

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Assistant Director of Policy &amp; Corporate</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Rachel Forkin</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Lower Thames Crossing Consultation</b>		<b>☎ 282625</b>
<b>Wards affected</b>	Not applicable		

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Highways England is proposing to construct the Lower Thames Crossing, which will consist of a new road with a tunnel crossing beneath the River Thames. On the north side of the Thames, the new road will link the tunnel to the A13 and junction 29 of the M25. On the south side it will link the tunnel to the A2 and M2 in Kent.
- 1.2 Highways England have previously consulted on locations for a new Lower Thames Crossing, with a number of route options to connect the tunnel to the strategic road network. In response to previous consultations the Borough Council indicated that it supported a new Lower Thames Crossing at location C and supported the proposed route 3 option with a connection to the A13 allowing access to/from the east. The preferred route for the Lower Thames Crossing follows this route and includes a crossing at location C.
- 1.3 It is proposed that Colchester Borough Council:
  - Supports the provision of a new Lower Thames Crossing;
  - Supports the preferred route of the Lower Thames Crossing;
  - Supports the changes made to the route since the preferred route announcement in 2017 – namely the changes to the A13 and Lower Thames Crossing junction

## 2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To agree the response in section 5.7 and 5.8, and Appendix C, which supports the provision and the route of a new Lower Thames Crossing, and submit this report as Colchester Borough Council's response to Highway England Lower Thames Crossing consultation.

## 3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 The existing Dartford tunnel and bridge crossing of the Thames is heavily trafficked and is the only road river crossing east of London. The tunnels and bridge form a key link in the strategic road network. Congestion around the crossing regularly occurs.
- 3.2 The Borough Council, as a major location for economic growth and Haven Gateway partner, wish to see investment made in the Strategic Road Network in Essex and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) area, which would be beneficial to Colchester and the wider area.

- 3.3 An efficient crossing is important for the economy and growth in the SELEP area. The new crossing will provide relief to the existing crossing and improve resilience during times of incidents and maintenance. This will provide greater opportunities for the businesses in the Colchester area to trade reliably with their customers in north Kent, south London and further afield including access to the Channel ports.

#### **4. Alternative Options**

- 4.1 Not to respond: Colchester Borough Council has responded previously to maximise support for a new crossing.
- 4.2 Different response: The Borough Council has previously indicated that it supported a new Lower Thames Crossing at location C and route 3.

## 5. Background Information

- 5.1 Highways England is proposing to construct the Lower Thames Crossing, which will consist of a new road with a tunnel crossing beneath the River Thames. In order to obtain powers of compulsory acquisition and to gain consent to build and operate the project, Highways England is required to make an application for a Development Consent Order. The Application will be made to the Planning Inspectorate and it is intended that this will be made in 2019.
- 5.2 Highways England have previously consulted on locations for a new Lower Thames Crossing, with a number of route options to connect the tunnel to the strategic road network. In response to this consultation the Borough Council indicated that it supported a new Lower Thames Crossing at location C and supported the proposed route 3 option with a connection to the A13 allowing access to/from the east. The preferred route for the Lower Thames Crossing follows this route and crosses the Thames at location C.
- 5.3 During the pre-application process, Highways England must consult with a variety of organisations about the proposed application. Colchester Borough Council have been consulted as a statutory consultee. This statutory pre-application consultation period takes place between 10 October 2018 and 20 December 2018. Consultation material can be found on the Highways England website <https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/ltc/consultation/>
- 5.4 The government announced the preferred route for the crossing in April 2017. This most recent consultation includes an updated, more detailed design which aims to maximise the projects benefits and includes changes to minimise the impact on local communities and the environment.
- 5.5 The Route  
The Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) is a proposed new motorway connecting Essex, Thurrock and Kent through a tunnel beneath the River Thames. On the north side of the Thames, the new road will link the tunnel to the A13 and junction 29 of the M25. On the south side it will link the tunnel to the A2 and M2 in Kent. The route can be seen in Appendix A. Proposals will include:
- Approximately 14.5 miles (23km) of new roads connecting the tunnel to the existing road network;
  - Three lanes in both directions with a maximum speed limit of 70pmh;
  - Improvements to the M25, A2 and A13, where the Lower Thames Crossing connects to these roads;
  - Two 2.5 mile (4km) tunnels, one for southbound traffic, one for northbound traffic crossing beneath the river;
  - A free-flow charging system, where drivers do not need to stop.
- 5.6 Following feedback on the preferred route, the proposals have been refined. The responses from this consultation will continue to help develop designs further. The design changes included in this consultation include:
- Three lanes in each direction, along the whole route from the M25 to the A2;
  - A13 junction – modified design to cope with traffic levels and reduce delays; Existing links between the A1089 and A13 will be maintained, while the junction will also connect the LTC to the A13 eastbound; A13 westbound to the LTC; and

the A1089 to the LTC. A plan of the proposed A13 junction can be seen in Appendix B;

- Improvements to the M25 and M25 junction 29 where the routes meet.

