

**Gravesham Borough Council (Registration ID  
Number: 20035747)**

**Lower Thames Crossing (Scheme Ref: TR010032)**

**Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH1) on Project  
Definition (21 June 2023)**

**Post Hearing Submissions including written  
summary of Gravesham Borough Council's Oral  
Case**

**Deadline 1: 18 July 2023**

**Issue Specific Hearing 1 (21 June 2023) - (ISH1) on Project Definition****Post Hearing Submissions including written summary of Gravesham Borough Council's Oral Case**

**Note:** These Post Hearing Submissions include a written summary of the Oral Case presented by Gravesham Borough Council (GBC). They also include GBC's submissions on all relevant Agenda Items, not all of which were rehearsed orally at the ISH due to the need to keep oral presentations succinct. The structure of the Submissions follows the order of the Agenda Items but within each Agenda Item, the Submissions begin by identifying the main points of concern to GBC and then turn to more detailed matters.

ISH1 was attended by Michael Bedford KC for Gravesham Borough Council, instructed by Alastair Lewis, Partner and Parliamentary Agent, of Sharpe Pritchard LLP. Also in attendance were Wendy Lane, Assistant Director (Planning) and Tony Chadwick, Principal Transport and NSIP Project Manager, of Gravesham Borough Council.

<b>Examining Authority's Agenda Item / Question</b>	<b>Gravesham Borough Council's Response</b>	<b>References</b>
<b>1. Welcome, introductions, arrangements for the Hearing</b>		
<b>2. Purpose of the Issue Specific Hearing</b>		
<b>3. The Applicant's Proposed Development</b>		
<b>The Applicant is requested to frame the purpose and definition of the proposed development, to introduce the minor refinements consultation process and changes arising from it and to identify whether any further substantial changes to project definition or design are anticipated during the Examination period?</b>		
<b>4. ExA Questions on Project Definition</b>		
<b>The ExA will ask questions of the Applicant relating to the definition of the project and seek observations from IPs present. Noting that this hearing is in the earliest stages of the Examination, the primary purpose of this Agenda item will be for the ExA to raise its own initial questions. Other IPs will be welcome to participate but will not be expected to frame their</b>		

Examining Authority's Agenda Item / Question	Gravesham Borough Council's Response	References
<p>own detailed positions until the submission of their Written Representations, Local Impact Reports, and participation in a further ISHs commencing in September 2023.</p> <p>The Applicant will be provided with a right of reply.</p>		
<p>a) The need case</p>		
<p>i. Can the Applicant demonstrate that the proposed development will meet anticipated need?</p>	<p>The starting point, as seen from GBC's relevant representation, is that GBC acknowledge there are clearly problems with the existing Dartford Crossing, but GBC are not currently persuaded that the solution that is provided by the LTC proposal is the right solution. Primarily, that's of course driven by GBC's assessment of the impacts that this solution has for Gravesham's administrative area, the communities within it, and the businesses that operate from it.</p> <p>Dealing with matters in fairly high level to explain why GBC think that both Items 4(a) and (b) do merit detailed probing during the Examination, GBC draws attention to three figures from the applicant's material.</p> <p>First, the baseline a.m. crossing movements across the existing Dartford Crossing as at 2016, as reported in the transport assessment – [APP-529] – at para 1.4.5, the 2016 figure is 14,430 movements across the existing crossings in the a.m. peak.</p> <p>Second, because of the various constraints that are outlined in the TA about the problems of those crossings, when you move forward to 2045, which was the end date for the modelling assessment originally reported in the modelling report [APP-518] the 2045 figure becomes only 15,481 in the 'do minimum', i.e. with no scheme for the Lower Thames Crossing. So that 14,430 only increased by effectively a thousand movements over the 29 year period between 2016 and 2045 for the Dartford Crossing, and the 2045 position is in APP- 518 at Table 6.4.</p>	<p>Transport Assessment – [APP-529]</p> <p>Transport Modelling Report [APP-518]</p>

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	<p>Third is that in the 'do something' as also shown in Table 6.4 in APP-518, the Dartford Crossings accommodate 14,868 in the 2045 'do something' a.m. peak scenario.</p> <p>In other words, by 2045, 96% of the 'do minimum' traffic is back with the Dartford Crossings, and that is itself only marginally above the present position because of the constraints that already exist at the Dartford Crossing. In other words, you're staying at roundabout 14/15,000, being able to get through the Dartford Crossings, both now, in 2045 'do minimum', and in 2045 'do something'.</p> <p>So that's one of the reasons why GBC question to what extent this is the right solution. GBC acknowledge the point about suppressed traffic, that in the 'do something' 2045, it's right that the LTC Crossing carries some 8,944 movements, table 6.5 of APP- 518. So we're not denying that providing the LTC releases capacity. But in terms of, 'Is it the right place to do it?' – and particularly, when you look at what's actually happening at the Dartford Crossings themselves, the LTC is not really building much capacity for resilience there, because it's at those kind of levels of flow, i.e. the baseline flows, that you still get the problems, the resilience problems, at the existing Dartford Crossing, which obviously are outlined in the transport assessment.</p> <p>So that is GBC's starting point take on it – that GBC are sceptical as to whether this particular solution has addressed matters in the way that is the most appropriate, and you will have seen that GBC had referred to option A as being worthy of further exploration, but we know it was discarded in the options assessment. And then we come on to GBC's particular concerns about whether or not if you do go for an LTC located where it is, and landing, obviously, in Gravesham Borough on its southern end – whether the impacts of that are justified, given the consequences that means for residents and businesses of Gravesham. So that's our overall initial view of it.</p>	

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<p>ii. Is it anticipated and if so, how swiftly is it anticipated that the proposed LTC alignment might become capacity constrained by traffic demand?</p>		
<p><b>b) Transport demand, traffic modelling and the role of the road in the National and regional transport system</b></p>		
<p>i. How will the proposed LTC affect the operation of the existing M25/ A282 Dartford crossing?</p>	<p>See Item 4(a)(l) above.</p>	
<p>ii. How will the proposed LTC address traffic demand arising from the M20 corridor (and possible demand for trips between the LTC alignment and the M20 alignment in Kent)?</p>	<p>Blue Bell Hill (A229) does not lie within Gravesham. But obviously, the local road network is effectively interconnected. The A2 obviously passes through Gravesham. The communities and businesses of Gravesham rely on the A2 as indeed they do on the A228 and the A227 and also the A229, so what GBC are concerned about, and as we raised in our relevant representation, is, in simple terms, the lack of joined-up thinking. It is acknowledged in the transport assessment material, that with the Lower Thames Crossing in place, there is a considerable attraction to the A229, that is the Blue Bell Hill route, for strategic traffic, particularly traffic from Dover/M20, wanting to go either to the Midlands or the North, so wanting to route round the M25, and using the Lower Thames Crossing, and one can see quite clearly there is greater use of the Blue Bell Hill corridor.</p> <p>But that Blue Bell Hill corridor is currently constrained by the nature of the roundabouts at each end and the carriageway up the hill. GBC are concerned that, whilst at earlier stages of the option appraisal work, the applicant did propose to incorporate, as Option C variant, improvements to that corridor to cater for the greater flows that will be attracted to it, that has now been discarded from the project which is before you to consider. The position is that Kent County</p>	

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	<p>Council as local highway authority has got an embryonic proposal to improve that corridor. They've made a bid submission, but they can't fund it themselves. And they've made it clear in their representations, they're actually looking to National Highways to make a substantial funding contribution towards that, which is not something which is currently agreed.</p> <p>And the concern for Gravesham is a lack of joined-up thinking that, at the moment, it's not clear how that will happen, when it will happen, and if it doesn't happen in a timely fashion, the knock-on consequences for the local road network in Gravesham. And therefore, the communities and businesses that rely on those links will have adverse impacts for Gravesham. And we are anxious that that should not happen.</p> <p>So, in GBC's relevant representations, we have talked about whether the Blue Bell Hill improvement should be brought into this project as associated development. That is certainly a route, but we're not precious on the mechanism that is used for addressing the problem. GBC recognise we are not the applicant, and, to that extent, we can't dictate what the applicant does or doesn't include in the project. But what GBC certainly want to see, and we would be looking to the applicant to do something on this, is to show how, in a timely fashion, provision of the LTC and the improvement of Blue Bell Hill will happen so that it does not cause the adverse impacts on the local road network. And that may be through, a phasing requirement as opposed to bringing it in as associated development. GBC are not precious on the mechanism. But we want to see something done to cater for the movements from that M20 corridor, which we can see will have adverse impacts on Gravesham unless adequately addressed and mitigated.</p>	

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<p>iii. Are there elements of demand for the LTC alignment that can be met by existing or new heavy rail, or light rail/ tram services (such as KenEx/ Thames Gateway Tramlink) and to what extent has the contribution of such modes and options been explored?</p>		
<p><b>c) Effects of the two-year rephasing in capital funding</b></p>		
<p><b>i. Is there sufficient scope within the Rochdale Envelope for the proposed development (effects as assessed in the Environmental Statement (ES)) to take account of the two-year rephasing in capital funding that has occurred in the period between the acceptance of the application and the commencement of the Examination?</b></p>	<p>GBC are not, at present, persuaded by what the applicant has said. We've looked at the letter of 30 March 2023, that's AS-086, where the position from the applicant is set out. And we have considered that, but we don't find that to be either comprehensive or full to deal with all of the issues that would arise in relation to the consequences of the 2 year delay. It's not that we've got a concluded view. It's that GBC simply don't really think the examination has been given sufficient information or material to make a properly informed judgment on that. The way that we would put it is to enquire, through the ExA, whether it is possible for the applicant to supplement what they said in AS-086 by the provision of a coherent rationale which looks at each of the environmental topics in relation to the environmental impact assessment and explains, first of all, why the change in construction period, therefore, does not make any change to the assessments for the purposes of identifying what is the reasonable worst case for a Rochdale Envelope parameter. And then secondly, also in relation to each of those topics, takes the various environmental disciplines and their guidance on methodology and explains why staying with the assessment years which are assessed in the environmental statement still accords with guidance if you acknowledge, which is now the case, that the year of opening will not be 2030 and will be not before 2032. Now, GBC is open to be persuaded that the applicant's starting point is valid, but we really don't think that there is sufficient information provided by the applicant so far to deal with that. Essentially, what we think the examination needs is the information. The</p>	

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	<p>procedural route to achieve it is perhaps more a matter for the ExA than GBC.</p> <p><b>Post-ISH1 note:</b> GBC welcomes Action Point 1 from ISH1 and reserves its position further until it has seen the applicant's response to that Action Point.</p>	
<p><b>ii. What is the effect on construction duration and environmental effects of the proposed use of a single tunnel boring machine (TBM)?</b></p>	<p>As mentioned in GBCs minor refinements consultation response, the DCO and/or control documents must secure that all tunnel spoil is removed from the north tunnel portal, and that tunnel segments and other tunnel materials will also be brought through the tunnel portal, whichever tunneling approach is adopted.</p> <p>GBC would certainly want to see the things that Mr Forrest for the applicant was referring to secured. That is to say, in particular, that if the contractor elects for the one tunnel boring machine nonetheless ensuring that will be serviced from the north and that all the spoil will be removed to the north, and GBC would want to see that reflected in one or more of the control documents so that it's absolutely clear, because that would go a considerable way to allaying our concerns.</p>	<p>GBC concerns raised in Minor Refinement Consultation response as submitted on 19/06/2023</p>
<p><b>d) Road design approach</b></p>		
<p><b>Having regard to anticipated traffic levels and user safety, is there a case for a different road design approach, including consideration of a special road/ motorway, provision of a continuous hard shoulder or any other particular safety measures?</b></p>	<p>"In relation to the design of the crossing as previously pointed out reducing the design speed to 50 mph would enable a much more compact and less damaging junction arrangement with the A2, which would be significantly less expensive and reduce the nitrogen deposition, air quality and a host of other impacts"</p> <p>When the routes were proposed in 2016, it was clear that the selection of location C was informed by assumptions over smooth flowing traffic "4.2.4 Hourly crossing capacity could be increased by 57% to around 19,250 pcus if an additional</p>	<p>From GBC's Local Refinement Consultation response</p>



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	<p>4 lanes are constructed at Location A. Assuming the new 4 lane crossing was built at Location C, capacity would increase to around 21,600 pcus, 76% higher than provided today. <u>The extra capacity at Location C is a function of the new tunnels and approach roads having a more consistent design</u> which means they can operate at higher speeds compared to the existing Dartford Crossing i.e. 70 mph compared to 50 mph"</p>	<p><a href="#">Pre-Consultation Scheme Assessment Report (Volume 5) (citizenspace.com)</a></p>
<b>e) Routing and intersection design</b>		
<p><b>i. What consideration has been given to possible alternative routes and/ or alignment design mitigations at route 'pinch points', specifically in open land between North and South Ockendon, at Baker Street and between the hamlet of Thong and Riverview Park?</b></p>	<p>GBC considers that the various problems and constraints arising at the 'pinch point' south of the River between Thong and Riverview Park are a consequence of preferring Option C to Option A.</p> <p>Starting with the remarks that Dr Wright for the applicant made at the outset about the option selection process, GBC are not currently persuaded from what is set out in chapter 3 of the environmental statement – that's APP 141 – that there's a coherent rationale to explain the dropping of option A in location A, and then the pursuit of option C in location C, and we contrast table 3.4 of APP 141, where, in summary, essentially location A doesn't have as many benefits, but it also doesn't have as many disbenefits, and location C, it has more benefits but it also has much more disbenefits. There is a judgement to be made there, but what we find confusing and not adequately explained is it then tells us that in 6 3.8.2(a) that location A was dropped because it doesn't meet scheme objectives, and we find that to be somewhat inconsistent because certainly in terms of economic and social impacts, location A in table 3.4 would seem to be passing muster. It just doesn't pass muster, perhaps, as well as some other things, but it has less disbenefits.</p>	<p><a href="#">Lower Thames Crossing Consultation - National Highways - Citizen Space</a></p> <p>(also map that shows options in more detail <a href="#">General Plan - Route 4 A0 (citizenspace.com)</a>)</p> <p>Chapter 3 of the Environmental Statement [APP-141]</p>

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	<p>The important point, obviously, is when you then do try to thread location C, option C, through to connect the LTC to the A2, you have the Thong/Riverview Park pinch point as described, and you also have the complex junction arrangement in order to accommodate movements to and from the LTC and the A2. What we see, in a sense is the constraints and the problems are because of that original option choice, and we're not persuaded that option A should have been discarded.</p>	
<p><b>ii. What consideration has been given to land take at intersections and whether alternatives to the 'all directional slip' model for the main intersections at Baker Street and Shorne /A2 /M2 have been considered?</b></p>	<p>The problem is that given the existing Marling Cross and Cobham/Shorne junctions fitting in a new road junction in this space given all the environmental and physical (e.g. HS1) constraints is very difficult.</p> <p>Where we now are with the LTC A2 junction, whilst GBC do think it's a complex junction and we do have concerns, particularly in terms of safety and ability of people to fully understand that junction, we are very anxious that the answer to that is not to reduce the local connectivity and access of that junction, because we are certainly concerned to ensure that the A2 remains as an important route for local traffic, and also that the connectivity benefits that would then be provided with a connection to the LTC are not lost. So although we recognise the problems, we're not in favour of what might be hinted in part of the ExA's question of, 'Well, would it be made more simple if we removed some of the slip roads and some of the connectivity?' Yes, it would be made more simple, but it would be at the expense, we say, of local access. So those are our concerns.</p>	

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<p><b>Are all directions to all directions outcomes needed at these intersections? If not, could some slips be deleted to reduce land take?</b></p> <p><b>If so could it be feasible to incorporate roundabouts into elements of intersection designs to reduce land take?</b></p>	<p>The A2 past Gravesend is an important local road as well as a strategic link, illustrated by the number of junctions (Pepperhill, Tollgate, Marling Cross, Cobham). Reduced access to A2 for local traffic would cause major impacts to local roads north and south of the A2</p>	<p>Have been lots of works to the A2 and its junctions in the last 20 years including A2 widening which involved work to all the junctions in GBC (see <a href="https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/418842/POPE_A2_Bean_Cobham_FYA.pdf">POPE A2 Bean-Cobham FYA (publishing.service.gov.uk)</a>), and more recently the Ebbsfleet / Bean works (<a href="https://www.nationalhighways.gov.uk/ebbsfleet-bean-works">A2 Bean and Ebbsfleet junction improvements - National Highways</a>)</p>
<p><b>iii. Has adequate provision been made in the proposed LTC design for port access (referring specifically to Tilbury, Tilbury 2, DP World London Gateway Port and extension) and for access to other proposed and emerging business, industrial and employment uses of land?</b></p>	<p>The junction and link to PoTL was in 2018 Stat Con and then deleted, and now the junction, albeit not connected to anything, has been added in. The Link road would now connect to the Freeport as well if built by others. GBC interest is twofold.. First if built, should it be the modelling for 15 years after opening. Secondly if that is agreed then why is Hoo housing not included?</p>	
<p><b>iv. Has adequate provision been made for the provision/restoration of community connections across the LTC alignment?</b></p>	<p>Construction phase – concerns over loss of Brewers Road bridge</p> <p>Operation phase – concern over loss of Cobham Services with no replacement proposed in the scheme</p>	
<p><b>v. Has adequate provision been made for the provision/restoration of connectivity across the LTC alignment for non-motorised users (NMUs)?</b></p>	<p>Major issue in Gravesham is NCR177 during construction.</p>	
<p><b>f) Mitigation design and delivery</b></p>		

