



Mr Gareth Davies
The Comptroller and Auditor General
National Audit Office
157-197 Buckingham Palace Road
Victoria
London
SW1W 9SP

Your reference:

1 October 2026

Dear Mr Davies,

Urgent: Lower Thames Crossing

We write further to our letter of 16 July and your letter of 9 July, confirming that the NAO will be examining and reporting on the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC). Your previous correspondence has not indicated a confirmed start date for the investigation, and more than two months have passed since our last letter of 16 July, to which we have not received a response. Since then, we have resorted to instructing lawyers to make a formal complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) due to the Department for Transport (DfT) withholding information about the business case for the LTC. We are therefore writing again to urgently request confirmation of when the NAO investigation will commence, before it is too late.

The need to fast track an NAO investigation of the LTC

The decision to privatise the LTC and Dartford Crossings, and to seek private funding to construct the LTC was made in October 2025. Meanwhile at least £3.1 billion of public funding has been committed to the LTC until 2029 (with the transference of LTC Ltd to private investors scheduled for 2028). Publicly funded construction works have also already started, resulting in devastation to the countryside of Kent and Essex and major disruption to local residents. This expenditure of public funds and commencement of construction works has all happened with no Full Business Case (FBC) in place to establish whether this

course of action represents value for money for taxpayers, contrary to Treasury guidance. This is a serious failure and should be treated with urgency not complacency.

There has been no scrutiny of the October 2025 privatisation decision. No information has been placed in the public domain about the evidence base for this decision, and there has been no Parliamentary scrutiny about the loss of significant national assets (the Dartford Crossings and the potential LTC), nor the loss of substantial user charges to the UK economy. Privatisation was not scrutinised in the DCO examination in 2023-24, as the privatisation model had not been announced then. Parliamentary, NAO and public scrutiny of this major policy shift is therefore long overdue, and should have started before construction works commenced and public funds committed.

To be of use, an NAO investigation should make recommendations to prevent misuse and waste of public funds. If this investigation happens too late, it risks being of little use and no more than a post mortem of a catalogue of bad decision making, similar to HS2.

The lack of transparency regarding the LTC

Our 16 July letter explained the urgency and need to expedite any investigation. We also raised significant new information, including that the Department for Transport was refusing to publish the Outline Business Case (OBC) for the Lower Thames Crossing, claiming it was 'incomplete'. However, the National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority (NISTA) confirmed in its Major Projects Annual Report for 2025–26¹ that the LTC's OBC "*was updated and approved by the DfT Investment Committee in October 2025*". We remain extremely concerned that the DfT is attempting to hide important information which evidences the decision making for the Lower Thames Crossing.

We requested an internal review of the DfT's refusal to publish the LTC's OBC on 16 June 2026, and have still not received a response. Our lawyers have made a formal complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) regarding this breach of the statutory time limits. As per our 16 July letter, we request that the lack of transparency and attempt to mislead the public should be included in any terms of reference for the NAO investigation of the Lower Thames Crossing road scheme.

If we are expected to engage with your investigation (as your letter of 9 July indicated we would), the DfT will need to increase transparency about this publicly funded project and put all information into the public domain. We request the NAO's assistance in securing this transparency so the evidence base for decision making can be scrutinised.

Please can you confirm a date when the NAO will start this investigation into the Lower Thames Crossing, and when it hopes to conclude.

We look forward to receiving confirmation of the investigation timetable and would welcome the opportunity to provide relevant evidence to the NAO as soon as possible.

¹ [Major Projects Annual Report for 2025–26](#) (, NISTA, July 2026

Yours sincerely,

Abby Coften
Chief Executive
Transport Action Network

cc

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP, Chair, Committee of Public Accounts
Ruth Cadbury MP, Chair Transport Committee
Rt Hon Richard Holden MP, Shadow Transport Secretary
Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP, Reform Treasury Spokesperson
Olly Glover MP, Liberal Democrat Transport Spokesperson
Sian Berry MP, Green Transport Spokesperson