#### Proposal

##### 5.7 Colchester Borough Council:

- Supports the provision of a new Lower Thames Crossing;
- Supports the preferred route of the Lower Thames Crossing;
- Supports the changes made to the route since the preferred route announcement in 2017 – namely the changes to the A13 junction with the Lower Thames Crossing.

##### 5.8 As part of the consultation an online survey form is available to complete. It is proposed that the proposal above is reflected in the response to the online survey. The proposed responses to the consultation are contained in Appendix C.

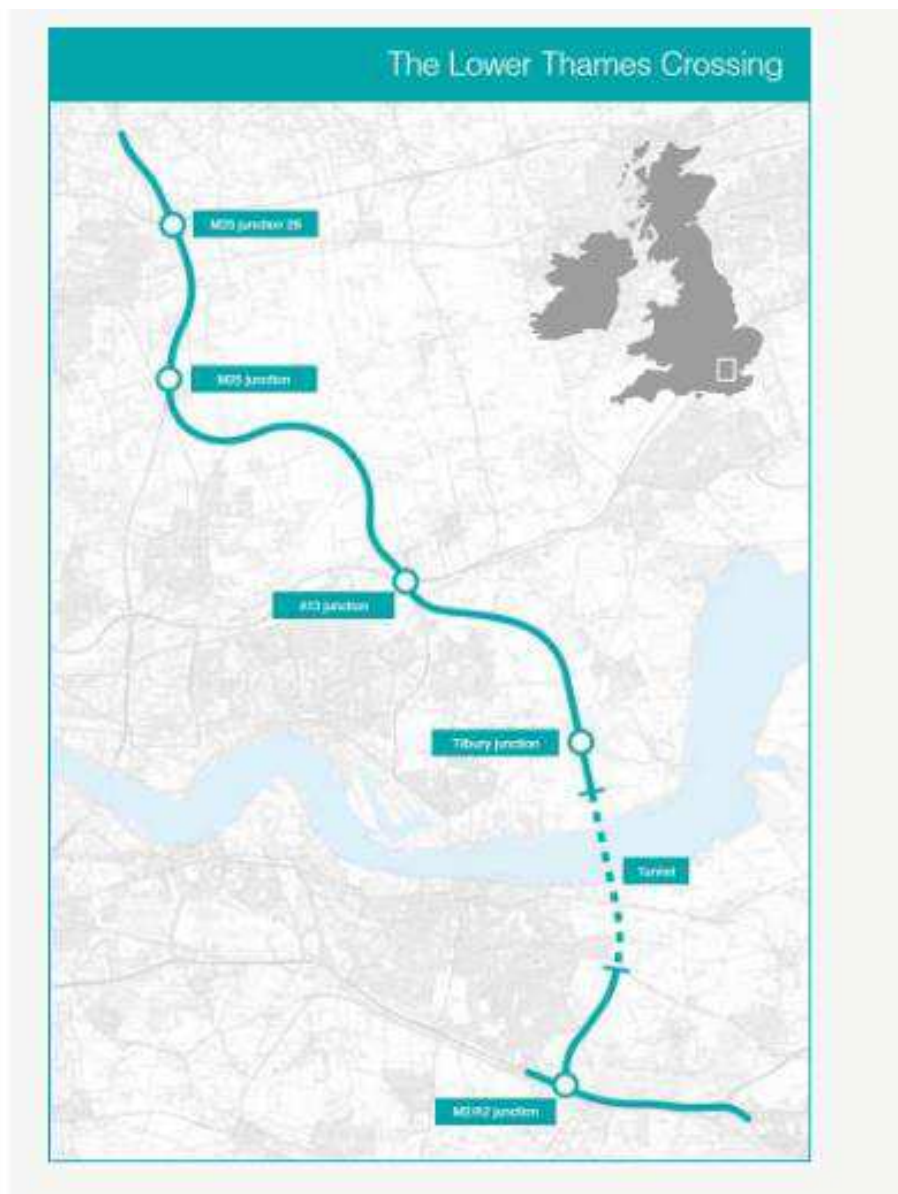
## **6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications**

