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Social Research Institute



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Lower Thames Crossing Consultation

Analysis of findings report

FINAL VERSION



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Overview of the consultation

1 Overview of the consultation

This report relates to the ‘Lower Thames Crossing Consultation’ run by Highways England from 26 January to 24 March 2016¹.

In 2009, the Department for Transport (DfT) commissioned a study, which identified five possible locations for a Lower Thames crossing that would ease congestion at the existing Dartford Crossing. Of the five locations considered, the two most easterly locations were ruled out and not pursued any further. In 2012, the DfT looked at three locations for a new crossing of the Thames between Dartford and east of Gravesend. These were known as Locations A, B and C. There was also a proposal for Option C Variant (additionally widening the A229 between the M2 and the M20). In 2013 the DfT ran a public consultation inviting views on the need for a crossing and where to locate it (‘Options for a New Lower Thames Crossing’²).

Following further investigation of the three options and taking into account responses from the 2013 consultation, the Government asked Highways England to consider options at two of these locations - Location A (a new proposed crossing close to the existing crossing at Dartford) and Location C (a new proposed crossing to connect the A2/M2 to the M25 via the A13), with or without C Variant. After thorough assessment, Highways England determined that Location C was its proposed solution (see Figure 1.1).

During their assessment of the options for a new crossing, Highways England considered whether widening the A229 between the M2 and the M20 (known as C Variant) would be a necessary part of a new crossing. Their assessment has concluded that this upgrade would have limited benefits, high environmental impact and high cost and is not essential as part of a new crossing scheme. Highways England will give further consideration to this link separately as part of Highways England’s ongoing regional route planning.

In order to gain the thoughts of members of the public and stakeholder organisations, Highways England decided to conduct a major public consultation. This consultation would cover not just attitudes to the proposed route, but alternative ideas and suggestions that participants may have about the proposed crossing.

The Lower Thames Crossing Consultation covered a number of aspects relating to the proposal to build a new crossing across the River Thames and the connection of a new proposed crossing to the existing strategic road network.

In particular, this consultation covered:

- 1.** The preference of Location C for a new crossing;
- 2.** Options for routes connecting the proposed crossing at Location C to the existing road network both north and south of the River Thames;

¹ <http://www.lower-thames-crossing.co.uk/>

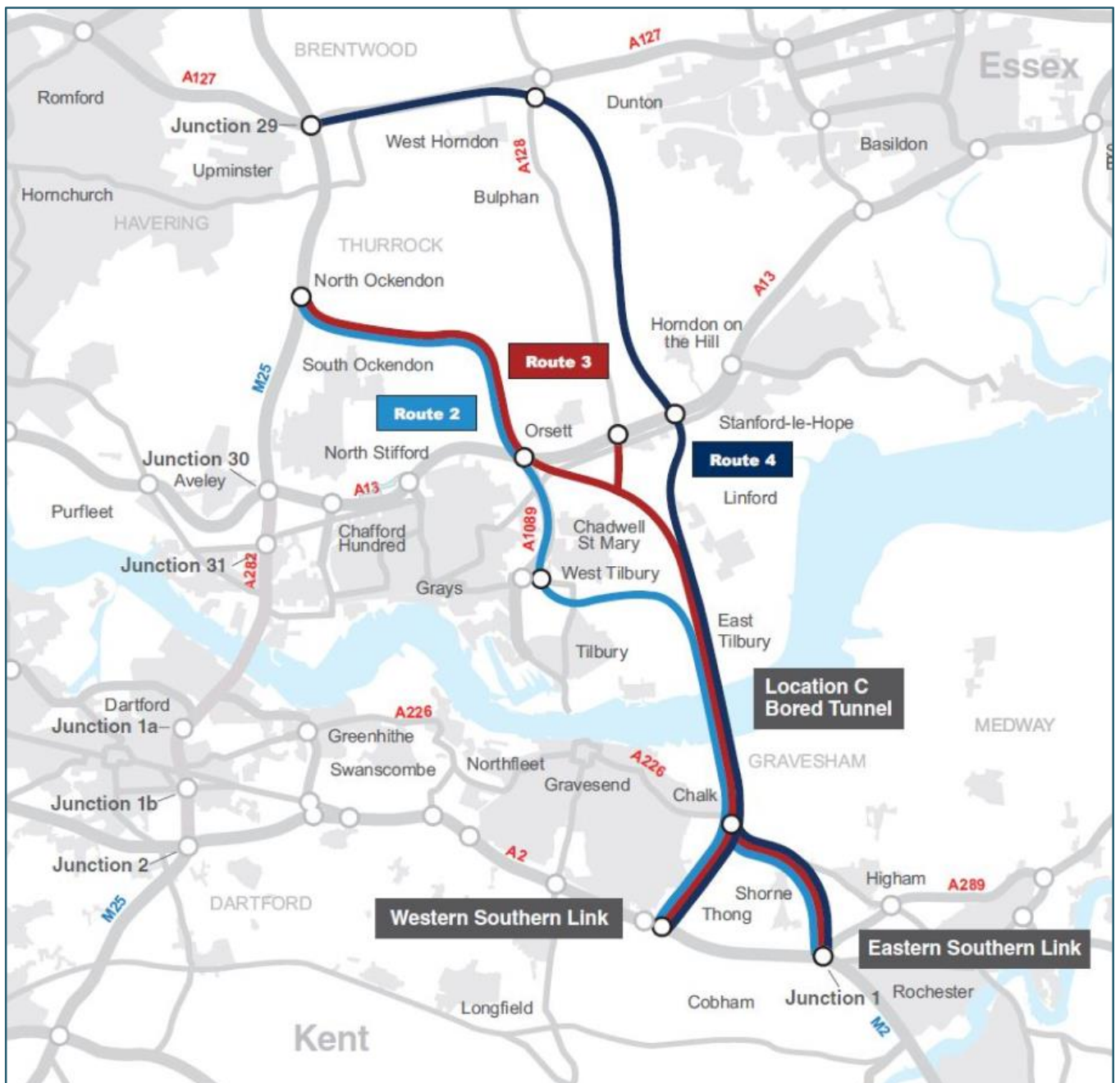
² <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/options-for-a-new-lower-thames-crossing>

3. The creation of additional junctions with existing roads.

From herein, references to “the consultation” refer to the 2016 Lower Thames Crossing Consultation which is the focus of this report.

The consultation was owned and managed by Highways England working with partners Halcrow Hyder Joint Venture (technical and stakeholder work) and PwC (business case). Ipsos MORI was contracted to analyse responses to the consultation and to prepare an independent report of findings.

Figure 1.1: Options identified at Location C



The general public and stakeholder organisations were invited to participate in the consultation. The detailed consultation documents and associated maps were designed to be as transparent as possible for a non-specialist audience, whilst still providing detailed information about the proposals³.

As a wholly independent research and analysis organisation, Ipsos MORI applied an impartial approach to the capture of the consultation responses, analysis, and reporting of the findings. The report excludes interpretation and opinion, instead reporting back the collated views and statements as received from individual members of the public and from stakeholder organisations that chose to take part in the consultation.

This report was compiled by Ipsos MORI specifically to provide an independent and objective analysis of the consultation's responses. Highways England will be publishing a separate report detailing the wider consultation and engagement process, including the Public Information Events (PIEs) that were held across the local area.

³ <https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/cip/lower-thames-crossing-consultation>

The consultation process

2 The consultation process

2.1 Taking part in the consultation

The consultation was launched on 26 January 2016. The purpose of the consultation was to give both members of the public and stakeholder organisations, including public representatives the opportunity to put forward their views and comments about the proposals for a new crossing of the Thames at Location C, east of Gravesend and a dual carriageway connecting junction 1 of the M2 to the M25 between junctions 29 and 30.

A 32-page *Lower Thames Crossing Route Consultation 2016* booklet⁴, providing details of the proposals, was made available on Highways England's project-specific website⁵. The website also included a summary of the business case, themed factsheets (covering aspects such as biodiversity, water, air, noise, land & property, and traffic modelling), property booklets, and a range of maps. The website, telephone and email helplines were maintained by Highways England throughout the consultation period. The website included a link to the online response form, which was hosted on a separate website⁶.

There were a number of formal channels through which participants could make known their views on the proposals:

- By completing the questionnaire **online** via the response platform which could be accessed through the Highways England website;
- By completing a **paper version of the response form**. A freepost envelope address was provided with response forms in order for members of the public and stakeholder organisations to post their response;
- Via a **written letter**. A freepost address was provided in the consultation document in order members of the public and stakeholder organisations to post their response;
- By **email** via a dedicated consultation email address (ltcc@ipsos.com).

All responses submitted via these advertised formal channels within the advertised consultation period were processed as part of the consultation. In addition, some correspondence regarding the proposals that had been either sent directly to Highways England, or forwarded on to Highways England from third parties (such as from DfT, other government departments and Members of Parliament) was also received. Where such correspondence had been received during the advertised consultation period, it was forwarded to Ipsos MORI by Highways England. Any such correspondence received by Ipsos MORI within agreed deadlines was processed and included within the consultation analysis where relevant.

⁴ https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/cip/lower-thames-crossing-consultation/user_uploads/lower-thames-crossing-consultation-booklet.pdf

⁵ <http://www.lower-thames-crossing.co.uk>

⁶ <https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/cip/lower-thames-crossing-consultation>

2.2 The response form and consultation questions

The response form (both the online and paper versions) consisted of a series of questions relating to the different aspects of the proposals.

The consultation questions were divided into sections as follows:

- Questions about the proposed **crossing location**
- Questions about the options for **routes north of the River Thames**
- Questions about the options for **routes south of the River Thames**
- Questions about **the proposed scheme** (Highways England's preferred combination of crossing location, route north of the Thames and route south of the Thames)
- Additional junctions
- Additional comments
- Feedback on the consultation process

Overall, there were eight questions about the proposals. Each question cross-referenced the relevant section of the consultation booklet. Please refer to Appendix A for the questions that were asked as part of the consultation.

2.3 The timing of the consultation

The consultation ran from **26 January to 24 March 2016**.

The consultation closed at 11.45pm on 24 March 2016. All responses dated and received within the consultation period were treated as valid responses. In line with protocols agreed before the consultation began, written responses were accepted up until 5:00pm on Friday, 31 March 2016 as long as they had been originally posted before the consultation deadline and were received at Ipsos MORI by this agreed date. This was to make allowance for any potential delays with the postal service or any erroneous misdirection of emails and letters by participants or third parties. Responses sent directly to Highways England and Government Departments were forwarded to Ipsos MORI. These responses were accepted by Ipsos MORI as long as they had been originally submitted before the consultation deadline and were received at Ipsos MORI by the agreed deadline of 8 April 2016.

Responses to the consultation

3 Responses to the consultation

3.1 Number of responses

In total, **47,034 responses** were received within the consultation period. Responses were received via a number of different response channels, the breakdown of which is set out in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Response type

Response channel	Count
Online response form	29,516
Paper response form	3,734
Letters and emails ⁷	13,258
Petitions	3
Responses from stakeholder organisations ⁸	523
Total	47,034

Of the responses received, 13,284 were identified as being associated with an organised campaign. The different campaigns are identified, and the total number of responses attributed to each is set out below in Section 3.4. Summaries of each organised campaign are detailed in Section 4.7.

At the data processing and analysis stage, a number of duplicate responses were identified (where an individual or organisation had submitted more than one identical response via the same response channel). Where these instances were identified, the duplicate was removed from the final dataset and excluded from the final tally of responses.

⁷ Responses submitted by post or email not using the response form structure (letters, emails, reports)

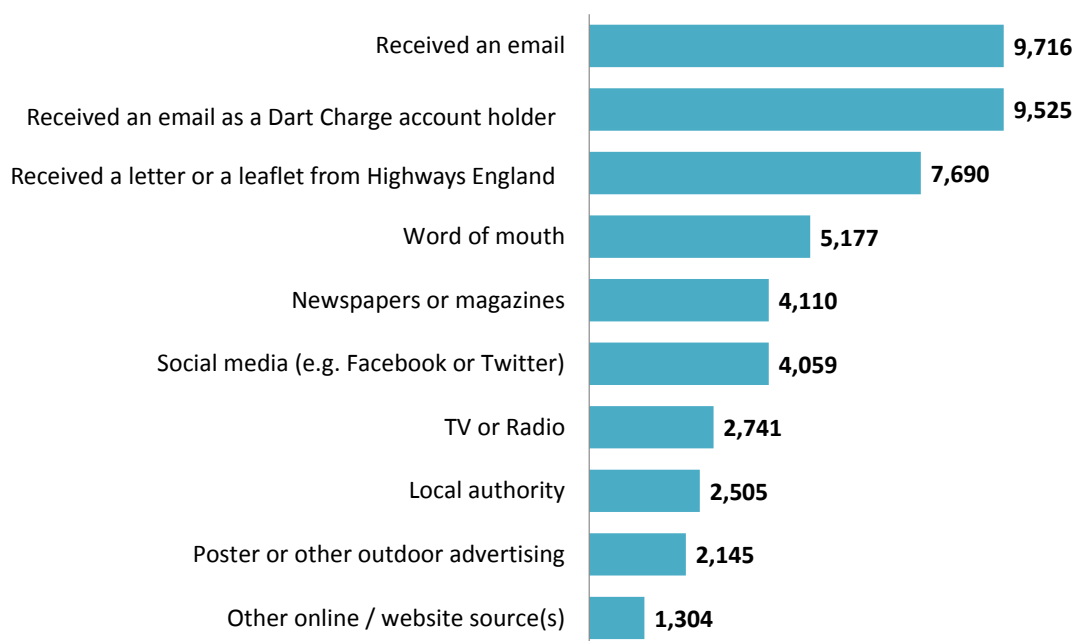
⁸ Those classified as stakeholder organisations include elected representatives, action groups, transport groups, community groups, local government organisations, including county, district, parish and town councils and those responding on behalf of businesses. The number of stakeholder responses is the total across all channels: online response form, paper response form, email and post

3.2 How members of the public heard about the consultation

Question 13 of the consultation response form asked how participants had heard about the consultation. Participants could select as many options as were applicable. Figure 3.1 details the responses given by members of the public responding via the response form.

Figure 3.1: How members of the public heard about the consultation

Q. How did you hear about the consultation?



Base: 31,928 respondents who took part through official response form: 26 January – 24 March 2016

Source: Ipsos MORI

3.3 Bespoke responses

Some participants chose not to use the online response form and instead submitted bespoke written comments via letter and email. Participants using the online response form were directed to the consultation document and answered specific questions about the proposals being consulted upon. It could not be known to what extent participants submitting bespoke letters or emails were aware of, or had read the consultation document, or whether they were aware of the wording of the questions on the consultation proposals.

3.4 Organised campaign responses

It is common in high profile public consultations for interest or campaign groups to ask their members, supporters and others to submit responses conveying the same specific views. Where identically worded responses have been received these have been treated as organised campaign responses. A total of 13,284 organised campaign responses are reported on separately from bespoke responses. Table 3.2 provides a breakdown of the type and number of organised campaign responses received. Section 4.7 in this report provides a summary overview of each of the organised campaigns received.

Table 3.2: Organised campaign responses submitted as part of the Lower Thames Crossing Consultation

Campaign name		Total responses
Campaign 1	Thurrock Objection 1	2,768
	Variation 1	2,673
	Variation 2	5
	Variation 3	14
	Variation 4	76
Campaign 2	Gravesham says no to Option C	229
Campaign 3	Thurrock Objection 2	226
Campaign 4	Higham Parish Council campaign	946
Campaign 5	Thurrock Objection 3	69
	Variation 1	62
	Variation 2	7
Campaign 6	Thurrock Objection 4	3,106
	Variation 1	2,063
	Variation 2	1,041
	Variation 3	2
Campaign 7	Pitsea	67

Campaign 8	Thurrock Objection 5	21
Campaign 9	Woodland Trust	5,625
Campaign 10	Company support	31
Campaign 11	Adam Holloway MP	42
Campaign 12	Motorcycle Action Group	5
Campaign 13	Higham Object to Option C	141
Campaign 14	Companies in Support	8
	Total	13,284

3.5 Petitions

As with organised campaigns, high profile public consultations often attract petitions. A total of three petitions (detailed below in Table 3.3) were submitted to the consultation. These are reported on separately in Section 4.8 in this report.

Table 3.3: Petitions submitted in response to the Lower Thames Crossing Consultation

Petition name		Number of signatories
Petition 1	Petition to Kent County Council	11
Petition 2	Petition to UK Government	37
Petition 3	Petition from Benyon Primary School	140
	Total	188

3.6 Analysis of responses

Analysis of the responses to the consultation questions required coding of the data. Coding is the process by which each individual response is matched against a series of themes that Ipsos MORI compiled, so that the content can be summarised, classified and tabulated. Each of these codes represents a discrete issue or viewpoint raised by a number of participants in their verbatim responses.

The complete coding frame is comprehensive in representing the whole range of issues or viewpoints given across all of the responses. The codes were continually developed throughout the consultation period as further responses were coded to ensure that any new viewpoints that emerged were captured and no nuances lost. Any one response may have had a number of different codes applied to it if a respondent made more than one point, or addressed a number of different themes or viewpoints. Comments were coded in the section of the code frame they related to rather than on a question-by-question basis.

The coding and data handling procedures are set out in more detail in Appendix B. The same code frame was developed for analysing both response forms and letters/emails from the general public.

The responses from stakeholder organisations tended to be more detailed. Our analysis of these responses was more qualitative in nature. The key themes and issues were drawn out, commented on and summarised, rather than being coded into the structured code frame. A full list of the stakeholder organisations that responded are found in Appendix C. The list excludes those who requested confidentiality or responded anonymously.

3.7 Interpreting the consultation findings

While a consultation exercise is a very valuable way to gather opinions about a wide-ranging topic, there are a number of issues to always bear in mind when interpreting the responses received. While the consultation was open to everyone, the participants were self-selecting, and certain types of people may have been more likely to contribute than others. This means that the responses can never be representative of the population as a whole, as would be the case with a sample survey.

Typically, with any consultations, there can be a tendency for responses to come from those more likely to consider themselves affected and more motivated to express their views. In other consultations, we have found that responses also tend to be more biased towards those people who believe they will be negatively impacted upon by the implementation of the proposals. Responses are also likely to be influenced by local campaigns.

It must be understood, therefore, that the consultation as reflected through the report can only aim to catalogue the various opinions of the members of the public and organisations who have chosen to respond to the proposals. It can never measure in fine detail the exact strength of particular views or concerns amongst the general public, nor may the responses have fully explained the views of those responding on every relevant matter. It cannot, therefore, be taken as a comprehensive, representative statement of public and business opinion.

While attempts are made to draw out the variations between the different audiences, it is important to note that responses are not directly comparable. Across the different elements of the consultation, participants will have chosen to access differing levels of information about the proposals. Some responses are therefore based on more information than others, and may also reflect differing degrees of interest across participants. The response form sign-posted relevant

chapters of the consultation booklet for the respondent, but of course it is not known whether each respondent read the document in full.

It is important to note that the aim of the consultation process is not to gauge the popularity of a proposal per se; rather it is a process for identifying new and relevant information that should be taken into account in the decision making process. All relevant issues are therefore considered equally whether they are raised by a single respondent or a majority; a consultation is not a voting process.

3.7.1 Definition of stakeholder organisations

Those who responded on behalf of an organisation or group were classified as stakeholder organisation responses. Those classified as stakeholder organisations included statutory agencies, elected representatives, action groups, transport groups, community groups, local government organisations (including county, district, parish and town councils), and businesses.

The response form asked participants to indicate whether they were responding on behalf of an organisation or group or as an individual. Participants who said they were responding on behalf of a group or organisation were generally classified as a stakeholder organisation, unless it was clear from their response that they were actually members of the public (for instance, those who stated that the group they represented was their family).

The response form asked stakeholder organisations to indicate the category of organisation they felt best described themselves from a pre-determined list. For the purposes of consistency of reporting, Ipsos MORI has occasionally chosen to reallocate stakeholder organisations to a different category to the one that they self-selected, however, participants' own selections have been largely respected. Stakeholder organisations that responded by email or letter were allocated to categories by Ipsos MORI, to the best of its judgement.

A full list of the organisations that took part (excluding those requesting confidentiality or who responded anonymously) can be found in Appendix C.

3.7.2 Definition of general public participants

Participants who said they were providing their own response in the online and paper response form were generally classified as members of the public, unless it was clear from their response that they were responding on behalf of a group or organisation. Those who responded by email or letter (i.e. not using the online response form) were classified as members of the public, unless it was clear that they were responding on behalf of an organisation or group.

3.8 Free-text responses

The consultation included a number of free-text questions which were exploratory in nature and allowed participants to feed back their views in their own words. Not all participants chose to answer all questions, as they often had views on certain aspects of the consultation, and made their views on these clear, but left other questions blank. Therefore, there were many blank responses to certain questions. The figures in this report are based on all participants commenting on the issues relating to the question (i.e. excluding those who did not answer) and this means that the base size (number of people the results for the question are based on) is different for each question.

While some figures may seem small given the scale of the overall consultation, all those reported on have been highlighted due to their importance relative to other themes.

A number of verbatim comments are included in this report to illustrate and highlight key issues that were raised. These are included in the report in italics. It is important to remember that the views expressed in these verbatim comments do not always represent the views of the group as a whole, although in each case the verbatim is representative of, at least, a small number of participants.

When free-text responses are discussed, it is in a qualitative fashion, the words such as ‘few’, ‘some’, or ‘many’ are used to describe the frequency with which certain comments are made. These are general descriptions of frequency rather than ones based on a specific quantitative frequency.

3.9 Reading this report

Chapter 4 of this report, ‘Analysis of responses’, follows the individual sections of the online response form:

- **Section 4.1** contains a summary of responses about the **proposed location** of the crossing;
- **Section 4.2** summarises responses about the proposed options for **routes north of the River Thames**;
- **Section 4.3** provides a summary of responses about the proposed options for **routes south of the River Thames**;
- **Section 4.4** summarises responses regarding Highways England’s **proposed scheme** – their preferred combination of crossing location and routes north and south of the Thames;
- **Section 4.5** includes a summary of responses regarding **additional junctions** with the existing road network;
- **Section 4.6** summarises the issues raised in response to **Question 12** of the response form (the open-ended question) as well as from unstructured email and letter responses where it was not possible to link the issue to one of sections 4.1 – 4.5. Ipsos MORI has attempted to assign responses to the questions in the consultation, but it is not always possible to do this. In a number of cases, participants also have made points outside of the scope of the consultation. These points are also briefly covered in this section;
- **Section 4.7** summarises each of the **organised campaigns** that were received during the consultation period (campaigns are also listed in Table 4.5 of this report). Where participants made additional bespoke comments with campaigns, these have been coded and are included alongside the summary of each campaign wherever the additional points have been made;
- **Section 4.8** summarises each of the **petitions** that were received during the consultation period.

Sections 4.1 to 4.6 of Chapter 4 are set out with commentary on stakeholder organisations responses, followed by analysis of responses from members of the public who responded using the online response form. Responses from members of the public who responded by email or by letter are then summarised.

Given that stakeholder organisations are a diverse group with many different points to make, all responses to open/free-text questions, and to stakeholder emails and letters were summarised rather than being coded with the structured responses.

All responses have been analysed in full and the points made by members of the public who responded via either the online or paper response form, or by letter or email, have been coded. This includes responses to every question as well as general comments, and comments about how proposals might impact specific areas or places.

Please note that two separate topline documents in Excel have been produced which show all of the codes produced for members of the public responses, the numbers of participants who mentioned each code, and the number of comments made under each code. One of the documents includes the coded responses for those who answered each of the main questions in the response form. The second document contains the coded responses of those who responded by email and letter. The topline documents also break down responses by local authority area in cases where respondents provided their full postcode.

Analysis of responses

4 Analysis of responses

4.1 Views on the proposed location of the crossing

This section provides a summary of responses to the consultation which address Questions 5a and 5b on the online and paper response form, as well as unstructured responses via email and letter that make reference to issues relating to the location of the crossing.

Question 5a: Our proposal is a crossing at Location C, east of Gravesend and Tilbury. On balance, do you agree or disagree with our proposal for the location of a crossing, at Location C?

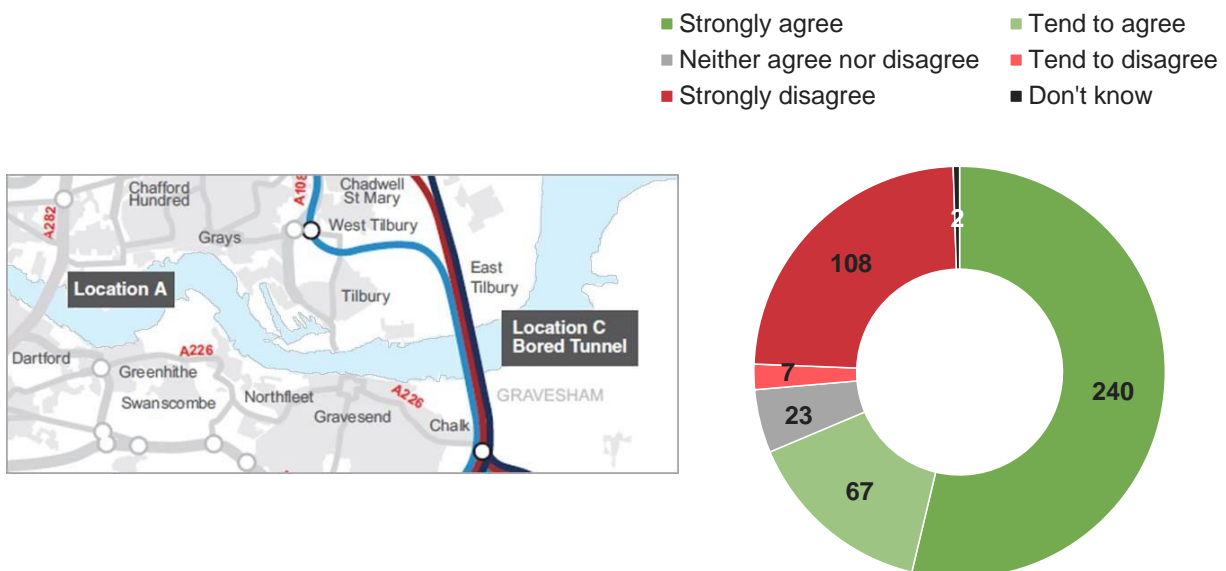
Question 5b: Please provide the reasons for your response to question 5a.

4.1.1 Stakeholder organisations

Figure 4.1 shows the responses provided by stakeholder organisations answering Question 5a on the response form. A list of the stakeholder organisations that responded is presented in Appendix C of this report.

Figure 4.1: Question 5a responses from stakeholder organisations

Q. On balance, do you agree or disagree with our proposal for the location of a crossing, at Location C?



Base: 447 organisations who took part through official response form: 26 January – 24 March 2016

Source: Ipsos MORI

Of the 447 stakeholder organisations answering **Question 5a** in the response form, 307 agree with the proposals for a new crossing at Location C (240 'strongly' agree). On the other hand, 115 stakeholder organisations disagree with the proposal – the majority of which 'strongly' disagree (108). Twenty-three stakeholder organisations neither agree nor disagree, and two don't know.

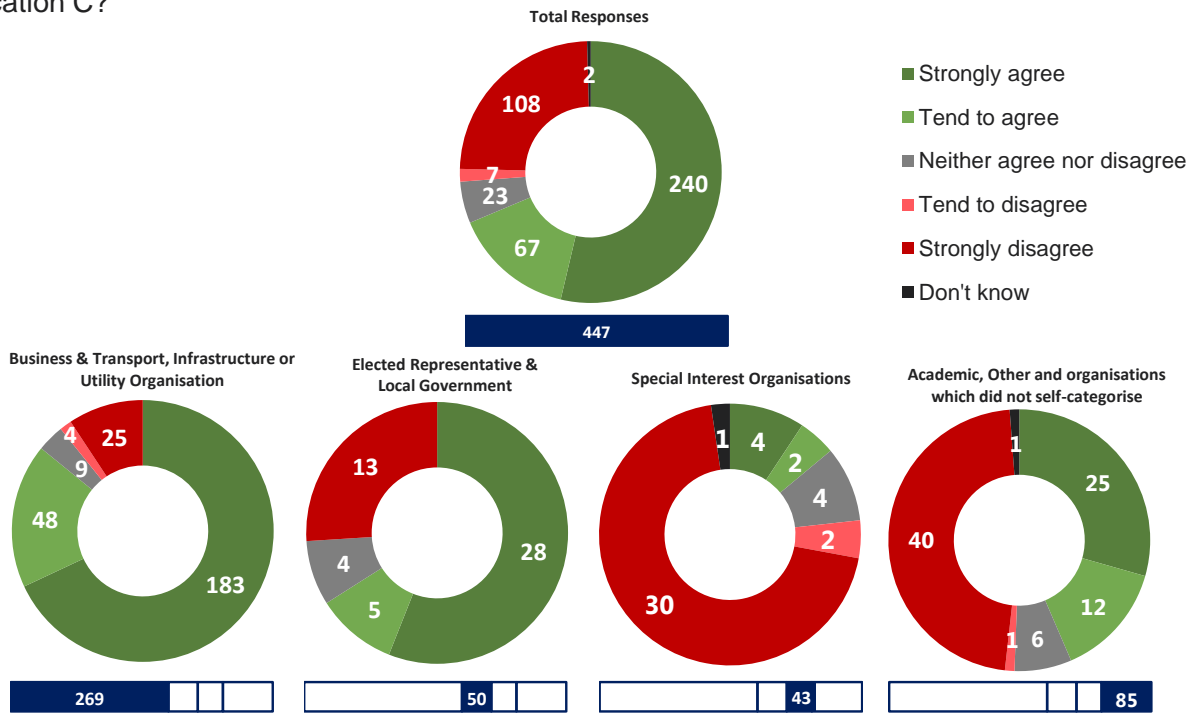
Levels of agreement vary by type of stakeholder organisation. As shown in Figure 4.2, it is businesses, transport, infrastructure and utility organisations that are more likely to be positive about the proposed crossing location with around four in five (231 out of 269) in agreement. Two in three elected representatives and local councils (33 out of 50) also agree with the proposal.

The balance of opinion for academic and 'other' organisations is evenly split between those who agree with Location C (37 out of 85) and those who disagree with it (41).

Most special interest organisations that responded disagree with the proposal for a crossing at Location C (32 out of 43 disagree).

Figure 4.2: Question 5a responses by organisation type

Q. On balance, do you agree or disagree with our proposal for the location of a crossing, at Location C?



Special interest organisations comprise:
Action, Environment, Heritage and Community groups and Statutory Agencies

Base: 447 organisations who took part through the official response form: 26 January – 24 March 2016

Source: Ipsos MORI

Stakeholder organisations provided comments about a crossing at Location C, either in response to **Question 5b** on the response form, or in an email or letter. Support for the proposal is most commonly on the grounds of its positive effect on congestion at Dartford, improved network resilience, reduced journey times and better connectivity, and the resultant economic benefits for people and businesses. On the other hand, those who disagree with the proposal for a crossing at Location C mention the potential for impacts of congestion in the area, as well as concerns about the impact on the environment, and on local communities.

Academic organisations

There is one academic stakeholder organisation that states that it strongly agrees with the proposal in response to Question 5a, but does not elaborate on their reason why in Question 5b. All other academic organisations state their strong opposition to the proposal. Key issues raised include concerns about the impact of additional traffic and its consequences, such as air pollution on the health of pupils, and of additional traffic on the safety of pupils when they are travelling to and from their place of education.

"It is with dismay we find that the recommended route for the Lower Thames Crossing will pass through our village and 300m behind our primary school..... There can be no doubt that the road would cause harm to the health of the children and the local community".

Shorne C of E Primary School

Similarly, several stakeholders raise concerns about the impact of the proposal on the classroom environment, for instance noise that might distract pupils. One, a nursery, states that its funding is dependent on attracting parents, and that one of their key attractions is its location with access to peaceful outdoor space.

Action groups

The Alliance of British Drivers favours the combination of Location C and Route 3 as they think it would be the shortest and least environmentally damaging option and that it would create a new junction with the M25 and avoid further congestion at Dartford. Margate Regeneration agrees that Location C would reduce congestion at Dartford and the Motorcycle Action Group also thinks this is a possible benefit. Both these organisations are supportive of a crossing further east than the existing Dartford crossing, noting the possible benefits of shorter journeys and better connectivity for the people of Kent and Essex.

"Making the crossing as deep into Kent and Essex will benefit the greatest number of people. It will alleviate congestion at the Dartford crossing, benefitting users and local residents, whilst giving businesses and residents further East of London either side of the Thames more opportunities with their regional neighbours. It will also cut travel times between East Essex and East Kent significantly."

Margate Regeneration

The Motorcycle Action Group, however, notes that a possible negative consequence could be noise and pollution impacts for local people.

ABridge2Far opposes Location C, instead indicating a preference for a crossing at Location A. It refers to the cost assessment that accompanied the 2013 consultation:

"...not only was Option A by far the most affordable option at just 40% of the cost of Option C, it also offered significantly better value for money."

ABridge2Far

ABridge2Far is also critical of the consultation not offering a choice to indicate a preference between the two locations, a sentiment echoed by another group, Groc and Groll, which challenges the purpose of the question if the decision to select Location C, and not Location A, has already been made.

Business organisations

The majority of business organisations indicate that they are supportive of the proposal for a crossing at Location C. Many of those stakeholders which are supportive refer to problems they have experienced with congestion at the Dartford Crossing and the resultant impacts on both the operations of individual businesses and the growth of the local and wider economy. Many state that the existing crossing at Dartford is no longer suitable to meet requirements.

"The current situation caused by traffic congestion at the Dartford Crossing is a major concern for us. We operate over 200 HGV's from our depot in Erith and when they get held up in traffic it increases the financial costs for both ourselves and our client. This is not good for business or the local or national economy."

Erith Group

These organisations believe that a crossing at Location C would attract traffic away from Dartford, improving traffic flow and reducing delays to enable more predictable journey times. It is considered that Location C would provide an attractive route for traffic heading to Essex and Kent, particularly heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) travelling to and from Channel ports and the Channel Tunnel. Not only would Location C make their journeys quicker, but it would divert a considerable amount of this traffic away from Dartford. These stakeholders suggest that a crossing at Location C would increase resilience, particularly in the event of an accident or closure of the Dartford Crossing.

"We believe the Lower Thames Crossing at Site C would significantly decrease congestion at the Dartford Crossing and journey-times for those travelling between Kent and Essex."

Castlekeep Ltd

Many organisations refer to lost time and increased costs caused by congestion at the Dartford Crossing. Among the suggested benefits of Location C is that it will improve the commutes for workers and enable quicker and more reliable deliveries.

"There will be time and fuel saving to be gained by a new crossing which helps to lower our overheads when visiting clients and making deliveries in Kent. "

Brand Promotions UK Ltd

Many feel that the proposal would open up new opportunities for businesses, both making it easier to cross the Thames in general, and to access new markets.

"[It] could be central to unlocking significant wider regional economic growth so long as it offers a high transport performance in terms of safety, capacity and resilience. We believe it is essential that Variant C should also be pursued to ensure effective improvement of the wider strategic transport network."

Ebbsfleet Development Corporation

The economies of Essex and Kent are considered particularly likely to benefit, with the new crossing acting as a stimulus for growth by making these areas more attractive to businesses looking to relocate (as well as to retain businesses who might otherwise be considering relocating away from these areas because of congestion). Similarly, there is thought to be a benefit in connecting companies to a wider range of markets.

"Location C offers the greatest economic benefits to existing businesses in Essex. The Board is particularly keen to see the route developed to support the growth in the port complexes and associated logistics sector around London Gateway and Tilbury Ports.....Additionally it is recognised that Location C will also deliver the greatest potential for regeneration and job creation in an area that would significantly benefit compared to Option A where significant growth and regeneration has already been achieved."

Greater Essex Business Board

Those stakeholders who oppose a crossing at Location C often challenge the likely effectiveness of the crossing to divert traffic from Dartford. Instead, it is suggested that either traffic management at the existing crossing should be improved in order to increase capacity and reduce incidents, or that a new crossing be built at Location A instead.

"The ideal solution for us would be to increase capacity at location A, and segregate long haul traffic from short haul. A significant cause of congestion and crashes is short haul traffic joining the M25, racing into the fast lane, and then trying to cut back to lane 1 to make the next exit."

CNI Europe Limited

Others are concerned about the effects of a second crossing on the area. In particular, there are concerns it would exacerbate traffic and congestion in the local area, especially Thurrock which is stated to be already heavily affected by the Dartford Crossing. There are also concerns about spreading air pollution over a wider area, and the effect this would have on communities.

"C is too close to the existing crossing and any route to it will mean severe upheaval to residents, landscape, environment and wildlife. I do not believe this option will solve the congestion problems at Dartford. This area already suffers from above average pollution rates and exceeds Euro regulations - add another crossing will further increase this."

Cladding UK Ltd

The negative impacts of the proposal's land coverage on specific businesses is also raised, including farms that would lose productive land as well as the potential loss of newly built housing.

"The NFU has concern that the promoted option could cause significant direct harm to a number of farming businesses within the option easements".

National Farmers' Union (NFU)

Elected representatives

Elected representatives who are supportive of Location C often refer to the negative impacts of congestion and disruption experienced with the present crossing at Dartford. Gareth Johnson, MP for Dartford, refers to the impacts on his constituents' daily lives, such as the difficulty in getting to school or work:

"The problems caused by congestion to local residents cannot be easily overstated. On occasions children cannot get to and from school and people cannot get to work or travel across the area. Dartford Bridge Community Primary School is heavily affected whenever there is congestion at the crossing. Local people often tell me that they feel like prisoners in their own homes when traffic is particularly bad."

Gareth Johnson, MP for Dartford

Dartford Labour Party refers to the negative impacts of Dartford Crossing congestion as well as to the health impacts associated with air pollution that affect the Dartford area. It states that Location C is the only option that could lead to a reduction in both of these problems. Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, highlights the economic benefits he believes Location C would unlock:

"Improved river-crossing connectivity will be needed to ensure that London and the South East's residents can continue to access employment opportunities, as well as to enable businesses to trade effectively."

Boris Johnson, Mayor of London

Other stakeholders challenge the suggested benefits of Location C for congestion and local communities. Adam Holloway, MP for Gravesham, states that Location C, as well as not resolving problems at Dartford, will create a lot of new problems for residents in Gravesham. Similarly, Stephen Metcalfe, MP for South Basildon and East Thurrock, suggests that the proposal would not tackle the underlying issues that cause congestion. Jackie Doyle-Price, MP for Thurrock, believes that Location C could add additional traffic to the Thurrock road network, in particular if Route 3 were chosen, and refers to concerns about congestion and air quality from her constituents. There are also concerns about the environmental impact, such as suggestions that Location C would negatively impact on designated areas, ancient woodland and wildlife in North Kent.

"The construction of a major new tunnel and roadway will have a major impact upon a significant area of riverside countryside."

Cllr. Stuart Millson (East Malling & Larkfield Parish Council)

Environment, heritage, amenity or community groups

For those groups which are supportive of a crossing at Location C, there is an acceptance of the need to relieve congestion at Dartford and its associated negative impacts, including those on residents.

“There is a need to traffic relieve congestion at the existing Dartford River Crossing”

Federation of Enfield Residents & Allied Associations (FERAA)

These organisations state that they would either find a new crossing at Location A unacceptable or less effective than one at Location C, for reasons including the increased impact on the communities and area around the crossing and the impact of the construction work.

Concerns about Location C include doubts about the business case put forward by Highways England. This includes the potential impact it would have on the congestion problems at the Dartford Crossing in both the short and longer term. Some state that the new crossing would not be attractive enough to draw a large number of motorists away from Dartford and therefore deliver no improvement at that crossing. Others point to Highways England’s traffic projections and argue that the estimated traffic reduction at Dartford is not sufficient to warrant a crossing at Location C, and that any initial reduction in traffic would be significantly counter-acted by the long-term growth in the number of car journeys. Some state that the cost of the proposed crossing is too great in comparison to its anticipated benefits.

“Option C is predicted to divert only 14% (20k) of traffic from the existing, over capacity, crossing at Dartford. In 2025 (only accounting for new port traffic), an additional 40k vehicles will be put back on our roads. This is a deficit of 20k, not taking into account any population growth”.

Bonnors Residents Association

Many of those who oppose Location C raise concerns about its environmental impacts such as loss of open green space in general as well as designated areas such as ancient woodland and marshland. These stakeholders worry about the loss of habitat for animal and insect species as well as the negative impact on communities which use these environments for amenity, both in general, and at specific locations such as Shorne Country Park.

“We are rightly proud of our natural and cultural heritage here in the Thames estuary and we are utterly opposed to and appalled by Highways England’s recommended route Option C which passes to the east of Gravesend and runs through (or potentially under, in the case of a bored tunnel) the network of mudflats, salt marsh and grazing land that is the Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA/Ramsar, as well as RSPB Shorne Marshes. This whole area provides a rich mosaic of feeding, roosting and breeding habitats for birds.”

Friends of the North Kent Marshes

West Tilbury Commons Conservators states that the proposals will negatively affect the use, access and amenity of the Commons as well as the ecology and wildlife of these sites.

Other environmental concerns mentioned include the impact on air quality, noise and light pollution along the new route. CPRE Kent is concerned about the potential impact on the marshes, including the possible increased risk of flooding, as well as the possible need to dewater land during construction.

Some stakeholder organisations note that the proposals appear to cross, or pass in close proximity to sites or areas of amenity or heritage value. There were concerns about how this could make areas or specific locations less attractive to live in and to visit, for instance, Thurrock District Scout Camp Site.

"The proposals will severely damage the ambience and amenity of villages, historic buildings and their settings. The Society has worked for decades to protect these areas and has not been doing so merely to keep the area clear so that it can then be destroyed by roadbuilding."

The Dickens Country Protection Society

Local government organisations

Many of the local government organisations who are supportive of the proposal for a crossing at Location C state that they accept that the proposal would best meet the scheme's objectives, including increasing resilience and capacity in the strategic road network, compared with an additional crossing at Location A.

"This location appears to offer the best relief and resilience to the existing crossing."

Colchester Borough Council

These organisations often reference the current problems experienced with the network around Dartford, agreeing that it is not sustainable or that there is no, or very limited, scope for further improvement at the existing Dartford Crossing. Some believe that a new crossing at Location C would reduce problems at Dartford from their current levels, or at least would not increase them further. A couple suggest that these problems are limiting the economic development of the area and a new crossing at Location C would be the best solution to aid growth.

"The economic benefits of a new Crossing at Location C are significant and this location has the greatest potential for regeneration and job creation. These benefits are of a substantially greater scale than expansion of capacity at Dartford can provide."

Essex County Council

Another stated benefit of a crossing at Location C is the improved connectivity and faster journey times it would provide across the Thames from Kent into Essex and up through into the Midlands and the North of England. It is suggested that this would be particularly beneficial for traffic travelling from the Channel crossings.

"The current Thames crossing at Dartford is a critical part of the strategic road network serving Essex and the East of England which is currently running at capacity. A new crossing at Location C would open up the region, improving access to the Thames Estuary and Channel ports, opening up new markets, attracting inward investment, and improving access to the skilled labour that our businesses need to remain competitive and grow."

Braintree District Council

Several stakeholders, while supportive, indicate that this support is conditional upon the effective mitigation of any new noise and pollution impacts that result from a crossing at Location C. Sevenoaks District Council specifically supports the use of a tunnel on the grounds that it would mitigate the potential environmental impacts on protected areas such as

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and ancient woodland. Kent County Council (KCC) advocates further improvements to the road network as part of this proposal:

"KCC agrees with the proposal for a new Crossing at Location C but strongly encourages Highways England (HE) to urgently reconsider the inclusion of C Variant (enhancements to the A229 link between the M2 and M20) and to improve the link via the A249 (M2 Junction 5 at Stockbury to M20 Junction 7 at Detling Hill). A phased programme of wider network improvements are needed along the M2/A2 corridor including dualling of the A2 from Lydden to Dover and improvements to M2 Junction 7 (Brenley Corner). KCC's support is also contingent on the selection of the Western Southern Link as well as suitable compensation, environmental mitigation, increased tunnelling, removal of the junction with the A226, and optimisation of the junction with the A2."

Kent County Council

Comments made by local government organisations who are critical of the Location C proposal include doubts about its effectiveness in tackling problems at the Dartford Crossing, including suggestions that it is not sufficient, or not a long term-solution to these issues.

"Unlikely to be a significant long term difference to general traffic conditions at the existing crossing."

Thurrock Council

There are concerns about the knock-on effects for the wider road network, for instance where additional traffic might be introduced to connecting local roads, or where strategic roads linked to a crossing at Location C are of a lower standard. An example is the single carriageway A228 that links the M2 to the M20.

"To be viable the alternative route needs to have the same capacity as the M25 if it is provide resilience [sic]. To suggest that 'Option C' is a viable alternative to the M25 is unrealistic...if a significant volume of traffic is diverted from the M25 it will result in gridlock with traffic queuing on both routes and blocking the connecting roads. That is spreading the problem."

Shorne Parish Council

Herongate & Ingrave Parish Council is concerned that adding a new junction to the M25 will create another location where traffic could bottleneck.

