

# Lower Thames Crossing

## 5.4.4.3 Statement of Common Ground between (1) National Highways and (2) Dartford Borough Council

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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) Dartford Borough Council.
- 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 Dartford Borough Council is a host authority in respect of the application and as such is a category 'B' local authority under section 43(1) of the Planning Act 2008. As a borough council, it is the local planning authority and holds responsibilities including developing and implementing a Local Plan, waste management, community and environmental issues within its boundary. The Borough of Dartford is a local government district in the north-west of the county of Kent, England. Its council is based in the town of Dartford. It is part of the contiguous London urban area. It borders the borough of Gravesham to the east, Sevenoaks District to the south, the London Borough of Bexley to the west, and the Thurrock unitary authority in Essex to the north, across the River Thames. The borough was formed on 1 April 1974 by the merger of the Municipal Borough of Dartford, the Swanscombe Urban District, and part of the Dartford Rural District.

## 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 matters for Dartford Borough Council to comment on. However, if new matters arise Dartford Borough Council 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 Basildon Council 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) Dartford Borough Council 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 Table 2.1 Matters details the matters which have been agreed, not agreed, or are under discussion between (1) National Highways and (2) Dartford Borough Council.
- 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. Matters to which this applies have an asterisk (\*) next to them.

**Table 2.1 Matters**

Topic	Item number	Dartford Borough Council comment	National Highways comment	Document Reference	Status
<b>Need for the Project</b>					
Need for the Project	2.1.1	Dartford Borough Council support the need for the Project and would like to highlight that they are keen for construction to commence as soon as possible.	Noted.	N/A	Matter Agreed
<b>Route selection, modal alternatives &amp; assessment of reasonable alternatives</b>					
Route alignment	2.1.2	Dartford Borough Council has no comments on the details of the proposed route alignment.	Noted.	N/A	Matter Agreed
<b>Consultation and engagement</b>					
Adequacy of Consultation	2.1.3	Dartford Borough Council is satisfied with the adequacy of consultation on the Project.	Noted.	N/A	Matter Agreed

Topic	Item number	Dartford Borough Council comment	National Highways comment	Document Reference	Status
<b>Charging</b>					
Charging regime	2.1.4	Dartford Borough Council agrees with the principle of the proposed charging regime for the Project.	Noted.	N/A	Matter Agreed
<b>Traffic and economics</b>					
Growth level Modelling	2.1.5	<p>Whilst Tempro (a program developed by the Department for Transport (DfT) providing traffic growth projections used in traffic models and intended to act as a nationwide standardised distribution of growth in trip ends) has been used to forecast trip growth, Dartford Borough Council urges that National Highways to continue to work with local authorities to define more accurately the extent of growth and the full impacts on the surrounding road network.</p> <p>Dartford Borough Council confirm that this is an issue for Kent County Council as the Local Highway Authority.</p>	National Highways have had extensive discussions with Kent County Council as the Local Highways Authority with regards to traffic modelling, the issues discussed have formed part of the Statement of Common Ground between National Highways and Kent County Council.	N/A	Matter Agreed
<b>Wider Network Impacts</b>					
General road improvements	2.1.6	Dartford Borough Council would like to see more funding allocated to road improvements in and around Dartford Crossing. Dartford Borough Council would also like to be consulted during consultation with	Networks (DfT, 2014), and considers that the adverse transport impacts are acceptable under this policy. Further information on policy compliance can be found within the Planning Statement. As such, National Highways is not	N/A	Matter Under Discussion

