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## Largest stock draw 'in a decade' dampens tanker rates outlook



THE LATEST OIL demand figures signal better times ahead for tanker markets, but the International Energy Agency forecasts higher crude prices to trigger the largest stock draw in at least a decade over the third quarter, further curbing seaborne exports.

“The Opec-plus stalemate means that until a compromise can be reached, production quotas will remain at July’s levels,” the IEA said in its latest oil report. “Oil markets will tighten significantly as demand rebounds from last year’s Covid-induced plunge.”

Deadlocked talks between the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and Russia over whether to increase production lifted crude prices to three-year highs in July, slashing export growth.

This has worsened the freight rate outlook for the 5,500-strong trading fleet of crude and product tankers above 24,000 dwt.

Earnings have remained moribund for the past nine months, on both lower-than-expected demand growth for transport fuels and year-old Opec production cuts that have reduced shipments.

Whether the improved outlook signals rising demand for tankers will depend on the pace of inventory drawdowns. Although the IEA says stocks will draw this quarter by the most in a decade, it does not provide any estimate of how that much will be.

The IEA estimated global crude demand surged by 3.2m barrels per day in June to 96.8m bpd, when worldwide tanker liftings were tracked

at 49.02m bpd on 1,731 ships over 55,000 dwt, according to Lloyd's List Intelligence data. That was 750,000 bpd more than in May, data show.

Shipments from the Middle East Gulf last month were tracked at 18.5m bpd on 476 tankers over 55,000 dwt, the highest in five months.

June's exports from the region were 100,000 bpd above May volumes, data show, which translated to an extra 15 tankers.

Additional exports were not enough to reduce the oversupply of tankers, with high bunker prices now further depressing average monthly earnings on benchmark routes to Asia.

July's time charter equivalent rates for very large crude carriers shipping 2m barrels to China from the Middle East Gulf to date are the lowest monthly average in Baltic Exchange data going back to 2017.

The IEA estimates global oil demand is forecast to rise by 3.3m bpd between July and September, quarter on quarter, and another 1.3m bpd again in the fourth. This will add 4.6m bpd to the market by the end of year.

“This is more than twice as large as the seasonal increase registered in the third quarter of 2019 and almost three times as much as the third quarter of

2018, as easing Covid restrictions in much of the northern hemisphere and rising vaccinations are set to boost mobility and social activity,” the report said.

“Gasoline demand is forecast to rise by 1.1 mb/d quarter-on-quarter, followed by jet/kerosene (+830,000 bpd) and gasoil and diesel (+760,000).”

Refinery runs are expected to increase by 2.7m bpd over July and August before a seasonal slowdown in the fourth quarter, the report said, after a month-on-month gain of 1.6m bpd in June.

Slowing refinery output in North America and Europe, even as record levels are seen east of Suez, means total throughput will remain 2.6m bpd lower than the 2018 peak and the gap will not close until 2022, the IEA said.

Total oil stocks drew by 225,000 bpd in the second quarter and 1.2m bpd in the first, according to the IEA.

Oil demand in China is estimated to rise by 1.2m bpd in 2021 — the second-largest gain after the US — and another 510,000 bpd in 2022.

This is welcome news for tanker markets, after Chinese trade data for 2021's first half released this week showed a 3% drop in crude imports, to 216m tonnes.

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## WHAT TO WATCH:

# Coal trades at risk from short-term disruptions

COAL trades may be subject to short-term disruption following a derailment in South Africa and a new wave of coronavirus infection in Indonesia.

Some delays in cargo being delivered to South Africa's Richards Bay port were reported following a 30-wagon train derailment earlier this month, according to local ship agents. It is the second such incident this year.

But while the situation was improving as one line had re-opened albeit at reduced speeds, civil unrest in the country this week has had a negative impact on port operations.

The dry bulk and multipurpose terminals were currently not in service, the ship agent said, as roads are blocked and employees are unable to get to work safely.

A suspension to all port movements, including coal loadings, has been issued from July 12 until further notice.

Wilhelmsen ship agents said that Transnet, the country's port authority, was endeavouring to continue operations at the terminal where labour was available.