There are concerns about the potential impact on communities such as Chalk, Shorne and Cranham, particularly in relation to traffic on local roads, noise and air pollution. A particularly common concern is the environmental impact, in particular the loss of open space and green belt land. There are also concerns expressed about the potential impact on wildlife and habitats. Several stakeholders feel that any benefits of a new crossing at Location C will be limited, and question whether they will be sufficient to justify these perceived negative impacts.

"It will have a significant negative impact on biodiversity and destruction of ecological sites and conservation areas and listed buildings. It would devastate many acres of Green Belt as well as fen, villages and wildlife hospital at Orsett. It would also destroy ancient woodland, heritage sites and wildlife habitats."

London Borough of Havering

While some local government stakeholders which oppose Location C indicate a preference for a new crossing at Location A instead, a couple suggest that the existing Dartford Crossing could be improved. Another prefers a crossing further east, near Medway.

Transport, infrastructure or utility organisations

Most of this category of stakeholder organisations are supportive of a new crossing at Location C. Several refer to the existing congestion problems at Dartford and the effects of these on people and organisations to demonstrate the necessity of a new crossing. A number of benefits for road users are identified, including speeding up journeys and the increase in resilience through provision of an alternative route should incidents curtail operation of the Dartford Crossing. The additional route across the Thames is considered to make Location C a more advantageous option than a new crossing at Location A. Eurotunnel, along with others, believes that Location C will provide a more attractive route for traffic that travels via the Channel crossings to and from the European mainland, therefore not only improving their journeys but drawing that traffic away from the Dartford Crossing.

"Provides a vital link in a chain that connects businesses and consumers in the rest of the nation with markets, producers and manufacturers across Europe."

Port of Dover

The Institution of Civil Engineers believes that Location C would provide the required resilience for the road network. However, it strongly advocates the adoption of the 'Option C variant' proposed in the 2013 consultation.

As well as benefits for continental traffic, Location C is also considered attractive for domestic traffic that might otherwise go via the Dartford and Blackwall Tunnel crossings. HS1 Ltd expects that a crossing at Location C would improve journeys for its customers that travel via the A2 and would encourage new economic development in Ebbsfleet.

The practicality of a new crossing at Dartford is challenged, with concerns voiced about the construction impacts and the suggestion that it would lead to traffic delays and negatively affect the economy. In contrast, it is felt that Location C will result in minimal disruption during the construction phase.

"Further expansion of the existing crossing would be extremely disruptive and costly and thus, in our view, impracticable."

RAC Foundation

Forth Ports Ltd (on behalf of the Port of Tilbury London Ltd) indicate that it would support Location C on the condition that the proposals improve access to the port.

Southern Water and National Grid both flag nearby infrastructure assets that need to be taken into account. The Commercial Boat Operators Association (CBOA) welcomes the proposal to use a tunnel as they state this will reduce navigation risks for shipping.

English Regional Transport Association (ERTA) challenges the proposal and says it is a short-term measure that will shift the location of traffic rather than reduce it in volume. The Campaign for Better Transport is also critical, considering that the benefits of a crossing at Location C are insufficient to justify the proposal. Instead, it calls for a different approach to traffic management.

"We are calling instead for a strategic approach to freight movements, combined with better public transport alternatives."

Campaign for Better Transport

The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport UK (CILT), while supportive of the proposal, similarly advocates the improvement of public transport provision.

Statutory agencies

The Environment Agency indicates that they support the proposal for a tunnel at Location C. Natural England raises concerns about specific areas and landscapes including Thames Estuary and Marshes Special Protection Area and Ramsar site, Great Crabbles Wood SSSI, Kent Downs AONB and ancient woodland. They encourage measures to mitigate potential environmental impacts, for example extending the tunnel further north on the Essex side of the crossing.

Historic England refers to the siting of the proposed tunnel close to two designated scheduled monuments, Tilbury Fort and Coalhouse Fort, and states the need to ensure the proposal provides mitigation to listed structures in line with current government policy.

"...the tunnel and approach road has the potential to erode the settings of a number of grade II and II buildings".*

Historic England

Other categories of organisation or group

Some of these stakeholder organisations support a new crossing at Location C, mainly due to the problems of congestion experienced at the Dartford Crossing.

"Something has to be done to alleviate congestion at the Dartford Crossing, and providing an alternative route to divert traffic from Kent and Essex is logical. The Thames needs more, lots more crossings east of Tower Bridge and this can be one of them."

Anonymous

Others challenge the logic of building more roads to tackle congestion, and suggest a more multi-faceted solution that incorporates other transport modes.

"The plan looks no further than the construction of additional roads."

Green Party

Other concerns include the proposal's cost and its effectiveness in relieving congestion and pollution at the Dartford Crossing. Environmental concerns include the impact on green space and natural habitat, such as designated AONBs and ancient woodland, and the impact on Shorne Country Park. Another concern is the potential increase in pollution levels in areas of Kent and Essex. There were some concerns about the impact on communities including potential increased congestion in Gravesend such as on the A226, the loss of land for landowners and effects on the built heritage. There are also comments about the effect on the settlement of Chalk, particularly about how Chalk Parish Church would be divided from its community.

4.1.2 Members of the public

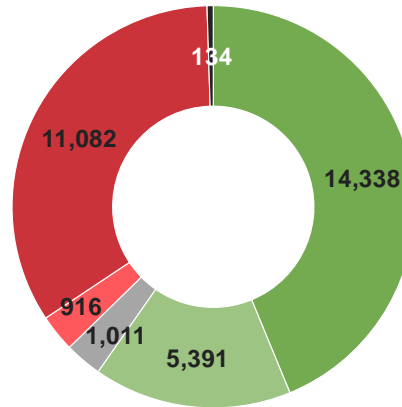
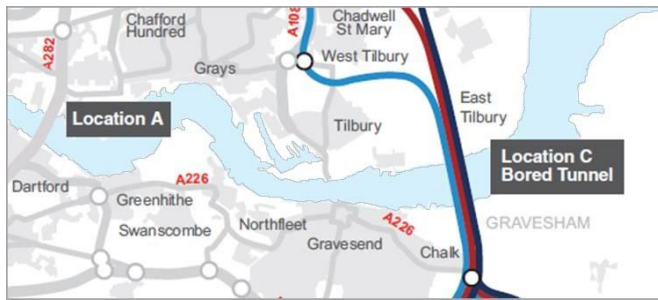
Response form

There were 32,872 members of the public who answered **Question 5a** on the response form. The question asked whether the participants agreed or disagreed with Highways England's proposal for a crossing at Location C. Figure 4.3 shows the responses given by members of the public who answered this question.

Figure 4.3: Question 5a responses from members of the public

Q. On balance, do you agree or disagree with our proposal for the location of a crossing, at Location C?

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know



Base: 32,872 participants who took part through official response form: 26 January – 24 March 2016

Source: Ipsos MORI

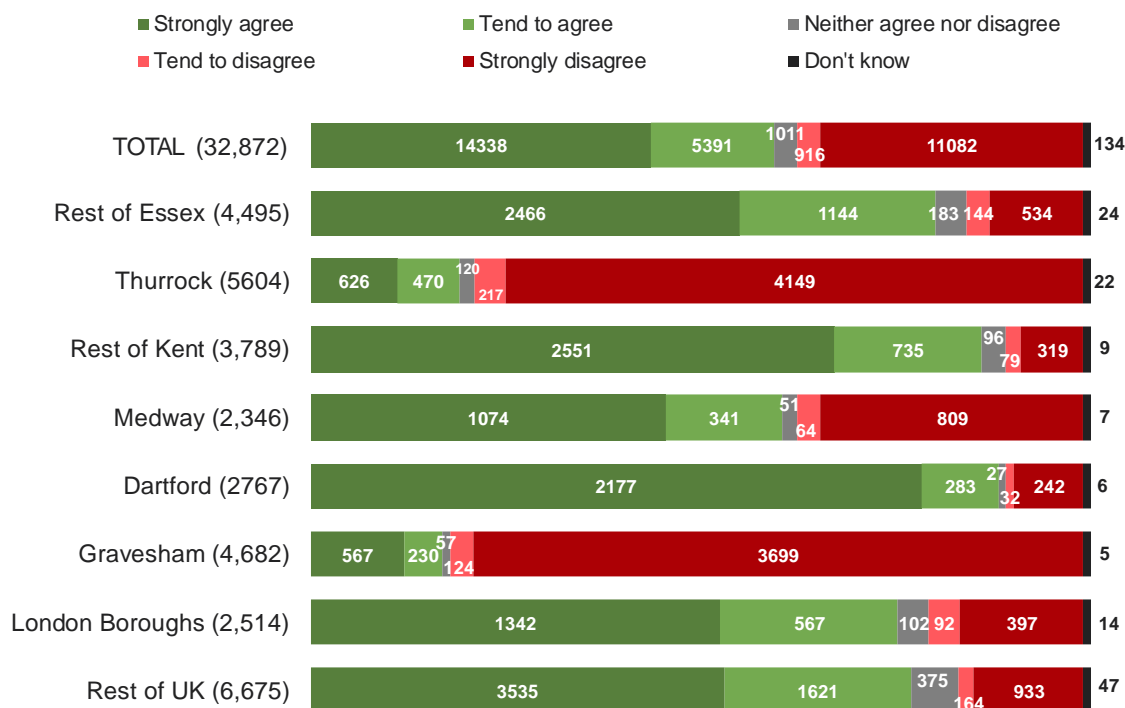
Among those who answered **Question 5a**, the balance of opinion towards Location C is more positive than critical. Three in five of those who responded to this question (19,729) agree with a crossing at Location C, at least to some degree. In contrast, just over one in three who responded (11,998) disagree with the proposal. A smaller proportion (1,011), have no opinion either way, or don't know (134).

Attitudes towards Location C are also distinctly polarised, both for and against it. There are more participants who 'strongly agree' with the proposed crossing (14,338) than 'tend to agree' with it (5,391). Similarly, far more participants 'strongly disagree' with Location C (11,082) than 'tend to disagree' with it (916).

Attitudes also vary considerably by geographical location, with disagreement much more marked in the local authority areas most affected by the proposals. For example, three in four participants in Thurrock disagree with Location C as the site for the crossing (4,366 out of 5,604), compared with only one in seven participants who reside in the rest of Essex (678 out of 4,495). On the southern side of the Thames, four in five participants in Gravesend (3,823 out of 4,682) disagree with Location C, and one in three participants in Medway disagree (873 out of 2,346). This compares with only one in ten in Dartford (274 out of 2,767) and one in ten across the rest of Kent (398 out of 3,789).

Figure 4.4: Question 5a responses from members of the public by local authority area

Q. On balance, do you agree or disagree with our proposal for the location of a crossing, at Location C?



Base: 32,872 participants who took part through the official response form: 26 January – 24 March 2016

Source: Ipsos MORI

When attitudes towards the proposal for a crossing at Location C are broken down by attitudes towards other parts of the proposed routes, those who prefer any of the proposed route options (particularly Highways England's proposed scheme) are much more likely to agree with Location C than those who prefer another route or who want no routes at all. For example, of those who prefer either Routes 2, 3 or 4 north of the Thames, the great majority in each case agree with Location C as the crossing site (see Table 4.1). In particular, more than nine in ten of those who prefer Route 3 agree with Location C (9,772 out of 10,572). In contrast, agreement with Location C is low among those who prefer a route north of the Thames other than the three proposed route options (295 out of 1,707 participants). Agreement with Location C is even lower among those who do not want any route north of the Thames (276 out of 7,981 participants).

The same pattern applies when attitudes towards Location C are analysed by preferences for the route south of the Thames or by agreement with the overall proposed route; agreement with Location C is greatest among those who favour any of the proposed routes (especially Highways England's proposed scheme) compared with those who do not.

Table 4.1: Question 5a responses analysed by attitudes towards other route options

	Agree with Location C	Disagree with Location C	Neither agree nor disagree	Don't know
Total: 32,872	19,729	11,998	1,011	134
Route north of the Thames:				
Route 2 (1,861)	1,501	273	77	10
Route 3 (10,572)	9,772	504	281	15
Route 4 (6,545)	5,457	833	235	20
Another route (1,707)	295	1,362	48	2
None (7,981)	276	7,634	54	17
Route south of the Thames:				
Western Southern Link (5,884)	4,863	770	236	15
Eastern Southern Link (12,277)	11,327	643	281	26
Another route (1,479)	359	1,063	52	5
None (7,639)	295	7,278	55	11
Whole route (Location C, Route 3, Eastern Southern Link)				
Agree (16,508)	15,610	517	349	32
Neither agree nor disagree (1,604)	1,108	209	277	10
Disagree (13,875)	2,600	10,958	287	30

Reasons put forward for response at Q5a

There were 26,664 members of the public who provided comments in response to **Question 5b** on the response form to help explain the answer they provided for Question 5a. This section of the report looks at the reasons given for those who agree with the proposal and those who disagree. A number of alternatives and other suggestions are also discussed by theme where such comments have been made by those who answered the question on the response form.

The following section includes positive or supportive comments, followed by negative or opposing comments, and then other comments and suggestions made. It is important to remember that while some participants agree with the proposal, they can also include negative comments as part on their response. Similarly, those who disagree with the proposal can also put forward or make some positive or supportive comments too.

Just over half of those who answered Question 5b (13,809) make a comment in favour of Location C, which broadly mirrors the balance of opinion at Question 5a. Very often, the comment is a simple statement of support for the proposed location (3,502 comments), although many make reference to the need for an alternative to the Dartford Crossing (2,743 comments) which they perceive to be inadequate for current and future transport needs.

“The new crossing CANNOT be at Dartford...There needs to be a completely separate route. Location C is definitely the best solution.”

Member of the public

Among the broader reasons for supporting Location C, reduced congestion is a very important one, with one in four participants who think the proposal would improve traffic flow (7,155). This is particularly the case for traffic at the Dartford Crossing, as well as on other routes such as on the M25 and roads to the Channel Ports. Many of these comments refer to the frequent blockages at Dartford caused by accidents or the passage of heavy goods vehicles as well as the congestion that often spreads out into the local area. It is hoped the proposed Location C crossing will alleviate this.

“The M25 Crossing at Dartford is a nightmare. At certain times of the day, Junction 1a is completely blocked by lorries trying to get on to the M25. This has been made worse since the removal of the tolls. A lower crossing will take a lot of vehicles from the Channel Ports heading north and alleviate the problems at Dartford. It is also an alternative for myself if there is a problem at the Dartford crossing. At the moment the only alternative is the Blackwall Tunnel. 8 miles further into London.”

Member of the public

Improved access to destinations is also an important factor in support for a crossing at Location C, with 6,034 participants saying it would make it easier to reach various locations. A wide range of places are mentioned, but most frequently participants expect Location C to give better access to the Channel Ports and to Kent and Essex generally. In many cases, they speak from personal experience of how difficult it is to reach certain destinations via the Dartford Crossing.

“As a fairly frequent traveller from Kent to Essex/Suffolk, the proposed location would be a great help to me, completely avoiding the Dartford Crossing and Bluewater Interchange.”

Member of the public

Other reasons for supporting Location C are mentioned by comparatively fewer participants. There are 1,029 who mention economic benefits to the proposed location, chiefly that it is the most cost effective solution but also that it would create jobs as a result of improved transport access on the roads.

“Connect Essex and Kent, relieve congestion at Dartford, and boost economic growth by better transport links.”

Member of the public

There are also 1,545 participants who think Location C would have a positive effect on communities or specific people. Most often, participants who say this state that the proposed crossing would benefit them themselves, although others also talk about how Location C would have the least effect on the local area and would therefore be most beneficial.

“It will be so useful for us as we travel to Essex to visit family, so the furthest over to the East the new crossing is, the better it will be for us. Please build it soon!”

Member of the public

“Looking at the amount of housing in the area, I feel this route would be the least disruptive and gives easy access from the M2.”

Member of the public

The most common type of negative comments, made by just over a third of those who answered Question 5b (9,875), are statements in opposition to Location C. This is followed by opposition to the proposed scheme as a whole (1,173 participants) and by opposition to another crossing at Dartford/Location A (1,165 participants).

One in three of those who answered Question 5b (9,875) make a comment in opposition to Location C, which roughly reflects the proportion who disagree with Location C at Question 5a. The most common single reasons for being opposed to it are the effects Location C would have on the environment (6,074 participants), with frequent mention of specific impacts it would have on air quality, the landscape, and protected locations such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

“[[It] ruins countryside, ancient woods, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and green belt. Blights thousands of people's property and lives. Creates pollution where there is none currently”

Member of the public

A total of 5,659 participants are critical of Location C on the grounds that they think it would either not ease congestion or would actually make it worse. This is particularly so for the Dartford Crossing, where there were 1,071 responses that Location C would not improve present problems, and for Thurrock, where there were 739 responses that Location C would make traffic congestion worse.

“Option C will not fix the issues we are currently experiencing with M25 at Dartford/Thurrock. Option C will compound the gridlock roads, pollution and noise that Thurrock already experiences on a daily basis. Option C will bring Thurrock to a grinding halt.”

Member of the public

A further 4,599 participants are against Location C because of the effect they expect it to have on communities and individual people. A wide range of negative effects are mentioned, such as noise pollution, increased traffic in residential areas, poorer air quality with consequent increases in health problems, the destruction of property and the blight of property values for the housing that remains.

“Value of property will decrease, noise pollution and traffic in the area will increase. I strongly object to this use of the edge of the green belt or the brown field site not in a residential area. Will we as residents get full market value of our property from the council if this goes ahead?”

Member of the public

In addition to positive and negative comments, suggestions and alternative options were also put forward at Question 5b. Some of those who provided a response to Question 5b mentioned other locations, which they usually put forward as alternatives to the proposed Location C crossing. In particular, 2,928 made a comment about Location A at the current Dartford Crossing, and more are in support of this than make negative comments against it (1,760 compared with 1,165 who comment against it). Arguments in favour of Location A often concentrate on the reduced disruption they think it would produce in comparison with Location C.

“A further crossing could be built beside the existing one, negating the need for the devastation to homes and communities by Option C. Congestion problems occur only when traffic is stopped for one reason or another at all other times it is free flowing. A new tunnel beside the existing one would solve that problem no need for extra road system that will always bottle neck somewhere.”

Member of the public

Of the other locations, 639 participants make a comment about Location D towards Canvey Island, with almost all of them (617) in support of it and only a handful (19) who comment against it. There are 97 participants who comment on Location B, with most in support of this location for a crossing (61 compared with 34 who are opposed). There are also 37 participants who discuss Location E at the Isle of Grain, with the balance split between 33 who support this location and four who are against it.

The most common suggestion is for an alternative crossing at somewhere other than Location C (1,449 participants). This is followed by an alternative option for the proposed scheme generally (826 participants), alternative options at Location C (537 participants) and alternative options for other routes (341 participants).

Some 1,449 participants put forward an alternative or an addition to the proposed location. Most often, they say the crossing should be further east (480 comments). This is followed by a view that it should be further west towards London (268 comments). These arguments are usually because of concerns about the effect of traffic at the proposed crossing.

“Another crossing with associated roads will increase pollution resulting in long term health implications on residents. The increase in local road congestion when accidents occur or the existing bridge closes, as happens regularly now. The destruction of our remaining countryside, resulting in loss of ancient woodlands, wildlife habitats and areas of leisure. I believe that spending vast amounts of money on this project is short-sighted, construction of another crossing towards Southend would take traffic away from Thurrock.”

Member of the public

“The impact on the residential community will be huge. The part of Thurrock between the current crossing and Option C will become an island surrounded by a road network. Building a new crossing will increase the amount of traffic, and it will all be funnelled within a relatively small area. Any new crossing should take a more westerly route.”

Member of the public

Responses by email and post

In addition to those who used the response form, 410 participants made comments on proposals for Location C either through email or by post. Unlike those who have answered through the response form, only a small minority of these (45) are in support of Location C, compared with a majority (375) who are opposed to a crossing there. Opposition is most often voiced because of the anticipated effect of the proposals on the environment, on levels of traffic and on particular communities and people.

“A lower Thames crossing at Option C on whatever route will split Chalk/Shorne in two. It will cause damage to wildlife and reduce the ever decreasing greenbelt. It will cut through ancient woodland and areas of specific scientific interest. It will cause increased traffic to nearby areas already in crisis during rush hour traffic. It will cause increased air and noise pollution, already dangerously high. I have been aware that the crossing has been proposed for some time with the main criteria for the build to reduce the congestion at Dartford.”

Member of the public

In contrast, 255 participants comment on Location A, and the great majority of them are in favour of this option (218 compared with 32 who are against it). Similarly, 124 participants comment on Location D, almost all of who are in favour of it (117 compared with six who are against it). Comments in support of other locations usually focus on the problems that are anticipated at Location C and how other sites for the crossing would have less impact.

“Build another bridge alongside the QE2 bridge. It will be less intrusive on the environment and it will have less impact on the people you intend to turf out for the LTC. And it will be less offensive to the eye.”

Member of the public

A further 110 participants put forward an alternative or addition to the proposed Location C. As with suggestions made through the response form, these suggestions are often for the crossing to be moved further east (25 comments) or further west (15 comments), although 21 comments are about wanting the crossing to be at Pitsea.

4.2 Views on the proposed routes north of the River Thames

This section provides a summary of responses to the consultation which address Questions 6a, 6b and 7 on the online and paper response form, as well as unstructured responses via email and letter that make reference to issues relating to the location of the crossing.

Question 6a: There are three route options north of the river in Essex – Routes 2, 3 and 4. Where do you think the route should be located north of the river?

Question 6b: Please provide the reasons for your response to question 6a.

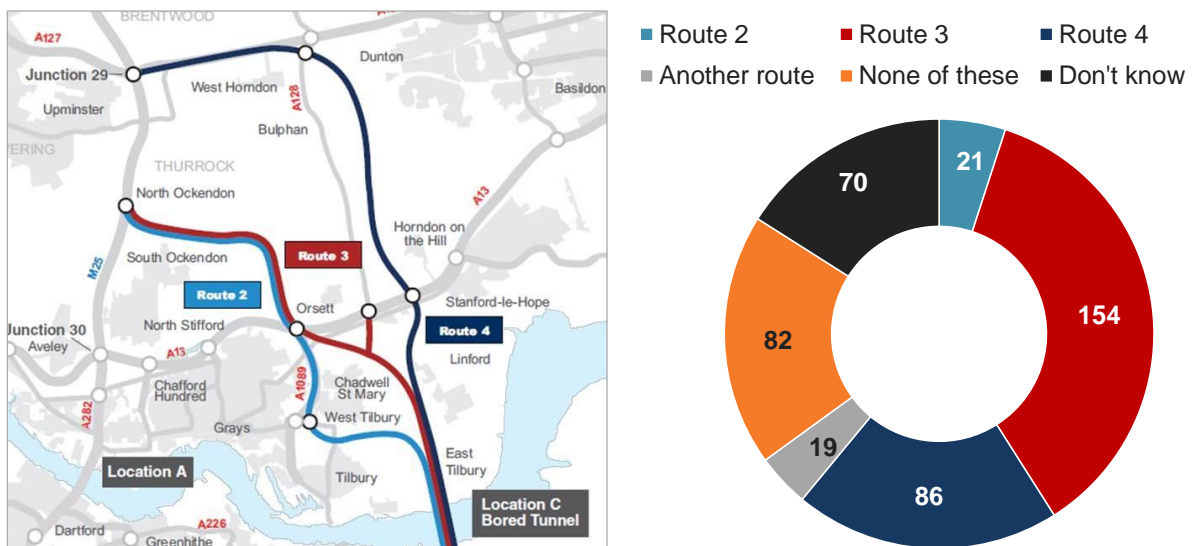
Question 7: Thinking about the three route options north of the river, on balance do you agree or disagree with our proposal for each of these?

4.2.1 Stakeholder organisations

Figure 4.5 shows the responses given by stakeholder organisations who answered Question 6a on the response form.

Figure 4.5: Question 6a responses from stakeholder organisations

Q. There are three route options north of the river in Essex – Routes 2, 3 and 4. Where do you think the route should be located north of the river?



Base: 432 organisations who took part through official response form: 26 January – 24 March 2016

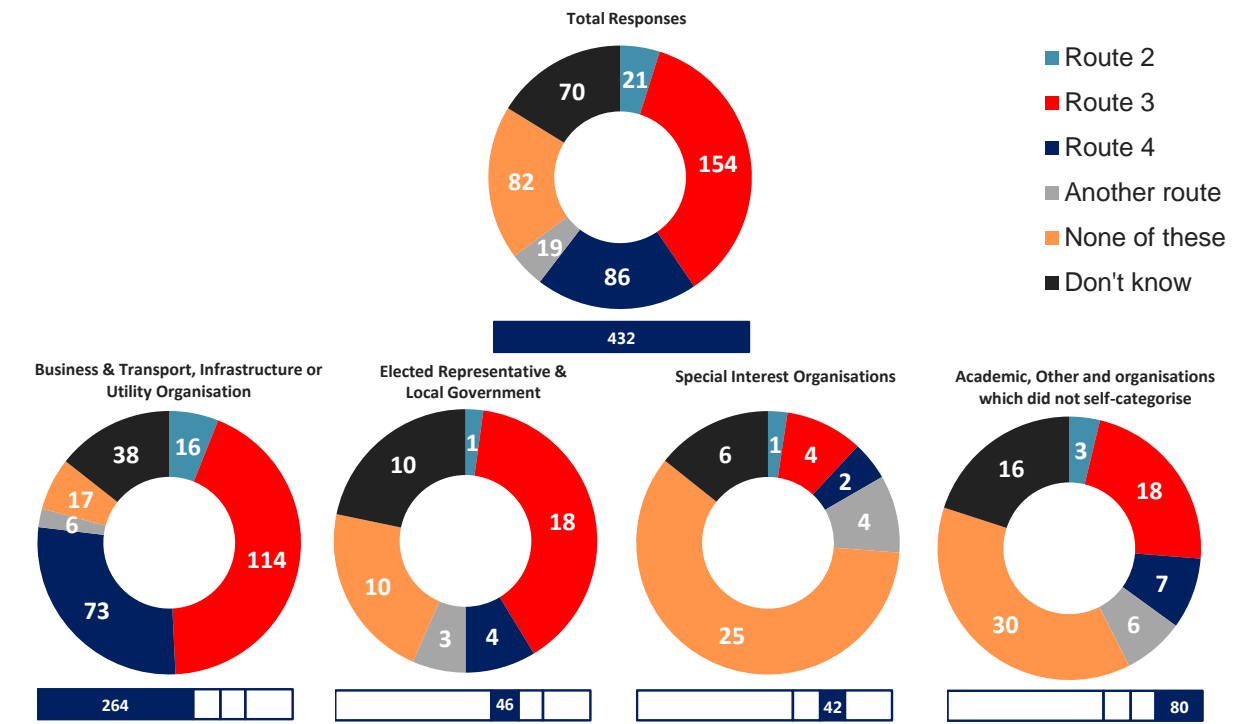
Source: Ipsos MORI

A total of 432 stakeholder organisations answered Question 6a on the response form. Route 3 is the most popular option for a route north of the River Thames, selected by 154 stakeholder organisations, followed by Route 4 (86). Fewer stakeholder organisations (21) favour Route 2. A further 82 indicate that they do not want any of these routes. A similar proportion (70), say they do not know which route they prefer. Nineteen stakeholder organisations would prefer an alternative route.

Across the various types of organisations, Route 3 is the most frequently chosen of the three options. However, it is businesses, transport, infrastructure and utility organisations who are most often in favour of Route 3 (114 out of 264). They are also more likely than other types of organisations to choose Route 4, with one in four who prefer this option (73 out of 264). In contrast, only seven of the 42 special interest organisations that answered this question have chosen any of the three routes - the majority (25) say 'none of these'.

Figure 4.6: Question 6a responses by organisational type

Q. There are three route options north of the river in Essex – Routes 2, 3 and 4. Where do you think the route should be located north of the river?



Special interest organisations comprise: Action, Environment, Heritage and Community groups and Statutory Agencies

Base: 432 organisations who took part through the official response form: 26 January – 24 March 2016

Source: Ipsos MORI

Stakeholder organisations provided comments about the routes north of the Thames, either in response to **Question 6b**, or in an email or letter.

Those who comment on the proposed routes north of the River Thames generally consider that Route 2 would provide good access to Tilbury Docks, and minimise loss of undeveloped land by utilising existing road infrastructure. However, there are concerns about its proximity to communities in Thurrock such as Grays and Tilbury.

Route 3 is the most supported route, and is expected to have the advantages of being a wholly new stretch of road built to modern standards and of being the shortest of the three proposed routes. It is seen to have a lesser impact on communities compared with Route 2 as well as a smaller negative environmental impact compared with Route 4.

Route 4 is welcomed for its more northerly junction with the M25, which, along with connections with other routes such as the A127 and A13, would reduce or eliminate the time many drivers have to spend on the M25. Its distance from built-up

areas is also attractive to some stakeholder organisations. However, there are concerns that the route is the longest of the three proposed routes and would have a greater impact on undeveloped land.

Academic organisations

One academic stakeholder organisation indicates a preference for Route 3 as it believes that it will have the least detrimental effect on the environment and local area. However, it also suggests that Route 4 would have the best longer-term impact. Another organisation which runs a nursery states that it does not favour any of the routes, although it would consider Route 4 to be the 'least worst' as it is the furthest from its premises and therefore least likely to affect it.

Action groups

Those which favour Route 3 do so on the basis that it would be the shortest route and is considered to have the lowest ecological impact of the three proposed routes.

As Route 4 has fewer junctions, it is supported by one organisation which is keen to minimise the number of junctions along a new route. This is because it feels junctions would increase traffic and hinder the effective operation of the road.

"The Highways Agency have a track record of having too many junctions on these arterial routes, thus allowing local traffic to take short-cuts and create huge amounts of unnecessary congestion."

Groc and Groll

Business organisations

Businesses which advocate Route 2 envisage that it would have a minimal impact on undeveloped land and would cause least disruption during construction because it would use the existing road infrastructure. It is also suggested that its relatively close proximity to the M25 and the Dartford Crossing would make it a more viable alternative route in the event of a closure at the Dartford Crossing. They also think of Route 2 as an attractive route for drivers who want to access the M25 because it connects with that road as further south than Route 4 (at the same location as Route 3).

"Better provision of junctions to serve the local area and closer to the M25 to encourage maximum usage."

Streamadvice Limited

The provision of junctions, particularly at Tilbury, is welcomed due to the perceived benefits for vehicles travelling to the docks.

Those who support Route 3 most commonly cite the fact that this is the shortest, or most direct, of the proposed routes as a reason for their support. The benefits of lower cost and quicker journey times are often mentioned. As a result, it is suggested that Route 3 would be the most attractive of the proposed routes to drivers.

"It would provide the shortest route, the greatest improvement in journey time, deliver a modern high quality road and have the lowest environmental impact of the three route options."

Essex Chambers of Commerce

That Route 3 will provide a wholly new road is welcomed for the perceived benefit in driver experience. It is considered Route 3 would result in reduced negative impacts on local communities and the local road network, both during construction and operation because it is further away from built up areas than Route 2. It is also suggested that the environmental effect of Route 3 would be less harmful than that of Route 4.

Route 3 is considered to be well connected to existing roads, and the provision of a new junction with the M25 is welcomed on the grounds that this would help traffic flow. Some stakeholder organisations, including Kent and Medway Economic Partnership advocate an additional junction to serve the Port of Tilbury.

Route 4 is seen as advantageous for its resilience, in particular because it is thought to be at less risk from congestion problems on the M25. In part, this is due to the more northerly junction with the M25 which, for some of those who responded to the consultation, means drivers would avoid the most congested parts of that road around Dartford. However, it is also due to its more easterly route and its direct connections with the A127 and A13. Many users, especially those from the East, would therefore be able to cross the Thames without any need to join the M25 at any point.

Route 4's avoidance of built up areas such as Thurrock is welcomed, although it is acknowledged that the route is likely to have a greater environmental impact than the other proposals.

"This route does not depend on M25 since it gives access to A12 in both directions without involving the M25. It also gives at least two options off the A127 in case one were blocked or subject to very heavy traffic. Remember that, if the M25 is blocked or seriously reduced in capacity because of accident, repairs or heavy traffic, Route 4 gives the most options for keeping traffic moving at a reasonable speed."

Innovomantex Limited

Elected representatives

Jackie Doyle-Price (MP for Thurrock) and Stephen Metcalfe (MP for South Basildon and East Thurrock) each raise concerns which they feel would result from Routes 2 and 3. Jackie Doyle-Price MP states that South Ockendon in particular would be impacted by both Route 2 and 3, and in particular that Route 3 would introduce additional traffic into the local area's road network. Stephen Metcalfe MP describes the effect of both routes on homes in his constituency as "vandalism" and objects to the impact on the rural landscape.

Stephen Metcalfe MP also opposes Route 4 because it would pass through historic farmland.

Jackie Doyle-Price, MP for Thurrock, believes Route 4 would benefit Tilbury by diverting traffic, specifically HGV traffic, away from the area and the A128. Bexley Labour Group similarly respond positively to Route 4's potential to disperse traffic via the A127 and A13.

James Duddridge, MP for Rochford and Southend East, highlights that Route 4 is the most easterly route, and as well as being further from local communities, he argues that it is the best option for linking Essex and Kent to new connections and opportunities.

"This option addresses the need to provide an alternative connection between Essex and Kent as well as providing positive outcomes in terms of the wider economic value and unlocking new opportunities for local communities."

James Duddridge MP

Environment, heritage, amenity or community groups

CPRE Essex, Brentwood Group welcomes Route 2's junction with the A1089 near West Tilbury. However, other organisations raise concerns about the routes' impact on environmentally sensitive areas such as the Thames Chase Community Forest, Thames Terrace grassland sites and ancient woodland. Those that support Route 3 state that it will be the most direct and quickest route. It is suggested that it will be less congested and that it would have the lowest negative impact on the area.

"Route 3 has the least ecological impact, and should cause the least disruption during construction."

The Caravan Club

Many of those amongst this category of stakeholders raise concerns and objections about all three proposed routes in particular, or any new roads through Essex in general. Reasons include concerns about effects on the environment, such as pollution in Thurrock and damage to habitats and wildlife, as well as doubts about the ability of the proposals to achieve their objective of reduced congestion. Some restate their support for either a new crossing at Location A, or improvement of the existing Dartford Crossing.

"All of these routes will cause devastation to the environment. Only route A will solve problems at Dartford. Route north of river should be via M25."

Friends of St Marys Church

West Tilbury Commons Conservators states that all routes would impact on access to the Commons. It is particularly concerned about Route 2 which they state will cut directly across the land.

Local government organisations

Route 2 is favoured by Langford & Ulting Parish Council which believes the route will have a lower impact on the countryside, in particular that it will limit opportunity for infill development, compared with the other proposed routes.

Route 3 is the most popular route with local government organisations. In particular, it is the preference of Essex County Council. Several other stakeholders, including Kent County Council and Dover District Council, say they either endorse or have given considerable weight to Essex County Council's preference when they put forward their own response.

"Route 3 is the only option that provides a new strategic link between the Channel Ports and the Midlands and North and provides improved connectivity from Essex to these locations. Dependent upon the direction of travel and time of day 23% and 34% of travellers would choose to use a LTX at Route 3 rather than the existing crossing."

Essex County Council

Reasons for preferring Route 3 include it being the shortest of the three proposed routes. This is presumed to result in the quickest journey times for drivers. The fact that it will be an entirely new road, built to modern standards, is also an important consideration for many, both in terms of the quality of the road and in the reduced impact of its construction. Several believe it will provide the greatest resilience in the event of disruption at the Dartford Crossing. It is also suggested that it will have the least environmental impact of the three proposed routes.

"It would provide the shortest route, the greatest improvement to journey time."

Suffolk County Council

Comments about Route 4 often refer to it as the longest of the proposed routes. Sutton at Hone & Hawley Parish Council believes that, as the most easterly option, Route 4 would have the advantage of moving traffic away from areas that are already heavily congested.

Transport, infrastructure or utility organisations

The Road Haulage Association supports Route 2 as it believes it would give the best link with planned expansion at the Port of Tilbury

"The RHA would prefer to see Route 2 constructed since this option would fit most easily with the planned expansion of Tilbury, with easier access to the port and the new truck stop."

Road Haulage Association

However, these stakeholder organisations generally tend to be critical of Route 2 due to concerns about its close proximity to local communities and the disruption it could cause.

"Route 2, on the north of the river, is too close to a dense urban area, causing unnecessary disruption to residents during construction."

Institution of Civil Engineers South East England

Route 3 is supported by many, for reasons that include it being the shortest and most direct of the proposed routes, and that will provide good access to vehicles travelling from Essex and direct from the M25 and A13 for Kent. It is therefore considered likely to succeed in attracting heavy good vehicles away from the M25.

Others feel that as a new road, Route 3 will both minimise construction disruption, but also have lower community and environmental impacts than the other proposed routes.

The Port of London Authority states that it supports Route 3 on the condition that it includes a junction with the Port of Tilbury and has an effective connection to the A13.

Stated benefits of Route 4 include that the more northerly connection to the M25 at Junction 29 would enable traffic to avoid congestion on the M25 around Thurrock and Lakeside Shopping Centre.

"It is vital to go for Route 4 as there is often congestion between J29 and J28."

Nicholls Transport

Route 4 is the route furthest from the M25 and it is suggested that this could make it more attractive to road users who travel to and from Essex or Kent.

Concerns about Route 4 include that it is the longest of the proposed routes. This is considered to have potential consequences for journey times as well as increased cost and disruption during construction.

"Routes 2 and 3 are shorter than Route 4 by at least 2 miles and are at least £300m less expensive."

RAC Foundation

There are also some concerns about how Route 4 might affect the A127 and Junction 29 of the M25 which are considered to already be busy. Quintas Energy opposes Route 4 due to the potential impact on a solar facility they operate. National Grid notes that all routes would cross its overhead transmission lines. Route 4 would cross three of its gas transmission pipelines. All route options cross National Grid's gas distribution network.

Statutory agencies

Statutory agencies responses often highlight particular sites that the proposed routes might affect, or alert Highways England to particular policies, guidance or regulations that should be taken into consideration.

"The use of embankments in all three routes means that intrusive groundworks are less likely to impact on buried archaeology."

Historic England

With regard to Route 2, the Environment Agency raises concerns about the potential loss of Tilbury Flood Storage Area and Historic England mentions potential impacts on buried archaeological remains at North Ockendon, which it states could also be affected by Routes 2 and 3.

Historic England also raises a concern about the impact of Route 3 on crop marks at Orsett. Natural England states that Route 3 would have the least environmental impact. The Environment Agency would wish to discuss flood risk in relation to the scheme.

Comments on Route 4 are made by Historic England which refers to potential impacts on Grade II* Thorndon Park, and Horndon on the Hill. If Route 4 is selected, the Environment Agency states that they would wish to discuss ways that flood prevention measures could be designed into proposals with Highways England. Natural England raises concerns about the route's impact on ancient woodland.

Other category of organisation or group

General opposition to the routes includes concerns about over-development and loss of farmland and disruption.

Comments favourable to Route 3 are that it would be the most viable and the most cost effective route.

"Cost effective and could be linked through other existing routes and does not contribute to traffic but eases traffic from the existing routes."

Anonymous

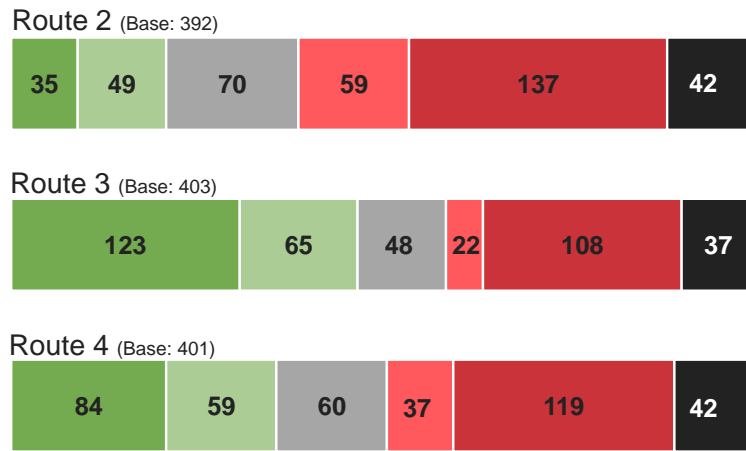
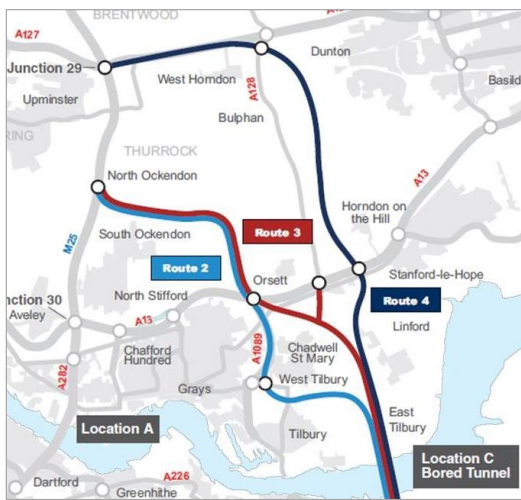
Comments about Route 4 include it being preferred on the basis that the other routes are too close to Dartford and that it would attract more traffic between Essex and Kent. A critical comment is that it might overburden the A127 and that it is also the longest of the three proposed routes.

Question 7 had three parts, one for each of the proposed routes. Among stakeholder organisations, the numbers who answered each of the parts of Question 7 on the response form varied (392 for Route 2, 403 for Route 3 and 401 for Route 4). The question asked about the degree of support or opposition to each of the three proposed routes north of the River Thames. Figure 4.7 shows the responses given by those who answered Question 7 on the response form.

Figure 4.7: Question 7 responses from stakeholder organisations

Q. Thinking about the three route options north of the river, on balance do you agree or disagree with our proposal for each of these?

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither / nor
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know



Base: Organisations who took part through official response form (variable base size): 26 January – 24 March 2016 Source: Ipsos MORI

Just as Route 3 is the one most often preferred at Question 6a, it is also the one with which organisations most often agree. Almost half of the 403 stakeholder organisations responding to this question (188) say that they agree with it, of which most (123) strongly agree. In contrast, one in three (130) indicate that they disagree with Route 3.

Stakeholder organisations are slightly more likely to oppose than support Route 4. There are broadly similar levels of agreement and disagreement with this option, as 143 of the 401 stakeholder organisations who answer this question agree and 156 disagree.

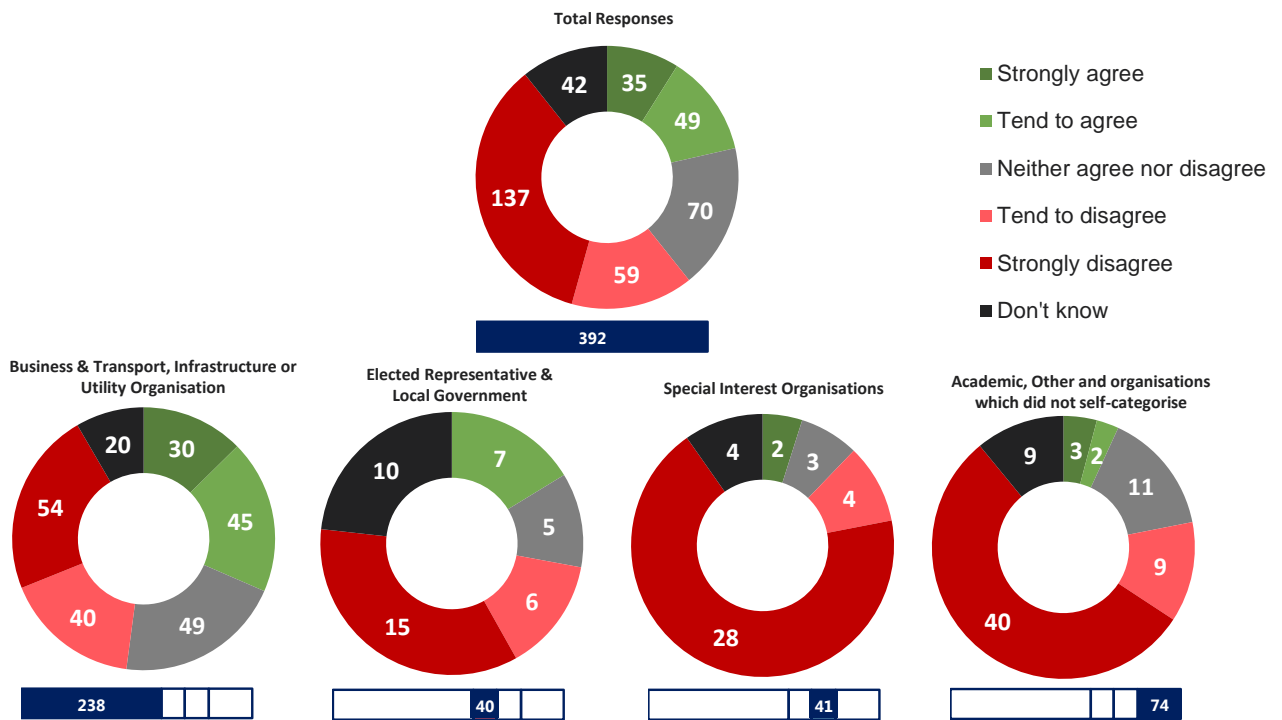
Route 2 is the least popular of the proposed routes, just as it is at Question 6a. Half (392) of those who responded to this question disagree with this route option (196), while 84 agree with it.

Each of the various types of stakeholder organisations are more likely to disagree than to agree with Route 2. However, business, transport, infrastructure and utility organisations are the most positive about this option, with one in three in agreement with it (75 out of 238).

In contrast, only two out of the 41 special interest organisations that submitted a response to this question agree with Route 2. Most of them (28) strongly disagree with it. Similarly, agreement with Route 2 is very low among academic and ‘other’ organisations (5 out of 73) and most disagree with it (49).

Figure 4.8: Question 7 responses by organisational type for Route 2

Q. Thinking about the three route options north of the river, on balance do you agree or disagree with our proposal for each of these? **ROUTE 2**



Special interest organisations comprise: Action, Environment, Heritage and Community groups and Statutory Agencies

Base: 392 organisations who took part through the official response form: 26 January – 24 March 2016

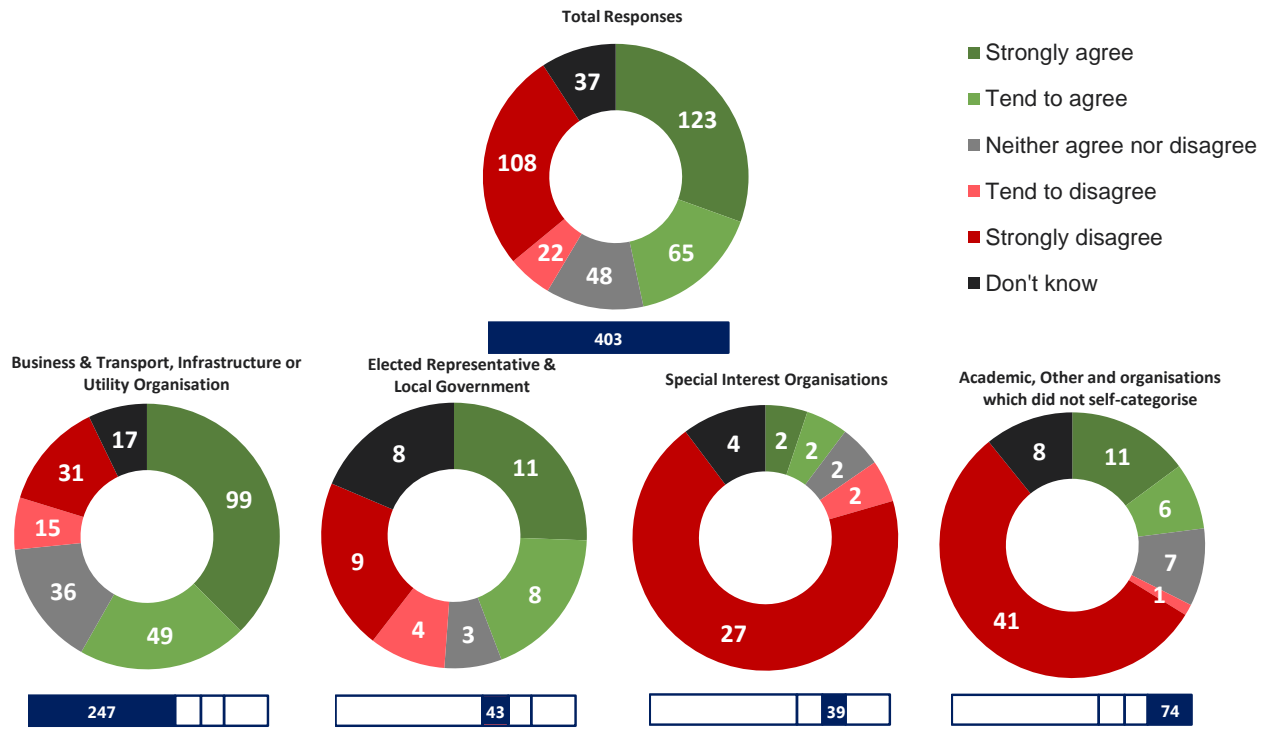
Source: Ipsos MORI

Attitudes towards Route 3 are even more diverse across the types of organisations that responded. Again, it is business, transport, infrastructure and utility organisations who are most positive, with a majority in agreement with this route (148 out of 247 agree). Similarly, out of the 43 elected representatives and local councils who responded to this question, more agree (19) than disagree (13) with Route 3.

Special interest organisations are generally negative, with most against the Route 3 proposal (27 out of 39). Out of the 74 academic and ‘other’ organisations that answered this question, more of them also disagree than agree with the proposal (42 disagree and 17 agree).

Figure 4.9: Question 7 responses by organisational type for Route 3

Q. Thinking about the three route options north of the river, on balance do you agree or disagree with our proposal for each of these? **ROUTE 3**



Special interest organisations comprise: Action, Environment, Heritage and Community groups and Statutory Agencies

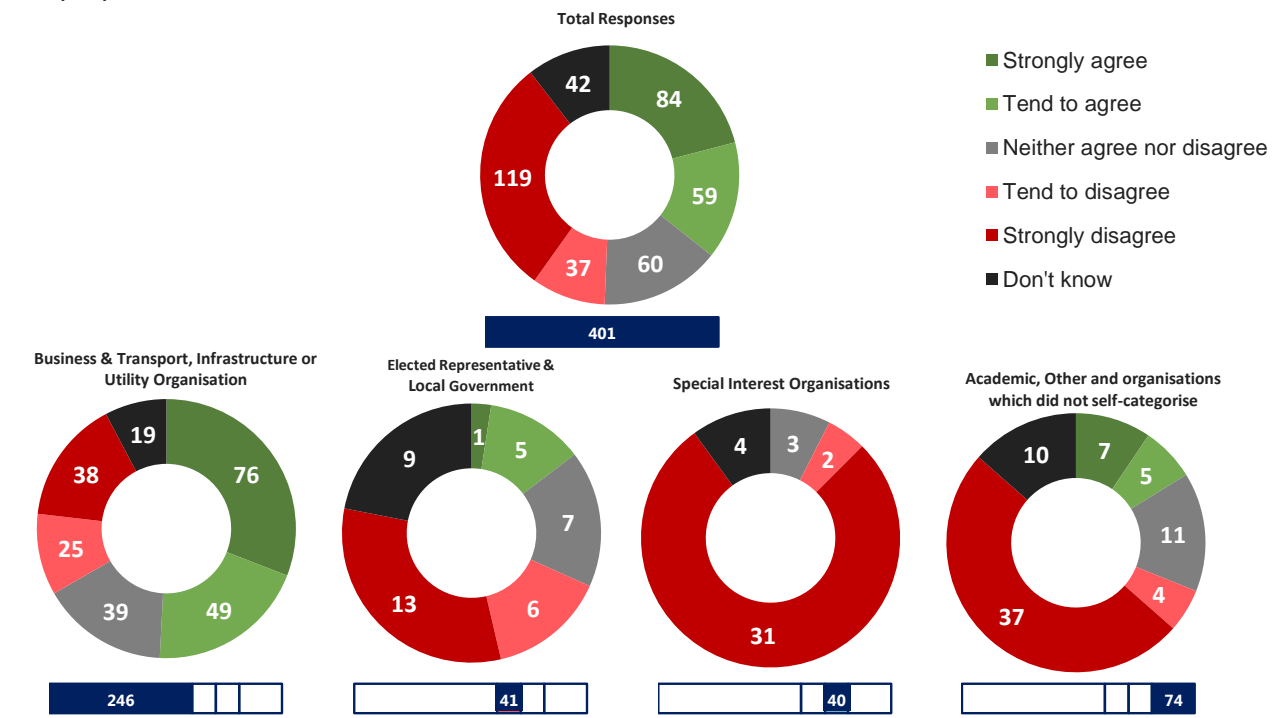
Base: 403 organisations who took part through the official response form: 26 January – 24 March 2016

Source: Ipsos MORI

Again, it is businesses, transport, infrastructure and utility organisations who are more likely to agree with proposals for Route 4. Around half of these organisations agree with the proposals (125 out of 246), compared with one in four that disagree (63). Other types of stakeholder organisation are more negative. Among the 41 elected representatives and local councils that answered this question, only six agree with the Route 4 proposal, compared with 19 that disagree. Similarly, among the academic and ‘other’ organisations, there are considerably more that disagree with the route (41) than agree with it (12). Among the special interest organisations, not one of them agrees with the Route 4 proposal - most of these organisations (31) strongly disagree with the proposal.

Figure 4.10: Question 7 responses by organisational type for Route 4

Q. Thinking about the three route options north of the river, on balance do you agree or disagree with our proposal for each of these? **ROUTE 4**



Special interest organisations comprise: Action, Environment, Heritage and Community groups and Statutory Agencies

Base: 401 organisations who took part through the official response form: 26 January – 24 March 2016

Source: Ipsos MORI

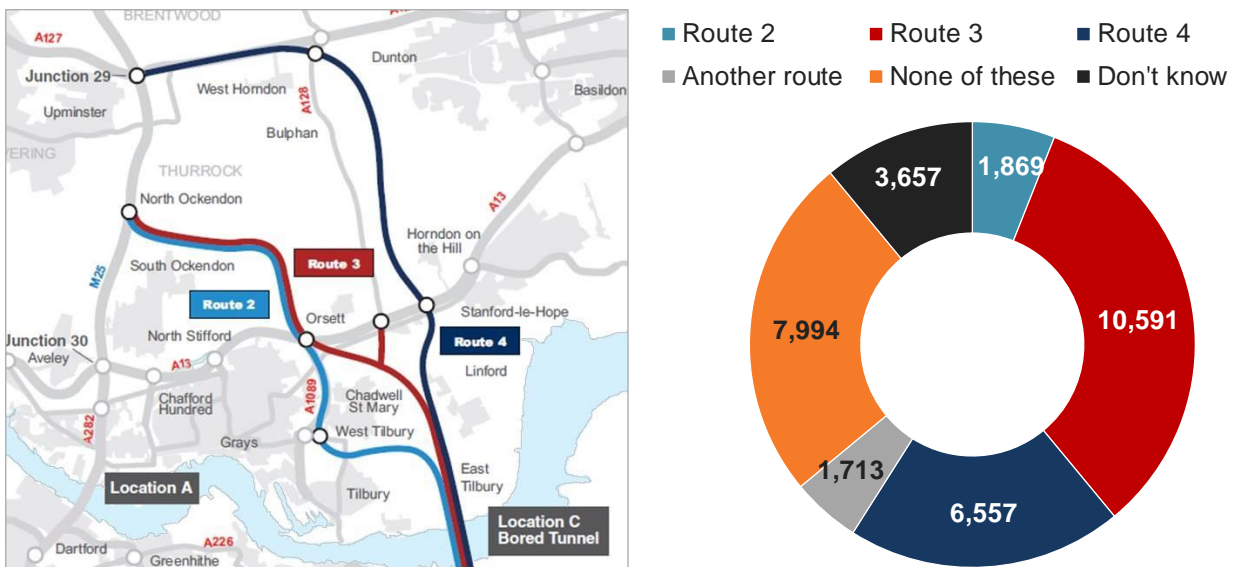
4.2.2 Members of the public

Response form

There were 32,381 members of the public who answered **Question 6a** on the response form. The question asked which of the three proposed routes north of the Thames is preferred. Figure 4.11 shows the responses given by those who answered Question 6a on the response form.

Figure 4.11: Question 6a responses from members of the public

Q. There are three route options north of the river in Essex – Routes 2, 3 and 4.
Where do you think the route should be located north of the river?



Base: 32,381 participants who took part through official response form: 26 January – 24 March 2016

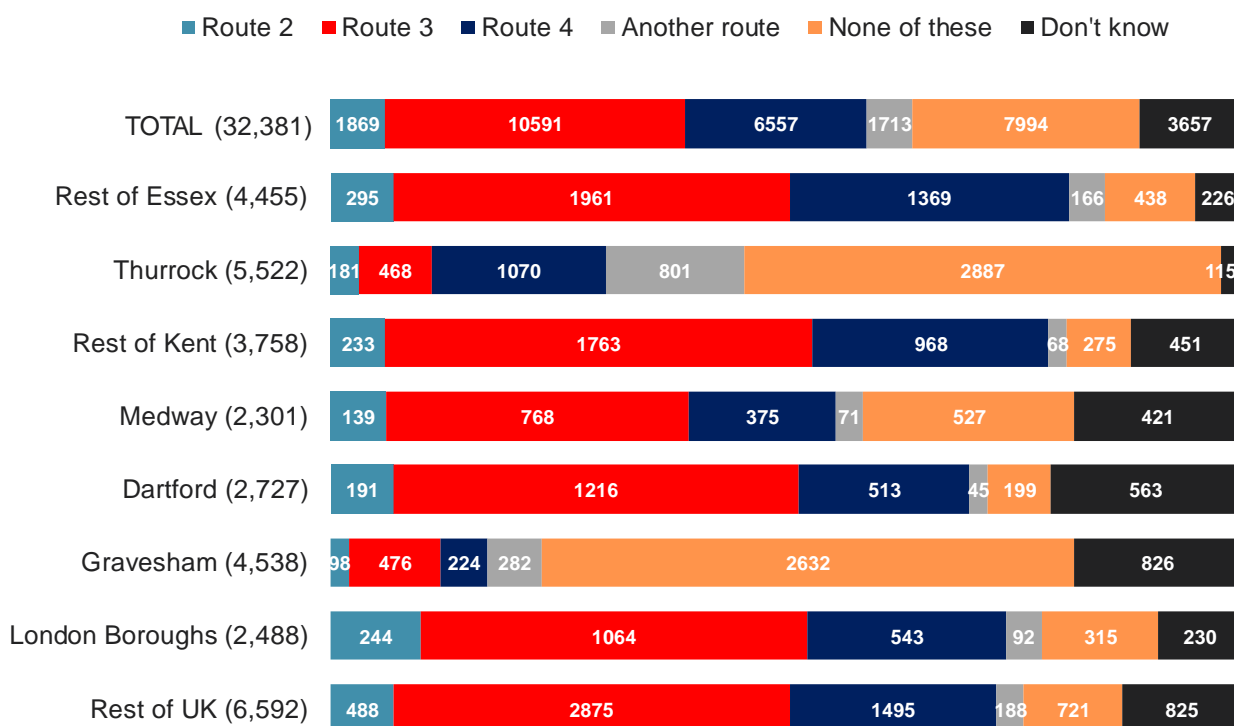
Source: Ipsos MORI

One in three of those who answered the question (10,591) selected Route 3 as the location of the route north of the River Thames, while one in five (6,557) selected Route 4. Participants are least likely of all to select Route 2 (1,869). However, it is notable that one in four (7,994) participants selected none of the three routes, and one in ten (3,657) 'don't know'.

Across local authority areas, the proportion against any of the three routes is greater in those places most affected by the proposed route. More than half of participants in Gravesham say 'none of these routes' (2,632 out of 4,538 participants here) and so do more than half of those in Thurrock (2,887 out of 5,522).

Figure 4.12: Question 6a responses from members of the public by local authority area

Q. There are three route options north of the river in Essex – Routes 2, 3 and 4. Where do you think the route should be located north of the river?



Base: 32,381 participants who took part through the official response form: 26 January – 24 March 2016

Source: Ipsos MORI

Table 4.2 shows preference for routes north of the Thames by attitudes towards other parts of the route. It shows that those who choose any of three suggested routes generally agree with Highways England's other proposals. Generally, the great majority of those who choose routes 2, 3 or 4 also agree with Location C and with the whole route. The exception is those who prefer Route 4 as they are more evenly split between agreeing and disagreeing with the whole proposed route.

Generally, the balance of opinion of those who do not want any route, or would prefer another route north of the Thames is more negative than positive about Location C as the proposed crossing, with having any routes south of the Thames, and with the overall proposals. For example, while just 276 participants who do not want any of the routes agree with Location C as the proposed crossing site, 7,634 participants who do not want any of the proposed routes disagree with the proposed crossing site.

Table 4.2: Question 6a responses analysed by attitudes towards other route options

	Route 2	Route 3	Route 4	Another route	None of these	Don't know
Total: 32,381	1,869	10,591	6,557	1,713	7,994	3,657
Location C:						
Agree (19,478)	1,501	9,772	5,457	295	276	2,177
Neither agree nor disagree (989)	77	281	235	48	54	294
Disagree (11,727)	273	504	833	1,362	7,634	1,121
Route south of the Thames:						
Western Southern Link (5,827)	697	2,876	1,362	106	178	608
Eastern Southern Link (12,189)	760	6,204	3,801	204	150	1,070
Another route (1,445)	36	212	130	482	379	206
None (7,544)	62	188	102	489	6,131	572
Whole route (Location C, Route 3, Eastern Southern Link)						
Agree (16,342)	1,221	9,270	3,615	210	208	1,818
Neither agree nor disagree (1,574)	174	398	559	59	60	324
Disagree (13,666)	428	826	2,266	1,389	7,597	1,160

There were 22,867 members of the public who provided comments in response to **Question 6b** on the response form in support of the answer they provided for Question 6a. The most common is a statement of support for Route 3, given by three in ten participants (7,199). This is followed by one in five who say something positive about Route 4 (4,830), and by statements in support of Route 2 (1,088) or in favour a crossing at Location A (1,078). The numbers who make favourable comments about the three routes roughly mirrors the balance of opinion at Question 6a, in which Route 3 is the most preferred option, followed by Route 4 and lastly by Route 2.

The most common type of negative comment at Question 6b is a general statement of opposition to the route options, given by one in eight participants (2,836). This is followed by opposition to a crossing at Location C (1,145), opposition to Route 4 (969) and opposition to the proposals generally (826). Compared with Route 4, fewer participants say something critical about Routes 2 (709) or 3 (632).

The most common type of suggestion made at Question 6b is a different route to the three options proposed (1,504). This is followed by an alternative location for the crossing of the Thames (587). The other main types of suggestions are an alternative design of Route 4 (283), an alternative proposal for the scheme as a whole (278) and a different design for Route 3 (222).

The following section looks in greater depth at the specific comments made about the routes north of the Thames

Route 2

A total of 1,776 participants provided comments about Route 2, with more who comment in favour of it (1,088) than say something in opposition to it (709). The most frequent argument in favour of Route 2 is that it would improve connections to destinations and freedom of travel (548 participants). Most often, these comments relate to how Route 2 is the shortest of the three alternatives, and how it would improve access to the M25 or specific places such as Tilbury.

“It’s the shortest. It intersects with Tilbury so will pick up the traffic from the docks.”

Member of the public

Other comments in support of Route 2 are about how it would be the best option for communities and individual people (167 participants), chiefly because it would cause the least disruption to communities as the route goes through industrialised areas. A similar number (161) comment favourably about the difference Route 2 would make to traffic flow, for example at the Dartford Crossing. There are also 138 participants who support Route 2 for environmental reasons, most often because it would have the least effect on the countryside and the rural landscape.

“Our preference is route 2. The majority of road infrastructure is already there. Less effect on A13, no extra junction, and avoids greenbelt and smaller villages that would suffer under routes 3 and 4.”

Member of the public

“Route 2 would be the preferred route as it does not impact the environment as much as the other routes would, but the route is short enough to entice the drivers to use the crossing and not go straight back to the Dartford Crossing.”

Member of the public

Route 2 is opposed most often on the grounds that it would not reduce congestion or would actually increase it (306 participants). Closely linked with this is opposition because of the effect the route would have on communities (226 participants) such as those in developed or residential areas generally or specific places such as South Ockendon.

"I live in South Ockendon and the traffic is already bad - if the new crossing comes through South Ockendon the lives of the residents will be disrupted. Route 4 is the best for me as it takes the traffic that bit further afield. South Ockendon doesn't have the infrastructure to have an increase in road traffic."

Member of the public

There are also 148 participants who are against Route 2 because of its effect on access and freedom of travel, for example through being too close to the current Dartford Crossing or by placing too much strain on the local road network. Some 129 participants are critical of Route 2 for environmental reasons, most often because they think it would increase air pollution and the level of noise.

"Route 2 where local and long distance traffic will need to mix could create future problems when Dartford crossing is closed and traffic levels are at their highest."

Member of the public

Route 3

There are 7,750 members of the public who comment on Route 3 - this is more than for either of the other two routes and perhaps reflects the fact that it is the route preferred by Highways England. Far more participants comment in support of Route 3 (7,199) than make a comment against it (632).

By far the most common reasons for supporting Route 3 are to do with improved access to destinations and freedom of movement (4,027 participants). Most often, these comments are about how Route 3 is the shortest route (2,088 comments), but some also expect it will improve the quality of the road infrastructure (976 comments) and give better access to specific roads, such as the M25 (561 comments).

"This is the shortest and most direct route offering a complete motorway solution at 70 mph. This is perfect. Properly designed roads for the modern era rather than old roads converted and made to do to fit the need."

Member of the public

The comparative amount of disruption is also an important factor in support for Route 3, with 1,190 comments in favour of it because it would have the least impact during construction or when in use.

"This is the shortest and most logical route for traffic from the east heading towards the north. Whilst none of the routes are free from adverse impacts, the impacts resulting from Route 3 would have the least overall. A new junction onto the M25, unlike Route 4, would lead to less conflict with other traffic flows and therefore would not add to existing congestion."

Member of the public

Prominent among the other comments in support of Route 3 are statements about how it would be the least damaging to the local area. For example, 1,378 participants support Route 3 because it would have least effect on the environment, either generally or on specific places such as protected natural areas. Similarly, 828 comment about how Route 3 would have least effect on communities or individual people, most often those in developed residential areas.

“Route 3 would be the best solution as it will cause less impact on existing urban area, the ecology, conservation & heritage areas and be a more efficient new highway.”

Member of the public

Comparatively fewer participants mention improved traffic flow as a reason to support Route 3, with 807 who anticipate reduced congestion either generally or on specific roads, most usually on the M25. There are also 696 who refer to potential economic benefits from Route 3, most often because it would be the most cost effective route.

As noted, far fewer participants make comments against Route 3. The most common objections relate to the impact on traffic and congestion (267 participants), and these are mostly about how Route 3 would increase problems on the roads. There are also 206 who make a critical comment about the effect of Route 3 on local communities and 196 who comment about the effect on the environment.

“Route 3 cuts a swathe across an area of the county which is already suffering from the effects of heavy commercial traffic and congestion, which would be increased by funnelling traffic far too close to the existing exit routes from the existing crossing.”

Member of the public

Route 4

There are 5,664 participants who comment on Route 4, and the great majority say something in support of it (4,830). Comparatively far fewer comment in opposition to it (969). As with the other two routes, the most common argument for Route 4 is that it would improve connections to destinations and freedom of travel (2,591 participants). These participants mention improved travel on a range of specific roads such as the M25, A13 and A127, as well as improved access to specific places, chiefly Kent and Essex. Others comment on how Route 4 is the right distance from the Dartford Crossing.

“Furthest away ensures traffic congestion already seen at Dartford is minimized and therefore it is used for mainly M25 users, S.E. London, and northbound into Essex. The further route will provide better connections for Essex to Kent and the Eurotunnel.”

Member of the public

In close connection with this, there are 1,845 participants who favour Route 4 because of the difference they expect it to make on congestion levels, with frequent mentions of improved congestion on the M25 and at the Dartford Crossing as well as at other places such as Thurrock, around the Lakeside Shopping Centre and on the A13.

“Route 4 appears to be the best in terms of relief of pressure from the crossing as well as traffic for Lakeside.”

Member of the public

Among the other reasons put forward in favour of Route 4 are the limited effect it is thought it would have on communities and individual people (1,105 participants). Comments mainly relate to the effect on developed, residential areas although there are also comments about how Route 4 would benefit participants themselves.

“As one who travels regularly from the N.E. to Kent, it would be the best route. It also appears to keep as much as possible from heavily populated areas.”

Member of the public

In contrast, the most common reasons for opposition to Route 4 are the effect it is thought it would have on traffic (438 participants), with particular reference to increased congestion on the A127. Correspondingly, a further 212 expect Route 4 to have a negative effect on access to destinations, often on the grounds that Route 4 would be the longest route.

“Route 4 is totally impractical. It utilises the A127 east of the M25 which already suffers from severe congestion at peak times and is only two lanes in each direction. It also appears to be the longest length of road of the three options which will in addition, unlike the other options, have to cross a main line railway, both of which add significantly to the construction cost.”

Member of the public

Other objections to Route 4 are most often to do with the anticipated effect it would have on the environment (267 participants), often with reference to protected natural areas or to agricultural land.

“Option 4 will rip through parts of Horndon-on-the-Hill, impact directly on ancient woodland, a conservation area and a registered park and garden.”

Member of the public

Other comments on proposed routes

In addition, one in five participants who replied to Question 6b make a general comment about the routes (4,649 participants), and most of these make a critical comment (2,836 compared with only 445 who make a supportive comment).

The most frequent general comments against the routes are to do with their perceived effect upon the environment (1,325), chiefly through air and noise pollution, the impact on protected natural areas and the effect on listed buildings and heritage sites. This is followed by criticisms of the routes' effect on levels of congestion (1,042) and on communities and individual people (983). Very often, these general points about the routes are combined together by participants as a broad case against the development.

“I don't believe that these routes would be suitable and would not be able to cope with the likely levels of traffic. These routes would be detrimental to local residents and the environment.”

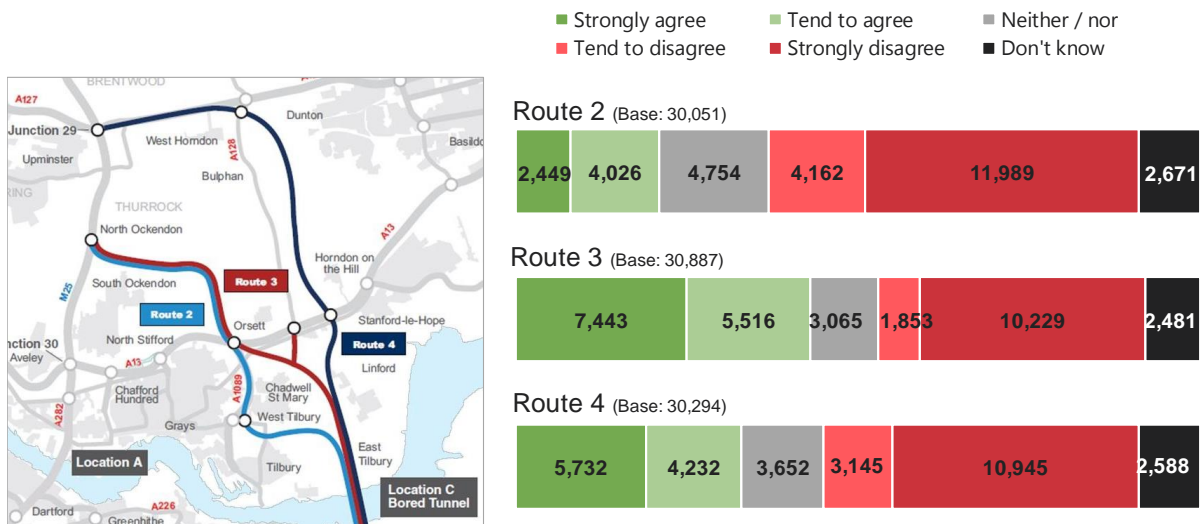
Member of the public

Among those who make general comments about the routes, there are also 1,504 who make a suggestion of some kind. There is a wide range of suggested changes, the most common of which is to move the crossing further to the east (126 comments) and to improve connections to the A13 (101 comments).

Question 7 had three parts, one for each of the proposed routes. Among members of the public, the numbers who answered each of the parts of Question 7 varied (30,051 for Route 2, 30,887 for Route 3 and 30,294 for Route 4). The question asked participants about their degree of support or opposition to each of the three proposed routes. Figure 4.13 shows the responses given by those who answered Question 7 on the response form.

Figure 4.13: Question 7 responses from members of the public

Q. Thinking about the three route options north of the river, on balance do you agree or disagree with our proposal for each of these?



Base: participants who took part through official response form (variable base size): 26 January – 24 March 2016 Source: Ipsos MORI

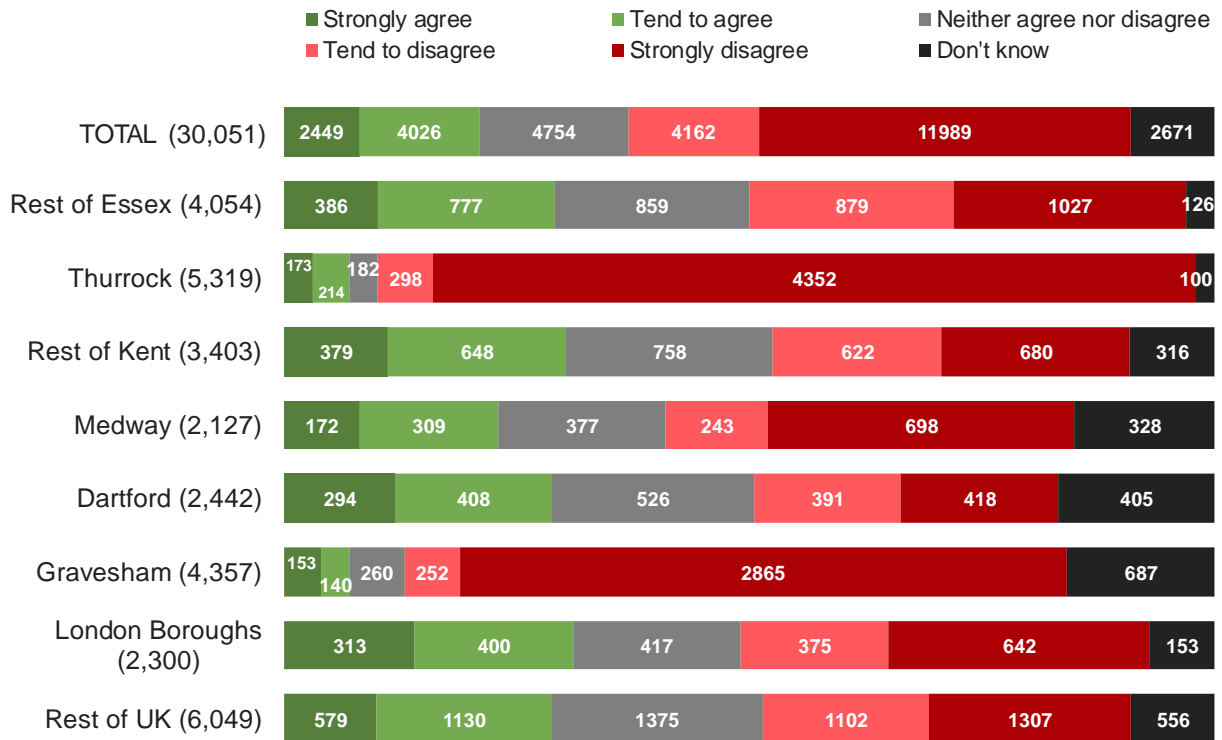
Attitudes to the specific routes follow the general pattern of preferences made at Question 6a. Those who replied to this question are most likely to favour Route 3, with just over two in five participants agreeing with it (12,959) compared with slightly fewer who disagree (12,082).

Participants are more likely to be against the other two route options rather than in favour of them. One in three (9,964) agree with Route 4, compared with almost half (14,090) who disagree with it. Agreement with Route 2 is lowest of all, just as it is the least preferred at Question 6a. Only one in five participants (6,475) agree with this route, compared with over half who disagree (16,151).

By area, opposition to Route 2 is strong in Gravesham, where seven in ten disagree with this option (3,117 out of 4,357 participants). It is even stronger in Thurrock, where disagreement runs to almost nine in ten participants (4,650 out of 5,319). Across other local authority areas in Kent, Essex, London and the rest of the UK, the balance of opinion is more even, with generally just under half who disagree with Route 2 compared with approximately one in four who agree with it.

Figure 4.14: Question 7 responses for Route 2 from members of the public by local authority area

Q. Thinking about the three route options north of the river, on balance do you agree or disagree with our proposal for each of these? **ROUTE 2**



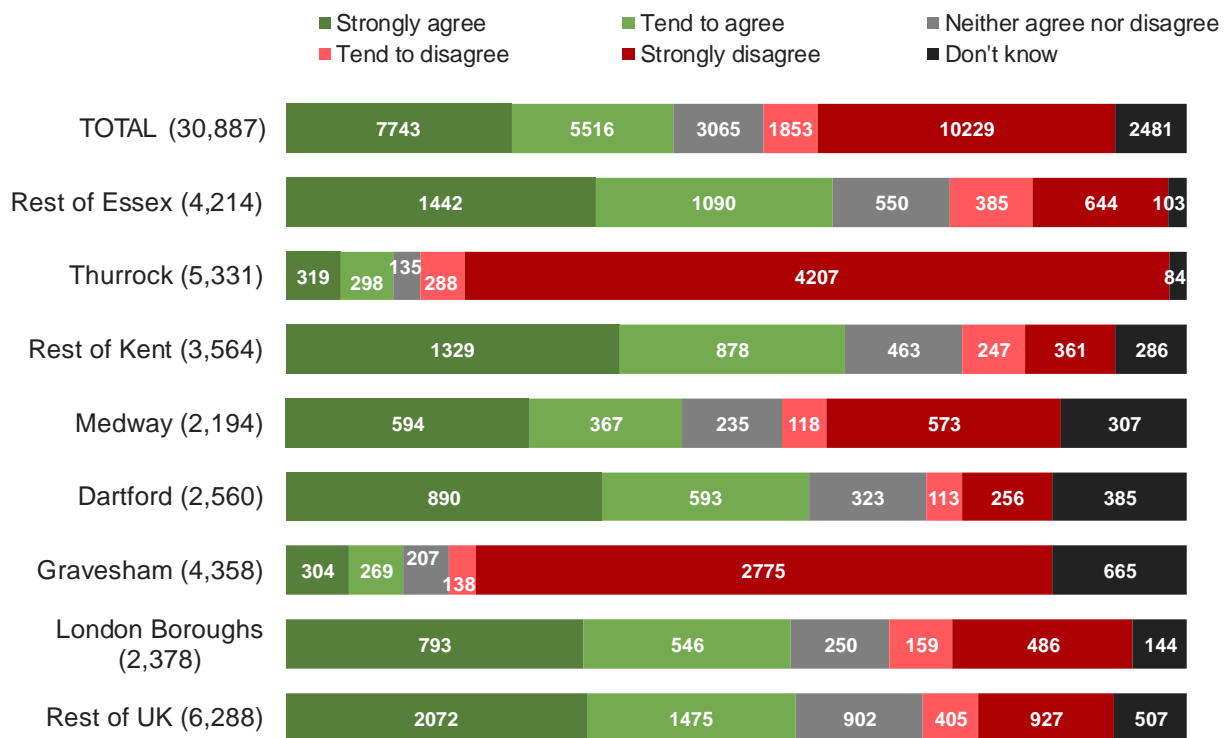
Base: 30,051 participants who took part through the official response form: 26 January – 24 March 2016

Source: Ipsos MORI

Turning to Route 3, the differences in opinion by local authority area are more marked. Two in three Gravesham residents disagree with this option (2,913 out of 4,358), and so do more than four in five of those in Thurrock (4,495 out of 5,331). In contrast, just over half of participants agree with Route 3 in the remaining areas of Essex and Kent, London and across the rest of the UK.

Figure 4.15: Question 7 responses for Route 3 from members of the public by local authority area

Q. Thinking about the three route options north of the river, on balance do you agree or disagree with our proposal for each of these? **ROUTE 3**



Base: 30,887 participants who took part through the official response form: 26 January – 24 March 2016

Source: Ipsos MORI

As with routes 2 and 3, disagreement with Route 4 is strongest both in Gravesham, where seven in ten participants are against it (3,000 out of 4,299), and in Thurrock, where seven in ten also disagree (3,871 out of 5,347). Across the rest of Essex, Kent, London and other parts of the UK, the numbers who agree and who disagree with Route 4 are generally quite evenly balanced.

Figure 4.16: Question 7 responses for Route 4 from members of the public by local authority area

Q. Thinking about the three route options north of the river, on balance do you agree or disagree with our proposal for each of these? **ROUTE 4**



Base: 30,294 participants who took part through the official response form: 26 January – 24 March 2016

Source: Ipsos MORI

Responses by email and post

As with those who answered through the response form, those who made comments by email or post are more likely to be against Route 2 (39) than to be in favour of it (seven). However, there are also far more who are opposed to Route 3 as well (71 compared with 20 who are in support). Only Route 4 is supported by more participants than oppose it (61 compared with 47).

As with comments made through the response form, the main reasons for opposing the routes are to do with the effect of the routes on the environment and on specific communities along the line of the routes.

4.3 Views on the proposed routes south of the River Thames

This section provides a summary of responses to the consultation which address Questions 8a, 8b and 9 on the online and paper response form, as well as unstructured responses via email and letter that relate to the proposed routes south of the Thames.

Question 8a: There are two route options south of the river in Kent – the Western Southern Link and the Eastern Southern Link. Where do you think the route should be located south of the river?

Question 8b: Please provide the reasons for your response to question 8a.

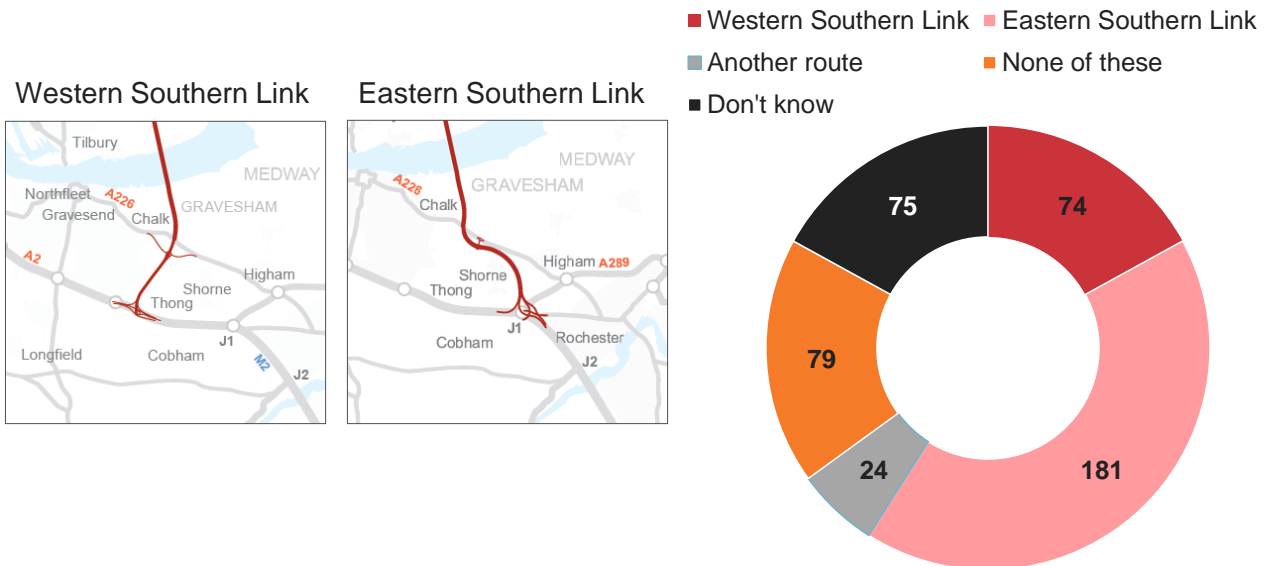
Question 9: Thinking about the two route options south of the river, on balance do you agree or disagree with our proposal for each of these?

4.3.1 Stakeholder organisations

Figure 4.17 and figure 4.18 show the responses given by stakeholder organisations who answered Question 8a on the response form.

Figure 4.17: Question 8a responses from stakeholder organisations

Q. There are two route options south of the river in Kent – the Western Southern Link and the Eastern Southern Link. Where do you think the route should be located south of the river?



Base: 433 organisations who took part through official response form: 26 January – 24 March 2016

Source: Ipsos MORI

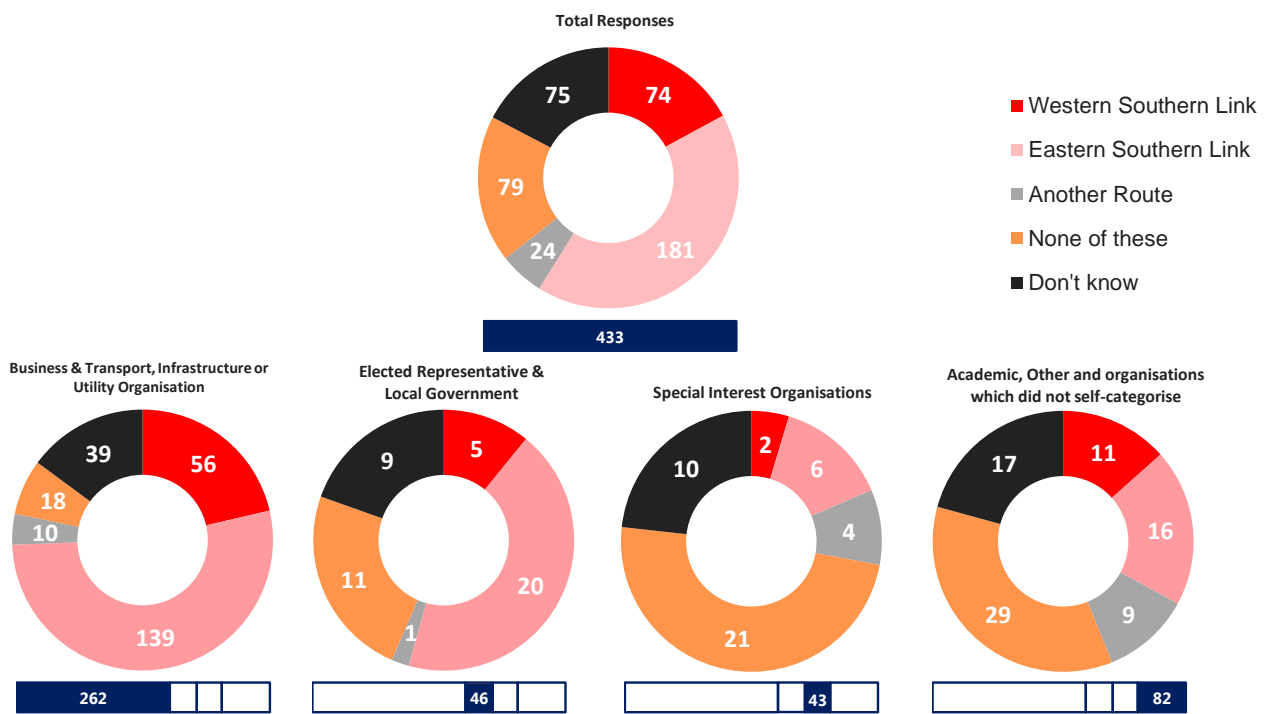
Of the two routes proposed for south of the River Thames, the Eastern Southern Link was significantly more popular with the 433 stakeholder organisations who responded to this question. Around four in ten stakeholder organisations that answered the question (181) state a preference for this link, compared with less than a fifth that favour the Western

Southern Link (74). Another route is favoured by 24 stakeholder organisations, while 79 indicate that they do not support any of the proposed options. A further 75 state that they do not know which is their preference.

Figure 4.18 shows how route preferences vary by organisational type. Business, transport, utility and infrastructure organisations are the most likely to choose at least one of the two proposed options, with over half (139 out of 262) that choose the Eastern Southern Link. Almost half of elected representatives and local councils also prefer the Eastern Southern Link (20 out of 46). On the other hand, special interest groups are less likely to prefer either of the two proposed options (8 out of 43), and half of them choose ‘none of these’ (21).

Figure 4.18: Question 8a responses by organisational type

Q. There are two route options south of the river in Kent – the Western Southern Link and the Eastern Southern Link. Where do you think the route should be located south of the river?



Special interest organisations comprise: Action, Environment, Heritage and Community groups and Statutory Agencies

Base: 433 organisations who took part through the official response form: 26 January – 24 March 2016

Source: Ipsos MORI

Stakeholder organisations provided comments about routes south of the Thames, either in response to **Question 8b**, or in an email or letter.

In summary, stakeholder organisations who discuss the relative merits of the two proposals for routes south of the River Thames generally consider the Eastern Southern Link to be the best proposal for road users. This is because it is a motorway-to-motorway connection and follows a more direct course from Kent, particularly for traffic to and from the Channel ports. It is generally thought that this would do more to draw vehicles away from the Dartford Crossing. The major advantage of the Western Southern link is generally thought to be its lesser impact on the environment, particularly on designated areas such as ancient woodland, SSSIs and AONBs.

Academic organisations

Academic stakeholder organisations which comment on the proposals for a route south of the River Thames state that they do not favour either of the proposed options.

Chalk Village Pre-School raises concerns about the environmental impact of both routes, in particular air pollution near schools. It is concerned about the impact of the proposals on the local road infrastructure and challenges the stated benefits on congestion at the Dartford Crossing.

"This at best is a very short term solution which will simply clog up the already busy A2 and make all the surrounding roads out to the M20 (A227, A228) rat runs for the huge amount of freight traffic coming over to Dover and transporting goods around the UK. It is ludicrous to think the single lane roads from M20 to A2/M2 could cope with this, which will mean more traffic jams, pollution and misery for local people."

Chalk Village Pre-School

Action groups

ABridge2Far opposes both of the proposed options. It challenges the stated benefits of both, and raises concerns such as environmental impact (including impact on green belt, ancient woodland and SSSIs) and poor connectivity with routes to areas such as the Medway towns and the impact on the community of Chalk.

"Both proposed routes for the link road south of the Thames cut off Chalk Church from its community. Both routes are entirely within protected Green Belt and internationally protected RAMSAR marshes."

ABridge2Far

Those which favour the Eastern Southern Link do so on the basis that it is considered to be a more effective link for traffic wishing to travel onto the M2 for the Channel crossings, as well as a suggestion that it would be less attractive to local traffic.

Margate Regeneration favours the Western Southern Link on the basis that it will have lower community and ecological impacts, and cheaper construction costs.

Business organisations

Businesses which support the Eastern Southern Link proposal largely refer to the greater benefits they think it will have for road users compared with the Western Southern Link. On the eastern route, stakeholders believe the key users of the new

crossing would be vehicles en route to Kent, particularly heavy goods vehicles on their way to the Channel ports. The Eastern Southern Link is seen to be more beneficial for these users as it would be a shorter and more direct route between the crossing and the coast. In addition, many participants believe that this connection would be of motorway grade for its whole route, from the M2 to the M25, and would provide the highest quality of road so that drivers could travel at 70 miles per hour continuously. It is suggested that this would achieve better traffic flow, with a greater capacity than the Western Southern Link where drivers would have to transfer onto the A2 prior to joining the M2.

“Tarmac support the proposed Eastern Southern Link as this would provide the most direct connection to the M2 that reflects the main traffic demand from the Channel Ports and Kent towards the national road network and other destinations north of the Thames.”

Tarmac Cement and Lime Ltd

It is also stated that avoiding use of the A2 would alleviate pressure at locations such as Ebbsfleet and Swanscombe.

“The Eastern Southern Link is the preferred south of the river solution. Connecting the existing network (A2/M2) further east is considered advantageous in (a) encouraging southbound traffic heading to East Kent onto the new crossing; and (b) alleviating congestion on the over-burdened A2 junctions around Ebbsfleet/Bean.”

Land Securities

Some of those businesses which state a preference for the Western Southern Link say that most potential users will be en route towards London and the South via the M25 and therefore believe that the Western Southern Link would be the more direct and convenient route for road users. At a more local level, it is also suggested that this link would benefit workers who travel from Gravesend to Tilbury Port.

Several problems with traffic are mentioned, including concerns about the Eastern Southern Link’s poor connectivity with the routes into the Medway towns. It is suggested that the Western Southern Link would provide better access to the Medway area as well as reduce the risk of traffic backlogs.

“The Eastern Southern Link (ESL) precludes direct access to the A2 and A289 for businesses located in the Medway Towns. Access would be via the A226 which would result in much greater traffic volumes travelling through Higham. This arrangement could have a major impact on the strategic road network by effectively cutting off Medway and also by posing an unacceptable risk of overloading the surrounding routes from the M2, M20, A226, A289, A228 and A249. It would also increase the risk of congestion to unacceptable levels through Strood, Chatham and Rochester town centres, all of which are already close to exceeding capacity.”

Kent and Medway Economic Partnership

Others prefer the Western Southern Link due to its lower cost and perceived lesser impact on the environment and local communities, in particular the village of Shorne, and areas of ancient woodland and landscape value.

“Looks like the cheaper option and will not affect the area of Shorne as much.”

BAE Systems

A couple of organisations suggest that, when the benefits of each link for road users are balanced against their respective negative impacts, the Western Southern Link is preferable.

Elected representatives

Bexley Labour Group does not indicate a preference for either route, but states that both link to the A2 which will aid traffic dispersal.

Environment, heritage, amenity or community groups

Comments from this category of stakeholder organisations refer to predominantly environmental, social and heritage impacts that might result from either or both of the proposed southern links.

With regard to the Eastern Southern Link, benefits identified include the direct connection with the M2 and the anticipation that it would keep traffic away from London. One stakeholder organisation states its support for this proposal, as long as tunnelling is used to mitigate the effect on sensitive environments such as woodland.

"We feel that the high speed eastern route is the best alternative to using the Dartford Crossing."

Swanscombe & Greenhithe Residents Association

With regard to the Eastern Southern Link, specific concerns include effects on the environment, in particular on areas of ancient woodland and Shorne Country Park. There is concern about the impact on the setting of the Kent Downs AONB, which they identify as a major reason the area was awarded AONB status. Kent Downs AONB also says it is concerned that the Eastern Southern Link would encroach on the AONB to a greater extent than the Western Link proposal. Kent Wildlife Trust says that, while they support neither route, it considers the Eastern Southern Link to be the more damaging of the two proposals for a number of environmentally important areas (e.g. ancient woodland and SSSI at Great Crabbles Wood).

Concerns are also raised about the loss of productive agricultural land and loss of property in order to construct the Eastern Southern Link. Shorne and Higham in particular are communities that it is suggested could be negatively affected by an increase in traffic. There are also concerns about the loss of amenities such as footpaths and a Sustrans cycle route, and the impact on listed buildings in the area.

The design of the Eastern Southern Link's connection to the existing road network is challenged for not providing a direct connection to the Medway towns via the A289.

With regard to the Western Southern Link, some stakeholder organisations believe it would be less intrusive to the local area. Others state that, while it would have negative impacts, particularly for the environment and local communities, of the two proposals it would be the less harmful.

"On the basis of the data available, the Western Southern link appears to be less damaging for the environment."

RSPB

Concerns about the Western Southern Link include the effect on villages such as Thong, Cobham and Sole Street, and the impact of greater noise, air and light pollution in the area. There is a concern about the impact that realignment of the A2 and slip roads could have, including the potential to increase traffic through Kent Downs AONB.

Some organisations are critical of both proposals, referring collectively to environmental impacts such as damage to ancient woodland, the loss of agricultural land and green belt. There are also concerns about the potential impact on the marine environment along the Thames coastline, which includes protected areas such as Ramsar sites and the North Kent marshes and the invertebrate species found there.

"[Proposals] would fundamentally change the landscape resulting in a loss of existing rural character to the detriment of the local environment."

Kent Downs AONB

These organisations also mention the impact on heritage and the built environment, including the splitting of Chalk Parish Church from the village of Chalk, the routing through and dissection of Southern Valley Golf Course and the proximity of both routes to housing. The National Trust is concerned about the impact of both proposed routes on its properties, although it states that the Western Southern Link would have a slightly less direct impact on them.

Local government organisations

The Eastern Southern Link's provision of a motorway-to-motorway connection between the M25 and the M2 is the most commonly cited advantage of the route over the alternative proposal, the Western Southern Link. It is generally seen as the most direct and fastest route for traffic, particularly heavy goods vehicles, that travel to and from Kent and the Channel crossings in particular. Several suggest that it would be the more 'future-proof' of the proposals, and would provide greater resilience for the network.

"Despite the admitted adverse impacts on the landscape, the only way that a new crossing will encourage a high enough level of use to mitigate the existing impact at Dartford is if it enables a motorway-to-motorway connection."

Stone Parish Council

It is also suggested that it would benefit the A2, particularly around Gravesend, by moving traffic from here further east.

"The Council considers the Eastern Southern Link to be the preferred route. This route provides a better connection to the A2/M2 corridor and has the potential to remove traffic and thus increase capacity/resilience earlier on the A2 than the Western Southern Link."

Maidstone Borough Council

Concerns about the Eastern Southern Link primarily focus on the route's environmental and social impacts. This includes specific sensitive or protected areas such as Kent Downs AONB and Great Crabbles SSSI. There are also concerns about its impact on wildlife and ancient woodland. Kent County Council acknowledges that both proposals would affect ancient woodland, but believes that the Eastern Southern Link's effect would be greater. Others think that the Eastern Southern Link would have a greater effect on built heritage, as it is closer to a greater number of listed buildings.

The design of the Eastern Southern Link proposal raises several concerns. These include suggestions that the layout of Junction 1 of the M2 is already fairly complex and connecting another road at this location might further increase complexity to a point where it compromises its safety. It is also suggested that by connecting a series of key roads at a single point there is an increased risk of incidents at this location, and these would have a knock-on impact on a number

of major routes. Kent County Council believes that a junction on the A2 would be easier to construct. Medway Council is concerned about the lack of connection with routes into the Medway road network.

“The Eastern Southern Link (ESL) would terminate with the M2 at Junction 1. This is already a complex junction and using this will require a fourth level of slip roads on viaducts with piers up to 23m in height. The number of slip roads could result in safety issues owing to its increased complexity. Further, as this would not be a dedicated junction an incident on one part of it could potentially affect the whole junction, with implications for traffic diverting on the local road network. It would not provide sufficient resilience to an incident of this nature.”

Kent County Council

The perceived lesser environmental and community impacts of the Western Southern Link are the most common reasons for this proposal to be favoured. Both Kent and Essex County Councils note a series of benefits, including a smaller effect on the Kent Downs AONB.

Some local authorities located to the west of Gravesend, such as London Borough of Bexley, note that the Western Southern Link would benefit their residents’ with more direct journeys into London or to Surrey and Sussex.

“We believe this would be most beneficial to the residents and businesses of Sevenoaks, West Kent and Surrey”

Sevenoaks District Council

However, many organisations note that the Western Southern Link would still have several effects, in particular on ancient woodland and communities. The effectiveness of this route is also challenged, with concerns particularly about the connection with the A2. It is thought it would make this route a short-term solution that would have a lower capacity and lead to a greater risk of congestion, as well as making the route a less attractive alternative to the Dartford Crossing.

Many local government organisations express concern about effects which they think would result from either route. These include the impact on villages, in particular Chalk, Shorne and Higham, the effect on green belt land and proximity to conservation areas.

Transport, infrastructure or utility organisations

The Eastern Southern Link is seen to have the greatest benefits for road users. These include its motorway-to-motorway connection to the M2 and a more direct alignment for traffic to and from Kent, in particular the Channel crossings. As a result, it is suggested that this route would be faster and have a better flow of traffic than the Western Southern Link.

“The Eastern Southern Link would also allow traffic accessing the new crossing to do so at motorway speeds”

Freight Transport Association

It is also suggested that connecting with the M2 at Junction 1 will divert traffic off the A2, therefore reducing the pressure on that road. However, it is also felt that the proposed junction will be complex in its design.

While the benefits of the Eastern Southern Link are acknowledged, several less favourable aspects, such as cost and environmental impact are noted.

"The easterly link would produce greater benefits. But it would be more expensive."

RAC Foundation

"Up to thirteen ancient woodlands could be destroyed across the whole scheme as well as new woodlands provided to offset previous road schemes."

Campaign for Better Transport

Due to its lesser use of land, the Road Haulage Association indicates that the Western Southern Link would be its preferred route.

"Given that construction of the Western Southern Link requires less land and is predicted to have a lesser environmental impact, the RHA would support the adoption of this route, since the other route does not have significant benefits in terms of efficiency for road hauliers."

The Road Haulage Association

National Grid notes that, while both routes would impact on its gas and electricity transmission assets, it would favour the Eastern Southern Link as this route would have less impact.

Southern Water Services state that they prefer the Western Southern Link as the Eastern Southern Link could affect the Colewood Water Supply Reservoir.

Alternatively, the British International Freight Associations (BIFA) suggests that both routes are constructed. Port of London Authority asks if there would be the potential to improve access for heavy goods vehicles from the Denton Riverside Industrial Zone.

Statutory agencies

Statutory agencies refer to locations where the proposed southern links might have negative impacts.

The Environment Agency mentions ditches and wetland features in Shorne that could be affected.

Historic England is concerned about the proximity of both routes to buildings and settings such as the Church of St Mary, Chalk and conservation areas in Thong and Shorne that could be affected.

Natural England refers to Kent Downs AONB. It states that both routes will affect this location and requests that a full assessment of the impact be undertaken.

"We advise a robust Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) will need to be produced to inform decisions made on the southern route options."

Natural England

Other category of organisation or group

Amongst these stakeholder organisations, a couple state support for the Western Southern Link. One suggests that it might be a more practical option and the other that it could be slightly less disruptive, but that this would only be the case if it were tunnelled.

Specific concerns about the Eastern Southern Link include the impact it is anticipated to have on the environment and local communities.

Others do not specify a preference but talk in general about a range of concerns they have about the proposals. These include effects on areas of environmental importance such as Kent Downs AONB, the Thames Estuary Marshes and ancient woodland, and concerns about the increase in pollution and its associated health impacts as a result of increased traffic. In addition, there are concerns that these proposals would lead to the construction of infill development.

“We also believe that whichever route option is chosen, infill development will be encouraged and facilitated in the area, leading to the eventual complete disappearance of the green space between Medway and Gravesend.”

Medway Green Party

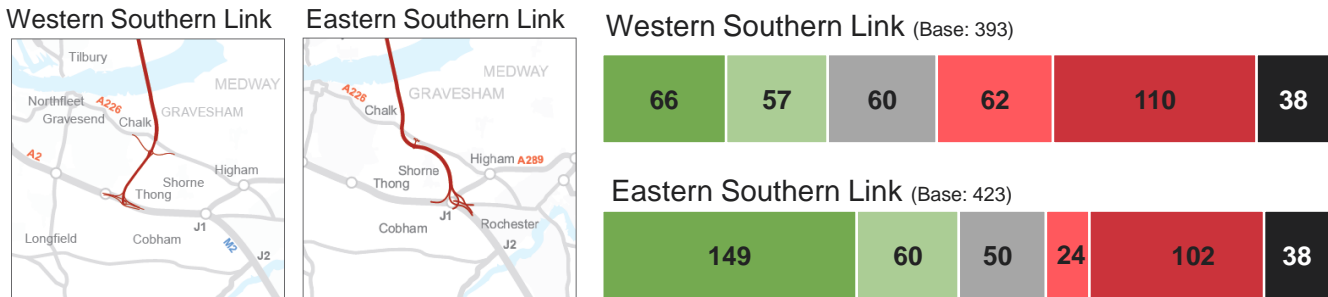
The Diocese of Rochester objects to the route running between the Community of Chalk and its parish church. It argues that Highways England has, to date, only considered the heritage impacts of splitting the church from the village and not the negative social impacts it believes would also result.

There were 393 stakeholder organisations that answered **Question 9a** on the response form (about the Western Southern Link) and 423 that answered **Question 9b** (about the Eastern Southern Link). The question asked participants about their degree of support or opposition to each of the two proposed routes. Figure 4.19 shows the responses given by participants who answered these questions.

Figure 4.19: Question 9 responses from stakeholder organisations

Q. Thinking about the two route options south of the river, on balance do you agree or disagree with our proposal for each of these?

- Strongly agree ■ Tend to agree ■ Neither / nor
- Tend to disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know



Base: Organisations who took part through official response form (variable base size): 26 January – 24 March 2016 Source: Ipsos MORI

Looking at the level of agreement or disagreement for each of the two proposed routes individually:

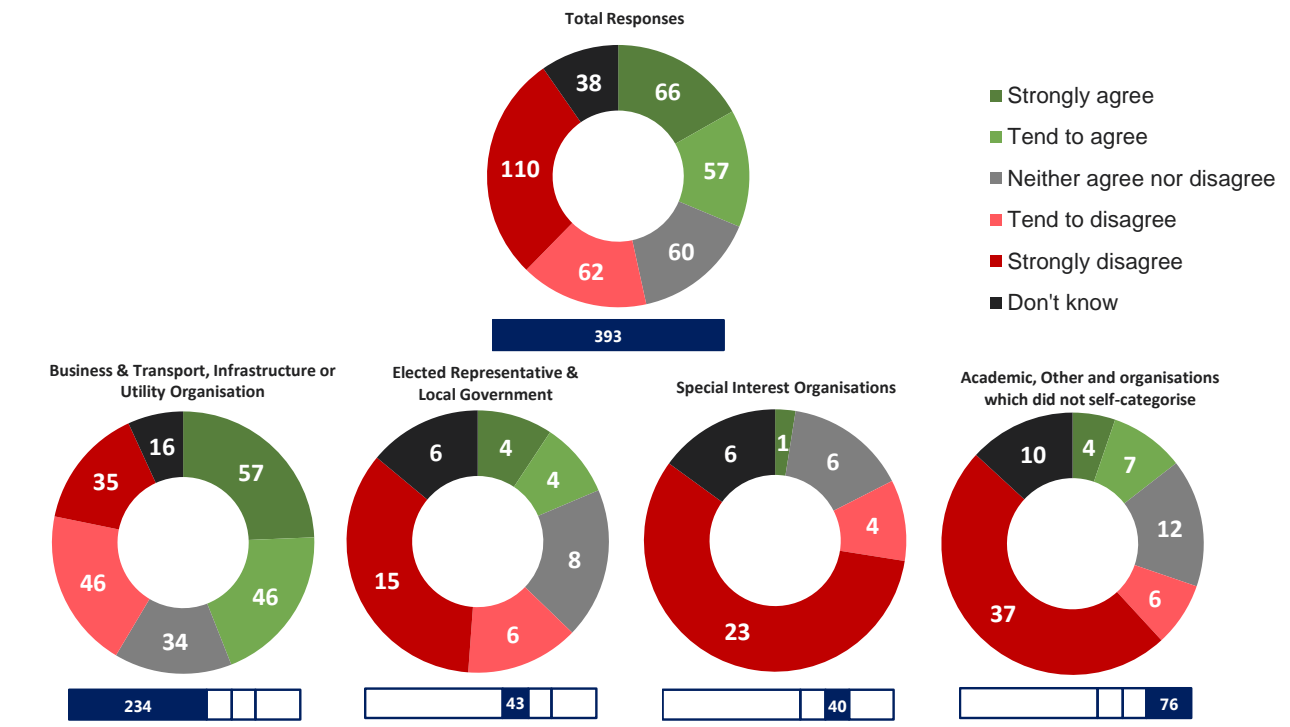
Western Southern Link: More of the 393 stakeholders who respond to this question disagree (172) with the route than agree (123). Of those who agree, strength of agreement is less strong than it is for the Eastern Southern Link, with an almost equal split between those who strongly agree (66) and those who tend to agree (57).

Eastern Southern Link: This is the most popular of the two southern link proposals, just as at Question 8a. Almost half of the 423 stakeholder organisations responding to this question indicate that they either strongly agree (149) or tend to agree (60) with the proposal. Just under a third of stakeholder organisations disagree with the proposal (126), most of which do so strongly (102).

Across the various types of organisations, agreement with the Western Southern Link is strongly concentrated among businesses, transport, utility and infrastructure organisations, of whom almost half (103 out of 234) agree with this option. This compares with one in six of the elected representatives and local councils that answered the question (8 out of 43), one in seven of the academic and ‘other’ organisations (11 out of 76) and only one out of the 40 special interest organisations.

Figure 4.20: Question 9 responses for the Western Southern Link by organisational type

Q. Thinking about the two route options south of the river, on balance do you agree or disagree with our proposal for each of these? **WESTERN SOUTHERN LINK**



Special interest organisations comprise: Action, Environment, Heritage and Community groups and Statutory Agencies

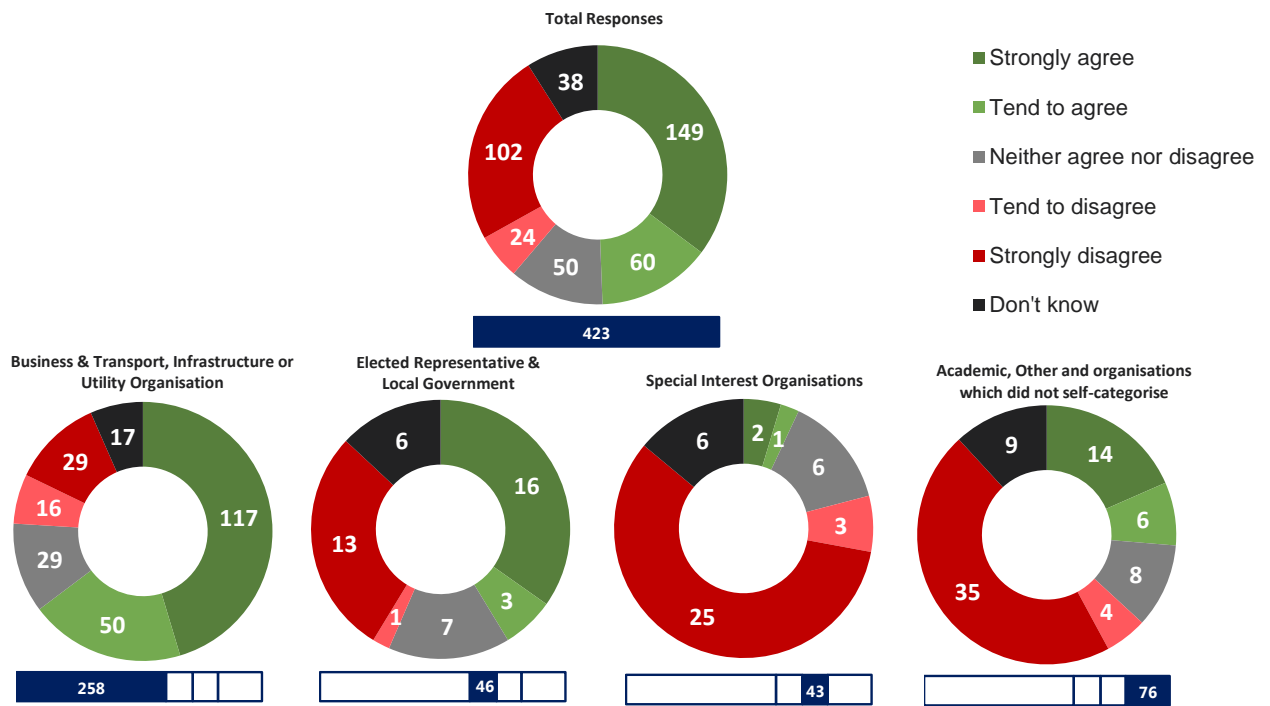
Base: 393 organisations who took part through the official response form: 26 January – 24 March 2016

Source: Ipsos MORI

For the Eastern Southern Link, support is again greatest among the businesses, transport, utility and infrastructure organisations. Two in three of them agree with this option (167 out of 258). On the other hand, less than half of elected representatives and local councils agree with this option (19 out of 46) and one in four academic and ‘other’ organisations (20 out of 76). Among the 43 special organisations that answered the question, only three agree with the Eastern Southern Link – over half (25) strongly disagree.

Figure 4.21: Question 9 responses for the Eastern Southern Link by organisational type

Q. Thinking about the two route options south of the river, on balance do you agree or disagree with our proposal for each of these? **EASTERN SOUTHERN LINK**



Special interest organisations comprise: Action, Environment, Heritage and Community groups and Statutory Agencies

Base: 423 organisations who took part through the official response form: 26 January – 24 March 2016

Source: Ipsos MORI

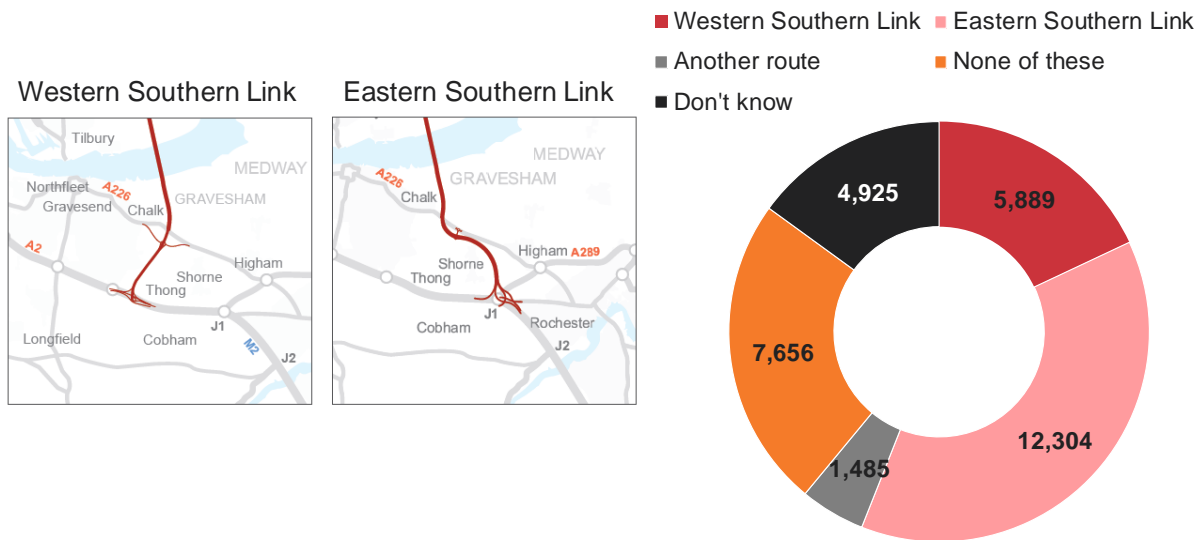
4.3.2 Members of the public

Response form

There were 32,259 members of the public who answered Question 8a on the response form. The question asked which of the two proposed routes south of the Thames participants preferred. Figure 4.22 shows the responses given by those who answered the question.

Figure 4.22: Question 8a responses from members of the public

Q. There are two route options south of the river in Kent – the Western Southern Link and the Eastern Southern Link. Where do you think the route should be located south of the river?



Base: 32,259 participants who took part through official response form: 26 January – 24 March 2016

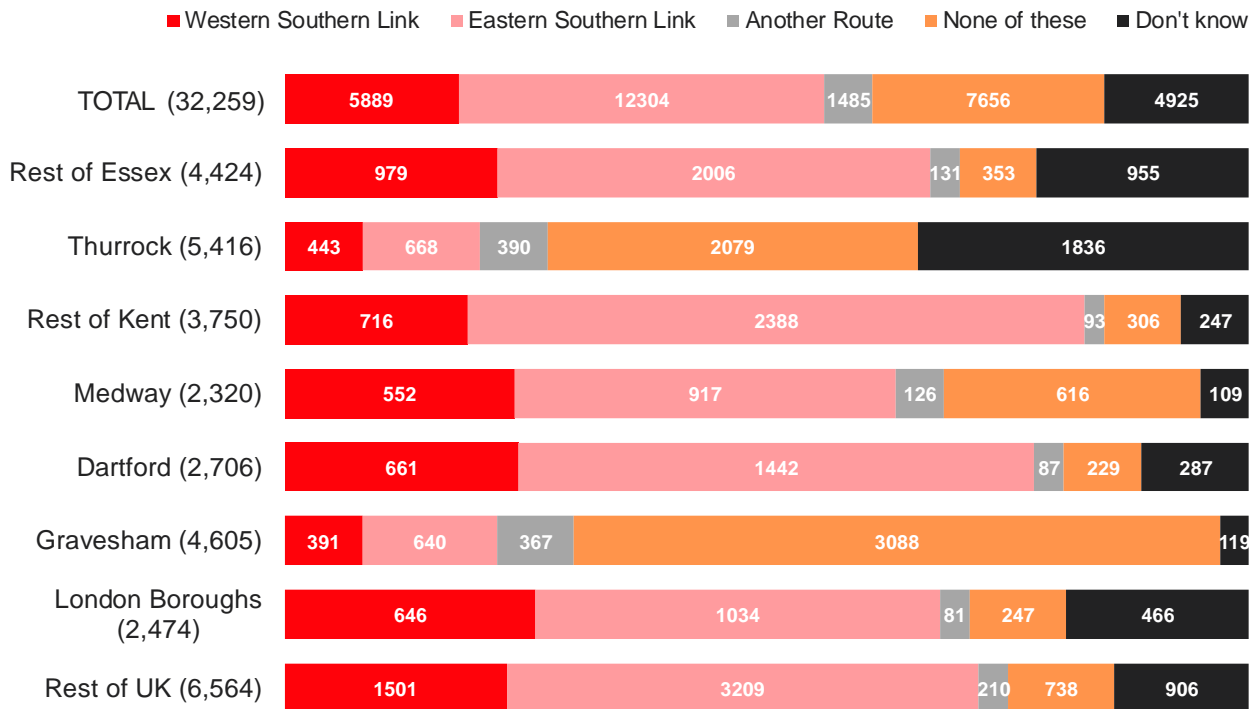
Source: Ipsos MORI

More than one in three of those who responded to the question (12,304) selected the Eastern Southern Link option, compared with only one in six (5,889) who selected the Western Southern Link option as the location for the route south of the River Thames. Fewer participants (1,485) would like another route to be used south of the Thames. However, 7,656 participants want none of the routes, and a further 4,925 participants 'don't know'.

As with routes north of the Thames, opposition to routes south of the Thames is greatest in areas most affected by the proposals. Two in three participants in Gravesham want none of the southern routes (3,088 out of 4,605 participants). Participants in Thurrock are also more likely than in other areas to want none of the proposed routes south of the Thames (2,079 out of 5,416 participants in Thurrock don't want any of the routes).

Figure 4.23: Question 8a responses from members of the public by local authority area

Q. There are two route options south of the river in Kent – the Western Southern Link and the Eastern Southern Link. Where do you think the route should be located south of the river?



Base: 32,259 participants who took part through the official response form: 26 January – 24 March 2016

Source: Ipsos MORI

When responses to Question 8a are analysed according to attitudes to other parts of the route, the great majority of those who choose Highways England’s proposed scheme, the Eastern Southern Link, also agree with Location C and with the whole proposed route. To a lesser extent, most of those who prefer the Western Southern Link also agree with Location C and the whole route.

Of those who prefer another route south of the Thames or who want no route at all there, the majority generally disagree with Location C, and are more likely to be negative than positive about the overall proposals. For example, while 217 participants who selected none of the proposed southern links agree with the overall scheme, 7,288 participants who do not want any southern link disagree with the overall scheme.

Table 4.3: Question 8a responses analysed by attitudes towards other route options

	Western Southern Link	Eastern Southern Link	Another route	None of these	Don't know
Total: 32,259	5,889	12,304	1,485	7,656	4,925
Location C:					
Agree (19,433)	4,863	11,327	359	295	2,589
Neither agree nor disagree (980)	236	281	52	55	356
Disagree (11,654)	770	643	1,063	7,278	1,900
Route north of the Thames:					
Route 2 (1,830)	697	760	36	62	275
Route 3 (10,500)	2,876	6,204	212	188	1,020
Route 4 (6,476)	1,362	3,801	130	102	1,081
Another route (1,667)	106	204	482	489	386
None (7,823)	178	150	379	6,131	985
Whole route (Location C, Route 3, Eastern Southern Link)					
Agree (16,327)	3,499	10,325	273	217	2,013
Neither agree nor disagree (1,583)	516	520	77	67	403
Disagree (13,620)	1,773	1,357	1,100	7,288	2,102

There were 20,175 members of the public who provided comments in response to **Question 8b** on the response form in support of the answer they provided for Question 8a.

The most frequent is a statement in support of the Eastern Southern Link (7,826 participants), followed by a comment in support of the Western Southern Link (3,672 participants) and support for Location A as the site of the Thames crossing (981 participants). The greater number who comment favourably about the eastern route option reflects the overall balance of opinion at Question 9a, where agreement with the eastern route is significantly greater than for the western option.

The most common type of negative comments at Question 8b are statements of opposition to the Southern Link proposals in general (2,587 participants). This is followed by opposition to the Western Southern Link (1,149 participants) and to the Eastern Southern Link (1,021 participants). There are a further 805 participants who say something in opposition to the proposed crossing at Location C, and 601 who comment against the proposed scheme as a whole.

The most common type alternative put forward at Question 8b is a suggested alternative for the Southern Link as a whole (454 participants). This is followed by an alternative location for the crossing of the Thames (361 participants) and an alternative option for the Eastern Southern Link (355 participants).

The following section looks at the comments made at **Question 8b** in greater depth:

Eastern Southern Link

A total of 8,573 participants made comments about the Eastern Southern Link. The great majority of these make a positive comment about it (7,826 compared with 1,021 who make a negative comment about it).

By far the main reasons given in favour of the Eastern Southern Link are the improvements participants think it would make to access to destinations and freedom of travel (5,551). Particular reference is made to improved access to the Channel ports, better connections between motorways and how the Eastern Southern Link is the shortest of the two routes south of the Thames.

"I would have thought that an Eastern Southern Link would enable a shorter/lower cost connection between the M20 and M2 near the A229. This would best serve Continental traffic and residents of East Kent."

Member of the public

Improved flow of traffic is the second most common set of reasons for supporting the Eastern Southern Link, with 1,850 participants who comment about the reduced congestion they think the route would produce, particularly on the A2, at the Dartford Crossing or on roads to and from the Channel ports.

"This is the preferred option I believe and makes sense with the direct connection to the M2. Transport that hitherto had to make its way to Dartford would swing off at this junction and relieve the pressure further up on the A2."

Member of the public

Of the other reasons for supporting the Eastern Southern Link, the most common is anticipated benefits for communities and individual people (648 participants). Those who make these comments are most likely to say the route would benefit

them personally and would have the least effect on developed residential areas. Other reasons for supporting the eastern route include the limited effect participants think it would have on the environment (261 participants) and anticipated economic benefits from the route (289 participants).

The main reason for opposing the Eastern Southern Link is its anticipated effect on the environment (501 participants), with particular mention of damage to protected natural areas, followed by green spaces and landscapes in general.

“East Southern Link – destroys SSSIs and woodland, cuts the village of Shorne in half... A crazy option in my opinion. We should be supporting our communities and the wildlife, not destroying it.”

Member of the public

Other reasons for opposition include the negative effect of the Eastern Southern Link on communities and individuals (280 participants), most often the village of Shorne. There are also 224 who say the Eastern Southern Link would do nothing to improve congestion or would actually make it worse, with the Dartford Crossing and Junction 1 of the M2 being the specific places named most often here.

“The junction between the A2 and M2 is already horrible and the Eastern Southern Link would just make this more complex.”

Member of the public

Western Southern Link

A total of 4,749 participants made comments about the Western Southern Link. Again, most of these participants say something positive about it (3,672 compared with 1,149 participants who make a negative comment about it).

The Western Southern Link is supported most often for environmental reasons (1,428 participants). The environmental benefits mentioned most often are that this route would have less effect on protected natural areas and on the countryside and landscape in general.

“Due to the area of natural beauty which will be disturbed using the eastern link, I would prefer to see the western link option.”

Member of the public

Similar numbers of participants (1,162) support the Western Southern Link because they think it would improve access to destinations and freedom of travel. Particular advantages they perceive are improved access to the M25 and the Western Southern Link being shorter than the eastern route.

“The Western route is a shorter link for access to the M25, the main purpose, as I understand, for the existing Dartford crossing. The eastern link on the other hand, would unnecessarily increase M25 traffic approaching the M2 and links with the channel crossing.”

Member of the public

Of the other reasons for supporting the Western Southern Link, the most common is the benefits for communities and individuals (770). Most often, these participants say that the western route would have least effect on developed residential areas, and specific places such as Shorne. However, some others anticipate benefits for themselves from the Western Southern Link.

“This route would run alongside the town of Gravesend and would not cut through the two rural villages of Higham and Shorne. This route would seem to disrupt fewer households provided suitable shielding was provided for Shorne West, Riverview Park and Southern Valley Golf Club.”

Member of the public

“Less impact on Kent Downs and further away from my house.”

Member of the public

Those who comment against the Western Southern Link are most likely to say it would either not reduce congestion or would actually make it worse (471 participants), with the A2 the most common specified location for this.

“Western Link will have an increase of traffic going London Bound on the A2. The Eastern Link will allow an easier flow of traffic.”

Member of the public

Other comments made against the Western Southern Link include arguments that it would not improve connections to other destinations or would be the slower route because of speed restrictions (283 participants). A further 149 participants say that it would have bad environmental consequences such as for local air quality and 135 add that it would not be beneficial for communities or for individual people.

“The western link is far too close to houses - the pollution would be terrible for the majority living there. The western link would take away Ashenbank woodland which would be terrible as its already lost far too much and it's an area of special scientific interest.”

Member of the public

General comments on routes south of the Thames

One in six participants to Question 8b (3,734) also make a general comment about having a link south of the Thames. The balance of these comments is generally critical, with 2,587 who make a statement against the proposed routes and only 500 who are supportive of them.

The impact on the environment is the most common single reason for being against the routes south of the Thames (1,206 participants), with frequent mention of potential damage to protected natural areas and the countryside in general as well negative effects on wildlife and local air quality.

“Both of these links go through green belt land most notably Shorne Country Park which is just sacrilege and destroys peaceful communities as well as providing a larger area for a traffic jam when there is a problem at a crossing.”

Member of the public

“This area is covered by a lot of countryside woodland and wildlife. It will be totally devastating to all that live or have lived here and who also enjoy peaceful walks or dog walking.”

Member of the public

In addition, there are 838 participants are critical of the proposed routes because of the anticipated effect on communities or individual people. A similar number (759) comment negatively about the impact of the routes on local levels of congestion, and there is a marked overlap between these comments with many who argue the routes would increase congestion in residential areas and undermine the local quality of life.

“These options do not solve the problems at Dartford. It only creates new problems for the local residents. The local roads around Gravesend and Shorne cannot cope with more traffic. Ancient woodland and areas of outstanding natural beauty will be destroyed. Communities will be cut in two with Chalk Church parishioners isolated from the church. The children at Shorne School will directly be impacted in terms of health and pollution and noise, which does not create a suitable learning environment.”

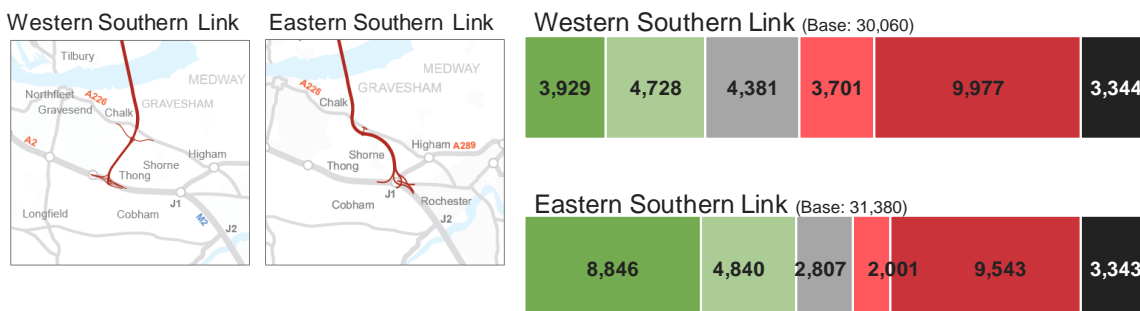
Member of the public

There were 30,060 members of the public who answered **Question 9a** on the response form (about the Western Southern Link) and 31,380 who answered **Question 9b** (about the Eastern Southern Link). The question asked participants about their degree of support or opposition to each of the two proposed routes. Figure 4.24 shows the responses given by those who answered these questions.

Figure 4.24: Question 9 responses from members of the public

Q. Thinking about the two route options south of the river, on balance do you agree or disagree with our proposal for each of these?

■ Strongly agree ■ Tend to agree ■ Neither / nor
■ Tend to disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know



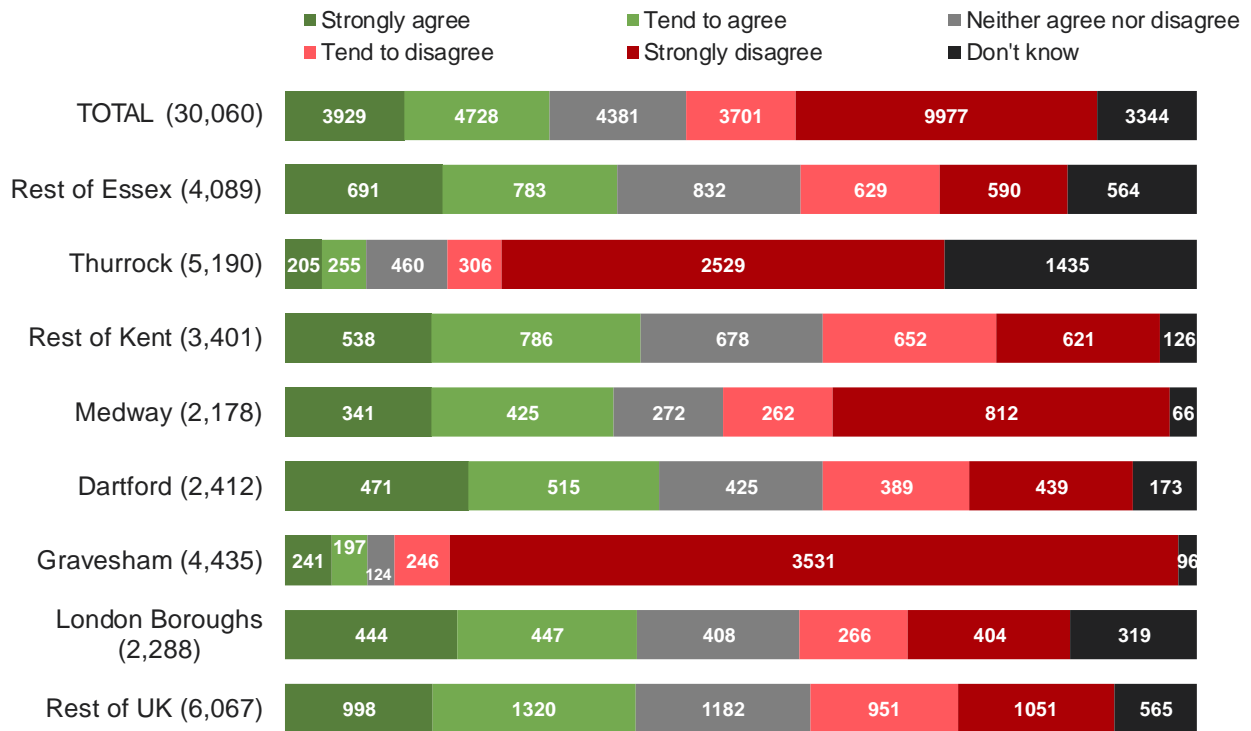
Base: participants who took part through official response form (variable base size): 26 January – 24 March 2016 Source: Ipsos MORI

In line with responses to Question 8a, there is most support for the eastern route south of the Thames, although there are also many who are opposed to it. More than two in five of those who responded to this question agree with the Eastern Southern Link (13,686), compared to more than one in three (11,544) who disagree with it. There is more opposition to the Western Southern Link, with almost half (13,678) who disagree with it, compared with 8,657 who agree with it.

Across local authority areas, there is strong opposition to the Western Southern Link in Gravesham, where four in five disagree strongly with it (3,531 out of 4,435 participants). This is followed by Thurrock, where just over half disagree with this option (2,835 out of 5,190 participants), and Medway, where half of participants also disagree with this route option (1,074 out of 2,178). Across other parts of Kent and Essex, London and the rest of the UK, attitudes are evenly balanced between those who agree and disagree with the Western Southern Link.

Figure 4.25: Question 9 responses for the Western Southern Link from members of the public by area

Q. Thinking about the two route options south of the river, on balance do you agree or disagree with our proposal for each of these? **WESTERN SOUTHERN LINK**



Base: 30,060 participants who took part through the official response form: 26 January – 24 March 2016

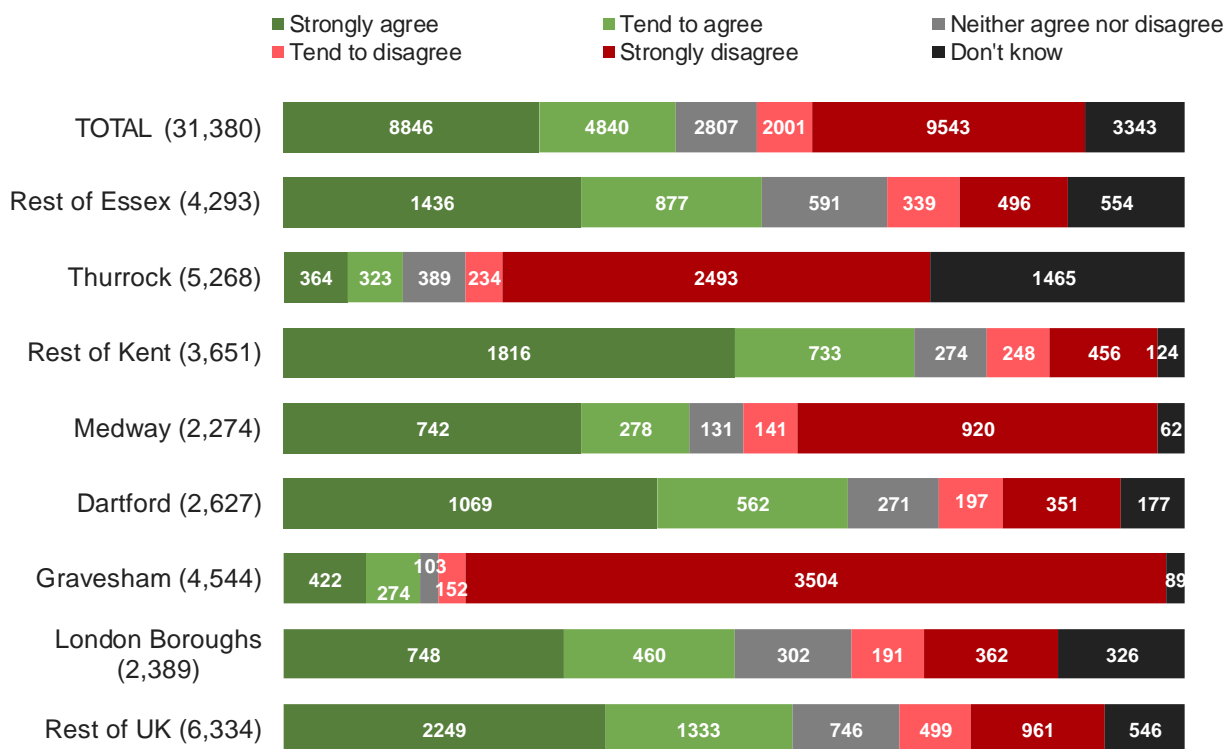
Source: Ipsos MORI

The pattern is similar for attitudes towards the Eastern Southern Link. Four in five participants in Gravesham are in disagreement with this route option (3,656 out of 4,544), as are just over half of those in Thurrock (2,727 out of 5,268) and half of those in Medway (1,061 out of 2,274).

Attitudes are more positive in parts of Kent outside of Gravesham and Medway. For example, three in five of those in Dartford agree with the Eastern Southern Link (1,631 out of 2,627). Across the remaining parts of Kent, the balance of opinion is even more favourable, with seven in ten who agree with this link option (2,549 out of 3,651).

Figure 4.26: Question 9 responses for the Eastern Southern Link from members of the public by area

Q. Thinking about the two route options south of the river, on balance do you agree or disagree with our proposal for each of these? **EASTERN SOUTHERN LINK**



Base: 31,380 participants who took part through the official response form: 26 January – 24 March 2016

Source: Ipsos MORI

Responses by email and post

In addition to comments made through the response form, there are 40 members of the public who commented on the Eastern Southern Link, either by email or post. Only nine participants make a supportive comment, compared with 32 who are opposed to this route south of the Thames. There are 29 members of the public who comment on the Western Southern Link, with a more even balance between those who make supportive comments about this route (16) and those who say something critical about it (18).

4.4 Views on the proposed scheme

This section provides a summary of responses to the consultation which address Questions 10a and 10b on the online and paper response form, as well as unstructured responses via email and letter that make reference to issues relating to Highways England’s proposed scheme – the preferred combination of a crossing at Location C, Route 3 north of the Thames and the Eastern Southern Link south of the Thames.

Question 10a: Having evaluated the options, our proposed scheme is a new bored tunnel road crossing at Location C, following Route 3 north of the river and the Eastern Southern Link south of the river. On balance, do you agree or disagree with our proposed scheme?

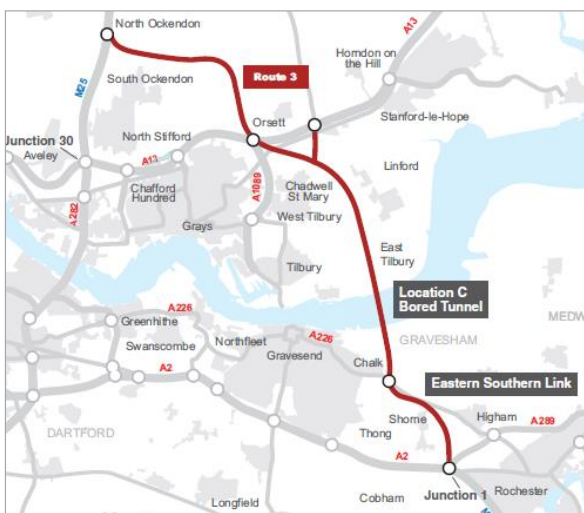
Question 10b: Please provide the reasons for your response to question 10.

4.4.1 Stakeholder organisations

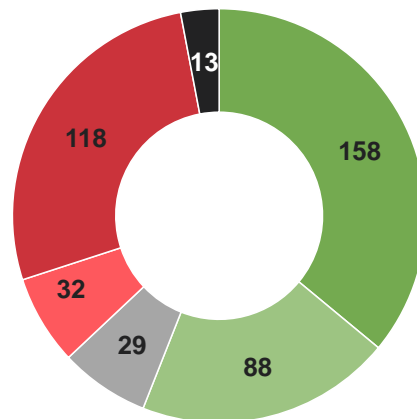
Figure 4.27 shows the responses given by stakeholder organisations which answered Question 10a on the response form.

Figure 4.27: Question 10a responses from stakeholder organisations

Q. Having evaluated the options, our proposed scheme is a new bored tunnel road crossing at Location C, following Route 3 north of the river and the Eastern Southern Link south of the river. On balance, do you agree or disagree with our proposed scheme?



- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know



Base: 438 organisations who took part through official response form: 26 January – 24 March 2016

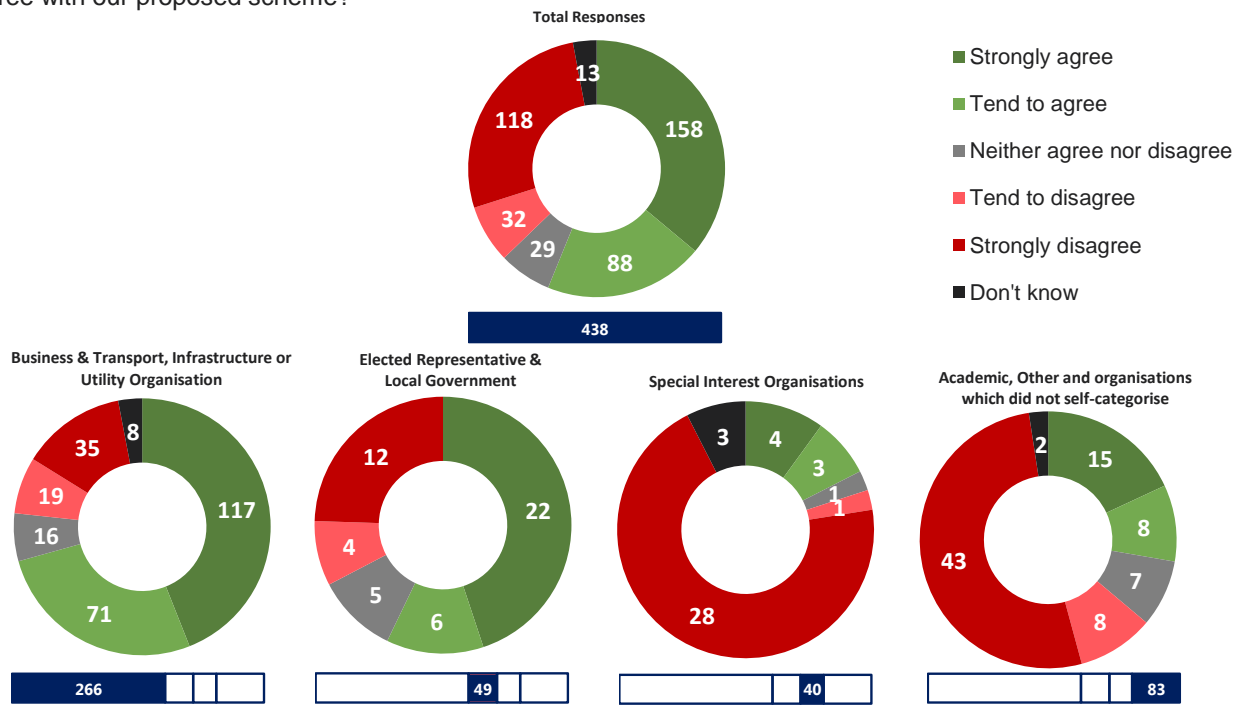
Source: Ipsos MORI

Of the 438 stakeholder organisations that responded to this question, over half (246) agree with the proposed scheme. Of those who agree, the majority strongly agree (158) compared with 88 who indicate that they tend to agree. Just over a third of stakeholder organisations (150) disagree with the proposed scheme, amongst which strength of feeling is strong, with 118 strongly disagreeing, compared with the 32 that tend to disagree.

Across organisational type, it is businesses, transport, utility and infrastructure organisations that most strongly support the proposed scheme as a whole, with seven in ten who agree with it (188 out of 266). Just over half of elected representatives and local councils also agree with it (28 out of 49). In contrast, only one in four academic and ‘other’ organisations agree (23 out of 83) and most disagree (51). Among special interest organisations, the majority disagree with the proposed scheme (29 out of 40).

Figure 4.28: Question 10a responses by organisational type

Q. Having evaluated the options, our proposed scheme is a new bored tunnel road crossing at Location C, following Route 3 north of the river and the Eastern Southern Link south of the river. On balance, do you agree or disagree with our proposed scheme?



Special interest organisations comprise: Action, Environment, Heritage and Community groups and Statutory Agencies

Base: 438 organisations who took part through the official response form: 26 January – 24 March 2016

Source: Ipsos MORI

Stakeholder organisations provided comments about the proposed scheme, either in response to Question 10b, or in an email or letter.

Academic organisations

Of a small number of schools and nurseries which made comments about the proposed scheme, all of these organisations disagree with the proposals, with most saying they strongly disagree. A key reason for such opposition is perceived negative impact on children’s health and wellbeing, as a consequence of increased pollution caused by an increased volume of traffic.

"There can be no doubt that the road would cause harm to the health of the children and the local community."

Shorne Church of England Primary School

"...we are against this on grounds of the pollution it will bring to the children attending our preschool and the adverse impact on local roads and green space."

Chalk Village Pre-School

Benyon Primary School stated that they and the vast majority of their pupils were opposed to Location C for several reasons, including increased pollution; loss of animal habitats; destruction of farmland; that increased traffic noise would affect concentration levels at school; and that it would be unfair as some people would be forced to leave their homes, and as such, some children may be forced to move school.

Willow Garden Day Nursery is concerned that Route 3 (if it goes ahead) would negatively affect their whole operations, and for a number of reasons (including noise, pollution, traffic congestion and damage to the local natural environment) it strongly disagrees with the proposals.

Action groups

Of the four action groups that made comments about the proposed scheme, two strongly agree (Motorcycle Action Group and Alliance of British Drivers) and two strongly disagree (ABridge2Far and Groc and Groll).

Motorcycle Action Group said they are supportive of the scheme as it is a "logical balance of the technical and traffic factors". Alliance of British Drivers said that while it did agree strongly, it suggested that three lanes should be built each way from the onset for future-proofing purposes; that southern junction links should take into account traffic implications of building Ebbsfleet Garden City and Paramount Theme Park; and that environmental impact might be mitigated by some further tunnelling.

Groc and Groll believes that a tunnel would be too restrictive to cater for increased traffic in future, and that only a bridge would solve congestion problems.

"Past experience shows that a tunnel is a really bad idea as it will be impossible to cater for more lanes when it becomes too congested for purpose. Within a short space of time a repeat of the debacle at the Dartford Crossing will be in evidence as another bridge will be the only way to expand this crossing point."

Groc and Groll

ABridge2Far says that the proposals would just create a new set of traffic problems east of Gravesend, and that traffic problems would be back to existing levels at Dartford within 1-2 years of a crossing at Location C opening as "little if any traffic would choose to make a lengthy detour east of Gravesend". The organisation also suggested that Highways England was narrowly focussed on an alternative route for freight transport to get to and from channel ports, and that a claim that "motorway to motorway" was false as A roads would also be needed. It also cast doubts over the quoted costs of the scheme.

"As far as we are aware, damage to the ecology and the natural environment are not monetised, nor are the very real costs associated with dealing with health issues resulting from pollution and poor air quality."

ABridge2Far

Business organisations

A majority of the businesses that provide comments on the proposed scheme agree with what is being proposed.

Agree with the proposals / positive comments

Some of the businesses that agree with the proposed scheme mention that a new crossing is needed as soon as possible, and/or that it would be the best route option. Businesses that said this included Erith Group, Longerlife Posts Ltd, Pandor Ltd, Streamadvice Ltd, and the White Cliffs of Dover Hotel and Guest House Group.

Other businesses provide more detailed reasons as to why they agree with the proposals, and include that traffic congestion issues would be eased through increased capacity, and that current congestion at the existing Dartford Crossing would in some way be alleviated.

"The proposed scheme will deliver the required capacity onto the network, alleviate congestion north and south of the Thames and encourage traffic bound for east Kent to divert away from Dartford. The proposed scheme is, in our view, by far the best solution."

Land Securities

A number of businesses advocate improved journey times and overall improved journey experience as a result of the proposals. This included that Route 3 would provide the shortest route north of the Thames, and that it would reduce traffic flows and congestion on the A127, which according to St Modwen is an important gateway and corridor for housing and employment growth as identified in Brentwood and Basildon Draft Local Plans. Others highlighted that having a higher speed limit throughout giving a motorway to motorway link would be positive and save motorists time on long journeys. Others were of the view that there would be increased connectivity as a result of the proposals.

"It provides fast and effective connections between Basildon and Kent and all the other areas south of the Thames, including the channel tunnel."

Basildon Golf Course

A range of businesses and business federations agree with the proposals because of economic benefits they believe would result from the proposals. For Dover Business Forum, the proposals would support business growth and investment. Savills expects that the route would create a wider range of regeneration opportunities in north Kent. KTI Energy Limited say that the proposals will provide a strong economic link between Essex and Kent. ESE Electrical Ltd provide comments that echo the view of a number of other businesses in that there would be economic benefits to businesses by a reduction in congestion.

"I run a small business and live in Dartford on the bridge estate right next to the bridge and the traffic is terrible. My business really suffers we can only get off the estate at certain times so any crossing away from Dartford can't be built quick enough in my opinion."

ESE Electrical Ltd

“Businesses based in Swale will find it increasingly difficult to access opportunities in the Midlands and the North through the current Dartford crossing.... A new crossing is needed and of all the options, option C is in our view the most direct route and creates the best opportunities for the growth of business in north Kent.”

Swale Economy and Regeneration Partnership

A few business organisations, including Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, and The Chatham Archive mention that the proposal would have least environmental impact on the environment and local landscape.

A small number of businesses also mentioned that a tunnel would be more resilient than a bridge and least likely to be impacted by high winds, thus having less impact on their business operations.

“...a tunnel under the Thames is a far more resilient means of crossing than a bridge over the Thames, as a bridge will be closed to traffic in high winds - something which creates significant disruption to our operations when it occurs”.

BP Oil

A few businesses also agree with the proposal as they agree with Highways England that Location A would not be viable. NLP Planning on behalf of Roxhill Developments Ltd agree with Highways England's conclusions that Option A is not viable. Their view is that it would just increase traffic flows along the existing corridor and a single incident could close the entire crossing. Option A could increase local congestion, and the 6-year construction phase would be disruptive. Option C would redistribute traffic flows to a wider area; and would also create an important road link to regenerate areas further to the east.

A small number of businesses mentioned that they were in support of Route 3, as other proposed routes could have a negative impact or consequence for their own businesses. This included Tarmac Building Products who are concerned that if Route 4 was the preferred option, it would pass near their Linford block production site, and as such, they would want to discuss the route location in detail. But as Route 3 was the preferred option, this would not impact negatively on their businesses.

Disagree with the proposed scheme / negative comments

A number of businesses disagree with the proposed scheme and put forward reasons for this. These reasons include that it would be too expensive, that the proposals, in their opinion will not reduce traffic congestion; that a crossing should be further east; that homes, businesses and livelihoods will be destroyed, and that other routes (particularly Route 4) would be better. A few businesses also cite health and environmental consequences for local people and local habitats.

Several business think that the proposals are too expensive, and that cheaper alternatives should be considered. Others suggest that if the proposal is to be economically viable, the crossing should be three lanes each way, as opposed to two lanes each way. B2B Events Ltd said that the crossing should be a three lane carriage way to start with, which would be more cost effective in the long run. Nigel Barrett Photography suggests that the cost of the proposed scheme would be better spent elsewhere, with a cheaper and more immediate solution to improve the existing crossing at Dartford. Premier Work Support believes that at a cost of £5.9 billion, this would not be money well spent, and that it would not help the workers of Dartford who sit in traffic every day. It went on to say that the problem needs to be addressed now and not in

2025 or 2027, and made a suggestion that freight could be taken to the deep sea port at Essex to reduce congestion on roads from Dover.

“What about the millions already spent on the deep sea container port at Essex, why can’t freight be taken there, thus alleviating the congestion on the roads from Dover? Shame on the Government this is only about economic growth and their key stakeholders only.”

Premier Work Support

Some of the businesses that are negative about the proposed scheme are negative as they do not believe the scheme will address problems with congestion, and in some cases think that the proposals will make things worse in the wider area. This was the view of RMS Ltd, and echoed by SeeMe Group Ltd who believe that it will not reduce traffic on the A12, A13, or A127, but that it is likely to become worse as a result of the proposals. Long Rake Spar Ltd was also negative about congestion, and was concerned that there is insufficient infrastructure in place in Kent to link the M2 and M20, and that both the A249 and A229 are congested at peak periods, meaning that drivers travelling to and from the M20 would be likely to continue to use the crossing at Dartford for fear of delays on link roads.

“Route 3 is too far westward and the Eastern Southern Link is too close to the Medway towns which will cause congestion in that area.”

Easton Farr Accountants

A small number of businesses say they prefer Route 4. This includes Big Red Branding Ltd as it believes the route would be quicker from east Kent – Innovomantex Ltd is also supportive of Route 4 over Route 3. Foursquare mentions that while it strongly agrees with the Eastern Southern Link, Route 4 would be better as it would help avoid busier sections of the M25, and could (at a later date) be possibly extended across to the M11, to further reduce pressure on the M25. Regeneration X also prefers Route 4, suggesting that the connection should be further north on the M25 and be a two-way junction going north and south.

Some businesses are concerned about the direct impact of the proposed scheme on their own business and livelihood. Churchgate Construction Ltd says that the proposed scheme would mean that 24 new homes they have built and sold would have to be destroyed. The organisation suggested that the route should be moved further east to avoid their development, and advocate Route 4. Select Estates says that Location C will devastate their business, and as such, it strongly disagrees with the proposed scheme.

C.H. Cole & Sons strongly disagree with the proposed scheme, suggesting that while all of the routes would be devastating to their farming businesses, Routes 3 and 4 would be most devastating as they would directly impact farm employees, their homes, and their quality of life. The National Farmers’ Union (NFU) had serious concerns in particular that Location C could lead to further urbanisation and development pressure, which would indirectly impact on the important rural economy. It suggested that the consultation may have overlooked significant improvements that could be made at Dartford through improved management of oversized vehicles, and the upgrading of existing infrastructure at Dartford. FSB Kent and Medway (based on a survey of its members) has concerns about the proposed scheme as it believes that congestion would negatively affect businesses in north Kent.

"Should Operation Stack be implemented on consecutive days... businesses are concerned that a lack of additional road improvements around north Kent would negatively affect their trading and overall business performance."

FSB Kent and Medway

Some businesses raised concerns about the environmental impact of the proposal scheme, and for this reason, strongly disagree with what is being proposed.

"By allowing this development it will encourage further development destroying the only area of Kent which retains its natural beauty next to the Thames. The CGI diagrams provided by Highways England are a false misrepresentation of what the actual scheme will bring. It will be visually intrusive and severe Shorne village in half, cut off Chalk from its ancient Church - the diagrams and CGIs presented misrepresented this impact."

Saarke - Professional Business Solutions

"Thurrock area is so polluted (fails limits so often). As a heating company I am trying to tell people about being green, saving energy...but if they go outside they have trouble breathing...it makes a mockery of all the work being done to make people healthy".

Terry Taylor Plumbing & Heating

Cladding UK Ltd, and Medway Security Wholesale Ltd were among businesses that disagree with the proposed scheme, suggesting that Location C is not far enough away from the current crossing at Dartford to make any significant positive impact or difference. These businesses suggested that the crossing should be further east of where it is proposed in order to alleviate congestion issues.

"Option C is too close to the existing crossing and any route to it will mean severe upheaval to residents, landscape, environment and wildlife. I do not believe this option will solve the congestion problems at Dartford...When there is an incident at either crossing, Thurrock will become gridlocked (as it already does with one crossing!) as more traffic will have no option but to try to find alternative routes..."

Cladding UK Ltd

Suggestions from businesses

A number of businesses and business representatives also made other comments and suggestions about the proposed scheme. A key comment is that Highways England should future-proof the development by including three lanes in either direction at the tunnel, rather than two lanes each way. Businesses that suggested this included Armac Shipping Services Ltd, and Thames Gateway Kent Partnership. Thames Gateway Kent Partnership also suggested that Highways England work closely with a number of organisations to ensure that there is a detailed understanding of the impact of final proposals on a number of businesses.

"An investment such as the new Crossing is a once-in-several-generations scheme and it would clearly be a false economy to create an infrastructure asset that would not be fit for purpose within 15 or fewer years of opening. We would strongly urge Highways England to work closely with London Resort Company Holdings, Ebbsfleet Development Corporation and other stakeholders to ensure that a comprehensive understanding of the likely

highways impacts of LPER and Ebbsfleet Garden City is factored into the final proposals for the Crossing and associated network improvements."

Thames Gateway Kent Partnership

Some businesses suggest that given the impact of the proposed scheme, there should be some benefits for local communities. Thames Gateway South Essex believes that the local community must have access to the crossing by way of local road connectivity; and that local residents should be given cost reductions for using the crossing. The organisation also mentions future-proofing to allow more than the two lanes planned for the crossing.

A few businesses suggested that the consultation was a missed opportunity by discounting Option C Variant. These businesses are Ebbsfleet Development Corporation, South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP); and Kent and Medway Business Advisory Board.

"Variant C should also be pursued to ensure effective improvement of the wider strategic transport network."

Ebbsfleet Development Corporation

Kent & Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP) suggest that there has to be a package of funded improvements to the wider Kent motorway and road network if economic growth was to be truly unlocked.

"...imperative that proposals to upgrade the link between the M2 and the M20 and to add capacity to the A2/M2 must be developed concurrently to the proposal for a new [LTC], to ensure the new crossing relieves congestion and does not simply displace it"

Kent & Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP)

Harrisons suggest that while a motorway to motorway link is a good idea, it did not believe that the junction with the A226 at Chalk would be necessary. It suggested that this junction could result in causing significant traffic issues around Chalk and Shorne.

"Currently the A2 and A226 are the only routes to Gravesend from the east. If there is traffic congestion on the new link road, as a result of an accident, both the A2 and A226 will result in being congested / gridlocked. If there is no A226 junction, Gravesend bound traffic will still be able to use the A226 without becoming involved with the crossing delays. The A2 is relatively close by and has sufficient capacity to carry northbound traffic from the Chalk and Shorne areas. By not having a junction with the A226 this will reduce the impact on the neighbouring villages whilst having a minimal effect on northbound traffic from these areas."

Harrisons

While the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) said that the proposed scheme will lead to better utilisation of the M20/A20 and M2/A2, to the benefit of the whole country it must not just displace bottlenecks to other areas though. The CBI also suggested that there is a need to add operational resilience to the port terminals in Thurrock.

Other suggestions from businesses include:

There needs to be a new junction east of Tilbury, with a direct link to the Port of Tilbury;

Any development takes place in such a way that it minimises disruption to businesses and to local communities;

That environmental issues are fully addressed, such as those outlined on page 21 of the consultation booklet. One business also suggests that a tunnel could pass under Shone Woods to avoid disrupting natural habitat and woodland;

A third tunnel could be built as an “emergency tunnel” so that it could be used if there was a problem at one of the other two tunnels (e.g. if there was a road traffic incident), traffic could be diverted to the spare tunnel;

Highways England should work with Thurrock Council to assist the council in delivering its economic growth and regeneration aspirations;

More information should be made available in terms of the implications for each of the options on strategic and local road network, as well as on the differential economic, environmental, ecological, heritage and community impacts.

Elected representatives

A small number of elected representatives provided comments about the proposed scheme.

Agree with the proposed scheme / positive comments

The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson said that he welcomed the Government’s decision to adopt this option as the preferred route as it would improve links between Essex and Kent, provide a more direct route for channel traffic, and that it would reduce congestion at Dartford. The Mayor also said that the proposal offers opportunities for new housing and business developments *“including the potential for a new airport for London”*.

Gareth Johnson, MP for Dartford, believes that the new crossing will offer an alternative and ease congestion in North Kent. He feels that congestion problems would not be solved in Dartford by building more roads in the same place. He also suggested that a tunnel would be resilient to all weather events, air quality in Dartford would be improved; and there would be increased business opportunities between Kent and Essex.

Bexley Labour Group also mentioned that a bored tunnel is preferred to a bridge given a bridge would be susceptible to weather conditions.

Disagree with the proposed scheme – negative comments

Councillor Stuart Millson (East Malling & Larkfield Parish Council) strongly disagrees with the proposed scheme as it would add to traffic congestion. The councillor says that the proposed scheme would cause a worrying build-up of traffic across the area currently served by the A26 and the north-south A228.

Stephen Metcalfe (MP for South Basildon and East Thurrock) believes that as only 14% of traffic would be diverted to the new crossing, the proposed scheme would not alleviate congestion to a large degree. He mentioned there would be the same congestion, with slightly shorter tailbacks, and that the real problems at the existing crossing need to be addressed. He also raised concerns that another crossing at Location C will create poor air quality in the east of the borough.

Kelly Tolhurst, (MP for Rochester and Strood), also raises concerns about air pollution that increased traffic would bring, and mentioned that Medway has one of the worst one-year survival rates for lung cancer. She said that her objection to

Location C lies with the lack of strategy around reducing nitrogen dioxide levels. She also objected on the grounds that no consideration had been given to increased housing across North Kent.

Other comments and suggestions from elected representatives

Councillor Chris Walker, Southend West suggests that a tunnel crossing could be between Canvey and Corringham, emerging east of Gillingham to join M2 and head for Dover. He contends that this would attract large amounts of M25 traffic, providing a shorter, more convenient route. Low-lying land could potentially be raised with spoil from excavation with minimum transportation, land could be improved for better farming, and contends that no properties would need to be purchased for this route.

Environment, heritage, amenity or community groups

Over sixty environment, heritage, amenity or community groups provide comments about the proposed scheme – most of these organisations strongly disagree with the proposals for environmental reasons. Few agree with the proposals.

Agree with the proposed scheme / positive comments

The Federation of Enfield Residents & Allied Associations (FERAA) strongly agrees with the scheme and believes it would provide much needed relief to traffic congestion at the existing Dartford Crossing. Jara, Swanscombe & Greenhithe Residents' Association (SGRA) also strongly agree with the proposed scheme to tackle congestion issues, and Gravesend MCC simply states that it has to be done.

"The SGRA believes that a high speed road, built to motorway standards is the best solution to providing an alternative to the Dartford Crossing."

Swanscombe & Greenhithe Residents' Association (SGRA)

Little Belhus Country Park and The Caravan Club tend to agree with the scheme as a bored tunnel. In their opinion, it would be preferable to building a bridge, as a tunnel would not be affected by adverse weather conditions. The Caravan Club also is in favour of an all-motorway route, though raising some concerns about environmental impact.

"The bored tunnel option is desirable in terms of adverse weather performance for high-sided vehicles such as towed caravans and larger motorhomes. The all-motorway route is clearly desirable, but some concerns remain over the environmental impact particularly of the section south of the river."

The Caravan Club

Disagree with the proposed scheme / negative comments and concerns

Many of the organisations strongly disagree with the proposed scheme on the grounds of negative environmental impact. This includes The West & East Tilbury & Linford Community (WELCOM) Forum; South Essex Wildlife Hospital; Essex Wildlife Trust; and Orsett Village Conservation Group. Specific impacts raised regarding the environment, habitats and species include:

- Destruction of parts of Goshems Farm LoWS which supports a diverse range of rare and protected species, including water vole – these species would have to then be transferred to new coastal grazing marsh which would have to be created;
- Impacts on the Thames marshes SPA/Mucking Flats and Marshes SSSI; and
- Impacts on unspecified marshes and fens.

The Woodland Trust referred to the National Planning Policy Framework which protects SSSIs and ancient Woodland, prohibiting construction in these areas, unless under exceptional circumstances, and in the public interest. The organisation also mentioned Making Space for Nature, the Forestry Commission and the UK Biodiversity Action Plan to protect ancient woodland; and also the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, which places a duty on public bodies to consider biodiversity. In light of this, and given the proposed scheme would impact on ancient woodland and natural habitats, the Trust strongly disagrees with the scheme.

"These proposed routes are particularly disappointing when considered against Highways England's Biodiversity Action Plan, which is less than a year old....by 2020, the company must deliver no net loss of biodiversity, and that by 2040 it must deliver a net gain in biodiversity."

The Woodland Trust

Plantlife International is also concerned about how proposals would damage ancient woodland, and specifically mentioned Crabbles Wood SSSI as being affected by the proposed scheme. The organisation also raised concerns about how an increase in nitrogen deposition resulting from increased traffic would cause a change of habitat in woodland, and in other habitats. Friends of the Earth also cited the EU Directive and a ruling by the Supreme Court about nitrogen dioxide limits that needs to be taken into account in the shortest time possible.

"The proposals will be likely to have indirect impacts on sites of importance through increased traffic flow on roads connecting to the proposed new crossing route, such as increased local nitrogen deposition, increased pressure for localised road widening and/or other transport improvements. Such sites include Plantlife's Ranscombe Farm Reserve, which lies close to the existing M2 motorway at junction 2."

Plantlife International

A number of organisations, including Kent Wildlife Trust, and Essex Wildlife Trust are also concerned that in their opinion, there is too much focus on the economic benefits of the scheme at the expense of the environment. Kent Wildlife Trust are disappointed that limited assessment of the economic cost of environmental damage and loss of ecosystems had been carried out. It also stated that the preferred route is particularly disappointing when considered against Highways England's biodiversity plan and its targets, which it says is less than a year old. It concluded that the proposed scheme will potentially result in these targets being missed, and that the intention to consider environmental impacts at the next stage, rather than at decision-making stage is at odds with the principles of sustainable development.

"The LTC scheme appraisal places undue emphasis on the theoretical economic benefits of the scheme. It places insufficient emphasis on all other impacts of the scheme, including the economic costs. These include impacts on ecosystem services, community health and tourism."

Essex Wildlife Trust

A large number of environmental concerns and issues are also raised. Friends of St. Mary's Church raised a number of environmental concerns about the proposed scheme, and that St. Mary's Church would be negatively impacted.

"Option C will cut through ancient woodland, greenbelt and AONB. It's pollution will adversely impact the nearby SSSI and High Level Stewardship Farmland on the marshes. It will also impact on the open access Woodland Trust site at Ashenbank Woods and Plantlife's Ranscombe Farm. Businesses in Gravesham and Strood think that Option C would adversely affect them. In particular, to St Marys Church on Higham Marshes: Both noise and air pollution would adversely affect the at present very peaceful church and environs."

Friends of St. Mary's Church

St. Mary the Virgin Church also provides its own response to the consultation. It was critical of the proposed scheme both in terms of financial costs and costs to the environment. It stated that *"In every respect Highways England's proposal of Option C is sub-optimal and appears to be a very poor compromise solution."*

Land of the Fanns Landscape Partnership was one of the few organisations that tends to disagree rather than strongly disagree with the scheme. It is concerned that the proposed scheme will cut through the centre of the HLF (Heritage Lottery Fund) Land of the Fanns Landscape Partnership Scheme area, and in doing so, which would adversely affect the landscape character of the area from North Ockendon to Orsett. Chatham Maritime Trust also said it tends to disagree and believes that the western southern route would be better for the area.

Bonnars Residents' Association strongly disagrees with the proposed scheme for a number of reasons. These reasons included that Location C does not support the free flow of traffic from the new super port at Coryton; that people's homes and lives would be ruined by the scheme; that the system has no resilience as the A13 is frequently congested and gridlocked; and that there are no plans to support clear passage of vehicles into and out of Thurrock for any existing industry.

Kent Downs AONB also raised concerns about the need for improvement to existing infrastructure, particularly at the eastern end of the M20 and M2 corridor, which has not been undertaken, along with the comparative environmental and socio-economic impacts of that provision. It was also concerned about how an increase in traffic would affect the AONB, and requested that it would expect a commensurate amount of compensation for damage caused.

A number of organisations, including Gravesham Rights of Way Committee, and Kent Countryside Access Forum, and The Dickens Country Protection Society strongly disagree with the proposed scheme as they believe Option C will result in the same problems as at the existing tunnel at Dartford. West Tilbury Village Hall was negative because it did not believe the proposals would solve road congestion, whilst impacting in a negative way on the village hall.

"Even with the road proposed the Dartford crossing will still be running above the maximum capacity and it would create more widespread pollution. The noise and disruption from the completed road and the upheaval during the construction period would have a serious impact on the continued viability of the village hall."

West Tilbury Village Hall

Some organisations, including Gravesham and Dartford Friends of the Earth, South East Essex Friends of the Earth, and The Abbot's Mill Project strongly disagree with the proposed scheme as they believe that the concept of building more roads is a flawed concept, and that the government focus should be on investing in sustainable transport.

“The whole idea of building more roads which will allow more traffic and then necessitate more roads to be built is wrong. As a country, and indeed a continent we need to consider better ways of moving goods and people around using more rail, more public transport and for freight, longer sea crossings from the continent to the UK, by-passing the need to cross the Thames at all.”

Gravesham and Dartford Friends of the Earth

The British Horse Society also strongly disagrees with the proposed scheme, and states that it would result in more traffic in the area, particularly through the villages of Shorne, Higham and Chalk, which would have serious impacts on vulnerable road users such as equestrians, cyclists and walkers. It states that mitigation for vulnerable road users should be designed into the proposals.

Other comments and concerns from organisations that strongly disagree with the proposed scheme include that Routes 2 and 3 would significantly affect the delivery of the Thames Chase Plan; that proposals do not take account of a new cemetery and crematorium at Chalk; that there is no justification for a junction with the A226 at Chalk; that noise impacts have not been fully considered; negative impacts on the villages of Shorne and Chalk; that Route 3 would cause heavy traffic congestion and pollution on the A13 and M25; and negative impact of Route 3 on Thurrock Rugby Football Club.

West Tilbury Commons Conservators stated that a bored tunnel would need the Option C routes to which it was opposed.

Suggestions from Environment, heritage, amenity or community groups

A few organisations made other comments and suggestions:

Rochester Bridge Trust would be prepared to consider offering use of its land to facilitate construction of the route, subject to agreeing the necessary and appropriate terms.

While Bean Residents' Association says that it neither agrees nor disagrees with the overall scheme, it agrees with a bored tunnel, but that the tunnel should be longer.

West Essex Aeromodellers suggests that it would be far less disruptive to the already over-burdened residents of Thurrock and Basildon if the crossing were located further east so that it could link to the new A130.

Faversham Society says that it cannot see any impact assessments for the wider area, and urged that these be expanded across the whole of the east Kent highway network, including the full length of the M2 and A2.

The RSPB raised concerns about the impact of the proposed scheme on a grazing marsh from construction of the north tunnel, and dewatering during both construction and operation. It suggested that careful siting of the portals may be able to address these concerns. The organisation was also concerned that the south tunnel portal emerges at the boundary of the Shorne Marshes which is a Ramsar designated site, and this may also impact on the hydrology of the site. It suggested that Highways England evaluate whether a short extension of the tunnel would enable any hydrological concerns to be addressed.

The National Trust mentions that the southern road links have the potential to impact on Trust land and Property at Cobham Woods and Owletts properties, south of the A2.

Local government organisations

Of local government organisations that provide comments about the proposed scheme, on balance, more agree than disagree with the proposal.

Agree with the proposed scheme – positive comments

A number of organisations responding, including Braintree District Council, Dartford Borough Council, Medway Council, and Wrotham Parish Council agree with the proposed scheme because of the bored tunnel rather than a bridge or immersed tunnel. Reasons for such support include that the option would have least visual, noise, and environmental impact or intrusion.

“...a bored tunnel is preferred to the other crossing options because it would result in the least noise and visual impact during the construction and operation phases and would have the least impact on protected habitats and species by minimising disturbance over much of its length.”

Dartford Borough Council

Other organisations mention the economic benefits of the proposed scheme as a reason for supporting it. These organisations include Essex County Council, Tendring District Council, Swale Borough Council and Hartlip Parish Council.

“As indicated in Table 1 Route 3 supports the long term creation of an additional 25,000 new jobs and enables the construction of an additional 21,000 new homes over the reference case. Assuming the construction of Paramount Park, Option C supports the long-term creation of an additional 32,000 new jobs and enables the construction of an additional 28,000 new homes over the reference case. This modelling has not been undertaken for routes 2 and 4”

Essex County Council

A number of local government organisations also strongly support the proposed scheme because it will alleviate congestion problems at Dartford, and that there is too little river crossing capacity at present, which leads to severe congestion issues at the Dartford Crossing. Organisations that agree with the proposed scheme to alleviate congestion and increase capacity include Maldon District Council; Sevenoaks District Council, and Suffolk County Council.

Dover District Council states that the proposed scheme must be progressed as soon as possible, and that it supports the Eastern Southern Link as it offers, in its view, greater transport and economic benefits. While the London Borough of Bexley strongly agrees with the proposed scheme because it would provide the greatest overall benefits, it made mention that it would prefer the Western Southern Link. Other organisations, including Essex County Council, and Tendring District Council, while supportive of the overall scheme, also support the Western Southern Link over the Eastern Southern Link.

Maidstone Borough Council strongly agrees with the proposed scheme because it feels that it represents the best balance between improved capacity and resilience of the Strategic Road Network, potential economic benefits and environmental impacts.

The London Borough of Redbridge strongly agrees with the proposed scheme. The reasons put forward include that it will encourage longer distance orbital traffic to remain on the M25, rather than using less suitable alternative routes such

as the A406 and the Blackwall Tunnel during periods of disruption at the current Dartford Crossing; and that local business in the borough will benefit from efficient and reliable freight movements resulting from the proposed scheme.

While Ashford Borough Council supports the Eastern Southern Link south of the river, it does not express a view on options north of the river.

Disagree with the proposed scheme – negative comments and concerns

Some of the local government organisations that responded to the consultation strongly disagree with the proposed scheme. Several different reasons are put forward, including concerns about environmental impact and overall negative impact on local communities, local areas, natural habitats, and protected landscapes. Others have concerns about the scheme increasing congestion in their local area. A few also say they would prefer the Western Southern Link over the Eastern Southern Link.

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, whilst tending to agree with the proposed scheme, are concerned about traffic congestion on the A229, and in the absence of a C Variant, believe this could lead to more rat running on the A228 and A227, with detrimental impacts on communities along those corridors.

"The A229 is the main route between Maidstone and the Medway Towns and is the shortest link between the M2 and the M20. It is therefore the most likely route that will be taken by drivers using the Eurotunnel at Folkestone and the port at Dover with starting points or destinations north via the LTC. Given the existing congestion around Junctions 5/6 of the M20 and Blue Bell Hill/ Lord Lees roundabout (M2 junction 3), the opening of the Lower Thames Crossing without upgrades to one of the most direct routes to it from the south will only exacerbate congestion issues, resulting in a damaging impact on the local economy. "

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

Thurrock Council strongly disagrees with the proposed scheme. The council made reference to analysis by Highways England between Location A and Location C, with the findings being that Location A would increase resilience of the network, while Location C would provide a more attractive route for traffic between Kent and the Channel ports, and to destinations north of the River Thames. However, the council states that environmental harm should not be outweighed by economic, social, or transportation benefits. Other issues mentioned by the council include that there has not been a compelling case for compulsory purchase orders; that costs and benefits of the options are unclear; that time-saving data suggested by Highways England is out of date; that identifying a preference for a particular route is premature; and that local residents have concerns about flood risks, air quality, and impacts on health and wellbeing.

"Given there are significant questions over the accuracy of the data from 2001, there must be questions over the accuracy of the modelling and therefore the travel time savings, and hence over the accuracy of the benefits. "

Thurrock Council

Herongate & Ingrave Parish Council is concerned that the scheme would impact on large areas of green belt and countryside, thus having a negative impact of rural living for local people. It also raises concerns about ancient woodland and SSSIs being affected, as well as pollution, noise and destruction of wildlife habitat. Higham Parish Council have similar concerns about the impact on local villages, rural communities, the green belt, and resulting pollution from increased traffic movements using the new crossing.

“The Council is extremely concerned about the massive impact on the rural communities of Higham, Shorne and Chalk. The devastation of woodlands, marshland, Green belt etc. increased noise and pollution levels, whilst not fixing the problems at Dartford is ineffective management and poor use of resources. The justification for the Option C ESL proposal appears to be based on the Benefit Cost Ratio aspects - how this is calculated is unclear. Where will the new jobs cited be based, where will the new housing go? Being told at the Information Sessions that there is no detail on this yet is very worrying - are we right to assume that development of the Green Belt area is under consideration? How can this be justified? If it's not planned for the Green Belt, where will it go? If there is no plan, how can you justify the proposal on the basis of Benefit Cost Ratios?”

Higham Parish Council

Shorne Parish Council strongly disagrees and believes that Location C is unlikely to support local development, and that it would pass through green belt land and Grade 1&2 agricultural land that, in its view, cannot be developed on. The council also mentioned that it strongly disagrees because the proposed scheme does not connect the M20 to Kent, and that it may cause more congestion in North Kent, which would have consequences for road safety. It also questions the economic viability given value for money has not been established.

Broomfield Parish Council mentions that the scheme is an expensive scheme to shave a few minutes off existing journeys, while doing nothing to address congestion and poor air quality.

Cuxton Parish Council strongly disagrees with the proposed scheme as there is not enough information regarding how traffic would access the new crossing from the M20. It also disagrees given there are no planned improvements to existing roads. It concludes by stating that it supports the campaign for the protection of Rural England to find a more long-term and less destructive solution.

Langford & Ulting Parish Council is concerned about how the scheme will impact the countryside.

Gravesham Borough Council states that while a bored tunnel should be used, all of the options presented still have serious environmental impacts that need to be addressed. It is very concerned about how the local community in Gravesham would suffer from air quality issues as it believes congestion on local roads would be exacerbated by proposals. The council also states that the area contains many archaeological remains, which would necessitate detailed field assessments to be undertaken; that there would be loss and fragmentation of high quality agricultural land, while there is no information on whether viable farm units can be maintained. They raised significant issues in relation to drainage of the tunnel and interaction with existing systems and marshes; that there is insufficient information to form a view on noise impacts of proposed routes; that there has been no proper assessment of implications for air quality; and that the cost-benefit analysis provides insufficient information to judge which option is economically better.

While West Horndon Parish Council disagrees with Route 3, it states that it sees this as the least harmful of all of the options presented in the consultation.

While Kent County Council is supportive of a bored tunnel, and the choice of location for the Option C corridor, it does not agree with the Eastern Southern Link and prefers the Western Southern Link. The council also urged Highways England to reconsider the inclusion on the Option C Variant, and to work with Essex County Council in relation to environmental and traffic concerns in the Essex area.

“KCC agrees with the choice of the Location C corridor for the new Lower Thames Crossing but this support is contingent on the selection of the Western Southern Link as well as suitable compensation, environmental mitigation, increased tunnelling, removal of the junction with the A226, and optimisation of the junction with the A2. KCC strongly encourages Highways England to urgently reconsider the inclusion of C Variant (enhancements to the A229 link between the M2 and M20) and to improve the link via the A249 (M2 Junction 5 at Stockbury to M20 Junction 7 at Detling Hill). A phased programme of wider network improvements are needed along the M2/A2 corridor including dualling of the A2 from Lydden to Dover and improvements to M2 Junction 7 (Brenley Corner).”

Kent County Council

While Essex County Council is supportive of Route 3, it states that it supports the Western Southern Link (WSL) proposed by Highways England as it now follows the alternative alignment proposed in a study commissioned by Kent County Council in 2014, and unlike the previous alignment proposed in 2013, avoids passing centrally through Shorne Country Park. Tendring District Council also states that it supports the Western Southern Link as preferred by Kent Council.

The London Borough of Havering strongly reaffirms its support for a new crossing at Location A. It suggests that Location A would avoid the Green Belt, whilst also supporting or facilitating regeneration in London Riverside area. The Council believes that the Location C routes would have more adverse impacts such as noise disturbance and vibration.

Suggestions and other comments from local government organisations

Basildon Borough Council states that while it tends to agree with the scheme, its preference is for Route 4 over Route 3 north of the river, subject to certain provisos. It also suggests that while it does not have any evidence to counter the claim by Highways England that the proposed scheme would be least damaging environmentally, it recommends that Highways England canvasses industrial technical expertise before making a decision on the type of crossing that should be built. The council, however, also added that as the existing crossing at Dartford is affected by high winds, it would seem advantageous that a tunnel is used as the means of crossing the river.

Colchester Borough Council, while supportive of the scheme, suggests changes to Route 3 and connection to the A13.

Castle Point Borough Council believes that while the proposed four lanes on the A127 are welcome, the same consideration should also be given to the A127 east of the A128, and A13 east of the A13/A1014 Manorway Interchange. It suggests a need for additional access to and from Canvey Island using this interchange, and that the proposals should take this into account in future.

Dover District Council feels that consideration should be given to three-lane tunnels in each direction, with scope for 4 lanes in future to future-proof the development. It also stated that current proposals do not take a strategic enough approach at improving roads and junctions further afield, that would feed into the Thames crossing. It asked that the M2/A2 should be improved, that the A260 should be upgraded to link the M20/A20 and the M2/A2.

Medway Council advocates the need to consider an integrated transport package, including local roads connecting to the Lower Thames Crossing and its junctions.

Brentwood Borough Council states that a wider infrastructure strategy is required for various transport types and future needs.

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council mentions that while Option D was ruled out following a study in 2009, that this study may have underestimated traffic flows, and as such, the evidence should be re-examined.

