

# THAMES CROSSING ACTION GROUP

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

Via email: [public.enquiries@hmtreasury.gov.uk](mailto:public.enquiries@hmtreasury.gov.uk); [rishi.sunak@hmtreasury.gov.uk](mailto:rishi.sunak@hmtreasury.gov.uk)

From: [admin@thamescrossingactiongroup.com](mailto:admin@thamescrossingactiongroup.com)

27<sup>th</sup> March 2022

Dear Rt. Hon. Rishi Sunak MP

We are writing to you as Chancellor of the Exchequer to ask that you call upon the National Infrastructure Commission to review the proposed Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) please.

As the LTC Adjournment Debate<sup>1 2</sup>, called by Adam Holloway MP for Gravesham highlighted, the unanimous opinion of the MPs present was that the proposed LTC would be hugely destructive and harmful, is not fit for purpose, and would not solve the problems at the Dartford Crossing.

You will be aware that the cost of the proposed LTC is now up to £8.2bn, a considerable increase from £3.72bn in 2016.

The current cost of the proposed LTC is more expensive per mile than the highly controversial HS2.<sup>3</sup>

The LTC project has morphed from being about fixing the problems at the Dartford Crossing, into being about economic development in Kent and Essex. National Highways own evidence shows that the Dartford Crossing would still be over capacity even if the proposed LTC goes ahead<sup>4</sup>. National Highways have also refused to share an estimated figure on the economic benefits of the project.

Construction costs in general are rising across the industry.

In addition, at a recent National Highways industry summit<sup>5</sup>, there were plenty of mentions of lower carbon options costing over 3 times as much as traditional options. With the latest news that National Highways aim to make the proposed LTC the greenest road ever built in the UK (a surprising claim considering it is currently estimated to emit over 5 million tonnes of carbon emissions<sup>6</sup>), the cost can only rise higher.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://parliamentlive.tv/event/index/7164f472-6534-4de5-a0ff-fb82e9d82c7b?in=15:45:15>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=2022-03-24a.526.0#g526.1>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.thamescrossingactiongroup.com/cost-of-the-proposed-ltc/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.thamescrossingactiongroup.com/ltc-not-fit-for-purpose/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://thamesestuary.baevents.co.uk/eventpage/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.thamescrossingactiongroup.com/ltc-carbon-emissions/>

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With the way the government now calculates carbon emission costs, the proposed LTC carbon costs for construction alone have risen by more than 230%. It is estimated that the overall cost (Construction and Operations) of cleaning up the carbon associated with the proposed LTC would be over £1bn.

The proposed LTC would also have severe impacts to the existing road network, which would lead to further investment to be needed to rectify the problems that the proposed LTC would inflict both sides of the river. Not to mention the false economy of removing the proposed Tilbury Link Road from the LTC project, but progressing it as a separate stand-alone project.

And it's not just the financial cost that should be taken into account; there are also the environmental and health costs to consider.

Areas impacted by both the proposed LTC and Dartford Crossing suffer with illegally high levels of air pollution, and the ongoing associated healthcare costs would continue to rise, and have negative and deadly impacts on those in the areas.

As you will also be aware Government have recently written to all Local Authorities to advise that road projects that are likely to increase carbon emissions, and do not cater for active travel are likely to lose funding.<sup>7</sup>

As previously mentioned, the proposed LTC is estimated to emit over 5 million tonnes of carbon. Plus the actual LTC route doesn't allow for any active travel, as only vehicles that can legally use motorways would be able to use the proposed route, with no additional option for active travel across the river. Not only that, due to the lack of adequate connections between the LTC and existing road network, it would also not be viable for bus routes. Thus we believe that the same guidelines for Local Authority funding for roads should be enforced upon all road projects, since climate change issues are not discriminatory of what type of project the carbon emissions come from.

The National Policy Statement for National Networks (NPS NN) is being reviewed, as it is not compliant with UK law on climate grounds. There are also calls for Road Investment Strategy 2 (RIS2) to be re-opened in line with National Highways Licence due to major variations<sup>8</sup> being considered.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/carltonreid/2022/03/13/major-new-roads-in-england-may-have-funding-pulled-if-they-increase-carbon-emissions-or-dont-boost-active-travel/?sh=3c68043644f3>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.newcivilengineer.com/latest/pressure-mounts-on-shapps-to-reopen-24bn-road-investment-plan-15-03-2022/?tkn=1>

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For all of the reasons above, we therefore officially call on you to kindly request the National Infrastructure Commission review the proposed Lower Thames Crossing, and question whether it is deemed value for money, as a matter of urgency.

We thank you for your time and consideration, and look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Thanks and kind regards

Laura Blake

Chair – Thames Crossing Action Group

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*Sent by email to: The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP – Chancellor of the Exchequer, and The Treasury*

*CC to – The Rt Hon Simon Clarke MP - Chief Secretary to the Treasury; The Rt Hon Lucy Frazer QC MP – Financial Secretary to the Treasury; John Glen MP – Minister of State (Economic Secretary); Helen Whately MP – Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury; Adam Holloway MP – Gravesham; Stephen Metcalfe MP – South Basildon and East Thurrock; Jackie Doyle-Price MP – Thurrock; Julia Lopez – Hornchurch and Upminster; Thurrock Council, Gravesham Council, Havering Council.*