



Lower Thames Crossing

9.154 Final Agreed Statement of Common Ground between (1) National Highways and (2) Maidstone Borough Council (Tracked changes version)

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Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010

Volume 9

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Revision history

<u>Version</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Submitted at</u>
<u>1.0</u>	<u>31 October 2023</u>	<u>Deadline 6</u>
<u>2.0</u>	<u>15 December 2023</u>	<u>Deadline 9A</u>

Status of the Statement of Common Ground

This is ~~the Final Agreed~~ Statement of Common Ground ~~between (1),~~ National Highways ~~(the Applicant) and (2),~~ Maidstone Borough Council.

~~Both parties have reached agreement on the status of all 11 matters. Of the 11 matters contained within, seven matters are agreed and four matters are not agreed, leaving no matters outstanding.~~

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Deleted: considers that this draft Statement of Common Ground is an accurate description of the matters raised by

Deleted: and the status of each matter, based on the engagement that has taken place to date.

On behalf of the Applicant

<u>Name</u>		
<u>Position</u>		
<u>Organisation</u>		
<u>Signature</u>		

On behalf of Maidstone Borough Council

<u>Name</u>		
<u>Position</u>		
<u>Organisation</u>		
<u>Signature</u>		

Deleted: A high-level overview of the engagement undertaken since the DCO application was submitted on 31 October 2022 is summarised in Table A.1 in Appendix A.¶

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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 (the Applicant) to the Secretary of State for Transport (Secretary of State) under section 37 of the Planning Act 2008 on 31 October 2022.

1.1.2 Although this SoCG was in development prior to the Application on 31 October 2022, ~~an endorsed SoCG (i.e., signed by both Maidstone Borough Council and National Highways), was not submitted to the Examining Authority as part of the Application. An endorsed SoCG was available by November 2022, but as the Application had already been made at that time the SoCG was retained for internal use. Subsequent to this, Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) and National Highways have continued to engage in order to ensure an updated and endorsed SoCG is made available to the Examining Authority. It is noted that the draft SoCG, submitted at Deadline 6 was not endorsed by Maidstone Borough Council.~~

1.1.3 The SoCG has been produced to confirm to the Examining Authority where agreement has been reached between the Applicant and Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) and where agreement has not been reached.

1.1.4 This final version of the SoCG has been submitted at Examination Deadline 9A.

1.2 Principal Areas of Disagreement

1.2.1 On 19 December 2022, the Examining Authority made some early procedural decisions to assist the Applicant, potential Interested Parties and themselves to prepare for the Examination of the DCO application.

1.2.2 One of these procedural decisions was to use a tracker recording Principal Areas of Disagreement in Summary (PADS). This tracker is known as the PADS Tracker.

1.2.3 The PADS Tracker provides a record of principal matters of disagreement emerging from the SoCG and will be updated alongside the SoCG as appropriate throughout the Examination with the expectation that a revised PADS Tracker should be submitted at every Examination deadline.

1.2.4 This SoCG should be read in conjunction with the MBC PADS Tracker.

1.3 Terminology

1.3.1 In the final position on matters table in Section 2 of this SoCG, 'Matter Not Agreed' indicates agreement on the matter could not be reached following significant engagement. 'Matter Agreed' indicates where the issue has been resolved.

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Deleted: Throughout Examination the Applicant and Maidstone Borough Council have been in discussions regarding the submission of an agreed draft version of the SoCG. However, timings of examination deadlines, Maidstone Borough Council's internal governance processes and the Applicant's own internal production processes have not aligned to facilitate this. Although discussed with

Deleted: officers, this SoCG has still not been through Maidstone Borough Council's full internal governance process. However,

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2 Matters

2.1 Final position on matters

- 2.1.1 A summary of the engagement between the Applicant and Maidstone Borough Council is provided in Appendix A.
- 2.1.2 The outcome of this engagement is presented in Table 2.1, which details and presents the matters which have been agreed or are not agreed between (1) the Applicant and (2) Maidstone Borough Council.
- 2.1.3 In the column 'Item No' in Table 2.1, 'RRN' indicates a matter entered into the SoCG as a result of content in the Relevant Representation and 'RRE' indicates an existing SoCG matter that was also raised in the Relevant Representation. Where both references have been used against the same Item No., this indicates that it was an existing matter that was expanded upon in the Relevant Representation.
- 2.1.4 At Examination Deadline 9A there are 11 matters in total of which seven are agreed and four are not agreed.

