

Press release: 55 years on, Dartford crossing looks to the future

With plans for a new Lower Thames Crossing between Kent, Thurrock and Essex in public consultation, the original Dartford Tunnel marks its 55th anniversary.

Press release: 55 years on, Dartford crossing looks to the future

The original tunnel opened to traffic on 18 November 1963 and has since been used to make 1.5 billion journeys, with around 155,000 vehicles currently using it each day.

Although it has been added to over the years, with a second tunnel opening in May 1980 and the Queen Elizabeth II bridge opening in October 1991, the Dartford Crossing is still the only road crossing of the River Thames east of London.

Highways England is currently seeking views on proposals for a new Lower Thames Crossing – which will provide an additional route over the Thames from 2027.

David Manning, Development Director for the Lower Thames Crossing, said:

At 55 years old, Dartford Crossing remains a vital piece of national infrastructure having provided decades of service to the country. However, being the only way to get across the Thames east of London, it carries more traffic than it was ever designed for – leading to regular delays.

This anniversary co-insides with our public consultation for the Lower Thames Crossing, a new route across the Thames connecting Kent, Essex and Thurrock. We want everyone to get involved and help us shape our plans and maximise the benefits, a transformational project of this size can deliver.

The existing Dartford Crossing is designed to carry up to 135,000 vehicles a day, although it regularly carries more than 180,000, with that number increasing every year. Keeping it running is a 24/7 operation, and involves major maintenance and a regular inspection programme. In recent years the two

Dartford Tunnels have been fully refurbished with new lighting, ventilation and fire suppression systems that significantly improve safety standards. Virtually all the work has been carried out overnight or at weekends, while keeping the Crossing open to traffic.

The multi-billion pound Lower Thames Crossing would nearly double road capacity across the river Thames and almost halve northbound journey times at Dartford Crossing.

The 14.5-mile route connecting Gravesham in Kent and Thurrock in Essex is expected to reduce traffic at Dartford by 22% with 14 million fewer vehicles using it every year. It will almost halve the morning peak average journey times between M25 junctions 1b and 31 from nine minutes to just five.

A consultation on the latest proposals – which aim to maximise the project's huge benefits – is currently underway. It ends on Thursday 20 December 2018. Find out more about the public consultation and give your feedback at the [Lower Thames Crossing website] (www.lowerthamescrossing.co.uk/haveyoursay).

Additionally, 60 events are being held between 10 October and 20 December across Kent, Thurrock and Essex for residents, businesses and communities to ask questions and provide their views.

[Press release: Britain's creative industries break the £100 billion barrier](#)

New figures reveal Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's sectors are now worth £268 billion

[Press release: Britain's creative industries break the £100 billion barrier](#)

- New figures show bumper growth in Britain's film, TV, music and advertising industries
- Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's sectors are now worth

£268 billion

- Record breaking figures in the digital industries which are now worth more than £130 billion

The UK's roaring creative industries made a record contribution to the economy in 2017, smashing through the £100 billion mark.

Its value of the creative industries to the UK is up from £94.8 billion in 2016 to £101.5 billion, and has grown at nearly twice the rate of the economy since 2010, according to [figures](#) published today by the Department for Digital, Media, Culture and Sport (DCMS).

Film, TV, radio, photography, music, advertising, museums, galleries and digital creative industries are all part of this thriving sector.

The increase has been driven in part by a boom in the computer services sub-sector which includes video games such as Batman Arkham made by London-based games company, Rocksteady Studios and Red Dead Redemption 2 produced by Scottish company, Rockstar Games. This sector alone is worth £5.11 billion.

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Jeremy Wright said:

Our creative industries not only fly the flag for the best of British creativity at home and abroad but they are also at the heart of our economy.

Today they have broken the £100 billion mark and continue on a hugely positive upward trajectory, outperforming the wider UK economy and bringing joy and entertainment to millions.

We're doing all we can to support the sector's talent and entrepreneurship as we build a Britain that is fit for future.

The strength of the creative industries is matched by the UK's world leading digital and tech sector, which has seen its contribution to the UK economy increase by 7.3 per cent between 2016 and 2017 and by 32.9 per cent since 2010. It is now worth more than £130 billion.

It continues to perform highly and over the last two months British tech firms Monzo, Farfetch and Funding Circle have surpassed the [\\$1 billion mark](#), meaning they are now so-called 'unicorns'.

The Government continues to back the creative industries. Dedicated tax reliefs supporting high-end television and film productions such as Peaky Blinders and Darkest Hour have seen a boom worth £12.6 billion since the schemes were introduced. There was also £1.38 billion of inward investment in the film industry last year as a result of tax relief.

As part of the Government's Industrial Strategy, [nine new Creative Clusters](#) across the UK have benefitted from £80 million funding to boost innovation by part-funding research partnerships between universities and industry. They

aim to increase the use of digital technologies to improve audience experience in the screen and performance industries, and shorten production times in the design industry.

This dovetails with investment in the UK's digital sector. This month's Budget included nearly £300 million of investment in emerging technologies including AI and quantum, with up to £50 million to be invested in [new Turing AI Fellowships](#) to help bring the best global researchers in AI to the UK, and [£235 million](#) to establish a new National Quantum Computing Centre, a quantum challenge to bring the technology to market and new centres for doctoral training.

Britain's thriving tourism sector makes up almost four per cent of the UK economy – worth £67.7 billion in 2017.

The value of sport to the UK economy has increased by 5.3 per cent year-on-year and by 40 per cent since 2010. Sport's value, which includes sport equipment production and the operation of sports facilities, rose to £9.8 billion, although this does not include the sports broadcasting rights or sports advertising markets.

DCMS sectors' contribution to the UK economy overall continues to rise, with GVA at £267.7 billion in 2017, up 3.4 per cent year-on-year. DCMS sectors now account for 14.6 per cent of the UK's GVA.

Notes to editors

- Media enquiries: DCMS News and Communications team on 020 7211 2210
- Gross value added measures the value of goods and services produced without associated costs.
- This release provides estimates of the contribution of DCMS sectors to the UK economy, measured by gross value added (GVA), in current prices i.e. not taking into account inflation.
- The 2017 figures are provisional and are subject to change when ONS National Accounts are published next year.
- These are all part of the Government's modern Industrial Strategy, and its the sector deal which will drive the development of the most potentially revolutionary, cutting-edge technologies, and accelerating their adoption in real-world, industrial environments in order to realise their benefits for business, consumers and wider society.
- The Film Tax Relief was introduced in 2007 and High-end TV Tax Relief was introduced in 2007.

Press release: October 2018 Price Paid

Data

HM Land Registry Price Paid Data tracks land and property sales in England and Wales submitted to us for registration.