

# LOWER THAMES CROSSING

MITIGATING THE NEGATIVE  
IMPACTS AND MAXIMISING  
THE BENEFITS TO CREATE  
A POSITIVE LEGACY FOR  
THURROCK

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PRODUCED BY  
THURROCK COUNCIL  
FEBRUARY 2021





## A MESSAGE FROM THURROCK COUNCIL LEADER CLLR ROB GLEDHILL

AS A COUNCIL WE HAVE MADE SURE THAT LOCAL VOICES AND OPINIONS HAVE BEEN HEARD LOUD AND CLEAR BY HIGHWAYS ENGLAND AS THEY PROGRESSED WITH THEIR PROPOSALS FOR THE LOWER THAMES CROSSING, WHICH WE KNOW WILL HAVE SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS ON THE BOROUGH AND ALL THE RESIDENTS WHO LIVE HERE.

It is fair to say that we have provided strong opposition to the proposals and have made sure that Highways England has been in no doubt about our concerns for the impacts their scheme will cause, both in the construction phase and in the longer term as the new crossing goes into operation, and we deal with the significant change to the borough's landscape and infrastructure which will be brought about by this major scheme.

We have seen some success through our engagement, but not enough. We will continue to engage effectively with Highways England to make sure that a full mitigation package comes forward to limit the harm to our borough's interests, and full consideration is given as to how these proposals can and should be an opportunity to deliver benefits to Thurrock and complement the borough's ambitions.

The recent withdrawal of the Development Consent Order is a clear and welcome signal that Highways England is willing to work more closely with us. We welcome their new approach and want to make certain that every opportunity is taken to ensure that any revisions to the LTC support our exciting plans for the economic development of Thurrock, as we work with colleagues along the Thames Corridor to create one of the most significant growth hubs in the United Kingdom.

With courage, common sense and above all collaboration these proposals can become something which contributes to positive change for Thurrock, its residents and businesses.

Our message is clear: this is a national infrastructure scheme which must put the welfare and prosperity of local people first.

We will continue to work to ensure that should this scheme receive its development consent order, it delivers the real and impactful benefits our residents deserve and we have been seeking for a long time.



*Rob Gledhill*

Leader of Thurrock Council,  
Councillor Rob Gledhill



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## INTRODUCTION

THIS REPORT HAS BEEN PRODUCED BY THURROCK COUNCIL. IT SUMMARISES THE FINDINGS OF THE LOWER THAMES CROSSING MITIGATION BENEFITS STUDY (NOVEMBER 2020), PRODUCED BY HATCH FOR THURROCK COUNCIL.

The main report examines a range of options for offsetting the identified negative impacts of the LTC scheme upon residents and businesses within Thurrock, as identified in the earlier February 2020 Economic Costs Study report by Hatch. This new report identifies 57 individual schemes and interventions that could help to reduce the negative impacts of the LTC construction, enhance the operation of the scheme, support residents and businesses through the transition, as well as provide a series of lasting legacy provision across Thurrock.

For the full Lower Thames Crossing Mitigation Benefits Study please visit: [www.thurrock.gov.uk/thames-crossing/lower-thames-crossing-proposals](http://www.thurrock.gov.uk/thames-crossing/lower-thames-crossing-proposals) or contact us using the details on the back of this report.



## THURROCK NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

### OUR BOROUGH

Located on the north side of the River Thames, Thurrock is a borough of strategic significance for Essex, London and the South East. We are home to three international ports and visitor attractions such as Lakeside shopping centre and our historic forts.

The area is characterised by a mosaic of landscapes, including coastal marsh, low-lying fenland, farmland and more developed urban areas. Around 60% of our borough is Green Belt and we are home to natural assets, such as the Mardyke Valley and Thameside Nature Park, with a range of designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (including Hangman's Wood and the Mucking Flat Marshes), 17 scheduled monuments (ranging from the forts to crop marks), and seven Conservation Areas. These areas are connected via a network of Public Rights of Way, providing access to open space and recreation.

We have a strong and growing economy, driven by our economic links with London and our good transport connections to the South East. The combination of rural attractions, good connectivity and job opportunities makes Thurrock a place where people want to live. Alongside low unemployment rates, this is why we have experienced population growth rates above England and Essex in recent years. Some challenges remain, in particular in terms of health outcomes, but we are working to improve this situation and reduce inequalities.

### VISION FOR FUTURE

We have ambitions for major growth and investment in Thurrock. Over the next 20 years we want to invest in infrastructure, create new job opportunities and build new homes for local people.

Thurrock is one of the largest growth areas in the UK and has major regeneration projects centred around six growth hubs that are set to create 24,500 new jobs. With £20bn of investment in infrastructure, new jobs, and homes already planned, and 1,000 acres of land ready for business development, Thurrock has an exciting future.

We are in the process of preparing our Local Plan which will guide this growth and focus it on the areas and communities that need it most.



# THE PROPOSED LOWER THAMES CROSSING

THE LOWER THAMES CROSSING (LTC) IS A PROPOSED NEW ROAD THAT WILL LINK THE A2 IN KENT TO THE M25 IN ESSEX AND IS AIMED AT INCREASING ROAD CAPACITY ACROSS THE THAMES.

The LTC will run from the M25 near South Ockendon through Thurrock, crossing the A13 at Orsett, and then under the River Thames between Tilbury and East Tilbury. It will connect with the A2 south of Gravesend on the other side of the river.

The project is being promoted by Highways England, the government body responsible for motorways and major A roads in England. Due to its scale, the project is classed as a ‘Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project’ (NSIP) and therefore planning permission for it will be determined by the Government, not the local Council (see more on this process on page 24).

