



A flawed consultation

The consultation ran from 26 January to 24 March 2016.

Neither of the routes (ESL or WSL) had been consulted on before.

Traffic forecasts showed that Option C would not resolve the problems at Dartford.

Nobody was given a proper choice.

Where were the questions on Option A at Dartford?

The consultation booklet was merely a 'sales brochure' for Option C

No to Option C

This is a picture taken at our Demo outside the Civic Centre last February, attended by hundreds of angry residents.



This was the beginning of the “No to Option C” campaign.

Nobody was happy with the consultation brochure and the consultation process.

Many people were asking “Where are the questions about Option A?”

Highways England had the answer...



Highways England published a Consultation publicity Q&A toolkit:

Question 2 asked: Why are you not consulting on a route option at Location A?

Answer: “In summary, Highways England’s assessment has shown that a crossing at location A would not solve the traffic problems at Dartford and would do little for the economy. Location C, by contrast, provides double the wider economic benefits of Option A, and provides a clear alternative route to the Dartford Crossing, reducing congestion there and improving the resilience of the road network as a whole. In light of these findings,

“Highways England have concluded that a route option at Location A will not be taken forward and therefore this option is not included in the public consultation.”



Department for Transport



Parliamentary Question:

On 24 February 2016, Stephen Metcalfe, MP for South Basildon and East Thurrock tabled the following written question:

“To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether Option A for a new Lower Thames Crossing is still (a) included in the consultation and (b) considered by his Department to be a viable option.”

On 2 March 2016, Andrew Jones, Under-Secretary of State for Transport gave the following written answer:

“I can confirm that Option A is included within the consultation and remains an option for consideration.”



“Location A will not be taken forward and therefore this option is not included in the public consultation.”



“Option A is included within the consultation and remains an option for consideration.”

The consultation should have been suspended as soon as this conflicting information was given.





Anyone could have their say

- Information events were held in the locality bounded from Bexley in the west to Rochester in the east, and from West Horndon in the north to Maidstone in the south.
- But Highways England invited 1.2 million people and organisations to respond, including 950,000 Dart Charge customers.
- Responses were received from as far away as Scotland, Isle of Man, Cornwall, and the west of Wales.
- Few if any of these attended the Information Events. Few would be aware of the local environment.
- Anyone who had used the Dartford Crossing once, no matter where they come from, had an equal say as the people most affected.

Total Responses Received

A total of 47,034 responses were received.

- 33,224 came from members of the public;
- 523 came from organisations or groups;
- 13,284 came from 'organised campaigns'.
- 3 came from petitions*.



- * The petitions included the KCC petition. They claim this had 11 signatures
– it actually had 3,678 signatures.

But what is an 'organised campaign'?

“Campaign” Responses Discounted from Members of the Public



“13,284 responses were received from 14 different campaigns.

A campaign response is an identically worded response that has been received from a group of people. These responses are included in the overall number of responses that were received but are summarised separately from those responses received from members of the public or organisations using the questionnaire.”

In other words, they were discounted from members of the public.

13,240 people out of this discounted 13,284 opposed Option C.

Only 44 agreed with Option C – 39 businesses and 5 motorcycle club members.

Remember this?

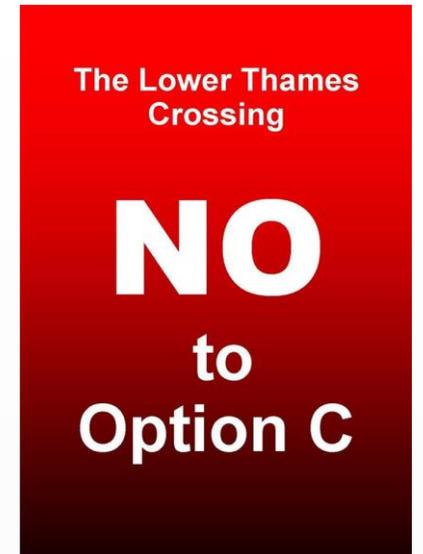
Shorne Public Meeting 12th February 2016

LOWER THAMES CROSSING SAMPLE CONSULTATION RESPONSE

“This presentation gives those of you who haven’t seen it before an idea of what the Consultation Questionnaire looks like, what the questions are, and it gives you some idea of the points you might want to consider when completing your form.

It’s not designed to tell you how you should answer the questions – that’s your choice, to use your own words, and to get the points across that you think are important.

But for anyone who is opposed to Option C, and who doesn’t want a crossing through our parish, you may find this helpful.”





