

Secretary of State for Transport
Rt Hon Patrick McLoughlin MP
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Dear Mr McLoughlin,

Lower Thames Crossing

Further to our letter to you dated 11th February, which called for an extension to the Lower Thames Crossing consultation period, we are writing again to call for the consultation to be halted, immediately. The reasons are set out below.

Earlier this month the Transport Minister Andrew Jones confirmed that Option A remained a viable option and was under consideration. This was confirmed by Highways England at the consultation event at Tilbury on 25th February. As you will know the many thousands of leaflets and the on-line consultation portal contain no information relating to Option A. It was dismissed as uneconomic and described as offering no solution to congestion problems at the Dartford crossing. It was also considered to do little for the economy. Similar comments to these were made again by Highways England at the Tilbury consultation event.

As no information or evidence about Option A is contained in the consultation material it is impossible for the public and businesses to offer comments or take a view. If Option A is part of the consultation then it should have been made clearer and have supporting information that is comparable to Option C.

Our related concern is that Options A and C perform completely different functions, according to the expert advice we have received. This calls into question what problem Highways England has been asked to resolve through this process. Is it to relieve congestion at the Dartford Crossing? Is it to build an expensive by-pass to the crossing and junction 30? or is it to provide a new strategic route for freight traffic travelling from the Channel ports to the Midlands and the North?

At the consultation event on 25th February there was a powerful and compelling call, from many of the 1,000 people in attendance, for Option D to be considered again. Given the ease with which Option A has been reintroduced part way through the process, why not Option D? Common sense tells us that with only three weeks of the consultation period remaining it is just not practical for one or two Options to be reintroduced, with the same level of information as Option C, and for it to be considered a fair consultation process.

As you have failed to respond to our request (in the 11 February letter) for the consultation period to be extended the only option open now is to halt this consultation process. This would allow all the evidence to be reviewed, including the rationale for Option D being dropped, for there to be clarity around the question that Highways England has been asked to address, and for a fresh, thorough and

credible set of options for a crossing to be brought forward should Government consider a new lower crossing of the Thames to be part of the solution.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Kent', written in a cursive style.

Cllr John Kent
Leader of the Council and Labour Group

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Gledhill', written in a cursive style.

Cllr Rob Gledhill
Leader of the Conservative Group

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Graham Snell', written in a cursive style.

Cllr Graham Snell
Leader of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP)

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Brian Little', written in a cursive style.

Cllr Brian Little
Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair