

SILVERTOWN TUNNEL

Volume 8

Development Consent Order Application

Response to ExA's First Written Questions:

8.10 Principal Issue: Habitats Regulation Assessment

The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure)

Rules 2010

November 2016

Silvertown Tunnel

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Development Consent Order Application Response to ExA's First Written Questions: Habitats Regulation Assessment

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HRA HABITATS REGULATION ASSESSMENT

HRA.1 Question

Section 7.5 of the HRA Report [APP-064] reports on in-combination effects and notes that nine proposed plans/projects within or adjacent to the scheme have been considered, as detailed in Table 7-2.

Has the list of projects to be considered in the in-combination assessment been agreed with Natural England.

Response

HRA.1.1 The SoCG with Natural England (NE) [SoCG001], states that NE are in agreement (teleconference call 27/10/16) with the list of projects to be considered for the in-combination assessment within the HRA Report (APP-064).

HRA.2 Question

The justification for the conclusions reached in the in-combination assessment provided in section 7.5 of the HRA Report [APP-064] is on the basis that Greenwich and Newham local plans have had their own HRA screening assessment which concluded no significant effect and that policies in the Core Strategies are to enhance biodiversity.

Has NE agreed with this approach taken by the applicant?

Response

HRA.2.1 The approach is currently under discussion between the Applicant and Natural England (teleconference call dated 27/10/16). The Applicant will seek to confirm the position of both parties in the SoCG with Natural England [SoCG001].

HRA.3 Question

The EA has raised concerns regarding the mobilisation of contaminants in its RR [RR-299] in relation to Water Framework Directive (WFD) compliance. The Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA and Ramsar site are downstream of the Silvertown tunnel proposal and has features which could potentially be sensitive to changes in water quality.

Can the Applicant provide commentary on whether mobilisation of contaminants could open up pathways for effects to the Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA and Ramsar site.

Response

HRA.3.1 Chapter 16 Water quality and Flood Risk and Chapter 10 - Marine Ecology of the ES [APP-031] provides full details of the predicted effects on water quality from mobilisation of contaminants during the construction of the Scheme. As set out in Paragraph 16.6.13 of the revised Chapter 16 Water quality and Flood Risk submitted at Deadline 1, the proposed works at Silvertown are not expected to lead to a long-term deterioration of the assessed contaminants (i.e. specific pollutants, priority substances or priority hazardous substances) within the Thames Middle transitional water body, nor prevent the water body from meeting its WFD objectives.

HRA.3.2 Section 7.3 of the HRA [APP-064] presents further the assessment of the potential effects (direct and indirect) on European Sites as a result of changes in water quality or changes of flow, concluding that:

The Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA and Ramsar site is sufficiently far removed at 30km east of the Scheme not to be within the zone of influence of water quality effects.

HRA.3.3 Due to no hydrological connectivity between the Scheme and the site, the residual effects are recorded as Neutral. Furthermore it should be noted, there is not sufficiently functionally linked wetland within the zone of influence of the Scheme. Therefore, no likely significant effects upon the Natura 2000 sites from water quality or flow have been identified resulting from the Scheme, either alone or in combination with other known plans and projects.

HRA.4 Question

The HRA lists a number of air quality exceedances at Epping Forest SAC.

Can the Applicant please confirm the source of this information?

Response

HRA.4.1 Section 7.2 of the HRA [APP-064] cites evidence of these air quality exceedances:

- footnote number 6 (page 36) "Air Pollution Information system; www.apis.ac.uk; Accessed 01 September 2015" and;
- footnote number 7 (page 37) "Essex County Council and the City of London Corporation; Epping Forest Transport Strategy 2012-2016".

HRA.5 Question

The HRA screening matrices provided by the Applicant contain very generic references to whole chapters of the ES. The footnotes are labelled alphabetically, under the heading of “Evidence supporting conclusions”. However, the matrices themselves do not cross refer to any specific footnote.

Please provide revised HRA matrices to ensure that each unshaded cell within the matrix is assigned a specific footnote, and that the footnotes are updated to provide references to specific paragraphs or sections of the relevant supporting documents (such as the ES or the HRA documents).

The Applicant is directed to review the “Report on the implication for European sites” of other NSIPs which have been recently determined in order to see an example of how the matrices should be completed.

Please provide the revised matrices both in Word format and as a PDFs.

Response

HRA.5.1 The Applicant has reviewed matrices completed for similar NSIP projects. The matrices within the HRA [APP-064] have been revised and submitted at Deadline 1.