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Following submission of the DCO application, continued discussions

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2.1.4 (Charging) Charging Regime¶
Since Application the following matters moved from 'Matter Under Discussion' to 'Matter Not Agreed':¶
2.1.5 (Traffic and Economics) Local plan growth - Traffic modelling methodology and local growth¶
2.1.8 (Air Quality) Project design and mitigation - Seeking collaboration to secure appropriate mitigation where needed¶
2.1.10 (Nitrogen Deposition) Detailed design/ management plans/ Implementation - Request for cross authority work in relation to site south of M2 at Blue Bell Hill¶
Since Application, Maidstone Borough Council submitted further comments on the DCO application which has led to new matters being included in Table 2.1.

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2.1.11 (Consultation and

Deleted: <#> - Timetable for submission of SoCGs¶
Since Application, the following matter has been reassigned from the heading 'Wider Network Impacts' to 'Design – road, tunnels, utilities':¶
2.1.7 (Design – road, tunnels, utilities) Non-Project highways improvements - Proposed wider network improvements¶
The outcomes of discussions to date are

Deleted: <#>Table 2.1

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Deleted: , and 'DL6' indicates a new matter added during Examination at/around that deadline.

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2.1.5 This is the final Statement of Common Ground between the Applicant and Maidstone Borough Council.

Table 2.1 Final position on Matters

Topic	Item No.	Maidstone Borough Council Comment	The Applicant's Response	Application Document Reference	Status
Need for the Project					
Need for the Project	2.1.1 RRE	Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) strongly agrees that the Lower Thames Crossing is required in order to provide a greater long-term capacity and resilience on the Strategic Road Network (SRN), and to alleviate capacity issues in the area surrounding the Dartford Crossing. Maidstone Borough Council acknowledge that without the project, the current issues surrounding the Dartford Crossing will only be set to worsen; negatively impacting upon those residents and businesses of Maidstone borough who currently rely upon the Dartford Crossing to cross the River Thames.	The Applicant welcomes MBC's recognition of the need for the Project.	N/A	Matter Agreed
Route selection, modal alternatives and assessment of reasonable alternatives					
Route selection Route corridor and alignment	2.1.2	Maidstone Borough Council supports the proposed route corridor (east of Gravesend) and route alignment. Maidstone Borough Council has previously expressed a preference	The Applicant welcomes MBC's support for the proposed route.	N/A	Matter Agreed

Topic	Item No.	Maidstone Borough Council Comment	The Applicant's Response	Application Document Reference	Status
		<p>in favour of the Eastern Southern link as opposed to the Western Southern link, on the corridor south of the River Thames in Kent. Notwithstanding this preference, Maidstone Borough Council acknowledge that the Eastern Southern link would have greater environmental impacts, including more significant intrusion into the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and is satisfied with the additional appraisal work undertaken by National Highways concluding that the Western Southern link is, on balance, more appropriate.</p> <p>Maidstone Borough Council in principle support is, however, subject to caveat over concerns related to the impact of the Project on the local road network (LRN) (see also matters under 'Wider Network Impacts' below, matters 2.1.6 and 2.1.7).</p>			
Consultation and engagement					
Adequacy of Consultation	2.1.3	Maidstone Borough Council is satisfied with the adequacy of consultation with the local authority on the Project.	The Applicant welcomes MBC's comment on adequacy of consultation.	N/A	Matter Agreed