Thurrock Council has been regularly engaging with Highways England since the scheme was first proposed, both through formal consultations and regular meetings. The Council has sought to understand the full implications of the scheme and has promoted improvements to the project so that it minimises the negative impacts upon Thurrock. Whilst Highways England has continued to develop and refine aspects of the scheme, the fundamental concerns identified by the Council have yet to be resolved.

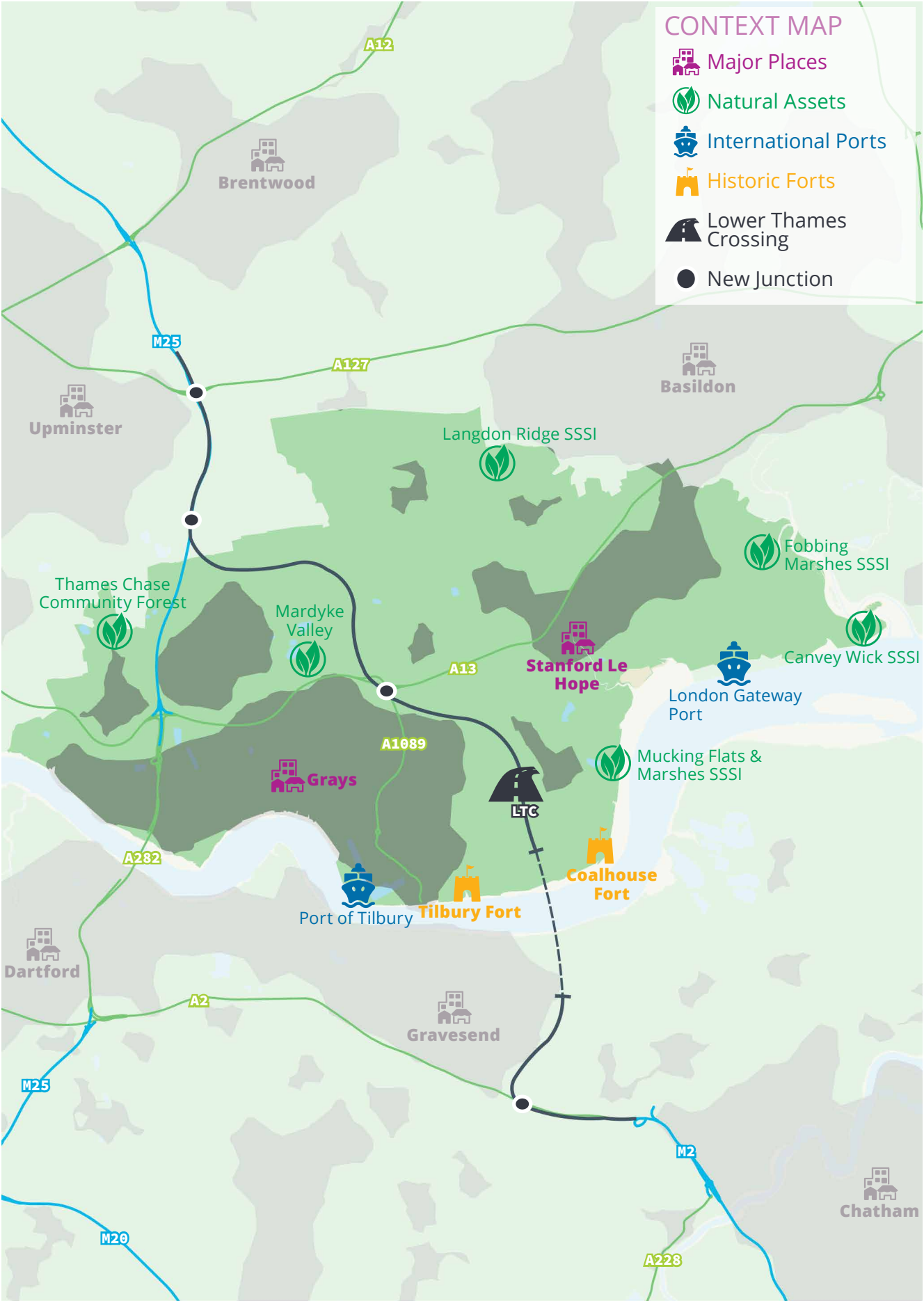
THE COUNCIL'S POSITION

Thurrock Council has consistently opposed Highways England’s current LTC scheme due to the negative economic, social and environmental impacts that it will have upon the borough, as well as the constraints it will place upon future growth.

By severing and restricting local access onto the LTC, the Council believe the current scheme represents a significant missed opportunity and will fail to create benefits for local residents and businesses. Instead of offering the potential to leave a lasting positive legacy, the current proposals will instead, result in local disruption and long-term severance.

In response to concerns raised by the Council, and other interested parties, Highways England has partially modified its original designs to incorporate changes to landscaping around the north tunnel portal, removal of one lane southbound between the M25 and A13 junction, changes to the design of structures in the Mardyke Valley and at Tilbury Viaduct, provide additional green bridges, as well as improve some footpaths for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. Whilst some, but not all, of these elements represent a positive step, they remain significantly below the Council’s expectations and a wide range of concerns remain.

Appropriate mitigation and legacy measures still need to be implemented to protect Thurrock’s future and reduce the harm caused by the LTC scheme.



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THE POTENTIAL HARM  
AND WHAT CAN BE DONE TO OVERCOME IT

THE LOWER THAMES CROSSING WILL HAVE SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS UPON RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES IN THURROCK, DURING CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION.

Whilst the scheme may bring a range of strategic connectivity benefits to the UK as a whole, it will negatively affect Thurrock's economy, restrict access and movement around the development corridor, delay growth, harm the environment, and increase air and noise pollution.

Without adequate mitigation, the construction phase of the LTC scheme will cause unnecessary disruption and blight upon local communities and affect day-to-day activities. Even once operational, the LTC will still create significant severance across the borough and offer very limited local benefits.

