

LOGISTICS UK



Lower Thames Crossing

Road to growth



About the Lower Thames Crossing

The Lower Thames Crossing is a proposed new road connecting Kent and Essex that will tackle congestion and unlock economic growth by almost doubling road capacity across the Thames east of London.

Congestion at the Dartford Crossing costs the UK economy more than £200 million every year in lost productivity, and leads to delays and diversions for vital freight travelling to every corner of the country.

The reliable new connection linking the north and midlands with the south-east ports will provide a boost of up to £40bn to the economy and leave a legacy of high-quality jobs and home-grown skills.

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The Dartford Crossing, once a marvel of engineering, is now a bottleneck that stifles economic growth and productivity.

As a vital artery for the movement of goods, the freight industry bears the brunt of delays with time sat in traffic translating to millions of pounds in economic losses every year.

The Lower Thames Crossing will provide a much-needed alternative. It is a strategic investment that will boost our economy, improve the quality of life of millions of people, and create a modern and efficient logistics network that can meet the demands of a growing economy.

The benefits will be felt before the first spade hits the ground, and during construction with thousands of high-quality British jobs that jumpstart better home-grown skills. As the first of a new generation of sustainable projects, it will change the way we build and decarbonise the construction industry.

Together, we can build a road that not only meets the demands of today but also paves the way for a brighter, greener and more efficient tomorrow.

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Matt Palmer

Matt Palmer
Executive Director for the
Lower Thames Crossing



The logistics industry is the backbone of our economy, supporting businesses, communities, and the daily lives of the country.

It ensures that essential goods, from food and medicine to raw materials and consumer products, reach their destinations efficiently and on time – every day.

The Dartford Crossing is an essential route between the north, midlands and south east ports. Delayed goods mean delayed business, and the ripple effects are felt across the entire supply chain, affecting everything from manufacturing to retail, and ultimately, the end consumer.

The logistics industry is focused on ensuring that goods are moved in the most productive, strategic and green way. This means reducing congestion and carbon emissions, boosting trade through better connections with ports and adding resilience to the overall logistics system and economy.

The Lower Thames Crossing will not only provide a vital new route that streamlines the movement of goods across the country. It will be a critical enabler of this transformation, especially as the first crossing over the Thames for larger double-decker HGVs.

Logistics UK is proud to support this vital initiative and looks forward to the positive changes it will bring.



A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'D Wells'.

David Wells OBE
Chief Executive for
Logistics UK

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Road to economic growth

1963
1st tunnel at Dartford Crossing opened
2 million crossings per year

1980
2nd tunnel opened
23 million crossings per year


1991
QEII bridge opened
30 million crossings per year

2024
It remains the only road crossing east of London
50 million crossings

40% of journeys are freight vehicles 

Designed for **135,000** crossings per day but regularly exceeds **180,000** 

2/3 journeys travelling north take twice as long as they should

Only **0.1%** of people living and working locally cross the river for work 

Lower Thames Crossing will provide a £40bn economic boost to the UK

2032
Lower Thames Crossing opens for traffic

Doubles road capacity over the Thames 

Reduces congestion at Dartford by taking 13 million vehicles away

400,000 more jobs within an hour's commute 

New connection linking the **north** and **midlands** with **south-east ports**

2026
Lower Thames Crossing construction begins

£ millions spent with UK businesses 

Almost **1/2** of workforce **recruited locally**

Kickstarting a new generation of **low carbon construction** 

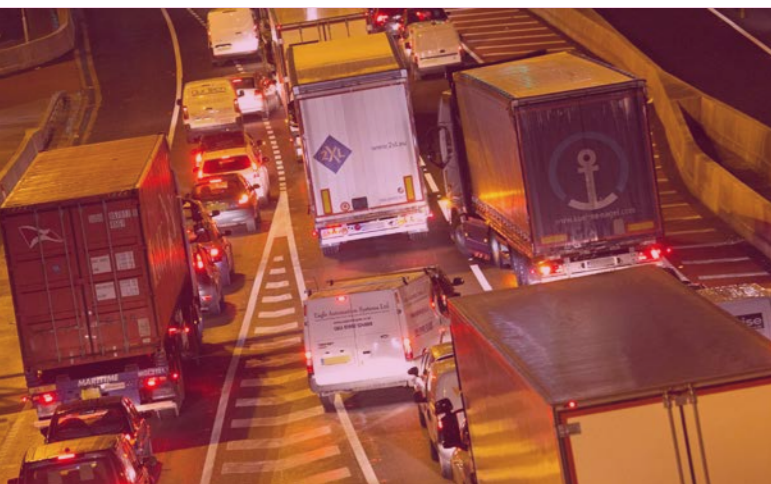
The Dartford Crossing – one of the UK's most vital roads

The Dartford Crossing's unique position as the only route over the Thames east of London makes it one of the UK's most strategically important roads.

Used by over 50 million vehicles every year, 40% of which carry vital goods, it plays a pivotal role connecting the country's key ports, distribution hubs and manufacturing centres.

The Dartford Crossing opened more than 60-years ago but despite a second tunnel and a bridge being added, it cannot keep up with unprecedented demand.

It was designed to handle 135,000 vehicles a day, but regularly exceeds 180,000 and takes the largest specialist team of its kind managing it 24/7 to keep traffic moving safely.



The huge volume of traffic makes it one of the country's most unreliable roads, where travel times regularly double and can escalate to several hours when there is a major incident.