Topic	Item No.	Maidstone Borough Council Comment	The Applicant's Response	Application Document Reference	Status
Timetable for submission of SoCG	2.1.11 RRN	<p>Maidstone Borough Council has regularly engaged with National Highways throughout the pre-application stage of the Lower Thames Crossing Development Consent Order (DCO). This includes participation in engagement activities such as technical briefing sessions and the submission of responses to formal public consultations, as reflected in the National Highways Lower Thames Crossing Consultation Reports. Maidstone Borough Council has also worked jointly with National Highways on the preparation of a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG). However, whilst the latest draft SoCG was signed by the Council's executive in October 2022 a countersignature from National Highways has not been forthcoming. National Highways have informed Maidstone Borough Council that the SoCG was not signed in time for it to be submitted at the DCO application stage. Maidstone Borough Council would like to point out that there was insufficient time provided for it to</p>	<p>The Applicant and MBC worked together in 2022 to agree content for a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG), with a view to that SoCG forming part of the Applicant's application for development consent for the Project.</p> <p>In October 2022, the council indicated that it preferred not to have the SoCG submitted because the document had not had sign-off by the relevant internal council authorities. There was an option for the SoCG to be submitted unsigned as part of the Application, but the council nonetheless requested that it should not be submitted at this stage.</p> <p>A signed-off version of the SoCG was received from the council after the Application was submitted and, as such, was not published on the Planning Inspectorate website with the rest of the Application. A signed-off version for the council's internal use was supplied to MBC following Application, as requested.</p> <p>The Applicant advised MBC that the next opportunity to submit the SoCG to the Examining Authority would be at Examination Deadline 1-</p>	N/A	Matter Agreed

Topic	Item No.	Maidstone Borough Council Comment	The Applicant's Response	Application Document Reference	Status
		agree the wording of the SoCG and to obtain sign-off under its Committee system within the timescales provided by National Highways. Maidstone Borough Council made this clear to National Highways at that time. In light of the above, Maidstone Borough Council understands that the SoCG has not been included with the submission documents for the DCO application and it is not currently in the Examination Library.			
Design – road, tunnels, utilities					
Non-Project highways improvements	2.1.7 RRE	Maidstone Borough Council supports in principle the changes National Highways have made to the route since the preferred route announcement was made in 2017, particularly the widening of the M2 and A2 to Junction 1 and the redesign of the M2/A2 junction in order to cut journey times and improve junction safety.	The Applicant welcomes Maidstone Borough Council's comments regarding changes to the route since the preferred route announcement.	N/A	Matter Agreed
Proposed wider network improvements					
Charging					
Charging regime	2.1.4 RRE	Maidstone Borough Council will confirm its position with respect to the proposed charging regime for the Project in due course.	At a meeting on 10 May 2023, key aspects of the National Highways charging regime were discussed. These included a Local Residents' Discount Scheme, where the draft DCO would allow the Secretary of	Road User Charging Statement [APP-517]	Matter Agreed

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Topic	Item No.	Maidstone Borough Council Comment	The Applicant's Response	Application Document Reference	Status
		Maidstone Borough Council's review of its position on the charging statement is ongoing, but it was indicated at a meeting on 10 May 2023 that there was sufficient information to move the matter to agreed.	State to enter into the same discount arrangement, at the same rates as offered to Dartford and Thurrock residents on the Dart Charge, with residents who pay their council tax to Gravesham Borough Council or Thurrock Council. This aligns with the Dartford Crossing Local Residents' Discount Scheme by limiting eligibility to residents of local authorities in which the tunnel portals would be situated. It was confirmed that only the tunnel would be subject to charging, and that revenues would not directly fund the Project, but rather would go to the Government and hence distribute the cost of the Lower Thames Crossing between the taxpayer and users. This is aligned with the National Policy Statement for National Networks (Department for Transport (DfT), 2014) paragraph 3.25. It was left that MBC would now refer to the Road User Charging Statement.		
Traffic and economics					
Local plan growth Traffic modelling methodology	2.1.5 RRE	Maidstone Borough Council has previously raised concerns that the traffic model does not fully account for the level of growth that is likely to occur in Maidstone and the wider Kent area over the long-term. Maidstone Borough Council acknowledges that the model takes	The Uncertainty Log (both for developments and highway schemes) used within the Project's transport model has been developed following TAG Unit M4, as is set out in Chapter 4 of the Combined Modelling and Appraisal	Combined Modelling and Appraisal Report [APP-518] Combined Modelling and Appraisal Report Appendix C: Transport	Matter Not Agreed