Transport, infrastructure or utility organisations

Of the transport, infrastructure or utility organisations that provided comments on the proposed scheme, slightly more agree than disagree with the proposed scheme.

Agree with the proposed scheme / positive comments

Graham Coaches strongly agrees with the proposals, as it believes Route 3 to be the shortest and quickest route to and from Kent, Purfleet, Dagenham, and to the City Airport. The organisation is also supportive of the Eastern Southern Link as it would provide the most direct access and easiest route to and from Southern Kent.

The Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) strongly agrees and believes a tunnel to be the best option in terms of resilience to weather, being less intrusive to the local area, and being more ecological and environmentally friendly than other options. The ICE also states that a tunnel scheme is technically straightforward, using tried and tested technology.

RAC Foundation also strongly agrees with the proposed scheme, and mentions that the proposed route would result in wider economic benefits.

SPB Transport mention that the proposed route is the most efficient option, while P W Gates Distribution says it is the best of both worlds.

While the Freight Transport Association (FTA) strongly agrees with the proposed scheme, it requested that the tunnel is designed in such a way that it is available to all heights and classifications of goods vehicles. The FTA states that it does not want to see the sort of restrictions that currently restrict commercial vehicle operations, and hinders other traffic at the current Dartford tunnels.

Forth Ports Ltd (on behalf of the Port of Tilbury London Ltd) said that while it supports Location C, there should be an additional and vital link road to Tilbury.

Eurotunnel, while also in support of the scheme states that a two-lane dual carriageway will not provide sufficient capacity, especially at times when the existing crossing at Dartford is closed. It suggested that a three-lane dual carriageway would be better for traffic transfer and to ensure sufficient capacity for future traffic growth.

Eric Aldridge Consulting Ltd say that they tend to agree with the proposal scheme, and that while the environment would be impacted, it can adapt, and with careful management, can recover in time.

"There is no easy solution for the requirements and there will be disruption and permanent damage to the environment for any scheme of this nature. However, in my experience, nature can adapt to disruption such as a new carriageway and providing the areas can be managed carefully during construction and replanted sympathetically afterwards nature will recover over a period of time and possibly gain some benefit."

Eric Aldridge Consulting Limited

Quintas Energy is supportive of the proposed scheme, as Route 4 would have a negative impact on their business.

Disagree with the proposed scheme / negative comments

Of the organisations that disagree with the proposed scheme, two (1st Call Mobility and Nicholls Transport) state a preference for Route 4 – and as such, both organisations tend to disagree with the proposed scheme.

Other organisations, including Campaign for Better Transport, Harlex Haulage and Services Ltd, and Metrotidal strongly disagree with the proposed scheme.

Campaign for Better Transport suggested that a sustainable transport approach would offer a more future-proofed investment in Kent and Essex. The organisation stated that other more sustainable and less damaging alternatives to a new road have not been properly considered. It also raised concerns about environmental impacts on Tilbury Marshes, Ramsar sites, SSSIs, and Kent Downs AONB.

"Given the irreversible impact on the natural environment, these risks alone should make the plans unacceptable."

Campaign for Better Transport

Harlex Haulage and Services Ltd say that south of the river has been inadequately surveyed prior to drawing up the proposed route. It said that it had invited Highways England to meet on its site to demonstrate impact on business and employees.

Metrotidal mentions that the anticipated costs of £4.3 to £5.9bn exclude road upgrade cost to the M11 and M20 which would add another £2bn, as well as further costs for the TE2011 flood defence programme which could bring the overall cost to between £7.8 and £9.4bn.

Suggestions and other comments from transport, infrastructure or utility organisations

National Council on Inland Transport (NCIT) requests that there is a need for Highways England to provide implications for impact of the new crossing on the M25.

Pallet Plus Ltd suggested that whilst the Eastern Southern Link is ideal providing a motorway to motorway link, the organisation thinks that an additional junction to the M25 will do nothing to improve traffic flow on this section.

Confederation of Passenger Transport suggested that the motorway to motorway connection should be at least a three lane motorway rather than a dual carriageway.

National Grid states that with the level of information available, it is difficult to choose between Route 2 and Route 4.

Statutory agencies

A few statutory agencies provided comments on the proposed scheme.

Historic England believes that the scheme would result in harm to a number of heritage assets. As such, the organisation suggested that archaeological and geo-archaeological assessments and evaluations would be required. At both the northern and southern approaches to the proposed tunnel, the organisation is concerned the impact on floodplain deposits with palaeo-environmental and possible archaeological potential.

Natural England advise that a minimum of two years' of survey data is required, at appropriate times of year for the species and habitats concerned, to support a Development Consent Order. It also raises concerns about loss of ancient woodland and SSSIs, and that these sites should be given high importance in route options considerations.

The Environment Agency states that when a flood risk assessment is carried out there is a need to ensure that the project does not increase flood risk, and that the scheme is protected from flooding for its lifetime. It recommends that Highways England engage with the lead local flood authorities regarding surface water drainage and ordinary watercourses. Other considerations are that there is a need to consider disposal and reuse of waste from boring, and that Highways England analyse impact on protected and priority Biodiversity Action Plan species. Avoidance of contaminated landfill sites should also be taken into account, as any route through these will cause significant construction difficulties.

Other category of organisation or group

Most of those responding in this capacity strongly disagree with the proposed scheme. Just three organisations agree with the scheme stating that it is their preference, the best option, and that there is a need for a new crossing.

Diocese of Rochester; King West (on behalf of a landowner), Medway Green Party and Gravesend Deanery strongly disagree with the proposed scheme.

The Diocese of Rochester provides a number of reasons as to why it strongly disagrees with the proposed scheme. It suggested that there is an over-focus on connectivity as a proxy for resilience and congestion relief. It also states that the consultation is a missed opportunity to explore and consult on a long tunnel under Dartford which could disaggregate M25 traffic from local traffic. It suggested that proposals were too short-term, and will not solve current congestion and pollution at Dartford.

Medway Green Party states that while it appreciates a tunnel rather than a bridge is proposed, and that while Highways England have sought to reduce environmental impact, it would be like sticking a plaster on an open wound. Valuable countryside, woodland, marshland, and wildlife would be lost forever in its opinion.

Gravesend Deanery mentions that Option C is by far the most expensive option, and that it will not resolve congestion at Dartford. It also raises environmental concerns, as well as negative impact on local communities.

“Option C also devastates the environment and community, and adds to pollution in the areas of Chalk and Shorne, and in Essex. Option C also cuts off the parish church at Chalk from its community, and also cuts off the community from the much-used green space next to the church. The church is used not only by the regular congregation but by many attending weddings, funerals and local events. In addition, Gravesend will be adversely affected by severe congestion on the A226, to be linked to the new road. This will be exacerbated by the new crematorium currently being constructed on the land next to Chalk Church, which will mean slow-moving funeral corteges on the A226 several times every hour. In addition, the ESL causes significantly more environmental disruption and disruption to local residents than does the WSL.”

Gravesend Deanery

King West on behalf of its client (a landowner) stated that loss of land would have significant financial and operational implications, and for these reasons, it strongly disagrees with the proposed scheme.

Other organisations strongly disagree because it would result in loss of farming land; that the proposed route is not the most economic route, and that the air quality of Gravesend would be impacted. It has also been suggested that as new housing and a proposed Paramount development had not been factored into any modelling, the scheme would only serve to increase congestion and reduce air quality further.

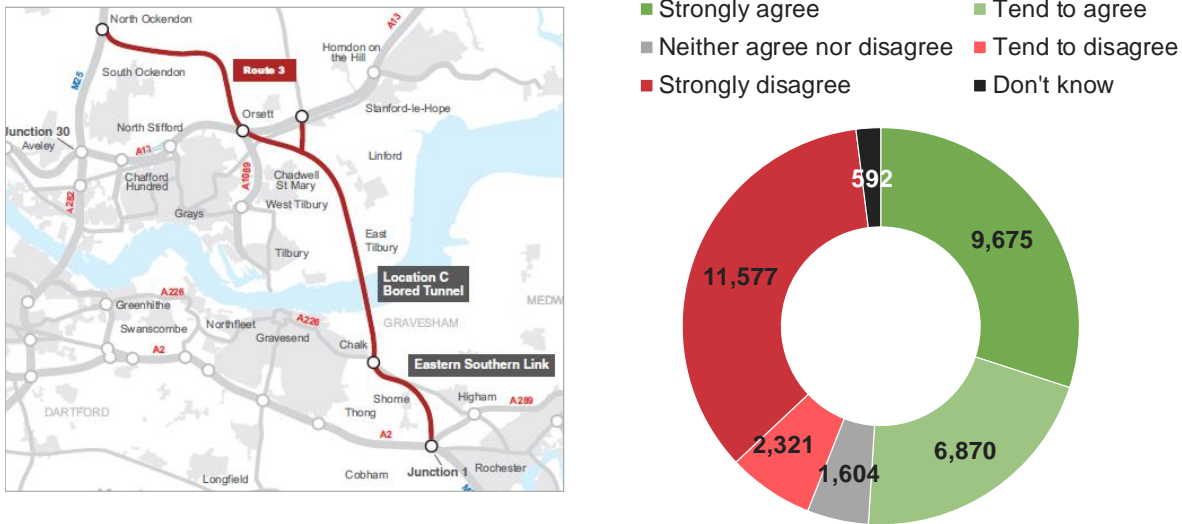
4.4.2 Members of the public

Response form

There were 32,639 members of the public who answered **Question 10a** on the response form. The question asked whether they agreed or disagreed with Highways England’s proposed scheme. Figure 4.29 shows the responses given by members of the public who answered this question.

Figure 4.29: Question 10a responses from members of the public

Q. Having evaluated the options, our proposed scheme is a new bored tunnel road crossing at Location C, following Route 3 north of the river and the Eastern Southern Link south of the river. On balance, do you agree or disagree with our proposed scheme?



Base: 32,639 participants who took part through official response form: 26 January – 24 March 2016

Source: Ipsos MORI

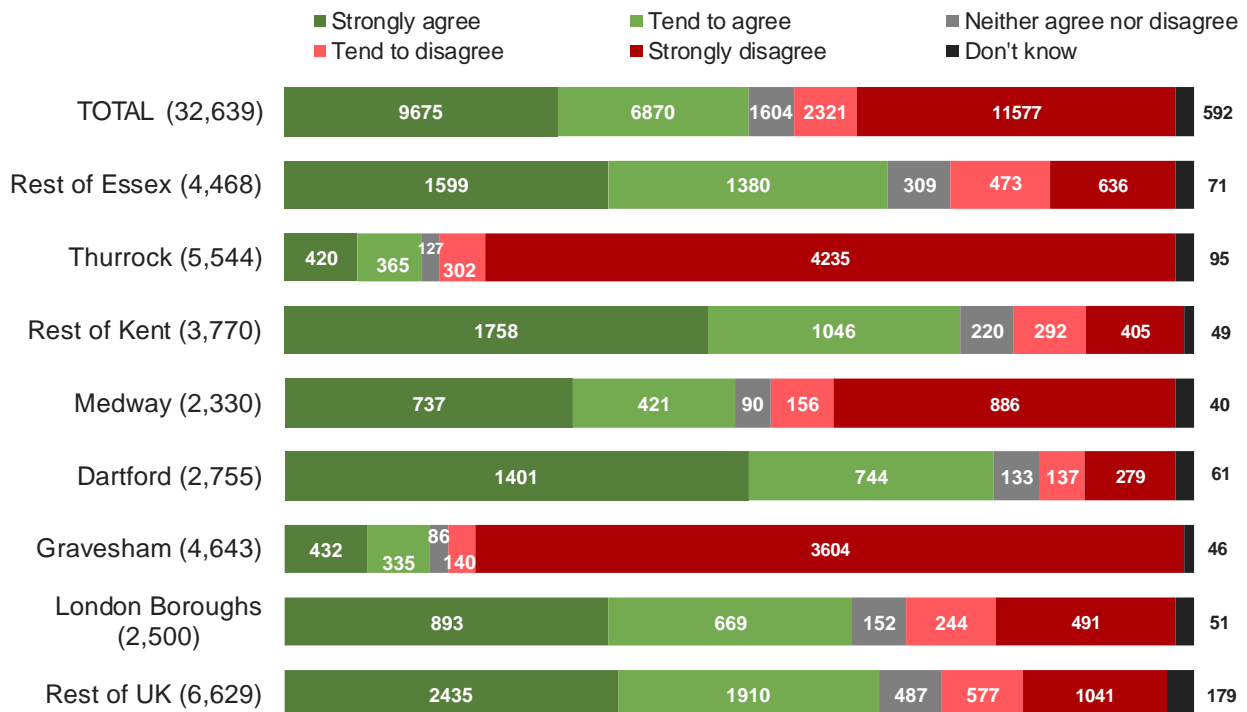
Attitudes to the proposed scheme are evenly split. Half of those who responded to the question (16,545) agree with it while around two-fifths (13,898) disagree. There are also smaller proportions who have no opinion either way (1,604) or who say they ‘don’t know’ (592). The strength of disagreement is notable, with 11,577 who ‘strongly disagree’ with the proposed scheme compared with only 2,321 who ‘tend to disagree’.

Across local authority areas, opposition is much greater in those areas most affected by the proposal. Four in five participants disagree with it in Gravesham (3,744 out of 4,643) and in Thurrock (4,537 out of 5,544) and the great majority of those who disagree do so strongly.

In contrast, three in four participants in Dartford agree with the proposals (2,145 out of 2,755), as do three in four participants across the rest of Kent (2,804 out of 3,770) and two in three participants in the parts of Essex outside of Thurrock (2,979 out of 4,768).

Figure 4.30: Question 10a responses from members of the public by local authority area

Q. Having evaluated the options, our proposed scheme is a new bored tunnel road crossing at Location C, following Route 3 north of the river and the Eastern Southern Link south of the river. On balance, do you agree or disagree with our proposed scheme?



Base: 32,639 participants who took part through the official response form: 26 January – 24 March 2016

Source: Ipsos MORI

Table 4.4 analyses attitudes towards the whole proposed scheme according to attitudes towards the various sections of it. Agreement with the whole route is greatest among those who agree with its individual elements. For example, four in five of those who agree with a crossing at Location C agree with the whole proposed route (15,610 out of 19,615), compared with only a very small number of those who *disagree* with Location C (517 out of 11,841).

Similarly, almost nine in ten of those who agree with Route 3 north of the Thames also agree with the whole proposed scheme (9,270 out of 10,563). This compares with two in three of those who agree with Route 2 (1,221 out of 1,856) and just over half of those who agree with Route 4 (3,615 out of 6,519). Those who favour another route north of the Thames or no route at all are much more likely to disagree with the whole proposed route than to agree with it.

Table 4.4: Question 10a responses analysed by attitudes towards other route options

	Agree with whole proposed route	Disagree with whole proposed route	Neither agree nor disagree	Don't know
Total: 32,639	16,545	13,898	1,604	592
Location C				
Agree (19,615)	15,610	2,600	1,108	297
Neither agree nor disagree (993)	349	287	277	80
Disagree (11,841)	517	10,958	209	157
Route north of the Thames:				
Route 2 (1,856)	1,221	428	174	33
Route 3 (10,563)	9,270	826	398	69
Route 4 (6,519)	3,615	2,266	559	79
Another route (1,684)	210	1,389	59	26
None (7,921)	208	7,597	60	56
Route south of the Thames:				
Western Southern Link (5,871)	3,499	1,773	516	83
Eastern Southern Link (12,226)	10,325	1,357	520	64
Another route (1,473)	273	1,100	77	23
None (7,614)	217	7,288	67	42

There were 19,136 members of the public who provided comments in response to **Question 10b** on the response form in support of the answer they provided for Question 10a. The most frequent type of positive comment at Question 10b is one of support for the proposed scheme, made by three in ten participants (5,492). This is followed by comments in support of Route 4 (1,262), saying something in favour of a bored tunnel (1,062), comments in support of Location A as the crossing site (931) and support for Route 3 (883).

The most frequent type of negative comment at Question 10b is a statement of opposition to the proposed scheme, made by over one in four members of the public (5,350). This is followed by opposition to Location C (1,094), opposition to the Eastern Southern Link (596) and opposition to Route 3 (589).

The most frequent type of suggestion at Question 10b is an alternative to the proposed scheme, made by 1,084 members of the public. This is followed by suggestions for an alternative crossing location (470), alternative route options (356) and alternatives with regards to a bored tunnel (319).

The following section looks at the comments made at Question 10b in greater depth:

Support for proposed scheme

Three in ten members of the public (5,492) make a comment in support of the proposal. The most frequent of these comments are general statements in support of what is proposed (2,280 comments) and comments about the need for a new crossing because of problems at Dartford (584 comments).

“Action is required to relieve Dartford Crossing and the proposals by Highway England are the best chance of achieving this, especially considering forecast traffic increases. Building the alternative closer to the present crossing site will not achieve as much as a site distant from it but close to the main feeder motorways, the M2/M20, from the Dover/Folkestone ports and Channel crossings.”

Member of the public

Among the broader reasons for supporting Location C, the most frequent is anticipated improvement to freedom of travel and access to destinations (1,611 participants). Those who make these comments are most likely to say the proposed route is the most direct and quickest, and would improve connections between motorways. The Channel ports, Essex and Kent are the specific places mentioned most often in terms of improved access.

“It frees South Essex traffic that struggles to get out of, what is effectively, an island and makes good links for traffic heading to Dover, Canterbury, Hastings and other popular parts of Kent/East Sussex. It also makes a viable alternative to heading out of Essex on A13 and south via M25.”

Member of the public

Comments on improved travel access often mention reduced levels of congestion. As a result, the next most frequent category of support for the proposals is anticipated improvement to traffic levels (1,047 participants), with particular reference to current problems at the Dartford Crossing.

“Pushing all cross Thames traffic into a single crossing point means that if that is blocked everything stops. This scheme will provide an alternative and reduce the existing flows through Dartford by providing a straightforward

route for traffic to/from the channel crossings heading to/from strategic routes such as the M11, A1 & M1 to the East & West Midlands, Yorkshire, NW & NE England and Scotland.”

Member of the public

Among the other reasons for supporting the proposals are that it would have a minimal or limited effect on the environment (511 participants), that it would have beneficial effects for communities or individual people (449 participants) and that it would have economic benefits such as being cost effective and creating jobs (364 participants). However, many of the statements of support also have caveats, including concerns expressed about the need to reduce potentially harmful effects of the scheme.

“I mostly agree. I have concerns with the proximity of the road to my house. Action must be taken to improve air quality including charges for vehicles that cause heavy pollution and a move towards electric or hybrid cars.”

Member of the public

“I tend to agree, but it goes without saying that roads like the A2, A127 and the A13 need attention to handle the changes. They are volatile roads prone to congestion, and if they struggle in the east already, they will certainly struggle if there's more traffic as Kent and Essex become more integrated.”

Member of the public

Opposition to proposed scheme

Three in ten members of the public (5,350) make a comment in opposition to the proposal, which is almost as many as comment in favour of it. The reasons for opposition chiefly relate to the impact of the route on levels of traffic, and especially the consequences for the local environment and the towns and villages in the vicinity.

The most common single category of objections is to do with environmental harm (2,300). Those who make these comments are most likely to refer to increased air pollution as a result of the scheme, damage to protected natural areas, damage to the countryside in general, increase in noise pollution and the impact on wildlife.

“The effect on countryside, ancient woodland, SSSIs, AONBs, and residents is too great a cost. We cannot lose our “green”. It also doesn't make any sense to have a 20-mile bypass of the existing crossing if it's to be used as a backup for when the current crossing is closed. Nothing is gained except the additional pollution associated with an additional 20 miles of travel, and so much, far too much, will be lost.”

Member of the public

Almost as many members of the public voice concerns about the impact of the proposals on traffic levels (2,046). Those who mention problems with traffic are most likely to say the proposals will increase congestion generally, but many mention increased congestion at particular places, chiefly the Dartford Crossing, Thurrock and on the M25.

"I do not agree with building of a new crossing at all. It will increase congestion in already congested locations. A dual carriageway will not be sufficient. Please take notice of the Bluewater Road way access points. This second crossing will draw a high percentage of the current commercial vehicles (heavier polluters) meaning Dartford will remain more of a public shopping crossing."

Member of the public

The effect of the proposals on communities and individual people is a key reason for opposing the proposal (1,959 participants). These comments are most often about the general impact on developed residential areas, but other participants say they themselves would be badly affected or anticipate worse quality of life or health for local people.

"This will not cure the problem of congestion at the Dartford Crossing. It will only add to the local traffic problems and cause back-up and gridlock in all surrounding areas. I live in Orsett and see this gridlock backing up to outside my house. Some days a 15 min journey can take up to two hours. The crossing needs to be miles away from the three crossings we already have in Thurrock. By putting the crossing further east, you will not be tearing villages apart and committing them to a slow death from the pollution. Fewer houses will be demolished. Fewer lives ruined."

Member of the public

Other arguments against the proposals are perceived negative economic effects (508 participants), chiefly that it would be a waste of taxpayers' money. There are also 417 participants who say the proposals would worsen access to other destinations, most often because of the strain placed on the local road network.

"The total number of lanes travelling north at Dartford and at [Location] C will exceed the capacity of the M25, and cause huge bottlenecks at North Ockenden, as you try to feed in the new lanes. Traffic from the East A13, A127, may not use the M25 any more to reach C and travel by local roads to C, increasing local traffic."

Member of the public

Alternative suggestions

Alternative suggestions or additions to the proposed scheme are put forward by 1,084 participants. The most common of these is that the roads that will be part of the route should be wider to handle the traffic that will use them (239 comments) and that the scheme must be a long-term solution that addresses future increases in traffic levels (124 comments).

Responses by email and post

A total of 612 members of the public made a comment about the proposed scheme other than through the response form. Only 79 make supportive comments, compared with 521 who make a comment against the proposal. A range of objections to the scheme are raised by these participants, most often to do with anticipated negative effects on communities and individual people (329), followed by negative effects on the environment (309) and problems with traffic and congestion (265).

4.5 Views on additional junctions

This section provides a summary of responses to the consultation which address Question 11 on the online and paper response form, as well as unstructured responses via email and letter that make reference to issues relating to the location of the crossing.

Question 11: We are proposing to create junctions with existing roads including the M2/A2, A226, A13 and M25. We would like to hear your views on whether you believe additional junctions would be beneficial.

We would welcome any comments you may have on our proposals for junctions.

4.5.1 Stakeholder organisations

A number of stakeholder organisations made comments about junctions, either in response to **Question 11**, or in an email or letter.

Academic organisations

Chalk Village Pre-School and Willow Garden Day Nursery provide comments about additional junctions. Both organisations oppose a specific proposed additional junction, or the proposals in general.

"We are not in favour of a junction on the A226, this will simply serve to increase traffic flow from the tunnel onto local roads and this traffic should be kept separate to avoid further congestion and pollution."

Chalk Village Pre-School

"We disagree with the proposal which would take place within 10 miles of our home and place of work."

Willow Garden Day Nursery

Action groups

A small number of action groups provide comments about additional junctions.

ABridge2Far says that as the existing junctions on the A229 with the M2 and M20 are already heavily congested at peak times, it questions how these junctions will cope with additional traffic trying to travel between the M20, and the proposed new crossing. It states that the whole of the road infrastructure from the Medway Towns to South East London would be gridlocked, as well as feeder roads such as the A227, A228, A229, and A289. The organisation also says it is strongly opposed to any junction on the A226, and has been unable to find any local authority prepared to admit to requesting this junction. It provides negative comments about the proposed Eastern Southern Link.

"...connections between the ESL and the westbound carriageway of the M2/A2 are far too close to the connections to and from the A289 Wainscott Bypass, allowing insufficient room for merging and filtering, which will result in excessive braking and weaving, creating hazardous driving conditions."

ABridge2Far

Alliance of British Drivers asks that the Orsett Junction is upgraded to same standard as Junction 30 M25, and that serious consideration needs to be given to widening A13 either side of new route to avoid traffic congestion.

Groc and Groll oppose additional junctions, and suggest that the fewer junctions the better. The organisation's rationale is that additional junctions would mean that tens of thousands of houses would be built around the junctions, adding to issues the road is supposed to alleviate.

Motorcycle Action group says that this is a matter for local residents and is a neutral issue as far as it was concerned.

Business organisations

Just over 150 businesses provide comments about additional junctions. A wide range of comments and suggestions are made, albeit that many of the comments do not mention specific junctions.

Comments requesting additional junctions / improvements / upgrades

A number of businesses, including Aqualisa provide general comments about junctions, in that they are useful or necessary, or critical to improve access on the road network. Others, including Invicta Window Films Limited assume that additional junctions would facilitate the possibility of using the new crossing.

Some businesses, including Machinery Safety Solutions Ltd and Maltron also provide general comments in terms of the benefits of additional junctions. Others, including Orchard Garage Ltd and QTL support additional junctions as a means of providing more options for drivers; if there is a major traffic incident, it would make it easier to find an alternative route.

Other businesses provide more specific comments or comments about specific junctions. This includes:

Ebbsfleet Investment (GP) Ltd thinks that improvements to the A2 Bean and Ebbsfleet junctions should remain a priority and delivery of the crossing must allow these A2 junction improvements to be delivered as soon as possible.

Indecon Building Ltd says that the A13 junction would be an advantage - allowing the industrial / freight traffic travelling to and from South East Essex without impacting on the M25. Similarly, Northfleet, Gravesend and the Ebbsfleet rail station would be well served by the new A226 junction.

Kent & Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP) says that a number of roads need to be improved, including A229, A249, Junctions 3 and 5 on the M2, junctions 5 to 7 on the M20, to allow free flow between the M2 and M20 without impeding local traffic. The organisation also suggests improvements north of the river at Junction 28 on the M25, as well as improvements to junctions between the A12 and A130, and the A127 and A130.

South East Local Enterprise Partnership also made mention of improvements to the A12/A130 junction, as well as Junction 28 on the M25, at the junction of the A127/A130, and also junctions 5 and 7 on the M2 and junction 7 on the M20.

Swale Economy and Regeneration Partnership also asks for improvements at junctions 5 and 7 of the M2, as well as potentially on the A249.

A number of business and business representatives including Globelink Fallow Limited, Armac Shipping Services Ltd, Delphini Ltd, and Essex Chambers of Commerce request a junction on the north side of the crossing with a through route to Tilbury Port.

Quinn Estates says that “further consideration of improvements to M2 (road widening between junctions 4 and 5) and integration with improvements at junction 5 (M2), A249 and junction 7 (M20) should be included in the proposals to assist traffic movement, economic benefit and vitality”

RiverOak Investment Group state that they “would be in favour of connections that would increase potential traffic flow to Manston Airport. The new crossing along with additional junctions with existing roads would increase access to Manston Airport. RiverOak is generally in favour of such a development”.

Thurrock Business Board says that the development of LTC must not delay the A13 Link 5 widening, and improvements to its junctions with the A13 and A1014.

Negative comments and concerns about additional junctions

A number of businesses, including Inline Logistik GmbH and St Modwen believe that there is no need for additional junctions, as what is already being proposed is fine or adequate. Others, including Mercury RV opposed additional junctions on the grounds of cost.

Harrisons suggest that avoiding a junction with the A226 would be a sensible way to reduce impact on local roads, and avoid gridlock in the entire area if and when there is an accident at the new crossing.

356 Architects Ltd says that the design for additional junctions feels like a design for 2005 rather than 2050.

FSB (South Essex Branch) is concerned that Route 3 would dangerously overload the A128 and the junction with both the A130 and A127.

Intu Properties PLC believes that a junction on the A13 is likely to lead to significant disruption and delay. It requested that any proposed works should be undertaken with a high level of engagement with local communities and businesses that will be affected. It also believes that significant mitigation measures and alternative routes may need to be identified to reduce the congestion and delays created during the construction period.

The National Farmers’ Union (NFU) raised concerns about the complexity of design of junctions at the A2, A289 and M2 and believes that there could have safety issues due to the complexities of junction interactions. The NFU also believes that additional junctions would increase congestion between Rochester, Gravesend and Chatham.

DP World London Gateway is concerned about layout of junctions with the A13, for Routes 3 and 4 and believes it would result in significant congestion. Additionally, Essex Chambers of Commerce questioned poor quality A13 junctions and that these would have difficulty coping with new traffic flows, resulting in significant delays to the existing network, and that this needs to be addressed.

Country Land and Business Association thinks that additional junctions would have both positive and negative consequences for communities and the local area. While junctions improve connectivity, the organisation was also concerned that additional junctions create greater levels of traffic through villages.

de Merke Estates, Borough Green Gardens Consortium, Cavalier Land Ltd says that junctions would just move congestion up the M25 and away from the crossing: Accidents on the A127 the M25 or the Junction will cause just as much disruption as is suffered at the moment.’

Vopak Terminals UK Ltd says that while the creation of junctions may increase economic benefits for the local area, additional junctions, when there is an incident at the current crossing, the gridlock that occurs at West Thurrock will only transfer to East Thurrock. As such, the organisation says there is a strong argument to only have north junctions at the M25, and no junctions on the new route on the north bank of the Thames. This would then ensure that the road can act as a relief to the current congestion which, in its opinion, is driving existing businesses to consider leaving Thurrock.

Saarke - Professional Business Solutions mentions that existing pollution at the M2/A2 junction is already above emission levels. It is concerned that if the junction were to connect to the eastern route, it would be too close to homes and a primary school, negatively impacting on their air quality. It questioned the accuracy of Highways England traffic figures for the A226, suggesting that there is more than double the number of vehicle movements than stated. The organisation does not want any new route to join with the A226, additional connection to the Wainscott bypass to be provided and that traffic management plans should be in place so as not to encourage more traffic on the M25. It also questions the costs of the proposals, and believes that costs included by Highways England do not seem to include costs for junction improvements at Bluebell Hill.

Thames Gateway Kent Partnership mentions that the Eastern South Link does not enable crossing from the A289 at M2 Junction 1. As a consequence, it thinks that this would overload surrounding routes of M2, M20, A226, A289, A228, A249, risking congestion through Strood, Chatham and Rochester. The organisation also believes that there is not a strong case for any additional junctions south of the River Thames beyond the A226 junction already under consideration. It suggests that Highways England and local stakeholders explore socio-economic and traffic implications more around A226.

Suggestions / other comments about junctions:

Dover Business Forum says that the key issue is maintaining the effective flow of traffic - if junctions assist this, then they are to be supported.

Enterprise4Good Group suggests it is better to create new junctions than to enhance existing junctions.

Foursquare requests that the junctions onto M25 and A2 need to flow straight through so there are no hold ups.

Margate Football Club asks that junctions are large enough to accommodate high volumes of traffic.

Northgate Garage Group Ltd request that the junction where the new route joins the A13 should be of motorway standard.

Regeneration X requests that any additional junctions must add to the flexibility and resilience of the local and strategic road networks

Thames Gateway South Essex - The Growth Partnership raises "serious concern over the way both Routes 3 and 4 tie into the A13." Removal of A13/A128 junction east facing slip roads "could lead to slip road queues back onto the A13 and potential for gridlock...." The junction connection into the Port of Tilbury will also need addressing."

Greater Essex Business Board would like to see further evidence before determining an opinion on proposals for new junctions with the A13 and M25 and any impact that these might have on the Local Road Network. It is concerned that junctions might exacerbate traffic on Essex's roads.

Haven Gateway Partnership says it wants to see a proper connection to the A13 allowing access to/from the east. It requests that Highways England investigate the potential to provide free flow access from the A13 (east) to the new tunnel approach to provide greater resilience.

Kent and Medway Economic Partnership requests that the new crossing is accompanied by a package of funded junction and road improvements across the wider Kent network. This includes upgrading the A229 and A249, and improving Junctions 3 and 5 on the M2, and junctions 5 to 7 on the M20. The organisation also believes that there is a need to upgrade Junction 7 on the M2 at Brenley Corner.

Tarmac Cement and Lime Ltd believes that there is a lack of detail as to how the proposed junction between Route 4 and the A13 will accommodate local traffic movements from Buckingham Hill Road which provides access to the Linford facility.

Elected representatives

A small number of elected representatives made comments about additional junctions.

Bexley Labour Group (Bexley Council) believes that improved junctions and crossing would improve connectivity, and that they would relieve congestion at the Dartford Crossing.

Jackie Doyle-Price, MP for Thurrock, calls for the Port of Tilbury to have an additional junction as this would allow port traffic to bypass Tilbury Town, and thus improving air quality.

Kelly Tolhurst, MP for Rochester and Strood, is concerned the M2 and M20 would have increased congestion as a result of Option C, and this would impact on the A228. In her opinion, this could be made worse by Operation Stack, when in operation.

Medway Labour Group believes that it is important to highlight the need for additional highways capacity at the M2 Junction with the A229. As the area is already congested, capacity is needed. The group also says that without this, the proposals, as they stand, appear to be somewhat fragmented.

Stephen Metcalfe, MP for South Basildon and East Thurrock, believes that the proposed junction at the A13/A1089 would create an unacceptable potential hotspot, significantly reducing air quality, and that a new housing estate would have to be demolished.

Tracey Crouch, MP for Chatham and Aylesford, requests that Highways England examine the impact of the proposals on the A229, and provide assurances that the investment for necessary upgrades to the road network will be forthcoming.

Environment, heritage, amenity or community groups

Given many environment, heritage, amenity and community groups are opposed to the entire scheme, many are also opposed to having additional junctions. Groups opposed to the overall proposals for an additional Thames Crossing include Gravesham and Dartford Friends of the Earth, South East Essex Friends of the Earth, and Ockendon District Girl Guiding UK.

“As there should not be any new roads new junctions do not apply.”

Gravesham and Dartford Friends of the Earth

“...highly against any new roads, motorways or slip roads or junctions to make an appearance within the South, North Ockendons and surrounding areas now or in the future. You will be ruining people’s lives, community, countryside, air pollution, housing & homes.”

Ockendon District Girl Guiding UK

South East Essex Friends of the Earth believes that the UK cannot meet its Paris Climate Conference commitments without reducing road traffic levels and believes that any proposal to build new roads will encourage increased traffic levels, as well as diverting funding from measures such as public transport, which would help reduce emissions and meet the Paris targets.

West Tilbury Village Hall reiterates its opposition to all proposals within Option C, and therefore also those for additional junctions. The organisation is concerned about the potentially severe disruption to the operation and profitability of the hall during construction, particularly due to air and noise pollution. It is concerned that this will reduce the hall’s desirability as a venue.

Comments about specific junctions

A13

A few organisations made comments about junctions on the A13. Orsett Forum is against additional junctions on the A13 on the grounds of pollution and consequences for local people’s health.

“This will drift pollution plumes of tiny particles (PM0.4-PM10) across Orsett and surrounding areas. The diesel plume density at the new super junction will exceed all European Union limits, limits there to protect human health causing lung cancer and heart attacks.”

Orsett Forum

Thurrock Rugby Football Club is also concerned about pollution.

“The Junction between the A13 and A1089... will carry much more traffic than the current A1089 Dock Road and will have a serious effect on the pollution levels on the Rugby Club pitches and the general surrounding Sporting Facilities.”

Thurrock Rugby Football Club

A127

Dunton Community Association believes that as the A127 is at capacity, it would need widening to cope with the extra traffic. However, the organisation was concerned about where funding would come for this, given that, in its opinion, this has been something that has been discussed for the last 20 years.

A2

Bean Residents' Association is concerned about junction options for the A2, and that this could lead to severe impacts on villagers and the countryside.

Faversham Society believes that Option C will put additional pressure on the A2 (as well as on the M2 at Junctions 6 and 7). It believes this will damage traffic flow, cause congestion, and increase pollution. It mentions that emission levels in part of the A2 already exceeds thresholds, and raised concerns about freight traffic on the M2/A2 as these roads are not well equipped for HGVs in its opinion.

A226

Several organisations made comments about junctions on the A226 – with most opposed to any new junction on this road.

1st Shorne Scout Group thinks that this would have an adverse impact on local traffic flows.

Bean Residents Association questions why the A226 has appeared as it wasn't in an earlier consultation, and suggests that a junction at this location would limit the scope for extending the tunnel length and increases the likelihood of traffic been drawn through Gravesend.

Dickens' Country Protection Society mentions that junctions with A226 would increase congestion, and that it strongly opposed to the A226 junction.

"...it will greatly increase the traffic through Lower Shorne and Higham, where it will threaten the historic buildings adjacent to the roadway including Gads Hill House (the former home of the author Charles Dickens) and its subterranean tunnel under the road which Dickens himself had built...the traffic on the A226 presently is more than double the figure stated in the consultation documents, more traffic will lead to more frequent gridlock. The junction would attract increased traffic to traverse Gravesend threatening its historic centre..."

Friends of the North Kent Marshes are concerned that a junction on the A226 would lead to a massive increase in traffic on the A226 and its feeder roads. The organisation is also against A226 junctions as these would expose the Green Belt and the Ramsar-protected marshes to industrial and commercial development.

Higham Village History Group echoed concerns about a massive increase in traffic, and the impact on Ramsar sites and protected marshes. It also believes that incidents at the new crossing and the existing crossing will cause major congestion and gridlock.

St Mary the Virgin, Chalk, says that a proposed junction on the A226 is most unwelcome, and would cause misery for people who live in the area. Friends of St. Mary's Church are also against A226 junctions. The group believes that a junction on the A226 would lead to a lorry shortcut to the A228 to Grain via Higham, causing additional noise and air pollution for the church and surrounding area.

A289

Kent Downs AONB believes that the A2/M2 junction with the A289 is already complicated. It states that while part of required land-take for the new junction is outside of the AONB, it is nevertheless considered to be of high landscape value, exhibiting similar characteristics to the adjacent AONB.

Bean Residents' Association prefers a junction at this location, rather than with the A226, and suggests the feasibility of this should be investigated as it already has links to both the A2 and M2.

ESL and WSL

1st Shorne Scout Group believes that the Eastern Southern Link is poorly considered given there is no link with Wainscott bypass (A289). As such, the organisation questions the objective validity of the whole consultation document evaluation, assessments and recommendations. The organisation also provides comments on the Western Southern Link, and suggests that a junction is only worth considering if the new road is underground from the area immediately north of the A2. It suggests that steps must be taken to ensure no displacement of traffic onto rural road network in case of incident, which does not happen at present.

M25 Junctions

A few organisations provide comments about junctions with the M25.

1st Shorne Scout Group believes that junctions with the M25 north of the river would only displace traffic, and add to congestion north of the immediate Dartford Crossing area.

“These links therefore do little to relieve the objective congestion nor provide any really significant extra traffic space. As exemplified by the Humber Bridge - most traffic there is east to west not across the bridge and here the main distant (as opposed to near local) traffic movement is north-south along the M25”

Havering Friends of the Earth are against junctions on the A13 and the M25 as they believe the routes already have a negative impact on Havering and Essex in terms of noise, pollution, damage to wildlife, and obstruction to the free flow of people and wildlife.

Horndon on the Hill Society & Community Forum also oppose additional junctions with the M25 on the grounds of additional pollution caused by having standing traffic over a wider area.

Thames Chase Trust is concerned about a proposed new junction immediately south of the Thames Chase Forest centre at Broadfields Farm, and requests that it is kept up to date with developments.

“This site serves as both an environmental attraction that draws c.100,000 visitors per year as well as serving as an exemplar and ‘shop window’ for the Thames Chase Community Forest project. Thames Chase has significant concerns regarding the potential impact of the junction on the operation and integrity of the Broadfields Farm site. Whilst detailed designs have yet to be prepared, the proposals as they currently stand imply that part of the southern part of the Broadfields Farm site could be needed to support the junction slipways. Thames Chase requests that it is kept up to date with any plan developments relating to this junction. A solution that focused on the existing road network would mitigate the need for additional junctions on the M25.”

'Land of the Fanns' Landscape Partnership is also concerned about the impact of an additional junction with the M25 on Thames Chase Forest Centre at Broadlands Farm.

Other comments and concerns about junctions

Comments received about other junctions include:

Gravesham and Dartford Friends of the Earth mention that much of the current Dartford to Purfleet crossing is a problem because there are too many junctions close to the tunnel entrance. These junctions are Junctions 2, 1a and 1b on the Kent side and 30 and 31 on the Essex side.

The Bonners Residents Association raises concerns about the Baker Street and Horndon on the Hill Junctions, given both areas are conservation areas. It also suggests that little or no consideration has been given to the two ports in the borough, which it says means that HGVs would have to travel longer distances to connect to the new road and would negatively impact on the local community.

The Women's Institute do not believe that additional junctions would be beneficial as, in their view, this would result in a huge increase in traffic.

"One of our Parish Councillors has warned us that villages south of the A2 such as Meopham and Istead Rise will become 'rat runs' for traffic cutting up from the M20 to access the new crossing. The main route out of my village of Vigo is by the A227 which is already a busy road and additional traffic would be an additional danger for school children attending the three schools along its route."

Chatham Maritime Trust says that their biggest concern relates to how the road infrastructure further down the roads will be improved to cope with the new influx of traffic.

Bulphan WI oppose additional junctions because they believe these junctions would be a blot on the landscape

Dickens' Country Protection Society has concerns about the design of junctions

"...junctions associated with this scheme (the ESL to M2 junction 1, the WSL to the A2, the Marlings Cross/Gravesend East junction) do not seem to have been well designed in the proposals and the Society believes that they can be designed with better layouts"

Little Belhus Country Park is worried about the impact on wildlife. It suggests that something is done to alleviate roadkill, and that Highways England should create some wildlife bridges over major roads. It also believes that levels of air pollution and noise pollution are already too high.

South Essex Wildlife Hospital, and WELCOM Community Forum were concerned about the Orsett Cock roundabout.

"The spur to the Orsett Cock Roundabout will draw traffic into local routes on our doorstep necessitating further road construction as the infrastructure at this location will not cope with an increase of traffic causing further gridlock"

South Essex Wildlife Hospital

"Proposed junctions at the Orsett Cock/A128 roundabout and the Dock Approach/Orsett junction will increase pressure on these local routes during peak times...if there is an incident on the A13 which would encourage national traffic via the A1306 as an alternative route to the junctions".

WELCOM Community Forum

National Trust says that it would like to see more detail of the proposed junctions and potential impact on setting and tranquillity.

Local government organisations

A number of local government organisations, including Dartford Borough Council, Darenth Parish Council, and Wrotham Parish Council agree with the proposals.

"The proposed additional junctions would be beneficial. They would improve connectivity in these parts of Kent and Essex and enable reduced journey lengths for those within the vicinity of the junctions. They, therefore, have the potential to stimulate economic growth"

Dartford Borough Council

Others including Maidstone Borough Council, Dartford Parish Council, and Gravesham Borough Council are negative about additional junctions. Maidstone Borough Council is concerned that additional junctions will reduce the effectiveness of the new road. Dartford Parish Council and Gravesham Borough Council are opposed to Option C, and hence oppose new junctions as a result of this.

Comments about specific junctions

A13

Essex County Council believes that if there is an incident on the M25, an alternative junction on the A13 will become the alternative route. The council does not believe that it has been demonstrated that the proposed junctions with the A13 can support forecast traffic flows and are future-proofed for growth.

While Castle Point Borough Council believes that additional junctions may improve accessibility, they could also create extra congestion, and as such would need significant improvement of capacity on the A13 and A127 to avoid this.

Colchester Borough Council notes that both Route 2 and Route 4 allow for free flow links to the A13 to/from the east of the crossing. However, it believes that as the proposed Route 3 does not provide the same level of service, the resilience of this route is compromised. It requests that Highways England investigate the potential to provide free flow access from the A13 (east) to the new tunnel approach to provide greater resilience.

Thurrock Council believes that proposed junction arrangements could have a significant impact in terms of access for existing users along the A13.

A127

The London Borough of Havering believes that as the A127 / A12 is already a congestion hotspot with a history of accidents, Route 4 would exacerbate this.

A2

Ospringe Parish Council also raises concerns.

"If the local road network is not improved, especially the junction of the M2 with the Sittingbourne turnoff, the A2 from Sittingbourne to Brenley Corner and the A251 junction at Faversham A2, these locations will not be able to cope with the extra traffic."

Ospringe Parish Council

A226

A few organisations provide comments about junctions with the A226:

Higham Parish Council is totally opposed to junctions on the A226, and states that lack of access from the new road onto the A289 is of great concern. It believes this issue will lead to a massive and unacceptable increase in traffic movements on the A226. As the A226 passes by Gad's Hill School, the council states that an increase in pollution on children's health is a key factor, and that further gridlock is inevitable.

Kent County Council does not support the proposal for a junction with the A226. It urges that as much of the route as possible be in a tunnel, especially at least to the far south of the river as the A226. It also mentions that modelling has not been provided that demonstrates the impact of this junction on traffic flows through urban Gravesend, Higham and Medway.

Shorne Parish Council object to a proposed junction with the A226 as it would create extra traffic and disrupt field patterns.

Gravesham Borough Council is opposed to a junction on the A226 as it does not support a route east of Gravesend.

Medway Council has concerns about increased traffic on this road and its capacity, especially from HGVs. The council is concerned about environmental impacts - landscape and air quality, and wider pressures on the Green Belt. It asks if some of the proposed route could be put in a tunnel.

A228

East Malling & Larkfield Parish Council is concerned that proposals would increase traffic on the A228, along Leybourne Way, Lunsford lane, and New Hythe Lane to the A20.

