



THAMES CROSSING ACTION GROUP

www.thamescrossingactiongroup.com



TCAG – who we are

Together we are stronger!



Thames Crossing Action Group, or TCAG began life as a community action group that represented people in Thurrock.

There were similar groups set up across the water, but we quickly became aware of attempts to divide and conquer, so we joined forces and TCAG took the lead in the fight against LTC. We now represent anyone and everyone who is opposed to the LTC!

In 2017 members of TCAG were refused the opportunity to ask a question at full council, resulting in us being thrown out of the meeting, and a lot of press and media attention followed.

As a result of this the LTC Task Force was created to improve and allow ongoing communications between the council and the public. We have had a seat on the committee from the very beginning.

Now we work with the council on LTC, and appreciate the hard work the council's LTC team have done over the years.

LTC – Some of what would be lost and impacted



LTC fails scheme objectives

LTC wouldn't solve problems at the Dartford Crossing, which has a design capacity of 135,000 vehicles per day, and regularly sees 180,000 per day. We'd need more than 25% reduction to bring it back below capacity. LTC would take as little as 4%. Still leaving the current crossing over capacity.

Not planning how traffic would migrate between the two crossings when there are incidents and there wouldn't be adequate connections. More chaos, congestion, and pollution.

There would be a 50% increase in cross river traffic if the LTC goes ahead, and it would also impact the existing and local road network.

It would be hugely destructive and harmful. Destroying and impacting homes, lives, health and well-being, green belt, woodlands (including ancient woodland), agricultural land (including grade 1 listed), solar farms, wildlife and habitats, countryside (including an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), the environment (around 6.6 million tonnes of carbon emissions), communities, and so much more.

Put simply LTC is not fit for purpose.

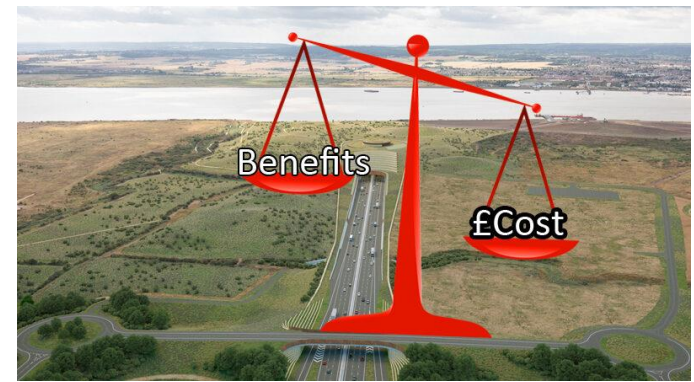


The project's objectives

We have worked with the Department for Transport (DfT) to agree the following objectives for the Lower Thames Crossing:

- to relieve the congested Dartford Crossing approach roads, and improve their performance by providing free-flowing, north-south connectivity
- to improve resilience of the Thames crossings and the major road network
- to improve safety
- to support sustainable local development and regional economic growth in the medium to long term
- to be affordable to Government and users
- to achieve value for money
- to minimise adverse impacts on health and the environment

LTC – Cost and Benefit Cost Ratio



Since 2016 the estimated cost has risen from £4.1bn up to an estimated £10bn+

Since 2016 the adjusted Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) has fallen from 3.1 down to 1.22

The adjusted BCR doesn't take a lot of significant things into account, for example the cost to the NHS for associated healthcare due to air pollution.

The cost is for capital cost not the real cost, ie it doesn't include things like the cost of disbenefits to impacted areas.

It also doesn't consider the additional costs that would come about as a direct result of the LTC if it goes ahead. Additional projects like the Tilbury Link Rd, Blue Bell Hill, A2 dualling, and other roads.

We don't believe adequate consideration has been given to these false economies.

LTC – Accounting Officer Assessment



An Accounting Officer Assessment is an official government document. It is supposed to offer transparency and guidance to Ministers who are making decisions about spending significant amounts of public money.

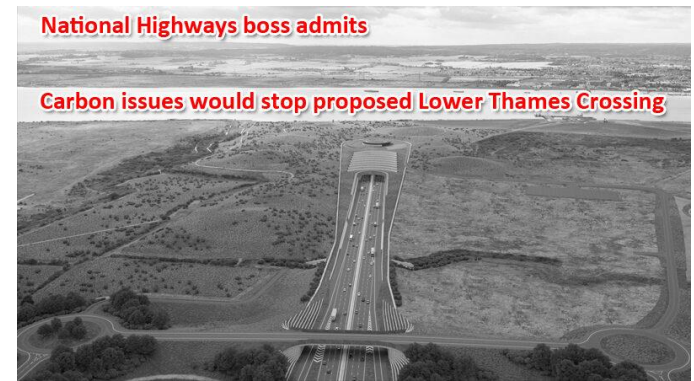
The Public Accounts Committee had been pushing for AOAs like the LTC AOA to be published as there had been a delay. The LTC AOA was finally published in Jan 2023.

