

From: [Stuart Watson](#)
To: [Lower Thames Crossing](#)
Subject: Lower Thames Crossing Swale and National Highways SoCG
Date: 14 December 2023 14:50:34
Attachments: [REDACTED]

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Dear Sir,

I am writing to inform you that Swale Borough Council will be withdrawing from the SoCG process with National Highways on the Lower Thames Crossing.

The primary reason lays within resourcing issues for the Council due to the complex nature of the matters concerned in the draft SoCG agreed in July 2023, rather than any agreement having been reached between parties on those matters. The Council insist that our existing representations to the Lower Thames Crossing be given full consideration as part of the DCO examination process. I've set out below a reiteration of Swales concerns regarding the crossing.

The Council maintains its position that the Lower Thames Crossing will result in unacceptable impacts on across the road network across the Borough and that the LTC cannot progress in isolation without plans in place to deliver the improvements across the wider Kent transport network needed. We confirm this view is still held.

Insufficient investment is planned in modal shift initiatives, and the interest shown by government in these initiative remains vastly disappointing to their potential beneficial impact. We remain firmly of the view that insufficient attention and investment is directed to the facilitation and promotion of modal shift away from road transport, in particular, for freight.

The Port of Sheerness offers great potential in this regard, and we would urge government to engage in conversation with us to progress this – noting our attempts to date to meaningfully engage movement in the modal shift as part of earlier consultations have met with limited success.

Our concerns regarding the significant pressure to which the scheme would condemn the wider Kent network remain. The Lower Thames Crossing would put unacceptable pressure on the already stressed M2/A2 and in particular key junctions such as J7 (Brenley Corner), and the M2/A2 - M20/A20 corridor links. This congestion impacts much of east Kent as well as Swale and we cannot afford – in environmental or economic terms – to entertain plans which will exacerbate this.

We acknowledge some mitigation measures have been identified as potential targets for RIS3 investment (Brenley Corner and Dover approach schemes), but this is a partial solution and we will need full reassurance that the funding is secured.

We strongly believe wider network schemes must be an integral part of any commitment to the Lower Thames Crossing, and must form part of prior or parallel investment. The crossing's designation as a nationally significant infrastructure project (NSIP) should inherently highlight that this scheme cannot be considered in isolation and we would remind government that the strategic route of which it forms part is of not just national, but international significance.

In summary, we are not satisfied that our concerns are fully addressed and the potential impacts of the Lower Thames Crossing will displace congestion to the east and into Swale, threatening our economic growth and reducing local road safety, air quality and journey time reliability. These are an unacceptable sacrifice for the residents of the borough, the people who work and invest in Swale and the delicate and susceptible environment within which we live, work and invest.

Kind regards

Stuart Watson BA MA MRTPI | Interim Planning Policy Manager (job share) | Planning Services

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