutions, and not simply focusing blindly on motorised vehicles. We should be looking to improve things, not worsen them by only allowing motorised vehicles and destroying irreplaceable greenbelt, agricultural land (including Grade 1 listed land), ancient woods, veteran trees etc.

Why is there no incorporation of rail into the design? There is an alternative project (not from Highways England) being looked at that is a double decker tunnel that incorporates trains in the tunnel. We currently have to go into London and back out again on the train to go to Kent, this would be a perfect opportunity to encourage the maximum use of trains. Plus it could incorporate

rail freight as an alternative to everything being put on HGVs and onto our already congested roads. Also there is another project (again not from Highways England) that is looking at trams through a tunnel. Where's the forward thinking on this? Where are the sustainable considerations? Why are we not looking to bring things into regional ports too, instead of encouraging it to come into places like Dover and then use roads to get it to Felixstowe and Harwich etc? Our reliance upon products and using roads to transport them is out of control.

The proposed route will just bring more road traffic to areas that are already struggling and suffering with congestion and pollution. New roads mean more traffic, that is a fact, and Lower Thames Crossing will do just that, it will bring more traffic. The only new road option that wouldn't generate more traffic and is acceptable as it segregates National traffic from local is Option A14. It effectively creates a double decker effects at the current crossing, similar to the double decker crossings/bridge that many other countries in the world have.

### **Thames Crossing Action Group also strongly opposes Highways England's selection of the proposed route for the Lower Thames Crossing.**

As said previously, we do not believe the 2016 consultation was adequate, and did not provide any real alternatives and the presented options were all variants of C, which has the crossing portals in the same place along the river. To place the crossing in this location is wrong, it's the wrong location so where is the choice? With things as they are at the Dartford Crossing companies such as haulage firms would think that a pontoon crossing across the river was a solution if that's the only option they were presented with. If they were given proper alternatives to choose from, with options like A14 represented properly alongside some other options then the results would have been very different. Highways England used the 2016 consultation to manipulate the results to suit themselves, rather than giving the public proper options to choose from.

The 2016 consultation was also manipulated by lumping together 13,000 responses as 1, because HE deemed them to be an organised group response. There are plenty of similar responses to probably millions of online petitions where a form of objection is used with an additional space for people to add any additional comments they might make, yet these are all considered to be individual opinions. If they are considered organised responses then so should all the official HE response forms as they all had the same basic text on them with spaces for people to make any additional comments they wish. The HE response forms are also created to try and get the response that HE wants, in the way questions are put to people etc. This screams of double standards and an unfair consultation and lack of consideration.

The original criteria for the scheme was to find a solution to the problems at the Dartford Crossing, which has now morphed into being predominantly about economic benefits and growth. Highways England is not Economy England, they are Highways England and should concentrate on Highways. It is perceived by many members of the public that Highways England struggle to manage and maintain the highways they are already responsible for effectively and efficiently, let alone letting them loose to design more poorly designed roads.

There are people working on this Lower Thames Crossing project that have spent years working at and managing the Dartford Crossing, which has been failing for years and has progressively been getting worse and worse, a sign they were not capable to manage the crossing, let alone design a new one.

The Lower Thames Crossing project is also not alone in being an example of Highways England's misleading ways of designing destructive new roads that provide no real solutions. The controversial Stonehenge A303 project where Highways England are going against advice from many experts on the damage to the ancient historic site and surrounding areas. Going against the World Heritage advice and comments. There were incidents of damage they have already done in the area that was recently reported in the news. This does not give us confidence in Highways England to know what they are doing, or that they will do the right thing anywhere.

The A27 project down in Sussex again shows that Highways England cannot be trusted with their destructive plans. Two judicial reviews against Highways England on this one, and now they are getting a new consultation because of all the inadequacies of the statutory consultation. The similarities between their consultation inadequacies and our own have been noted.

Highways England have destructive plans all over the country, where they are attempting to destroy homes, greenbelt, forests, farmland, communities, national parks etc and it is not acceptable, especially when in many of these cases they are not doing the right thing and have consultations and projects full of inadequacies.

**The Thames Crossing Action Group strongly opposes the changes that Highways England have made to the route since the preferred route announcement in 2017.**

We would question why the Tilbury link road was added to the design only to be removed prior to the Statutory Consultation. We do not buy the reason that HE doesn't feel the traffic warrants the link road being put in. There must have been a good enough reason to put it on the map, before you removed it. Nobody at Highways England has been able to provide any credible reason as to why the link road was removed.

We also question why there had been no mention of a rest and service area before the statutory consultation. We are aware that it is Highways Agency guidelines to include a rest and service area to keep drivers well rested. Obviously safety is important, yet Highways England have been more than aware that there would be a need or that it falls within guidelines to have a rest and service area somewhere along the Lower Thames Crossing route, yet failed to point that out until throwing it in at the very last minute at statutory consultation. This screams of them hiding it until they had to put it into the design as they knew it would create strong opposition and upset many residents.

The rest and service area is located way too close to residential areas, and will be a nightmare for residents, increasing air, noise, light, and vibration pollution literally right on their doorsteps.

Thurrock also has the worst service station in the country; we don't need or want more. We know that the Government acquire the land and then rent it to whatever company will be running the service station. There should be better assurances from the Government that these service areas are properly managed and maintained, not simply left to private companies who in the case of Thurrock services clearly are not fit for purpose. What guarantees can Highways England give the people of East Tilbury and indeed the rest of Thurrock and anyone who could potentially be using these proposed services that they will be of an acceptable and decent level?

With parking for 80 HGV and 16 coaches what assurances can Highways England give that there won't be problems with illegal immigrants coming into the area under HGVs and coaches too? This has long been an issue at the Dartford Crossing and Thurrock Services area. We will make further comments regarding the rest and service area further in to our response.

There are not adequate connections in place on the A13. There is no access to the Lower Thames Crossing heading eastbound on the A13. There is not access from the Lower Thames Crossing to head westbound on the A13. There is no access to the A1089 Southbound from the Lower Thames Crossing. There is no access to the Lower Thames Crossing or the A1089 from the Orsett Cock roundabout. This will lead to all sorts of traffic issues on a daily basis.

Traffic wanting to access the Lower Thames Crossing from the A13 eastbound will have to drive all the way down the A13 to the Stanford Junction (A1014), up and around a traffic light controlled roundabout (alongside HGVs in and out of DP World etc, as well as local Stanford and Corringham traffic), back westbound along the A13 to just under the Orsett Cock roundabout to access the new joint junction for the Lower Thames Crossing and A1089 south.

Traffic wanting to access the A13 westbound from the Lower Thames Crossing will have to come off the Lower Thames Crossing on the A13 eastbound slip, up and around the Orsett Cock junction roundabout, and back westbound along the A13.

Traffic from the Lower Thames Crossing (in either direction) will not be able to access the A1089 south (for Tilbury Port, docks, Cruise Terminal, Amazon, Travis Perkins, Asda, general Tilbury traffic) without having to take the same detour all the way to the Stanford Junction (A1014), up and around a traffic light controlled roundabout (alongside HGVs in and out of DP World etc, as well as local Stanford and Corringham traffic), back westbound along the A13 to just under the Orsett Cock roundabout to access the new joint junction for the Lower Thames Crossing and A1089 south

Traffic from the Orsett Cock wanting to access the Lower Thames Crossing or A1089 south will also have to take the same detour all the way to the Stanford Junction (A1014), up and around a traffic light controlled roundabout (alongside HGVs in and out of DP World etc, as well as local Stanford and Corringham traffic), back westbound along the A13 to just under the Orsett Cock roundabout to access the new joint junction for the Lower Thames Crossing and A1089 south.

The Lower Thames Crossing slip road onto the A13 eastbound is particularly questionable as traffic will not be merging onto the A13 until extremely close to where the A13 east filter lane off to the Orsett Cock junction starts, meaning there will be a lot of weaving and it will potentially become an accident hot spot. The Lower Thames Crossing Northbound to join the A13 eastbound also has a dangerous looking bend it in that mimics the bend at the top of the A1089, indeed this is just north of that bend that is renowned locally for accidents and lorries tipping as it is such a hazardous bend. Leaving the A1089 north to join the Lower Thames Crossing south is another bend that looks like an accident hot spot waiting to happen.

Highways England have not even factored in what happens when there is an incident at either crossing and traffic needs to migrate to the other crossing.

When there is an incident at the Dartford Crossing/M25 heading southbound. Traffic leaving the M25 at the A13 eastbound, or indeed coming along the A13 out of London that wanted to use the Dartford Crossing would have to travel all the way down the A13 eastbound to the Stanford Junction (A1014), up and around the traffic lighted roundabout (alongside HGVs in and out of DP World etc, as well as local Stanford and Corringham traffic), back westbound along the A13 to just under the Orsett Cock roundabout to access the new joint junction for the Lower Thames Crossing and A1089 south.

If the traffic leaves the M25 at the A127, coming down the A128, again it would have to travel all the way down the A13 eastbound to the Stanford Junction (A1014), up and around the traffic lighted roundabout (alongside HGVs in and out of DP World etc, as well as local Stanford and Corringham traffic), back westbound along the A13 to just under the Orsett Cock roundabout to access the new joint junction for the Lower Thames Crossing and A1089 south.

Alternatively some traffic will likely also try cutting through along the A127/A12 and into London to use the Blackwall Tunnel (or other crossings) as an alternative, just as traffic does now, The fact that the Lower Thames Crossing is there won't make an awful lot of difference because as we have outlined there will be so much chaos and congestion traffic will just look for and take any possible alternative route it can.

Depending on where the incident is and how traffic responds will depend on if the LTC junction on the M25 is blocked or not. We know that on motorways traffic backs up another 1 mile every 90 seconds after an incident. This would mean that the Lower Thames Crossing junction could become blocked in around 7 and a half minutes if there was an incident at the approach to the current crossing. If the incident was before the A13 junction the Lower Thames Crossing junction on the M25 could be blocked in around 5 minutes.

Many drivers do not trust or believe Highways Englands road signs regarding lane and road closures since HE are renowned for their 'boy who cried wolf' behaviour. Turning on lane closure signs when not needed or leaving them on after incidents, erratic speed limits jumping up and down between motorway signs. People will therefore prefer to trust their own eyes, and if traffic is still moving heading down the M25 southbound, as it is all detouring along the A13 down to Stanford, up and around the roundabout, back westbound and onto the Lower Thames Crossing to head south to cross the river, then traffic will keep coming down the M25 and following that detour migration route, rather than coming off onto the Lower Thames Crossing. This will be until such time that the traffic builds up so badly that it all comes to a grinding halt, and again will back up throughout the whole area, with local roads being used as rat runs in a bid to try and escape the chaos, bringing those to a halt too.

If the traffic does decide to detour off the M25 and down the Lower Thames Crossing, it would be 5 lanes of traffic on the M25, down to 3 lanes on the Lower Thames Crossing, until it reaches the A13 junction where it will drop to 2 lanes for a section, then back up to 3 lanes, through the tunnel, and then as it get towards the A2 traffic that wants to get back onto the M25 will need to head westbound on the A2, which will mean bottlenecking down to 2 lanes from the Lower Thames Crossing to the A2. Since the Dartford Crossing will still be over the designed capacity this means the A2 is likely to be just as busy then as it is now, with the particular stretch that traffic wanting to get back onto the M25 would use being a nightmare for congestion.



If for example there was an incident at the Lower Thames Crossing tunnel southbound meaning traffic needed to migrate to the Dartford Crossing, it would have to come off the Lower Thames Crossing to join the A13 eastbound, come off on the Orsett Cock roundabout, back down westbound along the A13 to the M25/A282. As mentioned previously this slip road merges onto the A13 extremely close the Orsett Cock filter lane, so this would additional issues for traffic that needs to come off onto the Orsett Cock, as it would be gridlocked with traffic from the Lower Thames Crossing wanting to use the Orsett Cock to turn around and gain westbound A13 access to the Dartford Crossing.

The same if traffic was heading northbound on the Lower Thames Crossing and there was an incident on it north of the A13. Traffic would need to come off the Lower Thames Crossing at the A13 and then come off at the Orsett Cock either to go around the roundabout and head westbound along the A13 to the M25, or come off at the Orsett Cock and head up the A128 to join the A127 onto the M25.

Similarly, how will traffic migrate if there is an incident heading northbound in Kent at either crossing? They will cut through anywhere and everywhere they can. Many drivers know the cut through along by Bluewater etc, and with sat nav in most vehicles these days people will just turn off anywhere they feel might be a good cut through and let the sat nav guide them.

Any way you look at any of these incidents local roads will become chaos with people attempting to take short cuts through local areas, causing more congestion and pollution.