The info and figures used in the AOA were 2 years out of date, and was working on costs as of August 2020.

The LTC AOA referred to independent assessment reviews by the Infrastructure Planning Authority. TCAG submitted an FOI request for copies of the reviews. The Cabinet responded to refuse the request.

TCAG have now instructed Leigh Day to write to The Cabinet on our behalf to appeal, by requesting an internal review on the decision. Cabinet have 40 working days to respond.

LTC - 6.6 million tonnes of carbon



The proposed LTC is not compliant with the legal commitment to Net Zero.

A top NH/LTC boss has said that if the carbon problem is not resolved the LTC won't go ahead.

NH have claimed that they would further slash carbon, yet when we and others questioned them as to how they would do this they back away from their bold claims, and had to admit that the technology is not available yet, and that even if it does become available it is highly unlikely to happen until towards the end of the proposed construction period.

Client Earth, Friends of the Earth, and Good Law Project won their legal challenge on the Government's Net Zero Strategy. Government have until 31st March 2023 to come up with a new strategy.

There are a number of other legal challenges on climate grounds against new road projects, largely referencing carbon issues. We are in touch with those making these challenges.

LTC – propaganda and greenwash



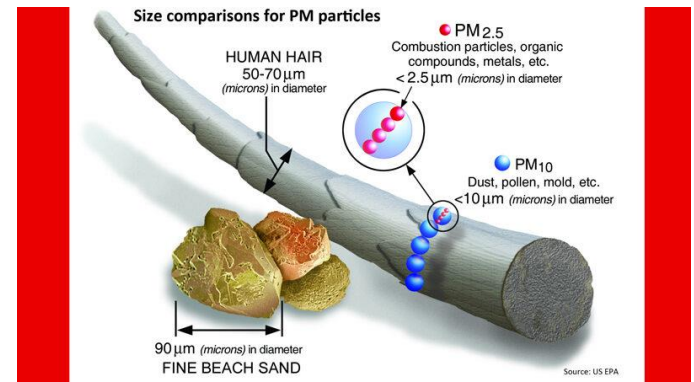
National Highways continue to attempt to greenwash the LTC, when the reality is it would be a hugely destructive and harmful project.

Billed as the greenest road ever built by NH, and given path finder project status by government. Yet there is no evidence to back up these claims. The talk about further slashing carbon, yet when quizzed by us and a leading industry journalist backed away from the bold claim and had no evidence of how they would further slash the carbon.

There is creative accounting in regard to Hole Farm Community Woodland, as NH are attempting to claim it as environmental mitigation and compensation for LTC, despite announcing publicly that it would go ahead regardless of the LTC.

NH recently promoted an LTC Community Fund, the reality is that this was rebranded funds from the central NH Designated Funds that could be applied for by communities regardless of it being earmarked and branded as an LTC Community Fund. They are simply using funds that are already available to try and put a positive spin on a terrible project.

LTC fails on air pollution targets



A lot has happened since Professor Lucas tweeted the above.

New legal targets for air quality, including PM2.5 have been set, and the level is the same as the guidance she tweeted about, so the whole route would fail against UK law now.

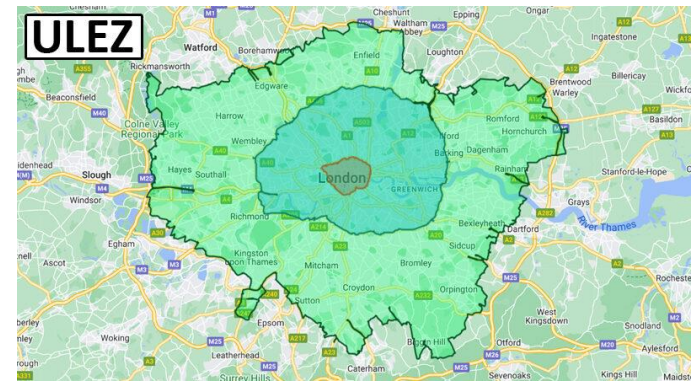
Don't forget EVs still emit PM2.5, and it pollutes the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the soil we grow our food in, it also harms wildlife.

NH have advised us they are still assessing LTC against the new legal levels.

We all deserve the right to breath clean air

Ella's Law (Clean Air Act) should get it's second hearing in the Commons on 24th March

LTC - ULEZ



TCAG have written to the Mayor of London regarding the fact the proposed LTC (if it goes ahead) and the M25 both fall within the London Borough of Havering. However, residents in areas like North Ockendon would be subject to ULEZ expansion, even if just for a weekly grocery shop. Yet traffic rumbling past 24/7 on the M25 and LTC would not be subject to ULEZ with both being NH roads not TfL.

