Department for Transport

Options for a New Lower Thames Crossing

Consultation Response Summary

December 2013

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1. Introduction and purpose

1.1 On 21 May 2013 the Department for Transport launched a public consultation on options for a new Lower Thames crossing. A consultation document[1] setting out why Government believes there is a need for additional river-crossing capacity in the Lower Thames area was published together with reports produced during the Department's review of options which preceded the consultation. The consultation set out the case for additional road-based river crossing capacity in the Lower Thames area and the relative merits of three potential locations together with one variant option. Views were invited on the options set out within the consultation document, and the consultation closed on 16 July 2013. The location options considered were:

- Option A: at the site of the existing A282 Dartford-Thurrock crossing.
- Option B: connecting the A2 with the A1089.
- Option C: connecting the M2 with the A13 and the M25 between junctions 29 and 30.
- Option $C_{variant}$: connecting the M2 with the A13 and the M25 between junctions 29 and 30, and additionally widening the A229 between the M2 and the M20.

1.2 The purpose of this document is to report on the feedback received during the consultation period. This document summarises the evidence gathered as part of the review and provides a record of the consultation activities carried out by Department representatives. This document also includes a breakdown of who responded to the consultation together with an analysis of their responses to the consultation questions.

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/options-for-a-new-lower-thames-crossing

2. Overview of review findings

2.1 The Department's review, which reported in 2013, investigated the problems at the existing Dartford-Thurrock crossing and assessed the relative merits of three location options for a new Lower Thames crossing. The review found that there was a problem at the existing crossing which was likely to deteriorate further with the increases in population and traffic that are forecast for the area.

2.2 Review findings suggested that even once free-flow charging technology has been introduced at the crossing in autumn 2014, the delays both northbound and southbound at the existing crossing are likely to exceed the delays currently experienced by 2041, when demand for a new crossing might be expected to have matured. The review also found that the crossing would be operating at stress levels of 112% by 2041 if no new crossing was provided, meaning that, the crossing would be operating beyond its capacity. Free-flow charging technology is therefore unlikely to provide a long-term solution to congestion at the existing Dartford-Thurrock crossing.

2.3 We assessed the three location options, and one variant option, against a number of economic, social and environmental factors. The review concluded that a new crossing would be feasible at each location in terms of construction, value for money and financing. Each location option has been shown to reduce congestion at the existing crossing, albeit to varying extents. The location options were also shown to produce varying social and environmental effects.

2.4 A new crossing at Option A is forecast to reduce congestion at the existing crossing by the greatest amount of the three options considered and is also expected to be the cheapest. A new crossing at Option A would not add any additional connectivity to the strategic road network and is therefore forecast to stimulate relatively limited economic growth when compared with the other options. A crossing at Option A also has the potential to create additional congestion around junctions 30 and 2 of the M25.

2.5 Option B is forecast to alleviate congestion at the existing crossing to a lesser extent than Option A but could add delay to the surrounding road network. This option would improve connectivity and is therefore forecast to be more effective than Option A in supporting the development of economic activity in the local area.

2.6 A new crossing at Option B would traverse the Swanscombe Peninsula and has the potential to affect planned developments in the area. A new

crossing would also traverse an area of nationally important heritage and archaeological value.

2.7 A crossing at Option C is forecast to alleviate congestion at the existing crossing to a similar extent as at Option B but without adding delay to the A2 and A13. It is, therefore, expected to result in greater journey time savings than a new crossing at Option B. As a result of the improved connectivity, this option is forecast to achieve more economic benefit resulting from the agglomeration of business activity than Options A and B. A new crossing at Option C would also provide a more direct route for many journeys and is expected to result in a large decrease in greenhouse gas emissions over the 60 year appraisal period.

2.8 A new crossing at Option C would involve the longest route of the options assessed, passing largely through undeveloped land which is designated as Green Belt. The area around Option C includes several environmentally sensitive areas, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest and ancient woodland. Option C would also affect several internationally designated sites. Whilst options for mitigation exist, any route which is likely to adversely impact one or more of these internationally designated sites would need to satisfy a test that there were no alternatives for the route that would avoid these areas and that it was of 'overriding public interest' in order to proceed. Overall, Option C would result in the greatest impacts on environmentally sensitive areas of all the options.

2.9 Option $C_{variant}$ would additionally involve widening the A229 between the M2 and the M20. It has been shown to have similar impacts to Option C, but due to the enhanced connectivity it provides, it is expected to bring the largest economic benefits.

3. Consultation activities

3.1 The consultation ran from 21 May 2013 until 16 July 2013; a period of eight weeks. During this period officials from the Department and the Highways Agency provided the opportunity for members of the public to speak face to face with officials through a series of consultation information events. Table 3.1 below lists the information events led by the Department.

Table 3.1 Information events

Date	Location
Thursday 13 June	Dartford Library, Central Park, Dartford, Kent, DA1 1EU
Saturday 15 June	Grays Library, Orsett Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 5DX
Monday 17 June	Chadwell Information Centre, Brentwood Road, Chadwell St Mary, Grays, Essex, RM16 4JP
Thursday 20 June	Bluewater, Greenhithe, Kent, DA9 9ST
Friday 21 June	Lakeside, West Thurrock Way, Grays, Essex, RM20 2ZP
Saturday 22 June	Gravesend Library, Windmill Street, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 1BE
Monday 24 June	Basildon District Council, Basildon Centre, St Martin's Square, Basildon, Essex. SS14 1DL

3.2 Stephen Hammond, the former Minister for roads, hosted a briefing session for Members of Parliament affected by the consultation on 20 May. He also hosted a briefing session for Local Government Leaders, including representatives from the London Assembly, on 21 May.

3.3 Departmental officials also attended the following public forums and meetings to provide briefings and answer questions regarding the consultation:

- South East Local Enterprise Partnership Executive Group – 24 May
- Thames Gateway North Kent Partnership meeting – 30 May
- Essex Local Authority Leaders and Chief Executives meeting – 6 June
- Thames Gateway Strategic Group – 11 June
- Open meeting for members of the Thames Estuary Partnership – 19 June

- Essex and South East Local Enterprise Partnership business breakfast – 21 June
- Kent and South East Local Enterprise Partnership business breakfast event – 24 June
- Medway Councillors briefing meeting – 24 June
- Thurrock Council Scrutiny Panel meeting – 1 July
- Gravesham Rural Forum and Gravesham East Forum public meeting – 4 July
- Dartford Borough Council public meeting – 10 July

3.4 Officials also accepted meeting requests from the Environment Agency, Natural England, English Heritage, the promoters of a new theme park proposed for the Swanscombe Peninsula, Lafarge and Land Securities.

4. Overview of respondents

4.1 A total of 5776 responses were received to the consultation. Responses were received via letter, email and through an online response form. Table 4.1 provides a summary of the responses received.

Table 4.1 Summary of responses	
Form of response	**Number of responses**
Letter	463
Email	394
Online response form	3487
Campaign letters/emails and petitions	1432
Total	**5776**

4.2 5511 responses, or 95% of the total number of responses, were received from individuals, with 265 responses, or 5%, received on behalf of organisations. A breakdown of the responses received on behalf of organisations is provided in Table 4.2 below.