According to Lloyd's List Intelligence, 19 bulk carriers are destined for the port in the week to July 16. They comprise eight capesizes, eight supramaxes/ultramaxes, with the rest panamaxes.

As of July 9, seven bulkers were at port, the data shows. Only two have been in anchorage for more than a week.

South Africa's exports dipped to 32m tonnes in the first half of this year compared with 36m tonnes in

the year-earlier period, according to London-based Maritime Strategies International. The figure is also 7m tonnes lower than the past six months of 2020.

MSI expects reduced exports in the second half of this year given the country's infrastructure problems.

Brokerage Braemar ACM saw a boost in capesize sentiment when the situation looked to be returning to normal, although the effect was seen as small given increased iron ore starting to emerge from Brazil.

The relatively expensive freight on panamaxs has also likely nudged shippers to up stem sizes, providing support to the capesize segment.

When the derailment news brokered out however, the July Forward Freight Agreement contracts dropped 14% to a one-month low.

Capesize spot rates fell 3.2% to \$30,272 per day at the close on the Baltic Exchange on July 13 from the day before.

Capesizes have lifted 56% of the coal exported from Richards Bay so far in 2021, according to Braemar, with supramaxes responsible for 31%.

Most of the coal, 13.8m tonnes, headed to India in the first six months of this year, followed by China at 8.9m tonnes, the highest level on record.

Meanwhile, Indonesia — China's largest supplier — also has some downside risks to coal flows this quarter after an increase in coronavirus cases in coal-mining regions of the country. At least one miner was heard declaring force majeure.

Arrow's head of research Burak Cetinok said that seaborne supply may also be affected by wet weather and miners directing more coal to domestic power plants as per a 2018 government directive. That could cut exports later in the year.

However, an upcoming religious holiday next week in Indonesia is seeing frenzied barge movements to anchored capesize vessels in ship-to-ship transfers.

According to Lloyd's List Intelligence, there are five capesize vessels in anchorage around main Indonesian ports, with two that have not shown any signs of movement for two-to-three weeks.

One Hong Kong-based charterer said that coal shipments to China have so far not been affected,

with safe loading being reported as there is minimum interaction between vessels, although there were restrictions on ships from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, which had to complete 14 days of quarantine before being allowed into port.

China was in a restocking drive for summer requirements, according to a Singapore broker, who did not see any impact to shipments despite virus cases in the Kalimantan region.

In the first six months of this year, Indonesia's exports fell 4.3% to 162.9m tonnes versus the same period last year, according to data from Banchemo Costa. That was partly due to the virus, but also due to the fact that it has struggled to remain competitive, with Australian supplies picking up share in markets like India and Japan.

While volumes from Indonesia increased 13.5% to China at 69.7m tonnes in January to June 2021, it "was not enough to compensate the declining volumes to India and Japan," said Banchemo's head of research Ralph Leszczynski.

Despite the apparent downside risks, global coal trade is steadily recovering "in an encouraging way," he said.

Total coal loadings in June rose 8.1% to 101.9m tonnes compared with the same month last year, and were the highest since March 2020, although January-to-June volumes were down 0.5% year on year to 577m tonnes.

According to Arrow, shipments have been increasing from Colombia in recent weeks, and with Newcastle coal futures surpassing \$140 per tonne, it expects exports to continue ramping up over the coming months.

"Indonesian exports may underperform, which could encourage Asian buyers to seek even more cargoes further afield," Mr Cetinok said, adding that the capesize segment is primed to benefit from incremental Atlantic coal volumes as they are increasingly tonne-mile heavy.

MSI echoed the view, saying that while Colombian volumes have recovered from a very weak latter half of the past year, they are still 16% lower than the first six months of 2020.

With a tight global coal supply market, MSI expects exports from the South American country to increase later this year, although the pandemic remains "an acute" downside risk.

# South Korean builders remain dominant in high value-added tonnage

SOUTH Korean shipbuilders have continued to dominate the market for high value-added vessels, according to government statistics.

Such a market normally features gas carriers, mega-sized oil tankers and containerships. South Korean yards are known their strength in these areas.

They have won all 16 of the large liquefied natural gas carriers of 174,000 cu m class or above ordered worldwide for the first half of 2021, data from the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy shows.