The Council has, and will continue to, advocate for significant changes to the LTC scheme and has identified four key areas where this change is required:

1. The approach to **constructing the LTC** scheme to minimise the impacts upon Thurrock residents and businesses
2. How the completed **LTC scheme will operate**, particularly the way it will affect local connectivity and severance across Thurrock, as well as the environment
3. How **businesses and residents can be fully supported** by the Council throughout the construction and operational phases
4. How it can be ensured that the scheme will **deliver lasting legacy benefits** across Thurrock that will help off-set the direct harm caused, including loss of development land

Summary of the Potential Harm to Thurrock




Homes lost and blighted and development land lost




Air and noise pollution



Severance across the borough



Negative impacts to health and wellbeing



Disruption to businesses during construction and operation

The Council has identified four core areas where the LTC Scheme will cause harm within the Thurrock. Appropriate mitigation will need to be developed by Highway's England to alleviate these negative impacts of the scheme.



# MINIMISING THE IMPACTS OF LTC CONSTRUCTION

## THE POTENTIAL HARM

The LTC scheme will be a major construction project lasting over 6 years. The construction boundary will extend well beyond the physical limits of the final road alignment. It will include a major construction compound around the site of the north tunnel portal between Tilbury and East Tilbury, as well as eight other compounds within, or adjacent to, Thurrock boundaries. At various stages of construction there will need to be both temporary and permanent local road closures that, alongside the additional HGV construction-related traffic, will cause severance and harm local connectivity and accessibility. The potential environmental impacts of construction activities and HGV traffic are also of concern, in terms of noise, dust and particulate matter, and visual blight.




The construction phase will inevitably create significant disruption to local residents and businesses across Thurrock. The Council is particularly concerned around the potential health and well-being impacts of the construction phase in terms of the direct health implications of air and noise pollution, restrictions to physical activity, access to public health facilities, as well as mental health impacts. The severance created could also impact upon community cohesion. The constraints placed upon local businesses activities will also be significant from reduced connectivity.

## WHAT CAN BE DONE?

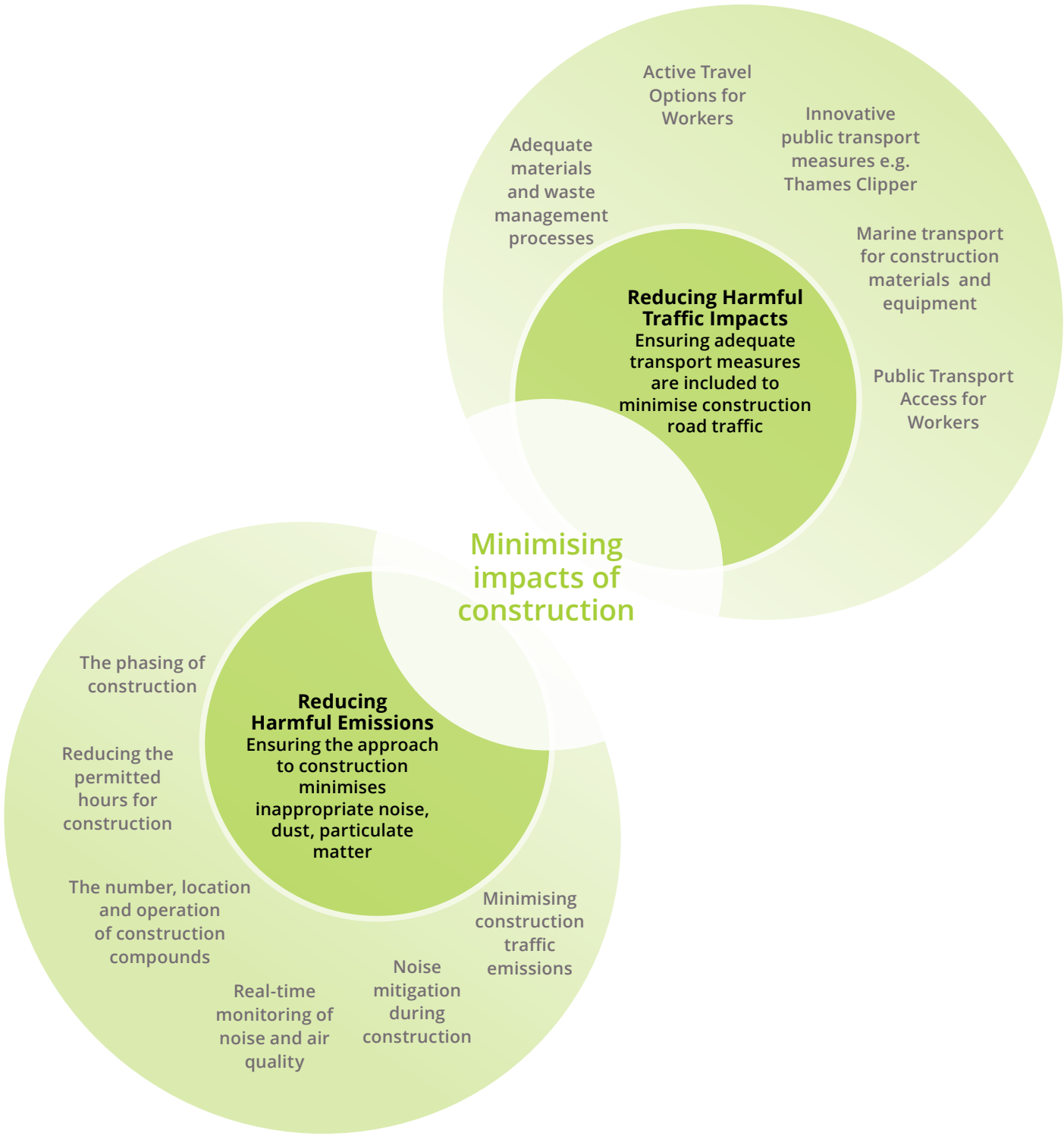
The Council recognises that the construction phase of the LTC scheme will be disruptive, but that it is imperative that every opportunity is taken to minimise the adverse impacts or to mitigate against them. We are striving to ensure that Highways England not only comply with all necessary statutory regulations but go beyond them to alleviate harm to local residents and businesses.