Ipsos MORI

Consultation Analysis



Campaign 4: (946 responses)

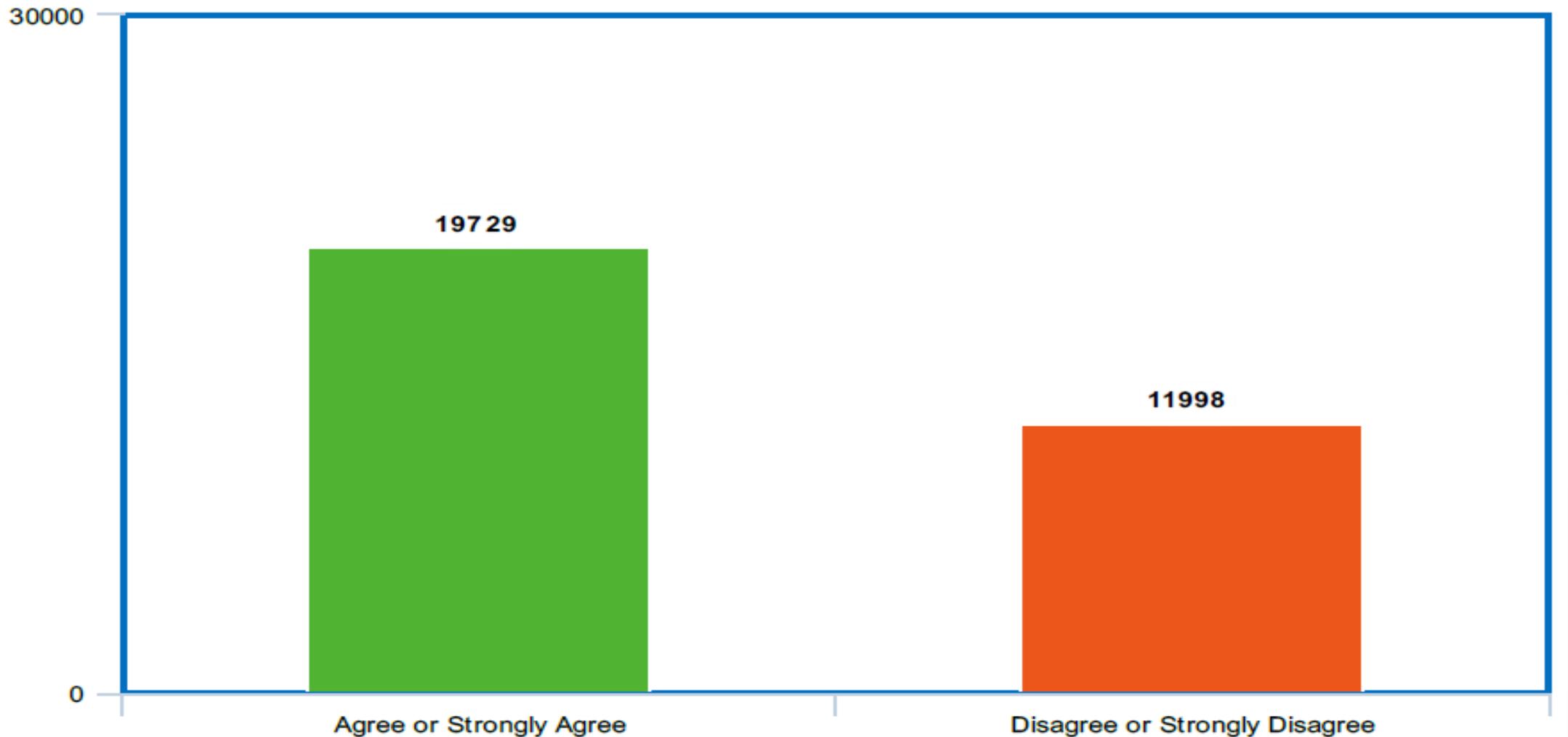
“This campaign appears to have been initiated by Higham Parish Council (*sic*). This campaign follows the consultation response form, providing template pre-filled answers to all closed and open questions. The instructions provided by the campaign describes the provided answers as being useful ‘...for anyone who is opposed to Option C, and who doesn’t want a crossing through our parish...’

- Of those who submitted this, six participants submitted the full campaign, identically worded, for all questions.
- 940 participants provided a response based on this campaign which:
 - - included a partial version of the text with or without their own personal comments, or
 - - included the full version of this text plus additional personal comments.”

