

cc BG

FCS/85/288

NB at this stage

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORTChannel Fixed Link: Consultation

1. Thank you for sending a copy of your letter of 24 October to Kenneth Baker about consultation with the public over a Channel Fixed Link project.
2. I set out my views on this in my letter of 1 April. I believe they remain valid. A successful Channel Fixed Link project would be a considerable boost to Anglo-French relations. If, on the other hand, we were to appear to be allowing the timetable for the project to slip, the damage to Anglo-French relations would be equally considerable. It is in my view essential therefore that we avoid the delay and uncertainty that would result from a public inquiry (a possibility that the French do not face).
3. I consequently welcome and fully endorse the proposals you make for consultations with the public after submissions from promoters have been received. In particular, I agree with your suggestion that the Government should adopt a higher profile in contacts with local interest groups. I also suggest that, to avoid any misunderstanding with the French, we should at the same time impress upon them that we are taking this action precisely to avoid a situation in which we were forced to concede a public inquiry, with consequent delays to the project.



4. I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, other members of E(A), the Lord Chancellor, the Chief Whip and Sir Robert Armstrong.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'G. Howe', written in a cursive style.

(GEOFFREY HOWE)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
5 November 1985

TRANSPORT  
CHANNEL REGISTER  
PT 3



CONFIDENTIAL



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT  
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB  
01-212 3434

My ref:

Your ref:

The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP  
Secretary of State  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
Whitehall  
SW1H

117 APR 1985

*N B P M*

CHANNEL FIXED LINK (CFL)

In Nicholas Ridley's absence abroad, and as David Mitchell is also away, I am writing to thank you for your helpful letter of 1 April in response to his of 28 March.

What you had to say about public consultation was reinforced by Patrick Jenkin in his letter of 3 April. I am glad to know that you agree that we should proceed on the assumption that there will be no local public inquiry while keeping our options formally open at this stage. We accept the cautionary remarks, expressed also on Ian Stewart's behalf (his Private Secretary's letter of 29 March) about the need to ensure that the informal consultative procedures for which we have made provision are seen, in combination with the hybrid bill procedures, to be adequate. We must of course, review the position when we have decided which project, if any, should go forward.

The contingency work with the French to which Nicholas referred is now at hand. We are also following up with them the related question of liberalisation of road transport in advance of the opening of any fixed link.

Generally I think the Statement (into which we were able to incorporate the changes suggested by Ian Stewart) and the guidelines went down well both with Parliament and the media. A great deal of very active interest is now evident on the part of the financial markets.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary, the Secretary of State for Defence, members of E(A), the Chief Whip, the Economic Secretary and Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Lynda*  
*Chalker*

MRS LYNDA CHALKER

Transport: Channel Tunnel

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12 APR 1985

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2 MARSHAM STREET  
LONDON SW1P 3EB  
01-212 3434

My ref:

Your ref:

} April 1985

N3PM

Dear Nick,

## CHANNEL FIXED LINK

pt 2 att

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 28 March to Geoffrey Howe and other colleagues.

You ask specifically for assurance that colleagues agree with your proposals on procedures, ie a hybrid Bill, combined with appropriate local consultations, but no formal public inquiry. The short answer, as far as I am concerned is, 'Yes, in the circumstances.' This is because I want the project to go ahead, and I have no reason to dissent from your judgement that a full-blown public inquiry would effectively kill it.

But it is unlikely that all those concerned will see the matter in the same light. The lack of public inquiry will almost certainly be seized on as an additional stick with which to beat the project by all those (eg shipping and port interests, plus marine and rural conservationists) who will be opposed to it on wider grounds, and they may obtain support from others on 'constitutional' grounds. If a more contentious and environmentally damaging form of project is chosen (ie some form of road link) then the lack of a public inquiry will be the more strongly attacked.

While there may be no way of avoiding these troubles altogether, I trust you will seek to minimise them by requiring the maximum sensible consultation within the limitations we have set. And we shall need to take these procedural and environmental problems into account when the time comes to select the form of project to go forward.

I am sending copies of this letter to the recipients of yours.

Your ever  
Patrick

PATRICK JENKIN

TRANSPORT: Channel Tunnel: Pt 3

