

Press release: New crossing to provide transport and jobs stimulus

A new crossing beneath the River Thames will unlock billions of pounds worth of economic benefit and create thousands of jobs, Highways England's Chief Executive said today as he welcomed the Government's announcement of the preferred route for a new Lower Thames Crossing.

Jim O'Sullivan said the new crossing east of Gravesend and Tilbury would improve journey times and dramatically increase capacity for traffic crossing the river east of London.

The existing Dartford Crossing, with the Dartford Tunnel and the Queen Elizabeth II Bridge, are the only way to cross the Thames by road east of London.

Highways England will be responsible for delivering the crossing, which will see a new tunnel constructed, easing pressure on the existing Dartford Crossing – currently the only road crossing of the River Thames east of London

The new crossing will be linked to the road network by a new road north of the river, which will join the M25 between junctions 29 and 30, and a new road south of the river which, will join the A2 east of Gravesend.

Highways England chief executive Jim O'Sullivan said:

This route will greatly improve journeys as well as unlocking more than £8 billion of economic benefits and create some 6,000 jobs.

The decision for a new crossing east of Gravesend and Tilbury is underpinned by years of studies, assessments and careful consideration of the record breaking response to our 2016 consultation. As we progress there will be further consultation and opportunities to be part of shaping the detail for the area, now and for future generations.

The Dartford Crossing is already over capacity – the new Lower Thames Crossing will relieve this.

The scheme will cost £4.4 billion and the new 70mph, 13 mile route and crossing will improve journeys for drivers. Capacity for vehicles crossing the Thames east of London will increase by 70 per cent.

Around 55 million journeys are made each year on the Dartford Crossing, six million more than it was designed for, and it suffers from closures due to incidents almost daily. This announcement provides a huge boost for local businesses, of which many agree that the new crossing will help their

business to grow and employ more people.

While the Dart Charge system has helped to relieve congestion, a new Lower Thames Crossing has been needed for some time.

More than 47,000 people responded to a consultation about the proposals last year, to help the Government reach this decision.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.