If there is an incident in the Lower Thames Crossing tunnels there is definitely not adequate access for emergency service vehicles. For instance the Orsett Fire Brigade would have to detour from the Orsett Cock down to the Stanford junction, and then back westbound along the A13 to the Lower Thames Crossing junction, if indeed there is room for them to get through the traffic since there will be no hard shoulders. Similarly with ambulances in and out of Basildon, the A13 will be heavy with traffic with everything diverting via the Stanford junction which will impact the ambulance route.

We do not feel that HE have taken into account if and which hospitals would be able to serve in case of accidents etc too, as all hospitals in the area are already struggling, to bring such infrastructure to an area that will not be able to cope in a medical emergency is irresponsible and should not be allowed.

The changes to Rectory Road in Orsett, removing the bridge across the A13, and putting a new road in through the middle of the Orsett Showground are totally unacceptable also. This is all down to the fact that you have chosen to put the Lower Thames Crossing /A1089 slip road in at the point you have, meaning with the realignment of the old A13 (A1013) and the slip road from the Orsett Cock onto the A13 westbound it is now too wide according to you to put a replacement bridge in at the end of Rectory Road. The fact that you simply looked at a map for the narrowest pinch point across the A13 for an alternative location for a new bridge without doing any research into what that route destroys is totally unacceptable. A quick Google shows the Orsett Showground on Google maps and clicking through from there you can easily find out that the Orsett Show has been running since 1895 and has great history. You can see images that clearly show that the proposed new road would go through the middle of the showground. It doesn't take a lot of looking at Google results to learn just how many events are held in the Orsett Showground

and therefore to realise the impact that this decision would make. The Showground does not just have special meaning to residents in the historic village of Orsett, but also to many people from all over for the historic and eclectic events that are held there. It is not acceptable for Highways England to move forward with this proposed route for an alternative to Rectory Road being closed off. We need and deserve a better solution. Joining it through to the A128 is also not a satisfactory solution as that section of road is particularly dangerous, with high amounts of accidents on that particular section near to the Orsett Cock roundabout. Indeed the whole of the A128 is a dangerous road, it is one that the air ambulance gets called out to most.

The changes you have made to the A13 junctions/connections have just taken the original plan you had of a super spaghetti junction near to Baker Street, Orsett removed vital connections and squished what is left along the entire length of Orsett village. This will increase air, noise, light and vibration pollution to the whole area.

The route along through the Orsett and Bulphan fens goes through areas that are prone to flooding, high winds and thick fog. This again will have a negative impact on air, noise, light, and vibration pollution. As well as the particles that will be released from tyres etc into the land surround the route, much of which is valuable agricultural land. We need to be protecting and supporting our farmers in this country, especially now with Brexit, to ensure we are as self-sufficient as we can be as a relatively small island. Not pointlessly destroying our agricultural land (including some that is Grade 1 listed).

The route to and connecting to the M25 junction has changed drastically, and still needs to be lower and in cut and cover, as does as much of the whole route as possible. We are fed up with being told constantly that cut and cover costs too much. The cost to our health and lives is of far greater value. You will be making money on the Lower Thames Crossing so the cost of what is needed will be covered. Ultimately if the cost of getting the route to an acceptable level pushes the scheme out of being value for money then it is the wrong scheme and you need to go back to the drawing board and find a better solution, because we deserve better, and do not deserve to have to live in fear for our lives and health.

We are also not happy about the addition of the access road to the 'pond', for want of a better word that will be located off North Road, South Ockendon. A new road being put in through precious farm land, near to residents homes purely so they can access and dredge and carry out maintenance.

The Lower Thames Crossing /M25/A127 joint junction is confusing and destructive. We are extremely disappointed to learn of the impacts it will have to residents and Thames Chase, Manor Farm etc and will comment further on that later in our response.

We feel that the new parallel road that would run alongside the M25 all the way up to the A127 roundabout will be very confusing. We have concerns that many in that area may not have yet realised the fact that the current slip road to the A127 coming off the M25 anticlockwise will be removed and replaced miles back down the road with the new confusing combined junction. Traffic will have to come off a junction before they actually want to access the junction they want. Again we will comment further on this later in our response.

The development boundary to the north of the Lower Thames Crossing takes in far more of the M25/A127 and surrounding areas than anyone previously imagined or was aware of. Highways England have promoted the Lower Thames Crossing as a crossing from the M2/A2 up between Gravesend and East Tilbury through to the M25 near Ockendon, why would people in areas past junction 29 on the M25 necessarily think it would impact them. It is only after digging into the supporting consultation documents and maps that the real extent of the impact can be seen. We do not feel that Highways England have done a good enough job to clearly promote the true extent of impact of Lower Thames Crossing to everyone that will be affected. Again we will comment further on this later in our response.

We have serious concerns over the fact that the proposed Lower Thames Crossing creates a toxic triangle with the M2/A2 running along the bottom, and the M25 and LTC running up either side of the triangle. This will create air, noise, light pollution for everyone in and around the area, and is not acceptable.

**Thames Crossing Action Group is strongly opposed to the proposed route south of the river.**

As mentioned previously we have serious concerns that there are not adequate connections in place for when there is an incident at either crossing. The impact it will have on local roads and communities is totally unacceptable. The communities south of the river will also be hugely impacted by the route regardless of when there is an incident. Southern Valley Golf Course and Shorne Country Park both impacted. There will be further comments on this later in our response.

From what we can see with regards to 'green' bridges they are not true green bridges as we would expect if someone tells us there will be a green bridge. These are simply bridges with a grass verge planted each side. That is not a true green bridge and we deserve better.

Local roads such as Thong Lane and Brewers Road will be greatly impacted. Brewers Road will lose its bridge due to the M2/A2 widening as part of the Lower Thames Crossing scheme. The widening of the M2/A2 section will also impact countryside all along the widening, which again is not acceptable. The air, noise, light and vibration pollution is unacceptable. Places like Shorne Country Park are magical and precious and the impact this scheme will have on it and its users is terrible.

The route comes very close to residents, destroying homes and communities, and leaving some residents in a position that they will be stuck living next to a motorway and repositioned electricity pylons, again this is not good enough.

**Thames Crossing Action Group is strongly opposed to the LTC tunnel.**

We feel the tunnel is in entirely the wrong location. We feel it would be better placed at Option A14, where it would actually complete the M25 as a true motorway orbital and offer a better alternative to the Dartford Crossing as it would take at least 40% of traffic away from the current crossing.

With the tunnel now being 3 lanes in either direction we also have concerns over the fact that whilst we don't want it, bigger tunnels or more roads, there is now no room for future proofing as

was first suggested. This is another indication that this scheme is not forward thinking enough, and if it does go ahead it will have a very limited shelf life before it is over capacity, struggling as the Dartford Crossing is and has been for years. If £6.8bn+ of taxpayer's money is being spent then we deserve a proper solution, not something that is outdated before it is even built.

No hard shoulder throughout the tunnel is also a concern for when emergency service vehicles need access. We have concerns that the local roads through Linford and East Tilbury will need to be used for emergency vehicles to be able to access the Lower Thames Crossing via the access road to the service station. With the amount of incidents at the current crossing this could be a huge amount of extra large traffic such as fire engines etc having to use local roads. Not to mention the concerns that East Tilbury is often completely cut off when the barriers at the level crossings come down, leaving that area stranded from emergency vehicles. This is of serious concern to residents, as they know only too well this can mean a matter of life or death. If this route is being proposed for emergency vehicles to the Lower Thames Crossing via the service station they would also suffer the same life or death delays as the residents currently suffer.

As stated previously the proposed tunnel has no provision for cyclist, pedestrians etc, only motorised vehicles, this is not very sustainable, and options for trains and trams should also have been considered and added to the design to allow for greener sustainable travel.

We do not buy into Highways England's claims that there will be so many electric vehicles on the roads by the time Lower Thames Crossing opens (if it opens). People are not moving over to electric vehicles, as the technology is still not convincing, the costs are too high, and there simply isn't and wouldn't be enough clean green electricity to power them all anyway. This would result in the need for more dirty power stations no doubt, and in this area of the country we know only too well about the impacts power stations have on air quality. Plus only 3% of mechanics are trained to safely work on electric vehicles and most of those are main dealership mechanics.

We would also point out the need, in line with new guidelines, for provision to be put in place in the tunnels for disabled users, such as wheel chair friendly escape routes.

We don't feel the tunnel comes far enough under the ground. We think it should all be in a tunnel or at very least cut and cover for the entire length from the M2/A2 to the M25. This would mean it is less intrusive into our local communities, less of a visual impact. Most importantly it would enable the air to be filtered thus reducing the levels of air pollution, in areas where we already suffer with illegally high levels of air pollution. We should be getting assistance to clean the air, not make it worse.

We have serious concerns over contamination and toxins being released from the spoil during testing and construction. We are very aware that there are historic tipping grounds, especially in the area around where the tunnel portal would be built and at various locations along the route. These are sites that were tipping grounds over 100 years ago, there are no records for what is down there, and what nasties could be released. We want reassurances from HE of how they have and will be performing any soil testing and boring, without any danger of them releasing anything dangerous and harmful into our environment.

Where the spoil will be distributed is also of concern, especially if it is contaminated. We expect clear and transparent info provided on all testing, boring etc and the potential hazards and risks to members of the public and the environment, as well as details of how and where spoil contaminated or otherwise will be treated and distributed. We have been told that much of it will be used within the construction of embankments and landscaping. Yet local knowledge of the area suggests that much of it is likely to be contaminated and/or wet chalk. Again we would expect full details of how and where this will all be treated and distributed.

One of the options that we have been made aware of regarding the spoil is that it could be distributed over the land south of East Tilbury, which is of course a flood plain. With the fact that the Thames Barrier now gets closed so much more frequently, and climate change is creating more flooding, how will this impact if the flood plains are raised with this spoil causes us to question the resulting impacts that would be caused. What other areas will flood instead, will communities in Thurrock, Kent, or further down river in Essex be impacted with flooding if the natural flood plains have been raised with the spoil? This is something that needs to be considered and the necessary action taken to ensure that it doesn't cause irreversible damage and a threat to anyone or anywhere.

Residents in Kent have concerns over where the spoil will end up too, Bluelake in Kent being a particular location that has been commented on with many having worries regarding the distribution of spoil there.

We have concerns over both tunnel access roads. In particular, the access road from the rest and service area, as we feel having this additional service road as an exit off the service station roundabout is likely to cause extra confusion to drivers. We are aware that it is likely to have a barrier at some point along, but that this is unlikely to be at the top of it right on the roundabout, which could cause issues and also potentially be used as a dumping ground or to attract unwanted behaviour. We also feel that we have not been given adequate info regarding the control building at the northern portal. We would like to see this concealed into the portal as much as possible if you fail to provide a better alternative to the Lower Thames Crossing as we are asking (i.e. option A14, a variant or another better alternative).

We are also concerned over ensuring that emissions are factored into modelling for the tunnels, including the areas directly at each end of the portals. We also want further clarification regarding the air quality both in the tunnels and how the emissions and pollution will be dealt with and mitigated.

### **Thames Crossing Action Group strongly opposes the proposed route north of the crossing.**

It is totally unbelievable and extremely concerning that Highways England have not even taken into account how traffic will migrate between the two crossing when there is an incident at either crossing. There are not adequate connections in place in the design of the Lower Thames Crossing, which will cause further chaos, congestion and pollution, impacting the Lower Thames Crossing and the local roads throughout the whole affected area between and surrounding both crossings.

The route and local roads will not be able to cope due to the lack of adequate connections between the Lower Thames Crossing and roads like the A13 and A1089 (south).

The impacts to the north of the river are immense. Homes and communities lost and destroyed, cut off from others, agricultural land (including Grade 1 listed of which there is only 3% left in the whole country), ancient woodlands, veteran trees, woodland, habitats, greenbelt, countryside, wildlife lost, damaged, or at threat.

The historic areas in and around East Tilbury, where Queen Elizabeth gave her great speech. Coalhouse Fort will be become way too close to a 6 lane motorway. Coalhouse Fort has recently been awarded £47k from the Government's Coastal Revival Fund and it seems contradictory for the Government to want to safeguard and revive this historic fort, only to then have a 6 lane motorway running so closely by it. Not to mention the impact it will have on the 2 Forts Walk between Coalhouse and Tilbury fort. This is a lovely river walk in a hugely historic area along the river. The air and noise pollution will certainly damage the experience of using this footpath for this and other walks throughout the length of the Lower Thames Crossing.

So much valuable farm land will be impacted (including Grade 1 listed). We should be supporting our farmers and encouraging as much local produce as possible to reduce our carbon footprints. Buying and supporting local farmers also reduces the congestion on our roads if food and goods have to travel shorter distances. From the farms in East Tilbury all the way along the route up to Manor Farm in Upminster, all impacted hugely, with none that we are aware of happy or wanting to lose their land, much of which has been passed from generation to generation, it's heart breaking.