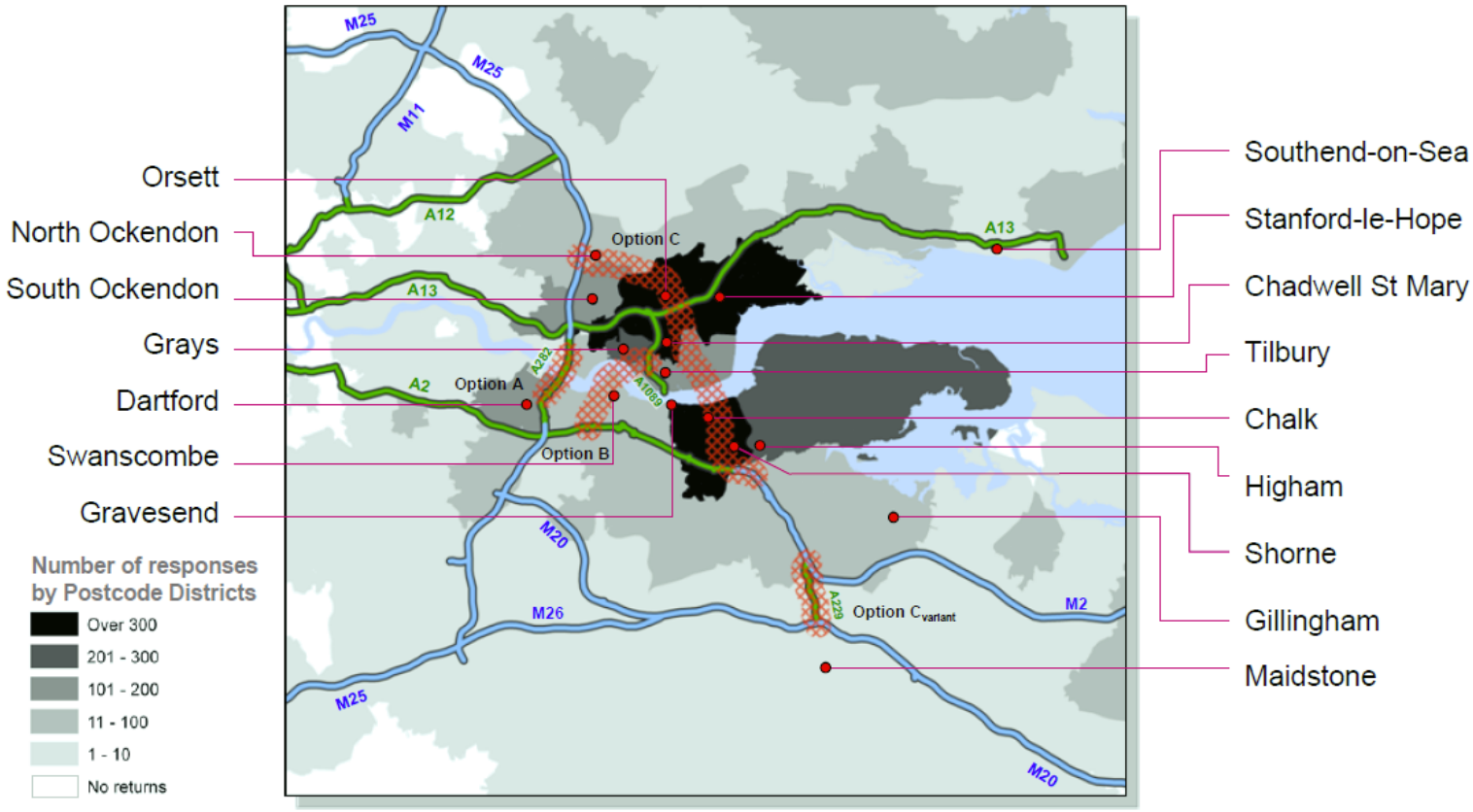
Table 4.2 Summary of responses received on behalf of organisations	
Organisation type	**Number of responses**
Business	68
Central Government	10
Environmental organisation	36
Local Government	47
Trade Association	9
Residents Group	18
Other	50
Not entered	27
Total	**265**

4.3 As mentioned above, a series of campaign letters, emails and signatures on petitions were submitted in response to the consultation. These consisted of six different letter/email templates or petitions and amounted to 1432 individual responses. A summary of the contents of these campaign letters/emails and petitions together with the numbers received of each are given in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3 Summary of campaign responses received		
Letter/Petition	**Summary of contents**	**Number received**
'Object to Lower Thames Bridge options A,B,C' petition	Name, address and signature of those who signed the petition against a new crossing at any location.	221 signatures
'No to Lower Thames Crossing' letters	Letter protesting against any proposal for a new crossing in Thurrock. Highlights the environmental impact of a new crossing and the impact on Green Belt land.	104 letters
'Proposed 2nd motorway crossing in Thurrock, Essex'	Letter expresses opposition to the options proposed and proposes 'Option D', a toll-free tunnel at the Canvey intersection on the A13 to link up with the A130 and A12.	16 letters
'A second crossing in Thurrock is not an option'	Letter protesting against another crossing in Thurrock and proposing an alternative site further downstream of Thurrock. Letter raises environmental concerns and concerns regarding the impact of a new crossing on Green Belt land.	17 letters
'Against Options C and Cvariant'	Letter expressing concerns at the inclusion of Options C and $C_{variant}$. Highlights concerns regarding the environment, safety and cost. Letter expresses support for Options A and B.	175 letters and emails
'Oppose Option C and wish any decision to be delayed until effect of free-flow known'	Slip opposing Option C and asking for the decision on the need for a new crossing to be delayed until after free-flow charging has been introduced and its effects known.	899 slips and signatures

4.4 Respondents were asked to supply their postcode as part of their response to enable an understanding of the geographical distribution of respondents. Just fewer than 90% of respondents supplied at least the first section of their postcode. Figure 4.1 shows the distribution of respondents' home postcodes. A small number of responses were also received from other parts of the country.

Figure 4.1 Geographic breakdown of home postcodes



4.5 Figure 4.1 shows that the largest numbers of respondents live in the RM16 and DA12 postcode areas; the areas in Essex and Kent which would be affected by a new crossing at Option C. These areas are shaded in black. As can be seen from Figure 4.1, the majority of the home postcodes recorded were from areas in close proximity to the three proposed location options.

4.6 As 95% of responses were received from individuals, Figure 4.1 demonstrates that the response to the consultation came predominantly from residents who live close to the location options presented as part of the consultation.

4.7 Respondents were also asked to provide some information relating to their use of the existing crossing and the purpose of their journeys.

Figure 4.2 Respondents' use of the existing crossing

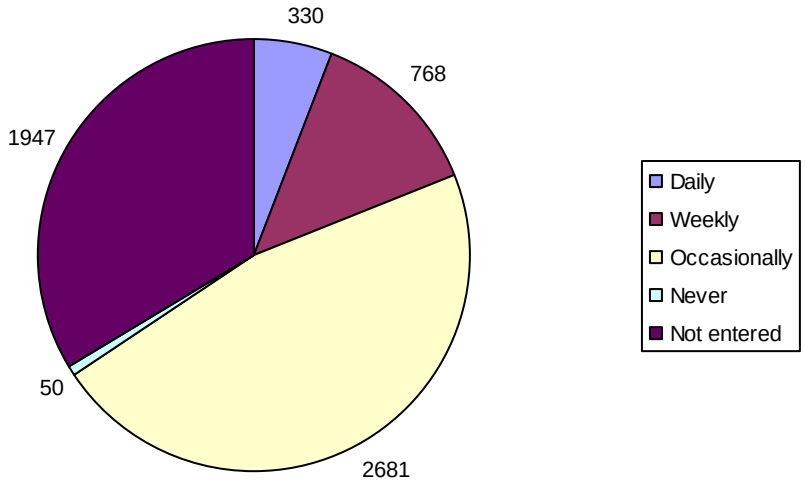
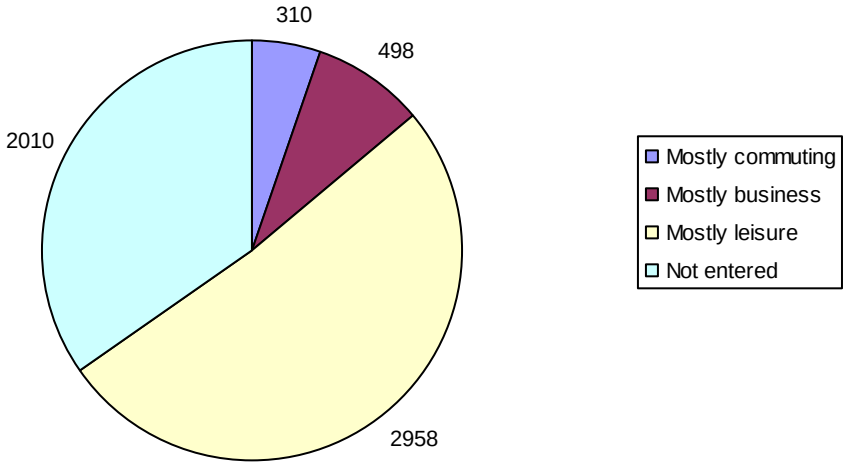


