

AN INFRASTRUCTURE

REVOLUTION

LOWER THAMES CROSSING CONNECTING SOUTH EAST ENGLAND

The Dartford Crossing is currently the only route across the River Thames east of London. It is the busiest river crossing in the country, carrying much more traffic than it was ever designed for. To reduce congestion and overreliance on Dartford, the Government has drawn up plans to build the **Lower Thames Crossing**, which will almost double road capacity across the river.

The new route under the Thames, which will be the longest road tunnel in the UK, will boost local, regional and national economies by providing better journeys and fewer delays.

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WHAT IS THE LOWER THAMES CROSSING?

The Lower Thames Crossing will connect Kent and Essex in the South East of England via a tunnel passing beneath the River Thames. Situated 7 miles east of the Dartford Crossing, the project will consist of a number of major improvements:

- A 2.6-mile road tunnel, with entrances to the east of Gravesend on the southern side of the Thames and to the west of East Tilbury on the northern side
- Around 50 new bridges and viaducts and 14.3 miles of new road connecting the tunnel to the existing road network, including the A2/M2 in Kent, the A13 in Thurrock, and the M25 in Havering
- A free-flow charging system, where drivers can pay remotely without needing to stop, similar to that at the Dartford Crossing.

The Lower Thames Crossing is expected to cost between £6.2 billion and £8.4 billion. Construction is due to start in 2026, with a target opening date of 2029/30.

Delivering an Infrastructure Revolution

Whilst economic and social infrastructure projects are often in the headlines due to the amount of money spent on them and the disruption caused during their construction, they generate huge long-term benefits. By providing better local services, new jobs, cleaner air and faster connections, modern infrastructure helps to level up opportunity and prosperity across the UK.

[Build UK's factsheets](#) cover a range of local and national projects explaining what they are and why they are being built in Britain today.





WHY WE NEED THE LOWER THAMES CROSSING

The Lower Thames Crossing will form a critical artery of transport across South East England, relieving pressure on existing routes. The project will:

- Reduce congestion at the Dartford Crossing and on nearby roads, improving their performance by providing free-flowing, north-south capacity
- Improve connectivity from ports such as Dover, Felixstowe and Southampton, allowing freight traffic to move beyond London to the Midlands and North of England
- Create thousands of new jobs, apprenticeships and training opportunities for those in the local area
- Support sustainable local development and national economic growth
- Pioneer the use of hydrogen as an alternative to diesel on construction sites, promoting investment in zero-carbon technology in the industry.

LOWER THAMES CROSSING IN NUMBERS



£6.2bn
estimated investment



14.3
miles of new road



22,000
new jobs supported

KEY ISSUES

- With the Dartford Crossing already significantly over **capacity**, critics argue that another Thames crossing will be required by the time construction of the Lower Thames Crossing is complete.
- The promotion of cars as a mode of transport has been criticised, with **environmental concerns** over the emission of greenhouse gases. However, the faster-than-expected uptake of electric cars and decision to ban the sale of diesel vehicles by 2035 may see the environmental impact of road traffic significantly reduced.
- Whilst overall traffic conditions and resilience to congestion will improve, there are areas that will experience a negative impact in terms of **traffic**, and Highways England is working closely with stakeholders to understand and respond to these.

WHO WILL BENEFIT?

The Economy

- Billions of pounds will be added to the UK economy by encouraging investment and regeneration in the areas near the crossing
- Cross-Thames road capacity east of London will nearly double, reducing journey times and improving local access to jobs.

The Local Community

- Around 22,000 new jobs, apprenticeships and training opportunities will be created over the lifetime of the project
- Local businesses, particularly SMEs, will be supported through a partnership with the Supply Chain Sustainability School
- The project has involved the largest ever statutory consultation of its kind, with more than 90,000 people sharing their views on the proposals, which has helped to reduce the land required for construction.

The Environment

- Special attention has been paid to the preservation of wetland bird sites, ancient woodland and Areas of Outstanding National Beauty. This has resulted in building a tunnel, rather than a bridge, to reduce the potential impact
- Innovative road surfaces will improve air quality and reduce noise pollution, while advanced modelling and impact assessments ensure any environmental impact will be lessened
- Acting as a trailblazer for net zero construction, the project will be the first to use hydrogen to power major construction plant, eliminating emissions from an estimated 66 million litres of diesel.

With thanks to National Highways for their help in producing this factsheet.



Further Information

Highways England (2017) [Lower Thames Crossing: Response to Consultation](#)

Highways England (2016) [Lower Thames Crossing: Route Consultation](#)

Highways England (2016) [Lower Thames Crossing: Summary Business Case](#)

Find out more

www.HighwaysEngland.co.uk

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