They also clinched 27 of the 31 very large crude carriers (87.1%), 52 of the 72 liquefied petroleum gas carriers (72.2%), and 81 of the 154 containerships exceeding 12,000 teu class (52.6%).

Meanwhile, South Korean builders also led the order winning for dual-fuel vessels.

They have signed deals in the six months to build 4.8m cgt of fresh tonnage that can run on alternative fuels, including LNG, LPG and methanol, accounting for 70.1% of the world total.

That market share has shown a consecutive growth from 63.8% in 2020 and 60.9% in 2019.

## Yang Ming denies link to 24,000 teu ships order

YANG MING Marine Transport, the world's ninth-largest container shipping line, has quashed speculation it is close to placing orders for 24,000 teu ships.

The Taiwanese carrier said it was still weighing up its options about fleet renewal, a move that is seen to reflect a dilemma faced by some owners when considering newbuilding projects at the movement.

Local media has reported that Yang Ming, boosted by rocketing shipping rates, is considering placing orders for between five and 10 super-sized boxships to gain a bigger say in The Alliance.

The company described the reports as "false stories" and "merely assumption made by local media."

The ministry estimates orders for more than 40 large LNG carriers will be firmed up by Qatar Gas, which signed the slot booking agreements with the country's three leading shipbuilders in the past year. That was expected to bolster their orderbook in the second half.

The trio — Korea Shipbuilding & Offshore Engineering Co, Samsung Heavy Industries and Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering — have all fared well in January-June in terms of order taking.

According to FnGuide, a Seoul-based financial market tracker, the first company has hit 86.6% of its annual order target for 2021, while the second and third has accomplished 64.8% and 71.4%, respectively.

Overall, South Korean builders won nearly 11m cgt of new orders during the reporting period, making up 44% of the global sum.

That ratio is, however, higher than the 40% figure released by Cansi, the Chinese shipbuilding association. It reported more new orders won by Chinese yards compared with the number recorded by Clarksons, which was used by the South Korean ministry as a reference for foreign newbuilding contracts.

"Yang Ming always looks for opportunities for fleet renewal to cope with our service development plan as well as the latest international/environmental regulation, but it's still under discussion and evaluation at this stage," it said in an email statement.

In May, the company reported first-quarter net profit of \$T24.5bn (\$875m), more than double the full-year surplus in 2020.

Chairman Cheng Cheng-Mount said at the time that the recovery in earnings will help Yang Ming implement plans shelved previously, such as expanding fleet via building new ships and acquiring secondhand tonnage, to ensure the company's position in the sector.

The box shipping market boom, alongside the company's current fleet structure, has fuelled expectations on the orders.

Among the member carriers in the three main shipping alliances, Yang Ming is the only one that has not yet equipped itself with vessels exceeding 20,000 teu class, the main workhorse in the Asia-Europe trade.

Absent from the latest sector-wide order spree, its largest vessels are 14,000 teu chartered in a few years ago. Even its smaller rival Zim recently contracted a batch of 15,000 teu newbuildings under long-term commitment.

Taiwan Ratings analyst Hu Kaifu said Yang Ming's strong profitability and cashflow in 2020-2021 will allow it to meet its need for capital investment while reducing borrowing.

He said in a report that Yang Ming planned to increase capacity via long-term charters and direct orders for new ships over the next one to two years, and may choose to repay its debts ahead of schedule to improve its capital structure.

Jason Jiang, director at Ocean Shipping Consultants, said that adding the 24,000 teu ships into its fleet would put the Taiwanese carrier on par with its Alliance partners — Hapag-Lloyd, Ocean Network Express and HMM.

However, such a move was not without its risks, he warned, as market conditions may change upon the vessel delivery.

The ongoing high freight earnings are contributed by various factors, including the pandemic-led logistics bottleneck, disciplined capacity management by alliances, restrained ordering activity in the past years and relatively low bunker prices, according to Mr Jiang.

"Bunker prices have started to rise. The capacity orders are starting to rise, and the pandemic could be over by then," he said.

Orders placed now for 24,000 teu ships are set for delivery in the first half of 2024, if not later, with yard slots being stuffed by projects signed over the past seven months, said a China-based shipbuilding source. Another major variable is the newbuilding prices, he added.

