

Unique Reference: 20035470

I am a resident of Orsett, Thurrock Strongly Opposed to proposed Lower Thames Crossing for lots of reasons and thank you for this opportunity to respond.

On numerous occasions I questioned, and never been answered by National Highways, on the dangerous hazards of Unexploded Ordnance, whether they have been considered within or anywhere near the project order limits both sides of the River Thames, and have always been told "Wait until the DCO paperwork", which indicates that National Highways do not find this important to residents, making this an even more stressful nightmare to have had to endure.

Document Ref. HE540039-ZET-GEN-GEN-REP-GEO-00001 Document - APP433

Now having read this report makes me even more worried and concerned, meaning years more of dread and fear for us residents.

Page 3 - I really do not find it reassuring that some of the information provided in the report by the company used by National Highways may not be correct, and no responsibility will be taken for that.

Executive Summary on Pages 4/ 5 – The chance of finding any UXO's, aircraft wreckage containing UXO's on the entire length of the site cannot be discounted.

Residents in all surrounding areas north/ south of the Thames, have lived for decades with knowledge that we were hugely impacted by aircraft crashes/ bomb raids during World Wars, and now, understandably, even more worried if proposed construction is carried out in areas known to be at risk from UXB's.

Orsett will be extensively affected by LTC construction of major junction/connecting roads. Extremely worrying for residents..

North Ockendon again extensively affected. Flight path to Hornchurch airport was used extensively during war, a major strategic target for bombers.

East Tilbury/Tilbury Docks/Tilbury Marshes - Tilbury especially the dock area is identified as strategic areas for bombers to/ from London and were heavily bombarded, Currently major development of Tilbury Port, extra vibration from digging, tunnelling, excavation work/ heavy vehicles etc could exacerbate the situation before proposed LTC tunnel boring and excavation work.

Coalhouse Fort, East Tilbury built in 1800's to protect the Thames estuary, and during the war was another controlled minefield area but on P57 is not considered a source of UXO hazard risk. Coalhouse Fort/surrounding area is currently a very popular leisure destination for its history and situation on Thames but that may change if people think there is any risk from UXO's during tunnel construction and afterwards, if it goes ahead.

Maps - Pages 6,7,8,9,10,11, Risk of Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) being potential hazards in numerous locations along the entire proposed route, either Low or Moderate risk, including “Moderate” right across River Thames where drilling of the tunnels would be 24/7 for a number of years. Low or Moderate risk can have a multitude of different meanings but the volume of UXB’s is so great that a chain reaction could happen.

Pages 12, 13 - Risk assessment for proposed work on site.

Pages 29,30,31,32,33,34- Defence posts/munition stores

Page 46 Bombs and Aircraft in River Thames even if recorded are unlikely to have been recovered.

Page 59 - Exact locations of extensive crashed aircraft/ bombs dropped, not recorded in Tilbury.

Pages 64,72,75,82,89, – Impact areas Thurrock north/central/north/central/Tilbury/Gravesend/Westfield Sole

Pages 91/92 - Number of strategic targets along River Thames in vicinity of proposed Site were bombed, but just recorded as they “fell in the river” but not exactly where.

Pages 95, 96 – Thames Estuary was heavily defended with Coastal batteries at Tilbury Battery, Coalhouse Fort, Tilbury Fort, meaning potential hazard of defence misfired/unexploded shells littering the proposed Site.

Page 98 - Wrecks Containing UXO - It is noted that according to the report that there are no records of any wrecks likely to contain any UXO hazard, but then goes on to state that a powder hulk was wrecked off Mucking Flats, approximately 2.2km northeast of the central part of the Site, surely close enough to be a potential hazard?

Pages 99-102 – Tidal UXO migration cannot be ruled out.

Page 103 – Abandoned Bombs Register not currently updated.

Pages 108-113 - UXO hazard zones along entire plan of Site

Pages 114, 115,116 UXO risk assessment - shows that whole project is definitely at least low/moderate risk for all proposed works, but cannot show all areas where UXO’s hazards were not recorded.