ALL 946 WERE DISCOUNTED FROM THE MEMBERS OF PUBLIC RESPONSE RESULTS

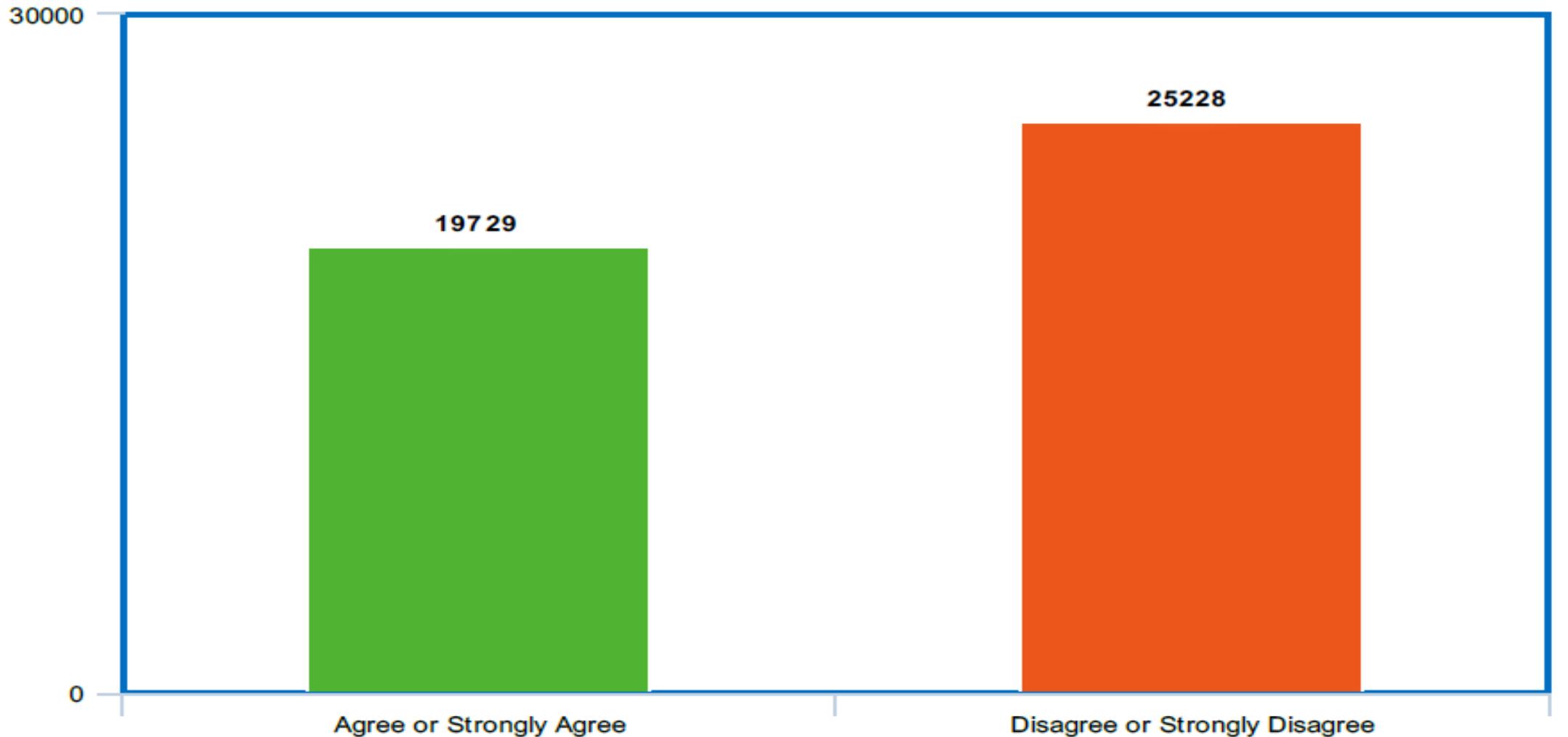
“Do you agree or disagree with our proposal for a crossing at Location C east of Gravesend?”

This is how Highways England presented the public response, with 13,240 people discounted.



“Do you agree or disagree with our proposal for a crossing at Location C east of Gravesend?”

This is the TRUE public response, with the 13,240 people included.



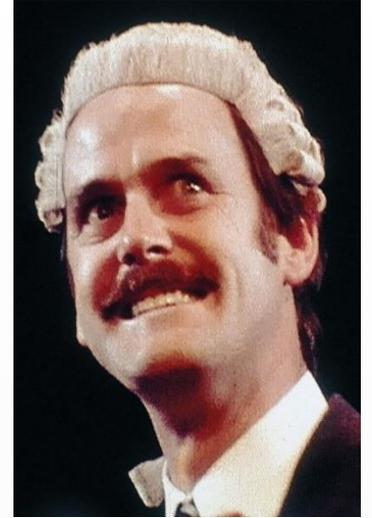
Legal challenge?



- We are very unhappy with the consultation process.
- We have obtained legal advice – but not what we wanted to hear.
- A legal challenge on the consultation is unlikely to be successful.
- There *may* be grounds to challenge the legality of the crossing at a later stage, based on air quality, climate change, etc., but this would need significant expertise and resources.
- We have therefore decided not to initiate our own judicial review.
- But we will provide support to other organisations where we can.
- CPRE has agreed to challenge Highways England via a pre-action protocol – a legal letter detailing the grievance.
- LTCA (of which Shorne PC is a member) has agreed to fund this.

Funding the challenge

- Shorne PC has previously paid for legal opinion.
- We funded 'No to Option C' posters and car stickers, which were sold to raise funds.
- Shorne Action Group has been very active during the past year, and has agreed to make a generous donation. This has been supported by Shorne PC and Shorne Village Hall.
- Shorne PC has agreed to round up the donation to £1,000.
- This money will be added to campaign fundraising by LTCA and donated to CPRE.
- £1500 granted by Gravesham Rural Neighbourhood forum will provide further working capital to focus on the primary aim of achieving maximum mitigation against the adverse impact of the proposed crossing and link road.



Our focus

- We maintain Option C is the wrong decision. It will not fix the problems at Dartford.



- We will support any professional challenge which will remove the crossing from east of Gravesend.



- We will focus on seeking the maximum mitigation on WSL.