Figure 4.3 Respondents' journey purpose



4.8 Figures 4.2 and 4.3 show that the majority of respondents use the crossing occasionally and mostly for leisure purposes. This reflects the fact that the majority of responses to the consultation came from individuals, rather than businesses.

5. Views on the case for a new crossing in the Lower Thames area

5.1 The consultation document set out why Government believes there is a need for additional crossing capacity in the Lower Thames area. Respondents to the consultation were asked whether they agreed with the Government's position and were invited to explain their reasoning.

Q1. Do you agree that there is a strong case to increase road-based river crossing capacity in the Lower Thames area?

- **Agree**
- **Disagree**
- **Neither agree nor disagree**

Please explain your reasons.

5.2 3966 respondents answered this question directly, with the remaining 1810 either not entering a response or not making their views about whether there is a strong case for new road based river crossing capacity explicit in their response. Those responses have been classed as 'not entered' in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Summary of answers to Question 1

Type of respondent	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Not entered	TOTAL
Individual	1616	1612	505	1777	5511
On behalf of an organisation	127	80	25	33	265
TOTAL	**1743 or 30%**	**1692 or 29%**	**530 or 9%**	**1810 or 31%**	**5776**

5.3 Table 5.1 shows that 30% of respondents agreed that there was a strong case for a new crossing, 29% disagreed, and the remainder either expressed no preference either or did not explicitly answer the question.

5.4 Of those respondents who responded as individuals, 1616 or 29% agreed that there was a strong case for a new crossing and 1612 or 29% disagreed. Of those who responded on behalf of an organisation, 127 or

48% agreed that there was a strong case for a new crossing and 80 or 30% disagreed. Table 5.2 provides a breakdown of the responses to Question 1 received on behalf of organisations.

Table 5.2 Breakdown of answers to Question 1 received on behalf of organisations

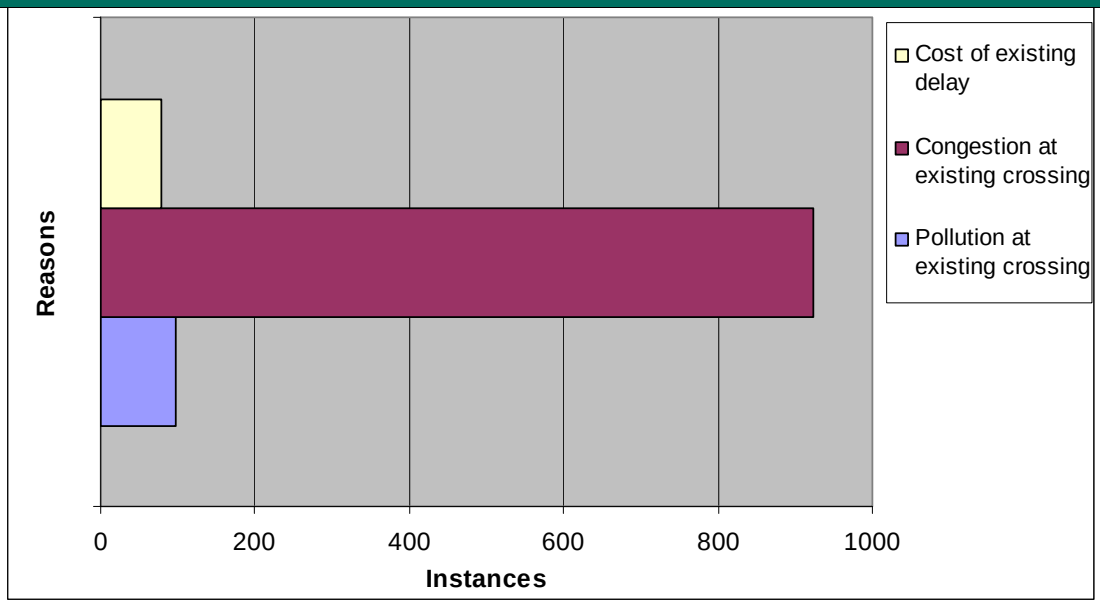
Organisation type	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Not entered	Total
Business	51	8	1	8	**68**
Central Government	5	0	0	5	**10**
Environmental organisation	1	24	6	5	**36**
Local Government	31	7	6	3	**47**
Trade Association	8	0	0	1	**9**
Residents Group	4	13	1	0	**19**
Other	17	21	8	4	**50**
Not entered	10	7	3	7	**27**
Total	**127 or 48%**	**80 or 30%**	**25 or 9%**	**33 or 12%**	**265**

5.5 The majority of respondents listed congestion at the existing crossing, compounded by incidents, as factors that led them to agree that a new Lower Thames crossing is necessary. Poor air quality and high pollution levels at the existing crossing were also cited in support of a new crossing.

5.6 Other respondents, including the Confederation of Passenger Transport and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, listed the cost of the existing delay at the crossing as a factor which led them to agree that a new crossing is necessary.

5.7 Figure 5.1 below displays the key reasons given by respondents who agreed that there is a strong case for providing a new crossing. The figure displays the number of instances that each reason was given in a consultation response. Many respondents listed several reasons for their choice, whilst others did not list any. It therefore does not reflect numbers of individual responses.

Figure 5.1 Key reasons for agreeing that there is a strong case for a new crossing