Tilbury marshes, Orsett and Bulphan fens, The Wilderness, Thames Chase and other locations (along and surrounding the route) that are precious habitat for wildlife and an oasis of nature for us to enjoy. The importance of nature to our health, both physical and mental is becoming more and more apparent every day, yet Highways England seem to place no importance on the impact Lower Thames Crossing will have on these areas and to us as residents.

The grade 2 windmill in Orsett, Grade 2 listed cottages, Gammonfields, and people's homes impacted and destroyed, and again Highways England seem to have no real concern about the damage and destruction, or the impacts this all has on people's lives and health.

The huge impact to the equestrian community, with so many stable yards, and so much grazing being taken for the Lower Thames Crossing. Again, this is with no real care or concern from Highways England. The almost bragging about how you will do all you can to ensure that bridleways will remain intact after construction of the Lower Thames Crossing, but no regard to the fact you are taking the land where the equestrian communities keep their horses. Where will they keep them if Lower Thames Crossing goes ahead? Who will use the bridleways if there is nowhere to keep the horses? You really need to reconsider the impacts of Lower Thames Crossing on so many levels.

The Orsett showground fiasco is diabolical, and there is no way that Highways England should be putting a road through the middle of our showground, it is the location for so many events including the Orsett Show which is a huge and historic community event. You say Lower Thames Crossing brings communities together in your sales pitch, but we find no evidence on it doing anything other than separating and destroying communities, homes, and lives in so many ways and on so many levels, and it is totally unacceptable.

To improve and change the route to avoid this destruction and damage you need to bring other better alternatives back to the table and give us the chance of a fair and unbiased consultation on real options.

The construction of the Lower Thames Crossing and other bridges and roads that are impacted will cause huge amounts of pollution (air, noise, light, vibration) and will damage and destroy everything. It will impact the local roads, and we will have haul roads that bring their own problems. It is of great concern that we feel we have not been given enough information about the construction compounds. The damage these compounds will do is scary. Things like concrete production compounds that will cause pollution and contamination of the ground they sit on. Much of the land being farmland, and it will never be given back, if it is given back, in the same condition it is taken. Who wants to eat food from fields that has had a cement works on it?

There will be impacts to local roads when realignments are carried out that will cause delays and detours to many road users and residents, including bus services and access to crematoriums. For instance the section of Ockendon Road, over the railway line, that will not be done offline. This is a bus route and also a main route used by many to get to Corbetts Tey Crematorium. It will also impact further the poor families who you are already stranding in their homes at Bridge Cottages, Upminster, between the two motorways. They will have to detour a long way to go to school, work, shopping etc. There has been no real indication as to how long the road will be closed.

How long will North Road, South Ockendon be closed for when they connect the newly aligned section to the current road? Again residents there will be cut off and have to take long detours to work etc. It is also questionable with the section of North Road that goes over the Lower Thames Crossing that it is represented in diagrams of the vertical and horizontal alignment that it is higher than needs be, as it could evidently be 4m not 6m as shown in the diagrams. The diagrams that by the way are incredibly difficult to understand and often don't have legends or proper explanations. A statutory consultation should include information in a way that the general public can easily understand.

We are not happy with the viaduct over the Mardyke. We also have worries about the Mardyke and how it and surrounding areas will withstand all the surface water and particulate matter that comes off the roads (tyre rubber etc). You have not made it clear why the Mardyke is in the development boundary. We are not sure if you will be digging it deeper or wider. The Mardyke and that area is known for flooding, it is after all fenland. Plus we are aware that local farmers paid for a special ditch to be dug to deal with the flooding and protect their farmland. This also

will be impacted by the Lower Thames Crossing and due care and consideration needs to be given to them and their land to ensure they do not suffer with flooding.

Orsett will be greatly impacted with most of its roads in and out of the village affected by construction and realignment. There is a fear from residents that the village could easily be cut off for our own access, and reassurances and details are needed as to which roads will be closed, in what order, and for how long.

The whole route needs more cut and cover to reduce the impact. Telling us it can't be done because of cost is not acceptable, we deserve better as we will have to live with it, if it goes ahead. You are trying to inflict this upon us, and there are no benefits at all to the people in Thurrock or indeed anywhere along the route, so the least you can do is to ensure that the damage and destruction, and devastating impacts are reduced as much as possible. The impacts to our health need to be taken into account. The cost to the NHS etc too if you don't take our health into account as whether directly or indirectly there will be a price to pay. We need it to be a preventative cost of investing in a safe road with the least impact possible on all concerned, not a cost to the NHS when we get sick. Of course the best solution to this would be to go with a route that actually fixes the problems not creates them like the Lower Thames Crossing does.

We are astounded by the built in bottlenecks that the Lower Thames Crossing brings too. The M25 dropping from 4 lanes to 3, which is already a heavily congested section of road, so needs no further problems to add to the congestion. The section of the A13, around the Orsett Cock, that drops to 2 lanes. Again we are more than aware of the congestion this stretch of road suffers with. The A13 is currently being widened as you know so it will be 3 lanes as a remedy to the current congestion and to allow for the growth of DP World, yet Lower Thames Crossing will create this bottleneck and right on top of a busy junction too, this is not acceptable.

The Lower Thames Crossing itself of course has the bottleneck where it drops from 3 lanes to 2 in each direction for a section around the A13 junctions. As well as the connection to the M2/A2 which is only 2 lanes each direction.

These bottlenecks along with the inadequate connections will of course cause chaos, no end of chaos, especially when there is an incident at either crossing and traffic needs to migrate between the two.

On the subject of the A13 widening project that is currently happening, the Lower Thames Crossing and lack of adequate connections will have a definite detrimental impact and will bring more congestion after all the money that is currently being spent on improving it.

You have not taken into account all the new properties that will be built as part of the Local Plan. Your reasoning that if things do not have permission yet wears thin. The fact with Local Plans, both sides of the river is that you know full well there are huge amounts of houses and supporting infrastructure that have to be built under Government legislation, so it isn't a question of if they will be built, just where. If our local authorities do not build them the Government will just step in and build them anyway wherever they want without any local knowledge. With the extortionate



amount of homes the Government are inflicting upon us (again both sides of the river) this really should be taken into account.

The very fact that you took an extra 68% of land in July when you increased the Lower Thames Crossing development boundary and mitigation land, has added extra pressure on our local authority with regards to the Lower Thames Crossing. You need to do all you can to work with them to ensure the best possible outcome for our communities and the future communities that the Local Plan will bring, ensuring the least amount of destruction, damage and impact as possible.

We also know that Southend Airport are for the crossing as they feel it will benefit them. According to Tim Jones it will encourage people in Kent to come across to Southend Airport rather than going to Gatwick, and that the Dartford Crossing currently puts potential customers off. However, we are also aware that the local roads in Southend struggle to cope with traffic levels now, let alone if they want to bring all these new customers to the area. Due to the fact that the airport is in a residential area, there are limited options with regards to widening the roads into the airport, unless they plan to CPO the properties there. When I spoke to Tim Jones regarding this matter he said it would be a matter for local authorities. However, we feel that points like this need to be taken into account. You can't simply build a road that will increase traffic considerably without taking the consequences into account.

There are also other councillors who seem to be under the impression that Highways England will be assisting in local road improvements that need the extra support and improvements due to the extra traffic that the Lower Thames Crossing will bring, which clearly isn't the case according to Tim Jones. Again these facts need to be clarified completely with all local authorities, businesses, and residents to ensure that everyone is clear moving forward and the necessary planning and decisions can be made properly and as an educated decision not just people buying into the dream that HE tries to sell in the sales pitch for the Lower Thames Crossing.

We do not feel that we have been given enough information regarding the environmental and flood mitigation, and doubt that anyone really has much confidence or trust in Highways England to provide adequate mitigation if the Lower Thames Crossing goes ahead. There has not been adequate info provided as to what the mitigation would be and to what extent it will be carried out. We still question if any trees that might be used as mitigation would be suitable and last long enough.

We are aware from local knowledge that East Tilbury for example is not an area that trees grow well. Pay attention to how few trees there are down there, it isn't because the farmers have been chopping them down, it just isn't an area that trees grow particularly well in. What will Highways England do to ensure any trees that are planted are taken care of and will be replaced if needs be? What alternative means of mitigation will be put in if the trees do fail to grow in areas like that? We are also aware that it would just be saplings that you plant if you go ahead with the Lower Thames Crossing, which means we would have to wait years to see the results you show in your video. It is far from a realistic representation, and we would have to live for years with the scars of the damage caused by the Lower Thames Crossing, again this is not acceptable.

We are also not convinced that once the trees are planted they would have any kind of protection to ensure they remain there and won't just be removed and the area developed for other things. More on this later!

Who will maintain the landscaping around the rest area and service centre? We have not received a satisfactory explanation for this. We have little faith in Highways England to take care of any of it, or any litter that will arise from the service station and Lower Thames Crossing. We are more than aware that you don't take care of that on the A1089 at the moment. Residents have run out of bin bags before running out of litter along the A1089. Items along there have been found with sell by dates that are years old, which shows that you do not maintain that section of road well enough. There is also the problem of parked HGVs along the verges on the A1089, that is a concern too, and again gives us no reason to trust your capabilities to manage and maintain the roads we already have let alone a new one that you want to inflict upon us.

### **Thames Crossing Action Group are strongly opposed to the proposed junction between the Lower Thames Crossing and the M2/A2**

We are worried that Gravesend East loses direct access to the A2/M2 eastbound, and that the new access is via 6 or 7 roundabouts to Brewers Road in Shorne. This will cause all sorts of problems and issues for everyone, and likely be very confusing and increase the amount of accidents with so many roundabouts and people figuring out where they are going.

Shorne loses direct access to the A2 west at Halfpence Lane and access to the A2 west would be via 5 roundabouts to Gravesend East.

We are worried about the impact on traffic (congestion and local roads) and pollution when there is an incident at the Dartford Crossing Bridge (southbound) and traffic has migrated to the Lower Thames Crossing and there are only 2 lanes from the LTC to the M25 westbound. A large amount of traffic if Dartford Crossing bridge is closed will want to get back onto the M25 after using the Lower Thames Crossing as an alternative crossing. We know this stretch of road already regularly suffers with congestion, and we are not convinced that will improve enough, since the Dartford Crossing will still be over capacity even if the Lower Thames Crossing opens. To be pushing all the detouring traffic back onto this already congested road is ludicrous. The fact that this has not been taken into account is of great concern, there seems to be no care of the fall out that this would cause to road users and residents in the affected and surrounding areas. It would be chaos with more congestion and pollution.

Over all this looks to be a very large, confusing, and destructive junction. We strongly oppose it as we do not consider any of the route to be in the correct places, so cannot agree with this junction as it leads to the Lower Thames Crossing which we strongly oppose as a whole as it will not leave the Dartford Crossing anything other than over capacity and creates a toxic triangle of congestion and pollution, there are better alternatives that need to be brought back to the table.

We would also like to point out that much of the traffic south of the river from Dover etc uses the M20 not the M2/A2. Our understanding is that the M20 was meant to relieve pressure off the

M2/A2 so by encouraging traffic back on to it to access the Lower Thames Crossing will just add to the congestion and pollution.

### **Thames Crossing Action Group are strongly opposed to the proposed Tilbury Junction**

As the Tilbury junction is purely to the rest and service area, along with the maintenance depot and we are opposed to them we can only oppose the junction that leads to those services. This is in the wrong location and is way too close to residential areas. The air, light, noise, vibration pollution and impacts that this will have on residents is unacceptable.

It also concerns us that this is a huge junction literally for a service area. We are aware that there is still provision to add the Tilbury link road back into the design. Whilst we know that the link road has been removed we do question why it was put into the design only to be removed again. Something doesn't add up, and we don't like it. We are told by Highways England that it has been removed as traffic doesn't warrant it, so why did it get added to the design at all? It was showing on maps prior to the consultation starting on Oct 10<sup>th</sup> 2018 so you felt it was warranted at that time. What has changed, nobody has been able to provide a satisfactory answer to that. We have to wonder if it was put in purely to try and keep Tilbury Port on side for as long as possible, as they have stated publicly that they will only support the Lower Thames Crossing if they get a link road. Now that has been removed they are opposed to the Lower Thames Crossing. We question if you just played delaying tactics to try and win them over, never having any real intention to give them the link road?

The link road is a double edge sword for residents, as obviously residents are opposed to it, as it would be raised and impact greatly on the area visually, as well as air, noise, light, and vibration pollution. It would however provide better access to the port etc, without the need for all the detours down to the Stanford junction on the A13. However, with the lack of adequate connections on the A13 it would also mean that when there is an incident at the Dartford Crossing (southbound) and traffic needs to migrate across to the Lower Thames Crossing traffic would likely then cut off the A13 down the A1089 south and through Tilbury to join the link road to access the Lower Thames Crossing.

The simple fact regarding the Lower Thames Crossing, the service area, and all the connections is once again that it is the wrong crossing in the wrong location.