Topic	Item number	Dartford Borough Council comment	National Highways comment	Document Reference	Status
		<p>relevant local authorities one year before the tunnel area opens prior to when the traffic impact monitoring scheme is secured in Schedule 2 of the draft Development Consent Order which is subject to approval of the Secretary of State. This matter will remain under discussion until DBC have reviewed the Wider Network Impacts Management and Monitoring Plan</p>	<p>committing to any direct additional funding for interventions on the wider network through the DCO. The Project is proposing to monitor the impacts of the Project on traffic on the local and strategic road networks. If the monitoring identifies issues or opportunities related to the road network as a result of traffic growth or new third-party developments, then local authorities would be able to use this as evidence to support scheme development and case making through existing funding mechanisms and processes. An updated Wider Network Impacts Management and Monitoring Plan(WNIMMP) will be included in the application, providing information about the proposed traffic monitoring, this supersedes the draft shared in the July 2021 Community Impact Consultation. The traffic impact monitoring scheme will be secured in Schedule 2 of the draft Development Consent Order and would require approval by the Secretary of State, after consultation with relevant local highway authorities, which would begin one year before the tunnel area opens. We would expect this consultation to involve the relevant Local Planning Authorities such as Dartford Borough Council.</p>		



Topic	Item number	Dartford Borough Council comment	National Highways comment	Document Reference	Status
			<p>National Highways is obligated to work with local highway authorities and others to align national and local plans and investments, balance national and local needs and support better end to end journeys for road users (National Highways License from DfT para 5.1.9). National Highways will continue to deliver against this obligation in its collaborative work.</p>		
Tilbury Link Road	2.1.7	<p>Dartford Borough Council supports the proposed junction between Lower Thames Crossing and M2/A2 but expresses disappointment that no link has been proposed from Lower Thames Crossing onto the A13 westbound and towards the Port of Tilbury. This will affect the connectivity between Kent and Essex, leading to longer journey times and reduced economic benefits.</p>	<p>The Tilbury Link Road is currently within in the RIS3 pipeline at Stage 0 (Project initiation) and National Highways are working with Thurrock Council to understand local road options alongside strategic road options. The Tilbury Link Road scheme would be separate to the Project.</p> <p>During the review of the Tilbury Fields element of the project. the Thames Freeport was designated, National Highways sought direction and received instruction from Department for Transport (DfT) and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) that the Tilbury Link Road should be delivered through a separate consenting process to the Project.</p> <p>The revised design at Tilbury Fields provides an operational access, with no</p>	N/A	Matter Agreed

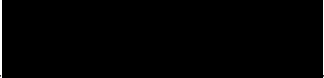
Topic	Item number	Dartford Borough Council comment	National Highways comment	Document Reference	Status
			access for public traffic on or off the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) at this location. The operational access could potentially accommodate further development in the future. Any new road connecting to the project at this point would have to follow the relevant planning process at the appropriate time.		
Funding for improvement in and around the Dartford Crossing	2.1.8	Dartford Borough Council would like to see more funding allocated to road improvements in and around Dartford Crossing. National Highways may have designated funds available for this scheme which can be used for appropriate and associated improvements in the area. Mindful that Dartford area is outside the immediate alignment of the proposed Lower Thames Crossing, however, impacts resulting from the strategic road network are likely to be significant and therefore Dartford Borough Council would like to put a marker down for inclusions on any discussions/bids for designated funds.  This matter remains under discussion pending engagement with the working groups.	National Highways have made their position clear with regards to funding improvements to the wider road network, a detailed response can be found above under matter 2.1.6 (general road improvements).  Working groups are already in place, Dartford Borough Council's input into these groups would be welcomed. The working groups looks at three themes which are environment, heritage and active travel.	N/A	Matter Under Discussion
<b>Population and human health</b>					

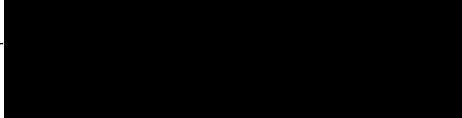
Topic	Item number	Dartford Borough Council comment	National Highways comment	Document Reference	Status
Proposed mitigation relating to impacts identified in the Health and Equalities Impact Assessment (HEqIA)	2.1.9	<p>Dartford Borough Council would like to ensure that where an impact is identified within the Health and Equalities Impact Assessment (HEqIA), mitigation is proposed that is secured and discussed in relating assessments including the Population and Human Health chapter and the Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC).</p> <p>Dartford Borough Council are content with National Highways' approach, subject to satisfactory review of documentation submitted as part of DCO submission.</p>	<p>The Health and Equalities Impact Assessment (HEqIA) is being finalised and submitted as part of the DCO submission. The HEqIA will describe the assessments undertaken in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in the context of health, including in-combination effects, and ascribe an assessment with regard to health and equality effects. The HEqIA has been considered in formulating the mitigation proposals set out in the Population and Human Health chapter of the ES and secured under the DCO Requirements via the REAC.</p>	Health and Equalities Impact Assessment (7.10)	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) Dartford Borough Council.**

