

## **Lower Thames Crossing Consultation – March 2016**

### **Response by Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport UK (CILT) – South East Region**

#### **1. Who We Are**

The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) is a professional Organisation representing those in the Logistics and Transport businesses. We have an overall membership of over 18,000 people.

The South East Region of the Institute represents Kent, Sussex and parts of Surrey.

#### **2. Overall Comment Regarding the Thames Crossing Proposals**

Although this response is from the South East Region of the Institute the implications of these proposals have significant national and international implications as the M25 Thames Crossing is a major link route between the northern, central and eastern regions of the UK and Europe. As stated in the report this route is subject to frequent disruption due both to a general lack of capacity on the route and also its proneness to specific problems relating to tunnels (e.g. security issues, safety issues relating to vehicles delayed underground) and the effect of high winds on the Queen Elizabeth Bridge. Although general experience of increasing road capacity is to increase traffic levels, any concern regarding this has to be offset by the indisputable fact that the current capacity constraints and consequent congestion problems are adversely affecting the efficiency of businesses located in the area as well as considerably delaying the movement of people and freight to and from South East England and the Continent. In addition improved road links to and from the Thames Gateway area are essential for economic regeneration in the area.

Therefore the CILT endorses the basic need for the proposals.

Although the CILT supports the plans we would add that, as well as strengthening road links across the Thames east of London, better rail links are also required, particularly for freight traffic. Currently freight links between the channel tunnel and north of London are very limited with no freight-enabled rail crossing east of London except for HS1 which has very limited freight capacity. If more sustainable freight movements are to be a reality in the south of England improved rail links are essential to avoid continuing increases in cross-river road traffic. A new rail link in the region of the Dartford river crossing would also allow better passenger rail connections between the north and south Thames-Side areas.

#### **3. Specific Problems Regarding the Plans**

Our main concern regarding the proposals is that an improved link between Essex and Kent east of Gravesend will increase traffic wishing to head to/from the M2/A2, A229 and A249. The report states that improvements to these roads are not planned, and in the case of the A229, previous proposals are not now to go ahead. We are therefore concerned that the

road network east of Gravesend will not be able to adequately cope with the increase in traffic, a problem that will be exacerbated by the considerable increase in housing in the Ebbsfleet area as well as the Paramount Theme Park proposals. We would therefore request that road improvements in this area are revisited. In the case of the M2 and A2 beyond Brenley Corner capacity is already limited as a result of it having been downgraded from its previous role of key route to the continent and any increase in flow is likely to increase the risk of traffic disruption, particularly as this is the alternative route to the channel when the M20 is disrupted.