Congestion at Dartford

95%

of journeys travelling northbound during the evening peak are delayed

3,000

incidents a year - one of the highest incident rates on the road network

Every 15 mins

there is a tunnel closure to escort abnormal loads and dangerous goods

6-7hrs

of tunnel closures for essential maintenance almost every night of the year

100+mile

diversions during major incidents or closures



£200 million
cost of congestion at
Dartford Crossing every year

Handbrake on economic growth

Congestion on the Dartford Crossing costs the UK economy more than £200 million every year.

This accounts for lost opportunity and dramatically reduced productivity as goods and people are stuck in traffic or face long diversions.

As the volume of traffic continues to increase, so will congestion, delays and the cost to the UK economy.

Barrier between Kent and Essex

This one-mile stretch of severely congested road divides two of the country's largest and most populous counties, holding them, the wider Thames Estuary and the country back from reaching its growth potential.

Only a tiny fraction of local people cross the river to get to work and the unreliable journeys stop businesses from reaching new staff, customers and suppliers, and people looking across the river for homes, jobs or education.

Lower Thames Crossing – driving economic growth

The Lower Thames Crossing is the solution to the decades-long road capacity problem over the Thames, that will break down barriers and create a strong foundation for growth.

Better access and more opportunity

The new road will make journeys quicker, safer and more reliable.

It will ease congestion at Dartford as well as heavily used sections of the A2, A13 and M25, and local roads, and create a more resilient road network by maintaining connectivity across the Thames when incidents disrupt Dartford.

The new connection will help businesses grow and increase productivity by improving access to key markets, customers, suppliers and employees.

It will also bring an additional 400,000 jobs within an hour's commute of local communities, and give them more choice of where to live, work and go to school, as well as where to shop and spend valuable free time.

A catalyst for decarbonisation

The Lower Thames Crossing will be a catalyst for driving carbon out of the construction industry by creating a new blueprint for future projects.

The project has already cut its predicted carbon footprint by around 50%, will use hydrogen to help phase diesel out of our work sites within the first year of construction, and create a home-grown workforce with the green skills needed to deliver this project and those of the future.

The greenest road

- Two new public parks overlooking the River Thames
- A new community woodland at Hole Farm
- 40 miles of new or improved pathways for walkers, cyclists and horse riders
- More than 1 million additional trees
- 80% of the new road below ground, in cutting or behind embankments
- Seven green bridges as safe crossing points for people and wildlife

Unlocking UK logistics

As the only road crossing over the Thames east of London, the Dartford Crossing is one of the UK's most important roads for logistics. It carries more than double the volume of freight than any other part of the strategic road network. The delays and congestion have a significant impact on the movement of goods and leads to millions of pounds of economic losses every year.

The Lower Thames Crossing will allow vital goods to reach every corner of the country smoothly and offer a reliable new connection between the north, midlands and south-east ports. It will be the only free-flowing option over the Thames for the next generation of sustainable, large goods vehicles such as double decker HGVs, with no escorts or stopping of traffic needed.

Traditional economic valuations for freight movements are largely based on the cost of a driver's time, but there are additional benefits that come from having goods move around the country in a timely and effective way. This includes reduced costs from late deliveries, vehicles operating for longer periods, and fewer empty HGVs.

Recent economic estimates show that the Lower Thames Crossing would offer closer to £40bn to the UK economy over the first 60 years of its lifetime when considering these additional benefits to the freight industry and other factors.

£40 billion
boost to the
UK economy

“The Lower Thames Crossing will help improve Asda's overall operational efficiency by giving us another route through Kent and Essex, and mean we can better utilise our double-decker HGV fleet, helping us reduce our transport emissions.”

Chris Hall, Vice President, Asda Logistics Services



High-quality British jobs and home-grown skills

During construction, the Lower Thames Crossing will give an economic uplift through the supply of new high-quality jobs and skills - locally, and across the UK.

Building the new road will provide thousands of new work opportunities for people and businesses, including hundreds of apprenticeships and graduate placements.

A home-grown workforce

With almost half of the project workforce to be recruited locally, it will develop home-grown skills that provide better access to higher skilled and paid work.

A national supply chain

A range of specialist suppliers from across the UK will support the huge demand of jobs and materials that will be needed over the six-year construction programme.

This includes sister companies of our three delivery partners, Balfour Beatty, Bouygues Murphy Joint Venture and Skanska.

Millions
spent with UK
businesses

Steel from Lincolnshire

Balfour Beatty's Bottesford Factory is a specialist precast piling facility. Carbon and waste reduction is top of their agenda by using cement replacement and zero steel waste through recycling.

The consistent production pipeline offered by the Lower Thames Crossing will support their almost fully Lincolnshire based 100-person workforce, as well as support their growth plans by enabling investment into better technology and robotics.



Plant from Nottinghamshire

Murphy Plant is a plant, transport and specialist equipment supplier that supports a broad range of construction activities from utilities to tunnelling. They are passionate about supplying solutions with low energy consumption and limited carbon emissions.

The opportunity to work with the Lower Thames Crossing supports their plans to expand a training academy in Nottinghamshire and create new jobs in the region.



Steelwork services from South Yorkshire

Skanska's Bentley Works is a specialist in steel manufacturing and engineering, with 90% of their workforce living within 10-miles of the Doncaster site. They're passionate about low carbon innovation, such as using Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil in all of their piling and ground engineering plant, and use computer-controlled equipment to create items from 3D plans.

Working with the Lower Thames Crossing would safeguard their local workforce and further develop their expertise.



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