

# The Lower Thames Crossing



# A guide to completing the Consultation Questionnaire

- These notes are purely to help you make sense of the questionnaire, to explain what each question refers to, and to highlight some of the issues you might want to consider when answering the questions.
- **This is not an organised campaign response.** This guide does not provide responses for you – these must be your own. You can support or oppose the Lower Thames Crossing, or comment on aspects of it.
- This guide does not cover all the questions, and only refers to issues on the Kent side of the river.
- You do not have to answer all the questions. If you have something you wish to say, say it. If you have nothing to say, say nothing.
- If there is anything you would like to see changed or improved about the current plans for the crossing, this is your chance to tell them – **don't waste it!**
- The one thing you should not do is ignore it – it is coming in one form or another!

# 1. The need for the Lower Thames Crossing

- Question 1 is all about the case Highways England has made to locate the Lower Thames Crossing east of Gravesend, and whether you agree with their case that it is needed and that it needs to be here.
- The stated case for the crossing is to boost the economy, to ease congestion at Dartford, to provide quicker journeys, to support local growth, and to create a better future (although who for is not clear).
- You might agree that *something* needs to be done. The Dartford Crossing is not fit-for-purpose and subject to frequent incidents, delays, and disruption. You might agree that a new crossing is needed, but not here.
- But make no mistake. They are not asking you whether you agree that there's a case for a new Lower Thames Crossing somewhere along the river; they are asking whether you agree with their case that we need the Lower Thames Crossing **east of Gravesend**.

# 1. The need for the Lower Thames Crossing

In considering your answer to the question, you might want to ask yourself:

- Would there be a need for another crossing if they sorted out the problems at Dartford?
- Is locating the Lower Thames Crossing east of Gravesend the best solution to relieve traffic and congestion at Dartford and on the M25?
- Would a new Lower Thames Crossing just generate additional traffic and create more problems?
- Do I want to promote growth and development in my local area?
- Is it acceptable for Highways England to seek to reduce the noise and pollution at Dartford by spreading it other people?
- Would it be better to make more use of rail or shipping, instead of building a new road crossing?

**Q1a.** Do you agree or disagree that the Lower Thames Crossing is needed?

<input type="checkbox"/>					
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know

# 1. The need for the Lower Thames Crossing

**Q1b.** Please let us know the reasons for your response to Q1a and any other views you have on the case for the Lower Thames Crossing.

- For this question, they give you a box so you can explain **why** you gave the answer you gave.
- Of course, you might simply **agree** that the new crossing is needed and that it needs to be east of Gravesend.
- You might agree that a new crossing is needed, but not here. Bear in mind that if you agree, they will present this as “the majority of respondents agreed with our case for the Lower Thames Crossing east of Gravesend”. If you don’t think it should be east of Gravesend, you should **disagree** and state the reasons. You will have more opportunity to comment on the location in Question 2.
- Alternatively you might just **disagree** that a crossing is needed at all.
- Or you might decide that you don’t know, or undecided. It’s up to you.
- It’s your decision.

## 2. Our preferred route for the Lower Thames Crossing

**Q2a.** Do you support or oppose our selection of the preferred route for the Lower Thames Crossing?

<input type="checkbox"/>					
Strongly support	Support	Neutral	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Don't know

- They are talking about the whole route, from the M25 in Essex to the M2 in Kent. In other words, do you agree that they have chosen the right location?
- Do you think Option C east of Gravesend was the right decision? If you remember, they only offered us a choice of routes east of Gravesend back in 2016. The majority of respondents opposed their preferred routes. We expected to see Dartford included in the 2016 consultation, but it wasn't there.
- Many people thought Option A14 (the tunnel linking the M25 from south of junction 2 to north of junction 30) was the best route, but this was dismissed.
- So – do you support their selection of a route east of Gravesend? If so, tick the box. If you don't agree, then tick the box to oppose it.

## 2. Our preferred route for the Lower Thames Crossing

**Q2b.** Do you support or oppose the changes we have made to the route since our preferred route announcement in 2017?

Strongly support |  Support |  Neutral |  Oppose |  Strongly oppose |  Don't know

Most of the changes are north of the river. South of the river, the overall changes to the route since 2017 have mainly been to extend the tunnel, widen the A2/M2 to 12 lanes, and further changes to the A2 junction. Details of the changes are covered in question 3.

Even if you don't agree with the location of the crossing, you might support some of the changes they've made – or not. Use the consultation to comment on the changes they've made, and to request further changes or improvements you would like to see.

## 2. Our preferred route for the Lower Thames Crossing

**Q2c.** Please let us know the reasons for your response to Q2a-Q2b and any other views you have on our selection of a preferred route for the Lower Thames Crossing.

Another box to fill in.

- If you don't agree how they arrived at their decision to locate the crossing east of Gravesend, tell them
- If you think the crossing is in the wrong place, tell them.
- If you still think Dartford, or Option A14 would be better, tell them.
- If there are changes you would like to see, tell them.
- If you are happy with the route east of Gravesend and the changes they've made, tell them.

### 3. Sections of the route

#### South of the river in Kent

They have made some changes. They have extended the tunnel by 600 metres. They've widened the approach road from 2 lanes in each direction to 3 lanes in each direction, but without any hard shoulders. They've widened the A2 to 12 lanes down to the M2. They have re-designed the A2 junction to improve access to and from the A2/M2. (Please note, access to the A2 eastbound from Gravesend East is covered in Question 4.) Do you support the changes?

Do you support the route from Chalk up through Southern Valley Golf Course, under Thong Lane, and out to the A2? Are you happy with their plan to widen the A2 to 12 lanes down to the M2?

**Q3a.** Do you support or oppose the proposed route south of the river?

<input type="checkbox"/>					
Strongly support	Support	Neutral	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Don't know

## South of the river in Kent

**Q3b.** Please give us your comments or any other views you have on the proposed route south of the river, including structures such as bridges, embankments and viaducts.

The tunnel has been extended by 600 metres. That is definitely an improvement. Is it enough, or do you think they should extend it further?

Southern Valley golf course will have to go. Are you happy with that?

They plan a 'green bridge' where Thong Lane crosses over the main link road, a flyover with a grass verge either side. Is that a proper green bridge, or should they make it wider with green cut-&-cover?

The A2/M2 will be widened to 12 lanes all the way from the M2 to the A2 junction. This will mean the loss of the green central reservation, and encroachment on countryside either side. How do you feel about that?

They intend to demolish Brewers Road flyover to accommodate the widened A2/M2 carriageway.

**If you want any improvements or changes to the design, then tell them.**

But if you are entirely happy with the route south of the river, let them know.

## 3. Sections of the route

### The crossing

**Q3c.** Please give us your comments on the tunnel, the north and the south tunnel entrances and any other feedback you have on this part of the proposed route.

- The tunnels will be 3 lanes wide in each direction, with no hard shoulder.
- Is it in the right place?
- They looked at extending the tunnel south of the river by 600 metres, 800 metres, and 1200 metres. In the end, they decided to extend it by 600 metres. It's an improvement, but is it enough? If you think they should extend it even further, then tell them.
- If you have concerns about the service access road at the A226, tell them.
- If you are completely happy with the tunnel, you can let them know.

### 3. Sections of the route

#### North of the river in Thurrock, Essex and Havering

What do you think about the route north of the river, from Tilbury to M25 junction 29?

Since this guide is designed for respondents south of the river, some might not have a strong view of the route north of the river. Others will have their own opinions. But remember that the route north of the river leads here. If you support it, it means you are supporting a route that leads to the east of Gravesend. You have your choice.

**Q3e.** Please give us your comments or any other views you have on the proposed route north of the river, including structures such as bridges, embankments and viaducts.

If you have any comments on the route north of the river, put them in the box.

Remember, you do not have to answer all the questions.

# 4. Connections

## South of the crossing

This is mainly about the connections to the A2 junction, and its impact on the existing road network. Gravesend East will lose its direct access to the A2/M2 eastbound. Access to the A2 eastbound will be via 6 or 7 roundabouts to Brewers Road in Shorne.

