

Secretary of State for Transport
Rt Hon Patrick McLoughlin MP
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Dear Sir,

Lower Thames Crossing – Public Consultation

It is with regret that the senior members of all political parties within Thurrock Council are contacting you for a second time about the public consultation on the Lower Thames Crossing when it only commenced a few days ago.

The Council is unanimously opposed to the Lower Thames Crossing in Thurrock but we have made a big effort to ensure that residents, property owners and businesses in the Borough are aware of all the issues and the potential impact the proposed Tilbury Tunnel and the twelve miles of dual carriageway motorway will have on residents and the local environment.

On the 9th February we held a Scrutiny meeting into the proposals and sixteen local resident groups / forums or local people gave us their views and we also received evidence from businesses including Tilbury Port.

We were pleased that Martin Potts from Highways England attended and defended the proposals at length under pressure from Council Members. However, the Scrutiny meeting highlighted serious concerns regarding the effectiveness of Highways England's consultation approach in engaging with all those affected in the Borough.

Serious issues have been raised with regard to the adequacy of the comparative environmental data and the absence of traffic flow data for impacts on the local network.

Our Members have repeatedly asked Highways England for more hard copy supplies of maps, consultation brochures, questionnaires and pre-paid envelopes, but have been told that there is a lead time delay of 15 working days before these might be delivered.

Members are perplexed that Highways England saw no reason to provide advance notice of their intention to write out to 300 residents and property owners informing them that their property might be required for the scheme.

We are frustrated that, despite the acute distress of some of these recipients, Highways England has repeatedly refused to share names and addresses of those affected with the Council to enable democratically elected representatives to support their constituents.

We therefore ask you, in light of the above, to require Highways England to extend the consultation period for a further eight weeks to enable a full and fair public consultation to take place.

We also ask that the 300 names and addresses of those most affected by the proposals are sent to the Council.

Please could you also ensure that sufficient hard copy consultation materials are made available to the Council for all Members to properly support the consultation process?

We are holding a public meeting at the Tilbury Port Cruise Terminal on the 25th February which will be attended by local MPs and Highways England. We hope that these issues will be clarified before then. You or one of your Ministers would be most welcome to attend.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Brian Little
Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair



Cllr John Kent
Leader of the Council and Labour Group



Cllr Rob Gledhill
Leader of the Conservative Group



Cllr Graham Snell
Leader of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP)