

29 January 2016

Martin Potts
Consultation Manager
Highways England

Dear Martin,

LOWER THAMES CROSSING – ‘YOUR LAND OR PROPERTY MAY BE NEEDED’ LETTER

It is not often three leaders of political parties unite to complain about the same subject. As Leaders of the Labour Party, Conservative Party and United Kingdom Independence Party at Thurrock Council, we unanimously object to Highways England’s insensitive letter to residents, landowners and businesses informing them they may be directly affected by a Lower Thames Crossing.

You are probably aware that all 49 Elected Members of Thurrock Council oppose the principle of a Lower Thames Crossing passing through Thurrock, which will be reflected in our formal response to the consultation before the end of March.

Our complaint is your apparent complete disregard for the impact your surprise letter has had on residents in the Borough at such an early stage in the current consultation process. Letters have gone to all residents on or near the three route options and therefore prematurely alarmed residents whose home may never be needed for your scheme.

We know residents across the Borough should be invited to take part in the democratic process leading to the selection of a route option later this year.

You have completely failed to equip council officers and elected members with the information and tools to properly support the people we are in place to represent.

Many residents will not understand the status of your letter, or the fact the decision-making process may take years before the land is actually needed, therefore Thurrock Councillors were ill-prepared to support vulnerable members of their communities who are now even more anxious at the prospect of losing their homes.

We are aware you are invited to attend the Council’s Scrutiny Committee on the 9th February and our next public meeting on the 25th February. We would urge you to confirm, as the Consultation Lead, that you will personally attend these events and personally defend your actions to residents.

It was with surprise and disappointment we read that you have just eight “public information events” in Thurrock, all but one of them in the week and all but that one between mid-morning and finishing at or before 7pm. One weekend meeting – at Lakeside – on a Saturday is not good enough. Can you also assure us you will have staff at each of these “events” ready to answer questions.

We feel it would be helpful if you could clarify the process for residents and put their minds at rest that there will be no threat to anyone’s home for at least 2 years. It is also necessary that if, as a result of your letter, there should be any premature

blighting of anyone's property, you would be prepared to purchase at the value of 25 January 2016 – before your announcement - plus at least the average house-price increase in the time since then.

We look forward to your response, and to engaging with you in the near future.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr John Kent

Leader – Labour Party



Cllr Rob Gledhill

Leader – Conservative Party



Cllr Graham Snell

Leader - UKIP