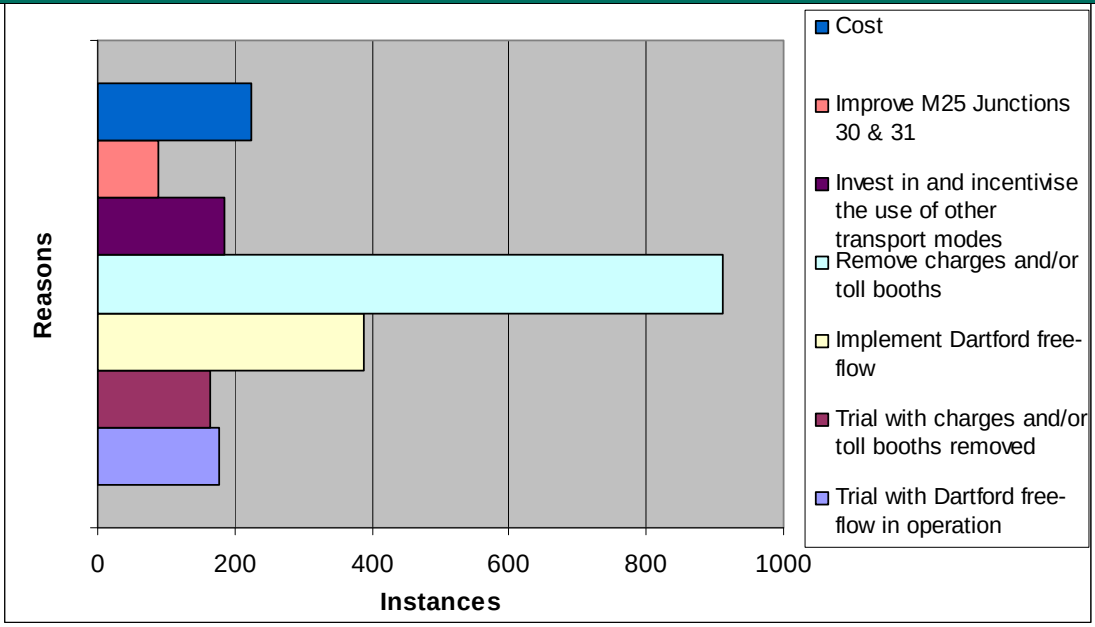
5.8 A large proportion of respondents who disagreed that there was a strong case for a new crossing were of the opinion that either removing the charges that apply at the existing crossing, the toll booths or introducing free-flow charging technology would significantly reduce congestion such that there would be no need for additional crossing capacity. Many respondents also felt that a trial of either free-flow charging technology or the removal of the charge should be carried out before a decision on whether to build a new crossing is taken.

5.9 Some respondents questioned whether the provision of a new crossing would increase traffic levels. Others queried what Government was doing to incentivise the use of other transport modes, such as rail, often commenting that encouraging travellers to use other forms of transport to cross the Thames would reduce the flows of traffic attempting to use the existing Dartford-Thurrock crossing. Some organisations, including the Haven Gateway Partnership, Transport and Health Study Group and Town and County Planning Association, were of the opinion that rail provision should be investigated as part of any proposal for a new crossing in the Lower Thames area.

5.10 Respondents also suggested that the Department should encourage hauliers and freight transporters to utilise the rail network or ports north of Dover, such as Felixstowe and Harwich, to transport goods which are destined for locations north of the existing crossing.

5.11 The figure below identifies points most often cited by respondents who disagreed that there was a strong case for a new crossing. Not everyone gave reasons for their views and while some gave numerous reasons, others gave none at all.

Figure 5.2 Points raised by respondents who disagreed that there is a strong case for a new crossing



5.12 Some respondents also queried the validity of the assumptions underpinning the traffic modelling carried out by the Department and the validity of the appraisal methodology. Protect Kent suggested that likely levels of future traffic growth had been overstated in the review material and consultation document and observed that traffic levels have fallen in recent years. Other stakeholders advanced the view that more robust evidence of the impacts that a new crossing would have on congestion, air quality and quality of life should be collected before a decision is made.

6. Views on the location options

6.1 Respondents were asked to express their preference for the location of a new Lower Thames crossing.

Q2. Which of the following location options for a new crossing do you prefer?

- **Option A: at the site of the existing A282 Dartford-Thurrock crossing**
- **Option B: connecting the A2 with the A1089**
- **Option C: connecting the M2 with the A13 and the M25 between junctions 29 and 30**
- **Option $C_{variant}$: connecting the M2 with the A13 and the M25 between junctions 29 and 30, and additionally widening the A229 between the M2 and the M20**
- **Other**

If other, please provide details.

6.2 3924 respondents directly answered this question, with the remaining 1852 either not entering a response on the online form or not making their preference explicit in their letter or email. These responses have been classed as 'not entered' in Table 6.1. Table 6.1 reflects all responses to this question, regardless of whether the respondent agreed or disagreed that there was a strong case for providing a new crossing.

6.3 1159 respondents, or 20%, expressed a preference for a new crossing at Option A, 302 or 5% expressed a preference for Option B and 977 or 17% respondents preferred Option C or $C_{variant}$.

Table 6.1 Answers to Question 2

	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option $C_{variant}$	Other	Not entered
Individual	1109	291	313	574	1408	1816
On behalf of an organisation	50	11	35	55	78	36
Total	**1159 or 20%**	**302 or 5%**	**348 or 6%**	**629 or 11%**	**1486 or 26%**	**1852 or 32%**

6.4 1109 or 20% of individuals favoured Option A, 291 or 5% favoured Option B, 887 or 16% favoured Option C or $C_{variant}$ and 3224 or 59% did not enter either an explicit response or expressed a preference for a new crossing at a location other than those consulted on.

6.5 Table 6.2 displays the breakdown of responses to question 2 received on behalf of organisations. 50 or 19% of organisations favoured Option A, 11 or 4% favoured Option B, 90 or 34% favoured Option C or $C_{variant}$ and 114 or 43% did not enter enter an explicit response or expressed a preference for a new crossing at a location other than those consulted on. We also received several surveys as part of responses submitted by organisations. For example, the Federation of Small Businesses conducted a survey of their membership to establish their preferred location option. Over 50% of their membership preferred Option C or $C_{variant}$, with Option B the least favoured of the location options.

Table 6.2 Breakdown of answers to Question 2 received on behalf of organisations

	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option $C_{variant}$	Other	Not entered
Business	10	6	12	24	9	5
Central Government	2	1	1	0	3	3
Environmental organisation	9	0	2	0	18	7
Local Government	15	0	11	14	7	2
Residents Group	1	0	2	2	12	1
Trade Association	1	1	2	3	2	0
Other	8	3	3	7	22	7
Not entered	4	0	2	5	5	11
Total	**50 or 19%**	**11 or 4%**	**35 or 13%**	**55 or 21%**	**78 or 29%**	**36 or 14%**

6.6 A large number of responses from organisations or representative bodies expressed a preference for either Option C or $C_{variant}$. A number of these recognised the potential for significant environmental impacts associated with a new crossing at Option C or $C_{variant}$ and the need for careful consideration of potential mitigation. Kent County Council offered some proposals to mitigate some of these impacts using tunnelling and by moving the assumed illustrative route for Option C at its southern end.

6.7 Overall, responses demonstrate that of the location options presented as part of the consultation, individuals tended to prefer Option A, with organisations preferring either Options C or $C_{variant}$. Option B was not preferred by individuals or organisations.

6.8 Figures 6.1 and 6.2 below display the preferences for the location of a new crossing segregated by those respondents who agreed or disagreed that there is a strong case for a new crossing.

Figure 6.1 Location preferences of respondents who agreed that there is a strong case for a new crossing

