

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your information request of 11 March 2022 relating to the Lower Thames Crossing scheme. As your request concerns the proposals for a new road scheme I have dealt with it under the terms of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

You have requested: '*latest Lower Thames Crossing Outline Business Case (OBC)*.'

I can confirm that the Outline Business Case is incomplete and hasn't been approved by the Chief Secretary of Treasury. The information is therefore being withheld as it falls under the exception in Regulation 12(4)(d) material in the course of completion, unfinished documents and incomplete data.

In applying this exception, we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosure. The key public interest factor in favour of disclosure was that it could support openness and transparency relating to the basis of government funding decisions, and in relation to companies preparing to bid for a government project of significant cost to the taxpayer.

There is a public interest in the assessment of new road development by public authorities and the environmental impacts. There is also a public interest in public authorities being held to account for the decisions made regarding new road schemes.

The key public interest factor against disclosure was that the Business Case is currently incomplete, and it has not been formally approved by the Chief Secretary of Treasury. Sharing the incomplete Business Case may cause confusion as the information within the documents is subject to change as it goes through the approval process. We have also considered carefully the nature of your request, and undertaken a review of the draft Outline Business Case. This has confirmed that where there is information within the Outline Business Case relevant to your concerns, that information and assessments that supersede the information in the Outline Business Case have already been supplied to Thurrock Council.

We will be publishing a summary business case within four months of it receiving final approval.

With specific regard to the questions you have raised in your request:

Whether carbon has been substantially undervalued in previous and current appraisal work, especially in light of the new appraisal values for carbon issued by BEIS (and supported by the Treasury) in September 2021 and the Supplementary Green Book guidance issued by Defra in November 2020

The Outline Business Case is prepared using the guidance current at the time of preparation. The carbon figures are accounted for through the Economic Case, provides values that are calculated according to a methodology aligned with those set out in Development Consent Order (DCO) application v1, but using an older set of traffic models. Consequently the information in the Outline Business Case is superseded by the information in the Economic Appraisal Report included as part of for DCO application v1, which we supplied to you on 1 December 2020. Neither of these documents account for the guidance referenced as both were prepared in advance of the release of that information. This guidance will be accounted for in the updated documents for the DCO application resubmission which will be published in due course.

The different scenarios run to demonstrate how best to reduce the climate impacts of the Project

There are no scenarios that consider the climate impacts of the project. It is understood that the Department for Transport will be publishing new scenarios that consider the transport decarbonisation plans later this year that will set a framework for this assessment. There is no information on this in the Outline Business Case.

The impact of the project on health and how the cost implications of this have been considered.

The cost implications of the impact of the project on health are presented in the Economic Case, providing values that are calculated according to a methodology aligned with those set out in DCO application v1, but using an older set of traffic models. Consequently the information in the Outline Business Case is superseded by the information in the Economic Appraisal Report for DCO application v1, which we supplied to you on 1 December 2020. This information will be updated for the DCO application resubmission which will be published in due course.

The Council would like to understand how increased delays to traffic on the existing network due to the Project have been assessed.

The cost implications of delays to traffic on the existing network are accommodated into the calculation of the benefit-cost-ratio (BCR) in the Economic Case, calculated according to a methodology aligned with those set out in DCO application v1, but using an older set of traffic models. Consequently, the information in the Outline Business Case is superseded by the information in the Economic Appraisal Report for DCO application v1, which we supplied to you on 1 December 2020. This information will be updated for the DCO application resubmission which will be published in due course.

If you are not satisfied with our response you may ask for an internal review within 40 working days of receiving the response, by replying to this email. You can learn more about the internal review process [here](#).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted [here](#) or via the address below –

Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5AF

Please remember to quote reference number **FOI/3385** in any future communications about this response.

Kind regards

Shaun Pidcock
Lower Thames Crossing Programme Director