

West Horndon Parish Council Comments on the Lower Thames Crossing Consultation

Following Highways England's publication of the latest consultation regarding the Lower Thames Crossing, West Horndon Parish Council has surveyed the residents in order to determine their views in order to inform our response to the consultation.

We asked three questions about the Lower Thames Crossing

1. Do you support a new Lower Thames Crossing at Thurrock?
 - Yes – 39% No – 41%
2. Do you support Option C Route 4 as proposed?
 - Yes – 4% No – 93%
3. Do you agree with any Route C option?
 - Yes – 38% No – 58%

Below is the consultation response that West Horndon Parish Council will send to Highways England, this reflects the views from the survey. It is set out in the same format as the official consultation response questionnaire. West Horndon Parish Council urges all residents to respond to the consultation. It is important that the views of this community are known and properly expressed views will be given consideration. If residents want use any of the council's response as the basis for their own they are welcome to do so.

Responses can be made on line via www.lower-thames-crossing.co.uk or sent in by post to: Freepost RTTH-GRYG-SCXZ, PO Box 1188, Harrow HA1 9NU

5. Crossing Location

West Horndon Parish Council strongly disagrees with the proposal for Option C as the Lower Thames Crossing location.

- Depending on routes chosen Option C will cost somewhere between £4.1billion and £6.4billion. This is a very large sum to only take 14% of the traffic away from the existing Dartford Crossing (Consultation Document page 17) and only at most reduce the journey time from the M2 J4 to M25 J28 by 9 to 12 minutes. (Consultation Document page 22). This raises the question, is Option C really good enough and good value? There must be a better crossing option.
- Thurrock and Brentwood already suffers from heavy traffic congestion. Any crossing going through Thurrock is likely to add to that congestion especially if there are incidents that could cause restriction or blockage of the road.

6. Routes North of the River

If, despite all the clear problems Option C is selected West Horndon Parish Council strongly opposes Route 4

- Route 4 is potentially £1billion more expensive and 2.6 miles longer than Route 3
 - It will harm more green belt than Route 3 or Route 2
 - There is a conflict between this route and the Brentwood Borough Council Draft Local Development Plan – the proposed Dunton Hills Garden Village. This will place Brentwood Council in a very difficult position with regards to being able to develop the Government required viable Local Development Plan.
 - The route is very close the three grade II listed buildings
 - East Horndon Hall
 - Dunton Hills Farm
 - Church of All Saints, East HorndonVibration both during construction and subsequently has the potential to damage these protected buildings as well as further ruin the views of and from them.
 - Route 4 will have a major impact on:
 - a conservation area
 - ancient woodland
 - the country park

- The land surrounding the A127 / A128 junction is already subject to major flooding, which has in the recent past resulted in several local homes being flooded. Further highway development would be certain to make this situation worse.
- From a highways perspective merging the new road with the A127 at the current A128 junction and then demerging again at the M25 has a potential high risk.
 - A127 is already at capacity and has a lot of local/commuter type traffic, many vehicles will be car and vans.
 - The new road will be used substantially by long distance traffic much coming from the Kent ports and heading north to the industrial areas of the country a much larger proportion of this traffic will be HGV vehicles.
 - Widening the A127 to 4 lanes each way between the A128 & the M25 will not really increase the capacity of this section.
 - Essex Highways have already identified that the A127 needs to be upgraded probably to 3 lanes each way. However, this proposal would in effect merge 2 lanes + 3 Lanes into 4 lanes. This would almost certainly exacerbate the lack of capacity problems especially as vehicles would be lane changing in order to demerge just 3.5 miles later when the roads separated.
- If Option C does become the chosen option for the crossing Route 3 is the least harmful of the presented routes.

7.

- Route 2 tend to disagree
- Route 3 tend to disagree
- Route 4 Strongly disagree

8. Routes South of the River

West Horndon Parish Council has no opinion on routes south of the river.

9. Routes South of the river

West Horndon Parish Council has no opinion on routes south of the river.

10. West Horndon Parish Council disagrees with Option C, Route 3 but sees it as the least harmful of the options presented in this consultation document.

11. Additional Junctions

Given the harm all the presented routes create additional junctions will not be beneficial.

12. Other comments

The Need to upgrade the Dartford Crossing

- West Horndon Parish Council agrees that the Dartford River Crossing is approaching capacity. This is especially the case north bound because of the need to close tunnels on a regular basis in order to permit vehicles carrying hazardous loads. There is a need to upgrade the crossing in some way.
- We acknowledge that part of the problem is that the Dartford River Crossing just a single crossing point – there is no alternative if there are any incidents on the crossing or M25 in the immediate area close to it
- Another crossing point needs to be found but we do not believe that Option C and especially Route 4 deliver the required improvements without creating unnecessary harm.