Spurred by a sharp increase in steel prices, shipyards are now seeking a 15%-20% mark-up of their products, when compared with the offers in the first quarter of the year. This has dampened some owners' ordering appetite.

"But the steel price could fall later. So, yards and the owners are weighing their options," said the source.

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## ANALYSIS:

# Ample availability for ship funding, says ABN Amro

FUNDING for new European capex projects in shipping is plentiful for those with the right business model, according to ABN Amro.

"We have ample availability for new loans to be drawn down this year," said Joep Gorgels, the Dutch bank's head of transport and logistics.

Mr Gorgels was talking to Lloyd's List following the bank's announcement that its \$700m US shipping loan portfolio was being sold to Credit Agricole CIB.

The portfolio sale is just the latest in a recent string of deals that will ultimately see the bank withdraw from financing US transportation companies and wind-down of the bank's non-core activities.

In a 2020 strategic review, ABN Amro said it would exit commodity finance globally and exit shipping, intermodal and energy in Asia and America's

It sold Maas Capital, an independent subsidiary of the bank with 15 controlling and non-controlling stakes in shipping assets in June.

The bank also sold energy loans to funds managed by Oaktree Capital Management in June for \$1.5bn and in April the bank offloaded its trade and commodity finance loan portfolio for €900m (\$1.1bn).

According to Mr Gorgels, the bank remains "strongly committed" as a financier for the European

shipping sector and will continue to grow its shipping portfolio via its remaining Amsterdam, Oslo and Athens bases.

“We think there is great potential for sustainability, ESG financing and innovative companies with projects within Europe and that’s where we can help create a lot of value,” he said. “Billions of dollars in capital expenditure is going to be invested by European companies in shipping in the coming decades in order for the shipping sector to become more environmentally friendly — and that’s a train we want to jump on.”

While the retrenchment of European banks from ship lending in recent years due to a combination of tightening capital controls and banking restrictions has seen Chinese leasing houses and other sources of high cost alternative capital emerge, Mr Gorgels believes that European bank lending to shipping will continue to play a major role in funding the industry’s future.

“You see a lot of companies now using traditional bank finance, either bilateral or syndicated, together with alternative bank finance or Chinese leasing finance bonds or private placements — they can co-exist very easily,” he said. “I think there should be enough money around for almost every client and

project — it just comes at different terms and conditions and pricing”.

While small shipowners have typically opted to raise funds from alternative sources of capital at higher costs because ship finance banks are deemed to be geared towards large corporates with strong balance sheets and low risk, he suggests that innovation and a good business model should ultimately trump size when it comes to lending potential.

“Investment in innovation comes at a cost and that is fine, but the business case has to work. Yes, bigger companies can often have more options when it comes to funding, but it’s not just a question of size,” said Mr Gorgels. “Smaller companies can often be very innovative. They often come to us with smaller experiments on one or two ships and I think that’s possible to finance those with the right business case.

“If someone wants to develop a new tanker which costs 50% more, and thinks he can charter that in the spot market competing with the rest, then obviously that is not a plausible or realistic business model.

“But if you do, say a five- or 10-year charter, for example, and have a charter which pays a little bit more, and pays for the incremental risk, then yes, why not.”

## Real-time data and competence make shipmanagement compelling

SHIPMANAGERS anticipate increasing interest in their expertise as shipping undergoes a shift from regulatory compliance to a deeper commitment to the sustainability agenda.

The proportion of the global fleet under third-party management has remained between 15% and 20%, depending on how the fleet is counted.

While that level is expected to remain stable, there will undoubtedly be a rebalancing among the players involved, according to Bjoern Sprotte, head of shipmanagement at V.Group.

“I believe that if you combine expertise, reach, platform, and people, shipowners should think this a very compelling offer,” he told Lloyd’s List.

V.Group ended 2020 with 561 ships under full technical management and 320 under crew-only management, making it a sector leader, with almost 900 vessels under management.

It invested heavily in its ShipSure data platform, which will be the basis for future expansion, Mr Sprotte said.

“Managing ships is managing people and managing risk. You have access to a large pool of competent people and a platform that helps to manage risk — a network of people working on a common platform.”

