

Emailed to: lrc.consultation@traverse.ltd
info@lowerthamescrossing.co.uk

8 September 2021

Dear Sirs,

Lower Thames Crossing Community Impacts Consultation 2021

I am writing to you as lead officer for Transport for the South East (TfSE) in response to the consultation on your Lower Thames Crossing Community Impacts Consultation.

Transport for the South East (TfSE) is a sub-national transport body (STB) bringing together leaders from across the local government, business, and transport sectors to speak with one voice on our region's strategic transport needs.

Our principal decision-making body, the Partnership Board, brings together representatives from our sixteen constituent local transport authorities, five Local Enterprise Partnerships, district and borough authorities, protected landscapes, National Highways, Network Rail and Transport for London.

Our transport strategy was agreed by the Partnership Board in July 2020. It sets out a 2050 vision for the development of the South East transport system, which includes a commitment to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050, at the latest.

As stated in our responses to the statutory consultation on the scheme which took place at the end of 2018, the further consultation in March 2020, and the design refinement consultation in August 2020, TfSE welcomes proposals for a new Lower Thames Crossing (LTC). Our Transport Strategy published in July 2020 identified the need for improvements to the strategic connectivity between the international gateways. The LTC will enhance connectivity between the port of Dover and key customers in the Midlands and the North as well as providing resilience for the Dartford Crossing.

Whilst TfSE considers that it is important to facilitate improved connectivity to our international gateways, this needs to be undertaken in ways that minimise impacts on the environment and communities. The TfSE Transport Strategy highlights the need for improving air quality and achieving net zero-carbon by the year 2050. Road transport is a leading source of carbon emissions and it is

imperative that the completion of this scheme does not counteract the efforts of local authorities and central government in improving area quality and achieving net-zero carbon. TfSE continue to expect that in developing the scheme details, National Highways continue to have due regard for the environmental impacts of the scheme, particularly in relation to air quality, and the impacts on protected landscapes, and that appropriate mitigation is provided.

It is also crucial that in continuing to develop the Lower Thames Crossing, the scheme is set in its wider context and that a way is found of maximising more local benefits alongside the wider strategic aims of the scheme. The LTC will provide a new connection between Kent and Essex, but a way needs to be found to ensure that the more local opportunities and benefits that could be facilitated by that connection are not missed.

The additional capacity and congestion relief to the Dartford crossing that the new LTC will provide is welcomed, however, with the creation of this new strategic route there will be increased pressure and wider traffic impacts on both the strategic and local road networks within the TfSE area. It is vital that the Strategic Road Network (SRN) is not looked at in isolation and that wider network improvements including those required on the local road network are delivered alongside the new LTC to maximise the benefits and ensure the success of the new crossing whilst also minimising the impacts on local communities.

Therefore, whilst we welcome the inclusion within RIS2 that the Brenley Corner and A2 Access to Dover schemes are to be developed as pipeline schemes for RIS3, it is essential not only that these schemes are delivered in a timely manner alongside the LTC, but that the wider impacts across the local road network are also considered holistically. A number of schemes led by Kent County Council which will provide capacity enhancements on the local road network feature within TfSE's priority schemes for the Major Road Network (MRN) and Large Local Major (LLM) programmes. There needs to be firm commitment to delivering these wider schemes and we would welcome the opportunity to work closely with both National Highways and Kent County Council to ensure that the right package of mitigation and complementary measures is brought forward alongside the LTC across the highway network as a whole.

We previously raised concern over the absence of any rest and service facilities within the design. TfSE's recent Freight Logistics and International Gateways Study that was developed as part of our Transport Strategy, recognised that inappropriate lorry parking is already a significant issue in Kent and the omission of appropriate rest and service facilities will only further exacerbate this issue.

We very much welcome the increased engagement and information sharing that TfSE has had with National Highways regarding the scheme recently, and trust that this will continue as development of the Lower Thames Crossing progresses.

This is an officer response. The TfSE Partnership Board meets on 21 October 2021 and will consider this draft response and a further iteration of it may therefore follow.

Yours sincerely,



Rupert Clubb
Lead Officer, Transport for the South East