This junction at Tilbury is also too close to the tunnel portal. We are all too familiar with the fact that junction 1a is too close to the Dartford Tunnel portals, and the problems this causes there. When I have tried discussing this with members of the Highways England team they have told me that the distance between the junction and the portal is within industry standards and guidelines. However, the distance between junction 1A and the Dartford Tunnels would have been within industry standards and guidelines at the time too. We need Highways England to learn from these mistakes and be more forward thinking. It is not good enough to place junctions so close to the tunnel portal, and this need to be addressed, as it is not acceptable to knowingly put a junction into the design that will cause problems within a very short space of time. Use some common sense, instead of blindly following standards and guidelines. After all, at some point these have to

be reviewed as they are no longer acceptable, what is to say that this is not that time to make those changes?

There is also the case that on the approach to tunnel portals, especially with all the signage about lanes, charges etc that it would add to the confusion to drivers to also have signage for a service station, and traffic leaving and joining the road for the service station. This will create confusion and also yet another accident hot spot. You are meant to be building a safe road that reduces the congestion, incidents and impacts, not something that will be just as bad, if not worse than the current crossing.

As we mentioned previously, we also have concerns over drivers getting confused with the access road leading off the service station roundabout. They will be looking to join back onto the Lower Thames Crossing, and another random unexpected road will cause confusion. It may lead to traffic taking a wrong turn and then having to find a safe spot to turn around, depending on how far down the barrier is. This would also lead to this lost traffic then having to merge onto what could be a busy roundabout to get back out onto the Lower Thames Crossing. Or traffic realising last minute that they don't need that first road off the roundabout when they are trying to get back onto the Lower Thames Crossing which could lead to panic and possible accidents.

The fact the Lower Thames Crossing is raised at this section of the route too is of great concern. The visual impact on the area is not acceptable. We feel if we really have to have this route that it should all be kept at ground level or lower, with as much cut and cover as possible. When we say possible we are not talking about within what you consider to be possible with the budget you are quoting, we are talking about if there is no physical reason why it can't go in cut and cover. The cost to our health and lives is far more valuable and important than the cost of the project. If doing this means it pushes the budget out of being value for being money then that again proves that this is the wrong crossing in the wrong location, and better alternatives need to be brought back to the table.

The railway line is already a huge barrier to the communities to the south of it, to the extent that when the railway crossing barriers go down it literally can be a matter of life and death if anyone needs emergency services. The Lower Thames Crossing just adds to this barrier that they already suffer with, and that is another reason this destructive route is in the wrong location.

### **Thames Crossing Action Group strongly oppose the proposed junctions between the Lower Thames Crossing and the A13/A1089**

Please note that we state we are opposed to the proposed junctions – plural as this is a huge amount more than a proposed junction. That makes it sound small and simple, a junction singular, when in fact it is the complete opposite and totally unacceptable. Another attempt by Highways England to make the impact look a lot less than it truly is.

There is no access from the Lower Thames Crossing to the A1089 South. This means that a detour off the Lower Thames Crossing, onto the A13 eastbound, 3 miles along to the Stanford junction (A1014), up and around a traffic light controlled roundabout (alongside Large numbers of HGVs in

and out of DP World, as well as all the Stanford and Corringham traffic), back westbound along the A13 to just under the Orsett Cock roundabout to be able to access the ridiculous joint A1089 south/Lower Thames Crossing junction.

This is an unacceptable detour for traffic to have to take, and greatly impacts the A13, a road which is currently having millions of pounds spent on it, to widen it due to the current congestion levels. You will just push traffic onto the same section of road which will then be heavily congested again. We know that DP World is not happy about this. They have invested money into the A13 widening project, and they didn't do it to carry the traffic you generate by not putting in adequate connections. Tilbury Port and other business to the south of the A1089 are not happy about this, neither of course are residents in all the affected areas. To stress again it will bring extra chaos, congestion and pollution and that is not acceptable, a better solution needs to be found. Our suggestion would of course be that this is the wrong crossing in the wrong place and a better overall alternative needs to be sought.

The actual Lower Thames Crossing/A1089 south joint junction is a terrible junction. It is both confusing and dangerous, and will no doubt become another accident hotspot.

Firstly, the junction is way too close to the Orsett Cock. When there are incidents at this junction, (which will no doubt, by experience of the Dartford Crossing, be way too often) the traffic will back up along the A13 which will create problems at the Orsett Cock junction also as it will get blocked, or worse traffic will start trying to cut off through local roads to try and escape the chaos.

You also create a horrible bottleneck around this junction where the A13 will drop down to 2 lanes. This is an extremely busy road, for local traffic and also lots of traffic heading in towards London. To inflict a bottleneck on such a busy section of road and right on top of a junction that is going to create nightmare problems is neither satisfactory or acceptable. Again you need to do better and not simply come in and destroy the existing roads. Yet again we state this is the wrong crossing in the wrong location.

When the junction leaves the A13 it then splits with the left hand lane heading off to the Lower Thames Crossing northbound, with the option for traffic to also join the Lower Thames Crossing south before it actually joins the northbound carriageway.

Then after that split the connection splits again, this time with the left hand lane going onto the Lower Thames Crossing Southbound, and the right hand lane going to the A1089 south.

This is an extremely confusing lot of junctions and we feel it will lead to accidents and congestion and pollution. Also when vehicles come off on this confusing joint junction if they make the wrong choice, for instance they take the first left when they want to go to the A1089 south they would have to go all the way up the Lower Thames Crossing, and then when they reach the Lower Thames Crossing/M25/A127 junction they would again have to face another confusing junction. They would have to choose whether to join the M25 or take the new parallel road to the A127. This would mean they either have to travel all the way up to J28 on the M25 to turn around and come back down to try and find the A1089, or take the new parallel road to the A127 roundabout

and head back from there. If junctions and connections cannot be placed in a sensible, clear way that avoids lengthy detours, confusion, and without creating huge impacts of destruction and pollution then this again proves that this is the wrong crossing in the wrong place.

Additionally there is no access to the Lower Thames Crossing from the A13 eastbound, and no access to the A13 westbound from the Lower Thames Crossing. Plus only one lane off the A1089 north to join the Lower Thames Crossing, with the amount of expanding business to the south of the A1089 this could become an issue moving forward.

It is also seriously questionable how Highways England feel it is acceptable to include bends in the road on the connections between the Lower Thames Crossing northbound and the A13 eastbound, which mimics the renowned dangerous bend at the top of the A1089 already. The bend leaving the A1089 northbound to join the Lower Thames Crossing southbound is also similarly questionable. Why mimic a bend that is known to cause problems and accidents? A better solution needs to be found that improves safety rather than creates accidents. Yet again we would suggest that this is the wrong crossing in the wrong location, and there are better alternatives.

Traffic from the Orsett Cock wanting to access the Lower Thames Crossing or A1089 south will also have to take the same detour all the way to the Stanford Junction (A1014), up and around a traffic light controlled roundabout (alongside HGVs in and out of DP World etc, as well as local Stanford and Corringham traffic), back westbound along the A13 to just under the Orsett Cock roundabout to access the new joint junction for the Lower Thames Crossing and A1089 south.

The Lower Thames Crossing slip road onto the A13 eastbound is particularly questionable as traffic will not be merging onto the A13 until extremely close to where the A13 east filter lane off to the Orsett Cock junction starts, meaning there will be a lot of weaving and it will become an accident hot spot.

The impact of the proposed junctions is huge and yet they still don't include the adequate connections for the Lower Thames Crossing to work, especially at times when there is an incident at either crossing. This is already an immense and confusing set of connections. Yet Highways England have failed to even consider what happens when there is an incident at either crossing, and the fact that this set of junctions and connections will not stand up at such times. It would just bring more chaos, congestion and pollution.

When there is an incident at the Dartford Crossing/M25 heading southbound. Traffic leaving the M25 at the A13 eastbound, or indeed coming along the A13 out of London that wanted to use the Dartford Crossing would have to travel all the way down the A13 eastbound to the Stanford Junction (A1014), up and around the traffic light controlled roundabout (alongside HGVs in and out of DP World etc, as well as local Stanford and Corringham traffic), back westbound along the A13 to just under the Orsett Cock roundabout to access the new joint junction for the Lower Thames Crossing and A1089 south.

If the traffic leaves the M25 at the A127, coming down the A128, again it would have to travel all the way down the A13 eastbound to the Stanford Junction (A1014), up and around the traffic light controlled roundabout (alongside HGVs in and out of DP World etc, as well as local Stanford and

Corringham traffic), back westbound along the A13 to just under the Orsett Cock roundabout to access the new joint junction for the Lower Thames Crossing and A1089 south.

Alternatively some traffic will likely also try cutting through along the A127/A12 and into London to use the Blackwall Tunnel (or other crossings) as an alternative, just as traffic does now. The fact that the Lower Thames Crossing is there won't make an awful lot of difference as we have outlined there will be so much chaos and congestion traffic will just look for and take any possible alternative route it can.

Depending on where the incident is and how traffic responds will depend on if the LTC junction on the M25 is blocked or not. We know that on motorways traffic backs up another 1 mile every 90 seconds after an incident. This would mean that the Lower Thames Crossing junction could become blocked in around 7 and a half minutes if there was an incident at the approach to the current crossing. If the incident was before the A13 junction the Lower Thames Crossing junction on the M25 could be blocked in around than 5 minutes.

Many drivers do not trust or believe Highways road signs regarding lane and road closures since HE are renowned for their 'boy who cried wolf' behaviour. Turning on lane closure signs when not needed or leaving them on after incidents, erratic speed limits jumping up and down between motorway signs. People will therefore prefer to trust their own eyes, and if traffic is still moving heading down the M25 southbound, as it is all detouring along the A13 down to Stanford, up and around the roundabout, back westbound and onto the Lower Thames Crossing to head south to cross the river, then traffic will keep coming down the M25 and following that detour migration route, rather than coming off onto the Lower Thames Crossing. This will be until such time that the traffic builds up so badly that it all comes to a grinding halt, and again will back up throughout the whole area, with local roads being used as rat runs in a bid to try and escape the chaos, bringing those to a halt too.

If the traffic does decide to detour off the M25 and down the Lower Thames Crossing, it would be 5 lanes of traffic on the M25, down to 3 lanes on the Lower Thames Crossing, until it reaches the A13 junction where it will drop to 2 lanes for a section, then back up to 3 lanes, through the tunnel, and then as it get towards the A2 traffic that wants to get back onto the M25 will need to head westbound on the A2, which will mean bottlenecking down to 2 lanes from the Lower Thames Crossing to the A2. Since the Dartford Crossing will still be over capacity of the amount of traffic it is designed to take, this means the A2 is likely to be just as busy then as it is now, with the particular stretch that traffic wanting to get back onto the M25 would use being a nightmare for congestion.

If for example there was an incident at the Lower Thames Crossing tunnel southbound meaning traffic needed to migrate to the Dartford Crossing, it would have to come off the Lower Thames Crossing to join the A13 eastbound, come off on the Orsett Cock roundabout, back down westbound along the A13 to the M25/A282. As mentioned previously this slip road merges onto the A13 extremely close the Orsett Cock filter lane, so this would additional issues for traffic that needs to come off onto the Orsett Cock, as it would be gridlocked with traffic from the Lower Thames Crossing wanting to use the Orsett Cock to turn around and gain westbound A13 access to the Dartford Crossing.

The same if traffic was heading northbound on the Lower Thames Crossing and there was an

incident on it north of the A13. Traffic would need to come off the Lower Thames Crossing at the A13 and then come off at the Orsett Cock either to go around the roundabout and head westbound along the A13 to the M25, or come off at the Orsett Cock and head up the A128 to join the A127 onto the M25.

There is not adequate access at these junction for emergency services either. The fire brigade at Orsett Cock for example would have to go all the way down to Stanford to be able to head westbound on the A13 to the new joint Lower Thames Crossing/A1089 junction.

Similarly with ambulances in and out of Basildon Hospital, the A13 will be heavy with traffic with everything diverting via the Stanford junction which will impact the ambulance route.

Alternatively they would have to take their chances of heading on local roads down through to East Tilbury and to the LTC via the service station. This route to East Tilbury is renowned for being a nightmare, especially for emergency services as the railway crossing barrier often causes life or death scenarios, or whether the emergency vehicles can get through quickly enough.

Also the additional traffic that the Lower Thames Crossing would bring to the area as a whole, especially when there is an incident at either crossing, would mean a huge impact to all roads in the area, which would again result in delays for emergency service vehicles to respond, not only to the LTC, but too the whole area. We already have concerns when gridlock kicks in throughout the area. What would happen if there was a major incident at Lakeside or on the M25 now, and it would be even worse with the proposed Lower Thames Crossing. We deserve better and our health and lives should not be at risk. We want robust, safe solutions for all junctions and connections, including for our emergency services.

The impact on our communities lives and health, and local roads during construction if this were to go ahead is horrendous. We have been given no clear picture of exactly how construction would happen, the real impacts explained, or given any reassurances about the impacts and mitigation. Orsett in particular could be left feeling like it is stranded from the outside world, with so many of its routes in and out of the village affected during construction.