Topic	Item No.	Maidstone Borough Council Comment	The Applicant's Response	Application Document Reference	Status
and local growth		<p>account of development pipeline activity, but also wishes to stress that assumptions of “near certain” or “more than likely” housing and employment development input into the traffic model are only a snapshot in time. Maidstone Borough Council remains concerned that the predicted uplift on housing figures within Maidstone’s Local Plan Review, and other authorities’ local plans, will go beyond what has currently been modelled and therefore likely to have an even greater impact on both local and Strategic Road Network (SRN) in terms of flow and capacity.</p> <p>The Maidstone Local Plan Review and supporting documents are currently undergoing Examination in Public.</p>	<p>Report - Appendix C - Transport Forecasting Package.</p> <p>The Applicant is satisfied that the Project’s transport model has been produced in line with Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG) (DfT, 2022) as set out in the Combined Modelling and Appraisal Report. It should be noted that overall growth within the transport model is in line with DfT traffic forecasts as set out in their National Trip End Model and published as TEMPro 7.2 traffic growth forecasts. The Uncertainty Log simply provides additional spatial definition of some of this growth.</p> <p>Alternative scenarios (high and low growth), in line with TAG, have been undertaken. Chapter 4 of Combined Modelling and Appraisal Report - Appendix C - Transport Forecasting Package includes details of the high and low growth scenarios, the results of which are presented within Chapter 7 of the Transport Assessment. The high growth scenario therefore assesses the impact of the Project on the road network with a higher level of growth than is present in the core scenario.</p>	<p>Forecasting Package [APP-522]</p> <p>Transport Assessment [REP4-148], [REP4-150], [REP4-152]</p>	
Wider Network Impacts					

Topic	Item No.	Maidstone Borough Council Comment	The Applicant's Response	Application Document Reference	Status
Non-Project highway improvement Impacts on sections of the A229, A249 and M20	2.1.6 RRE RRN	<p>Maidstone Borough Council remains concerned regarding the impact of the Project on the local road network. In particular around sections of the A229, A249, M20 east of the A229 and M2 Junction 3 at the interchange with the A229/Blue Bell Hill due to increased traffic levels. Maidstone Borough Council advocates concurrent provision of road and junction improvements to ensure the benefits of the speedier, more reliable river crossing are not stymied by insufficient road infrastructure further along the road network, and to ensure that local traffic is not unduly impacted as a result of the crossing. Maidstone Borough Council therefore strongly recommends that the project is accompanied by funded improvements to the road network.</p> <p><u>Whilst noting the Applicant's Wider Network Impacts Management and Monitoring Plan, Maidstone Borough Council is concerned that mitigation is not guaranteed within the DCO and would need to be implemented through a separate</u></p>	<p>The Applicant recognises that as a result of the Lower Thames Crossing opening, people will choose to make different journeys. In many places on the network, and within Kent, this will lead to beneficial impacts on the network, and in some cases will lead to adverse impacts. Overall, the benefits on the road network outweigh the adverse impacts, and this is reflected in the positive economic benefit of the Project within Kent. The Applicant has identified the adverse impacts on traffic flows across the Local Road Network, and this assessment has been set out in the Transport Assessment. Each of these impacts has been assessed and considered against policy requirements as set out in Appendix F of the Transport Assessment.</p> <p>The Applicant is proposing to monitor the impacts of the Project on traffic on the local and strategic road networks. If the monitoring identifies opportunities to further optimise 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. This process is set out in the Wider Network Impacts Management and</p>	<p>Transport Assessment [REP4-148, REP4-150, REP4-152]</p> <p>Transport Assessment - Appendix F - Wider Network Impacts Management and Monitoring Policy Compliance [APP-535]</p> <p>Wider Network Impacts Management and Monitoring Plan [Document Reference 7.12 (2)],</p> <p>Post-event submissions, including written submission of oral comments, for ISH4 [REP4-180]</p> <p>Post-event submissions, including written submission of oral comments, for ISH7 [REP4-183]</p> <p>Joint Position Statement: Blue Bell Hill [REP5-083]</p>	Matter Not Agreed

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Topic	Item No.	Maidstone Borough Council Comment	The Applicant's Response	Application Document Reference	Status
		<p><u>consenting route which has less certainty of delivery.</u></p> <p>Maidstone Borough Council supports in principle the changes National Highways have made to the route since the preferred route announcement was made in 2017, particularly the widening of the M2 and A2 to Junction 1 and the redesign of the M2/A2 junction in order to cut journey times and improve junction safety. Notwithstanding this support, Maidstone Borough Council considers that additional wider network improvements are required to mitigate impacts on the local road network, as set out above.</p>	<p>Monitoring Plan, which provides information about the proposed traffic monitoring.</p> <p>The Applicant recognises the case for developing a scheme to improve the operations of Blue Bell Hill and is continuing to support Kent County Council as they bring forward their improvement scheme. The A122 Lower Thames Crossing does not require the emerging improvements at Blue Bell Hill to deliver the benefits set out in the A122 Lower Thames Crossing application. Similarly, the case for this scheme is not dependent on the opening of the A122 Lower Thames Crossing.</p> <p>The Applicant has provided further information on its approach to wider network impacts mitigation in <u>Section 4: ExA Questions on: Wider Network Impacts Management and Monitoring</u>, and Section B.3 of Post-event submissions, including written submission of oral comments, for Issue Specific Hearing (ISH) 4.</p> <p>The Applicant provided further information on mitigation for wider network impacts, including precedents from made DCOs, in paragraphs 1.3.45 – 1.3.59 of Post-event submissions, including written submission of oral comments, for ISH7. At paragraphs</p>	<p><u>Wider Network Impacts Position Paper [REP6-092]</u></p>	

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 Kent County Council has commissioned modelling work assessing junction capacity on these roads. Maidstone Borough Council await the opportunity to review the study findings to inform updates to its current position.

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Topic	Item No.	Maidstone Borough Council Comment	The Applicant's Response	Application Document Reference	Status
			<p>1.3.73 to 1.3.75, the Applicant provided further comments about the draft revised NPSNN and further response to remarks made by Kent County Council regarding Blue Bell Hill.</p> <p>As an action arising from ISH7, the Applicant held a workshop with Kent County Council in respect of Blue Bell Hill and produced the Joint Position Statement: Blue Bell Hill.</p> <p><u>The Applicant's position on Blue Bell Hill is further clarified in the Wider Network Impacts Position Paper published at Deadline 6.</u></p>		
Air quality					
<p>Project design and mitigation</p> <p>Seeking collaboration to secure appropriate mitigation where needed</p>	<p>2.1.8</p> <p>RRE</p>	<p>Maidstone Borough Council understands that the Air Quality Assessment has been completed for the DCO Environmental Statement. It further understands that this work has not modelled impacts and identified mitigations outside of the area immediately impacted by the Lower Thames Crossing, including Maidstone borough, and that this work is ongoing. Maidstone Borough Council seeks assurances that the assessment is sufficiently robust</p>	<p>The air quality assessment presented in Environmental Statement (ES) Chapter 5: Air Quality, has been carried out in accordance with Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) LA 105 (Highways England, 2019). The air quality impacts of changes in traffic associated with the Project have been assessed adjacent to roads that trigger the traffic change criteria in DMRB LA 105, which includes roads in Maidstone's administrative boundary. The traffic modelling has been completed for a wider area and only those roads listed below are screened in for air quality</p>	<p>ES Chapter 5: Air Quality [APP-143]</p> <p>ES Appendix 5.6: Project Air Quality Action Plan [APP-350]</p> <p>Habitats Regulations Assessment - Screening Report and Statement to Inform an Appropriate Assessment [APP-487]</p>	<p>Matter Not Agreed</p>

