

Lower Thames Crossing Development Consent Order (DCO) costs (FOI/7140)

Dear ***** ,

Lower Thames Crossing – Development Consent Order costs

Thank you for your information request dated 22 December 2023 regarding the cost of preparing the two DCO applications for the Lower Thames Crossing. We have dealt with your request under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I can confirm that we hold the information you have requested.

Information provided

I would like to know the total amount National Highways has spent on the Development Consent Order (DCO) process for the Lower Thames Crossing broken down by reporting period from October 2022 to the most recent figures available. Please also include any cost that has been incurred on the examination period for the Lower Thames Crossing.
“New Civil Engineer has previously requested this information, and we would like updated figures to include the most up to date cost figures. <https://www.newcivilengineer.com/latest/lower-thames-crossing-applications-267m-cost-highlights-complexity-of-planning-system-06-12-2022>.”

Response

National Highways Development Consent Order application for the Lower Thames Crossing is one of the largest and most complex applications ever submitted to the Planning Inspectorate.

The project covers an area of 25sq km, includes five energy Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs), and seeks consent to build and operate the longest road tunnel in the UK and around 60 bridges, viaducts and other structures. Other schemes of this scale typically gain their planning through an Act of Parliament or Hybrid Bill.

The challenge of this scale and planning approach is to ensure the 10 planning authorities, local communities, and a wide range of stakeholders are involved in an inclusive manner in the development of the scheme. This has led the Lower Thames Crossing to be the most consulted on road planning proposal and resulted in over 90,000 responses.

The time period covered by your FOI request covers a period of over five years from the Governments Preferred Route Announcement in April 2017, and includes the preparation of the first DCO application submitted on 23 November 2020 and a second updated DCO application submitted on 31 October 2022, and the Planning Inspectorate’s rigorous examination of the proposals between 20 June to 20 December 2023.

Other activities such as development of the traffic model and the preliminary design, undertaking the assessments, public consultations and stakeholder engagement, and preparing the application documents, have also been carried out throughout this period.

The costs incurred in these activities are set out below. Please note these figures are excluding VAT:

	Reporting Period	Incurred Costs
First DCO application	Apr 2017 – Mar 2018	£55.3m
	Apr 2018 - Mar 2019	£78.4m
	Apr 2019 - Mar 2020	£32.8m
	Apr 2020 – Oct 2020	£43.1m
Updated DCO application	Nov 2020 – Mar 2021	£8.3m
	Apr 2021 – Mar 2022	£28.6m
	Apr 2022 – Oct 2022	£20.2m

DCO pre-examination and examination	Nov 2022 – March 2023	£9.4m
	April 2023 – Dec 2023	£19.0m

If you are not satisfied with your 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/7140]** in any future communications about this response.

Kind regards

Lower Thames Crossing – Executive Programme Director