The closure and removal of the Rectory Road, Orsett bridge and the new replacement Rectory Road through the middle of the Orsett Showground is as mentioned previously totally unacceptable and we expect and demand better. Our suggestion again being that this is the wrong crossing in the wrong location. Not to mention the impacts it will have with the realignments of the old A13 (A1013) and the slip road from the Orsett Cock roundabout down onto the A13.

It is not acceptable that Whitecroft rest home will be literally within the embankment of the LTC south connection road either.

The other glaring mistake with the Lower Thames Crossing around the A13 junctions is the fact that the Lower Thames Crossing itself drops from 3 lanes to 2 for a section in both directions. Highways England have been blatantly misleading people by saying that it is 3 lanes for the entire route from the M25 to the A2. This is clearly not the case and the information in the Guide to consultation proves this. Page 28 states "the route will be a motorway with three lanes in each direction, along the whole route from the M25 to the A2". Page 58 states "A short section of the



new route will reduce to two lanes in both directions around the A13 junctions". This is extremely misleading, and should have been made a lot clearer to people during consultation. How can Highways England sell the proposed Lower Thames Crossing as 3 lanes in each direction for the entire length when clearly it is not? Public perception is that this could have been done purposely to mislead people, who if they knew the truth of it having a 2 lane bottleneck part of the way along would not be so supportive.

We would also point out they call it a motorway, the proposed Lower Thames Crossing was chosen as a two lane route, not a three lane motorway. These changes have been made that we feel would impact people's decision, as the changes are so significant this no longer is a true representation of the route that was consulted upon for the preferred route announcement.

### **Thames Crossing Action Group strongly oppose the proposed junction between the Lower Thames Crossing and the M25**

Yet another confusing and complex junction. We would also point out that this is also a combined junction for the A127 too, not just the Lower Thames Crossing and the M25.

Whilst it is a slight improvement that this section has been lowered to now go below the M25 it is still unacceptable. We have serious concerns, and feel that there should be more tunnels or cut and cover for this northern section, and indeed the whole Lower Thames Crossing route.

We also are completely opposed to and severely concerned over the fact that families' homes will be stranded between the two motorways. We are of course referring to the homes in Ockendon Road, Upminster. The impact to these families is totally unacceptable, the impact on their homes, lives, health needs to be improved considerably. We have not been able to find one person, including Highways England staff, who have said they would want to live in these properties, so why inflict it upon these families?

One of the homes will literally be 17.5m from the motorway, and be literally in the motorway embankment, and they deserve so much better. Highways England added insult to injury by not even having the decency to show what they are inflicting upon these families, instead choosing to show the homes as a lovely wooded area in their fly by video of the route. We find this disgraceful and misleading.

The fact the A127 junction anticlockwise on the M25 will be removed and combined into this junction will create much confusion. People prefer and find it much easier when junctions for certain roads are from the same junction. With this traffic travelling anticlockwise wanting the A127 (currently junction 29) will have to take the new combined junction which will obviously have a new number, yet traffic travelling clockwise on the M25 wanting the A127 will take junction 29. This is a long section of parallel road that cuts through places like Thames Chase.

The fact that the A127 roundabout (south side) will be greatly impacted with the changes to the junction, including the new parallel road and filter lanes is not something we are happy about either. We are aware that Highways England has not taken into account a safe crossing at this roundabout for pedestrians, cyclists, and horse riders, and it is essential nobody is put at risk due to the Lower Thames Crossing. If this route is to be inflicted upon us Highways England need to

ensure there are adequate safe crossings and access where applicable for all users, not just Lower Thames Crossing and motorised vehicles.

The elevation info in the maps does not appear to be correct for North Rd where it will be realigned to go over the Lower Thames Crossing. It looks like it is showing 6m when it could/should be 4m. Although it is so hard to judge and understand these diagrams and maps as all too often the legends are not there, or make little or no sense.

Access for residents in Ockendon Rd, Upminster during construction will be horrendous too, especially when HE close the section over the railway line (as this work cannot be done offline). Buses that use Ockendon Road will also have to be diverted leaving a lack of public transport service to these families and also affecting other users, with no doubt a longer route, and probably certain locations left without service. Indeed we have concerns over bus routes being affected during construction in all the impacted areas.

Traffic needing to access the Corbetts Tey Crematorium will also need to be detoured as much of it uses Ockendon Road in Upminster. The impact this will have on people in an already stressful and upsetting situation and wanting to say their final goodbyes to loved ones is not acceptable.

There would be a section on the M25 that drops from 4 lanes to 3, creating yet another bottleneck, on an already heavily congested road. We do not believe traffic levels on the M25 will be improved by the Lower Thames Crossing either, so this is just another impact it will have on creating more chaos, congestion and pollution.

The fields surrounding the north end of the Lower Thames Crossing already struggle with flooding. There is so much agricultural land along the route too which will be impacted negatively with flooding, and the pollutants and particulate matter that the Lower Thames Crossing would bring. Some of this land is Grade 1 listed and since there is only 3% left in the whole country we need to be protecting and taking care of it, not destroying it for a new crossing that just adds to the congestion and pollution rather than doing anything to truly improve things.

These farmers, like Manor Farm have paid for and maintain special ditches to take excess water away from their fields where they grow crops for our food. There is no doubt that the Lower Thames Crossing will cause additional flooding and it is essential that Highways England take these farmers and their land into proper consideration and do not destroy their farms, land, or cause them any damage. As well as potential flooding this also means they should not take or destroy their reservoirs which are essential for watering their crops.

We are not at all happy with the level of destruction of forests in the area, including Thames Chase, The Wilderness, and other woodlands. The Lower Thames Crossing would directly or indirectly damage 13 ancient woods and threaten 10 veteran trees, again this is not acceptable. We should be taking care of our forest and environments, both for ourselves and for wildlife. There is so much press about climate change and how it is imperative to do something now, and they don't mean destroy forests, greenbelt etc.

The impact on the M25 (all the way up past J29) and actually at and on the A127 during construction of these junctions and roads will be horrendous. Local roads will suffer greatly too from traffic trying to avoid the roadworks during construction. This will bring more congestion and pollution.

Again chaos will triumph when traffic needs to migrate between the M25 and onto the Lower Thames Crossing to cross the river due to incidents at the Dartford Crossing or on the M25. There will be 5 lanes of traffic on the M25 onto 3 lanes on the Lower Thames Crossing, down to 2 lanes at the Lower Thames Crossing bottleneck around the A13 junctions, back up to 3 lanes, through the tunnel and down to the M2/A2 where it will go to 4 lanes, 2 lanes east and 2 lanes westbound. Much of the traffic will want to migrate all the way to the M25 to continue its journey so will again have to squeeze through the bottlenecks of 2 lanes and then likely sit within the already congested A2 back to the M25.

We have concerns for the entire route on the impacts to congestion, pollution, local roads, homes, communities, greenbelt, agricultural land, forests, habitats, wildlife, our emergency services etc.

There is also the additional cost impact that the Lower Thames Crossing would create for local authorities when they have to make improvements due to the additional traffic that will be bought into their areas due to the Lower Thames Crossing.

### **Thames Crossing Action Group strongly oppose Highways England's proposals in relation to public rights of way.**

We oppose this since we oppose the whole route and the damage it will do to homes, communities, greenbelt, agricultural land, forests, habitats etc, and because we feel there are better alternatives like Option A14 or a variant.

As mentioned previously, the A127 roundabout (south side) will be greatly impacted with the changes to the junction, the new parallel road and filter lanes is something we are not happy about either. We are aware that Highways England has not taken into account a safe crossing at this roundabout for pedestrians, cyclists, and horse riders, and it is essential nobody is put at risk due to the Lower Thames Crossing. If this route is to be inflicted upon us Highways England need to ensure there are adequate safe crossings and access where applicable for all users, not just Lower Thames Crossing and motorised vehicles.

We have a lot of concerns over the impact construction of the LTC and associated work will have on public rights of way. This could cause divides between communities, lack of safe options for walking, cycling and horse riding, and if it goes ahead then it is essential that work is carried out as quickly as possible and with the least impact possible. Highways England must particularly ensure that any works and changes to public rights of way are done in a way to reduce impact on all users, especially horse riders. They need to take into account that noises, and things blowing in the wind etc can spook horses, and ensure that everything possible is done to reduce these kind of impacts.

We are more than aware of the huge impact that the Lower Thames Crossing has on equestrian communities. The amount of stables, yards, grazing etc that would be taken and impacted is awful. Highways England need to be aware that this level of impact greatly impacts the equestrian community to the extent that many will no longer be able to keep their horses locally. Good land to keep horse and have stables is scarce in the area as it is. People should not be put in the position that they no longer have somewhere to keep their horses, this is unacceptable and again another reason that the Lower Thames Crossing is the wrong crossing in the wrong location.

Highways England state “If footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths along the route are affected by the Lower Thames Crossing we will reinstate them where practicable when construction is complete to ensure people continue to enjoy access to the landscape”. We question what they are meant to do during construction; bearing in mind this is years of construction. Highways England and the Lower Thames Crossing steals the opportunity for people to be able to walk, cycle and ride safely, which could be either for leisure or means of sustainable travel, and it severs communities from each other.

We do not like the terminology of ‘where practicable’ if you want to put a road through you can ensure that every single public right of way is replaced regardless, as we do not trust Highways England not to take the easy route out of not replacing if it is easier or cheaper for them not to do so.

Years of not being able to enjoy our public rights of way is simply not acceptable. There are so many areas along the route that will be impacted. The 2 Forts Walk would presumably be a no go area especially during construction, with all the heavy machinery and pollution from the tunnel boring and construction etc.

We are aware that to the south of the river there are footpaths that will be diverted and some will end up going through underpasses and over bridges which will impact the safety and enjoyment of using them.

Shorne Country Park and Thames Chase, The Wilderness and other areas that people enjoy will never be the same again, with the noise of the motorway, the air pollution etc. We deserve better and we deserve the right to get outdoors and to breathe clean air.

Even after construction it will never be the same again, with all the pollution. We should not be forced to lose our rights to enjoy the outdoors. Spending time outdoors, walking cycling, riding are great forms of exercise and also proven to improve both physical and mental health.

Even if every footpath, cycle path, and bridleway is put back, there will still be the undeniable fact that the equestrian community will have nowhere to keep their horse to be able to enjoy using the bridleways.

We feel it would have irreversible damage along the entire route that would make it far less enjoyable and less safe to use the public rights of way. We have serious concerns over pollution levels, including air, noise, light, and vibration and the impacts it will have on all users of the public rights of way.

### **Thames Crossing Action Group strongly disagree with the proposed measures to reduce the impacts of the project**

Creating a toxic triangle (M2/A2 at the bottom, M25 up one side, Lower Thames Crossing up the other) is nothing more than an infringement of our right to breathe clean air and live a healthy life.

We do not feel the Lower Thames Crossing is worth the cost to our homes, lives, health, greenbelt, farmland, forests, habitats, communities etc. There are better alternatives that would better solve

the problems at the Dartford Crossing and cause the least amount of impact on everyone and everything, such as Option A14 or a variant.

There are many areas that are impacted by the Lower Thames Crossing that already suffer with illegally high levels of air pollution, according to the World Health Organisation amongst others.

It greatly concerns us that at one of the Highways England Lower Thames Crossing Info events we were told by members of the Environmental Team that there were no areas in Thurrock that have illegally high levels of air pollution. It has been quoted many times in various press and from evidence by organisations such as the World Health Organisation that there are illegally high levels of air pollution.

Also that In the Preliminary environmental information summary, page 11 states under Existing conditions "There are areas that currently do not exceed UK Air Quality Strategy thresholds" yet further down that section on the same page it is stated " This baseline information indicated that air quality is currently exceeding UK and EU limits across the study area". This information is confusing, misleading, and does not provide facts that demonstrate properly the fact that Thurrock has very poor air quality.

We are also very aware that many residents have done air monitoring tests supplied by organisations such as Client Earth and Friends of the Earth, which have given results of illegally high levels of air pollution.

The Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report is outdated now that the development boundary has expanded by 68% in July and we would like to see an updated EIA Scoping Report. We also want to see Highways England provide people with a lot more information about mitigation. We keep being told about mitigation, but there have been no real explanations about exactly what and where this will be.

We want reassurances that if trees were to be planted as a form of mitigation there would be some kind of guarantee that these trees will be protected and not allowed to simply die or be chopped down for development, which would leave us without the necessary mitigation.

We have been given conflicting info regarding trees. One of the Environmental Team told us that trees would be guaranteed to be part of the plan and there for mitigation for at least 15 years. However, Tim Jones (LTC Project Director) has also since said that there are no guarantees and that it will be up to the land owner of any land that is used for environmental mitigation.