As part of this process, the Council recognise that a comprehensive mechanism is needed to allow residents and businesses meaningful engagement with Highways England and its construction partners. This needs to be instigated in advance of the commencement of construction and continue throughout the works and into the operational phase.

## Summary of the Construction Impacts

- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  20 Homes lost                             |  Restricted access to public services due to road closures |
|  Road closures and diversions              |  Land for growth and development lost or delayed           |
|  Jobs lost due to disruption to businesses |  Construction traffic causing pollution and delays         |

The Council has identified a number of aspects of the LTC construction plans that should be enhanced as part of the DCO process to help alleviate inappropriate levels of emissions and traffic impacts during the construction phase.





# ENSURING OPTIMUM OPERATIONAL ARRANGEMENT

## THE POTENTIAL HARM

Once completed, the LTC scheme will represent a major physical barrier across the borough and result in the loss of property and valuable development land. Wildlife habitats, woodlands, green space, and heritage assets will all be affected, as will views across Tilbury Marshes, Orsett Fen and the Mardyke Valley. A significant number of properties and facilities will be subject to blight in terms of noise, air quality, and views.

Access onto the LTC from Thurrock will be extremely restrictive meaning Thurrock residents and businesses will see limited benefits from the scheme. Whilst local connections across the LTC alignment will be re-provided, including Public Rights of Way, some will be subject to diversions and may no longer be as attractive to use. Parts of the local transport network are also expected to see higher traffic levels, including junctions along the A13, as well as areas such as Orsett, Horndon and Chadwell St. Mary.

The combination of impacts will affect community cohesion, health and wellbeing, business confidence and investment, as well as future development growth opportunities.

## WHAT CAN BE DONE?

The Council has undertaken a significant amount of work to examine the operational impact of the scheme. We have asked Highways England to explain its proposed design for the A13 / LTC junction that will restrict local traffic movements from the A128 Brentwood Road to the A1089 Dock Approach Road, but we still await an adequate response. The Council is concerned that car, van and HGV movements will divert onto alternative local routes and so it is imperative that adequate traffic mitigation measures are incorporated into the scheme, to alleviate negative impacts for Thurrock residents and businesses.

The Council is also seeking to ensure the highest standards, and innovative solutions are adopted by Highways England throughout the operation of the scheme. This includes smart monitoring of noise, emissions, and energy consumption, and ensuring the road has net zero impact upon climate change.

The Council has developed a range of mitigation measures to be adopted as part of the DCO process that will help alleviate negative traffic and environmental impacts and go some way to minimising the long-term adverse effects of the scheme.

### Land and Environmental Impacts



Habitats lost or damaged



Green and open space impacted



Farmland permanently lost



Blight to historic and heritage assets

### Connectivity Impacts



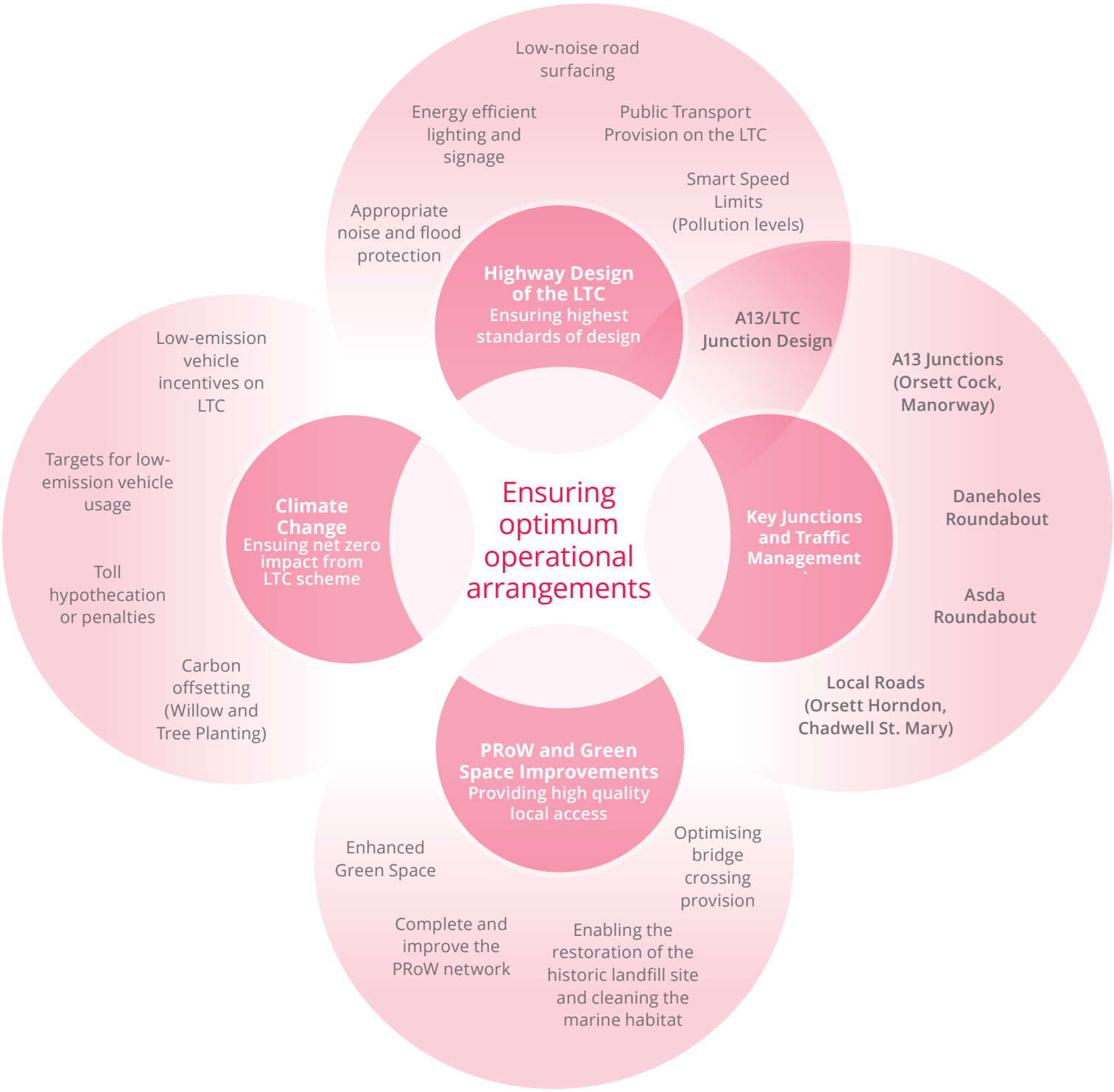
Restricted access onto the LTC from local roads



