

From: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: The reply to your correspondence, ref TO-00024121 is attached
Date: 22 November 2024 18:07:37
Attachments: [REDACTED]

I have recently returned from staying with our old neighbours from when we used to live near Antwerp (and not a pothole nor crack in the road between Brecht and Dunkirk) and now given some further thought to your reply - for which I thank you.

I am not convinced that the approach roads to Dartford would require widening for my proposal as when the tunnels do flow freely so does traffic on the M25 from Junction 3 to the crossing. Many of the hold-ups are due to the entrained information (compression wave) from the closure of a tunnel for the dangerous goods convoys, a problem my bridge would eliminate. Observation of traffic from the east on the slip roads from the M20 and A2 would suggest that the substantial majority of northbound traffic originates from the south and west. To take this traffic to the new crossing would certainly require an expensive fly-over across the existing roundabout at Junction 2 - apart from the congestion at the roundabout, the existing slip road to the eastbound carriageway is far too short and potentially dangerous. I accept that traffic heading east on the A2 from the west would likely remain on it past M25 Junction 2 to the LTC (compounding the slip road problem) - unless your calculations of the benefit of the LTC in relieving congestion at Dartford are correct, in which case presumably much would switch back to Dartford.....

I take your concerns about resilience but the new Silvertown crossing should make the Blackwall Tunnel a viable emergency alternative.

You make no reference to the relative costs of the two schemes - too embarrassing perhaps? Even if the Dartford scheme delivered only 80% of the claimed benefits of a LTC, and I would expect it to do better than that, it certainly would not cost anything like 80% of the £9bn plus cost of a LTC, let alone the £300m reportedly spent so far on the planning application and outline design. Many engineers, including those who built HS1, pointed out the folly of building, not a more than adequate 300km/hr HS2, but a 400km/hr one at a multiple of the cost. However, the Department persisted with the latter and where are we now?

Finally, please confirm that my proposal reached the eyes of the Secretary of State.

regards

Colin Wright

----- Original Message -----

[REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 5th 2024, 16:08
Subject: The reply to your correspondence, ref TO-00024121 is attached

Dear Colin Wright,

Please find attached the response to your recent correspondence to the Department for Transport.

Thank you,

Department for Transport
PO Correspondence



Department
for Transport

Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR
Tel: 0300 330 3000

Web Site: www.gov.uk/dft
Your Ref: 00024121

Colin Wright
[REDACTED]

5 November 2024

Dear Colin,

Thank you for your correspondence of the 8 October addressed to Louise Haigh about Tunnel project Proposal and Dartford. Your enquiry has been passed on the Correspondence Team Strategic Roads division for a response.

We would like to thank you for taking the time to share your detailed proposal for an alternative location for the Lower Thames Crossing. We recognise your concerns about current delays. Unreliable journeys on the Dartford Crossing have become normal. Northbound, during the evening peak, 19 out of 20 journeys are delayed, two thirds of journeys take twice as long as they should and 3 times a month a journey will take 5 times longer than they should. The Lower Thames Crossing will relieve the pressure between Kent and Essex, by taking around 20% - 13 million – of vehicles off the Dartford crossing, almost doubling road capacity across the Thames east of London by creating a direct, free-flowing connection between some of the country's most vital roads.

In regards to your statements about the local road network, Gravesham Council has raised similar concerns. As part of its objections, it has raised concerns around traffic potentially redirecting between the A2/M2 and M20 – particularly along the A227, A228 and A229. The modelling provides details on predicted changes and, while traffic on these roads will likely increase, it does not warrant a direct intervention. However, National Highways has worked with Kent County Council, providing data to aid the case and development of an upgrade to the A229.

Although another crossing at Dartford may seem to be the simplest the solution, the Department for Transport and National Highways have been through a lengthy selection process to identify and assess potential locations for the crossing. The proposed route was considered the best balance between meeting the scheme objectives and impacting the environment and local communities.

Approach roads from the west and the east are already heavily congested so traffic would not be able to reach a new crossing provided at Dartford. Also, all options at Dartford require rebuilding junctions and widening of the A282 and M25, which would be very disruptive over a long construction period. Compounding this issue, the approach roads and M25 are in a heavily built-up area – increasing their capacity would be massively expensive and require the demolition of many houses and other buildings.

If a new crossing at Dartford was constructed, the strategic road network would still have poor resilience with a potentially vulnerable single crossing point for freight. Despite being managed around the clock by a dedicated team of 300 people, the high volume of traffic means it has one of the highest incident rates in the country - around 3000 each year, meaning even smallest incident can cause mile-long traffic jams and create gridlock on the local road network. The proposed location of the Lower Thames Crossing will improve resilience by providing an alternative strategic route should there be an incident north or south of the Dartford Crossing or on the surrounding road network.

Thank you for your engagement with this matter. We hope that you will find this reply helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Correspondence Team, Strategic Roads