

# Lower Thames Crossing

## 5.4.3.17 Statement of Common Ground between (1) National Highways and (2) Royal Mail

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of the Statement of Common Ground

- 1.1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared in respect of the Development Consent Order (DCO) application for the proposed A122 Lower Thames Crossing (the Project) made by National Highways Limited (National Highways) to the Secretary of State for Transport (Secretary of State) under section 37 of the Planning Act 2008.
- 1.1.2 This SoCG does not seek to replicate information which is available elsewhere within the Application Documents. All documents may be available on the Planning Inspectorate website.
- 1.1.3 The SoCG has been produced to confirm to the Examining Authority where agreement has been reached between the parties named below, and where agreement has not (yet) been reached. SoCGs are an established means in the planning process of allowing all parties to identify and so focus on specific matters that may need to be addressed during the examination.

## 1.2 Parties to this Statement of Common Ground

- 1.2.1 This SoCG has been prepared in respect of the Project by (1) National Highways, and (2) Royal Mail.
- 1.2.2 National Highways became the Government-owned Strategic Highways Company on 1 April 2015. It is the highway authority in England for the strategic road network and has the necessary powers and duties to operate, manage, maintain and enhance the network. Regulatory powers remain with the Secretary of State. The legislation establishing National Highways made provision for all legal rights and obligations of the Highways Agency, including in respect of the Project, to be conferred upon or assumed by National Highways.
- 1.2.3 Royal Mail supports the Lower Thames Crossing, a major road scheme which, once complete, will be beneficial to Royal Mail and other major road users. However, Royal Mail seeks to ensure appropriate management of the Project's potential construction phase impacts on its road-based operations. Any such impacts have potential to interfere with Royal Mail's ability to meet its service delivery targets as a provider of the Universal Postal Service under the Postal Services Act 2011 and could possibly result in financial penalties.

## 1.3 Terminology

- 1.3.1 In the matters table in section 2 of this SoCG, "Matter not agreed" indicates agreement on the matter could not be reached, and "Matter under discussion" where these points will be the subject of on-going discussion wherever possible to resolve, or refine, the extent of disagreement between the parties. "Matter agreed" indicates where the issue has been resolved.
- 1.3.2 It is agreed that any matters not specifically referred to in Section 2 of this SoCG are not of material interest or relevance to Royal Mail. As such, those matters can be read as agreed, only to the extent that they are either not of material interest or relevance to Royal Mail. However, if new matters arise

Royal Mail reserves the right to comment on those matters as it considers appropriate.

## **1.4 Overview of previous engagement**

- 1.4.1 A summary of the meetings and correspondence undertaken between the two parties in relation to the Project is outlined in Appendix C.

## **1.5 Status of the Statement of Common Ground**

- 1.5.1 It is agreed that this statement is an accurate description of the matters raised by Royal Mail and the current status of each matter.
- 1.5.2 It is agreed that Appendix C is an accurate record of the key meetings and consultation undertaken between (1) National Highways and (2) Royal Mail in relation to the matters addressed in this Statement of Common Ground.

## 2 Matters

### 2.1 Matters agreed, not agreed or under discussion

- 2.1.1 Details the matters which have been agreed, not agreed, or are under discussion between (1) National Highways and (2) Royal Mail.
- 2.1.2 It is acknowledged there are some matters where further discussion may take place during the detailed design stage of the Project to finalise detail, but the matter is agreed in principle.

**Table 2.1 Matters**

Topic	Item number	Royal Mail Group comment	National Highways comment	Document Reference	Status
<b>DCO and Consents</b>					
Advance consultation on works affecting the highway network	2.1.1	Royal Mail requests that the DCO includes a specific requirement that during the construction phase Royal Mail is consulted by National Highways or its contractors at least one month in advance on any proposed road closures / diversions / alternative access arrangements, hours of working. Royal Mail sought to secure this through addition of wording to the Outline Traffic Management Plan for Construction (oTMPfC) and provided specific wording for inclusion in it based on wording that has been agreed with National Highways for inclusion in other Construction Traffic Management Plans.	Royal Mail will be a named attendee at the Lower Thames Crossing Monthly Traffic Management Forum alongside the Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and other Statutory Bodies in which the requested information will be provided.  In line with the request from Royal Mail, the oTMPfC includes the following commitment:  <i>“Advanced notifications of programmed diversions and closures will be issued to the Royal Mail. This will include providing Royal Mail with not less one month notice of any road closures, diversions or alternative access arrangements that may affect travel on those routes and the agreed hours of working. The method of communication with the Royal Mail will be agreed as part of the Traffic Management for Construction which is submitted to the Secretary of State for approval.”</i>	Draft DCO (Requirement 10 (1) and 10 (2)) (3.1) and draft Outline Traffic Management Plan for Construction (oTMPfC) (7.14).	Matter Agreed