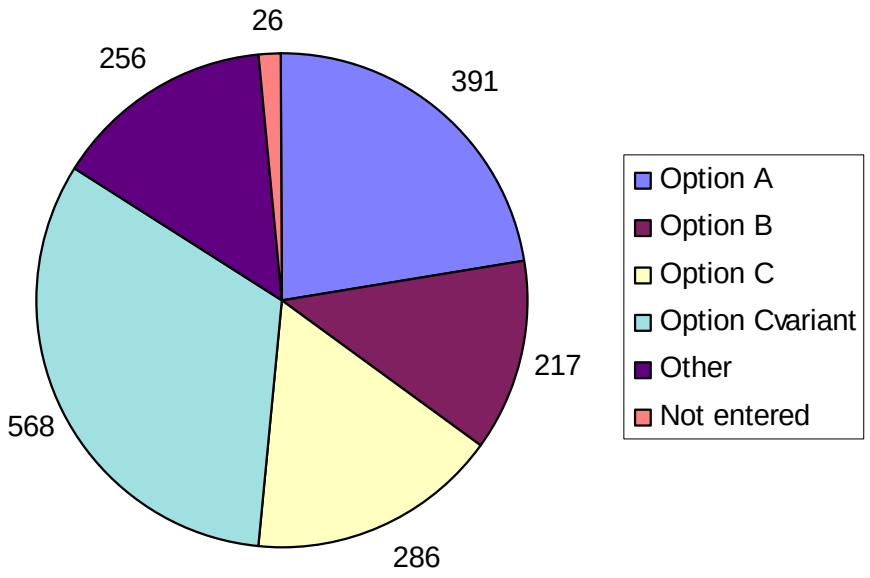
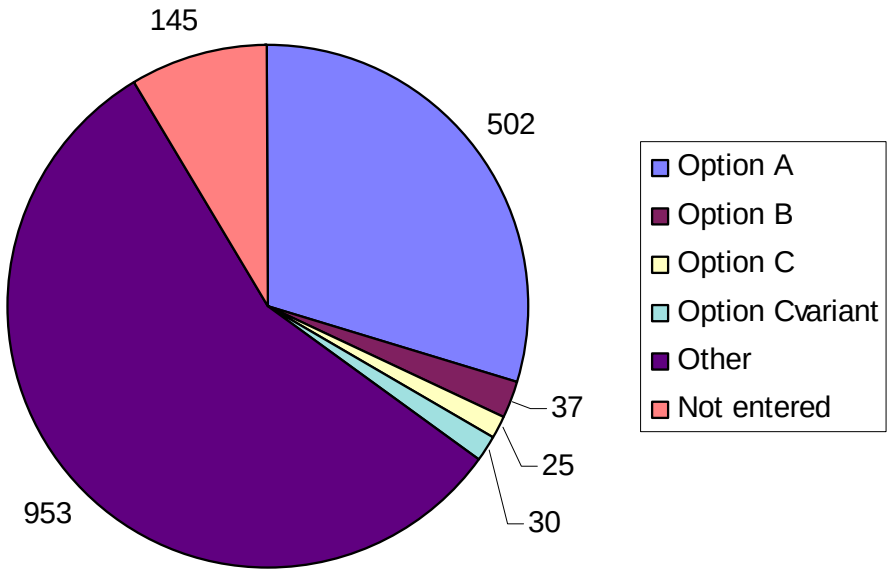


Figure 6.2 Location preferences of respondents who disagreed that there is a strong case for a new crossing



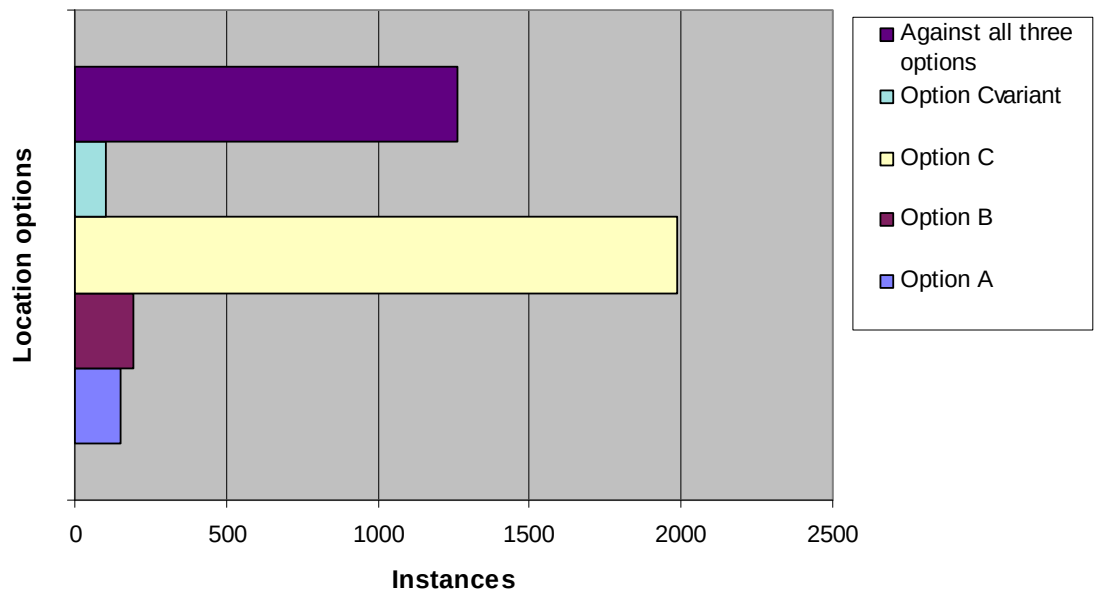
6.9 Of the respondents who agreed that there is a strong case for a new crossing, 22% favoured Option A, 12% favoured Option B and 49% favoured either Option C or $C_{variant}$. Many respondents who disagreed that there is a strong case for a new crossing still informed us of their preference for the location of a new crossing, many describing their preference in terms of being 'the least worst' option. 30% of those who disagreed favoured Option A and 56% selected 'other' and either

proposed an alternative crossing location, or expressed their opposition to a new crossing at any of the locations consulted on.

6.10 This shows that although Option A received the highest total level of support of the location options presented as part of the consultation, a significant proportion of this support came from respondents who disagreed that there is a strong case for a new crossing. In these cases, Option A was often referred to as being the 'least worst' location option. Almost half of those who agreed that there was a strong case for a new crossing were supportive of either Option C or $C_{variant}$.

6.11 Many respondents also registered their opposition to specific location options. 3700 instances were recorded of explicit opposition being registered to one or all of the location options (not necessarily different respondents, i.e. some respondents expressed opposition to more than one option). Figure 6.3 below displays instances where opposition was registered rather than numbers of individual respondents.

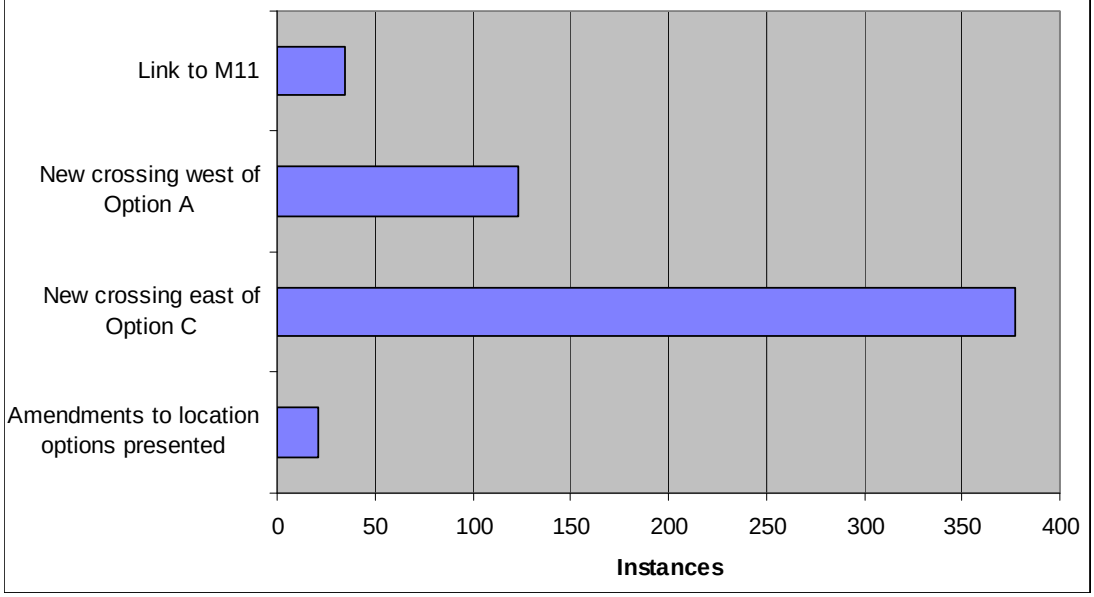
Figure 6.3 Opposition registered against the location options



6.12 Option C generated the greatest level of opposition, followed by instances where respondents expressed opposition to all the location options proposed during the consultation. By comparison, fewer respondents explicitly opposed Options A and B.