The ShipSure platform brings data regarding the clients’ own ships and crews “to their fingertips, instead of having to write long emails.”

An owner wants to operate his ships, trade his assets, and grow his fleet but doesn’t want to be “bogged down by technology — over time that technology evolves quickly and you need more and more people. Instead of managing your fleet, you end up managing all these people,” he said.

A larger manager has access to expertise in every shipping sector, Mr Sprotte suggested, and has

access to data from hundreds of vessels. This enables a client to compare data from his own ships with industry best practice.

There is real advantage from discussing options with a client using real — although anonymised — data from 300 tankers rather than colourful PowerPoint slides.

For an industry in which the regulatory environment is rapidly evolving and technology is developing at pace, selecting a shipmanager has become more complex.

“In the past, selecting a chief engineer was relatively simple: There were two engine makers, and two-stroke and four-stroke engines. That has changed and will change further,” he said. “You need access to many more competencies — people who actually operate those ships and have the necessary expertise. It’s no longer only about cost; the real value comes from the competence.”

The company recently strengthened its expertise in the strategically important LNG sector, which Mr Sprotte believes is “certainly one of the fuels of the future.”

He was involved in a project to bring LNG to the cruise sector earlier in his career, however he is not placing all eggs in the LNG basket.

“We are also working on methanol,” he said. “I can’t say much about that. As a shipmanager, we cannot do what one owner thinks. We want to provide a breadth of service so clients can talk to us about

fuels or segments. Our benefit is not being focused on one thing.”

Shipmanagers’ competence in fuels and technology will be a selling point in future. Class looks at ship construction but “managers have a lot of competence when it comes to providing owners with advice on technical opportunities, and on the impact on their trade.”

Managers in future will work much more closely with clients as a partner, he said, understanding the owner’s trade expectations, their funding options, and their ambition.

The pathway towards decarbonisation raises some important questions for shipping, as well as for shipmanagement as a sector, said Mr Sprotte. “As we go deeper into compliance, how do we move from compliance to a commitment to a sustainable world? It’s a fundamental shift in attitude.”

He believes tackling decarbonisation has to be done in a different way from tackling safety issues. It involves a shift in the industry, and in infrastructure, suppliers and operations. Further, it will bring a shift in attracting talent.

“Young people don’t want to work in an industry seen as a big polluter. I think this is a fantastic time to be part of the industry. However, [these industry challenges] cannot be tackled by one company, one association or by the International Maritime Organization alone. It requires commitment, not compliance.”

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## MARKETS:

# US agencies agree to collaborate on maritime antitrust issues

THE US Department of Justice and the Federal Maritime Commission have agreed to boost co-operation to improve competition in the maritime industry.

Acting Assistant Attorney General Richard A. Powers and FMC Chairman Daniel Maffei signed a memorandum of understanding this week following the executive order on competition announced by President Joe Biden.

The order aims “to combat the excessive concentration of industry, the abuses of market

power, and the harmful effects of monopoly and monopsony” through increased antitrust enforcement, rulemaking, and cooperation within the administration.

“The agreement we announced today shows how the department and other agencies are moving quickly to implement the president’s executive order on competition,” Mr Powers, who heads the Antitrust Division, said in a statement.

“Collaboration between the Antitrust Division and the FMC is important to ensuring healthy

competition in the maritime industry. The staffs of both agencies are developing a good working relationship on a number of matters of mutual interest.”

Mr Maffei said the move “supplements and strengthens” the FMC’s ability to “detect, address, and pursue” violations of the law or anticompetitive behaviour by “those we regulate”.

The two agencies will promote competitive conditions in the US-international ocean liner shipping industry, including terminal services provided to ocean liners,” according to the MoU.

“A co-operative relationship between the agencies will be of substantial benefit to the agencies in carrying out their respective oversight and enforcement responsibilities,” it said.

A Department of Justice spokesman said some carrier alliances are covered by the FMC and are “immune” from the antitrust laws “even though we

in the antitrust division still have jurisdiction over mergers between ocean carriers.”

That immunity has been in place since 1916 as an exemption “in one form or another, from the antitrust laws for ocean shipping carriers to engage in rate discussions and price-fixing agreements.”