We want to see any trees that are planted to be safeguarded and protected. Whether this be by some kind of legal agreement or covenant, or for the land that they are planted on to be entrusted to a suitable and reputable organisation that will protect them, such as the Woodland Trust or similar. This would also create new protected areas of habitat for wildlife.

We definitely feel that the 600m boundary to show noise impacts is not at all adequate. Especially since many areas show red areas right up to the boundary of that area both sides of the route. We need to be shown at what point that red area reduces to orange and safe green levels. We need to be shown and understand the true impacts to noise levels.

We expected to see a Preliminary Health Impact Report as part of the consultation, yet it was not present. We are told health impacts had been incorporated in the PEIR. We have been told we will get a full and separate Health Impact Report, and this does nothing to reassure us that this is ongoing and will actually be done. It has been requested by many health professionals and bodies and there is no doubt from us that this is essential if the Lower Thames Crossing is inflicted upon us.

No information has been given as to how adequate mitigation for the 24/7 service area can be provided. We don't believe people should have to live that close to the service area, but if it is inflicted upon us we expect full and adequate mitigation and deserve to be given an insight into what this will be as soon as possible.

We have serious concerns about contaminated spoil. We are aware that there are areas in the East Tilbury/Tilbury area that have been used for landfill for over 100 years with no records of exactly what has been tipped. A gas pipeline that was planned a few years ago in the area was aborted due to tests revealing nasties in the ground.

We are not convinced that Highways England have given us adequate information regarding how they will ensure people's safety with regards to potential contaminants (including airborne) being released when testing or boring, digging, construction etc. We want to know how these tests are carried out, as we believe there could be a danger of releasing contaminants when testing, let alone when construction starts.

To simply be asked by Highways England if we can provide any examples of such events happening with any road scheme in the UK does not give us confidence and we don't want to be the first ones impacted by such a disaster. We need and deserve proper explanations and reassurances. We are talking about land that we know has been used as a tipping ground since before records started, so Highways England will not be able to research comprehensively. This is why it is so important that our concerns are taken seriously, and information and reassurances are given before any testing or work is carried out.

These reassurances need to include information about how Highways England will handle any contaminates, including airborne, and what will be done with that spoil, and that nobody will be put at risk, and what provisions will be put in place in case of such an emergency/disaster.

We also want to know what provisions would be put into place to protect all agricultural land from the impacts of surface water, contaminants, and particulate matter (such a tyre rubber particles etc). As stated previously we are aware that the agricultural land includes some grade 1 listed, and since this is so precious it needs to be protected not destroyed or damaged. All the agricultural land not just the grade 1 listed. Many of our farmers have inherited their farms through their families and have been farming and living in the areas for hundreds of years. Their land, homes, interests, health, and incomes need to be taken into account and taken care of.

Farmers in this country have it tough enough as it is and they should be supported, not have their land and farms taken from them and destroyed. We also need to ensure that the land they are farming is safe for them to continue using and will not be impacted by pollution and flooding.

It is not just agricultural land we have concerns regarding flooding for either, any land along and near the Lower Thames Crossing should be safe from flooding. This includes the impacts it will

have on rivers like the Mardyke, we do not want to witness anybody suffering from flooding as a result of the Lower Thames Crossing or any of the associated roads that are affected by it.

We are extremely concerned about the impact of the Lower Thames Crossing on wildlife and habitats, forests etc. Some animals such as badgers have strong homing instincts and will even attempt to climb walls to get home. Highways England should take independent advice on issues like this from expert organisations or individuals such as the Wildlife Trust, Sir David Attenborough, and Chris Packham etc or those recommended by them.

These concerns about wildlife obviously also extend to those in and along the River Thames who will all be impacted by the construction under and at either side of the river. This includes Benny the Beluga and all and any other river inhabitants.

Green belt land should be protected and it is not acceptable to think that the Lower Thames Crossing is a good enough reason to destroy it, as we do not believe this route has enough value or benefit to anyone to warrant such destruction. The same goes for all countryside, forests etc along and surrounding the proposed Lower Thames Crossing and all associated roads (such as but not limited to the new Rectory Road in Orsett).

We have witnessed for years now the appalling level of litter that Highways England fail to pick up along the A1089 which is a Highways England trunk road. We know that residents have run out of bin bags before they have run out of litter along that road when litter picking. We also know that HGVs are often parked up on the verges along the side of the A1089 too, and that is unacceptable and also dangerous especially when it is wet and the mud is spread onto the road surface.

We are aware that much of this litter comes from traffic using the road, and this will also be the case with the Lower Thames Crossing and associated roads. The rest and service area is also a great concern with regards to litter. If the Lower Thames Crossing goes ahead we need assurances that Highways England will properly and adequately ensure that it and all associated roads are kept clean and well maintained.

We also have big concerns over the fact that the Lower Thames Crossing will bring more HGVs into the area, and that could result in more HGVs parking up on verges and streets in our area. We know this already happens and we want it stopped, not added to. We expect the cost of parking at the rest and service area to dissuade HGV drivers from using it, especially when many will already be familiar with verges to park on, and enforced detours like those via the Stanford junction on the A13 will be putting them in locations where we already suffer with this problem on a regular basis.

With high winds and fog hanging over the Orsett and Bulphan fens being a common occurrence we also have concerns over safety in these areas and the potential for more accidents leading to more congestion and pollution. We are not aware of any mitigation that will reduce the fog, and road protection from high winds will be large and no doubt ugly again impacting visually on our communities and environment. We really do not see that knowingly bringing a motorway through an area renowned for high winds and fog, especially when it will be on raised road a good or safe way to proceed. We would yet again comment that this is the wrong crossing in the wrong location and that there are better alternatives.

Of course we also have serious concerns over the impacts of construction, the pollution and impacts to people's lives and health and well-being. The constant pollution, air, noise, light,

vibrations, dust etc. Highways England has been unable to provide adequate details of how this will all be mitigated if the Lower Thames Crossing goes ahead.

We are aware there are new standards and guidelines for construction in London, including the construction vehicles and machinery and if the Lower Thames Crossing goes ahead we want at least those same standards and guidelines if not better. After all part of the route is in the London Borough of Havering, and everyone along the whole route deserves the same consideration and care along and surrounding the whole route.

We have serious concerns over the air, noise, light, and vibration pollution and impacts along the entire route of the proposed Lower Thames Crossing and the surrounding areas.

We do not feel there are or can be adequate mitigation for this route, especially since there are areas that already suffer with illegally high levels of air pollution.

Not to mention the impacts of the Lower Thames Crossing on people's physical and mental health and well-being, before, during construction, and after it opens (if it opens).

There are already too many cases of COPD, asthma and other air pollution related illnesses. The cost to our health and well-being needs to be taken into account, not just the financial cost.

It would be false economy not to take our health into full consideration, and to do everything physically possible to improve everything possible such as more tunnelling and cut and cover, as the cost will present itself in the form of health care bills if not construction costs, that is a fact.

Additional consideration needs to also be taken immediately into the impacts of the Lower Thames Crossing on people's health (physical and mental), and well-being now. We have desperate concerns over those whose homes are under threat. We know of residents who are suicidal, depressed, have suffered heart attacks and heart problems, as well as other health issues.

Highways England's handling of the situation regarding those whose homes are at threat has been greatly lacking at times. Long wait times for communication, lack of information, support, and guidance. Letters being sent in error, including to residents whose homes are clearly not within the development boundary, yet Highways England have written to them as late as the end of November telling them there are now in the development boundary (even though they are not) and that their homes could be taken.

There have been numerous incidents of errors on Highways England's part that have caused terrible stress, and this needs to be taken into account with regards to the health and well-being of residents.

Highways England need to be held accountable for these and all their actions and the impacts it is having and would have on people's lives and health.

### **Thames Crossing Action Group strongly oppose the proposed area of land you require to build the Lower Thames Crossing**

We are not at all happy about how much and where the land is being taken and used. We do not feel that the Lower Thames Crossing is worthy of so much destruction and damage both to homes (inc Graded 2 listed cottages), communities, greenbelt, agricultural land (inc Grade 1 listed), forests, habitats, rivers, lives and health and well-being.



We struggle to understand why Highways England all of a sudden decided to take 68% more land for the Lower Thames Crossing. It does not give us confidence that they understand the real impacts of the route and associated roads if they were so far out on their land grab as recently as July of this year.

We don't think it is acceptable to destroy and damage Grade 1 listed agricultural land. There is only 3% left in the country we need to protect it not destroy and damage it.

There is a reason that Grade 2 listed buildings are meant to be protected. We do not feel there are any benefits of the Lower Thames Crossing that warrant Grade 2 listed building or indeed any buildings to be destroyed or impacted by it.

At a time when climate change is on everyone's mind we need to also be protecting our valuable and precious greenbelt. Same with our forest and woodland, including the 13 ancient woods and 10 veteran trees that are at risk as outlined by the Woodland Trust. Under no circumstances do we feel the proposed Lower Thames Crossing warrants all this destruction.

The sheer volume of land that is proposed to be taken means it will split communities from each other which impacts us greatly. It will leave some families literally stranded between or next to the Lower Thames Crossing and connection roads.

Much of the additional land taken in the recent 68% increase is supposedly for flood and environmental mitigation, yet not enough information has been provided about what exactly that will entail. We want and need more info on this.

As already stated Highways England's handling of the situation regarding those whose homes are at threat has been greatly lacking at times. Long wait times for communication, lack of information, support, and guidance. Letters being sent in error, including to residents whose homes are clearly not within the development boundary, yet Highways England have written to them as late as the end of November telling them there are now in the development boundary (even though they are not) and that their homes could be taken.

There have been numerous incidents of errors on Highways England's part that have caused terrible stress, and this needs to be taken into account with regards to the health and well-being of residents.

Highways England need to be held accountable for these and all their actions and the impacts it is having and would have on people's lives and health.

It would be a false economy not to take our health into full consideration, and to do everything physically possible to improve everything possible such as more tunnelling and cut and cover, as the cost will present itself in the form of health care bills if not construction costs, that is a fact.

Additional consideration needs to also be taken immediately into the impacts of the Lower Thames Crossing on people's health (physical and mental), and well-being now. We have desperate concerns over those whose homes are under threat. We know of residents who are suicidal, depressed, have suffered heart attacks and heart problems, as well as other health issues.

The amount of land grab for this scheme is totally unacceptable and is unwarranted as the proposed Lower Thames Crossing is not the solution to the original criteria. The Dartford Crossing will still be over the capacity that it was designed to take. The destruction and damage and threat to people's lives and health is simply not worth it and we demand better.

**Thames Crossing Action Group strongly** oppose Highways England's proposals for a rest and service area in the East Tilbury location. We also strongly oppose the proposal for the maintenance depot in this location.

We do not think there is a need for a rest and service area or a maintenance depot in this location as we do not feel there is a need for the Lower Thames Crossing in the location it is being proposed full stop. It is also way too close to residential areas and this will impact greatly on these residents, their lives and health. A 24/7 service station with all the air, noise, light and vibration pollution is simply not acceptable. We feel it would be better located elsewhere if a service station has to be included. Although we do also question why it was so late in the day that Highways England announced that a service station was needed. Especially since it is Highways Agency guidelines, so they would have been more than aware. Yet again we state this is another reason why we feel the Lower Thames Crossing is the wrong crossing in the wrong place, and Option A14 would be better. We already have the worst service station in the country in Thurrock, we don't need another. We are aware that the Government will just purchase the land for the service station and then lease it to the service station company. We would like to see protections put in place to ensure we do not end up with another Thurrock Services.

If we have to have the Lower Thames Crossing and a service station and maintenance depot we would like to see it have the least amount of impact on the local communities and environment as possible. A suggestion would be something along the lines of a Teletubby style house, where it is unobtrusive and blended into the local environment with grass, trees, plants etc, with everything hidden underneath.

The planting could be done in such a way that is also offers some level of mitigation against pollution. It would also help blend it in rather than visually impacting the area. The maintenance depot in particular looks awful on the video and in images.

We do also have concerns that the service area will create yet another barrier cutting East Tilbury off further from its neighbouring communities. As well as being too close to residential areas it is also too close to historic Coalhouse Fort and the 2 Forts Walk.

We have concerns over emergency vehicle access via the service area. We have already stated that they do not have adequate access to the LTC via the A13 and if they used local roads to the service area instead there is the life or death matter of the railway crossing barrier that residents have to suffer with, that would also impact emergency service access.

We have not been convinced that there will be adequate barriers in place between the service and maintenance depot and the local roads and communities either. Will the Lower Thames Crossing have the potential to get out onto local roads, this is of huge concern for residents, especially in that area. We were told to start with that there would definitely be barriers, but have since been told nothing is definite.

As we have outlined previously we have serious concerns about litter along the Lower Thames Crossing and its associated roads, including the service area. Also the possible issues that could arise, with illegal immigrants coming in, on, and under coaches and HGVs, and fleeing within the area.