Shorne and will lose its direct access to the A2 westbound at Halfpence Lane. Access to the A2 westbound from Shorne will be via 5 roundabouts to Gravesend East.

The proposed 2-way link road between Gravesend East and Halfpence Lane will also carry traffic exiting from the M2 and the Lower Thames Crossing. Traffic from the A2 and A289 to Gravesend East will also have to use it. This is likely to be a very busy road, adding to congestion at Gravesend East, Halfpence Lane, and Brewers Road.

**Q4a.** Do you support or oppose the proposed junction between the Lower Thames Crossing and the M2/A2?

<input type="checkbox"/>					
Strongly support	Support	Neutral	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Don't know

## 4. Connections South of the crossing

**Q4b.** Please let us know the reasons for your response to Q4a and any other views you have on the relationship between the Lower Thames Crossing and the existing road network south of the crossing, including new bridges, underpasses and diversions.

- If you are not happy that access to the A2 eastbound from Gravesend East will be via 6 or 7 roundabouts to Brewers Road, then ask them to look again.
- If you are not happy that access to the A2 westbound from Shorne will be via 5 roundabouts to Gravesend East, then ask them to look again.
- If you are not happy with a 2-way link road linking Brewers Road, Thong Lane, new exits from the motorway and LTC, and Gravesend East, then tell them.
- If you are worried this will create a rat-run through Thong, and attract extra traffic through Shorne and other villages, then tell them.
- If you entirely are satisfied with their proposals, and the impact it will have on the local roads, tell them.

# 4. Connections

## North of the crossing

This refers to the proposed Tilbury junction, the A13/A1089 junction and the junction with the M25. It also refers to the relationship between the Lower Thames Crossing and the existing road network, including new bridges, underpasses and diversions.

- Questions 4c, 4d, 4e, and 4f ask your views on the connections north of the river.
- Since this is primarily a guide for those living south of the river, they are not in the scope of this guide.
- However, if you have views on the link road and its connections to the road network north of the river, you should tell them here.
- You might want to consider the likely impact this will have on traffic on their local roads.
- If you have nothing to say, say nothing. You do not have to answer all the questions

## 5. Walkers, cyclists and horse riders

There will inevitably be disruption to Public Rights Of Way during the 7-year construction period.

Footpath NG7 from the bottom of Thong Lane towards Shorne, and NG8 from Thong Lane/Vigilant Way towards Chalk Church, will be diverted across a footbridge over the tunnel approach road.

Footpaths NS167/174 between Thong and Claylane Wood, and NS167/169 between Thong and Michaels Gardens will be diverted through an underpass and across 2 bridges over the A2 junction slip roads. This will no longer be a pleasant walk.

The footpaths/cycle tracks alongside the A2 will also be diverted to avoid the new A2 junction.

Users of these pathways should familiarise themselves with the proposals before responding.

**Q5a.** Do you support or oppose our proposals in relation to public rights of way?

Strongly support

Support

Neutral

Oppose

Strongly oppose

Don't know

## 6. Environmental impacts and how we plan to reduce them

- Highways England admit that there will be adverse impacts on noise, air quality, and the environment in the area.
- They will seek to minimise the adverse impacts, and to mitigate the damage to the environment.
- On balance, they believe the adverse impacts on people east of Gravesend will be more than offset by the benefits to people at Dartford.

**Q6a.** Do you agree or disagree with the proposed measures to reduce the impacts of the project?

<input type="checkbox"/>					
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know

## Q6b. Please let us know the reasons for your response to Q6a and any other views you have on the environmental impacts of the Lower Thames Crossing

- Do you have any concerns about noise, emissions, air quality, or other potential pollution aspects? Do you have any suggestions how they can reduce the impact?
- The maps show that the land behind Astra Drive will be planted out with trees as environmental mitigation and to reduce noise impacts. Do we have any guarantees that this is permanent?
- Do you consider that the green bridge proposed at Thong Lane is adequate for wildlife and to prevent severance between natural habitats, and to mitigate against noise?
- How does Highways England propose to mitigate against the impact of a 12-lane highway adjacent to ancient woodland and Kent AONB?
- Are you happy with the state of maintenance and litter on roads and verges currently managed by Highways England, such as the A2/M2 and their slip roads? How do they propose to maintain the new roads and verges without hard shoulders?
- Are there any other assurances, guarantees, or mitigation measures you think are needed?

