

18th September 2020

Dear officers and members of Brentwood Borough Council

Thames Crossing Action Group represents thousands of concerned people along and surrounding the entire proposed Lower Thames Crossing route who are strongly opposed to the proposed route.

There are many reasons that we are strongly opposed, and we would welcome you to visit our website www.thamescrossingactiongroup.com for further detail, and we are always happy to hear from anyone who wishes to discuss with us directly.

Our reason for contacting you now is because we are aware of your recent meeting on Sept 9th in which the proposed LTC was discussed and your concerns were raised over the damaging impacts LTC would have on Brentwood's economic growth.

We know that other local authorities have serious concerns over the negative impact the proposed LTC would have on the local economy and economic growth. We highlighted Thurrock Council's concerns in this update to our website - www.thamescrossingactiongroup.com/impacts-to-thurrock/ In their report Thurrock Council state:

The construction and operation of the LTC scheme will have significant impacts upon residents and businesses located across the Thurrock area:

- The scheme will result in significant direct loss of land for current agricultural and amenity uses, as well as future residential and commercial development. The loss of economic value for the area could equate to as much as £96 million.
- The construction phase will significantly disrupt access and movement, affecting local business operations and creating community severance. The scale of impacts will depend upon the length of disruptions, but businesses could lose up to £39 million in economic value and communities will see a loss in social value equating to in excess of £36 million. A further £29 million will be lost from delayed development, on the basis the project is delivered to programme.
- Once operational, the LTC Scheme will continue to create blight across the corridor, affecting current and future property values and creating environmental emissions. This will affect community cohesion and local health and wellbeing. There will also be on-going impacts upon business operations and affect the attractiveness of the area for investment. Whilst not all of these impacts can be quantified, there is estimated to be a loss of economic value of over £100m.

We would be very interested to know whether Brentwood Council have any data to show the impact you predict the proposed LTC would have on Brentwood?

With the predicted cost of LTC now having risen to £8.2bn of tax payers money we feel that it is important that the true costs of LTC if it goes ahead are identified and considered.

We have serious concerns that the proposed LTC would create a hugely destructive toxic triangle that is not fit for purpose.

Using Highways England's own data it is proven that the Dartford Crossing will remain over capacity even if the proposed LTC goes ahead.

- The Dartford Crossing has a design capacity of 135,000 vehicles per day. (1)
- It is currently running at between 155,000 to 180,000 vehicles per day (2)(3)
- Predicted traffic growth between 2016 and 2026 is expected to be between 17-23% (2)(4). Bear in mind that currently the proposed Lower Thames Crossing is not predicted to open until late 2027.
- Highways England predict that there will be a 22% reduction in traffic using the Dartford Crossing if the proposed Lower Thames Crossing goes ahead. (5)

Therefore if you take each figure that the current crossing is running at now, add the 17%, 23%, or an average of 20%, then take the 22% reduction off this is what you get:

155,000+17%=181,350 / 181,350-22%= **141,453** vehicles per day using the Dartford Crossing
180,000+17%=210,600 / 210,600-22%= **164,268** vehicles per day using the Dartford Crossing

155,000+23%=190,650 / 190,650-22%= **148,707** vehicles per day using the Dartford Crossing
180,000+23%=221,400 / 221,400-22%= **172,692** vehicles per day using the Dartford Crossing

155,000+20%=186,000 / 186,000-22%= **145,080** vehicles per day using the Dartford Crossing
180,000+20%=216,000 / 216,000-22%= **168,480** vehicles per day using the Dartford Crossing

Clearly the Dartford Crossing would still be over it's design capacity of 135,000 vehicles per day.

(1) Ref – [Your Guide to Consultation](#) (Page 20)

(2) Ref – [2017 Environmental Impact Assessment – Scoping Report](#) (1.2.5)

1.2.5 – The existing crossing is heavily congested. Average daily two-way traffic flows are typically about 155,000 vehicles, and flows frequently exceed the design capacity of the crossing at peak periods. Forecast traffic growth is expected to result in an increase in traffic volume of 23% by 2025.

(3) Ref – [Case for the Project](#) (page 19)

6.2.32 – Traffic at the Dartford Crossing has increased significantly over time. On some days traffic using the Dartford Crossing exceeds 180,000 vehicles which is some 45,000 vehicles more than it was designed to take.