We also feel that there will be HGV drivers that will prefer to save money and park up for free on roadsides and verges in the area rather than pay to park in the service station. As already outlined this is already an issue, and Highways England's enforced detour via the Stanford junction on the A13 guides them so close to the Manorway which is renowned for illegal HGV parking. We don't need or want these issues made worse due to the Lower Thames Crossing. This and so many other things would bring additional work and cost to our Local Authorities, which is not right or fair.

**Thames Crossing Action Group strongly** disagree with the view that the Lower Thames Crossing would improve traffic conditions on the surrounding road network

We do not believe that the Lower Thames Crossing will improve traffic conditions anywhere at all. The Dartford Crossing will still be over the capacity that it is designed to take, as outlined previously.

Our preferred route would be Option A14 or a variant of it. We were hugely surprised when Highways England told us that it was actually one of their favourites until they ran their traffic modelling through it and only 12% of traffic was predicted to use it.

This is totally unbelievable and doesn't reflect reality. You only have to watch the traffic when you cross the current crossing in either direction to see that a large percentage does not come off at the first couple of junctions. The figure in the dads army style map shared previously of 40% is far more realistic. If designed correctly all national M25 traffic would use Option A14 leaving the current crossing for local and regional traffic, a much better solution, and far less destructive.

This discussion with Highways England led us to question the traffic modelling data that is being used. We have been told that they took an average month, March, and monitored the traffic during that month. For reference we have concerns over the use of this month as we have seen reports that March has been one of the worst months for incidents at the Dartford Crossing. However, they also went on to say that if there were times when they considered the traffic not to be 'normal' they would exclude that data. So the very data that reflects the problems they are meant to be fixing, and the problems that we live with on a day to day basis these days is removed from the equation. This does not make sense and is not acceptable. We would like to see some real traffic modelling done and used, including data that reflects all traffic, not selective. We would like to see anonymised sat nav data tracked and used for location as well as journey time, and more real time tracking using strips across all roads in the affected areas to see how traffic behaves when there is an incident so better damage control can be considered and incorporated into the design of any potential new crossing. The fact that traffic behaviour and how it will migrate between two crossings has not been considered is ludicrous.

The M25 can't cope with the traffic it already has, let alone encouraging more new traffic into the area to join it.

We have outlined our concerns over what happens when there is an incident at either crossing, we'd also like to state the additional concern over the absolute chaos that would ensue when there are incidents at crossings and/or the M25 or any other major road in the area, or at Lakeside or Bluewater for example. Emergency plans need to be designed for such situations, because it will happen and it will be chaos and it will be us that suffer.

Ultimately the Lower Thames Crossing is not fit for purpose as it is outdated before it is even built leaving the Dartford Crossing over the capacity it is designed to take.

There are not adequate connection in place to deal with regular traffic, let alone when there are incidents at either or both crossings, and the impact on local roads will be immense. Not only that, there is no money being factored into the Lower Thames Crossing to assist with improvements and increased maintenance that local roads will need as a direct impact of the Lower Thames Crossing. This crossing brings no true benefits for people either side of the river, both at the locations of the Lower Thames Crossing or the Dartford Crossing, yet it will inflict extra work and cost to the affected Local Authorities, and yet again that is not acceptable, and just another example of why the Lower Thames Crossing is the wrong crossing in the wrong location.

Thames Crossing Action Group are opposed to there being a charge for the Lower Thames Crossing

General public consensus is that we were promised years ago that the tolls would be removed at the Dartford Crossing once the tunnels were paid for, then it was the bridge, and then the Government has played sneaky and changed it from tolls to a congestion charge.

Our understanding is that with tolls the money taken is earmarked specifically for the maintenance of the infrastructure, whereas the congestion charge can be used for anything the Government choose. We guess that is why Highways England have been stating on social media (twitter to be precise) that the funds for building the Lower Thames Crossing will come from the funds from the current crossing. It is a little surprising to read this on twitter when at official Highways England info events nobody has been able to confirm where the funding will come from other than it will now all be public money.

On that topic, we have concerns over the fact that there was not an official statement and change to the details online on the Highways England/Lower Thames Crossing website to make people aware that the funding would now all be from public money as opposed to the part private funding that it was originally set out to be before the Budget announcement abolishing PFI's and PF2s which of course impacts the Lower Thames Crossing funding, as well as other projects.

It should also have been made clearer in information the real difference between public and private funding as many think that private funding means the money comes from private companies as an investment, so possibly from companies that stand to benefit from the scheme etc, rather than the real explanation of it being a loan to the Government from a private company. We appreciate that this is no longer relevant as long as it will be 100% funded using taxpayers money.

We are also aware that it now all being funded with public money means that VAT will have to be paid on top which will add at least another £1bn to the cost.

We are not happy with the way the current crossing is charged or operated, so would not be happy for the new crossing to be charged and operated in the same way.

The offices where the charges and residents discounts etc were dealt with was moved out of the local area when the toll booths were removed, taking jobs out of the area. How can we trust or believe that Highways England mean it when they talk about the Lower Thames Crossing bringing jobs to the area? The whole procedure of dealing with Dart Charge is painful, especially for local residents discount. This needs to be addressed regardless of whether the Lower Thames Crossing goes ahead or not.

Many are unhappy that way too many foreign drivers avoid paying the charge and are not chased and fined for non-payment. We don't care what percentage it is, there are too many getting away

with it and better provisions need to be put in place to avoid this continuing to happen at any crossing.

There is also a lot of confusion over the signage regarding the charges. There will be lots of extra signs up alerting people to the charges if it goes ahead, and they will need to be made clear in so many places to avoid confusion to drivers. For instance it would need to be signed from the M25 right through to the M2/A2 and vice versa, so that drivers know they need to pay. They would also need to be shown before traffic enters the Lower Thames Crossing from the A13, it could get very confusing.

We have concerns that there would be a lot of confusion about accounts for these charges and whether they will cover both crossings, or if you will need two different accounts. Especially if there is an incident at either crossing and traffic needs to migrate across to the other crossing.

We keep being told about how many vehicles will be electric by the time the Lower Thames Crossing opens which is not a fact that we believe. However, we do therefore have concerns that if this is the aim emission-based charging could come into effect similar to the parking in London, and this would inflict further charges/taxes upon us, and as local residents this is not fair as we have no other option but to use the crossing if we need to get across the river. London residents do not have to pay to cross the river in the city.

Many residents believe that there should be a local resident discount scheme if there has to be a charge, and that newly impacted areas such as Gravesham and Havering should be included.

We would finally comment on this particular topic that if there is going to be a charge to use this crossing the Government will get their outlay money back and then some, so there is no reason for Highways England not to ensure the safest and healthiest route is constructed regardless of cost.

**Thames Crossing Action Group strongly** oppose Highways England's initial plans for how to build the Lower Thames Crossing

As we have stated numerous times before we do not believe that the Lower Thames Crossing should be built at all, so we will never agree on how to build it.

Our preferred way to build it would be starting from around J2 on the M25 and tunnelling just over 7 miles to between J30 and J29 on the M25 in a very similar way to how you would build Option A14!

We do not feel that there has been adequate information provided about the construction of the Lower Thames Crossing, and certainly not about the construction compounds, and what would occur at each compound.

If the Lower Thames Crossing is inflicted upon us then the construction needs to be completed as quickly and efficiently as possible and with the least impact possible on residents and communities. This includes reducing the impact that compounds and construction traffic has on communities and roads.

We feel that more info needs to be provided on all aspects of construction, including compounds, and construction traffic, and the impacts it will all have on communities, roads, pollution, and the environment.

Obviously we also stand by all our previous comments regarding the treatment and use of all spoil from construction too.

Damage from construction also obviously needs to be carefully monitored, and mitigated where avoiding damage cannot or has not been avoided.

Special care is needed with regards to ensuring no damage or contamination is caused anywhere in or around the construction area, including rivers, habitats, agricultural land and greenbelt.

More tunnelling and cut and cover is needed along the entire route to reduce impacts to all communities.

Thames Crossing are strongly opposed to the change to utilities

We are greatly concerned about the impacts of moving utilities as it appears that many of them would be moved closer to residential properties, which is unacceptable, and creates health impacts from the EMFs and noise pollution, especially when the electricity pylons/wires are wet. As well as the visual impact on communities and residents, and the impacts it could have on wildlife.

We have concerns over the changes to utilities will affect our supply of gas and electric when they are being moved.

We are aware that Highways England have chosen to take homes in some areas rather than move electricity pylons because it is a cheaper option, another thing that we find unacceptable.

We like the idea of taking this opportunity to bury cables instead of moving pylons. We would certainly be interested to learn more about this possible option, if it reduces visual impact and can be done safely and without any hazards (health or otherwise to humans and animals).

We also find it very strange that the development boundary for utilities takes some very strange patterns on the map, and hope that this is purely about access to pylons and nothing else.

As to whether or not Thames Crossing Action Group felt the consultation information clear and easy to understand, the events were of good quality, the events were suitably located, and the consultation promoted well and to the right people, we would rate all as very poor.

We and many of our members did not find it easy to locate or understand the information provided. We found much of it to be misleading and confusing. The sheer volume and complexity of information that supported the consultation was confusing, overwhelming and intimidating especially in the given time frame of 10 weeks which was not long enough.

Many asked for the consultation to be extended to allow enough time for people to be able to properly read all the supporting documentation they wanted to, to be able to digest it, have time to get answers to questions, and then the time to adequately respond to the consultation.

Emails were not answered quickly or efficiently enough, and often didn't even properly answer the questions. We had emails that simply pointed us to which document to look at, and for us to search for the answer ourselves. We didn't need to email someone for this, we wanted answers. They didn't even include pages to view in some emails. This is not acceptable. We found many of the documents were not written and displayed in ways that were in plain English that was easy to

understand and often Legends or descriptions were missing.

With regards to adequate time to get answers to questions we would point out that Highways England's standard auto-response to emails is that to allow up to 15 working days for replies. We have logged instances ourselves where questions were emailed to the correct email address on Oct 29<sup>th</sup>, only to get a reply late on Nov 19<sup>th</sup> apologising for the delay and explaining that they would reply by the end of the week. The next follow-on email to that was not sent until late on Nov 28<sup>th</sup>. We do not feel that the response adequately covered the info requested or the answers provided reflected what had been suggested at an Highways England info event previously. For instance we were told that at the rest and service area in East Tilbury there would be barriers/gates between the access road in the re-aligned Station Rd and the staff car park and maintenance depot. This is something residents obviously want some reassurance of, to know that general Lower Thames Crossing traffic will not be able to access their local roads via the service area. In this reply they are now stating that nothing is finalised. We asked if there are any predictions of the likelihood and data of how frequently emergency service vehicles might be accessing the Lower Thames Crossing via the service area, as we would assume Highways England could make similar comparisons to the Dartford Crossing and incidents that occur there to make some kind of prediction. No response was given by Highways England to this question. How are we meant to provide an adequate response or have any faith in Highways England when they are not consistent with the info they are providing, if they do eventually actually answer questions?

There were additional emails for the same date Oct 29<sup>th</sup> that we were still waiting for replies to. We brought this matter to the attention of LTC Project Director Tim Jones on Saturday Dec 1<sup>st</sup> when we had a meeting planned with ourselves, Highways England and Stephen Metcalfe MP. Mr Jones asked us to email details through which we did by the end of Saturday. He said that we would get an email back by the end of business on Monday Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> to let us know when we could expect answers to the outstanding questions. It was only late morning on Dec 6<sup>th</sup> that we got some replies. This was the first response in relation to the requested email that we sent Tim Jones. Even these emails did not answer all the questions, they simply provided info that the agent has decided to send, rather than send the answers/info that we requested, so we have followed up with another email to Tim Jones but so far no response from him.

We also want to point out that this was a very difficult meeting to arrange, as it had twice been cancelled by Highways England, and only happened on Saturday (Dec 1<sup>st</sup>) purely because we kept pushing for it. We originally requested a meeting with Tim Jones along with Stephen Metcalfe back on Oct 27<sup>th</sup>, the first meeting which was agreed for Nov 6<sup>th</sup> was cancelled by Highways England, a replacement meeting was confirmed for Nov 16<sup>th</sup>, which again was cancelled by Highways England. This meeting on Saturday Dec 1<sup>st</sup> was the replacement. We feel it far from satisfactory that a meeting that was requested in October has finally happened in Dec, especially when you consider this is consultation period which ends on Dec 20<sup>th</sup>.

Mr Jones seemed less interested in the flaws and errors that we tried to bring to his attention in

the meeting, saying that we should be using the time in the meeting to discuss the actual route. He just doesn't seem to understand or appreciate the impact their errors and delays are having on everyone's ability to respond adequately to the consultation within the given time.