## 7. Development boundary

South of the river, Highways England plans to demolish 4 properties, and to take 2.32km<sup>2</sup> of land during the construction period, and 2.55km<sup>2</sup> of land permanently. That equates to around 575 acres and 630 acres respectively, stretching from Chalk, south to the A2 at Singlewell, and eastwards down to the M2 at Strood.

**Q7a.** Do you support or oppose the proposed area of land we require to build the Lower Thames Crossing?

<input type="checkbox"/>					
Strongly support	Support	Neutral	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Don't know

**Q7b.** Please let us know the reasons for your response to Q7a and any other views you have on the land we require to build the Lower Thames Crossing.

Do you think the amount of land required is reasonable? If not, give a reason.

When questioned, they could not confirm that the land put aside for environmental mitigation (such as tree planting) would remain within their control or ownership.

## 8. Proposed rest and service area, and maintenance depot

- Their proposal provides for a rest and service area, and a maintenance depot just north of the river near Tilbury junction. Questions 8a, 8b, and 8c refer to this.
- You might be happy that this is across the river and not south of the river. No doubt some of our friends across the river would prefer to see it over this side.
- On the other hand, you might not wish this on anybody.
- If you are happy with this going to Tilbury, then support it (and hope that they will not be urging Highways England to locate it in Kent).
- Alternatively, you might think that there is no need for a rest and service area anywhere along the route.
- Remember, you can be neutral, or choose not to answer this question at all if you are not sure.

## 9. Traffic

The Lower Thames Crossing is expected to generate up to 60,000 extra crossings a day due to “induced demand” and the release of “suppressed demand”. The Lower Thames Crossing itself is expected to carry up to 80,000 vehicles a day. Up to 24% of these will be HGVs.

Traffic levels on the M25 at Dartford and on the A2 west of Gravesend are expected to reduce, but traffic on the A2 east of the LTC, and on the M2 and A229 is expected to increase significantly.

Highways England say that they have modelled traffic forecasts for most local roads (eg Thong Lane, Valley Drive, Pear Tree Lane, Henhurst Road, Sole Street, A227, etc,) but they have not published them. Why not? How can they consult without providing the information?

Sketch maps they have published indicate peak traffic in Thong Lane, Pear Tree Lane, Valley Drive, and Henhurst Road will increase by between 101 and 500 vehicles an hour. What measures would you like to see to mitigate or reduce this?.

They have only modelled for ‘normal’ operation, ie without any incidents at Dartford. These incidents regularly cause 10 mile tail backs. In the event of a problem at Dartford, what route do you think M25 traffic will take from junction 5? What route would it take from junction 3?

## 9. Traffic

**Q9a.** Do you agree or disagree with the view that the Lower Thames Crossing would improve traffic conditions on the surrounding road network?

<input type="checkbox"/>					
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know

**Q9b.** Please let us know the reasons for your response to Q9a and any other views you have on the Lower Thames Crossing's impact on traffic.

- Will the LTC generate more traffic?
- What will be the impact on local roads, including the A227, A228, and A229?
- What rat runs will be created during normal operation, as well as abnormal operation?
- Will the LTC work without A229 improvements? Should they be costed into this project?
- Will the LTC work without improved access to the A2 from the M25 at junction 2? Should this be costed into this project?
- If you agree that the Lower Thames Crossing would improve traffic conditions on the surrounding road network, then please feel free to say so.

# 10. Charges for using the crossing

Please give us your views on our proposed approach to charging users of the crossing.

Note that they intend to seek flexibility, by this they mean differential charging. In other words, they may charge differing amounts at Dartford and the LTC in order to 'balance' the use of both crossings. Therefore if the LTC does not attract sufficient traffic, they could lower the charges for using the LTC to encourage more traffic to use it, or (perhaps more likely) increase the charges at Dartford to discourage traffic from using it. Or vice versa. The indicative charging regime for using the LTC ranges from half, to one and a half times (50% to 150%) the Dart Charge.

