

Proposals for the Silvertown Tunnel

There is regular severe congestion at the Blackwall Tunnel which is exacerbated by the high number of incidents and closures at the tunnel. Future growth in London's population and economy will put further pressure on London's roads, requiring new infrastructure and public transport services. We have proposed the Silvertown Tunnel scheme to help address these issues and in spring 2016, plan to apply to the Secretary of State for development consent to build and operate the scheme.

1 *Do you support the Silvertown Tunnel scheme as a means to address congestion and closures at the Blackwall Tunnel, and support future growth in London?*

No

If you have any comments about our intention to apply for consent to build and operate the Silvertown Tunnel scheme, please let us know in the space below.

The stated intentions of TfL with respect to control of traffic levels, and thus extent of pollution, are not sufficient to bind subsequent London regimes. We therefore are concerned that in due course an additional tunnel would generate additional traffic and pollution.

More broadly, there appears to have been no attempt to compare the various alternative river crossings, including bridge/ferry crossings further east, as well as possible rail crossings. Without such an analysis, it is impossible to judge what package of "new infrastructure and public transport services" offers the best outcomes in terms of improved connectivity as well as reduced congestion and pollution. Whilst we recognise the difficulties of having diverse planning regimes, the lack of such an overall view is a fatal flaw.

2 *Connections to the existing road network: We have described the proposed design of new junctions to link the tunnel to the existing road network. If you have any comments on the design of these new junctions please let us know in the space below.*

Comments

3 *Construction impacts: Our proposals for constructing the Silvertown Tunnel are at an early stage, although we have included our initial thoughts on what temporary road closures and diversions might be necessary. If you have any comments on our construction proposals and their potential impacts please let us know in the space below.*

Comments

We support the aim to maximise the use of river transport. If it is the case that this depends on the choice of construction method, we urge that the need to avoid additional road traffic should be treated as an important factor in the choice of method. It is also important to ensure that any road traffic that is required results in the minimum possible contribution to local pollution and disturbance to local residents.

4 *User charges: As part of our plans for the new Silvertown Tunnel we are proposing to apply a user charge to both the existing Blackwall Tunnel and the proposed new tunnel in order to manage traffic demand and pay for the new tunnel to be built. The level of the charge would be set closer to the time that the Silvertown Tunnel opens, taking account of the conditions that exist at that time. Further details are set out in the 'Preliminary Charging Report', which*

is available to download. If you have any comments on our proposals for user charging please let us know in the space below.

Comments

We support the application of user charges, and the intention to vary these once the tunnel is operation so as to avoid increases in the level of traffic. However, we believe that many very serious local problems of congestion and pollution (see Q6) may only be alleviated if traffic levels are actually reduced. In the case of the east/west routes, such a reduction might well require the wider application of user charges, a move that we would strongly support.

- 5** *Environmental effects: We have described the likely environmental effects of the Silvertown Tunnel scheme and described some mitigating measures we would take. Further details are set out in the ‘Preliminary Environmental Information Report’ (PEIR), which is available to download. If you have any comments on the likely environmental effects of the scheme and the proposed mitigation measures, or on any of the information set out in the PEIR, please let us know in the space below.*

Comments

Since road traffic is the effective determinant of the level of air pollution, new roads in polluted areas are only acceptable if they enable pollution levels to be reduced, and are accompanied by an explicit and effective public commitment to achieve that reduction. Given the excessive levels of pollution in its vicinity, the proposals for the Silvertown tunnel could only be supported if they included an even stronger commitment: a guarantee that traffic (including during construction) will be managed so that pollution levels steadily decline throughout the area and, at the very latest, meet EU requirements at all locations within two years of the Tunnel’s completion.

- 6** *Traffic impacts: We have described the traffic impacts of the Silvertown Tunnel scheme and explained that we would monitor its effects on traffic before and after opening. Further details are set out in the ‘Preliminary Transport Assessment’ and ‘Preliminary Monitoring and Mitigation Strategy’, which is available to download. We would take appropriate measures to mitigate any negative effects that might occur as a result of the scheme. These measures could involve adjusting traffic light timings or other traffic management measures. If you have any concerns about the effect of the Silvertown Tunnel scheme in any particular location, or comments about how we might mitigate these, please let us know in the space below.*

Comments

There is particular local concern about the southbound queues on the A102/A2 during the evening peak, and very bad congestion (am and pm) on the east/west routes A206 and A2.

- 7** *Cross-river bus services: The Silvertown Tunnel scheme would give us the opportunity to introduce new cross-river bus routes for east London. We have described an illustrative cross-river bus network for east London in the ‘Preliminary Transport Assessment’, which is available to download. If you have any comments on the introduction of new cross-river bus routes please let us know in the space below.*

Comments

We strongly support the use of any new crossing for additional bus services, both to meet the needs of the local population and to provide longer distance commuters with attractive train+bus alternatives. However, it is essential that all local routes make use of genuinely very low emission buses.

8 *Any other comments: Do you have any comments on any other issue connected to the Silvertown Tunnel scheme. If so, please let us know in the space below.*

Comments

We regard it as essential to provide improved river crossings in East London for pedestrians and cyclists, and therefore, if no other new routes are to be provided, would strongly support more effective use of the Cable Car for regular users. Had it been possible to incorporate appropriate facilities within the proposed new tunnel, there would surely have been no charge for such users. The aim should therefore be to provide essentially free use – at the very least for regular users of the cable car, perhaps by means of a low cost season ticket. This should be accompanied by improved pedestrian/cyclist links from the terminal points of the cable car to areas of employment or to existing pedestrian/cycle routes.

Should the Tunnel go ahead, there is a strong case to fund the construction of such links from the resulting charges, as a way of incorporating at least some pedestrian/cycle facilities within the overall scheme.

14 *Please tell us what you think about the quality of this consultation (for example, the information we have provided, any printed material you have received, any maps or plans, the website and questionnaire etc.)*

Comments

The quality of the consultation was seriously damaged by the inability to incorporate information or views about other potential road/rail/ferry crossings in east London, to compare their relative merits or to consider how they might be best combined.