Leybourne Parish Council asks about where the link between the M2 and M20 will be located. It states that while the A228 is nearest, this road is already congested, and what with housing developments in progress, will lead to additional traffic volumes. It also believes that some housing would have to be demolished along the A228 as the road would have to be widened in the event of a link with the proposed new route.

A229

Ashford Borough Council believes that the effectiveness of the new crossing can only be maintained if complementary improvements are made to the A229. Cuxton Parish Council believes that if the A229 is not improved, it will result in

heavy congestion at the A2/M2 junction. Leybourne Parish Council requests that Highways England to encourage cross channel traffic to use the A229 between the M20 and the M2.

M2

Several organisations made comments about junctions with the M2, including:

Dover District Council states that the M2/A2 route needs to be improved, including Junction 7 on the M2. It requests that longer distance traffic remain on the strategic route network and not leak onto local roads. It states that further modelling and investigation into junctions is needed.

East Malling & Larkfield Parish Council states that the A228 linking the M2 and M20 has restricted width and is on a poor alignment. It says that the A228 from the M2 into Crupton Valley and the junction with Bush Road is a danger spot as it follows two-way roads, and then leads to Junction 4 of M20 which is already busy at peak times. In light of this, the council says that proposals must not attract through-traffic over the bridge at Wouldham.

Faversham Town Council requests assurances that planned improvements to junctions factor the full impact into the design. It states that once the route is decided, plans should be developed to minimise the impact to the A2 and M2 and improve the A249.

Ospringe Parish Council says that if the local road network is not improved, especially the junction of the M2 with the Sittingbourne turnoff, the A2 from Sittingbourne to Brenley Corner, and the A251 junction at Faversham, that these locations will not be able to cope with the extra traffic.

Swale Borough Council & Hartlip Parish Council believe close attention should be given to the widening of the M2 from Gillingham to Sittingbourne Junction 5 to improve capacity as traffic is often slow or stopped because of narrowing to two lanes.

M25 Junctions

Buckhurst Hill Parish Council is concerned about additional traffic volume around Junctions 28 to 25. It states motorway improvements could be required, which would impact on the environment.

Eastern Southern Link (ESL) and Western Southern Link (WSL)

Bean Parish Council says that the Eastern Southern Link must link directly to both the A20 and M20 otherwise there will be considerable congestion on the A2.

Shorne Parish Council considers that the Western Southern Link junction with the A2, the Eastern Southern Link junction with the M2 at Junction 1, and the revised Marling Cross/Henshurst/Gravesend east junctions are all poorly designed, and would be in need of redesign.

C Variant

Medway Council says that it cannot be true that Option C Variant has been ruled out of proposals because it has no influence over route choice between Dartford and the proposed new crossing location. It argues that it means that the A229 would not be improved, and that the M2 Junction 3 and M20 Junction 20 would remain untouched – which in its opinion, are already congested. It further argues that these issues need to be addressed at the same time.

Other comments, suggestions or concerns about junctions

A large number of other comments were made including:

Sutton at Hone & Hawley Parish Council request that new junctions are exceedingly well and clearly signposted especially for HGVs.

Cuxton Parish Council says it is difficult to access details of the A2 junction proposals as the detailed drawings do not seem to be available online for Western and Eastern junctions with A2.

Essex County Council says that whilst the consultation is focused on route options, it also needs to consider the impact on existing junctions on the strategic road network. It states that where improvements are required as a result of the changing traffic flows created by the new crossing, then such improvements should be funded as part of the scheme to avoid future problems for the highway authorities. The council also says that it has consistently argued for a number of wider network improvements and believes these must be delivered in conjunction with the LTC to mitigate current pinch points which would otherwise be exacerbated. This includes Junction 28 on the M25 with the A12, A127/A130 (Fairglen junction), A12/A130 (Howe Green junction) and the A127 capacity improvements.

“Once a decision is made on the route for the LTX ECC would expect to see additional modelling on existing and new junctions for the M25, A12, A13, A127 and A130”

Essex County Council

Maldon District Council believes that to avoid delay in this infrastructure project, no additional junctions are necessary.

Shepway District Council considers that longer distance traffic using the new crossing should remain on the strategic road network and not leak onto the local road network. It believes that the current proposals may lead to an increase in traffic on local roads, and as such, further testing and modelling of preferred options and junctions, are required before a final decision is made in consultation with affected local authorities and communities.

London Borough of Bexley believes that the proposed junction provision is adequate to serve the existing network configuration and locations of towns and major employment areas. However, it suggests that junction provision to the north of the river may need reviewing if major development areas come forward as a result of the proposed crossing scheme being approved.

Basildon Borough Council would seek the views of its Highway Authority (Essex County Council) for any views on the specific design or locations of junctions along the proposed routes and would support any comments made by its Highway Authority as part of this consultation process. As none of the junctions are proposed within the Basildon borough, the Council says that it does not have any land constraint issues in terms of what is currently proposed.

Kent County Council recommends a number of wider network improvements and believes these must be delivered in conjunction with the crossing to fully realise its benefits (M2 J7; dualling the A2; M20 J7; M2 J5). The council also states that for other developments (e.g. Ebbsfleet Garden City and the Paramount Entertainment Resort) that these should be acknowledged to future-proof the scheme.

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council is concerned that adequate modelling and local scheme design has not been carried out in terms of detailed junction design and effect on local roads. In particular, the effect on the A127, A13, A130 and A128.

Suffolk County Council mentions there is a need to complete improvements to: A12 Chelmsford to A120; M25 Junction 28; the A12 from M25 to Chelmsford, and the A12 Colchester Bypass.

Teynham Parish Council says that new motorway specifications are required at all junctions and link to the exiting A road junctions should be avoided at all costs.

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council supports the principle of investment in the connecting and nearby infrastructure to ensure road safety and free flowing traffic that limits impacts on residential amenity.

West Horndon Parish Council says that given the harm all the presented routes create, additional junctions will not be beneficial.

Transport, infrastructure or utility organisations

As with other categories of stakeholder, some transport, infrastructure and utility organisations support additional junctions, and others oppose. For example, Aggreko state they agree with proposals if road capacity can also be increased. Nicholls Transport also agree with what is proposed. SPB Transport also believes there are already sufficient junctions on the proposed route.

Specific comments on junctions

A2

The Road Haulage Association (RHA) notes that as there are no planned changes for the Faversham to Dover part of the A2, it asks Highways England for confirmation of this. It also mentions that their members report that the Duke of York Roundabout A2 (top of Jubilee Way) already experiences existing peak hour congestion issues, and Whitfield Roundabout A2 has all day congestion issues and is an accident blackspot for left-hand drive vehicles trying to gain access to the roundabout. In the view of the RHA, the single A2 lane carriageway from Whitfield to Lydden needs to be dualled.

A226

Motorcycle Action Group believes that linking either of the southern approach roads to the A226 would create severe local traffic problems in Higham; Local lanes would become 'rat runs'.

Eastern Southern Link (ESL)

Hutchison Ports (UK) state that due to economic deprivation in Medway and Isle of Grain, that with the design of the junction connecting the Eastern Southern Link to the M2 it is important to ensure there is free-flowing access to the A289 as well as the A2 and M2.

M2

A few organisations made specific mention of M2 junctions, including:

British International Freight Association (BIFA) says that a motorway standard road at Bluebell Hill will be required to connect the M2 & the M20. The organisation also believes that the M2 / A2 will need to be upgraded to motorway standard all the way to Dover.

The Road Haulage Association say they would like to make the point that heavy traffic volumes during peak hours are already recorded on the whole of the A2, in both directions, starting from the exit to the dual carriageway from Lydden to Brenley Corner M2 Junction 7. The organisation also says that its members have reported that the A249 Sittingbourne / Junction 5 on the M2 records heavy traffic congestion at peak times, and there is existing peak hour heavy congestion at the A249 Detling Hill – Maidstone M20 Junction 7, with daily standing traffic 10 -15 minutes' delay.

C Variant

Confederation of Passenger Transport says it is seriously concerned that the proposal of a connection from A2/M2 to the M20 has been discounted, as this connection would be most direct route to Dover from the North. As such, it believes that traffic volumes will cause congestion beyond Canterbury.

M20

Eric Aldridge Consulting Limited says that their biggest concern is that in the south the A2/M2 route is not the preferred route to Dover and the proposals will create an unmanageable increase in traffic on this route. As a result, it states that they believe a motorway link to the M20 should be constructed to lessen this impact.

Other junctions

R&J Transport supports a new junction and link road into Tilbury and the Docks. It suggests that not only would this junction benefit those travelling to the docks, but that it would also benefit other users of the road by lightening traffic and shortening journey times.

Forth Ports Ltd (on behalf of the Port of Tilbury London Ltd) also state that an additional junction linking to the Port of Tilbury would enhance:

- Economically - further growth of the port; provide time savings to movements to/from the Port;
- Transport - provide congestion relief to Dartford and improve the performance of the A13 and A1089 approach roads; improve resilience of network; improve safety;
- Community and environment - benefits to Tilbury residents, to air quality, noise and amenity; Improve connections and better access to jobs in Kent and Essex.

Other comments and concerns about junctions

Other comments and concerns about junctions include:

RAC Foundation questions the wisdom of having local access junctions near to the crossing, unless these are on a scale to cope with significant vehicle movement.

Harlex Haulage and Service Ltd state that the junctions proposed aren't clear on drawings, that some are totally impractical and too bunched together, and that this could cause confusion in an area where accidents are already frequent. The organisation says that accidents are already frequent where the A2 splits into Wainscott bypass, Rochester (A2), M2 and then further down the spur to A228.

P W Gates Distribution Ltd believes that as additional junctions tend to cause more congestion and potential for collisions, they are in favour of fewer junctions.

Eurotunnel believes that a direct link from the A2/M2 to the M20 would balance traffic flows on the A2/M2 and M20 corridors and would provide for greater route choices and smoother traffic flows on the southern side.

Port of Dover says that the A2 needs dualling and that the M2/A2 corridor performs inadequately. The organisation says that connectivity to M20/A20 needs to be considered, as otherwise, there is a danger that increasing volumes of freight using the new crossing will by-pass the M20/A20 corridor by heading directly to the coast on a less reliable M2/A2.

The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport UK (CILT) is concerned M2/A2, A229 and A249 use will increase and improvements are needed, but that these will not be going ahead. It believes that the road network east of Gravesend won't be able to cope, and that new housing development in Ebbsfleet and the proposed Paramount Theme Park will exacerbate this.

The Freight Transport Association "believes that great care needs to be taken when considering additional junctions and they should only be acceptable if they enhance the through-journeys on the route."

HS1 asks for assurances that redevelopment of the Bean Interchange will be unaffected by the LTC programme as this is seen as being critical to releasing short term growth.

Other category of organisation or group

A number of other organisations provided comments about junctions. These comments include:

King West (on behalf of a landowner) says that whichever route is chosen, a junction accessing the Port of Tilbury is needed. As all development is currently served from the A1089 - for resilience of the network, a further junction is needed to the east of Tilbury, to give a second access to the Port and area. The organisation believes that Route 3 does not do this, and would mean that all traffic would go to the A13 before coming back to the A1089.

Diocese of Rochester says that the inclusion of access/exit roads to the A226 is particularly unnecessary. All local access should be from the A2/M2. A new bridge at Dartford would not require any new junctions.

Gravesend Deanery believes that the proposed access road to the A226 will cause huge congestion and hold-ups to traffic flowing in and out of Gravesend to the East. Especially when combined with the traffic to and from the new Crematorium currently being built at Chalk. It states that the A2 / M2 is the only road in the area able to sustain this traffic, and that these roads would not be able to sustain much extra traffic. The organisation also says that the link between the M2 and M20 - the A229 - is wholly inadequate for the additional traffic it would need to carry. It says that to upgrade this road would add significantly to the cost and disruption of this project.

Medway Green Party is not in favour of this proposal going ahead. It states that despite all opposition if the decision is made to proceed with the proposed scheme, it is important that the locations of any junctions should take full account of their impact on the existing local road network. For example, the single carriageway A226 and A228 are already busy roads which will face much increased traffic if drivers use them to access the approach roads for the proposed Crossing.

4.5.2 Members of the public

Response form

There were 18,543 members of the public who answered **Question 11** on the response form. The question asked for the participants' views on whether additional junctions would be beneficial. The most common type of positive comments made at Question 11 are statements of support for the junction proposals, made by around one in four participants (4,426). This is followed by support for Location A as the crossing site (756) and support for the proposed scheme generally (643). The specific junction proposals that most often receive support are those for the M25 (510).

The most common form of negative comment at Question 11 is a statement of opposition to the junction proposals, made by one in five members of the public (3,857). This is followed by opposition to the proposed scheme as a whole (1,303) and opposition to a crossing at Location C (722). The specific junction proposals that most often attract negative comments are those for the A226 (715), followed by those for the M25 (420).

The most frequent type of suggestion made at Question 11 is an alternative to the junction proposals, made by one in six participants (2,998). This is followed by an alternative to the proposed scheme as a whole (821), alternative route options (415) and a different location for the Thames crossing (383).

In terms of the specific comments that participants made at Question 11, the following stand out as the most important:

General comments on junctions

Members of the public are most likely to make a general comment on the proposed junctions (10,263), with more who comment in support (4,426) than in opposition (3,857). The most frequent general comments in favour of the junctions are broad statements of support for them (2,093 comments) and a statement that they are urgently needed (651 comments).

"I was born and raised in Dartford. I know the area well. The efficiency of the current Dartford crossing is getting worse day by day. The residents of this area need a solution. These junctions will be efficient. Please build them sooner and not later."

Member of the public

Other general comments in support of the junctions similarly address anticipated improvements in the level of traffic and congestion (889 participants) and better access to destinations and freedom of travel (759 participants).

"New junctions are vital to access the new crossing. Some traffic would invariably be able to be diverted away from the Dartford crossing and it could shorten the journey to cross along the eastern areas of Kent and Essex, which must be beneficial overall in terms of mileage costs, congestion and pollution."

Member of the public

General comments against the junctions are often a general statement in opposition to them (1,298 comments). This is very frequently made in conjunction with a comment about problems with congestion as a result of these new junctions (1,694 participants) or damage to the environment (654 participants).

"I strongly believe a new junction would NOT be beneficial. There are enough junctions that can be widened to adapt to new road scheme and cause less environmental damage. Being a car driver I strongly believe that the traffic flow runs better between junctions and the more junctions the poorer the traffic flow and more likelihood of traffic jams, which I believe one of the issues you are trying to avoid. More junctions also lead to more 'rat runs' when there are delays, by drivers exiting the main roads to seek other routes and then congesting smaller local roads (i.e. our local roads)."

Member of the public

"In an area which is already flooded with traffic, adding more junctions will cause more stop-start traffic, more pollution, noise, disruption and loss of greenbelt land in Thurrock."

Member of the public

Specific junctions

A total of 2,703 members of the public make comments on the specific junctions between the proposed route and the major roads with which it would connect: A13, A226, A2/M2 and M25. As with the comments about junctions in general, the comments on specific junctions are generally quite evenly split between those in support of them and those against them. Attitudes towards the levels of congestion are generally the most important factor, particularly for those opposed to the junctions.

However, far more participants comment against the junction with the A226 (715) than in support of it (86). Comments against the proposed junction are particularly likely to be about the anticipated increase in traffic that the surrounding area would experience, as well as the effect on Shorne, Chalk and other communities in this part of Kent.

"NO JUNCTIONS TO EXISTING ROADS (A226), road casualties, air pollution, and traffic will gridlock both the new link road and the A226 and surrounding areas in Gravesend, Shorne and Higham. Traffic from Medway will pass by everyone's homes to this 'proposed junction' and cause chaos, driving away business from the area due to aggravation and traffic/travel times increasing!"

Member of the public

Responses by email and post

There are 74 members of the public who have commented on junctions through email or by post. For each of the specific junctions, the weight of comments is much more likely to be in opposition than in support. This is particularly the case for the A226 junction, with all 29 members of the public who comment on it being opposed to it. This is mainly because of the anticipated effect of the junction on communities and on the level of traffic.

4.6 Further comments

This section provides a summary of responses to the consultation which address Question 12 on the online and paper response form, as well as unstructured responses via email and letter that make reference to issues relating to the location of the crossing.

Question 12: We would welcome any other comments you may have on our proposals.

4.6.1 Stakeholder organisations

Many stakeholder organisations provide additional comments, either in response to **Question 12**, or in an email or letter. However, many of the comments provided tend to be comments that had been already made at earlier questions in the response form/questionnaire. As such, this section provides a general and broad overview of the suggestions made as responses to Question 12, as well as any additional comments made by email or unstructured letter (i.e. those not providing their response via the questionnaire).

Suggestions and other comments

Businesses / Businesses Representatives

Essex Chambers of Commerce says that it is essential that the new Lower Thames Crossing project is progressed with some urgency in order to support important economic growth plans.

Kent & Medway Economic Partnership suggest that the construction of a longer tunnel should be considered. It is suggested that this approach may lessen negative community and environmental impacts, and, as a result reduce objections to the proposals, ultimately resulting in the earlier completion of the project.

Regeneration X feels strongly that the new crossing must be funded via public expenditure and not via private funding. It believes that public funding is cheaper and simpler than private funding, and as such, private funding is not acceptable.

Thames Gateway Kent Partnership says that there is a need for updated modelling forecasts to take account of expansion of the Port of Dover.

London City Cruise Port is concerned that if the proposal was to consider a new bridge, this could potentially give rise to significant issues which would prejudice the viability and sustainability of the new London City Cruise Port in the Royal Borough of Greenwich.

C. H. Cole & Sons (Mill House) mentions that any effects on food production and farming are noticeably absent from the consultation documents.

Big Red Branding Ltd suggests that tankers should be banned from the new tunnel so as not to cause the same sort of hold ups at the existing Dartford Tunnel.

Arc Sound Ltd mentions that residents in the Boroughs of Thurrock and Dartford receive a discounted rate for the existing QE2 bridge crossing. The business suggests that Highways England, and the Government must commit to extending this discount, or more ideally, abolishing it altogether for the communities of Thurrock and Dartford who will be affected by

the construction of the new crossing. Arc Sound Ltd also suggests that as an alternative, the Government commits to a reduction in business rates for the businesses operating in the affected boroughs. Arrow Leasehold Management Ltd also mentions tolls charges and asks that if a charge is to continue on the Dartford Crossing then perhaps this could be lowered and an identical charge be added to the new crossing which would mean, in its opinion, that whatever crossing is used, that the same charge would apply so there would be nothing to gain from not using the nearest crossing. B&A Miles Associates Limited believes that there should be no toll charges on the new crossing.

Savills, representing the London Resort Company Holdings Limited (LRCH) said that it is progressing with plans for the London Paramount Entertainment Resort (LPER) on the Swanscombe Peninsula. It said that it noted that the Business Case for the LTC (included within the consultation documentation) does not take into account LPER. Omitting the LPER from the assessment of the Business Case, in its opinion, significantly underestimates the potential economic dividends. If the Business Case is re-evaluated to take into account the LPER there will likely be significant additional economic benefits and further justification for the delivery of the LTC. LRCH therefore believe it is of fundamental importance that the Business Case be reviewed.

FSB South Essex Branch believes that it is short-sighted to rely on a single link back to M25 north of the River Thames. It suggests that the scheme should at least have provision for a direct link to the proposed Oxford/Cambridge link as part of an outer orbital.

Enterprise4Good Group says that if money were no object and all politics are set aside, the ultimate solution would be to create two new Thames Crossings (1) the LTC as planned and (2) a second East London River Crossing at Beckton Gallions Reach. The business believes that this would open up the whole of the Thames Gateway creating opportunities for new jobs, business growth and stronger local, regional and national economies.

Marketing & Business Development believes that a third lane is required on the M2 between Gillingham and Faversham.

Synergy Planning & Property Consultants Ltd asks Highways England to look again at a bridge option, incorporating a tidal barrier across to the Isle of Sheppey.

DP World London Gateway would like future information about how routes would be affected during emergency incidents

Country Land and Business Association says that Highways England should act as a responsible acquiring authority and seek to minimise the impact of any scheme on private households, landowners and businesses. The chosen routes, in its opinion, should minimise the amount of private land taken and ensure that fair compensation is offered where the acquisition of land cannot be avoided.

Saarke - Professional Business Solutions thinks that the costs need to be revised and presented for analysis and the consultation should be re-run with accurate traffic figures, accurate plans, accurate CGIs and accurate value for money calculations.

The Haven Gateway Partnership believes that for users to be able to make best use of this new alternative route live traffic information needs to be provided through roadside signs in advance of the key junctions and via satnav systems.

Biggin Hill Airport says that the M25 South of the Dartford Crossing needs further appraisal. It mentions that Kent County Council are currently appraising the need for better connectivity at Junction 5 and possibly a new connection at

Westerham, and that the airport invites Highways England to consult with it on this and wider connectivity issues in South London and the wider South East.

Thames Gateway Kent Partnership thinks that it is not enough to look at the Lower Thames Crossing in isolation. It states that holistic solutions are needed to ensure that the entire strategic corridor from the Channel Ports to the M25 can perform at the level proposed for the new Crossing.

Vopak Terminals UK Ltd suggests that much of the congestion that occurs during an incident on the QE 2 Bridge or adjacent roads is caused by the poor behaviour and lack of compliance by motorists. It says it would urge Thurrock Council to consider the introduction of control measures such as yellow box systems at a number of the key roundabouts and junctions equipped with CCTV enforcement cameras to prevent clear routes being blocked.

Elected representatives

The Mayor of London believes it necessary to consider more fully the role of public transport in the design of this crossing. He suggests discussing this with Transport for London (TfL). The Mayor also states that LTC and Dartford crossings need to be integrated with other future crossings within Greater London. The Mayor recommends establishing a joint working group of TfL, HE and local highways authorities to ensure good integration of plans.

Stephen Metcalfe, MP for South Basildon and East Thurrock, is disappointed that Highways England is not looking at wider issues of road network in South Essex.

Thurrock Conservative says that should Government insist on progressing with the crossing after the consultation has finished, that elected members and officers of Thurrock Council should be involved in discussions with Highways England and other parties to help protect residents and businesses from the least-worst option.

Councillor Linda Van den Hende of the London Borough of Havering says that she found it difficult to understand why, having had previous consultations, where it was obvious Location C in any variation was unacceptable; Highways England has persisted in going for the option least popular with residents. In her opinion, it seems as though the consultation is in name only and that Highways England does not really want to listen and has already made up its mind.

Local Government organisations

Canewdon Parish Council suggests that once the toll has raised sufficient funds to cover the cost of the crossing, it would like to see the crossing remain with the control of the highways authority and the revenue raised thereafter be used for good causes in Essex.

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council says that there is no further mention in the current consultation of heavy rail links, and that in the opinion of the council, this represents a missed opportunity to link into the current network.

Shorne Parish Council says that it regrets that Highways England has excluded Location A from the consultation, given this was the preferred option in 2013.

Dartford Borough Council says that given the prospect of the Paramount park development, or similar alternative scheme that generates a high number of visitors, on the Swanscombe Peninsula the proposals need to be revised to accommodate a 3-dual lane crossing at Location C as a matter of urgency.

Thurrock Council requests that the Department for Transport (DfT) and Highways England jointly investigate the effect of pollution on health.

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council believes that proposals should progress with the C variant as an essential element of the LTC project. Without appropriate measures in place to address the growth in traffic along this route, the council states that Highways England is failing in their duty.

Aylesford Parish Council believes that whilst the consultation is focused on route options, the impact on the existing local road network and junctions should not be ignored and should be considered as part of this consultation.

Higham Parish Council believes that the narrow focus on proposing a route for a new crossing seems to have excluded any longer term infrastructure planning and joined up thinking.

Essex County Council thinks that it is essential that property owners, who may have already been blighted by the three proposed routes, are fully compensated for the loss of property value and inability to now sell if they need or want to move.

Environment, heritage, amenity or community groups

Dunton Community Association says that poor local knowledge and defective evidence-gathering may cause Highways England to seriously undervalue the Dunton area.

The Dover Society says that the M2/A2 is neglected as a "signed route" to Dover and that a long awaited upgrade of the A2 from Lydden to Dover Docks that should be considered within this scheme.

Thurrock Local Access Forum wishes to state that it is vitally important that its committee is kept fully informed and is fully involved in all stages of the project right from the very beginning. It therefore requests that at least one member of this Forum is appointed to any working party or consultative group that is formed to consider the project, from its infancy to the final stages.

Buglife -The Invertebrate Conservation Trust, says it would be happy to be consulted further on routes and would be keen to insure that appropriate invertebrate surveys and mitigation plans are included should the proposal progress further.

Essex Wildlife Trust is concerned to ensure serious financial commitment to bring about genuine and significant net gains in biodiversity. The Trust says that it expects the LTC project to be accompanied by a substantial package of landscape-scale mitigation, enhancement and new habitat creation proposals.

Essex Bridleways Association asks to be kept fully informed with progress and to be given an opportunity to help contribute to this project from a rights of way perspective.

South East Essex Residents Group questions why Highways England has not taken a wider view in relation to the immediate area that is affected currently by crossing traffic.

Thurrock Rugby Football Club says it is very surprised that there is no mention of an environmental impact assessment on the area in any of the documentation.

1st Shorne Scout Group says that there is little or nothing in the consultation document detailing how public access and rights of way would be preserved / restored both during construction and post construction in the consultation documents.

The British Horse Society asks that the Society is kept fully informed and is fully involved in all stages of the project and that they have the opportunity to have an input into any working party or consultative group that is formed to consider the project, from its infancy to the final stages.

RSPB says that there are "gaps in knowledge with regards to the effects of noise on water bird populations" which the RSPB would like to see addressed."

West Tilbury Commons Conservators is very disappointed that, as the responsible body for the management of a substantial area of land, they were not approached. It says that the situation regarding the land purchase, compulsorily or otherwise, is complex and should have been a matter for consultation long before now.

Transport, infrastructure or utility organisations

The Institution of Civil Engineers South East England mentions that Public Private Partnership (PPP) may provide the greatest benefits for the proposed scheme. It also suggests the subcontracting out of the management of both crossings to maximise cost-saving and the incorporation of a light rail link, connecting the Tilbury loop line and the North Kent Railway into the scheme to ensure that it is future proof for increases in commuter demand.

Gravesend Deanery believes that although Location A is still 'on the table', the consultation seems to assume that Location C is the only option. It believes that the questions are worded in such a way that to answer some of them implies a support for Location C in general, which is not in fact the case. It states that variants of Location A will still be more effective in reducing the congestion in Dartford than any of the Location C proposals.

Freight Transport Association says that there are a series of conditions that would need to be met to secure their support for tolling, which they describe as their Commercial Vehicle Operators' Road Toll Charter'. This charter consists of eight points, including visibility of charging elements, compensatory reduction in fuel duty, availability of alternative non-tolled route; minimum service levels, lower rates for less polluting and less road-wearing vehicles; harmonise charging or tolling nationally and interchangeability, the investment of toll revenue back into the roads from which it originated and for the government to set out a long-term plan for investment in the road network, including identifying where new routes would be expected to be tolled.

Harlex Haulage and Service Ltd suggests that Highways England have been premature, resulting in a badly presented scheme, impacting on areas unnecessarily.

Port of London Authority says that if Location C is chosen, future consultations will need to show how the crossing will interact with diver shoal groynes, which minimise maintenance dredging in Gravesend Reach.

British International Freight Association (BIFA) says that in addition to the lorry traffic at Dover, 25% of all UK Banana imports also land at Dover by container. It says that the delays at the current crossing are costing UK Plc a huge amount of money.

RAC Foundation believes that mitigating the environmental impacts of the Eastern Southern Link could be costly and that more work is needed to get details on this.

National Council on Inland Transport (NCIT) request that provision is made for a future railway route next to the bored tunnel. It suggests that shield tunnelling of "rectangular" cross-sections is ideally suited to the geology and future use. If it linked Hoo Junction to Tilbury it could be a valuable part of the Strategic Freight Network capable of high-gauge freight services, giving easier linkage to HS1.

HS1 Ltd states that should Location A be chosen, then Highways England will need to discuss implications further with it.

Commercial Boat Operators Association (CBOA) suggests using the waterways more. It suggests that Highways England avail of Thames transport to move construction materials and spoil out during construction phase, to minimise impact on roads. It points out that each barge can carry 10 or more lorry loads.

Forth Ports Ltd (on behalf of the Port of Tilbury London Ltd) believes it is vital that the LTC proposals are integrated with and support long term strategic planning in the Thurrock area.

The Road Haulage Association states that truck parking is important and that it would like to see some of the land used to develop a truck park in the vicinity of Cobham/Gravesend. It says further that it sees trucks being moved on night after night, due to lack of parking facilities in this area.

Southern Water Services Ltd says that the proposed southern routes lie within Southern Water's area of operation and will affect its interests. It states that any route will need to include the relocation of infrastructure such as sewers and water mains at the expense of the developer and to Southern Water's specification. It says further that the main impact will be on assets that cannot be easily moved, e.g. water abstraction sites, water supply works, pumping stations. In addition, it notes that the proposals could impact on groundwater protection. Southern Water requests early liaison with Department for Transport once the proposals are finalised in order to manage the impact on their infrastructure.

Eurotunnel believes the LTC route C is essential to provide an alternative to the increasing traffic flows between the UK and continental Europe, to ease congestion on the M25 at the existing crossing and to enable growth in the Thames Gateway north and south of the river. Eurotunnel believe that the development must be able to accommodate future traffic growth and therefore be at least three-lane dual carriageway and that it must connect to the M20.

Statutory agencies

Environment Agency are pleased to note that Highways England have acknowledged the requirement for a Water Framework Directive (WFD) assessment. It requests that the scheme must not lead to deterioration in the status of any of the watercourses or groundwater bodies it crosses.

Historic England says that the soils and other near surface deposits of higher ground in Kent and Essex need to be assessed for heritage assets.

Marine Management Organisation notes that as all options set out include crossing the River Thames through a bored tunnel, it would draw Highways England's attention to The Marine Licensing (Exempted Activities) Order 2011 (as amended), which states that bored tunnels are exempted from the requirements of a marine licence under Part 4 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 subject to a number of conditions.

Natural England refers to the National Networks Planning Policy Statement with regard to SSSIs that 'proposals should only proceed where the benefits of and need for the project in that location clearly outweighs the loss or deterioration that will occur as a result'. Natural England states that while some of the ancient woodland inventory has been updated - where it hasn't, the data is around 30 years out of date, and should be treated with caution. It suggests that Highways England consider how it will monitor and record impacts and benefits relating to biodiversity.

Other stakeholder organisations

Chalk Village Pre-School suggests an extension of the bored tunnel out to the other side of the A226 to reduce noise and pollution.

Medway Green Party states that the Government of this country has recently signed up to international obligations to reduce emissions and fight climate change. Building additional roads that increase traffic will do nothing to help us achieve this. It suggests that a smarter, more sustainable transport strategy is needed.

Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) asks several questions including whether motorcyclists have been considered in plans/risk assessments, if there will be a toll and if so, will motorcyclists have free status? The group also ask if the development will it be an A or M road as riders on L plates can only use A roads, so A status would be needed in its opinion. Other queries and comments from MAG include (1) will approach roads be sufficiently sheltered (trees/buildings/cuttings) (2) that barriers must not have protrusions as wire barriers particularly dangerous (3) have Highways England considered the placement of road signs (4) are junctions far enough apart (5) that large cats eyes hinder motorcyclists, and (6) will the road system have a continuous hard shoulder?

Alliance of British Drivers suggests that a northern Whitfield by-pass would solve a number of congestion problems in and around Dover, as would a tunnel into the Eastern Docks with a second Traffic Access Protocol control, providing alternative access.

4.6.2 Members of the public

Response form

There were 15,463 members of the public who answered **Question 12** on the response form. The question asked participants for any additional comments they had about Highways England's proposals. The most common type of positive comment at Q12 is a statement of support for the proposed scheme, made by one in five members of the public (3,247). This is followed by generally positive comments about the proposals (1,473), support for a crossing at Location A (1,381), support for a crossing at Location C (411) and support for Location D as a crossing site (367).

The most common type of negative comment made at Q12 is a statement of opposition to the proposed scheme, made by one in four members of the public (3,681). This is followed by opposition to a crossing at Location C (1,197) and then by generally negative comments or concerns about the proposals (460).

The most common type of suggestion made at Q12 is for an alternative to the proposed scheme, made by one in seven members of the public (2,193). This is followed by suggestions for an alternative crossing (789), for alternative routes (400) and for alternative options for a bored tunnel (304).

The following sections look in greater depth at the specific comments made at Question 12:

Half of those who responded to Question 12 (8,241) made a comment about the proposed scheme, with slightly fewer who comment in support of it (3,247) and against it (3,681). The most frequent supportive comment is that a new crossing is urgently needed (1,972), followed by comments that mention anticipated improvements in traffic levels (made by 706), most often at the Dartford Crossing.

"This crossing can't come quick enough to ease the congestion around the Chafford, West Thurrock area. When there are traffic problems with the crossing M25 my ten-minute journey from work turns in to a 2, 3, 4 hour journey home which I recently experienced. The quicker the better."

Member of the public

The most frequent types of comment against the proposals relate to their presumed effect on the environment (1,389), especially in terms of air pollution, the impact on protected natural areas and on the countryside generally. Almost as many participants oppose the proposals because of the effect on communities and individual people (1,301). Very often, there is a close correspondence between the effects on the environment and on communities in reasons given for opposing the proposals.

"The proposals are totally unacceptable, there will be an increase in light, noise and exhaust pollution. Thurrock is already blighted more than nearly all other areas with this. Additionally, what provision has been made for compensation in terms of health and property prices?"

Member of the public

"I don't think this is well thought out and in the end will cause more problems where there are other solutions, I believe that it will cause more traffic jams in Gravesend and surrounding areas, increasing air pollution with the traffic, ruin Chalk and Shorne which are beautiful natural places with lots of history."

Member of the public

There are also 1,172 members of the public who are against the proposals because of the anticipated effect they would have on levels of traffic, with the most common specific reason being that the scheme will increase the amount of congestion generally (322 comments), at the Dartford Crossing (215 comments) and in Thurrock (161 comments).

“It is appreciated, and understandable that a new crossing is needed to reduce the unnecessary flow of traffic to Dartford, however another crossing within the vicinity would cause more traffic to be brought to the area instead of reducing it. It would be counterproductive to place another crossing here, especially being so close to Lakeside.”

Member of the public

In addition, 2,193 members of the public put forward a suggestion or addition to the proposals. Most often, it is that the crossing should have cheaper tolls or be free of tolls altogether (396 comments). This is followed by the scheme being designed well enough to be a long-term solution for future needs (241 comments).

Responses by email and post

A total of 624 members of the public sent in general comments through email or by post, with 83 who said something positive about the proposals and 55 who made a negative comment about them. Most other comments raise general concerns about the impact of the proposals, most often on the level of traffic (317 participants), but also on communities and individual people (124 participants) and the environment (118 participants).

4.7 Organised campaigns

4.7.1 Overview

This chapter provides a summary of each of the organised campaigns that were received as part of responses to the consultation. Overall, Ipsos MORI received 13,284 campaign responses from 14 different campaigns listed in Table 4.5 below. Some of the campaign responses consisted of slight variations - these variations have been listed out separately under the main campaign heading if/as applicable.

Please note that the name assigned to each campaign was done so based on either the name of the campaign or, if this was unclear, a name was assigned by Ipsos MORI based on campaign content.

A number of those who sent generic campaign responses also provided additional, bespoke comments. These comments have been analysed and included in the commentary alongside each campaign summary in this chapter.

Table 4.5: Organised campaign responses submitted as part of the Lower Thames Crossing Consultation

Campaign name		Total responses
Campaign 1	Thurrock objection 1	2,768
	Variation 1	2,673
	Variation 2	5
	Variation 3	14
	Variation 4	76
Campaign 2	Gravesham says no to Option C	229
Campaign 3	Thurrock Objection 2	226
Campaign 4	Higham Parish Council Campaign	946
Campaign 5	Thurrock Objection 3 (all variations)	69
	Variation 1	62

	507 (variation 2)	7
Campaign 6	Thurrock Objection 4 (all variations)	3,106
	Variation 1	2,063
	Variation 2	1,041
	Variation 3	2
Campaign 7	Pitsea	67
Campaign 8	Thurrock Objection 5	21
Campaign 9	Woodland Trust	5,625
Campaign 10	Company Support	31
Campaign 11	Adam Holloway MP	42
Campaign 12	Motorcycle Action Group	5
Campaign 13	Higham Object to Option C	141
Campaign 14	Companies in Support	8
	Total	13,284

4.7.2 Campaign summaries

The summary of each campaign received has been set out below.

Campaign 1: Thurrock objection 1 – all variations (2,768 responses overall)

Overview: In total, Ipsos MORI received 2,768 examples of this campaign. Four slightly different variations of this campaign were received, which was initiated by Cllr. Tim Aker MEP for the East of England region.

Variation 1 (2,673 responses)

Summary: This campaign states opposition to the proposed scheme due to concerns about the additional adverse impacts of congestion and respiratory problems that it is suggested the proposal will create. The campaign states that these issues already have an extreme negative impact on the area. Concerns are expressed about the negative impact the proposal would have on Thurrock's green belt and that the scheme could exacerbate demand for council housing as a result of homes lost to make way for the scheme.

Additional comments: Of those who submit this variation of the campaign 24 add additional comments. Comments include opposition to the proposed scheme (12) for reasons including: that it would be a waste of taxpayers' money (1), the potential impact on people and communities (4), negative impact on congestion (4) and the environment (7). There are six comments in opposition to a crossing at Location C. Reasons given include, that Thurrock already has one crossing (3), the impact on local people's quality of life and health (1), the impact of increased traffic and congestion (3), that the location is too close to the crossing at Dartford (1), and the impact on the environment (3).

Variation 2 (5 responses)

Summary: This variation additionally states that additional roads will result in additional pollution. It also states that the proposals would cause significant environmental damage to the community, as well as cause a loss of historical heritage.

This variation refers to Compulsory Purchase, stating that many residents will be forced to sell their homes to the Government.

Additional comments: No additional comments were added by those who submitted this variation of the campaign.

Variation 3 (14 responses)

Summary: This variation explicitly refers to the Lakeside Shopping Centre as a source of congestion in the Thurrock area. It provides additional comments stating concern about the impact of the proposals on farmland and wildlife habitat. It is stated that the high quality of the agricultural land in Thurrock has seen it be prevented from being used for other purposes in the past. It is stated that the area provides habitat for a protected species, Fire Bellied Salamanders. It is also stated that the area is on a flood plain.

Additional comments: No additional comments were added by those who submitted this variation of the campaign.

Variation 4 (76 responses)

Summary: This variation of the campaign refers additionally to the current levels of congestion that result when the crossing at Dartford is shut due to high winds or road traffic incidents.

Additional comments: No additional comments were added by those who submitted this variation of the campaign.

Campaign 2: Gravesham says no to Option C (229 responses)

Summary: The campaign opposes a crossing at Location C on the grounds of the loss of green belt and open space, air pollution and resultant health impacts and negative impacts on community assets such as Chalk Church and Shorne Country Park.

The campaign challenges the proposed scheme's impact on improving congestion at the Dartford Crossing and questions the stated economic benefits of Location C comparative to its cost.

Additional comments: Of those who submitted this campaign, 142 added additional comments. These include one comment, which is supportive of the overall proposed scheme. In contrast there are 113 comments opposing the proposed scheme, reasons given include, negative effects on the environment (67), impact on communities and people (56), traffic flow and congestion (51) and the impact on the local economy (3).

With specific regard for a crossing at Location C, 14 participants indicate their opposition. Reasons provided include the impact on traffic and congestion (7), the impact it would have on communities (3), the negative impact on, or failure to improve the local road network (3), the impact on the environment (2) and that it would be a waste of taxpayers' money (2),

One respondent states support for the Western Southern Link proposal. One respondent comments on proposals for junctions, stating their opposition to a junction with the A2 and M2.

Campaign 3: Thurrock Objection 2 (226 responses)

Summary:

This campaign opposes any new crossing of the Thames in Thurrock and challenges the planning, design, proposed approach and need case for the proposals as flawed. Grounds for this opposition include the belief that that a new crossing would not benefit congestion at the Dartford Crossing sufficiently to off-set the resulting loss to the environment, community and economy. It is stated that a new crossing would increase pollution in areas that currently have a reasonable environment.

Concern is expressed about the loss of green belt land, housing and historic sites in order to make way for the proposed scheme.

The stated economic benefits (both local and national) of the proposed scheme are challenged. In particular, that it would fail to support the development at the 'new super port' local port facility which is described as a major contributor in HGV pollution.

Rather than reduce the volume of traffic on the M25, it is argued that this proposal would potentially increase congestion at Junctions 30, 31 and 29.

Additional comments:

Of those who submitted this campaign 198 add additional comments. Many (148) state opposition to the proposed scheme, of which 20 participants state that they oppose any proposals which impact upon Thurrock. There are 82 comments about the impact on the environment, particularly the impact on air quality in general (33) and in Thurrock particularly (22).

Other comments include concerns about the impact on people and communities (75), impacts on traffic and congestion (75), impacts on business and the economy (12), such as the proposals being too expensive or poor-value, and the impact on jobs and impacts on the local road network (6).

One respondent states that they oppose Route 1, six oppose Route 2 and eight state that they oppose Route 3.

With regard to Location C, there are 34 comments providing opposition to the proposal. Key issues raised include the cost being too great (3), or disproportionate to potential benefits (2), the impact on people and communities (8), impact on congestion and traffic (14) and the effects on the environment (14).

There is opposition to junctions from three participants.

Campaign 4: Higham Parish Council Campaign (946 responses)

Summary:

This campaign appears to have been initiated by Higham Parish Council. This campaign follows the consultation response form, providing template pre-filled answers to all closed and open questions. The instructions provided by the campaign describes the provided answers as being useful ‘...for anyone who is opposed to Option C, and who doesn’t want a crossing through our parish...’

Question 5a: Strongly disagree

Question 5b: Option C is the most expensive option, impacts on the environment (ancient woodland, green belt, SSSIs)

Impacts on communities of Kent and Essex, in particular Chalk where the church will be cut off from the village, as well as noise, air pollution and worsened air quality in general.

That Option C will fail to resolve congestion at Dartford, which the campaign attributes to the closure of the tunnels for hazardous loads and large vehicles to be escorted. It states that the only solution to this problem will be a new bridge at Dartford.

Question 6a: None of these

Question 6b: All routes will have environmental and community impacts, without resolving the issues at the Dartford crossing and that the proposals will introduce noise and pollution to areas and people currently not affected by these problems. It is stated that only Option A is on the primary route around London and that the M25 should remain as the route traffic travelling north through Essex.

Question 7: Route 2 - strongly disagree, Route 3 - strongly disagree, Route 4 – strongly disagree

Question 8a: None of these

Question 8b: The suggested text expresses opposition to any version of Location C as well as both the Eastern and Western Southern Links. It states that both the Eastern Southern Link and Western Southern Link will cause pollution and noise impacts for many people not currently impacted, without any improvement of the issues at the Dartford crossing. The text expresses a preference for a new crossing at Location A (Dartford), and objects to their being no option to state a preference for Location A within the questionnaire.

Question 9: Eastern Southern Link – strongly disagree, Western Southern Link – strongly disagree

Question 10a: strongly disagree

Question 10b: The concerns raised include; environmental impacts (ancient woodland, green belt, SSSIs), impacts on the community (including Shorne specifically and more widely across Kent), pollution (noise, air quality, including for pupils at Shorne Primary School).

It is stated that the proposals will not resolve issues at the Dartford crossing, which only a new bridge at Dartford could address.

Question 11: The response states opposition to a new junction with the A226 because it will result in a large increase in traffic on the A226 and its feeder roads, and cause 'gridlock' should an incident at either the Dartford or Gravesend crossings disrupt traffic. There is also a concern that it would open up the green belt and Ramsar-protected land alongside the A226 to development.

The campaign also opposed any junction with the M2/A2 or with the M25 due to anticipated increases in traffic and accidents. The response states that a new bridge at Dartford would not require the construction of any new junctions.

Question 12: The consultation is described as 'divisive' and 'flawed' for not including questions about Location A. It is claimed that the Scheme Assessment is manipulated to favour Location C. Highways England are criticised for accepting consultation responses from people who will be able to influence the decision about where to locate a crossing, without themselves being personally impacted by the proposals.

Finally, the response reiterates the campaign's opposition to all proposals, stating that none are considered acceptable, nor does it think that they would resolve problems it believes are caused by the tunnels at the Dartford Crossing.

Additional comments: Of those who submitted this campaign six participants submitted the full campaign, identically worded, for all questions.

940 participants provided a response based on this campaign which:

- included a partial version of the text with or without their own personal comments, or

- included the full version of this text plus additional personal comments.

Because of the nature of this campaign, additional comments provided by participants have been summarised with the members of the public sections of this chapter.

Campaign 5: Thurrock Objection 3 – all variations (69 responses overall)

Overview: In total, Ipsos MORI received 69 examples of this campaign. Two slightly different variations of this campaign were received.

Variation 1 (62 responses)

Summary: This campaign is opposed to Location C or any other option for a new crossing of the Thames in Thurrock. It states that the scheme is being proposed despite the claimed opposition of Councillors from all parties, Thurrock Council and all 154,000 residents of the area.