Topic	Item No.	Maidstone Borough Council Comment	The Applicant's Response	Application Document Reference	Status
		<p>and that any mitigation measures have been adequately identified and will be implemented in a timely manner. It is imperative that National Highways work closely with Maidstone Borough Council and Kent County Council to agree appropriate mitigation measures to manage the effects of traffic in all of the affected areas, including in Maidstone borough.</p>	<p>assessment. All the assessment related to air quality has been completed and is included in the Application. The roads that are included in the air quality assessment within Maidstone borough for the operational assessment include: the A229 north and south of M20 junction 6; the M20 between junctions 5 and 6; and the M2 between junctions 3 and 5. The air quality impact of the Project during construction and operation is discussed in Section 5.6 of ES Chapter 5: Air Quality.</p> <p><u>Construction effects</u></p> <p>In relation to construction phase impacts on human health receptors, pollutant concentrations were predicted to be well below the annual mean nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) Air Quality Strategy (AQS) Objective of 40µg/m³ at receptors adjacent to the roads modelled in the Maidstone Borough. The maximum annual mean NO₂ concentration predicted in the construction phase air quality study area was 23.5µg/m³, which was predicted in 2025 for both the 'without' and 'with' Project scenarios at receptor LTC348_H (Travelodge Maidstone Central) adjacent to the A229 in Maidstone. Furthermore, the impacts predicted at human receptors in the Maidstone borough were all imperceptible in each year of construction</p>		

Topic	Item No.	Maidstone Borough Council Comment	The Applicant's Response	Application Document Reference	Status
			<p>(2025-2030). No air quality mitigation specific to impacts on human receptors are therefore required for the Project in terms of the construction phase in Maidstone borough.</p> <p><u>Operational Effects</u></p> <p>In relation to human health receptors, pollutant concentrations were predicted to be well below the annual mean AQS Objective for NO₂ (40µg/m³) at receptors adjacent to the roads modelled in the Maidstone borough. The maximum annual mean nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) concentration predicted was 27.6µg/m³, which was predicted in the 'with Project' scenario at receptor LT066 adjacent to the A229, north of the M20. Furthermore, the impacts predicted at human receptors were all imperceptible, other than at receptor LTC066, where a small increase (0.9µg/m³) in annual mean NO₂ was predicted because of the Project. The air quality assessment presented in ES Chapter 5: Air Quality concludes that there are no significant air quality effects on human health receptors and therefore no air quality mitigation is required in relation to these effects. The assessment identified significant air quality impacts on some designated habitats close to the M2 within the Maidstone borough because of</p>		

Topic	Item No.	Maidstone Borough Council Comment	The Applicant's Response	Application Document Reference	Status
			<p>changes in nitrogen deposition, and as a result mitigation has been proposed in the form of speed enforcement on the M2. More details on the speed enforcement proposed, other mitigation measures assessed and where measures are secured can be found within ES Appendix 5.6: Project Air Quality Action Plan.</p> <p>At a meeting on 10 May 2023, the Applicant discussed the approach to air quality modelling and the area of MBC which is based on the traffic model and includes all of the M25, M2 and M20. In the MBC area, it includes the A229 north and south of the M20. The assessments include the effects on human health, limit values and ecological and habitat assessments. The A229 saw the biggest change in assessed values of 0.9µg/m³ of NO₂, below the 40µg/m³ limit value.</p> <p>MBC asked about potential concessions and mitigations for air quality impacts, especially for a small area of land in the North Downs Woodlands Special Area of Conservation (SAC) where Natural England has requested MBC carry out further investigations and potential mitigations. The Applicant advised that because the area affected within the SAC is so small and due to there being no nitrogen-sensitive species present in the</p>		

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			area, the Habitats Regulations Assessment would conclude no adverse effects on integrity; additionally, there are no feasible mitigation options at this location. The Applicant's approach to mitigation and compensation for significant nitrogen deposition effects is further summarised in ES Appendix 5.6: Project Air Quality Action Plan.		
Nitrogen deposition					
Site selection and surveying Confirmation that proposed nitrogen deposition compensation sites do not impact upon spatial strategies outlined in Maidstone Local Plan	2.1.9 RRE	Maidstone Borough Council supports the expansion of the Order Limits to include land to the south of the M2 between junctions 3 & 4 (Blue Bell Hill) as this would provide the necessary land for nitrogen and ammonia deposition compensation. Maidstone Borough Council confirm that the expansion of the Order Limits does not impact upon the existing or proposed spatial strategies outlined in the adopted Maidstone Local Plan or draft Maidstone Local Plan Review.	The Applicant notes MBC's agreement to the proposed compensation land being included within the Order Limits.	N/A	Matter Agreed
Detailed design/ management	2.1.10 RRE	Maidstone Borough Council would welcome cross-boundary cooperation work in relation to the site south of the M2 at Blue Bell Hill as it falls within the authority area	The detailed design and long-term management plans are ongoing. At a meeting on 10 May 2023, the Applicant drew attention to the series of interactive sessions to consult on the development of	N/A	Matter Not Agreed