The response we received on his behalf states that TfL have concerns about the proposed LTC and will be making representation in the DCO.

On to the topic of ULEZ in Havering we were told there would be improved air quality due to the ULEZ expansion. Whilst we are of course very much for cleaning up air quality, we have asked what evidence the Mayor and TfL have for this, since the ULEZ consultation stated there would be no improvement. We are waiting their response.

As with the proposed LTC there are also concerns about PM2.5 pollution which would not be covered by ULEZ.

LTC - 'Smart' Motorway by stealth

Evidence from DCO documents shows that the proposed LTC would be a 'smart' motorway by stealth.



“In common with most A-roads, the A122 would operate with **no hard shoulder** but would feature a 1m hard strip on either side of the carriageway. It would also feature technology including **stopped vehicle and incident detection, lane control, variable speed limits and electronic signage and signalling**” - Paragraph 2.2.6 of Section 6.2 of the Transport Forecasting Package.

“Notwithstanding that the Project is to be designated as an all-purpose trunk road (APTR), **the mainline is coded as a three-lane motorway** (except for the northern section between the M25 and A13 where the southbound direction has two lanes)“- Paragraph 6.2.3 of Section 6.2 of the Transport Forecasting Package.

'Smart' technology + motorway design = 'Smart' motorway

We have written to the Transport Secretary and Roads Minister calling for LTC to be paused in keeping with the pause on 'Smart' Motorways.

LTC – Habitats and wildlife



The UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world.

Proposed water vole habitat is in an area known for Mink, water voles main predator.

NH admit there is no proven mitigation for bats when it comes to large road projects.

Surveys have even re-found the ruby-tailed wasp, which has been classed as extinct in the UK, which was on record as not having been seen since 1902.

Maps dating back to 1767 show The Wilderness, a privately owned woodland in South Ockendon. The estate was owned by Sir Richard Saltonstall, Mayor of London in the 1500s.

The LTC route was changed to avoid the nearby landfill site, pushing the LTC through The Wilderness instead of the landfill site.

LTC – food security

Food security is very topical right now.



Empty shelves could be something we have to start getting used to if we don't take food security seriously.

If the proposed LTC goes ahead thousands of acres of farmland would be lost or impacted.

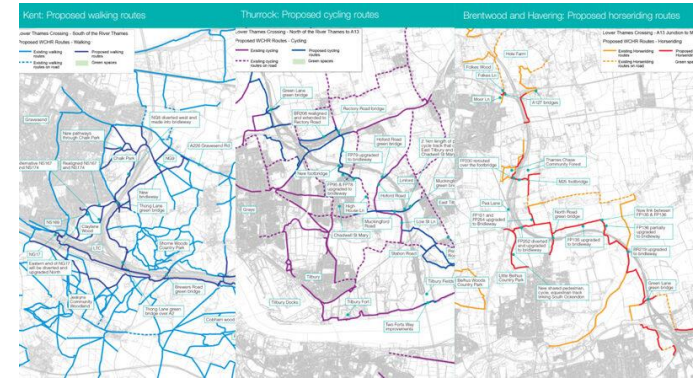
It's not just the direct loss of land, which includes grade 1 listed land, but also the impacts to the land.

PM2.5 not only pollutes the air we breathe but also the water we drink and the soil we grow our food in.

Loss of land also leads to the need to import more food, which results in more miles travelled and larger carbon footprints.

Plus of course the environmental impacts of the LTC contribute towards climate change and further disruption to food growth and production in general.

LTC – active and public transport



Despite government talk about improving active travel and encouraging modal shift, the proposed LTC offers no provision of cross river active travel.

Some of the walking, cycling, horse riding routes NH are claiming as 'new' are actually existing routes that would need to be realigned due to the LTC.

We also question some of the proposed routes that spiral and zig zag like those in Tilbury Fields, which seem to be more about increasing the number of miles of paths for NH benefit, rather than improving active travel for communities.

We have been told by a local bus company that the LTC would not be viable for bus routes, due to the lack of adequate connections.

This does not encourage modal shift, or offer a cleaner and healthier environment for people to get out of cars and walk, cycle and use public transport more.

LTC - alternatives

We do not feel adequate consideration has been given to other better and more sustainable alternatives.



70% of goods in and out of the Port of Dover use the Dartford Crossing. 42% of traffic using the Dartford Crossing is goods vehicles. Yet there are no rail connections to the Port of Dover.

Rail improvements between Ashford and Reading, estimated cost £4.5bn would get more freight off the roads and onto more sustainable rail.