Public rights of way severed and diverted



Traffic on local roads and at A13 junctions





# SUPPORTING BUSINESSES AND THE COMMUNITY THROUGH THE TRANSITION

## THE POTENTIAL HARM

During the construction, and subsequent operation, of the LTC scheme there will be significant impacts on communities and businesses within Thurrock. Increased traffic, road closures and severance will put pressures on local business operations and on the local community's ability to access employment, education and public facilities, including GP surgeries and hospitals, especially via public transport. This, in turn, will place additional pressure on the Council's resources to support these groups whilst continuing their legal duties to provide public services and maintain local roads.

Furthermore, whilst the construction of the LTC scheme may offer some opportunities for local people (e.g. direct employment or as part of the supply chain), without adequate information and support local residents and businesses could find it hard to access these opportunities.

## WHAT CAN BE DONE?

The Council is seeking funding from Highways England to resource a number of internal teams that can support the local labour market, businesses, and the wider community. These teams will work to ensure local people are fully informed of the potential impacts of the LTC scheme and are able to access support. Given that the Council has good existing relationships with local businesses and the community in Thurrock, it is best placed to offer this much needed additional support to local people.

Specific measures could also be put in place to directly support businesses and the local communities most affected by the LTC scheme, including grant funding opportunities or business rates relief.

Financial support from Highways England will also enable the Council's Highway Team to manage the significant additional work required to facilitate changes to the local road network and the disruption caused by the LTC construction requirements.