It is stated that Thurrock already suffers from high levels of congestion and a high prevalence of industrial facilities which bring heavy goods vehicles onto local streets. Concern is expressed about how the area would cope with the additional lorry movements required for the construction of the scheme.

Routes 3 and 4 are opposed due to the impact on the green belt and agricultural land (including their eco-systems and wildlife) and the impact on the quality of life for Thurrock residents.

The Campaign cites scientific studies linking air pollution to premature death through a range of conditions and illnesses stating that the proposed crossing will increase air pollution and therefore the associated health impacts on Thurrock residents.

The need case for the proposed crossing is challenged on the grounds that the 'Summary Business Plan' demonstrates that over the past decade the number of vehicles using the Dartford crossing has been decreasing and the economic benefits cited by Highways England are described as 'unsubstantiated'.

Finally, the campaign states that the suggested route will not alleviate any of the problems on the existing road network, will be a waste of money and will affect historic sites, and lead to a loss of both green belt and agricultural land.

Additional comments: Of those who submitted this variation of the campaign one added additional comments.

This response states opposition to the proposed scheme on grounds of impact on the community of Linford, on countryside and greenspace and increase in noise pollution.

Variation 2 (7 responses)

Summary: This variation of the campaign makes the same arguments as variation 1, but additionally advocates 'Option D' (connecting the A130 with a tunnel via Canvey Island to the M2 and A12) as a preferable alternative to Location C. Benefits mentioned include being a cheaper option and a more preferable route for traffic from DP World, Stanford-le-Hope and the Port of Tilbury.

Additional comments: No additional comments were added by those who submitted this variation of the campaign.

Campaign 6: Thurrock Objection 4 – all variations (3,106 responses overall)

Overview: In total, Ipsos MORI received 3,106 examples of this campaign. Three slightly different variations of this campaign were received.

Variation 1 (2,063 responses)

Summary: This campaign opposes a Crossing at Location C and all proposed route variations. Reasons given include concerns about Thurrock already being over-congested, over-developed and too polluted. It is claimed that all proposed routes would destroy green belt, homes and historic sites and not be in the interests of the Thurrock population.

The need case for the proposals is challenged with claims that the data is out of date and therefore no longer valid in assessing proposals. It is also claimed that the proposals will not decrease the volume of traffic in Thurrock. The campaign challenges the consultation, claiming that 'the majority of Thurrock residents who will be affected have had no correspondence and are completely unaware of this proposal'. It also says that the consultation period was too short.

Additional comments: Of those who submitted this variation of the campaign 687 provided additional comments. Of the 505 participants who express an opinion of the proposed scheme six indicate their support, while 496 indicate their opposition. Reasons given for opposition include: the opposition to any proposals that impact on Thurrock (56), the impact on people and communities (137) and the negative impact on traffic and congestion (189), particularly in Thurrock (38). Also of concern are the environmental impacts (211), in particular that of air

pollution and air quality in general (121) and specifically in Thurrock (32). Noise pollution is another environmental concern (28).

There is opposition to crossings at both Location A (15) and at Location C (61). There is some support for the location of the crossing to be at Canvey (49).

Variation 2 (1,041 responses)

Summary: This variation is identical to variation 1, but also includes a map entitled ‘South Ockendon surrounded by toxic motorways’ showing South Ockendon in relation to the M25, A13 and the proposed new road.

Additional comments: Of those who submitted this variation of the campaign 379 provided additional comments. These mirror those made by those who submitted Variation 1 of this campaign: with strong opposition to the proposed scheme (206), concern about the impact on people and communities (43), impact on congestion and traffic (57), particularly in Thurrock (12). Another common concern is the impact on the environment (82), particularly with regard to air quality in general (50) and in Thurrock in particular (11). In addition, 20 participants state their opposition to a crossing at location C, while a similar number offer support for the crossing to be located at Canvey (19).

Variation 3 (2 responses)

Summary: This variation raises the same points as variation 1, however, instead of Thurrock, the objections are raised specifically in relation to ‘Cranham and the local area’.

Additional comments: No additional comments were added by those who submitted this variation of the campaign.

Campaign 7: Pitsea (67 responses)

Summary: This campaign states objection to the proposed crossing. The campaign endorses an alternative proposal – a crossing at Pitsea incorporating an Essex – Kent rail link. A concern is raised about air pollution in Thurrock, which the campaign states is already the worst in the UK, and the risks it poses to the health of the local population.

Additional comments: No additional comments were added by those who submitted this variation of the campaign.

Campaign 8: Thurrock Objection 5 (21 responses)

Summary:

This campaign states that it opposes any proposed crossing in Thurrock.

Objections to the proposed scheme include the impact on local communities (noise pollution, air pollution, impacts on homes, impacts on historic sites) and the local environment (impact on the countryside, including green belt and the Kent and Essex Thames shorelines).

The campaign challenges the impact of the proposed crossing, arguing that it would have a very limited impact on both the volume of traffic using Dartford, or the extent of disruption experienced at that crossing.

It is stated that Option C would be more expensive than a new crossing at Dartford due to the new roads that will be required to link the bored tunnel at Location C to the network.

The engagement process around the consultation is challenged as being insufficient to enable all interested or affected parties to respond to the consultation, and it argues that local groups should have been given a length of time to prepare their counter-arguments equivalent to the time taken by Highways England to develop the proposals. It is argued that people should have been given longer to respond. The campaign notes that Location C has been proposed despite the objections raised in previous consultations by local communities and councils.

Additional comments: No additional comments were added by those who submitted this variation of the campaign.

Campaign 9: Woodland Trust (5,625 responses)

Summary:

This campaign was instigated by the Woodland Trust, via a form on their website which allowed users to directly submit a response to the consultation email address.

The campaign states opposition to the following aspects of the Lower Thames Crossing proposals:

- Eastern Southern Link
- Western Southern Link
- Route 2

- Route 4

The campaign does not provide any reasons for opposing these proposals.

Additional comments: Of those who submitted this campaign 3,418 provided additional comments.

There are 3,091 participants who indicated that they oppose the proposed scheme. Reasons given include that the scheme is not required (22) and that it would not address long-term requirements (78). Twenty-six participants believe that the disadvantages of the proposed scheme would outweigh any potential benefits. Also of concern is the impact on communities and people (213) and negative impacts on traffic and congestion (111).

The key concern is the impact on the environment (3,003), in particular the impact on ancient woodland and other protected areas (2,433) and on wildlife and natural habitats (1,245). It is stated that the scheme should seek to minimise impacts on ancient woodland and other protected areas (272).

With regard to the routes north of the Thames, 47 comments state opposition to Route 2, and 62 oppose Route 4, in both cases largely due to the potential impacts on the environment. In contrast, of the 154 who refer to Route 3, the majority are supportive (146). The key reason is that it will have the least impact on ancient woodland (91).

With regard to routes south of the River Thames, comments include opposition to the Eastern Southern Link (46) and opposition to the Western Southern Link (37). Sixty-five comments state opposition to both proposed links. In each case, the major objection is the impact on the environment, in particular ancient woodland.

General comments about the proposals as a whole include concerns about the impacts on people and communities (173), in particular quality of life (109), as well as concerns about traffic and congestion (144), in particular, the view that new roads should not be built as they encourage an increase in the volume of vehicles on the roads (102).

Campaign 10: Company support (31 responses)

Summary: This campaign was submitted by local businesses.

It states support for the proposed crossing at Location C as well as Routes 2, 3 and 4 north of the Thames.

Support is conditional on there being a junction and new link road connecting the new crossing with Tilbury and Tilbury Port.

Additional comments: No additional comments were added by those who submitted this variation of the campaign.

Campaign 11: Adam Holloway MP (42 responses)

Summary:

This campaign originated on the Facebook page of Adam Holloway MP, Member of Parliament for Gravesham.

It challenges the proposals, arguing that a new crossing at Location C is unnecessary and will not solve the problems experienced at the Dartford crossing.

The campaign suggests that the cause of congestion at the Dartford crossing is the need to stop traffic to enable movement of special convoys through the north-bound tunnel. It is argued that a new north-bound bridge crossing at Dartford is the only way to solve the congestion problem.

The campaign suggests that as well as not tackling the problems at Dartford, a new crossing at Gravesend will impact on thousands of people in Thurrock and east of Gravesend. In particular, the potential impact on air pollution and the proximity of the proposal from a number of schools and nurseries.

In addition to challenging the impact of the proposals on congestion, it is also predicted that technological advances within vehicles in the next few years help reduce congestion by significantly increasing the capacity of road space through the use of on-board systems that enable what would currently be a traffic jam to be turned into a 'road train'.

It is suggested that the proposals are a missed opportunity to improve links between north east Kent and East Anglia. It is also suggested that another solution that should be investigated is running freight trains directly from Calais to north of the Thames, rather than unloading goods at Folkestone, a suggestion that is attributed to the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England.

Additional comments: Of those who submitted this campaign 13 participants submitted the full campaign, identically worded.

29 participants provided a response based on this campaign which:

- included a partial version of the text with or without their own personal comments, or
- included the full version of this text plus additional personal comments

Because of the nature of this campaign, additional comments provided by participants have been summarised with the members of the public sections of this chapter.

Campaign 12: Motorcycle Action Group (5 responses)

Summary:

This campaign was initiated by the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG), which describes itself as a riders' rights and road safety organisation.

The campaign states that it is supportive in general of any proposal that reduces congestion and traffic.

The Motorcycle Action Group ask whether the needs of motorcyclists have received specific consideration in the development of the proposals and risk assessments.

The campaign requests clarification of whether the proposed crossing would be subject to a toll, and if so, would motorcyclists be able to cross free of charge, as is the case at the Dartford crossing. Clarification is also sought as to the intended classification of the crossing and link roads (whether they would be 'A' roads or motorway), with a preference expressed for both being classified as 'A' roads, in order that, like the Dartford crossing, motorcyclists using 'L' plates can use the crossing. The response suggests that this would be of particular benefit to young people travelling to and from work.

In addition, the response details a series of points regarding the design of the proposed crossing and roads which they believe should be taken into consideration in order to improve the safety of the proposals for motorcyclists. These include sheltering roads from cross winds, the placement of road signs, the style of barriers used, the distance between junctions and size of cats eyes.

Additional comments: No additional comments were added by those who submitted this variation of the campaign.

Campaign 13: Higham Object to Option C (141 responses)

Summary:

This campaign opposes all aspects of the proposals for a crossing at Location C. The proposals for Location C are claimed to be poorly designed, and based on out of date, biased and unsubstantiated data. As well as taking longer to build and being more expensive, it is claimed that they will not resolve the congestion problems at Dartford.

Concerns are raised about the impact on the local community, in particular noise, and on the environment, including pollution, the encouragement of green belt development and negative impacts on SSSI, AONB and Ramsar sites. There are also concerns raised about the potential

increase of traffic on nearby rural roads. The campaign indicates that it thinks that a better solution would be address the problems at Dartford, where it notes that the necessary supporting infrastructure is already present.

Additional comments: Of those who submitted this campaign 16 added additional comments. Of these, six state their opposition to the proposed scheme. Concerns include: impact on people and communities (3), the impact on congestion and traffic (4) and the environment (2). A crossing at Dartford (Location A) is preferred to Location C (8).

Campaign 14: Companies in Support (8 responses)

Summary: This campaign was submitted by businesses in the Borough of Swale in support of the proposed crossing at Location C.

The campaign states that Location C will provide the greatest benefit for businesses in Kent, by helping them to access opportunities in the Midlands and North of England, which will otherwise become increasingly difficult to access with the predicted growth in traffic levels at the Dartford crossing. Location C would be the most direct route for these businesses.

However, the campaign raises concerns about the potential knock-on impact of the proposed crossing on the M2 (particularly Junctions 5 and 7) and the A249 and asks that the impacts on the wider north Kent road network be considered during the planning stage.

Additional comments: No additional comments were added by those who submitted this variation of the campaign.

4.8 Petitions

4.8.1 Overview

This chapter provides a summary of each of the petitions that were received as part of responses to the consultation.

Overall, Ipsos MORI received three petitions (listed in Table 4.6 below).

Please note that the name assigned to each petition was done so based on either the name given or, if this was unclear, a name was assigned by Ipsos MORI.

Table 4.6: Petitions submitted to the Lower Thames Crossing Consultation

Petition name		Number of signatories
Petition 1	Petition to Kent County Council	11
Petition 2	Petition to UK Government	37
Petition 3	Petition from Benyon Primary School	140
Total		188

4.8.2 Petition summaries

Petition 1: **Petition to Kent County Council** (11 signatories)

Summary: This petition included the following text:

'Petition to Kent County Council

We the undersigned petition Kent County Council to withdraw its support for a Lower Thames Crossing east of Gravesend, and to support the thousands of Kent residents whose lives would be devastated by this proposal. A new crossing east of Gravesend will not address the problems at Dartford.'

Petition 2: Petition to UK Government (37 signatories)**Summary:**

This petition included the following text:

‘Petition to UK Government to reconsider the decision on the Lower Thames Crossing Option C – Gravesham

The UK Government via the Highways Agency has recently announced that the preferred route for the Lower Thames Crossing is Option C. This option will adversely affect the quality of life for many Gravesham residents, as well as the huge environmental damage to an area of outstanding natural beauty.’

Petition 3: Petition from Benyon Primary School (140 signatories)**Summary:**

This petition included the following text:

‘Letter of objection to the proposed Lower Thames Crossing Option C all route variations

Our school councillors have spoken to the pupils in Years 1-6 to inform them about the proposed Lower Thames Crossing near to our school. The vast majority of pupils are strongly opposed to the proposal for the following reasons:

- The extra traffic will add to pollution in our area, effecting the quality of air around our school,
- We already live in an area that has too much pollution; this will only add to the problem which is affecting our health,
- The road would cross lots of countryside and therefore destroy animals’ habitats,
- Farmland would be destroyed which would stop crops from growing and therefore make the farmers lose money and maybe their livelihoods,
- The increased air pollution will affect the quality of the crops grown in the local area,
- It is unfair that people will be forced to leave their homes and the area that they live in; their children may be forced to move schools (this is effecting children in our school),
- Additional noise from the traffic would have an adverse effect on the children’s concentration on class.

We feel very strongly that option C should not go ahead.’

Appendices

Appendix A: Consultation questionnaire



Lower Thames Crossing Consultation questionnaire

Highways England is consulting on proposals for a Lower Thames Crossing – a new road crossing of the River Thames connecting Kent and Essex.

A new crossing is needed to reduce congestion at the existing Dartford crossing and to provide free-flowing north-south capacity. Unlocking economic growth and supporting the development of new homes and jobs in the region is also a priority.

Following a series of studies and a public consultation in 2013, the Government commissioned Highways England to carry out a more detailed assessment of two location options. These are shown on the map, at the site of the current crossing, known as Location A, or a new crossing further east, known as Location C.

We have completed our assessment and are seeking your views on our proposals. Route options are shown on the map to the right.



Have your say

Please get involved and tell us your views before consultation closes on **24 March 2016**. We will review the responses and report our final recommendation to the Department for Transport. The Government is expected to decide on the location, route and type of crossing later this year.

Further information and how to respond

We recommend that you read our booklet *Lower Thames Crossing, Route Consultation 2016* before completing this questionnaire. We are also holding a series of events where our team will be available to answer your questions.

You can complete this questionnaire online at www.lower-thames-crossing.co.uk. You can also complete this questionnaire online at our events.

Please tick the box(es) as appropriate and write your responses clearly in black ink within the appropriate sections. If your response is too large to fit into the boxes, please attach additional evidence. If you do so, please make it clear which questions you are answering and number any additional pages you send. Send your completed questionnaire free of charge to our address below:

Lower Thames Crossing Consultation, Freepost RTTH-GRYG-SCXZ, PO Box 1188, Harrow, HA1 9NU

We cannot accept responsibility for responses that are sent to any address other than the one stated above. Thank you for your participation.



About you

The following questions will help us to understand the range of people and organisations who have responded to this consultation and to identify local issues. The information you provide will not be used for any purpose other than assessing responses to this consultation and for other reasons explained in this questionnaire.

1. Name (optional)

2. Postcode

3. Email address or postal address

This is optional but providing your email or postal address will allow us to update you with any news on this consultation.

4. Are you responding on your own behalf or on behalf of an organisation or group?

- Providing my own response
- Providing a response on behalf of an organisation or group

Crossing location

5. Our proposal is a crossing at Location C, east of Gravesend and Tilbury.
For more information see pages 16 – 17 of our booklet

On balance, do you agree or disagree with our proposal for the location of a crossing, at Location C?

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know



Please provide the reasons for your response to question 5.

Routes north of the river

6. There are three route options north of the river in Essex – Routes 2, 3 and 4.

For more information see pages 19 – 22 of our booklet

Where do you think the route should be located north of the river?

- Route 2
- Route 3
- Route 4
- Another route
- None of these
- Don't know

Please provide the reasons for your response to question 6.

7. Thinking about the three route options north of the river, on balance do you agree or disagree with our proposal for each of these?

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Route 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Route 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Route 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Routes south of the river

8. There are two route options south of the river in Kent – the Western Southern Link and the Eastern Southern Link.

For more information see pages 20 – 22 of our booklet

Where do you think the route should be located south of the river?

- Western Southern Link
- Eastern Southern Link
- Another route
- None of these
- Don't know

Please provide the reasons for your response to question 8.

9. Thinking about the two route options south of the river, on balance do you agree or disagree with our proposal for each of these?

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Western Southern Link	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eastern Southern Link	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



The proposed scheme

10. Having evaluated the options, our proposed scheme is a new bored tunnel road crossing at Location C, following Route 3 north of the river and the Eastern Southern Link south of the river.
For more information see page 24 of our booklet

On balance, do you agree or disagree with our proposed scheme?

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't know

Please provide the reasons for your response to question 10.

Additional junctions

11. We are proposing to create junctions with existing roads including the M2/A2, A226, A13 and M25.
We would like to hear your views on whether you believe additional junctions would be beneficial.

We would welcome any comments you may have on our proposals for junctions.





Any other comments

We would welcome any other comments you may have on our proposals. (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary).

Feedback on this consultation

13. How did you hear about this consultation? (Please select all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Received a letter or a leaflet from Highways England | <input type="checkbox"/> TV or radio |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Received an email | <input type="checkbox"/> Social media (e.g. Facebook or Twitter) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Received an email as a Dart Charge account holder | <input type="checkbox"/> Other online/website source(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Posters or other outdoor advertising | <input type="checkbox"/> Word-of-mouth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newspapers or magazines | <input type="checkbox"/> Local authority |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other source (please specify) |

14. Do you have any feedback on this consultation – events, information provided, advertising, etc.?



More about you

15. If you represent an organisation please complete all questions in this section. If you are a member of the public please answer question 17 only.

Position in the organisation

Name of the group or organisation

Please use the space below to provide further detail about your role or organisation

16. What category of organisation or group are you representing?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Academic | <input type="checkbox"/> Local Government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Action group | <input type="checkbox"/> Transport, infrastructure or utility organisation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business | <input type="checkbox"/> Statutory agency |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elected representative | <input type="checkbox"/> Other category of organisation or group (please specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environment, heritage, amenity or community group | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |

17. How often, if at all, do you use the Dartford Crossing, either by driving or being driven?

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Daily | <input type="checkbox"/> Several times a week | <input type="checkbox"/> About once a week |
| <input type="checkbox"/> About once a fortnight | <input type="checkbox"/> About once a month | <input type="checkbox"/> About once every three months |
| <input type="checkbox"/> About once every six months | <input type="checkbox"/> About once a year or less | <input type="checkbox"/> Never |

Equality and Diversity

To help ensure that we are meeting our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 we would be grateful if you could fill in the following diversity survey. Completing the survey is voluntary and is not a requirement for your response to be accepted. The survey will not be linked to the information you have provided in your response and we will not share the information with anyone else. We will use the survey results to provide a summary of the types of people and organisations who responded to this consultation. It will not identify individuals.

18. What is your gender?

Male Female Prefer not to say

19. Do you consider yourself as a person with a disability?

Yes No Prefer not to say

20. Please describe your ethnic background

Asian/Asian British White Black/Black British
 Chinese Mixed Ethnic background Gypsy or Irish Traveller
 Other ethnic group Prefer not to say

21. Age Under 25 25-45 46-60 61+ Prefer not to say

If you need help accessing this or any other Highways England information, please call 0300 123 5000

Website www.lower-thames-crossing.co.uk

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this consultation in compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

Highways England will process your personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988 (DPA) and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

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This document is also available on our website at www.gov.uk/highways

If you have any enquiries about this publication email info@highwaysengland.co.uk or call **0300 123 5000***. Please quote the Highways England publications code **PR115/15**

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Appendix B: Technical note on coding

Receipt and handling of responses

The handling of responses was subject to a rigorous process of checking, logging and confirmation in order to support a full audit trail. All original electronic and hard copy responses remained securely filed within Ipsos MORI, catalogued and serial numbered for future reference.

Stakeholder organisation responses to open questions in the response form, and unstructured responses via email and post were analysed qualitatively rather than being coded.

Development of initial code frame

Coding is the process by which free-text comments, answers and responses are matched against standard codes from a coding frame Ipsos MORI compiled to allow systematic statistical and tabular analysis. The codes within the coding frame represent an amalgam of responses raised by those registering their view and are comprehensive in representing the range of opinions and themes given.

The Ipsos MORI coding team drew up an initial code frame for each open-ended free-text question using the first thirty to forty response form responses, and ten to fifteen responses for email and letter responses. An initial set of codes was created by drawing out the common themes and points raised across all response channels by refinement. Each code thus represents a discrete view raised. The draft coding frame was then presented to the Ipsos MORI consultation team and Highways England consultation team and fully approved before the coding process continued. The code frame was continually updated throughout the analysis period to ensure that newly emerging themes within each refinement were captured.

Coding using the Ascribe package

Ipsos MORI used the web-based Ascribe coding system to code all open-ended free-text responses found within completed response forms and from the free-form responses (i.e. those that were letters and emails etc.). Ascribe is a proven system which has been used on numerous large-scale projects. Responses were uploaded into the Ascribe system, where the coding team worked systematically through the verbatim comments and applied a code to each relevant part(s) of the verbatim comment.

The Ascribe software has the following key features:

Accurate monitoring of coding progress across the whole process, from scanned image to the coding of responses.

An “organic” coding frame that can be continually updated and refreshed; not restricting coding and analysis to initial response issues or “themes” which may change as the consultation progresses.

Resource management features, allowing comparison across coders and question/issue areas. This is of particular importance in maintaining high quality coding across the whole coding team and allows early identification of areas where additional training may be required.

A full audit trail – from verbatim response to codes applied to that response.

Coders were provided with an electronic file of responses to code within Ascribe. Their screen was divided, with the left side showing the response along with the unique identifier, while the right side of the screen showed the full code frame. The coder attached the relevant code or codes to these as appropriate and, where necessary, alerted the supervisor if they believed an additional code might be required.

If there was other information that the coder wished to add they could do so in the “notes” box on the screen. If a response was difficult to decipher, the coder would get a second opinion from their supervisor or a member of the project management team. As a last resort, any comment that was illegible was coded as such and reviewed by the Coding Manager.

Briefing the coding team and quality checking

A core team of coders worked on the project, all of whom were fully briefed and were conversant with the Ascribe package. This team also worked closely with the project management team during the set-up and early stages of code frame development.

The core coding team took a supervisory role throughout and undertook the quality checking of all coding. Using a reliable core team in this way minimises coding variability and thus retains data quality.

To ensure consistent and informed coding of the verbatim comments, all coders were fully briefed prior to working on this project. The Coding Manager undertook full briefings and training with each coding team member. All coding was carefully monitored to ensure data consistency and to ensure that all coders were sufficiently competent to work on the project.

The coder briefing included background information and presentations covering the questions, the consultation process and the issues involved, and discussion of the initial coding frames. The briefing was carried out by Ipsos MORI’s executive team along with Martin Potts, Project Manager of behalf of Highways England.

All those attending the briefings were instructed to read, in advance, the consultation document and go through the response form. Examples of a dummy coding exercise relating to this consultation were carefully selected and used to provide a cross-section of comments across a wide range of issues that may emerge.

Coders worked in close teams, with a more senior coder working alongside the more junior members, which allowed open discussion to decide how to code any particular open-ended free-text comment. In this way, the coding management team could quickly identify if further training was required or raise any issues with the project management team.

The Ascribe package also afforded an effective project management tool, with the coding manager reviewing the work of each individual coder, having discussion with them where there was variance between the codes entered and those expected by the coding manager.

To check and ensure consistency of coding, 10% of coded responses were validated by the coding supervisor team and the executive team, who checked that the correct codes had been applied and made changes where necessary.

Updating the code frame

An important feature of the Ascribe system is the ability to extend the code frame “organically” direct from actual verbatim responses throughout the coding period.

The coding teams raised any new codes during the coding process when it was felt that new issues were being registered. In order to ensure that no detail was lost, coders were briefed to raise codes that reflected the exact sentiment of a response, and these were then collapsed into a smaller number of key themes at the analysis stage. During the initial stages of the coding process, meetings were held between the coding team and Ipsos MORI executive team to ensure that a consistent approach was taken to raising new codes and that all extra codes were appropriate and correctly assigned. In particular, the coding frame sought to capture precise nuances of participants’ comments in such a way as to be comprehensive.

A second key benefit of the Ascribe system is that it provides the functionality of combining codes, revising old codes and amending existing ones as appropriate. Thus, the coding frame grew organically throughout the coding process to ensure it captured all of the important “themes”.

Checking the robustness of the datasets

Once coding was complete, and all data streams combined, a series of checks were undertaken to ensure that the data set was comprehensive and complete. The initial check was to match the log files of serial numbers against the resultant data files to ensure that no responses were missing.

In the case of any forms logged that could not be found in the dataset, the original was retrieved from the filed storing boxes, captured then coded and verified as appropriate. A check was then run again to ensure records existed for all logged serial numbers. During this process it was also possible to identify any duplicate free-format responses (e.g. where two cases for the same serial number appeared). Where this was detected, one form was noted as a duplicate (using the corresponding code) to identify that it was not missing data and the information was not double counted.

Appendix C: Stakeholder organisations

The following is a list of stakeholder organisations who responded to the Lower Thames Crossing Consultation; those who requested confidentiality or anonymity have not been included.

The response forms asked stakeholder organisations to indicate the category of organisation they felt best described themselves from a pre-determined list. For the purposes of consistency of reporting, Ipsos MORI has occasionally chosen to reallocate stakeholder organisations to a different category to the one that they self-selected, however, participants own selections have been largely respected. Stakeholder organisations that responded by email or letter were allocated to categories by Ipsos MORI to the best of its judgement. (Please note that the categorisation of organisations has been undertaken to demonstrate the breadth of the response; the categorisation is not definitive and has no bearing on the way in which the responses were dealt with):

Academic

Benyon Primary School
Chalk Village Pre-School
Cobham Primary School
MidKent College
Shorne C of E Primary School
Treetops School
Willow Garden Day Nursery (Little JS Ltd)

Action groups

ABridge2Far
Alliance of British Drivers
Groc and Groll
Margate Regeneration
SBC
Thurrock Action Group

Business

356 Architects Ltd
A B Jones & Partners
A Gomez Ltd
Accommodate-UK Ltd
And Hospitality
Ansmann UK Limited
APS
Aqualisa
Arbor Trading Limited

Arc Sound Ltd
Arden Windows Ltd
Armac Shipping Services Ltd
Arrow Leasehold Management Ltd
Assosia Ltd
Assured Engineering
ATS Adhesives Ltd
AW Accounting
B&A Miles Associates Limited
B2B Events Ltd
BAE Systems
Barlow & Sons Ltd
Barnes Coaches
Basildon Golf Course
Batt Cables PLC
Betteridge & Milsom
Big Red Branding Ltd
Biggin Hill Airport
Bowler Engineering Ltd
BP Oil UK Limited
Brand Promotions UK Ltd
Building & Structural Consultants Ltd
C. H. Cole & Sons (Cherry Orchard)
C. H. Cole & Sons (Heath Place)
C. H. Cole & Sons (Mill House)
Canadian & Portland Estates
Canary Wharf Group PLC
Cantium Scientific Limited
Capital Space Limited
Capital Wealth Solutions Ltd
Caravanguard
Care at Home Services
Castlekeep Limited
Caterham Cars Ltd
CEG - Brentwood Dunton Hills
Cemex UK Cement Limited
Central Service Ltd
Charlie Brown Associates Ltd
Chartway Group Limited
Chemidose Limited
Christmas Magic Ltd
Churchgate Construction Ltd
Cladding UK Ltd
CNH Industrial

CNI Europe Limited
Cobolt Systems Ltd
Compass Travel (UK) Ltd
Confederation of British Industry (CBI)
Construction Composites Ltd
Contracts Engineering
Corringham Dairy Co
Cosine Ltd t/a Floataway
Country Land and Business Association
Countryside Properties
Crowe Clark Whitehill LLP
Cullum Detuners Limited
Curran Packaging Co Ltd
Curtaincraft Ltd
Davies Turner & Co Ltd
de Merke Estates, Borough Green Gardens Consortium, Cavalier Land Ltd
Delphini Ltd
Discovery Park Limited
Dover Business Forum
DP World London Gateway
East Anglia Security
Eastern Petroleum Supplies
Easton Farr Accountants
Ebbsfleet Development Corporation
Ebbsfleet Investment (GP) Ltd
EBS Environmental Services Ltd
Edgewood Embroidery
EMR LTD
EMS Security Group Limited
Enterprise4Good Group
Entity Group Limited
Erith Group
ESE Electrical Ltd
ESP Technologies Group Ltd
Essex Chambers of Commerce
Everest Linen Services Ltd
Exquisite Cocktails
Factair Ltd
Field Chemicals Ltd
FloPlast Ltd
Fort Knight Group PLC
Foursquare
FSB Kent and Medway
FSB South Essex Branch

Fujifilm Speciality Ink Systems
Furley Page Solicitors
Gateway Construction Services Ltd
Gerald Eve LLP
Globelink Fallow Limited
Greater Essex Business Board
Greenscape Services Ltd
Group1 Automotive UK
Hairprem
Harlequin Group Ltd
Harrisons
Haven Gateway Partnership
Haven OHS Ltd
Hilo Scaffolding
Holidays With Your Horse
House Network Ltd
Howards Hydrocare Ltd
Howe Maxted Group
Hughes TV & Audio Ltd
Iceni on behalf of Cogent Land LLP
Icom Holdings Ltd
Image Tiling Ltd
Indecon Building Ltd
Independent Insurance Services
Inline Logistik GmbH
Innovomantex Limited
Interstate Hotels Europe
intu Properties PLC
Invicta Dog Walking Service
Invicta Safety
Invicta Window Films Limited
Jackson Civil Engineering
K D Attwood and Partners
Kefco Sales Limited
Kent and Medway Business Advisory Board
Kent and Medway Economic Partnership
Kent Drainage Ltd
Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce
Kent Scuba Ltd
Kirbys Coaches
Koehler UK Limited
KTI Energy Limited
KWA Architects
La Fiaba del Mediterraneo

Laceys Event Services Ltd
Land Securities
LCL International Ltd
LJE Modular Maintenance Ltd
Locate in Kent
London Bearings (Kent) Ltd
London City Cruise Port
Long Rake Spar Co Ltd
Longerlife Posts Ltd
Lustre Consulting
Machinery Safety Solutions Ltd
Maltron
Manor Design
Margate Football Club Limited
Marketing & Business Development
Maven IT Services Ltd
MDS Civil Engineering Ltd
Medway Security Wholesale Limited
Mercury RV
Milestone Restaurants Ltd t/a McDonald's
MME Interiors
Modern Furniture and Lighting Ltd
Morgan Jones Recruitment Consultants
Morgan Training Solutions Ltd
MultiControls Ltd
National Farmers' Union (NFU)
Neith Associates BV
Network Solutions Inc Ltd
Nigel Barrett Photography
NLP Planning on behalf of Roxhill Developments Ltd
Northgate Garage Group Ltd
Orchard Garage Limited
Orion Telecom Ltd
P F International
Pandor Ltd
Paragon Commodities Ltd
Park Farm House
Persimmon Homes Essex
Peter Staines Refrigeration Limited
Plews Bros Ltd
PMS International Group plc
Polymark GB Ltd
Portals to the Past
Power Electronics Corp UK Ltd

Premier Diamond Products Ltd
Premier International Leisure Ltd
Premier Work Support
Process Benchmarking Ltd
QTL
Quinn Estates Ltd
R&B Star (electrical wholesalers) Ltd
RAN Logistic
Raxwell Ltd t/a Greenwich Linen
Regeneration X
Reside Developments
Residential Management Group
RHJB Architects Limited
Rhodes Edwards Assoc Ltd
RiverOak Investment Corp
Riverside
RMS Ltd
Robert Leonard Group PLC
Rochester and Cobham Park Golf Club Ltd
RWE Generation (UK) PLC
S&J Padfield and Partners
Saarke - Professional Business Solutions
Saltworks
Savills (on behalf of landowner)
Savills (on behalf of London Resort Company Holdings Ltd)
SBR Steris Ltd
Sealtite Windows Ltd
SeeMe: Group Limited
Select Estates
Sharp Business Systems UK Plc
SJS
SkemUK Ltd
Skip2bfit Ltd
Soul Music Enterprises Ltd
South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP)
Southend-on-Sea Business Partnership
Southfields Gravel Co Ltd
SPE
SPEL Products
Spirit Motorsport
St Modwen
Streamadvice Limited
Suffolk Chamber of Commerce
SW Bruce & Co Ltd

Swale Economy and Regeneration Partnership
Swale Heating Ltd
Synergy Planning & Property Consultants Ltd
Tarmac Building Products
Tarmac Cement and Lime Ltd
TCS
Terry Taylor Plumbing & Heating
Texcel Technology PLC
Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
Thames Gateway South Essex
Thanet Business Forum
The Alternative Accommodation Agency
The Chatham Archive
The Document Warehouse UK Ltd
The Greek Delicatessen Ltd
The Plumbing Team Ltd
The White Cliffs Dover Hotel & Guest House Group
Thomson Snell and Passmore
Thurrock Business Board
Tidmas Townsend Ltd
Tillett Racing Seats
Total Crane Services Limited
TSL Lighting Ltd
TSS
Unifurnaces Limited
Veolia
Vibration Monitoring Services Ltd
Vincent and Gorbing on behalf of London Distribution Park LLP
Vlase International
Voicetek Communications Ltd
Vopak Terminals UK Ltd
VR Sani-Co Ltd
W&Co Design Solutions Ltd
Ward Trade Marks Limited
Westbound Shipping Services Ltd
Westerham Brewery Co Ltd
World Coffees (London) Ltd
You Name It

Elected representatives

Adam Holloway (MP for Gravesham)
Bexley Labour Group (London Borough of Bexley)
Boris Johnson, Mayor of London

Chris Walker, Councillor Southend West
Cllr H J Craske, Member for Higham
Cllr Stuart Millson (East Malling & Larkfield Parish Council)
Cllr Linda Van den Hende (London Borough of Havering)
Dartford Labour Party
Gareth Johnson (MP for Dartford)
Helen Whately (MP for Faversham and Mid Kent)
Jackie Doyle-Price (MP for Thurrock)
James Duddridge (MP for Rochford and Southend East)
Kelly Tolhurst (MP for Rochester and Strood)
Medway Council Labour Group (official opposition)
Stephen Metcalfe (MP for South Basildon and Thurrock East)
Thurrock Conservative
Tracey Crouch (MP for Chatham and Aylesford)

Environment, heritage, amenity or community groups

1st Shorne Scout Group
Audley Residents Group
Bean Residents Association
Bonners Residents Association
British Horse Society
Buglife - The Invertebrate Conservation Trust
Bulphan WI
Chafford Hundred Residents
Chatham Maritime Trust
Coalhouse Fort
Condozers Camp Site Committee
CPRE Essex Brentwood Group
CPRE Kent
Cranham Residents Association
Cyclists Tourist Club
Dickens' Country Protection Society
Dunton Community Association
Essex Bridleways Association
Essex Wildlife Trust
Faversham Society
Federation of Enfield Residents & Allied Associations (FERAA)
Friends of St Marys Church
Friends of the Earth
Friends of the North Kent Marshes
Gravesend MCC
Gravesham and Dartford Friends of the Earth
Gravesham Rights of Way Committee

Great Warley Conservation Society
Harold Wood Park Residents Association
Havering Friends of the Earth
Higham Bell Ringing Group
Higham Village History Group
Horndon on the Hill Society & Community Forum
JARA
Kent Countryside Access Forum
Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
Kent Ornithological Society
Kent Wildlife Trust
Land of the Fanns Landscape Partnership
Little Belhus Country Park
National Trust
Ockendon District Girl Guiding UK
Orsett Fen Right Holders
Orsett Forum
Orsett Village Conservation Group
Pagan Churches
Plantlife International
River Thames Society
RSPB
South East Essex Friends of the Earth
South East Essex Residents Group
South Essex Wildlife Hospital
St Mary the Virgin, Chalk
Swanscombe & Greenhithe Residents Association
Thames Chase Trust
The Abbot's Mill Project
The Caravan Club
The Dover Society
The Rochester Bridge Trust
The West & East Tilbury & Linford Community (WELCOM) Forum
Thurrock District Scout Council
Thurrock Local Access Forum
Thurrock Rugby Football Club
Thurrock Scouts and Guides
West Essex Aeromodellers
West Kent Badger Group
West Tilbury Commons Conservators
West Tilbury Village Hall
Women's Institute
Woodland Trust

Local government

Ashford Borough Council
Aylesford Parish Council
Basildon Borough Council
Bean Parish Council
Boxley Parish Council
Braintree District Council
Brentwood Borough Council
Broomfield Parish Council
Buckhurst Hill Parish Council
Canewdon Parish Council
Canterbury City Council
Castle Point Borough Council
Chelmsford City Council
Colchester Borough Council
Cuxton Parish Council
Darenth Parish Council
Dartford Borough Council
Dartford Parish Council
Dover District Council
East Malling & Larkfield Parish Council
Epping Forest District Council
Essex County Council
Faversham Town Council
Gravesham Borough Council
Great Totham Parish Council
Herongate & Ingrave Parish Council
Higham Parish Council
Hythe Town Council
Kent County Council
Kings Hill Parish Council
Langford & Ulting Parish Council
Leybourne Parish Council
London Borough of Bexley
London Borough of Havering
London Borough of Redbridge
Longfield & New Barn Parish Council
Lympne Parish Council
Maidstone Borough Council
Maldon District Council
Medway Council
Mereworth Parish Council
Ospringe Parish Council

Ramsden Crays Parish Council
Sevenoaks District Council
Shepway District Council
Shorne Parish Council
Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
Southfleet Parish Council
Stone Parish Council
Suffolk County Council
Sutton at Hone & Hawley Parish Council
Swale Borough Council & Hartlip Parish Council
Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town Council
Tendring District Council
Teynham Parish Council
Thanet District Council
Thurrock Council
Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council
West Horndon Parish Council
West Malling Parish Council
Wrotham Parish Council

Transport, infrastructure or utility organisations

1st Call Mobility Ltd
Aggreko
Access Travel
Aldeva Ltd
Austin Contract Services Ltd
Automobile Association
Bishopsgate
British International Freight Association (BIFA)
Campaign for Better Transport
CC Cabs / Sky Transfers
Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport UK (CILT)
Commercial Boat Operators Association (CBOA)
Confederation of Passenger Transport
Conquip Engineering Group
Dash Despatch Limited
De Georgio Transport UK Ltd
Eric Aldridge Consulting Limited
English Regional Transport Association (ERTA)
Eurotunnel
Fargolink
Forth Ports Ltd (on behalf of the Port of Tilbury London Ltd)
Freight Transport Association

Graham Coaches
Harlex Haulage and Service Ltd
Hi Speed Services
Hilltop Logistics Ltd
HS1 Ltd
Hutchison Ports (UK)
Institution of Civil Engineers
Institution of Civil Engineers South East England
London House Removals Ltd
Metrotidal
Motorcycle Action Group (MAG)
MPH Chauffeur Cars
Muller
N.M.Transport-Logistik Ltd.
National Council on Inland Transport (NCIT)
National Grid
Nicholls Transport
P W Gates Distribution Ltd
Pallet Plus Ltd
Penspen on behalf of Barking Power Ltd
Port of Dover
Port of London Authority
Quintas Energy
R&J Transport
RAC Foundation
S.T.Douglas Transport Ltd
SGN
Southern Water
Southern Water Services Ltd
SPB Transport
Stobart Automotive Europe & Eddie Stobart Europe
The Road Haulage Association
Welcocks Skips Ltd
WPRG Ltd

Statutory agencies

Environment Agency
Historic England
Marine Management Organisation
Natural England

Other category of organisation or group

Diocese of Rochester

Gravesend Deanery

King West (on behalf of E&K Benton Ltd)

King West (on behalf of Mott Family Farm)

King West (on behalf of a landowner)

Medway Green Party

The Confederation of Kent Green Parties

The Green Party

Tonbridge and Malling Green Party

Appendix D: Profile of individuals

The following table shows the profile of individual members of the public who took submitted responses through the response form, both online and paper.

Demographic characteristic		No. responses
Sex	Male	20,319
	Female	10,317
	Prefer not to say	1,397
Age	Under 25	868
	25-45	8,682
	46-60	9,313
	61+	11,210
	Prefer not to say	2,066
Disability	Yes	1,639
	No	28,557
	Prefer not to say	1,714
Ethnicity	White	27,852
	BME	1,578
	Prefer not to say	2,796
Local authority area (Kent/Essex/east London Boroughs)	Ashford	260
	Canterbury	519
	Dartford	2,775
	Gravesham	4,693
	Maidstone	602
	Medway	2,351
	Swale	499
	Shepway	214
	Thanet	274
	Sevenoaks	658
Tonbridge and Malling	514	

	Tunbridge Wells	219
	Kent (total)	13,578
	Basildon	878
	Braintree	219
	Brentwood	647
	Castle Point	325
	Chelmsford	545
	Colchester	299
	Epping Forest	199
	Harlow	52
	Maldon	206
	Rochford	311
	Southend-on-Sea	628
	Tendring	152
	Thurrock	5,623
	Uttlesford	105
	Essex (total)	10,189
	Barking & Dagenham	126
	Bexley	701
	Bromley	447
	Havering	1,064
	Redbridge	152
	East London Boroughs (total)	2,490

Appendix E: Glossary of terms

Ancient woodland	In the United Kingdom, an ancient woodland is a woodland that has existed continuously since 1600 or before in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	An area of countryside in England, Wales or Northern Ireland that is designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 if its natural beauty and distinct character are deemed of sufficient value.
Bored tunnel	A tunnel constructed by the excavation of soil and rock using a Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM).
Brownfield land	Brownfield is a term used in urban planning to describe land previously used for industrial purposes or some commercial uses. The term can also be used to apply more generally to previously used land.
Campaign	An organised action group within which multiple individuals responded with an identical or similar response.
Coding	The process whereby responses are categorised by themes.
Consultation Document	The document outlining the purpose of the consultation, the crossing and route options, and how to respond.
DfT	Department for Transport
Eastern Southern Link (ESL)	One of two proposed routes connecting the proposed crossing at Location C with the existing road network at the M2.
Green Belt	Land permanently set aside as open land where agriculture, forestry and outdoor leisure can be expected to prevail. Its purpose is the limiting of urban growth
HE	Highways England
HGVs	Heavy Goods Vehicles
Immersed tunnel	A tunnel constructed by the sinking and then linking together of pre-fabricated sections onto a sea or river bed.
Ipsos MORI	The organisation who independently received, analysed and reported on the consultation responses.
Location A	One of the locations previously identified for a possible crossing of the Thames. Location A is near to the existing crossing at Dartford.
Location C	Highways England's proposed location for a new crossing of the River Thames. It would be located to the east of Gravesend to the south and east of Tilbury north of the river.
LoWS	Local Wildlife Site

LTC	The Lower Thames Crossing
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MP	Member of Parliament
Organisation or group	An establishment who responded on behalf of a group of people.
Protected species	A plant or animal that is protected by law and needs special management.
Ramsar Site	A Ramsar Site is a wetland site designated of international importance, especially those providing waterfowl habitat, under the Ramsar Convention.
Route 2	One of the three shortlisted options connecting a new crossing at Location C with the existing road network north of the river – from the crossing following a westerly line via the existing A1089 to the M25 between junctions 29 and 30.
Route 3	One of the three shortlisted options connecting a new crossing at Location C with the existing road network north of the river - from the crossing following a middle-line to the M25 between junctions 29 and 30.
Route 4	One of the three shortlisted options connecting a new crossing at Location C with the existing road network north of the river – from the crossing following an easterly line via the existing A127 to the M25 at junction 29.
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	A protected conservation area of the best wildlife and geological sites. Natural England identifies and protects them.
Stakeholder organisations	Those who responded on behalf of an organisation or group.
Strategic Road Network	The motorways and major trunk roads in England that are managed by Highways England.
TfL	Transport for London
Western Southern Link (WSL)	One of two proposed routes connecting the proposed crossing at Location C with the existing road network at the A2.

For more information

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About Ipsos MORI's Social Research Institute

The Social Research Institute works closely with national governments, local public services and the not-for-profit sector. Its c.200 research staff focus on public service and policy issues. Each has expertise in a particular part of the public sector, ensuring we have a detailed understanding of specific sectors and policy challenges. This, combined with our methodological and communications expertise, helps ensure that our research makes a difference for decision makers and communities.