

From:

Subject:

Date:

FW: Budget savings, moving money to real priorities, the Road Programme and review and the Lower Thames Crossing.
29 September 2024 10:55:13

Dear Transport Secretary (and Chancellor of the Exchequer)

I have just written a letter on the Transport Network Action template but with additions from my knowledge of all types of road schemes for the last 50 years and in particular Thames Crossings since 1984.

I had recently written (as below) to Ms Rosie Duffield but, with today's news, I do not believe that there is any likelihood of an urgent meeting between Ms Duffield and yourself in the immediate future.

In this case I would ask you for many reasons not to give any, yet to be approved, National Highways Road schemes approval. I would welcome a personal conversation on the matter with you or your Ministerial (and or Political) advisers.

I am also still involved with the Local Government Technical Advisers Group (LGTAG - basically a Local Government Chief Engineers society). They support the general thrust of severely curtailing the National Roads programme and spending the money in better ways however they are not involved specifically (and Nationally) on Thames Crossings. LGTAG have written to Lord Peter Hendy on the matter.

Kind regards

John Elliott

Sent: 17 September 2024 15:19

To:

Subject: Budget savings, moving money to real priorities, the Road Programme and review and the Lower Thames Crossing.

Dear Rosie

I have been involved with Highways for my whole career since 1972. I have had considerable involvement with National Road schemes as well as Local Authority schemes. In particular I have had involvement with east London river crossings since 1984.

It is a well accepted fact amongst most Transport Professionals that the present programme of road enlargements by National Highways are deeply flawed. I and most in the profession, outside central government, recognise that staff dealing with Highways in the Department of Transport and National Highways have a major interest in continuing as much of the road programme as they can.

Many senior politicians in the past have accepted that road building near big cities just doesn't work. Peter Bottomley said, probably about 1990, that he wasn't going to build roads for people to commute in their one and a half tonne metal vests. Steve Norris said in 1994, just after a national report came out showing that new roads generate substantial extra traffic, that he wouldn't have built as many roads if we had known this before. John Gummer/Lord Deben has kept to the same line ever since. John Prescott followed with pro-public transport policies during the first decade of this century.

The evaluation of road schemes (especially the so called economic evaluation) is artificial at best with assumptions that there is substantial evidence they are just plain wrong.

All this applies in spades to the Lower Thames Crossing. However at first sight it would seem to solve the congestion problems on the M25. It may do for a couple of years but will fill up and cause massive congestion elsewhere within 5 years. This will certainly apply to the M2 and A2 in the Canterbury constituency.

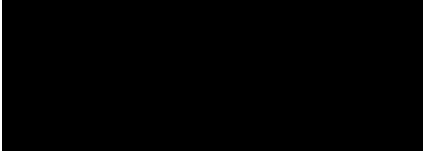
The case against it may be difficult politically but some of £10bn saved from not constructing it could be used for other most worthy causes (eg potholes/reconstruction of 97.5% of the county's highway network, school and hospital buildings).

I also recognise that keeping the Civil Servants on side is critical – many of the Transport and Civil Engineering staff in the country could be redeployed on the real infrastructure priorities.

I would welcome an initial discussion with you and if you thought worthwhile attend with you a meeting with Louise Haigh or her SPAD.

Kind regards

John Elliott



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