Topic	Item No.	Maidstone Borough Council Comment	The Applicant's Response	Application Document Reference	Status
plans/ Implementation Request for cross authority work in relation to site south of M2 at Blue Bell Hill		of: Maidstone Borough Council, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council and Kent County Council. Maidstone Borough Council await further information from Highways England and other stakeholders in this respect.	the detailed design of landscape and ecological mitigation, including the framework for the long-term monitoring and management of the Project's landscape and ecology mitigation proposals which is currently underway. An MBC delegate attended the initial session and MBC will receive invitations to future sessions. The matter remains under discussion pending the outcomes of these meetings and any other engagement required.		

Appendix A Engagement activity

Table A.1 Engagement activities between the Applicant and MBC since the DCO Application was submitted on 31 October 2022

Date	Overview of engagement activities
11 November 2022	Email to MBC to offer a DCO briefing session
14 November 2022	Email to MBC to notify of publication of documents on Planning Inspectorate website
25 November 2022	Lower Thames Crossing Biodiversity and Ecology Briefing
28 November 2022	Email to MBC to inform them that the Lower Thames Crossing was Application Accepted for Examination
06 December 2022	Email to MBC outlining the pre-examination strategy, timetable and matters under discussion
14 December 2023	Email to MBC to inform them of the Planning Inspectorate's announcement of the Relevant Representations and Interested Party Registration opening date
04 January 2023	Email to MBC to advise of PADS Tracker request from Planning Inspectorate
12 January 2023	Email to MBC to advise on the relevant reps opening period and further PADS Tracker guidance from Planning Inspectorate
12 January 2023	Email to MBC to advise on the relevant representations period closing date and further PADS Tracker guidance from Planning Inspectorate
26 January 2023	Meeting to discuss PADS Tracker and other Examination process issues
7 February 2023	Email to MBC with SoCG process clarification
24 February 2023	Email to MBC to supply an updated version of the PADS Tracker template from the Planning Inspectorate
9 March 2023	Meeting to discuss PADS Tracker and other Examination process issues
15 March 2023	Email to MBC with the signed post-submission stage SoCG for internal use
10 May 2023	SoCG matter resolution meeting
1 June 2023	Examination Deadline 1 timetable emailed to MBC
9 June 2023	Draft Examination Deadline 1 SoCG emailed to MBC for final comment
26 June 2023	Draft Examination Deadline 1 SoCG emailed to MBC for final comment / endorsement
5 July 2023	Draft Examination Deadline 1 SoCG emailed to MBC for endorsement
7 July 2023	Email received from MBC suggesting submission of the SoCG version formally endorsed at Application stage.
13 July 2023	Emailed MBC concerning Targeted Landowner Consultation
17 July 2023	Emailed MBC to confirm that no SoCG would be submitted at Deadline 1