### 6.1 There are no Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications in relation to the report.

## **7. Standard References**

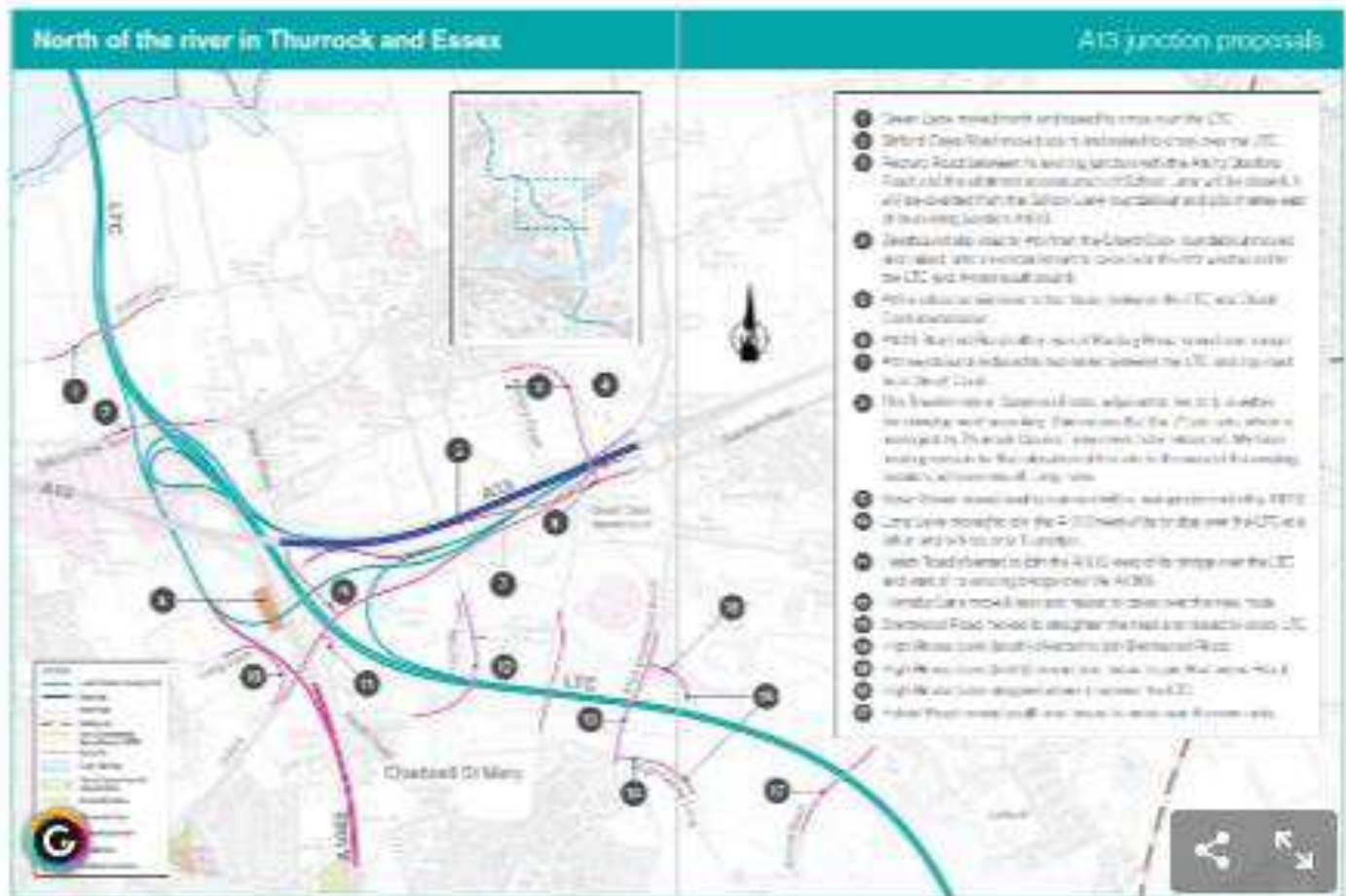
### 7.1 There are no particular references to the Strategic Plan; consultation or publicity considerations or financial; community safety; health and safety or risk management implications.

## Appendix A: Proposed Route of Lower Thames Crossing



Source: <https://highwaysengland.co.uk/lower-thames-crossing-home/>

## Appendix B: A13 Junction Proposals



Source: <https://highwaysengland.co.uk/lower-thames-crossing-home/>

## Appendix C: Consultation Questionnaire

Below is a copy of the substantive questions from the on-line survey form and the proposed response.

The consultation contains a number of questions on different topics. Answers can be provided to all of the questions or just some of them. Answers have been provided to questions 1, 2, 3, 3.2, and 4.1.