P 155,156 Appendix 3 -Recent UXO Finds

The statement is extremely worrying for residents along the route, as the whole area was a major target area for unexploded ordnance, and evidently explosives rarely lose effectiveness with age and can in fact become more sensitive and more prone

to detonation regardless of where they were dropped, or whether they are under water, buried in silt, clay, chalk – which comprises most of the soil which would be excavated from the Thames and deposited on the banks to simulate what National Highways define as “parks”, possibly adding further risk of delayed detonation for the future.

Pages 160-186 – List of WW1 and WW2 Bombs recorded for locations within or close to proposed site. Within the report are lots more references to aircraft crashes, bombs being dropped somewhere close to, but not specific, locations/ numbers of UXB dropped/ uncertainty as to whether been recovered or not.

With regard to wrecks containing UXB's – SS Richard Montgomery

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1092878/ss-richard-montgomery-survey-report-2021.pdf

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-kent-60416597>

Local residents in Kent and Thurrock are aware of, but there is absolutely no mention in the report of, the **SS Richard Montgomery, the half-submerged wreck, 2 kilometres from land off Sheerness, beached on a sandbank in 1944 containing 1,400 tonnes of explosives which could detonate.**

The wreck is monitored, there is an exclusion zone around it but it is not far from the main shipping lanes, and is a popular busy small boat tourist trip area to see the masts of the wreck.

The ship is decaying and if the cargo explodes, a huge tidal wave could blast towards the Kent and Essex shorelines causing flooding along the Thames Estuary and onwards towards London.

It is very close to a major shipping channel used by a multitude of vessels, including liquid natural gas (LNG) tankers going to Isle of Grain. Accidental collision by another vessel could cause UXO detonation and would be a catastrophic disaster for miles around.

Climate change is regularly bringing more adverse weather, high winds/tides which could trigger off detonation of the 1,400 tonnes of explosives.

It is also of concern that excavation under the Thames for the tunnels could send underwater vibrations to the sunken ship, or other ordnance still in the Thames, causing a chain reaction detonating everything undiscovered along the river/Thames Estuary and inland.

APP-420 National Highways 6.3. - Environmental Statement - Appendix 9.1

Pages 6-13 Assessment of GroundBorne Noise and Vibration, and Underwater Noise from the Tunnel Boring Machine at Marine Receptors

Significance criteria – Fish and mammals are considered but I cannot find definitive mention of significance criteria risk of UXO's being affected by noise and vibration.

Page 12 – Plate 1 is a complete mystery as it is not decided whether it will be 1 or 2 TBM's.

This report gives me even less confidence in National Highways, as they have continually treated us like mushrooms, kept us in the dark and fed us s**t, not only about something as important as this, but lots of other important relevant information too.

This LTC project will not solve any problems at the Dartford Crossing, and just taking the above into consideration could well cause - at taxpayers' expense - extreme devastation, destruction, injuries and even loss of life, making it even more obvious that it is in the wrong location and not fit for purpose.

It would be a disgraceful waste of taxpayers' money, as it is not good value for money, would create a toxic triangle of pollution and congestion in an already high level area, impacting the health and wellbeing of the public, wildlife, woodlands, general environment.

It would not promote active travel or public transport, with no adequate migration system in cases of road closures anywhere, destroy local people's livelihoods, including farmers with Grade 1 agricultural land at a time of food emergency, would destroy an operational solar farm, limit the Local Plan, put our already overstretched emergency and health services under unacceptably increased pressure,

Building roads brings more traffic and alternatives such as rail should be used instead, especially for HGVs which make up a vast amount of the Dartford Crossing vehicles.

The Port of Dover, which accounts for a vast amount of HGV's on the roads, does not have a rail system which would take the majority of those vehicles away, from the congestion at the Dartford Crossing.

Ports further north should be utilised delivering cargos nearer to where they need to be.

However the tunnels at the Dartford Crossing are in dire need of updating and Option A14, on which we were never consulted, would fit the criteria to replace them, and also relieve the Dartford Crossing congestion, which is exactly what National Highways were commissioned to do, but this project would fail miserably on all levels.