## Summary of Business and Community Impacts



Over 55,000 residents live near the LTC



Increased severance and loneliness, especially for vulnerable residents



Disrupted access to schools, GP surgeries and hospitals

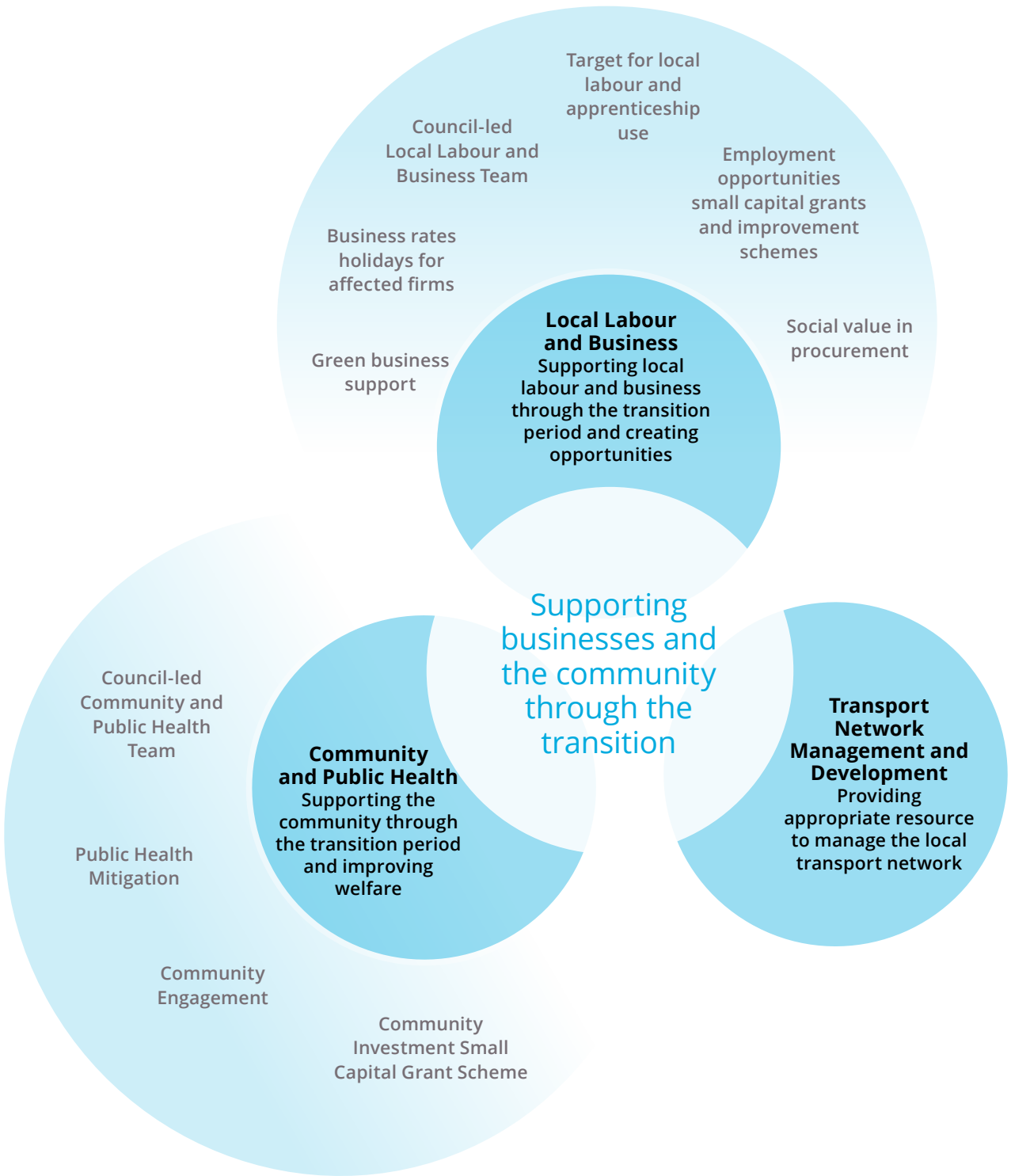


Homes and community facilities impacted by noise, visual and air pollution



Disproportionally impacting communities with deprivation and health challenges

The Council proposes a range of measures to help provide the necessary local resource and financial support to manage the transitional impacts resulting from the construction and operation of the LTC scheme.





# DELIVERING LONG-TERM BENEFITS

## THE POTENTIAL HARM

The LTC scheme runs through the heart of Thurrock and yet the current design offers extremely limited access from the Thurrock main road network. The main beneficiaries from the scheme are those travelling along the route on long-distance trips, as opposed to local Thurrock communities. At the same time, it is the local Thurrock residents who are the ones who will be subject to significant disruption during the construction and will suffer from the long-term severance caused by the scheme.

For a major road infrastructure scheme of this size, it is very unusual for there to be such limited positive impacts for local people. Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects should offer the potential to deliver transformational change for the communities in which they're located but the current design of the LTC scheme negates this possibility.

Highways England need to better meet the objectives they set themselves for the LTC Scheme, which include:

- Supporting sustainable local development and regional economic growth in the medium to long term
- Minimising adverse impacts on health and the environment

## Long Term Impacts



LTC benefits long-distance travellers not Thurrock residents



Increasing greenhouse gas and carbon emissions



Disrupting Thurrock's economic growth and development ambitions

## WHAT CAN BE DONE?

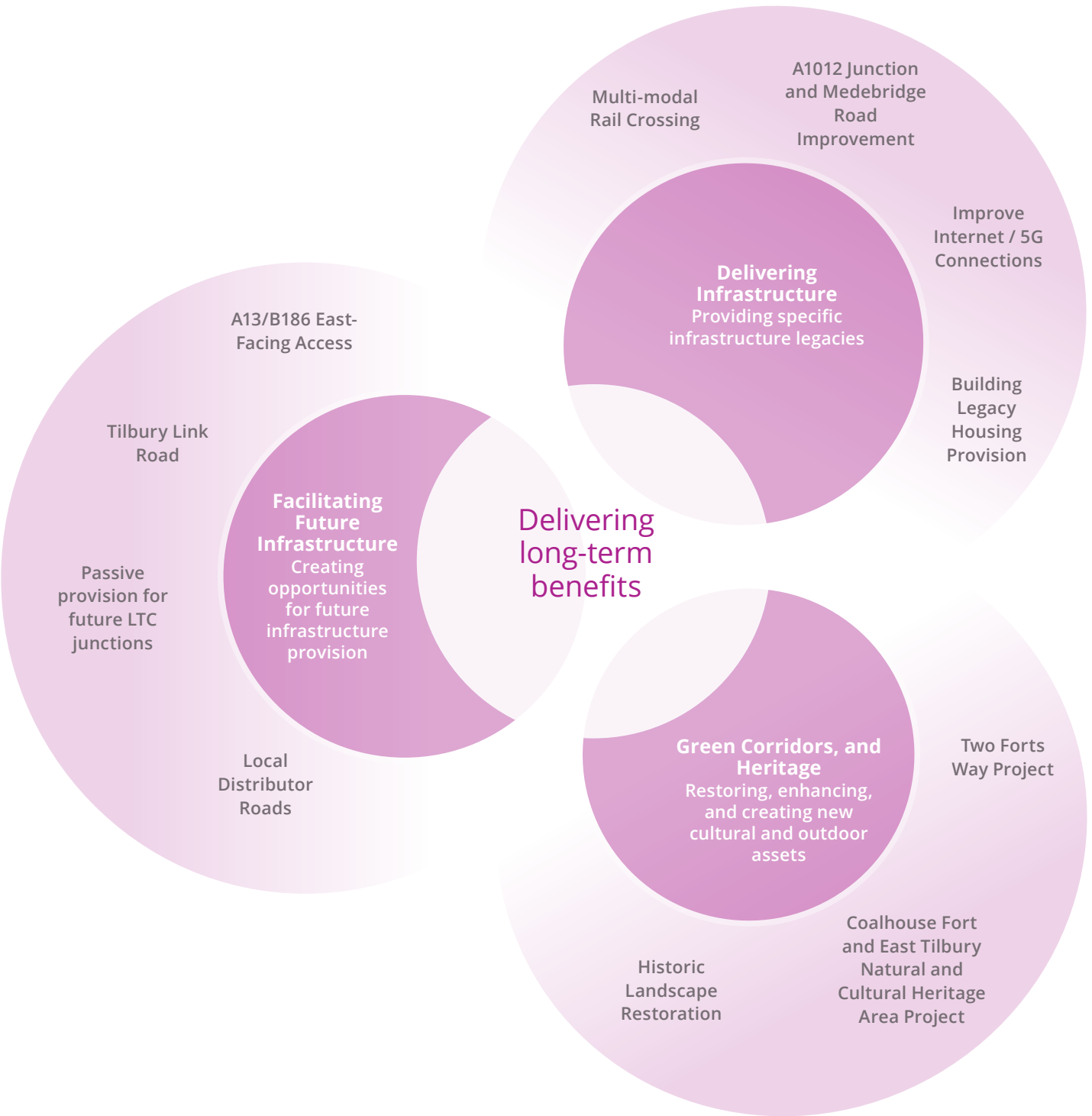
The Council has undertaken significant research to determine what a positive legacy for Thurrock from the LTC scheme could look like. Fundamentally, this has to involve significant additional investment across the borough, on projects that will create lasting benefits for local people and businesses and that will support future growth aspirations.