6.13 1486 respondents, or 26%, selected 'other' as their preferred location option for a new crossing. Figure 6.4 below sets out the main proposals put forward.

Figure 6.4 Alternative proposals for the location of a new crossing



6.14 As can be seen from Figure 6.4, many respondents questioned why proposals for a crossing further east of Option C had not been included in the consultation. Suggestions for crossing locations ranged from Canvey Island to the Isle of Grain. Respondents in favour of a new crossing east of Option C included individuals but also businesses and local authorities, including Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, Dartford Borough Council, Thurrock Council and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership.

6.15 Support was also expressed for constructing a new crossing further west, in London, rather than in Thurrock. Some respondents also suggested that any new crossing should link with the M11 rather than funnelling traffic back on to the M25. These respondents commented that this would provide a greater economic benefit, shorter journey times to the north and would relieve some congestion on the M25.

6.16 Several respondents also suggested an amendment to one of the location options presented or the use of the variant associated with Option C (widening the A229 between the M2 and M20) in combination with either Options A or B.

6.17 Figures 6.5 - 6.7 display the postcodes, where entered in response to the consultation, of those who supported and opposed each of the location options.

Figure 6.5 Breakdown of home postcodes who either supported or opposed Option A

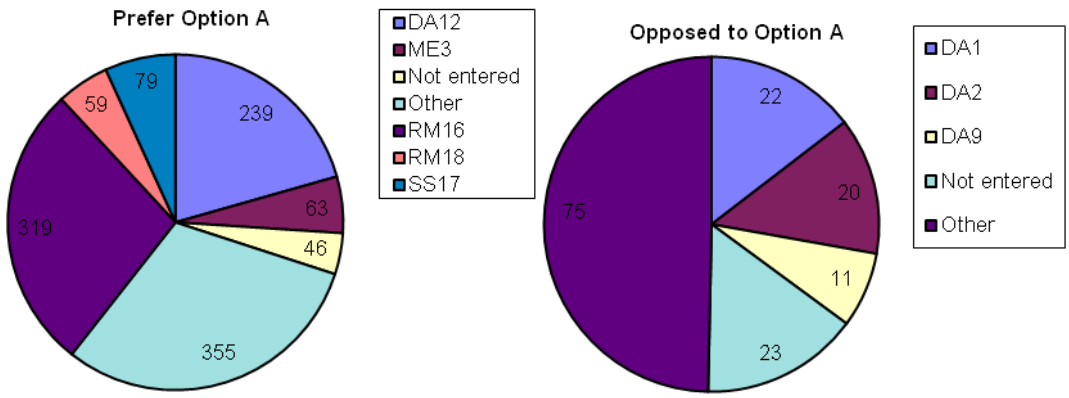


Figure 6.6 Breakdown of home postcodes who either supported or opposed Option B

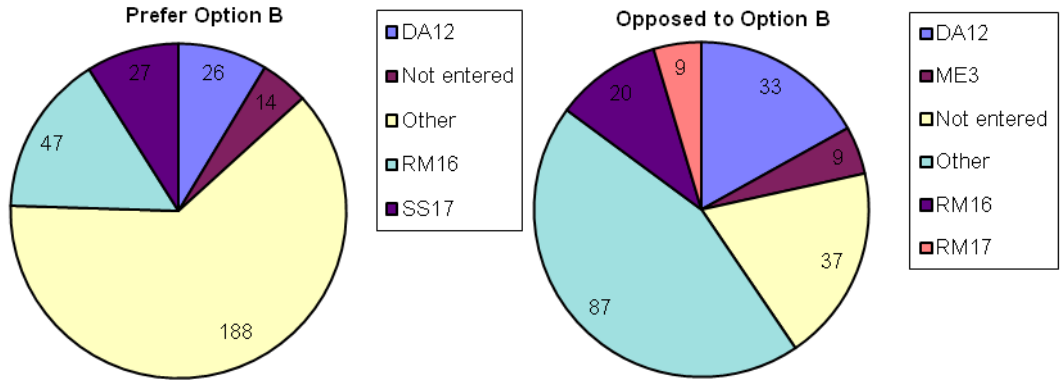
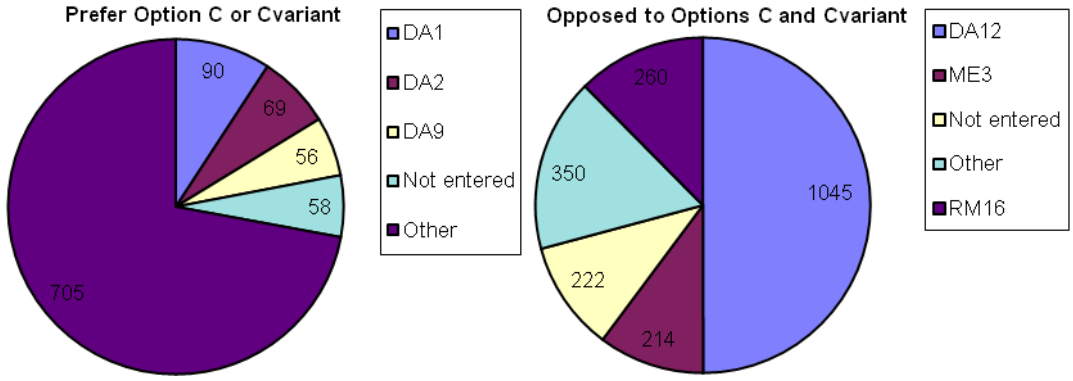


Figure 6.7 Breakdown of home postcodes who either supported or opposed Options C and $C_{variant}$



6.18 Figure 6.5 shows that support for Option A came from a mixture of postcode areas, but the DA12 and RM16 postcode areas made up a significant proportion of these, covering areas in Kent and Essex that would be affected by Option C. Figure 6.5 also shows that opposition to

Option A came from a wide range of postcode areas that have been included under 'other'. Significant opposition also came from the DA1 and DA2 postcode areas which lie south of the Thames, close to the existing crossing.

6.19 Figure 6.6 shows that support for Option B came from a wide range of postcode areas. Noticeable support came from the RM16 and DA12 postcode areas. Opposition to Option B also came from residents of the RM16 and DA12 areas as well as the RM17 postcode area in Essex, which would be directly affected by Option B.

6.20 Figure 6.7 shows that support for Options C and $C_{variant}$ came from a range of postcode areas, with particular support coming from the DA9, DA2 and DA1 postcode areas in Kent. Opposition to Options C and $C_{variant}$ came predominantly from the DA12 area in Kent, with other major opposition coming from RM16 and ME3. These are all areas that would be directly affected by Options C and $C_{variant}$.

7. Factors which influenced respondents' choices

7.1 The consultation questionnaire sought to ascertain the relative importance that respondents placed on the objectives listed in the consultation document.

Q3. Please indicate how important the following factors were in influencing your preference for the location for a new crossing, in answer to Q2. Please mark whether they were very important, important or not important.

- **Forecast contributions to the national economy**
- **Forecast reductions in congestion at the existing Dartford-Thurrock crossing and forecast improvements to the resilience of the surrounding road network**
- **Forecast reductions in greenhouse gas emissions**
- **Smaller forecast adverse impacts on environmentally sensitive areas and larger forecast improvements in quality of life relative to other location options**
- **Smaller forecast adverse impacts on planned development relative to other location options**
- **The distribution of forecast impacts on people within a range of different income groups**
- **Lower estimated costs relative to other location options**
- **Forecast value for money**
- **Other**

If other, please provide details.

