

**Thames Crossing Action Group's representation for the  
Comprehensive Spending Review 2020**

Thames Crossing Action Group is a community action group that represents thousands of people who are strongly opposed to the proposed Lower Thames Crossing. We object to the proposed Lower Thames Crossing for many different reasons, and do not consider the project to be fit for purpose.

We are making this representation to you in relation to the Comprehensive Spending Review as we have serious concerns over the spending of taxpayer's money on the proposed Lower Thames Crossing, especially since it is not fit for purpose in so many ways.

We ask you to reconsider and stop Government spending on the RIS2 projects, including the proposed Lower Thames Crossing and other road projects, and all future road projects moving forward past RIS2.

We are more than aware that most, if not all, of these road projects have been poorly considered and inadequately consulted upon. We consider this to be an unacceptable waste of taxpayers' money.

At a time when we need to be considering the cost to the environment and our health and well-being, more than purely financial cost, to move forward with such destructive and damaging road projects, like the proposed Lower Thames Crossing and others, is ludicrous, especially when they are not fit for purpose.

As well as being completely unfit for purpose, the financial aspect of the proposed LTC is also a false economy for various reasons.

Highways England has not included all aspects in the relevant cost associated with the proposed Lower Thames Crossing. For instance, the alleged removal of the Rest and Service Area and the Tilbury Link Rd, both of which are still being discussed but as stand-alone projects. How can it be considered ethical or correct to remove aspects of a project when they are still being progressed as separate projects, this is definitely a false economy.

In addition there is currently a separate consultation for the Blue Bell Hill improvements in Kent, by Kent Highways which are in direct response to the additional negative impacts to traffic that the proposed LTC would create. Again another false economy that all of these other projects are not having to be included into the LTC budget and project. Accurate consideration of the budget for projects like LTC is essential, and Highways England should not be allowed to carry out such practices as they are, which is most definitely a false economy and unrealistic costing. Highways England and other companies need to be more closely monitored and held accountable for these poor practices. Anything which is directly related to a project should have to be included in the project budget and not be allowed to be broken off into stand-alone projects in an attempt to improve the benefit cost ratio like this.

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The cost that projects like LTC, and other projects, should also have to take into consideration the cost to the NHS. There will be a negative impact on health and well-being due to the LTC and many other road projects and the associated pollution etc. These aspects need to be taken into account when the benefits and costs are considered, before taxpayers' money is spent, and the money should not be spent on projects that will cause further cost in regard to health impacts and the NHS, further adding to the over negative and cost of the project.

The same consideration should be given when spending taxpayers' money on anything harmful to the environment, such as RIS2 and very likely future RIS. The cost to the environment should be considered in full, and taxpayers' money should not be spent on anything which is harmful to the environment. You cannot count your so called economic benefits of road building projects if there is no clean air to breathe.

It is also a false economy for the Government to allow Highways England and the like to destroy trees/hedges/plants/habitat as part of their projects, while we are very importantly spending money on replanting in an attempt to positively impact the environment.

The same with protecting and supporting British farming. Now more than ever we need to be ensuring that our country is as self sustainable as possible, both to strengthen the supply chain for our own food, and to reduce the carbon footprint of our food and drink as much as possible, and reduce the negative impact this has on the environment and air quality. We simply shouldn't be spending money on projects like LTC which destroy agricultural land, including the highest quality grade 1 land.

To be spending out with one hand to try and save and protect our environment, and allowing Government companies to be destroying the same thing on the other hand is unacceptable and ludicrous, and needs to be stopped immediately.

In relation to the proposed LTC particularly the Government would be spending money on a project which hasn't been properly consulted upon, and is ultimately not fit for purpose.

The original remit was for a new crossing to fix the problems we all suffer with due to the Dartford Crossing. However that is no longer the priority for Highways England with this project, to the extent that their own figures prove 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:

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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.**

The current cost of the proposed Lower Thames Crossing which will leave the Dartford Crossing still over capacity is £8.2bn+ of taxpayers' money. We all know these projects never run to budget, so that is a lot of money being spent on something that does not fulfil the original remit of fixing the problems we all suffer with due to the Dartford Crossing. Clearly the proposed Lower Thames Crossing is not fit for purpose, and we do not feel that taxpayers' money should be spent on such a project.