This could include new or safeguarded road infrastructure, such as the Tilbury Link Road, additional future provision for junctions onto the LTC, or a new bridge crossing over the Tilbury Loop railway line, all of which could help to open up the benefits of the LTC and drive forward growth and opportunity across the borough. Opportunities for enhanced housing and digital infrastructure provision should also be considered, including high quality temporary worker accommodation that can be left for the Council to help meet Thurrock's long-term housing needs, and laying ducting for internet cabling to address the very poor levels of connectivity in some parts of the borough.

The Council also has concerns about Highways England's limited proposals to improve walking, cycling and horse-riding across the borough. Additional investment in an enhanced coastal route (Two Forts Way) and for restoring the heritage assets and the wider landscape in the Tilbury Fort, Coalhouse Fort, Coalhouse Battery, Bowater Farm and North Portal area will improve and safeguard public green spaces for leisure and exercise well into the future.

The Council is seeking legal commitment from Highways England to deliver these measures and leave a lasting, positive legacy in Thurrock.

The Council has developed a range of mitigation measures to be adopted as part of the DCO process that will help alleviate negative traffic and environmental impacts and go some way to minimising the long-term adverse effects of the scheme.





POSITIVE OUTCOMES FROM MITIGATION AND LEGACY MEASURES

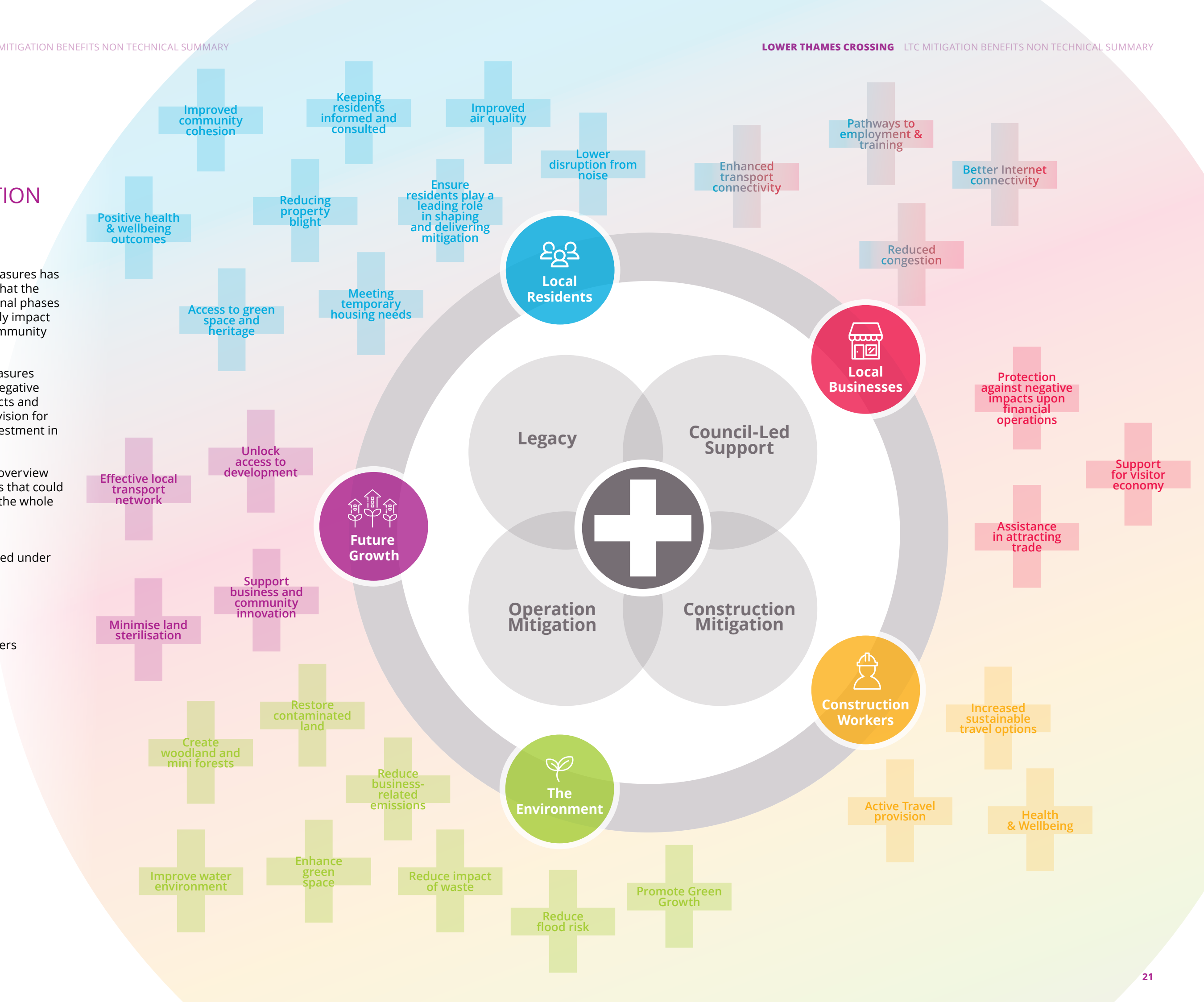
The overall package of measures has been designed to ensure that the construction and operational phases of the LTC do not negatively impact upon local businesses, community and the environment.

