

Our ref: EIR 101651

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Dear Ms Blake

Lower Thames Crossing: request for information

Thank you for your email of 12 December 2020 requesting information relating to the Lower Thames Crossing. As your request relates to a new road scheme, we have answered it under the terms of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

You asked for ‘...a copy of the latest 2020 Appraisal Summary Table for the Lower Thames Crossing’. We have now completed the search for the Appraisal Summary Table (AST) and it has been enclosed with this letter. Please note, the black fields are a standard feature of the Department for Transport’s AST template; they do not represent redacted information.

The AST is a tool commonly used to present the appraisal results of public sector projects. For Highways England projects, these are based on advice in the Department for Transport’s Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG) and summarise the key economic, environmental, social and public accounts impacts of a project at a fixed point in time.

It is normal for infrastructure projects of the scale and complexity of the Lower Thames Crossing to update their appraisals as the design matures, new information is taken into account, and changes to appraisal guidance and parameters are published.

Different versions produced at different times for the same project should not be compared as they do not include details of key input assumptions or summarise the new impacts and value for money considerations.

The enclosed version of the AST was created in October 2020 and is an update to the version previously published in January 2016. Since 2016 the design of the Lower Thames Crossing scheme has changed significantly, and some key changes used in the development of the new AST include:

- The new appraisal is based on different sets of traffic data and different traffic models;
- key appraisal input assumptions, parameter values and guidance have changed;
- the 2020 AST is based on a much more detailed understanding of the likely impacts of the Lower Thames Crossing than the 2016 AST;
- additional impacts are summarised in the 2020 AST; and
- the DfT now require the use of different appraisal tools to summarise some of the impacts.

Consequently, there are significant differences in respect of the economic, environmental, social and public accounts of the scheme. Compared to the 2016 AST, the 2020 AST:

- reports lower levels of business user and transport provider benefits, such as journey time savings, but higher journey time reliability benefits for business users and providers and higher transport user and reliability benefits for commuters and other users;
- reports a higher estimate of wider economic impacts;
- provides a more detailed summary of the expected noise and air quality impacts;
- reports lower estimates in tonnes and monetary values of Greenhouse Gas emissions, without taking into account the revised government targets related to the production of electric vehicles;
- reports higher scheme costs and lower indirect tax revenues.

The AST will be updated again when the project's Development Consent Order application is resubmitted to the Planning Inspectorate.

If you are unhappy with the way we have handled your request you may ask for an internal review within 2 months of the date of this response for Freedom of Information requests and within 40 days for Environmental Information Regulations requests.

Our internal review process is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/highways-england/about/complaints-procedure>

If you require a print copy, please phone the Information Line on 0300 123 5000; or e-mail info@highwaysengland.co.uk. You should contact me if you wish to complain.

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 at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House

Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote reference number 101651 in any future communications.

Yours sincerely



Shaun Pidcock
Programme Director – Lower Thames Crossing