Topic	Item number	Royal Mail Group comment	National Highways comment	Document Reference	Status
		Following a meeting with National Highways on 2 September 2021 it is understood that National Highways will be considering a further revision to the draft oTMPfC to include wording that will address this requirement.			
Consultation on the content of the final Traffic Management Plan for Construction	2.1.2	Royal Mail requests that the DCO includes a specific requirement that during the construction phase Royal Mail is consulted by National Highways or its contractors on the content of the final Traffic Management Plan for Construction (TMPfC).	National Highways has amended the oTMPfC to include a commitment that the Royal Mail is consulted as part of the submission of the TMPfC to the Secretary of State. Requirement 10 of the draft DCO has been amended to require consultation with the bodies referenced in that plan (i.e., the requirement to consult Royal Mail is legally secured).	Draft DCO (Requirement 10 (1) and 10 (2)) (3.1) and draft Outline Traffic Management Plan for Construction (oTMPfC) (7.14).	Matter Agreed
Mechanism to inform major road users (including Royal Mail)	2.1.3	Royal Mail requests that the final TMfC includes a mechanism to inform major road users (including Royal Mail) about works affecting the local highways network, with particular regard to Royal Mail's distribution facilities near the Lower Thames Crossing proposal boundary as identified above.	Royal Mail is a named attendee at the Lower Thames Crossing Monthly Traffic Management Forum alongside the LPAs and other Statutory Bodies.	Draft DCO (Requirement 10 (1) and 10 (2)) and draft Outline Traffic Management Plan for Construction (oTMPfC) (7.14).	Matter Agreed

### 3 Agreement on this Statement of Common Ground

#### STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

This Statement of Common Ground has been prepared and agreed by (1) National Highways Limited and (2) Royal Mail.

Name	Fortune Gumbo
Position	Town Planner – DCO
Organisation	Highways Limited
Signature	<i>Fortune Gumbo</i>



[NAME] HOLLY TROTMAN  
[POSITION] SENIOR LEGAL ADVISOR  
on behalf of Royal Mail  
Date: [DATE] 11 /10 /2022



## Appendix A Documents considered within this Statement of Common Ground

N/a

## Appendix B Glossary

Term	Abbreviation	Explanation
Development Consent Order	DCO	Means of obtaining permission for developments categorised as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) under the Planning Act 2008.
Local Planning Authority	LPA	A local planning authority is the local authority or council that is empowered by law to exercise statutory town planning functions for a particular area of the UK. May also be referred to as 'local authority'.
Outline Traffic Management Plan for Construction	oTMPfC	The outline Traffic Management Plan for Construction (oTMPfC) has been produced to provide an outline framework and principles that will be applied for the design and management of construction traffic management and transport logistics for the Lower Thames Crossing Project.
Statement of Common Ground	SoCG	A Statement of Common Ground is a written statement containing factual information about the proposal which is the subject of the appeal that the appellant reasonably considers will not be disputed by the local planning authority.
Traffic Management Plan for Construction	TMPfC	The approach to carrying out temporary traffic management for the safe construction of the Project. It will also explain management measures available to our Contractor to reduce the impact on the local community (including journey time reliability, access, and safety).

## Appendix C List of engagement activities

- C.1.1 A summary of the meetings and correspondence undertaken between the two parties in relation to the Project is outlined in Table C.1 below.
- C.1.2 It is agreed that this is an accurate record of the key meetings and correspondence undertaken between (1) National Highways and (2) the Royal Mail Group in relation to the matters addressed in this SoCG.

**Table C.1 Engagement activities between National Highways and the Royal Mail Group**

Date	Form of contact/ correspondence	Key topics discussed and key outcomes
October – December 2018	Statutory Consultation	Statutory Consultation on the latest designs for the Project.
15 November 2018	Meeting	National Highways provided an overview of the proposals set out in statutory consultation including the route, new structures and free-flowing charging system. Royal Mail explained their main concerns were around the construction impacts and would like to be involved in the development of the Code of Construction Practice.
January – March 2020	Supplementary Consultation	Consultation on the latest designs and development boundary for the Project
July – August 2020	Design Refinement Consultation	Consultation focusing on specific changes to the Project including the Order Limits.
28 January 2021	Meeting	National Highways provided a project update and discussed ways of working going forward.
29 March 2021	Meeting	National Highways provided an overview of the Lower Thames Crossing project.
20 April 2021	DCO documents shared	National Highways shared updated DCO documents with the Royal Mail Group including the outline Traffic Management Plan for Construction and Transport Assessment Chapter 8 for review and comment.
30 April 2021	Letter	Royal Mail's comments on updated DCO documents received.
11 June 2021	Meeting	National Highways briefed the Royal Mail Group consultation mechanism proposals.
18 June 2021	Letter	Draft wording for outline Traffic Management Plan for Construction and requirement wording shared with Royal Mail Group for comment.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Form of contact/ correspondence</b>	<b>Key topics discussed and key outcomes</b>
2 September 2021	Meeting	Informal discussion on draft DCO Schedule 2 Requirements and revised draft Outline Traffic Management Plan for Construction.
22 March 2022	DCO documents shared	National Highways share draft OTCMP
24 August 2022	Meeting	CTMP discussion

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