1. The need for the Lower Thames Crossing (Required)	<div><div></div></div> 2 of 2 questions answered
2. Our preferred route for the Lower Thames Crossing	<div><div></div></div> 3 of 3 questions answered
3. Sections of the route	<div><div></div></div> 2 of 2 questions answered
3.1 Sections of the route: The crossing	<div><div></div></div> 0 of 1 questions answered
3.2 Sections of the route: North of the river in Thurrock, Essex and Havering	<div><div></div></div> 1 of 2 questions answered
4. Connections	<div><div></div></div> 0 of 2 questions answered
4.1 Connections: North of the crossing	<div><div></div></div> 4 of 4 questions answered
5. Walkers, cyclists and horse riders	<div><div></div></div> 0 of 2 questions answered
6. Environmental impacts and how we plan to reduce them	<div><div></div></div> 0 of 2 questions answered
7. Development Boundary	<div><div></div></div> 0 of 2 questions answered
8. Proposed rest and service area, and maintenance depot	<div><div></div></div> 0 of 3 questions answered
9. Traffic	<div><div></div></div> 0 of 2 questions answered
10. Charges for using the crossing	<div><div></div></div> 0 of 1 questions answered
11. Building Lower Thames Crossing	<div><div></div></div> 0 of 2 questions answered
12. Utilities and pylons	<div><div></div></div> 0 of 1 questions answered
13. Other comments	<div><div></div></div> 0 of 1 questions answered
14. The consultation	<div><div></div></div> 0 of 2 questions answered

Closes 20 Dec 2018

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## 1. The need for the Lower Thames Crossing

The case for the Lower Thames Crossing, including the reasons why we consider it is needed, is set out in [Section 4](#) of [Your guide to consultation](#) and in the [Case for the Project](#).

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

(Required)

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☒ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Don't know

**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.**

The Borough Council, wish to see investment made in the Strategic Road Network in Essex and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) area which would be beneficial to Colchester and the wider area. An efficient crossing is important for the economy and growth in the SELEP area, and will provide greater opportunities for the businesses in the Colchester area to trade reliably with their customers in north Kent, south London and further afield including access to the Channel ports.

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

For a description of how, in 2017, we selected a preferred route for the Lower Thames Crossing, and how that route has been refined since then, please refer to [Section 3 of Your guide to consultation](#), and also to [Approach to Design, Construction and Operation](#).

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

- ☐ Strongly support
- ☒ Support
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Oppose
- ☐ Strongly oppose
- ☐ Don't know

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

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.

Support the the A13 junction and connections to the LTC to the A13 east.

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## South of the river in Kent

This refers to the section of the proposed route starting at the M2/A2 and ending to the south of the southern tunnel entrance. It also includes the proposed improvements to sections of the M2/A2 around the junction with the Lower Thames Crossing.

Included in the scope of question 3a and 3b are the route, structures such as bridges, embankments, viaducts and any other aspect that you wish to comment on. Please note, question 4 provides an opportunity to comment on connections between the Lower Thames Crossing and the surrounding road network.

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

- ☐ Strongly support
- ☐ Support
- ☒ Neutral
- ☐ Oppose
- ☐ Strongly oppose
- ☐ Don't know

### 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.

CBC have no strong opinion on which route should be followed to the south of the Thames.

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## 3.2 Sections of the route: North of the river in Thurrock, Essex and Havering

This refers to the section of the proposed route starting immediately north of the northern tunnel entrance and ending at the connection with the M25 at junction 29, and the related improvement works at the M25.

Included in the scope of question 3d and 3e are the route, structures such as bridges, embankments, viaducts and any other aspect that you wish to comment on.

Please note, question 4 provides an opportunity to comment on connections between the Lower Thames Crossing and the surrounding road network.

**Q3d. Do you support or oppose the proposed route north of the crossing?**

- ☐ Strongly support
- ☒ Support
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Oppose
- ☐ Strongly oppose
- ☐ Don't know

**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.**

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**Q4c. Do you support or oppose the proposed Tilbury junction?**

- ☐ Strongly support
- ☐ Support
- ☒ Neutral
- ☐ Oppose
- ☐ Strongly oppose
- ☐ Don't know

**Q4d. Do you support or oppose the proposed junction between the Lower Thames Crossing and the A13/A1089?**

- ☐ Strongly support
- ☒ Support
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Oppose
- ☐ Strongly oppose
- ☐ Don't know

**4e. Do you support or oppose the proposed junction between the Lower Thames Crossing and the M25?**

- ☐ Strongly support
- ☐ Support
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Oppose
- ☐ Strongly oppose
- ☐ Don't know

**Q4f. Please let us know the reasons for your response to Q4c-Q4e, indicating which junction or junctions you are referring to, and any other comments you have on the proposed connections of the route north of the crossing.**

Support the proposed junction between the Lower Thames Crossing and the A13/A1089