

Open Floor Hearing 4 – Wednesday 6th September 2023

Written submission by Gordon Pratt, representing Thames Gateway Tramlink (The “KenEx” cross river project), who spoke at OFH4.

1) **Thames Gateway Tramlink Ltd** are promoters of the KenEx cross river tramway project www.kenextram.co.uk

1.1 Following the submission of an Outline Business Case (OBC) for the tramway project to the Department for Transport, the OBC was then further reviewed by the Centre of Excellence at “UK Tram”, the industry trade body. The scheme is now moving forward to the Full Business Case (FBC) stage.

1.2 Parts of the brief for the project included the enablement of the movement of **people** across the river Thames, to provide connectivity to other forms of public transport and to provide a long term sustainable, clean and energy efficient transport solution.

1.3 The DfT submission required a comparison with other transport modes, bus, ferry, and car for example. Low levels of local car access and the potential volume of cross river journeys led to a tramway as being selected as being the optimal solution meeting all criteria.

1.4 The OBC identified a potentially significant modal shift from the current Dartford Crossing traffic to a tramway solution (approximately 5 million vehicle crossings) or 10% of the current crossing load.

1.5 Total annual passenger crossings of the tramway are likely to be around 10 million comprising a mix of:

- a) Modal shift from the Dartford Crossing
- b) New journeys from residents without access to cars, now made possible.
- c) Induced demand due to improved transport links

1.6 The total cost of an 18km system as submitted in the OBC (with subsequent cost uplift) is up to £1 billion (around a tenth of the expected LTC cost out-turn)

1.7 The tramway project gained early support from Arriva, who operated the Fastrack BRT system in north Kent which suffered operationally from the Dartford Crossing traffic. Arriva’s goal was to **reduce** local car traffic by encouraging an attractive alternative to cars.

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2) Observations of the Lower Thames Crossing applicant’s submission – public transport

2.1 Thames Gateway Tramlink having gone through the Outline Business Case process were requested by the DfT to apply focus on connectivity.

To what extent has the applicant consulted with:

- a) Bus operators
- b) Rail operators
- c) Ferry operators
- d) Thames Gateway Tramlink?

2.2 The area includes wards where residents have low levels of car access and new developments are being built with 1 parking space for every 2 properties.

How does the LTC address the needs of the significant number of non-car drivers needing to cross the river?

3) Observations of the Lower Thames Crossing applicant’s submission – freight

3.1 We understand that the focus of the applicant is now towards freight connectivity (from the Midland to the Kent coast)

3.2 Around 20 years ago the privately backed “Central Railway” project was proposed to take HGVs by rail between the Kent Coast and the Midlands which would have accomplished the goal of the Lower Thames Crossing at much lower financial and environmental cost with features such as:

- a) Significant lower energy costs (40 HGVs per train v single HGVs)
- b) Avoidance of HGV driver shortage
- c) Avoiding Net Zero issues which will occur in attempting convert HGV’s away from fossil fuels (See also North Sea Transition Authority) and likely resulting additional LTC costs.

3.3 Commercially, the company, Cargo Beamer now runs HGV’s on rail from Ashford to Perpignan:

https://www.cargobeamer.com/files/theme/content/terminals_routen/product-sheet-ashford-calais-perpignan.pdf

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3.4 Expedition Engineering has recently costed a shorter (Ashford – Reading HGV on rail) route than Central Railway at less than £5 billion. This is significantly lower cost than the LTC due to most of the railway being already in place requiring upgrade as opposed to a completely new build for the LTC.

3.5 How can the applicant justify costs of £10 billion for a road solution when an HGV on rail solution is estimated at half the cost to the taxpayer?