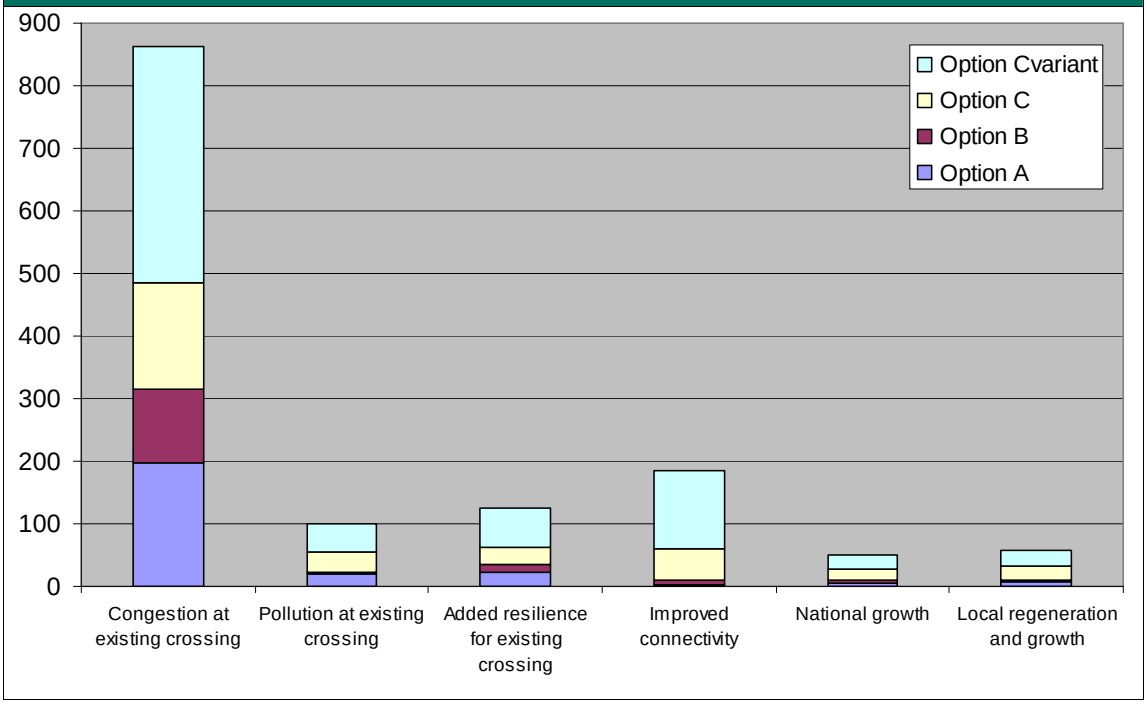
7.2 Respondents were asked to rank each objective as being either very important, important or not important to their decision-making process. All responses which did not directly answer this question have been classed as 'not entered' in the table below. Table 7.1 displays the breakdown of responses expressed as percentages. Some respondents chose to only express their opinion on the importance of some of the objectives, and left others as 'not entered'. Approximately 60% of respondents expressed their opinion on each of the objectives.

Table 7.1 Answers to Question 3				
Objectives	**Very important**	**Important**	**Not important**	**Not entered**
Forecast contributions to the national economy	12%	23%	23%	41%
Forecast reductions in congestion & improvements in resilience of the surrounding road network	31%	20%	8%	40%
Forecast reductions in greenhouse gas emissions	19%	24%	16%	41%
Smaller forecast adverse impacts on environmentally sensitive areas and larger forecast improvements in quality of life relative to other location options	30%	21%	8%	41%
Smaller forecast adverse impacts on planned development relative to other location options	16%	24%	16%	43%
Distribution of forecast impacts on different income groups	17%	22%	18%	43%
Lower estimated costs relative to other location options	19%	16%	23%	42%
Forecast value for money	23%	21%	15%	42%
Other	12%	2%	5%	82%

7.3 Table 7.1 shows that reductions in congestion and improvements in resilience at the existing crossing were rated as being the most important factors influencing respondents' preference for the location of a new crossing, followed by smaller adverse impacts on environmentally sensitive areas and improvements in quality of life relative to other location options. In contrast, contributions to the national economy and lower estimated costs relative to other location options were rated as being the least important factors.

7.4 In addition to answering the question above, respondents were given the opportunity to record the other factors influenced their choice of location option. Figure 7.1 below displays some of the factors that were mentioned by respondents in support of a location option, split by which location option they expressed a preference for.

Figure 7.1 Points raised by respondents in support of a location option



7.5 This shows that congestion at the existing crossing was the main reason that was quoted in favour of all of the location options, while the creation of better connections was quoted more often in connection with Options C or $C_{variant}$.

7.6 Respondents who favoured Option A listed several other reasons for their choice. Many respondents commented that due to the existing infrastructure in the vicinity of Option A, building a new crossing at this location would cause the least environmental damage and would be the quickest and easiest to construct. Other respondents listed cost as one of the most important factors in their decision as providing a new crossing at Option A is expected to be the cheapest of the options considered as part of the consultation. Greater forecast reductions in congestion at the existing Dartford-Thurrock associated with a new crossing at Option A was also cited by respondents who favoured Option A.

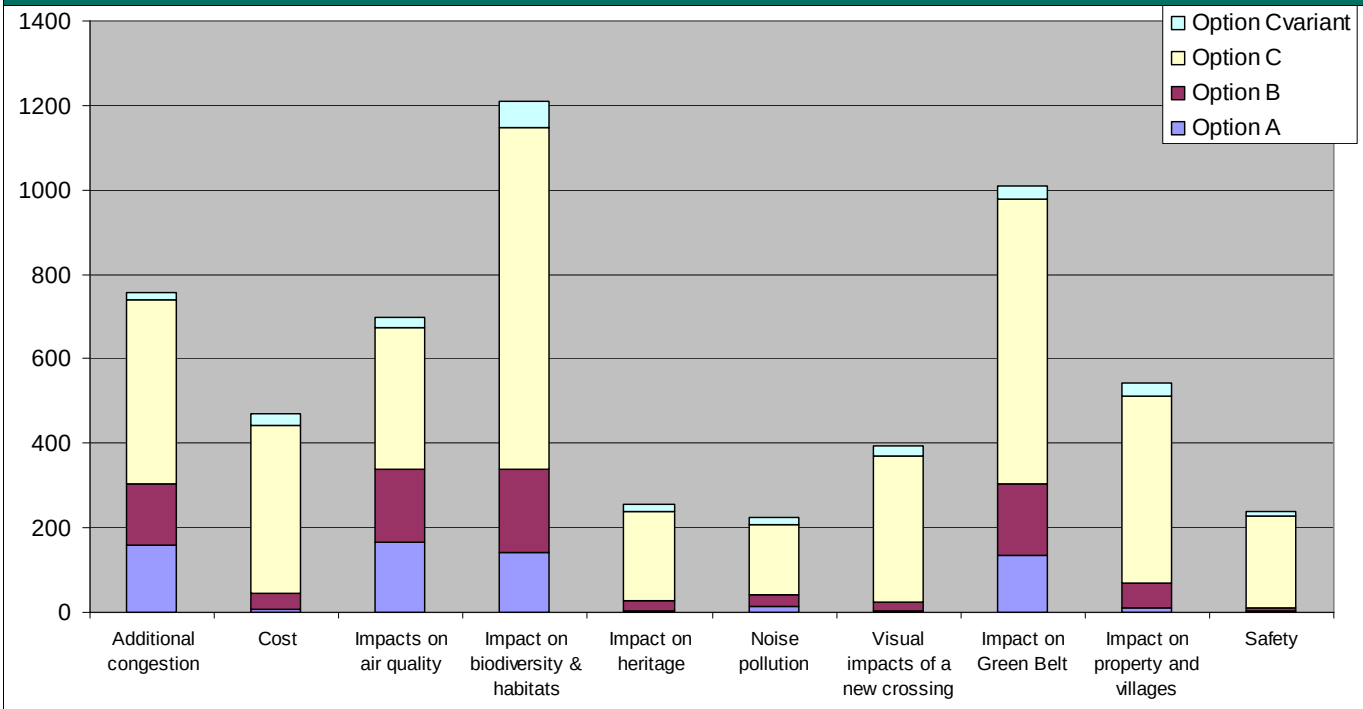
7.7 The majority of respondents who favoured Option B did so as a new route in this location would substantially reduce their commuting times and improve their local journeys between Kent and Essex.