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

[https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/ltc/consultation/supporting\\_documents/LTC%20%20Consultation%20Brochure.pdf](https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/ltc/consultation/supporting_documents/LTC%20%20Consultation%20Brochure.pdf)

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

[https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/ltc/consultation/supporting\\_documents/Environmental%20Impact%20Assessment%20%20Scoping%20Report.pdf](https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/ltc/consultation/supporting_documents/Environmental%20Impact%20Assessment%20%20Scoping%20Report.pdf)

*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) -

[https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/ltc/consultation/supporting\\_documents/LTC%20%20The%20Case%20for%20the%20Project.pdf](https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/ltc/consultation/supporting_documents/LTC%20%20The%20Case%20for%20the%20Project.pdf)

*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) -

[https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/ltc/consultation/supporting\\_documents/LTC%20%20The%20Case%20for%20the%20Project.pdf](https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/ltc/consultation/supporting_documents/LTC%20%20The%20Case%20for%20the%20Project.pdf)

*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.*

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

[https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/ltc/consultation/supporting\\_documents/LTC%20%20Consultation%20Brochure.pdf](https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/ltc/consultation/supporting_documents/LTC%20%20Consultation%20Brochure.pdf)

There are not adequate connections in place between the proposed Lower Thames Crossing and the existing road network.

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.

Also they 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 theme park that London Resort are planning in Kent.

Again this is all a waste of taxpayers' money and a completely false economy to not be properly and fully taking all these aspects into account.

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

The original remit to solve the problems at the Dartford Crossing have been superseded by so called economic growth and benefit. However, the last predicted figure that was provided on the economic benefit of LTC was around £8bn, for a project that is now predicted to cost £8.2bn, which we all know will rise, and also doesn't include all the stand-alone projects, or costs to health and the environment etc as outlined above.

LTC will also have a negative impact on local communities and businesses as highlighted in reports by local authorities including Thurrock Council, and Brentwood Council who have publicly expressed concerns over the negative economic benefits to the local economy as a direct result of the proposed LTC. Our Government should not be spending money out on a project like the proposed LTC.

Serious consideration needs to be given to what the Government are spending money on, especially in this time when the COVID-19 pandemic has hit the economy hard. Proper consideration needs to be given to the impact the pandemic has and is having and taken into account with these projects, and they need to be reassessed, rather than just pushing ahead as though it is business as usual, because we all know that is not the case.

So many questions have and are being asked, and investigated with regard to spending on another Government company/project HS2. The proposed Lower Thames Crossing is actually more expensive per mile than HS2.

HS2 costs is £307m per mile of track, as stated in an article in the Guardian –

[www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/feb/03/at-307m-per-mile-of-track-can-the-cost-of-hs2-be-justified](http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/feb/03/at-307m-per-mile-of-track-can-the-cost-of-hs2-be-justified).

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LTC is predicted to cost £8.2bn and is 14.3 miles long. That means the proposed LTC at the current predicted cost (which is still likely to rise) would cost nearly £573.5m per mile. How can this be considered value for money, or a good benefit cost ratio? Especially when you consider all the false economy aspects that we have previously highlighted, and the fact that the proposed LTC is not fit for purpose?

Yet this is exactly what Highways England, a Government company, is proposing taxpayers' money be spent on.

For this reason we would also state that we consider Highways England are also not fit for purpose and are costing taxpayers way too much money too. Not just with these expensive destructive unfit for purpose projects, like the proposed LTC, but also as a company itself. How can it be considered worthwhile spending of taxpayers money to be wasting so much money on Highways England, with a CEO on a salary of £456,727 – three times that of the Prime Minister. And who knows how much more is spent on the rest of Highways England?

We hope that all the information outlined in this response will clearly explain why we, as a group of over ten thousand ask you to reconsider the spending of British taxpayers' money on Highways England and it's hugely destructive and unfit for purpose Lower Thames Crossing.

We would of course be more than happy to discuss any aspects of this with you in more detail should you wish, and more information can also be found on our website –

[www.thamescrossingactiongroup.com](http://www.thamescrossingactiongroup.com)