Name	Charlotte Crake
Position	Statements of Common Ground Manager
Organisation	National Highways
Signature	

Name	Sonia Collins
Position	Head of Planning Services
Organisation	Dartford Borough Council
Signature	

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

- A.1.1 A summary of the documents which have been considered in the development on this SoCG outside of the DCO application documents are provided below, such as emails, meeting notes, etc.
- a. Consultation materials released by LTC at the following stages of consultation and corresponding responses:
    - i. Route Consultation (Opened January 2016, closed March 2016)
    - ii. Statutory Consultation (Opened October 2018, closed December 2018)
    - iii. Supplementary Consultation (Opened January 2020, closed April 2020)
    - iv. Design Refinement Consultation (Opened July 2020, closed August 2020)
    - v. Community Impacts Consultation (Opened July 2021, closed September 2021)
    - vi. Local Refinement Consultation (Opened May 2022, closed June 2022)
  - b. Scoping Opinion: Proposed Lower Thames Crossing, 2017

## Appendix B Glossary

Term	Acronym	Explanation
A122 Lower Thames Crossing	Project	A proposed new crossing of the Thames Estuary linking the county of Kent with the county of Essex, at or east of the existing Dartford Crossing.
Calculation of Road Traffic Noise	CRTN	Provides a methodology originated by the National Physical Laboratory for calculating road traffic noise levels in some situations. It is linked to the procedure issued by the Department for Transport.
Code of Construction Practice	CoCP	Contains control measures and standards to be implemented by the Project, including those to avoid or reduce environmental effects.
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities	DLUCH	The UK Government department for housing, communities, local government in England and the levelling up policy. Formerly called the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.
Department for Transport	DfT	The government department responsible for the English transport network and a limited number of transport matters in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland that have not been devolved.
Design Manual for Roads and Bridges	DMRB	A comprehensive manual which contains requirements, advice and other published documents relating to works on motorway and all-purpose trunk roads for which one of the Overseeing Organisations (National Highways, Transport Scotland, the Welsh Government or the Department for Regional Development (Northern Ireland)) is the highway authority. For the A122 Lower Thames Crossing, the Overseeing Organisation is National Highways.
Development Consent Order	DCO	Means of obtaining permission for developments categorised as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) under the Planning Act 2008.
Environmental Impact Assessment	EIA	A process by which information about environmental effects of a proposed development is collected, assessed and used to inform decision making. For certain projects, EIA is a statutory requirement, reported an Environmental Statement.
Environmental Statement	ES	A document produced to support an application for development consent that is subject to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), which sets out the likely impacts on the environment arising from the proposed development.
Health and Equalities Impact Assessment	HEqIA	A systematic process used to identify the potential health and equalities impacts arising from policies, plans, programmes and projects, to identify the distribution of those effects amongst the population and to identify mitigation measures to address these effects, thereby minimising adverse effects on the local population