Tesco's are already using more rail freight and have said that this move has helped them ensure better reliability of stocking their shelves.

Kenex tram would offer a sustainable cross river public transport option, and take around 10% of traffic away from the Dartford Crossing.

Evidence shows that new roads lead to more traffic, usually around 50% increase, induced demand, so we cannot simply continue to build more and more roads, we need better and more sustainable options.

LTC – other considerations

There are so many changes going on at the moment.

A lot has changed since the LTC preferred route was announced, so there really is a serious question of the proposal needing to be reassessed.

The National Policy Statement for National Networks that the LTC is being judged against is currently being reviewed because it is outdated and doesn't take things like Net Zero into account.

Welsh Government has recently announced their decision making process will not allow harmful new roads that increase things like carbon emissions or fail to support modal shift.

During a recent oral evidence hearing for the Transport Select Committee inquiry, committee member Ben Bradshaw MP said that given what they had been told it sounds as if the A303 Stonehenge and Lower Thames Crossing are just not going to happen, they're impossible.



TCAG - Networking

We are leading the fight against the proposed LTC.
Over the years our networking has grown.



We now work closely with the likes of Transport Action Network, Woodland Trust, Essex and Kent Wildlife Trusts, Kent and Essex CPRE, Buglife, Community Planning Alliance, South Essex Wildlife Hospital, Essex Badger Protection Group, West Kent Badger Group, Cycling UK, Froglife, and many other NGOs and community action groups around the country.

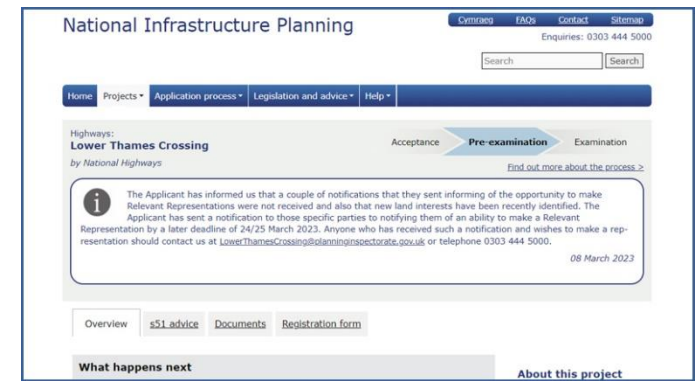
We are in regular contact with MPs, government select committees, councillors, local authorities, community forums, and parish councils. As well as leading academics, and industry experts.

We have built up working relationships with local, regional and national press and media, and have appeared numerous times on radio and tv talking about the LTC.

We realise that the LTC is not just a local road/problem it is the largest road project in the UK, and we are strong believers that together we are stronger, which is why we continue to liaise and work with as many people and groups and we can.

They don't have permission yet

The first attempt to submit the DCO application in 2020 failed and was withdrawn.



In Oct 2022 the second attempt was made, and accepted in Nov for Examination.

Between 9th Jan 2023 – 24th Feb registration took place to participate in the DCO process.

We are now in the Pre-Examination stage

Examination is anticipated to start May/June and will last strictly 6 months

The Examining Authority will then have 3 months to consider and make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport, who takes a further 3 months to consider and announce their decision on whether to grant permission or not.

There is then a 6 week window for legal challenge if there is a case to be had.

There have been questions about Thurrock Council's ability to make representations in the DCO. In particular reference to the council making a Local Impacts Report, which is an important document that the Examining Authority and the Secretary of State for Transport have to take into account when making their decision about the LTC.

TCAG have registered and will be making representations in the LTC DCO.

They don't have permission yet

Latest news broke on 9th March.

The Transport Secretary has announced that whilst the LTC DCO process will still carry on, IF it is granted permission there would be a 2 year delay in starting construction.

Transport Update

Statement made on 9 March 2023

Statement UIN HCWS625

Statement



To date we have spent over £800m on planning the Lower Thames Crossing. It is one of the largest planning applications ever, and it is important we get this right. We remain committed to the Lower Thames Crossing, and the Development Consent Order process will be an important opportunity to consult further to ensure there is an effective and deliverable plan. In order to allow time for this process, and given wider pressures on RIS, we will look to rephase construction by 2 years.



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Obviously in that time a lot will change again. We could have a new government. Things like environmental and traffic modelling should have to be updated. The roads policy should have been reviewed and updated. Costs will definitely have risen even more.

We hope and believe this latest news could be the beginning of the end for this awful road project. The fight continues!

THAMES CROSSING

Essex
ACTION GROUP

South Ockendon Stanford-le-Hope
We say **NO** to the
Lower Thames Crossing
Option C

Tilbury Gravesend
Dartford
Kent
www.tcag.info