

## **Port of Tilbury backs Lower Thames Crossing - but only with a junction into the expanding port area**

Posted: 2017-04-12

The Port of Tilbury, London's major port and the closest significant transport operation to the proposed new motorway and tunnel, welcomes the Government's decision today (12<sup>th</sup> April) on the Lower Thames Crossing.

**Charles Hammond, Chief Executive of the Forth Ports group (owner of the Port of Tilbury)**, welcomed the Government's decision on the route of the Lower Thames Crossing, while continuing to make the case for a junction into the Port of Tilbury area: *"With Brexit looming, it is imperative that the UK prioritises major infrastructure improvements to key international trading corridors.*

*"This investment is as much about north-south connectivity, as east-west road links on and off the motorway.*

*"It is vital that nationally significant transport operations like the Port of Tilbury have high quality and reliable road connections. That's why we will maintain the case for an all-moves junction off the new motorway into the expanding port area."*

According to Highways England's latest draft route strategy, the Port of Tilbury has one of the least reliable and least resilient road connections to the national motorway network of any major port.

Tilbury supports option C - a new tunnel and motorway connection east of the towns of Gravesend and Tilbury - but with the **proviso** that the proposed crossing and new road through Thurrock provides a step change in the connectivity to and from the port.

Over the next 12-18 months as the details of route and junctions are refined by Highways England, the Port will continue to call for the inclusion of an all-moves junction east of Tilbury with a direct link to the Port of Tilbury area. The additional junction is vital to:

- improve connectivity to the current Port estate and the Port's extensions - the 70-acre London Distribution Park and the proposed 152-acre port terminal, Tilbury2 (which will be operational in Q1 2020)
- provide much needed operational resilience to the Port's operations, with associated relief for the local road network, including residential areas
- open up north Kent to the substantial employment opportunities at the Port, and
- develop better access to the trading hubs in the Midlands, northern Europe and the South East.

Subject to planning approval for the new port terminal, Tilbury2, the Port aims to double the business through the port and triple the direct employment (c 9,000 jobs) in 10-15 years.

**Also commenting on the decision, Denise Rossiter, Chief Executive of Essex Chambers of Commerce,** added: *"We welcome the fact that the Government has made a decision on the Lower Thames Crossing. Like Forth Ports we too support option C and share with them their desire to see an all-moves junction east of Tilbury.*

*"As they rightly say, with international trade assuming even more importance once we leave the European Union, it is vital that we have the right infrastructure to provide access to and from our ports, whilst at the same time providing relief to the local road network around Tilbury."*