

Annex 2

Lower Thames Crossing Consultation Questionnaire: TMBC Response

Crossing Location

5. Our proposal is a crossing at Location C, east of Gravesend and Tilbury.

On balance, do you agree or disagree with our proposals for the location of a crossing, at Location C?

Agree

Please provide the reason for your response to question 5.

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council support Location C as it represents the most transport benefits for the region in terms of creating extra capacity and resilience across the strategic network and has the potential to add economic benefits for the Borough. Location C offers the relief from congestion at Dartford and mitigates traffic growth on the M20 corridor through Tonbridge and Malling.

However, the ‘C Variant’ proposals should be reinstated to ensure greater resilience in the Kent network and avoid future problems of congestion, potential accidents, air quality and noise issues along the A229 and at the M2 junction 3/ Lord Lees roundabout and junction 6 of the M20. It will also dissuade rat running on other routes such as the A228. This additional investment is directly related to the LTC proposals and should be advanced in parallel and as an integral part of the overall project.

Routes north of the river

6. There are three route options north of the river in Essex – Routes 2, 3 and 4.

Where do you think the route should be located north of the river?

There are no direct impacts of the route north of the river on this Borough and therefore the Council has no specific view.

Routes south of the river

8. There are two route options south of the river in Kent – the Western Southern Link and the Eastern Southern Link.

- Western Southern Link
- Eastern Southern Link
- Another route
- None of these
- Don't know (in the absence of further traffic data)

Please provide the reasons for your response to question 8.

In terms of supporting a preferred southern route, there is not enough detail provided in terms of traffic impact, precise route and road layout and indicative access onto the surrounding network.

It is difficult to come to a final view at this stage without knowing what the realistic prospects might be of securing the road and junction improvements needed on the A229 between the M2 junction 3 and the M20 junction 6 and also to assess the detailed impact on the A228 and A227.

The Borough Council is mindful of the constraints and impact of the proposed junction arrangements of the preferred ESL route with the M2. Equally, it is concerned that the traffic impact of the WSL is uncertain at this stage and will in itself depend on the level of commitment to other network improvements contained in a 'C Variant' package.

We wish to work with HE and KCC to establish a clearer picture of these vital issues before a final design is selected.

9. Thinking about the two route options south of the river, on balance do you agree or disagree with our proposal for each of these?

Western Southern Link

Eastern Southern Link

The proposed scheme

10. Having evaluated the options, our proposed scheme is a new bored tunnel road crossing at Location C, following Route 3 north of the river and the Eastern Southern Link south of the river.

On balance, do you agree or disagree with our proposed scheme?

Tend to agree

Please provide the reasons for your response to question 10.

The C Variant (upgrade of the A229) has not been included as a result of an assessment which has concluded that “...this upgrade would have limited economic benefits, high environmental impact, a high cost and would have little benefit in transferring traffic from Dartford onto Location C routes”. This means that some of the local economic benefits derived from the LTC could be negated by current traffic issues being accentuated along this route, including at key junctions.

The A229 is the main route between Maidstone and the Medway Towns and is the shortest link between the M2 and the M20. It is therefore the most likely route that will be taken by drivers using the Eurotunnel at Folkestone and the port at Dover with starting points or destinations north via the LTC. Given the existing congestion around Junctions 5/6 of the M20 and Blue Bell Hill/ Lord Lees roundabout (M2 junction 3), the opening of the Lower Thames Crossing without upgrades to one of the most direct routes to it from the south will only exacerbate congestion issues, resulting in a damaging impact on the local economy.

In addition to the above, it is highly likely that the additional traffic will result in an unacceptable deterioration in noise levels and has the potential to harm air quality and compromise road safety. It is also likely that in the absence of ‘C Variant’ more localised rat running will occur on the A228 and A227 with detrimental impacts on communities along those corridors.

The Council strongly urges Highways England to revisit the impacts of the LTC on the A229 and environs and ensure that highway improvements are in place at the same time as the LTC opens to ensure safe and free flowing traffic in this area.

Additional Junctions

11. We are proposing to create junctions with existing roads including the M2/A2, A226, A13 and M25. We would like to hear your views on whether you believe additional junctions would be beneficial.

We would welcome any comments you may have on our proposals for junctions.

The Council supports the principle of investment in the connecting and nearby infrastructure to ensure road safety and free slowing traffic that limits impacts on residential amenity.

Any other comments

We would welcome any other comments you may have on our proposals. (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary).

Proposals should progress with the C Variant as an essential element of the LTC project. Without appropriate measures put in place to address the growth in traffic along this route, Highways England is failing in their duty.