<b>Term</b>	<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Lower Thames Area Model	LTAM	Transport model designed to forecast impacts of providing additional road based capacity across the River Thames at locations at or east of the existing Dartford Crossing.
Lower Thames Crossing	LTC	A proposed new crossing of the Thames Estuary linking the county of Kent with the county of Essex, at or east of the existing Dartford Crossing.
National Policy Statement for National Networks	NPSNN	The NPSNN sets out the need for, and Government's policies to deliver, development of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects on the national road and rail networks in England. It provides planning guidance for promoters of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects on the road and rail networks, and the basis for the examination by the Examining Authority and decisions by the Secretary of State.
National Trip End Model	NTEM	A model that forecasts the growth in trip origin-destinations (or productions-attractions) up to 2051 for use in transport modelling. The forecasts take into account national projections of population, employment, housing, car ownership and trip rates.
Noise Policy Statement for England	NPSE	The Noise Policy Statement for England was published on 15 March 2010. It sets out the long-term vision of government noise policy, to promote good health and a good quality of life through the management of noise.
Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments	REAC	The REAC identifies the environmental commitments that would be implemented during the construction and operational phases of the Project if the Development Consent Order is granted, and forms part of the Code of Construction Practice (Application Document 6.3, ES Appendix 2.2).
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.
Transport Analysis Guidance	TAG	National guidance document produced by the Department for Transport.
N/A	LaMAX	Maximum sound level. LA is a measurement of weighted sound.

## 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) Dartford Borough Council in relation to the matters addressed in this SoCG.

**Table C.1 Engagement activities between National Highways Dartford Borough Council**

<b>October 2020 – August 2022</b>		
<b>Procedural Matters</b>		
14/10/2020 – 16/08/2022	Meeting 6 occurrences	General briefing sessions to provide project update, guidance on Statement of Common Ground Process.
<b>Technical Meetings</b>		
06/10/2020	Meeting 1 occurrences	Traffic modelling review meeting, to include STANTEC presentation.
06/07/2021	Meeting 1 occurrences	Meeting to run through and discuss the feedback received on the Outline Materials Handling Plan.
<b>Cross Local Authority Discussions</b>		
02/08/2022	Meeting 1 occurrences	Local Authority Carbon Update
<b>Consultation Briefings</b>		
03/02/2022	Meeting 1 occurrences	To present LTC's proposal for the Local Refinement Consultation and to discuss any SoCG feedback Dartford Council may have.
Key Emails Received		
10/2020 – 08/2022	Email	Emails received on the following topics: Tree Preservation Order Traffic modelling Consultation
<b>September 2017 – September 2020</b>		
<b>Procedural Matters</b>		
27/10/2017 - 06/09/2018	Meeting 3 occurrences	General briefing sessions to provide project update, guidance on Statement of Common Ground Process.
<b>Technical Meetings</b>		
10/08/2018	Meeting 1 occurrence	Traffic Modelling workshop



<b>Cross Local Authority Discussions</b>		
24/10/2017 – 26/03/2018	Meeting 2 occurrences	Stakeholder Advisory Panel.
17/01/2019 - 01/03/2019	Meeting 2 occurrences	Kent Local Authorities traffic modelling workshop to discuss the draft Data Sharing Agreement and traffic model cordons.
10/10/2019	Meeting 1 occurrences	Meeting with Thames Gateway Kent Partnership (TGKP) (include Dartford Council Leader) to provide a project update.
10/02/2020	Meeting 1 occurrences	Cross-authority meeting to discuss: Stantec review of the LTC Cordon Traffic Model; Update on traffic modelling within the LTC Supplementary Consultation; Discuss scope of Wider Network Impact Study; Current work on A229 Bluebell Hill and other areas of concern.
15/09/2020	Meeting 1 occurrences	LTC Air Quality Meeting (cross-authority to include Dartford Council) to discuss the air quality assessment methodology and outcome with local authority ahead of the submission of the Air Quality ES chapter.
<b>Consultation Briefings</b>		
19/12/2017	Meeting 1 occurrences	A meeting to discuss LTC Statement of Community Consultation to include how to plan for the Statement of Community Consultation, key statutory consultation timing and duration, approach to selecting locations together with Local Authority suggestions.
15/01/2020	Meeting 1 occurrences	Briefing session for Dartford Council Leadership on upcoming supplementary consultation and a request to their continued support for the project.
<b>Key Emails Received</b>		
09/2017 – 09/2020	Email	Emails received on the following topics: Statement of Community Consultation Consultation Materials Uncertainty Log

C.1.3 In addition to the meetings / correspondence listed in the tables, there has also been regular correspondence by email / phone call. This is not reported in the table, but the total number of contact entries in our stakeholder database is 304 emails/letters and 8 phone calls.

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