



From: G FITZGERALD [REDACTED]

Sent: 13 August 2024 14:59

To: REEVES, Rachel [REDACTED]

Subject: The Lower Thames Crossing - Application for Development Consent

For the attention of The Rt Hon Rachel Reeves, Chancellor of the Exchequer

Dear Chancellor,

I am writing to you in your role as Chancellor of the Exchequer, as I am strongly opposed to the proposed Lower Thames Crossing and wish to raise my objections with your Office.

I do hope that your team can find some time to read and consider these objections.

There are a multitude of critical and compelling reasons why this scheme should never go ahead and I would appeal to your new and forward-thinking Government to take an informed and balanced decision in deciding where this colossally expensive folly is placed in their list of priorities.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL

Despite the series of manipulated Consultations over the c14 year period that this project has been in the planning, there is no actual evidence that the Proof of Concept, Project Viability or Business Case have ever been appropriately and independently revisited or updated by National Highways (NH).

The evidence against proceeding is overwhelming - no robust or convincing Business Case for this outdated project *has ever* been presented, instead we have had to endure a relentless campaign of misinformation and Greenwashing from NH.

The NH claims that LTC would have a 'large economic benefit', have no basis in fact or substantive evidence to support this exaggerated claim.

This project is now woefully outdated, as are the cost projections.

Time has moved on significantly since the original proposal (which was always seriously flawed) and there have been major changes in opinions, priorities and circumstances, which now render the project completely obsolete and, in the current Economic Climate, deeply offensive.

By NH own admission, the LTC will not resolve the congestion problems in the Dartford area, which it was designed to address.

This would be a massive and totally unacceptable price to pay, Environmentally, Socially and Financially, for this Sticking Plaster solution.

The already extortionate £10+ Billion projected cost of this project has now obviously escalated enormously beyond this figure.

New Costings and Budgets MUST be revealed.

Since this last projected costing, Construction costs have risen North of 30%, Fuel and Energy Prices have more than doubled, Wages are rapidly increasing and Inflation soared into double figures

There must be complete transparency of the real cost - HOW MUCH IS THIS NOW REALLY COSTING?

This is a massive amount of money, surely these taxpayer funds could and should be redirected to;

- Alleviating the Cost-of-Living Crisis / Fuel and Energy Bill burden / Inflation
- the NHS and Social Care
- Privatisation and improvement of the Railways and the establishment of Great British Railways (there is no direct rail link between Kent and Essex, why build yet further road links whilst no rail links exist?)
- Providing better transport links in the North (after the Tory Party abandonment of HS2)
- Improving the terrible state of the roads we already have nationwide
- Bolstering our Defence capabilities in the face of Global unrest and conflicts
- Tackling Climate Change
- Food Security
- etc. etc.

The relatively few deriving any benefit from the proposed 14 mile* LTC pale into insignificance against these nationwide critical and immediate imperatives. (* eventual cost c.£1Billion per mile, for what is essentially a by-pass for the Dartford Crossing!).

ENVIRONMENTAL

How can the continuation of this highly destructive and eye watering expensive road building programme possibly be reconciled with the formal commitments the Government have made to tackling and preventing permanent Environmental disaster?

This ill-fated venture would unleash over 5 million tonnes of Carbon Emissions into the Local Area and wider atmosphere, produce massive levels of Air, Noise and Light Pollution and destroy Community Forest, Ancient Woodland and Grade 1 Agricultural Farmland.

We are the most Nature depleted Country in the World and we have already had deaths in Central London legally attributed to Air Pollution.

The London Borough of Havering is in the top 4 London Boroughs for the highest number of deaths linked to poor Air Quality – there is now a legal precedent for this, so how many more deaths are NH prepared to add?

LTC is a huge Carbon Bomb ticking away until it adds its weight to triggering Climate Catastrophe, yet NH appear happy to cash in while the World burns.

The whole proposed route fails against World Health Organisation Standards for PM2.5 and the UK Law on Air Pollution Levels (PM2.5).

Independent Tests have proven that toxic particles from tyre wear are almost 2,000 times worse than from exhausts, as the weight of EVs increases. So clearly, Electric Vehicles are not 'clean' and the NH advocacy that they are, is just another example of the deception and falsity of their PR Machine.

Estimated harmful emissions could cost the NHS and Social Care £10.4Billion over the next 30 years and this does not factor in the additional devastation the LTC will be directly responsible for.

Any expenditure on roads should be in repairing nationwide the ones we already have, many of which are in a shocking and dangerous state of disrepair.

PROJECT VIABILITY

Given the present far-reaching critical challenges and competing priorities faced by the Government, both domestically and globally, surely more innovative and forward-thinking solutions are necessary, rather than simply building more roads at huge expense and continuing to destroy the Environment.

It is a £multi-billion folly to run a major new tunnel and road parallel to the existing M25 Dartford Crossing and major Motorway. All this is doing is moving any traffic congestion and

bottlenecks onto new junctions.

It is incredulous that there will be no ability to migrate between the two routes in the event of an incident.

Neither is the proposed route viable for Public Transport or Non-Motorised Users.

NH have actually conceded that this solution to easing periods of traffic congestion at the existing Dartford Crossing is neither truly fit for purpose or a long-term solution!

Even Thurrock Council, within the Crossing area, state it will barely reduce congestion on Dartford Crossing by 4% against the design capacity claims of 25%.

It is time to go back to the drawing board.

Surely, a far better option would be to give proper deliberation to the Kent Essex Tramline under the Thames, which could conceivably launch by 2032. This is an infinitely cheaper (c. £800M) and Greener alternative.

Furthermore, as the proposed LTC is a Smart Motorway in all but name then it should obviously fall under the present moratorium on further road construction pending the Safety Review.

The fact is, this project is a Cash Cow for NH and they will go to any lengths and employ any tactics to protect and promote it. NH has been shown to have vastly over reported the benefits, whilst massively under reporting the Environmental Damage, Emissions Levels and Costs.

This has included manipulation of data and statistics, suppression of Expert Opinion on the true levels of Emissions and bullying attempts to obfuscate the FOI process, all of which have been uncovered and are well publicised and widely reported.

NH activities seem to be free of any Public accountability or Checks & Balances. They continue to conduct an increasingly desperate propaganda campaign claiming Green credentials, when clearly this is a massive Environmentally damaging venture and Money Pit for Taxpayers funds.

This ill-conceived project, is entirely discredited by all impartial Planning Adjudicators and Environmental Organisations

SUMMARY

This is not just about different viewpoints or whether you support the LTC project or not.

Clearly, it is impossible to reconcile the Government's Environmental Policy and legally binding Commitments to Carbon Net Zero with the wanton neglect and hypocrisy of pressing ahead relentlessly with an obscenely expensive, destructive and now totally unnecessary road building programme. All at a time when these funds are so desperately needed elsewhere.

Please do not ignore these imperilled warnings. We do not need, nor can we absorb more roads and the consequential Environmental destruction that the LTC project would certainly result in.

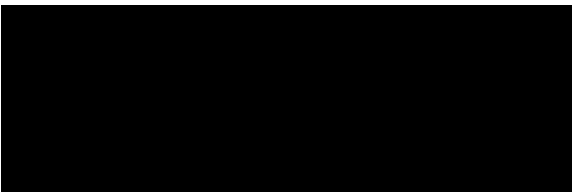
I implore you to examine and assess this project in forensic detail before making a decision - it is a monumental waste of Public (or Private) funds.

Please spend our money elsewhere, where it is so desperately needed.

"Building Nothing is the Best Solution" Nick Harris, NH CEO

Respectfully Yours

Gary Fitzgerald



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