

Response to proposals for additional East London River Crossings

London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies is a federation of over 130 community groups across London.

We share and support the comments and objections to the proposal for an additional crossing between Silvertown and the Greenwich Peninsular of the Westcombe Society, one of our members.

London Forum considers that the proposals for extra crossings have not been devised as sustainable development projects and would fail to conform to policies in that regard that were in the draft National Planning Policy Framework for England and to the policies in the Mayor's London Plan 2011 for climate change mitigation, CO2 reduction, reducing the need to travel, smoothing traffic flow, road capacity effects of additional traffic (Policy 6.12B-b&c) reducing congestion, improving air quality, reducing noise, local character, building London's neighbourhoods, heritage and place making.

If the Mayor proceeds with the plans for more crossings, they would be subject to challenge on those policies unless he took action to mitigate the effects of the additional ways of crossing the Thames. That would require the highest standards of design and what he could do to reduce harm is to introduce road pricing, so that the businesses that needed the access could have the advantages of the crossings and the cost savings, but at a fee, whereas private motorists would be deterred by the charges. That would deal with the problem London Forum is concerned about that each of the crossings proposed would introduce more traffic, much of it being drivers diverting to try to take advantage of the new routes, not because they need them for local destinations but for convenience in crossing London more quickly and cheaply.

The evidence given by participants to the examination in public of the Draft Replacement London Plan (DRLP) in 2010 convinced the Inspectors that increased traffic, pollution, congestion and noise could not be allowed to develop in an unrestricted way. They recommended to the Mayor that he should modify the DRLP to prepare for introducing road pricing. The Mayor not only rejected the proposal but wrote that he would never do so whilst he is in office. That is an unrealistic attitude to the traffic problems in the capital. The Mayor's Transport Strategy reports on the factors that make London unattractive to businesses to move here. One of the ones on which London has a very low rating in the estimation of businesses is air pollution. As so much of that is from road traffic, the Mayor must take action to reduce it before promoting additional roads and river crossings.

The Mayor has taken out existing congestion charge areas and delayed the introduction of low emission zones. He has not taken the opportunity to reduce business commuting traffic by imposing charges on private non-residential parking places. If more traffic routes are to be created, TfL should advise the Mayor how to mitigate the adverse effects they will bring and the necessary measures must be implemented.

London Forum expects the Mayor and TfL to implement new controls and guidance on freight movements by time and routes to limit congestion without increasing delivery times and costs too much.

The proposals for the additional crossing between Silvertown and the Greenwich Peninsular seem to have been compiled with inadequate assessment of the effects of increased congestion at peak times of the day on the A2 and the A102. The same issues could apply to the Western Way for the new ferry.

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