If implemented, these measures would help to offset any negative economic and social impacts and instead contribute to our vision for significant growth and investment in Thurrock.

This diagram provides an overview of all the potential benefits that could be achieved by delivering the whole package of mitigation and legacy measures.

The benefits can be grouped under five broad themes:

- 1. Local Residents
- 2. Local Businesses
- 3. Construction Workers
- 4. The Environment
- 5. Future Growth





# GETTING INVOLVED AND NEXT STEPS

HIGHWAYS ENGLAND SUBMITTED AN APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL FOR THE SCHEME THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER (DCO) PROCESS, TO SECURE DEVELOPMENT CONSENT FROM THE GOVERNMENT FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PLANNING INSPECTORATE (AN EXECUTIVE AGENCY OF THE GOVERNMENT). HIGHWAYS ENGLAND HAS SUFFERED A SET-BACK IN THEIR SUBMISSION HAVING NOW WITHDRAWN THEIR DCO APPLICATION, BUT IS CURRENTLY PROPOSING TO RESUBMIT ITS APPLICATION DURING 2021, WITH A TIMESCALE YET TO BE DETERMINED.

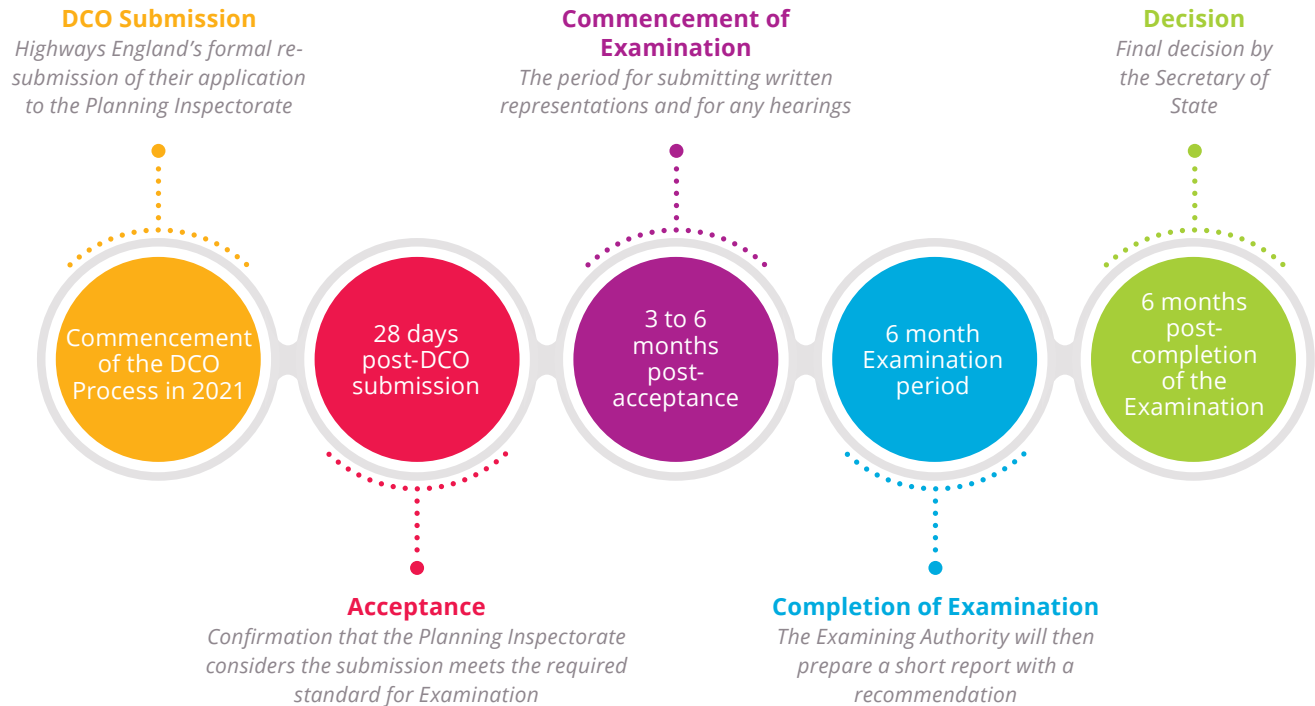
The diagram on the next page gives an overview of how the DCO process works. This is a statutory process and to take part, or submit your views, you must register as an 'Interested Party'. Anyone can be an interested party (individuals, businesses, community groups, etc.).

If you would like to register you must fill in a Relevant Representation form in full. This will become available on the Lower Thames Crossing project page of the Planning Inspectorate website <http://bit.ly/LTC-NIP> once the DCO Submission has been accepted. An advice note with more detail on how to register, and what the benefits of getting involved are, can also be found on the Planning Inspectorate website <http://bit.ly/NIP-NSIPP-Advice>.

Thurrock Council, and many statutory bodies, are automatically registered as interested parties and will continue to be involved in the DCO process on behalf of Thurrock's residents and businesses.

## THE DCO PROCESS

The DCO process has six stages with a strict timetable. Any Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) has to go through the DCO process rather than applying to the local authority for planning permission. This is because the NSIPs are so big and nationally important that permission to build them needs to be given at a national level. The expansion of Tilbury Port (called Tilbury 2) is another local example of an NSIP which has been approved and is under construction.





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## **THURROCK COUNCIL**

Civic Offices  
New Road  
Grays  
RM17 6SL

Website: [www.thurrock.gov.uk/thames-crossing/lower-thames-crossing-proposals](http://www.thurrock.gov.uk/thames-crossing/lower-thames-crossing-proposals)