Date	Overview of engagement activities
21 July 2023	MBC emailed to confirm it was not planning to submit a Local Impact Report
28 July 2023	Emailed MBC concerning progression of SocG for future Examination deadlines
1 August 2023	Emailed MBC concerning progression of SocG for future Examination deadlines
4 August 2023	Phone call to MBC to progress SoCG submission
8 August 2023	Phone call to MBC to progress SoCG submission
9 August 2023	MBC confirmed earliest sign off dates
11 August 2023	Emailed MBC to suggest a meeting to discuss options to progress SoCG
16 August 2023	Email from Maidstone declining suggested meeting dates owing to resources required for Local Plan Review examination.
31 August 2023	Emailed MBC to progress SoCG matters under discussion
5 September 2023	Emailed MBC with timetable to submit SoCG
11 September 2023	Meeting between MBC and the Applicant to discuss draft SoCG and next steps to updating and formalising it.
18 September 2023	Email from MBC with comments on SoCG, <u>with amendments considered necessary for MBC to progress SoCG for endorsement</u> and details of committee <u>and cabinet member sign-off for council's October meetings</u> .
22 September 2023	Emailed MBC to <u>flag that National Highways responses on Wider Network Impacts issue in the SoCG still under review and to</u> suggest options for progression of SoCG.
<u>22 September 2023</u>	<u>Emailed MBC to confirm that Wider Network Impact response may require further update by National Highways, and without that response finalised would be unable to submit SoCG. Suggested proceeding SoCG to council's November meetings for approval rather than October.</u>
25 September 2023	Meeting to discuss SoCG matters and submission timetable
28 September 2023	Email from MBC with further detail on committee <u>and cabinet member sign-off</u> .
10 October 2023	Emailed MBC providing detailed SoCG submission programme.
17 October 2023	Meeting to discuss SoCG matters and submission timetable
<u>25 October 2023</u>	<u>Emailed MBC advising of intention to publish draft SoCG at Deadline 7</u>
<u>30 October 2023</u>	<u>MBC emailed to advise that it would be unable take SoCG to committee for sign off as further time required to consider latest updates by National Highways in SoCG.</u>
<u>31 October 2023</u>	<u>Emailed MBC to confirm that it would not endorse the D6 SoCG, but a version would go to committee in November</u>
<u>9 November 2023</u>	<u>Emailed MBC to confirm whether SoCG had been to committee</u>
<u>9 November 2023</u>	<u>MBC confirmed that SoCG had not been submitted to committee</u>
<u>13 November 2023</u>	<u>Emailed to arrange meeting to progress agreed final SoCG for D8 or D9</u>

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Deleted: Email to MBC advising of Project's intention to submit unendorsed SoCG at Deadline 6 to allow sufficient consideration by Examining Authority

Date	Overview of engagement activities
14 November 2023	Meeting to discuss SoCG sign-off and submission programme for D8/D9

Appendix B Glossary

Term	Abbreviation	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.
Air quality	AQ	A measure of the level of various atmospheric pollutants.
Air Quality Strategy objective	AQS objective	An objective set by the Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to improve air quality in the UK in the medium term. Objectives are focused on the main air pollutants to protect health.
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	AONB	Statutory designation intended to conserve and enhance the ecology, natural heritage and landscape value of an area of countryside.
Combined Modelling and Appraisal Report	ComMA	The purpose of the Combined Modelling and Appraisal Report is to inform decision makers and stakeholders on how the evidence underpinning the business case has been developed, from the initial identification of the underlying problem through the collection of data and the production of any supporting traffic models and forecast impacts of the Project on traffic to the eventual economic appraisal.
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.
Design Manual for Roads and Bridges LA105	DMRB LA105	A standard set in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges for Air Quality.
Development Consent Order	DCO	Means of obtaining permission for developments categorised as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) under the Planning Act 2008.
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.

Term	Abbreviation	Explanation
Local plan	n/a	A Local Plan sets out local planning policies and identifies how land is used, determining what will be built where. Adopted Local Plans provide the framework for local development across England.
Local Road Network	LRN	The Local Road Network is that portion of the Road Network for which a Local Government is responsible and is eligible for funding from the State Government to operate and maintain.
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.
Major Road Network	MRN	The Major Road Network (MRN) is a classification of local authority roads in England. It incorporates the National Highways-controlled strategic road network (SRN) and the more major local authority-controlled A roads.
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 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.
Nitrogen dioxide	NO ₂	A reactive gas introduced into the environment by natural causes, including entry from the stratosphere, bacterial respiration, volcanos, and lightning. It is also introduced by the emissions of internal combustion engines burning fossil fuels.
Special Area of Conservation	SAC	A designation under EU Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, also known as the Habitats Directive.
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 appellants reasonably considers will not be disputed by the local planning authority.

Term	Abbreviation	Explanation
Strategic road network	SRN	The core road network in England managed by National Highways.
Trip End Model Presentational Program	TEMPro	DfT software for viewing data from the DfT's National Trip End Model
Transport Analysis Guidance	TAG	National guidance document produced by the Department for Transport.

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