

Consultation: Lower Thames Crossing  
Response by: Higham Parish Council

About you

1 Name

Name:

*Higham Parish Council*

2 Postcode

Postcode:

*ME3 7BG*

3 Email address

Email:

*enquiries@higham-kent-pc.gov.uk*

4 Are you responding on your own behalf or on behalf of an organisation or group?

*Providing a response on behalf of an organisation or group*

Crossing location

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

*Strongly disagree*

Please provide the reasons for your response:

*The Parish Council and most of our residents do not believe that a crossing at Location C will solve the problems at Dartford. A new crossing will not alleviate the pollution and congestion in either Dartford or Thurrock. The Council is concerned that the figures for costings are not accurate and that the massive impact on the environment and the communities in Kent and Essex is unacceptable. The increase in noise and pollution in the Shorne, Chalk and Higham area is too high a price to pay for NOT solving the problems at Dartford. Other solutions/proposals must be considered.*

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?

*None of these*

Please provide the reasons for your response:

*The problems at the existing crossing need to be solved. Alternative options need to be assessed and considered. The proposals for North of the river will have a massive impact on Essex communities.*

7 Thinking about the three route options north of the river, on balance do you agree or disagree with our proposal for each of these?

Q7 - Route 2:

*Strongly disagree*

Q7 - Route 3:

*Strongly disagree*

Q7 - Route 4:

*Strongly disagree*

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

*None of these*

Please provide the reasons for your response:

*The Parish Council does not support either WSL or ESL. Both routes will result in more noise and pollution in Shorne, Chalk and Higham. Any problems with the new crossing would result in a knock on effect - with rat runs and gridlock - we can see that we will be trapped in the village. This already happens when there are problems on the A2/M2. There is limited opportunity to comment on alternatives - we are only asked to comment on Option C - and we whole heartedly oppose this Option - there are other options in the documentation but they appear to have been rejected. There is very little detail of the reasons for rejection - can they not be reconsidered? and can a more detailed study be undertaken to explore new options?*

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?

Q9 - Eastern Southern Link:

*Strongly disagree*

Q9 - Western Southern Link:

*Strongly disagree*

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?

*Strongly disagree*

Please provide the reasons for your response:

*The Council is extremely concerned about the massive impact on the rural communities of Higham, Shorne and Chalk. The devastation of woodlands, marshland, Green Belt etc. increased noise and pollution levels, whilst not fixing the problems at Dartford is ineffective management and poor use of resources. The justification for the Option C ESL proposal appears to be based on the Benefit Cost Ratio aspects - how this is calculated is unclear. Where will the new jobs cited be based, where will the new housing go? Being told at the Information Sessions that there is no detail on this yet is very worrying - are we right to assume that development of the Green Belt area is under consideration? How can this be justified? If it's not planned for the Green Belt, where will it go? If there is no plan, how can you justify the proposal on the basis of Benefit Cost Ratios?*

Junctions

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

Feedback on additional junctions:

*The Parish Council is totally opposed to junctions on the A226. The lack of access from the new road onto the A289 is of great concern. Both these issues would lead to a massive and unacceptable increase in levels of vehicle movements on the A226 - a single lane road with 40mph and 50 mph speed limits. This road passes by Gad's Hill School - the impact of increased pollution on children's health is a key factor. Further gridlock is inevitable. There is no consideration of the impact on the*

*wider road network and the lack of acknowledgement of the need for improvements to feeder roads and junctions e.g. A249, A229, A2/M2, A228. Being told that this wider view is not part of HE remit seems negligent and further evidence of poor planning and ineffective analysis of the key issues.*

Any other comments

12 We would welcome any other comments you may have on our proposals

Text box for additional comments on proposals:

*The narrow focus on proposing a route for a new crossing seems to have excluded any longer term infrastructure planning and joined up thinking. What consideration has been given to the problems with the existing tunnels at Dartford? these problems are not solved by a new crossing at Location C. We are regularly told that the 2 Dartford tunnels are not fit for purpose - building Option C won't fix that problem, or the problem of hazardous loads going through the old tunnels. Taking only 14% of the traffic away from the existing crossing does not seem to represent value for money. The forecasts for vehicle movements show that it wouldn't be long before the traffic levels at the existing crossing climb back up to the levels that exist now - so what's the long term solution? HE documentation states that option C will have higher levels of accidents - that's not acceptable. Lack of planning for the potential Paramount development seems again to be poor judgment. Why is the pollution issue not more fully explored? The pollution levels are already at amber on the A2.*

Feedback on Consultation

13 How did you hear about the consultation? (Please select all that apply)

*Local Authority*

Other:

14 Do you have any feedback on this consultation – events, information provided, advertising, etc.?

Text box for further comments:

*\*Very short timescales for the consultation - it took several years to come back with proposals after the last consultation (2013), which clearly did not support option C, then only 8 weeks to give our views*

*\*No Information Session arranged for Chalk or Higham*

*\*Large amount of documentation - much of it confusing, contradictory, inaccurate, misleading photos*

*\*Information not easily accessible.*

*\*Our residents were given conflicting information at the Information Sessions e.g. Option A is not included, whereas the Minister clearly stated it was still on the table.*

*\*Slow and confused responses to written questions posed e.g. referenced to specific documents or sections in documents which were impossible to find*

*\*Failure to reply to questions asked in public meetings and Information Sessions*

*\*One-sided consultation which only seeks views on one proposal*

*\*Lack of trust – we don't believe you will take any notice of what we say, we feel you have already made the decision*

*\*We feel angry, disappointed, ignored and sidelined*

More about you

15 If you represent an organisation please complete all questions in this section.

Position in the organisation:

*Parish Councillor*

Name of the organisation of group:

*Higham Parish Council*

Please use the space below to provide further detail about your role or organisation:

*The Parish Council is an elected body representing the residents of Higham*

16 What category of organisation or group are you representing?

*Local government*