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<p><b>i. There appears to be some element of double counting of the benefits of some elements of mitigation design and delivery. Examples arising from site inspections include the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The observation that land at Hole Farm near Great Warley is identified as already having been purchased and drawn into the creation of community woodland that has been publicly described as serving some general purposes not directly linked to the effects of LTC.</li> <li>• The observation that land proposed for nitrogen management at Bluebell Hill and Burham was added to the land requirement for the project between the first application and the second application, but that elements of this land are identified in the minor refinements consultation as potentially surplus to need and to be reduced in extent. The possible inclusion of some of this land in Stewardship is given as a basis for some of the exclusion, but again there does not appear to be a direct link between the management of land under Stewardship and the management of the effects of LTC?</li> </ul>	<p>GBC's concerns about the reduction in the nitrogen mitigation areas in Kent were raised in Minor Refinement Consultation response as submitted on 19/06/2023</p>	
<p><b>ii. Can the extent of land take and acquisition for mitigation be fully justified as addressing need arising from LTC?</b></p>	<p>GBC would tend to argue for more land</p>	
<p><b>g) Utilities and transmission diversions</b></p>		
<p><b>i. These works are currently characterised as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) in their own right. The statutory basis for this approach will be explored in ISH2.</b></p>	<p><b>Post-ISH1 note:</b> In the discussion of this Item at ISH1 there was also some discussion of the role of 'associated development' for NSIP development. This is now to be addressed via Action Point 4 from ISH2.</p>	
<p><b>ii. What design approach has been taken to the siting and design of replacement utilities and transmission alignments?</b></p>		
<p><b>h) Economic benefits</b></p>		

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<p><b>i. Are the economic benefits (BCR) of the proposed LTC robust and measurable?</b></p>	<p>A significant proportion of measurable benefits are monetised and relate to time savings resulting from the construction of the LTC. These are based on the 'willingness to pay' of different types of user for different journeys – i.e. work or non-work.</p> <p>The basis of the approach they use is set out in WebTAG Unit A1.3 - User and Provider Impacts (May 2022) at Chapter 4.</p> <p>GBC seek clarification on the economic benefits as reported in the economic appraisal report which is APP-526. The primary assessment is based on what is termed the central case. We understand that, and one of the inputs that goes into the calculation of economic benefits is the cost that is attributable to the value of time. That's both the value of time for businesses and the value of time for non-work journeys as well.</p> <p>Chapter 11 of APP-526 then sets out the sensitivity tests that were conducted, and we've seen that, and essentially they are based on varying some of the input factors, including the levels of traffic growth, so there's a high growth and a low growth, and also varying some of the cost factors.</p> <p>However, what we at the moment cannot see is where there is any sensitivity testing carried out of the value of time input away from the central case assumption, and as we read WebTAG unit A1-3, which is on user and provider impacts, we think that it recommends sensitivity testing on the value of time, at paragraphs 4.2.19, 4.2.20, 4.3.6, and 4.3.7, and the sensitivities that it recommends are, for work time, a sensitivity of plus or minus 25% to the value that you've chosen to use, and for non-work time, depending on whether it's a commuting journey or a non-commuting</p>	<p>For WebTag see <a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1102785/tag-unit-a1.3-user-and-provider-impacts.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1102785/tag-unit-a1.3-user-and-provider-impacts.pdf</a></p> <p>Economic Appraisal Report [APP-526]</p>

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	<p>journey, the range it recommends is either plus or minus 25% or plus or minus 60%. Those are obviously fairly big sensitivities, if you were to include them.</p> <p>What WebTAG, as we read it, also advises is that that sensitivity testing should be carried out, and should be reported on separately from the main 5 assessment, and again, we understand that, but what we're at the moment struggling with is we can't see where that sensitivity testing on value of time has been carried out or reported, and obviously, as such, we reserve our position on this, but if we can simply make the obvious point that because so much of the BCR, the benefit-to-cost ratio, is informed by time savings from journeys, obviously we think that the value of time input will be an important component, and given that the adjusted BCR gives a value for money ratio which is categorised as 'low' in the hierarchy, then, obviously, we would expect that sensitivity testing plus or minus those kind of magnitudes of that particular input – and we recognise that it's only one input out of a whole process, but we think it's likely that it would have a marked effect on where you would end up with as a sensitivity test, and we can't see where that is in the applicant's material, so some clarification on that would be helpful.</p> <p><b>Post-ISH1 Note:</b> GBC welcomes Action Point 7 from ISH1 and reserves its position further until it has seen the applicant's response.</p>	

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ii. Do costs figures adequately address current positions in relation to labour and materials availability and costs? Has inflation been taken into sufficient account?		
iii. Is any adjustment to economic benefits necessary, given submissions from Ports to the effect that the lack of local highway connectivity to the waterfront could reduce local journey time reliability and have negative economic impacts on port operations?		
<b>5. Next Steps</b>		
<b>6. Closing</b>		