7.8 Key factors which influenced respondents' preference for a new crossing at Option C or $C_{variant}$ included the fact that it would bypass the existing

Dartford-Thurrock crossing completely, providing shorter and more direct journeys for many people. These location options also supported by organisations including the South East Local Enterprise Partnership on the grounds that they are forecast to encourage economic growth both locally and nationally.

7.9 Many responses to the consultation were opposed to one or all of the location options presented. Figure 7.2 below displays some of the factors that were mentioned by respondents in opposition to a location option, split by which location option they chose.

Figure 7.2 Points raised by respondents in opposition to a location option



7.10 There was relatively little opposition expressed to Option A, but many respondents, including Dartford Borough Council, listed pollution at the existing crossing and the possibility of worsening air quality and quality of life in Dartford and Thurrock as key factors influencing their decision to oppose Option A. Some respondents expressed concern about future disruption to the local area, including additional noise pollution that might result from a new crossing, and the knock-on effect that a new crossing might have on the surrounding road network, including on M25 junctions. Other respondents, including the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, commented that Option A did not present a strategic solution to the problems at the existing crossing.

7.11 There was relatively little opposition expressed to Option B, but opponents included a Member of Parliament, local authorities, including Dartford and Gravesham Borough Councils and the Thames Gateway Kent Partnership. These respondents called for Option B to be rejected as a matter of urgency due to its possible impacts on the Ebbsfleet Valley and proposed Paramount Park developments.

7.12 Many people responded to the consultation to register their opposition to Options C and $C_{variant}$. Many opposed these location options due to potential environmental impacts on the surrounding areas. Respondents, including Thurrock Council and the Woodland Trust, raised concerns about the impact that a new crossing at this location would have on biodiversity and protected habitats in the area. Respondents also expressed concern about the visual impact of the crossing on the Kent Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the adverse impact on land designated as Green Belt, and the potential for a new crossing at Option C to lead to more development in the area. Many respondents also raised concerns about the negative impact that a crossing at this location might have on surrounding villages and properties. Kent County Council suggested that such environmental impacts could be reduced by more extensive use of tunnelling and by moving the connection with the A2/M2 to the west of M2 J1.

7.13 Other issues raised or mentioned included:

- The extent to which the review has taken account of the implications of the London Gateway port development on future forecast traffic flows on the Dartford-Thurrock crossing and the surrounding road network; and
- How airports, either existing or proposed, had been or will be considered as part of Government's decision-making process on the location for a new crossing.

8. Views on the engineering solution

8.1 Respondents were asked whether their preference for the location of a new crossing was conditional on whether a bridge, immersed tunnel or bored tunnel was constructed.

Q4a. Is your preference for the location of a new crossing, in answer to Q2, conditional on whether a bridge, bored tunnel or immersed tunnel is provided?

- **Yes**
- **No**

Q4b. If yes, please indicate which type of crossing you would prefer:

- **Bridge**
- **Immersed tunnel**
- **Bored tunnel**

8.2 3631 respondents directly answered this question, with the remaining 2145 either not entering a response on the online form or not making their preference explicit in their letter or email. Those responses have been classed as 'not entered' in the table below. Only 10% of respondents informed us that their choice of preferred location was dependent on the engineering solution chosen.

Table 8.1 Answers to Question 4a

Respondent	Dependent on engineering solution	Not dependent on engineering solution	Not entered
Individual	520	2935	2084
On behalf of an organisation	31	145	61
Total	**551 or 10%**	**3080 or 53%**	**2145 or 37%**

8.3 Table 8.2 displays the preferences expressed by the 551 respondents whose location preference was dependent on the engineering solution chosen. Over half of those who responded to this question told us that a bored tunnel was their preferred engineering solution. A bridge was the next most popular engineering solution, supported by 25% of respondents, and only 16% of respondents favoured an immersed tunnel.

Table 8.2 Answers to Question 4b				
Respondent	**Bridge**	**Bored tunnel**	**Immersed tunnel**	**Not entered**
Individual	124	280	84	32
On behalf of an organisation	13	14	3	1
Total	**137 or 25%**	**294 or 53%**	**87 or 16%**	**33 or 6%**

8.4 Table 8.3 shows the breakdown of responses to Question 4b received on behalf of organisations. Just under half of organisations whose preference for the location of a new crossing was dependent on the engineering solution chosen expressed support for a bored tunnel. Another 42% of organisations expressed their preference for a bridge. For example, the Port of London Authority expressed support for a bored tunnel on the grounds that it would be the least disruptive to river traffic both during construction and once operational.

Table 8.3 Answers to Question 4b broken down by organisation type				
Organisation type	**Bridge**	**Bored tunnel**	**Immersed tunnel**	**Not entered**
Business	5	6	1	0
Central Government	1	0	0	0
Environmental organisation	0	4	0	0
Local Government	2	1	0	0
Trade Association	1	0	1	0
Residents Group	0	0	0	0
Other	4	3	1	1
Total	**13 or 42%**	**14 or 45%**	**3 or 10%**	**1 or 3%**

9. Summary and next steps

9.1 In summary, 5776 responses were received to the consultation. 95% of responses were received from individuals, with only 5% of responses received on behalf of organisations. The majority of responses were received from individuals living in the locality of the existing crossing or the location options.

9.2 We received a very mixed reaction as to whether there was a strong case for a new crossing, with 30% of respondents agreeing that there was a strong case and 29% disagreeing. The remaining 40% of respondents were either undecided or did not explicitly express an opinion on this point.

9.3 Again, we received a mixed reaction regarding the location options, with 20% of all respondents expressing a preference for a new crossing at location Option A, 5% preferring Option B, 17% preferring either Option C or $C_{variant}$, and 26% expressing a preference for another location. Option A was preferred by most individual respondents and Options C and $C_{variant}$ were most popular with those responding on behalf of organisations.

9.4 It is clear from the consultation that respondents were most concerned with easing congestion at the existing crossing, and also with minimising negative impacts on the environment, local communities and the quality of life for residents.

9.5 Our review of the location options showed that a new crossing at Option B has the weakest case. Consultation feedback has additionally shown that a new crossing at Option B has limited support, and the prospect of a new crossing at Option B raises serious concerns that it would jeopardise major redevelopment of the Swanscombe Peninsula, a key part of the growth strategy for the Thames Gateway area. A number of stakeholders, including Dartford Borough Council and other members of the Thames Gateway North Kent Partnership urged that Option B should be discarded as swiftly as possible.

9.6 We have concluded that the review findings and consultation evidence provide sufficient grounds for discarding Option B at this point. We will continue to carefully consider important points raised during consultation in reaching a decision or whether to select Options A, C or Cvariant in 2014.