We have also been made aware that some residents have received letters from Highways England in the past few weeks telling them their properties are now within the development boundary, which according to Highways England maps we know not to be true. We have brought this to Highways England's attention at one of their info events, for them to confirm that the letters were sent in error, HE asked us to apologise to the residents and to let them know that a new letter explaining what had gone wrong would be sent. Again with relation to Highways England's property team, the auto-response to the email address is up to 15 working days. Whilst we can understand a need to outline time targets in the auto-response when you are talking about residents' lives and health being impacted by the stress such letters such as this cause is this really acceptable? We are aware of a number of cases whereby residents felt it necessary to alert us and/or their MPs/Councillors to their concerns over letters from Highways England. This is another point that we raised with Mr Jones, again he asked for details to be emailed to him. We have now been made aware that a resident nearby to the residents we mention above has now received a letter telling him that the letter was sent in error and he isn't actually in the development boundary, even though Highways England maps clearly show his property as in the boundary. And he has been under the illusion for several months that his home, as shown on HE's map has been taken. It was some of his neighbours who don't appear in the development boundary on maps who had been sent the letter in error. You would think and hope that Highways England would take more care and responsibility over sending the letters to correct their error, but evidently not.

We do not feel that Highways England have communicated well with anyone, including Local Authorities and have regularly witnessed this at the LTC Task Force Meetings at Thurrock Council. Highways England have failed for over a year to provide answers to questions. This resulted in the Task Force having to list the outstanding questions as mitigation points. The standard response always seemed to be that Highways England would get back to the Task Force with the answer, but never did. After the Statutory Consultation started the go to response changed to, tell us in your consultation response. This screams of Highways England being incapable of or reluctant to provide adequate info and a definite lack of ability to communicate clearly, acceptably, and this has greatly impacted on everyone's ability to get the necessary answers and to take part in the consultation.

We are aware that Local Authority Thurrock Council have raised concerns over the lack of meaningful engagement by Highways England. Also their concerns over the length of the consultation for their own response as well as residents. We know that their response to SoCC requested Highways England consider the consultation should run for at least 12 weeks, a request that Highways England ignored. We have ourselves requested the consultation be extended to allow time for ourselves, residents, and the local authorities to respond adequately, only to be told their 10 week consultation is both proportionate and reasonable. How can that be so when everyone is struggling to wade through the unprecedented amount of documents and get the info



needed to be able to respond adequately to consultation? Highways England keep telling us how important our feedback is to them, yet they are refusing us the necessary time to do so adequately.

Residents in East Tilbury who are greatly impacted with the Lower Thames Crossing don't even have a SoCC info event, only a mobile info event, which is a van with very limited resources, info and staff, and these events are not and have not been adequately promoted, so residents are often not aware of these mobile events in their area. We are of course aware that as they are not part of SoCC they don't legally have to be promoted, but this is obviously not helpful to residents like those in East Tilbury whose lives are and will be greatly impacted by Lower Thames Crossing. Surely they should be entitled to a proper full info event that is promoted so concerned and affected residents can attend?

We were told the reason that East Tilbury school could not be used as a venue for Highways England's info event was they felt it didn't meet their risk assessment due to the proposed area for their staff break/backstage area didn't have an adequate fire escape route. We find this hard to believe since it is a school and surely must meet fire standards. We have also suggested they could have used their mobile info van as a break/backstage area if that was the case, or some other arrangement, to ensure that the people of East Tilbury who are so hugely impacted have the chance of a proper SoCC info event with full displays, info, and staff. (Highways England have since emailed to say that it was East Tilbury Village Hall that failed their risk assessment, but that is not what we were told in person at an info event.) That was bad enough, but on top of the incident with Highways England's info van being parked in a one way street in Corringham in a manner that left residents having to walk amongst the traffic to access the info van we are struggling to understand how risk assessments and health and safety only seems to matter to Highways England when it suits their own needs.

Staff at info events have often not appeared to have the knowledge to answer questions from the public. We have heard from many residents that feel Highways England staff couldn't answer their questions or provide a means for getting the answers. We were disappointed when we spoke to Tim Jones at the Southend awareness event that we had to point out to him that the Lower Thames Crossing actually drops to 2 lanes around the A13. He told us that he wasn't really sure and would need to check. On page 28 of the consultation guide it states that the Lower Thames Crossing is 3 lanes from the M25 to the A2, but on page 58 of the same guide it states that the Lower Thames Crossing drops to 2 lanes for a section in both directions around the A13 junction. We have witnessed many occasions where Highways England staff simply lacked the knowledge or even got the info wrong when talking to members of the public, to the extent that we had to jump in to ensure members of the public got the right answer/info. Goodness knows how many times this happened and misleading info, wrong info, or people simply didn't get the answers they should have got when we were not present at events.

We are aware that some Highways England staff were removed from events after we had to put

complaints in about their inept handling of dealing with members of the public, giving misleading info, and also one with a particularly confrontational and aggressive attitude towards some of us, which was totally unwarranted (as proven by the fact we were told that member of the team would not be attending any more events as a result of our complaint).

In the Preliminary environmental information summary, page 11 states under Existing conditions “There are areas that currently do not exceed UK Air Quality Strategy thresholds” yet further down that section on the same page it is stated “ This baseline information indicated that air quality is currently exceeding UK and EU limits across the study area”. This information is confusing, misleading, and does not provide facts that demonstrate properly the fact that Thurrock has very poor air quality.

In the consultation guide on pages 60 and 62 the A13 is shown according to the legend for the images as a motorway, which of course it is not. Followed by definite inconsistencies on pages 64,65, and 66 where the A1089 north connection to the Lower Thames Crossing is not shown on some of the maps, when clearly other routes are shown whether they are highlighted as what is being described or not. Again confusing, misleading, and not providing the facts clearly.

Nowhere in the Guide to consultation could we find a clear indication as to the estimated costs of the proposed Lower Thames Crossing, this is something we consider to be vital information that should have been included.

The video that Highways England used to promote the Lower Thames Crossing is not a true and realistic representation. Around 6mins 12sec when they show the A13 junctions they chose yet again not to represent the Orsett Windmill a landmark that would help most identify and get their bearings, even though we have previously mentioned this being missed out in previous videos. At 8mins 45sec they show the area between the M25 and the Lower Thames Crossing motorways as a lovely area of trees, failing to show the real implications of the route and show the fact that they are stranding families locked in this space between the two motorways, with at least one of the families homes being literally within the motorway embankment. This adds insult to injury for those families, and also misleads people who may not realise the real implications and impacts of the route. Some, if they had seen families homes stranded in that section, may have changed their opinion of Lower Thames Crossing, as trees look great, families homes stranded does not however portray the mess that Highways England have made of those particular homes, very misleading! The video also fails to show changes like the removal of the Rectory Rd bridge in Orsett, or the replacement road through the middle of the Orsett Showground. This does not show the design of the Lower Thames Crossing at the time of statutory consultation as suggested at the start of the video. The only reason for the removal of this bridge and destruction of the much loved Orsett Showground is due to the Lower Thames Crossing, so surely it should be shown as part of the design, not hidden away so many won't even know what will happen if this option goes ahead.

The cleverly positioned camera angles to avoid showing certain areas and how close the route might come to homes and communities. Well-known local landmarks like the windmill at Orsett

not being included, and the fact that Highways England decided to create and include some new ones that don't exist like the Great Pyramids of South Ockendon!

We do not feel that all demographics in the communities were given adequate notice or assistance with taking part in the consultation. We learnt that a Deaf British Sign Language User resident had to request that a BLS interpreter was provided at an info event for them and others. We are also aware that when it came down to completing the response forms they needed further interpreter assistance as the response form is in English language and they use BSL. We also have concerns that blind people may not have been aware of the consultation, as all the SoCC announcements were made in visual representations, how would they even know the consultation was on, let alone obtain enough information in Braille or audio to listen to?

In general we don't feel there was enough promotion of the consultation, especially that which wasn't biased in favour of the Lower Thames Crossing. So many areas do not get the local newspapers, and the only events that were publicised were the 25 full info events, there wasn't even a leaflet promoting the mobile van infos. Highways England seem determined to promote the fact they have had over 60 public events, yet only 25 on them are in the SoCC, the rest were not properly promoted.

Press releases such as [www.gov.uk/government/news/lower-thames-crossing-opens-its-doors-at-first-of-sixty-public-events](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/lower-thames-crossing-opens-its-doors-at-first-of-sixty-public-events) for the consultation have been heavily biased in favour of the crossing, to the extent that no opposition was noted at all, only support. There is plenty of opposition to the Lower Thames Crossing yet they included none of it. We have emails, letters and conversations from various people, businesses, local authorities, councillors, MPs who are all opposed, you don't have to go far to find them. Yet again Highways England chose not to represent this in their consultation and promotional activities.

Online promotion of the Lower Thames Crossing consultation has again been biased to show only support of the project, not giving fair representation. Where were the voxpops for residents? None, only for businesses that feel they stand to benefit from Lower Thames Crossing, again biased representation. And these businesses are fed a different story to that portrayed to the residents that will lose their home or have their lives turned upside down. These businesses have only ever been offered C3, obviously with a need for another crossing they are quick to support it but I doubt that would be the case if they were fully informed, or given other alternative routes to choose from.

At Highways England info events there is no indication of any negative points in any of the display material, it is all positively biased. With a project of this size it cannot be 100% positive, yet Highways England have chosen not to display any kind of negative impacts, again leading to biased view and misrepresentation of the Lower Thames Crossing. The point of the consultation being to present the facts in a clear, easy to understand, unbiased manner so that people can review the info and give their own honest opinions.

How can people be expected to have been able to do so adequately with such unprecedented amounts of info, poor and slow communication from Highways England via email and at info

events, a limited amount of time considering how much info was presented and how many flaws and inadequacies there are in the consultation?

These are some of the many things we consider to be inadequacies of this consultation. We feel these inadequacies and flaws have directly impacted the consultation in a negative way.

We do not feel it was at all easy to find out where to locate information online or offline. You just had to wade through and see what you could find.

We and other residents found there were not always adequate supplies of the Guide to Consultation, response forms and return envelopes at info points and deposit locations. Also the opening hours of these locations were often very limiting, especially for those that work.

Many of the maps were difficult to view and understand. You couldn't clearly see the map that it was overlaid upon, to see existing roads and building to know the true impacts of the Lower Thames Crossing. The constant changing of the orientation of the maps throughout map books, and different legends and scales being used was also unhelpful.

Highways England using Dart Charge to contact their entire database to take part in the consultation and encouraging them that it would only take a few minutes, hardly encourages them to actually review a fraction of the information that supported the consultation, but more encouraged them to blindly comment. Public perception of this is that it was done to try and manipulate the results of the consultation to try and get more support for the Lower Thames Crossing. Many of these people would not be local and their only experience would be of sitting in traffic for hours at the Dartford Crossing, paying for that experience, and therefore being completely biased into wanting a new crossing regardless and without even viewing the true impacts it would have on the areas it would be inflicted upon.

We would also question that this means of contact and the consultation form in general encourages an organised group response, which no doubt Highways England will choose to count as individual responses, yet they discriminated against residents who opposed the crossing in the 2016 consultation when they unfairly grouped together 13,000 responses as 1 organised group response, something Highways England threatened to do again this consultation.

The consultation is full of inadequacies.

To sum up Thames Crossing Action Group are strongly opposed to the Lower Thames Crossing, we feel it will just create a toxic triangle of more chaos, congestion and pollution. There are not adequate connections in place for day to day use, let alone when there is an incident at either crossing. There is no true consideration for residents and communities anywhere along or around the Lower Thames Crossing route. There are no true benefits for the residents and communities anywhere along or around the Lower Thames Crossing route. No matter where we are along or around the Lower Thames Crossing route we will only suffer with the huge negative impacts it has to our lives, health, homes, communities, leisure, public rights of way, greenbelt, agricultural land, forests, rivers, habitats, wildlife, environment, and so much more. The people along and around the Dartford Crossing will fair no better. The Dartford Crossing will still be over the capacity that it is designed to take, even if the proposed Lower Thames Crossing opens. They will still suffer the same problems and impacts to their lives and health (both physical and mental), the congestion and pollution.

We still believe there are better alternatives, with Option A14 or a variant being our preferred option. We believe this would be far superior as a solution to all the problems that everyone suffers with due to the Dartford Crossing on a way too regular basis.

We feel that further consideration and comparisons between the preferred Lower Thames Crossing and some alternatives should be done. We strongly believe there are better alternatives and that the Lower Thames Crossing as the design stands now is so different to the original that it needs to be reassessed. We also question the value for money of this project, both in financial terms and in terms of the costs to people's lives, health (physical and mental), and well-being.

We believe the Statutory Consultation to have been too short in length and too full of inadequacies for us to have been properly able to read all the supporting documents that we wanted to, to be able to digest that info, have adequate time to ask questions and get acceptable answers, and the time to then be able to respond adequately.

We always have been and remain completely opposed to the proposed Lower Thames Crossing and the irreversible damage it would do to all areas along the proposed route and around it.