That exemption falls under the jurisdiction of the FMC, but conduct that does not satisfy the statutory requirements for the antitrust exemption remains subject to the country’s antitrust laws — the DOJ’s domain.

“And so, because there’s this fine line which is on each side of our respective jurisdictions, I think it’s really positive for us to be able to try to develop a better working relationship,” the spokesman said.

The memorandum comes amid an investigation by the FMC into alleged anti-competitive behaviour by the three alliances of ocean carriers.

## Shell signs carbon-neutral LNG deal with PetroChina

SHELL and PetroChina have agreed a first-term supply contract for carbon-neutral liquefied natural gas.

The five-year deal calls on Shell Eastern Trading and Petrochina International to co-operate on offsetting life-cycle emissions generated across the LNG value chain using carbon credits from nature-based projects, according to a statement.

Each carbon credit is subject to third-party verification and represents the avoidance or removal of one tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent.

The deal draws on Shell’s global portfolio of emission reduction projects including those aiming

to protect and enhance forests in China and other parts of the world.

Shell Energy’s executive vice-president Steve Hill described said the deal was “an important step in scaling up the market for carbon-neutral LNG”.

Shell has delivered 13 carbon-neutral spot LNG cargoes to producers and buyers across the globe since 2019.

PetroChina, the largest oil and gas producer and distributor in China, said it was looking to tap the deal with Shell to supply China with gas that complies with the country’s 2060 carbon-neutral aspirations.

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### IN OTHER NEWS:

#### Stena Bulk bails out Concordia Maritime

STENA Bulk will charter Concordia Maritime’s fleet of 10 panamax product tankers for \$15,500 per day over five years as part of an agreement forged with lending banks and the parent

company to bail out the troubled shipowner.

Nasdaq Stockholm-listed Concordia Maritime, which has racked up losses of more than \$1bn since 2017, signalled in April that banks had granted a

temporary covenant waiver as it sought to shore up its liquidity and financial position.

The time charters, as well as a \$10m guarantee, were sought as part of a restructuring of a \$114m loan which matures in the final



quarter of 2024, the company said.

### **Piracy and armed robbery at lowest level for 27 years**

PIRACY incidents in the first half of the year fell to a 27-year low, according to the International Maritime Bureau.

The watchdog counted 68 incidents worldwide, compared with 98 in the year-earlier period, 78 in 2019, and 107 in 2018.

There were 61 vessels boardings, four attempted attacks, two ships were fired upon and one was hijacked.

### **Capital confirms boxship and MR2 orders with KSOE**

CAPITAL Maritime & Trading, the Evangelos Marinakis-led shipping group, has firmed up feeder containership and medium-range tanker orders with Korea Shipbuilding, the umbrella for Hyundai group yards.

The Greece-based owner has placed an order for KSOE subsidiary Hyundai Mipo Dockyard to build three gearless 1,800 teu containerships with deliveries in early 2023.

The contract includes options for an additional three vessels and the feeders are priced at about

\$31m each, indicating an overall investment of about \$186m if all six vessels get built.

### **Eastern Pacific turns to VR for LNG bunkering training**

AS the sweep of technological change brushes every area of the industry, virtual reality technologies and gamification are transforming the ways seafarers are being trained.

The most striking example of this is the creation of the first VR course for liquefied natural gas bunkering procedures which has now been certified by the classification society Lloyd's Register.

Singapore-based operator Eastern Pacific Shipping has entered a partnership with digital learning application developer Kanda to create an interactive, multi-user VR training module that is claimed to provide quality training and a test bed for fun micro learning.

### **Equipment platform expands into tank containers**

CONTAINER xChange, the online equipment leasing platform, is to add tank containers to its portfolio after acquiring tank container leasing and trading marketplace TankContainerFinder.com.

"Our customers have been asking for tank containers for a while and after a few conversations it was clear that joining forces with TankContainerFinder.com made a lot of sense," said company founder Johannes Schlingmeier. "TankContainerFinder.com generated more than \$40m since it was founded in 2017 and is at the forefront of digitalisation in the growing tank container market."

The financial details of the acquisition were not disclosed, but Containers xChange said the deal would add "substantial" new members to its client base.