(4) Ref – [Case for the Project](#) (page 19)

6.2.37 – The average daily traffic flow using the Dartford Crossing without the Lower Thames Crossing is predicted to increase by 17% in the period 2016-2026.

(5) Ref – [Your Guide to Consultation](#) (page 22)

For clarity we would like to point out that the proposed LTC development boundary actually reaches as far north as junction 28 (the A12) on the M25, and not just junction 29 (the A127).

We would draw to your attention that there are not adequate connections in place between the proposed Lower Thames Crossing and the existing road network under normal conditions, let alone when there is an incident.

Highways England have not planned how traffic will migrate between the two crossings when there is an incident. This will result in absolute chaos on the roads whenever there is an incident.

We highlighted some of our concerns over this issue on our website - <https://www.thamescrossingactiongroup.com/ltc-bottleneck-m25-a13-junctions/>.

As you will see when there is an incident at the Dartford Crossing, which would still be over capacity, traffic has to detour all the way down to the Stanford junction on the A13 and return westbound to access the LTC to cross the river. If traffic decides to access the LTC directly from the M25, which would be 5 lanes of traffic at that point, onto just 2 lanes southbound on the LTC until after it passes the A13. As we know only too well from experience when there are incidents at the current crossing traffic cuts through wherever it thinks it might benefit. It is therefore not hard to understand that with a long detour for traffic trying to access the LTC from the A13 and a bottleneck from the M25 onto the LTC, traffic will start trying to cut through anywhere it can, including from the M25 along from junctions 28 and 29. They will likely believe and hope they will be able to access the LTC via the A128 to the Orsett Cock, yet there is no connection to the LTC from the Orsett Cock, and again the Stanford Detour would have to be taken. This would cause chaos to the road network, both strategic and local, again impacting our local area, lives and health.

As you will be aware HE are not, and do not have to, take into account the tens of thousands of new homes and developments in the region unless they have already been granted planning permission. This means tens of thousands of homes that form Local Plans in the region are not taken into account, including other developments and infrastructure that is being planned, unless it already has planning permission, which much of it doesn't.

This includes projects like the huge London Resort theme park that is currently being consulted on, and now includes parking facility in Tilbury at the southern end of the A1089, which again doesn't have direct access from the LTC. This means more traffic would be using the M25 to the A13 to get to the parking facility in Tilbury and therefore putting more pressure in the proximity to the Dartford Crossing.

From all of the above we hope that you will see that the proposed LTC is certainly not going to solve the problems we all suffer with due to the Dartford Crossing, or indeed make journey times more reliable.

On the topic of economic benefits, which appears to be where your concerns lay, although we hope the above has brought some other concerns to light for you to consider too!

As mentioned the current cost of the proposed LTC is sitting at £8.2bn, or nearly £573.5m per mile. More expensive per mile than the questionable HS2, which sits at around £307m per mile of track.

Highways England have now removed things such as the Rest and Service Area, Tilbury Junction, and Tilbury Link Rd from the LTC design. However, this is also a false economy since both the Rest and Service Area and Tilbury Link Rd are still being discussed to be added as separate stand-alone projects.

A consultation for junction improvement for Bluebell Hill (A229) in Kent has launched this week, as that is a junction that would experience considerable negative impact as a result of LTC if it goes ahead. There are other improvements that would need to be addressed and the costs covered as direct result of LTC if it goes ahead.

The negative impact the LTC would have on lives and health would result in additional costs to the NHS.

Plus of course the cost of LTC is not including the negative impact, or cost, to local communities and plans.

We would ask you to seriously consider any support of the proposed LTC in light of all these factors, as well as many others that you can read more about on our website.

Ultimately the proposed Lower Thames Crossing would create a toxic triangle that destroys homes, businesses, greenbelt, ancient woodland, grade 1 agricultural land, wildlife habitats, communities and much more, all at a huge cost to British taxpayers and local communities, including Brentwood.

Thank you for your time, we appreciate your consideration, and would welcome your comments. We look forward to hearing from you, and hope that the council will be able to provide further details of the predicted damage to Brentwood's local economy which was discussed at your recent meeting.

Kind regards

Laura Blake
Chair – Thames Crossing Action Group
www.thamescrossingactiongroup.com