

THAMES CROSSING ACTION GROUP

www.thamescrossingactiongroup.com

Lower Thames Crossing TR10032

Unique Reference 20035660

Please accept this submission in response to the Secretary of State letter Deadline 13th March 2025

Thames Crossing Action Group are a community action group which represents thousands of people from all areas opposed to the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC).

During the ExA process we were honored and accepted a seat by the planning inspectorate to sit and participate through the DCO process, which gave us the opportunity to make comments and observations along with stakeholders and relevant parties to the applicant National Highways.

Since the examination process is so fast paced and full on, and time is so limited we are unable to read, process and comment on everything we would like to, we are simply doing our best to comment on what we can. Failure to comment on certain aspects or examination documents does not mean we agree/disagree with other things simply that we do not have time and people power to comment on everything we would like to.

TCAG have been very consistent, submitting questions/observations at every deadline in the effort to hold the applicant accountable.

These can be found under **unique reference 20035660**

In response to the Chancellor, giving her backing to the proposed Lower Thames Crossing, at a time of financial constraints we feel this project is a waste of public money.

The Facts

- On the figures NH have presented the proposed LTC will leave the Dartford Crossing over capacity from day one and within five years will be back at current levels.
- Due to the LTC the A2 at Cobham will have through traffic lanes reduced from four to two in each direction creating major bottle necks.
- The LTC doesn't achieve any of its scheme objectives.
- The published cost doesn't include the cost of the required upgrades on the surrounding roads, which NH withdrew at different stages through the consultation periods, due to the rising costs.
- The LTC will increase traffic accidents, not reduce them.
- Goes against the government's own climate change policy, the increased air pollution, will put added pressure, cost on the NHS.
- The LTC is not value for money, with the cost continuing to rise, at present the cost benefit ratio (BCR) is only 1.2 this means for every £1 spent the government would get back just 20p.
- Is more expensive per mile than HS2.
- Hinder economic growth due to the positioning of the tunnels, being placed where the port wants to expand.

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- The CPRE report called End of the Road explains why it is 100% proven that building new roads increases congestion which has been known since the 1950s.

Please find report link below here;

<https://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/the-end-of-the-road-challenging-the-road-building-consensus/>

IMPORTANT Question for the Secretary of State.

There is a really important question we would like clarified and its about the tunnels, we have been told that the tunnel air ventilation systems will only be turned on if the traffic becomes stationery, we have also been told that vehicles, such as tankards would not need to be escorted through the tunnels. How would this work If an electric vehicle was to catch fire? Wouldn't air being activated make the fire spread to other vehicles causing a chain reaction? These are concerns from residents that have never been addressed by the applicant and NH have never been asked to comment on these concerns all through the DCO process. Perhaps its not made clear due to it being a motorway by stealth a trunk road with no hard shoulder though using smart yet unreliable technology.

Private Funding.

Even if private funding could be found, with the rising costs, what would the government have to offer investors as an incentive? The cost of the Dartford Crossing would have to rise sharply, if this was given as an incentive. This will also be inevitable after the new Silver Town Link and Blackwall Tunnel tolls start 7th April due to pricing being higher than the Dartford Crossing, during peak times this will cause more congestion as road users will use the cheapest alternative and in this case it will be the Dartford Crossing.

Replacing the LTC with the alternative public transport scheme.

At the end of February Thames Crossing Action Group were invited and attended the launch event of Essex -Kent Superlinks, it's a report written by [REDACTED] showing a smarter, cheaper alternative to the LTC, which will release investment and boost economic growth in Essex- Kent and further afield and would cost a fraction of the cost to the LTC.

It was explained that there are approximately 2.6 million people in the southeast of Essex and Kent (that's the equivalent to the estimated population of Kent) who are missing out on job opportunities due to there being no means of public transport locally for them to cross the river Thames, a lot of these people cannot afford a vehicle so a new crossing such as the LTC will not be of any use as there is no provisions to include public transport.

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We would like to point out that this report was well received by MPs, interested parties and got the backing of ASLEF.

Please find the report links below here ;

<https://transportactionnetwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/LTC-Roberts-Report-web.pdf>

<https://transportactionnetwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/TAN-Essex-Kent-Superlinks-web.pdf>

Conclusion

TCAG have looked through the applicant's response to the SoS letter and its perfectly clear that with no amount of greenwashing they can not hide the fact that this scheme is poor value for money and doesn't meet scheme objectives.

There are cheaper alternatives which is better for the environment. It would leave ancient woods in tact to help with air pollution and biodiversity, farm land to produce food stability for our growing population and will have a knock-on effect for economic growth spanning outside the M25 corridor. We hope that common sense will prevail alternatives will be considered and this out of date not fit for purpose road will be scrapped as at present the taxpayer is still subsidising this folly, when stringent cuts are happening in nearly every government department.

Kind Regards,

Thames Crossing Action Group (TCAG Team)