Hazardous loads will not need escorting through the LTC, and it is possible that tankers will be directed to the LTC to help reduce the number of stoppages at Dartford.

They also plan to have the flexibility to vary the charges for different classifications of vehicles. Highways England say that HGVs will be "encouraged" to use the LTC, and it is expected that up to 24% of vehicles using the LTC will be HGVs.

There is nothing specific about extending the Local Resident Discount scheme to residents of Gravesham. At the moment, residents of Dartford and Thurrock pay £10 for 50 crossings plus 20p for each additional crossing, or £20 a year for unlimited crossings. If you think that residents of Gravesham should be entitled to the same discount scheme, then you should say so.

# 11. Building the Lower Thames Crossing

The main tunnel boring operations will take place from Tilbury, but do not underestimate the disruption that this massive construction project will entail.

The whole area will become one huge construction site from the M2 at Strood to the A2 at Singlewell, and from Claylane Wood and The Inn On The Lake down to Chalk.

The A2/M2 will be widened to 12 lanes from the M2 to Gravesend East and realigned in places. Brewers Road and Thong Lane overbridges will need to be rebuilt.

Millions of tonnes of soil will need to be moved or removed from site, and it is expected that there will be an average of 5,800 HGV movements a month on our roads south of the river. That's 250 a day. This does not include traffic from smaller works vehicles.

There will be a construction compound immediately opposite houses in Thong Lane.

“Normal” working hours will be 08.00 to 18.00 Monday to Friday, 16.00 on Saturday, with up to an hour before and after for mobilisation. Extended working hours for certain activities will be up to 22.00 on weekdays.

Maintenance will take place between 08.00 and 17.00 on Sundays.

And this will go on for up to 7 years.

# 11. Building the Lower Thames Crossing

**Q11a.** Do you support or oppose our initial plans for how to build the Lower Thames Crossing?

<input type="checkbox"/>					
Strongly support	Support	Neutral	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Don't know

**Q11b.** Please let us know the reasons for your response to Q11a and any other views you have on our initial plans on how to build the Lower Thames Crossing.

- Are you happy with the planned working hours?
- Are you happy with a major construction compound being located immediately opposite houses in Thong Lane? Should this be moved away from residential properties?
- Is there any other mitigation you think they should consider to reduce the noise, disturbance, disruption, and dust?
- Give your views in the box provided.

## 12. Utilities and pylons

Please let us know any views you have on the proposed changes to utilities infrastructure.

There is a major gas pipeline running from Chalk to Claylane Wood which will require diversion before the work on the road takes place. This has been diverted before, and does not cause a permanent scar.

The high-voltage overhead power line between Thong Lane and Claylane Wood will need diverting. This will result in the line being closer to Shorne West/Riverview Park, with a new pylon being located between 50 and 100 metres from the end of Genesta Glade.

It is unlikely that there will be any health risks from the high-voltage overhead line, although the new pylons will impact on views. Should it be moved further away from residential properties?

If you have any comments, write them in the box provided.



## 13. Other comments

We would like to know what is important to you. Please let us know if you have any other comments about the Lower Thames Crossing.

It's probably too late to change their mind about the location of the crossing now.

**By all means let them know if you do not agree with their decision, but at this stage it is probably better to focus on getting improvements to the design, practical changes that will go some way to easing the worst of the impacts.**

Try not to get angry or make it personal. Rants might make you feel better, but they won't get you what you want.

Take your time. Attach separate sheets if you want to. They are obliged to consider all your comments and concerns.

Whether they take any notice, only they can say.

There are a number of other questions about you, what you think of the consultation, whether you are male or female, black or white, young or old, in work or unemployed, straight or gay, etc. It's up to you how or whether you answer these questions.

It is likely that when the consultation report is published, it will include something along the lines of "The majority of those people who disagreed with our proposals lived in the areas closest to the LTC". In other words, it will be implied that you are a Nimby and that your views should carry less weight.

Don't be concerned about that. You will be the people most directly (and permanently) affected by this, you will be the ones who will have to suffer the noise and disruption, and you have every right to defend your back yard and have your voice heard.

**Good luck!**