### **Easing of restrictions boosts London Shipping Week plans**

LONDON International Shipping Week 2021 will be held as both an in-person and virtual event after prime minister Boris Johnson confirmed the easing of coronavirus restrictions in England from July 19.

"The decision by the UK government to ease restrictions means we can press ahead with our plans," said event chairman John Hulmes.

"Shipping will have waited nearly 20 months to physically network together and the opportunity to reconnect in person will be eagerly welcomed."

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## **Classified notices follow**

**HIGHWAYS ENGLAND LOWER THAMES CROSSING  
NOTICE PUBLICISING A PROPOSED APPLICATION  
FOR A DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER  
NON-STATUTORY COMMUNITY IMPACTS CONSULTATION**

HIGHWAYS ENGLAND COMPANY LIMITED of Bridge House, 1 Walnut Tree Close, Guildford, GU1 4LZ ("Highways England") proposes to make an application ("the Application") under section 37 of the Planning Act 2008 to the Secretary of State for a Development Consent Order for the Lower Thames Crossing ("the Project").

Highways England carried out a statutory consultation in relation to the proposed Application from 10 October to 20 December 2018, a non-statutory supplementary consultation from 29 January to 2 April 2020 and a design refinement consultation from 14 July to 12 August 2020. Information about the Project presented during the 2018 statutory consultation, and the non-statutory supplementary and design refinement consultations in 2020 can be found at:

- <https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/ltc/consultation>
- <https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/ltc/consultation-2020>
- <https://lowerthamescrossing.consultationonline.co.uk/>

Highways England is now carrying out a further non-statutory consultation in relation to the Project, from 14 July to 8 September 2021. This consultation will seek to gather feedback on:

- the latest construction, operation and ward impact summary information, and our plans to mitigate the impacts of the Project
- changes to the Project since the design refinement consultation
- detailed feedback on how responses received at each of our previous consultations have informed the development of the Project

It would provide much-needed new road capacity across the river east of London and deliver the other project aims set out in the Guide to community impacts consultation.

On the south side of the River Thames, the new road would link to the A2 and M2 in Kent. On the north side, it would link to the A13 in Thurrock and the M25 in Havering. The tunnel crossing is located to the east of Gravesend on the south of the River Thames and to the west of East Tilbury on the north side. The Lower Thames Crossing proposals include:

- approximately 14.3 miles (23km) of new roads connecting the tunnel to the existing road network
- three lanes in both directions, apart from the southbound connection between the M25 and A13, where it would be two lanes, and around junctions
- technology providing lane control and variable speed limits up to 70mph
- upgrades to the M25, A2 and A13 where it connects to those roads
- new structures and changes to existing ones including bridges, viaducts and utilities such as electricity pylons
- two 2.6-mile (4.3km) tunnels crossing beneath the river, one for southbound traffic, one for northbound traffic
- a free-flow charging system, where drivers do not need to stop but pay remotely, similar to that at the Dartford Crossing
- traffic regulation measures that include prohibiting use by pedestrians, low-powered motorcycles, cyclists, horse riders and agricultural vehicles
- provision of environmental mitigation and replacement of open space and common land
- diversions to overhead powerlines and underground gas pipelines, some of which constitute Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects in their own right

In addition, any necessary rights and powers will be sought to ensure delivery of the Project, including compulsory acquisition of land and interests/rights in land, as well as any restrictions to be imposed over the River Thames following the construction of the Project.

The Project is an Environmental Impact Assessment development ("EIA development"), as defined by the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. This means that the proposed works constitute development for which an Environmental Impact Assessment will be required. An Environmental Statement containing information about the likely significant environmental effects of the Project will therefore be submitted as part of the Application.

During the 2018 statutory consultation, environmental information was included in a Preliminary Environmental Information Report, which is available online at <https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/ltc/consultation>, along with the rest of the statutory consultation materials.

