HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Matt Palmer
Executive Director, Lower Thames Crossing
Highways England
3 Ridgeway
Quinton Business Park
Birmingham, B32 1AF

Sent by email only.

Reference No. HW28436 2 September 2021

Dear Matt

Re: Lower Thames Crossing community impacts consultation

I'm writing to respond to the community impacts consultation on the Lower Thames Crossing.

Please accept this letter as my response to the consultation.

As you know, I have taken part in two previous public consultations on the project and have also met with representatives from project team. I welcome the engagement work being carried out on the project, including this consultation.

I believe that this project could bring huge benefits to people in my constituency and across Kent, but only if investment in the Lower Thames Crossing is combined with investment across the road network in Kent.

I have set out in previous consultations the particular sections of the road network that need upgrading if this project goes ahead – specifically the M2/J7 at Brenley Corner, and the A249 and the A229 – which are likely to see increased traffic.

I was pleased to see Brenley Corner listed as one of the schemes to benefit from development funding as part of the Government's Second Road Investment Strategy (RIS2). But there is a lot of work still to be done to ensure this junction secures the funding needed to deliver an improvement plan. I would be grateful for an update on anything that you or your colleagues have been doing to help secure improvements to this junction as part of your plans for the Lower Thames Crossing.

While I appreciate that this consultation is focused on the community impacts in the areas closest to where the Lower Thames Crossing would be built, I hope you will not overlook the way this could affect people elsewhere in Kent, including in my constituency.

The Lower Thames Crossing is likely to see more vehicles, including HGVs, using the M2 to access the Channel ports. This motorway is already extremely busy with several junctions along the route needing improvement. It's vital that the impact of the project on this, and other roads in Kent, is properly understood.

Impacts on traffic flow, air and noise pollution from this project need to be understood across the road network in Kent. I understand that some work on this was carried out at an initial stage of the project, but I would welcome more detailed and up to date information on the impact on the road network in my constituency – particularly on the M2, the M20, the A249, the A229 and the A251.

Improving one section of the road network is of little use if it simply shifts traffic problems to other parts of the network. The Lower Thames Crossing needs to make life better for motorists across Kent, not just fix traffic and capacity problems at the Dartford Crossing.

I would welcome your support for efforts to make sure the Lower Thames Crossing not only improves the traffic flow around the M25, but across the whole road network in Kent.

I look forward to hearing from you.

All best wishes,
Helen

Helen Whately MP
Member of Parliament for Faversham and Mid Kent