



The Alliance of British Drivers

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The Planning Inspectorate

Via Email: silvertowntunnel@pins.gsi.gov.uk

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Ref: TR010021 - Silvertown Tunnel Development

The following is our submission to the Silvertown Tunnel inquiry:

The Alliance of British Drivers supports the proposals for a new Silvertown Tunnel on the basis that the existing traffic demand on the existing Blackwall Tunnels is higher than the capacity of those tunnels (in both directions). This results in excessive queues of traffic at most peak periods which is very expensive in terms of the wasted time of vehicle occupants. In addition if there is the slightest incident, or a requirement to close either tunnel for maintenance or vehicle recovery, the resulting traffic congestion can spread over a very wide area of south-east and north-east London. Also, the slow moving or stationary traffic that results causes high air pollution in the area.

There are currently very limited cross-river links east of central London which inhibits commercial development and causes long detours to use other routes, particularly for large commercial vehicles. The existing bridges/tunnels are Tower Bridge, which has limited capacity with poor access roads and is also a major historic tourist attraction, the Rotherhithe Tunnel - a very old tunnel which is rated as a major safety risk even though usage is restricted to light vehicles, and the Dartford Crossing tunnels/bridge which is many miles from the centre and is also congested at peak times.

There has been clear demand for other Thames river crossings in this area for very many years, and numerous proposals for such crossings which for various reasons have not been progressed. Such crossings would enable the improvement and development of the areas east of London both north and south of the river which are major focuses for more housing and commercial development as these areas are some of the few providing development potential in the outer London area. Residents and businesses who reside both north and south of the river would benefit from additional river crossings, particularly those south of the river as the major commercial centres in London are north of the river and to reach most of the rest of the country requires road access across the Thames.

There are limited public transport services such as main-line train or underground services that provide the access required and what there are tend to be provide access mainly to central London and not to other areas. This often requires travel into and out of central London to gain access to other areas which is time consuming and expensive. More direct road links are the answer which a new river crossing would provide.

In summary, we wholeheartedly support the proposal for a new tunnel.

Toll Charges

Note that we oppose the use of tolls on cross-river crossings as a means to manage traffic flows. Tolls are socially divisive because they affect poorer sections of the community more than others. In London it is also perverse to have some river crossings tolled and not others. The imposition of high tolls might also negatively affect the residents and commercial businesses north and south of the river close to the crossing point - and might for example prejudice the claimed "business regeneration" aspects of the proposals.

However, as it seems likely that the funds to develop this project would not be forthcoming without finance from tolls being provided, we would support some tolls - for example at low charge levels and for a limited period of years until the development costs have been paid for.

Supporting Infrastructure

One slight concern we have with this project is that the proposals for access routes to the new Silvertown Tunnel and the adjacent Blackwall Tunnel appear to be inadequate in relation to the likely traffic flows. It would seem that the lack of development of those routes may be an attempt to manage the traffic flows through the tunnels, but this may have a negative impact in those areas north and south of the crossing in terms of additional traffic congestion over a wider area.

We would prefer to see an improved supporting road network infrastructure as part of this project. But if that is not achievable we would still support the proposals for development of this project.

We have no responses to the questions posed to "interested parties".

Yours sincerely

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