An Environmental Impacts Update (EIU) was also published in January 2020 as part of the suite of supplementary consultation documents and is available at <https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/ltc/consultation-2020>

A further EIU was produced to support the design refinement consultation in summer 2020, explaining any new or changed environmental effects associated with the design refinements. This is available at <https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/ltc/design-consultation>

All consultation materials will be available on our consultation website, details of which are set out at the end of this notice. We will also aim to provide the following documents at deposit locations, close to the proposed Project route:

- Guide to community impacts consultation
- Community impacts consultation leaflet
- Response form and Freepost envelope
- Construction update
- Operations update
- Ward impact summaries
- You said, we did
- Map Book 1: General Arrangements
- Map Book 2: Land Use Plans
- Map Book 3: Engineering Plans
- Large scale map operation
- Large scale map construction
- Easy Read versions of the Guide and other materials

A selection of draft Development Consent Order documents will also be available during the consultation online and at deposit locations.

To keep stakeholders and members of the local community fully informed on the proposals, we will also be looking to host a series of information events and drop-ins at key locations along the route. Information on our events are available on our website. Alternatively, you can call 0300 123 5000 for further details.

All the materials for this consultation will be available on the consultation website from 14 July 2021. For those unable to access the internet, one printed copy of the consultation materials per household will be available to order from 14 July 2021. They will be delivered to you free of charge. Instructions on how to order printed copies are set out at the end of this notice.

The website will also feature webinars with a Q&A session for the public to attend. There will also be a telephone surgery available, so that members of the public can book a call back from a member of the project team who will answer questions on the proposals. Details on how to access these services are listed at the end of this notice.

Anyone may comment on the proposals or otherwise respond to this consultation publicity.

From 14 July 2021, responses can be submitted via one of the following methods:

- **Online:** Fill in the response form at [highwaysengland.co.uk/ltcconsultation](https://highwaysengland.co.uk/ltcconsultation)
- **Freepost:** Send your response form or comments to: FREEPOST LTC CONSULTATION (the Freepost address is the only text needed on the envelope, and no stamp is required)
- **Email:** Send your comments to [LTC.CONSULTATION@TRAVERSE.LTD](mailto:LTC.CONSULTATION@TRAVERSE.LTD)
- **Telephone:** We are offering support to help you provide feedback over the phone. Please call us on 0300 123 5000 to book an appointment.

We cannot guarantee that responses sent to us in any other way will be considered.

**Responses will be accepted until 11.59pm on 8 September 2021.**

Highways England will consider all responses received when developing the Application for a Development Consent Order, once the consultation has closed. Responses will form the basis of a Consultation Report, which will be one of the factors taken into consideration by the Planning Inspectorate when deciding whether the Application can be accepted for examination. Therefore, anyone providing comments should consider this.

If you would like further information about this notice, the consultation or the Project, please contact Highways England by emailing [info@lowerthamescrossing.co.uk](mailto:info@lowerthamescrossing.co.uk), phoning 0300 123 5000, or writing to Lower Thames Crossing, Woodlands, Manton Industrial Estate, Manton Lane, Bedford, MK41 7LW.

Highways England's policy on managing personal data can be found at <https://highwaysengland.co.uk/privacy>.

Yours sincerely

**Gareth Protheroe**, Development Director  
Highways England

**Consultation website**

The consultation website will be available to access anytime from 14 July 2021 on [highwaysengland.co.uk/ltcconsultation](https://highwaysengland.co.uk/ltcconsultation). Details regarding the consultation services and ways of accessing consultation materials and information can also be found here.

**Telephone surgery**

A call back from a member of the project team can be booked to discuss any questions or provide comments on the proposal. An appointment can be booked from 14 July by visiting [highwaysengland.co.uk/ltcconsultation](https://highwaysengland.co.uk/ltcconsultation) or by calling 0300 123 5000.

**Consultation material on demand**

For those unable to access the internet or concerned about visiting a consultation event, deposit location or information point, one printed copy per household of the community impacts consultation materials will be available to order from 14 July 2021 onwards and will be delivered free of charge. The consultation materials are available to order via the following channels:

- By contacting Highways England on 0300 123 5000 or emailing [info@lowerthamescrossing.co.uk](mailto:info@lowerthamescrossing.co.uk)
- By ordering on the consultation website at [highwaysengland.co.uk/ltcconsultation](https://highwaysengland.co.uk/ltcconsultation)



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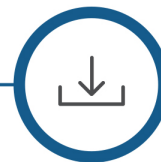
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