

Our Ref: TfL
Your Ref:

17 September 2014

Third river crossings consultation
rivercrossings@tfl.gov.uk

Dear Sirs

Third consultation on TfL's proposals for new East London River Crossings

London TravelWatch is the statutory watchdog representing transport users in London. London TravelWatch considered this issue at its 16 September 2014 Policy Committee meeting.

London TravelWatch recognises the need for additional vehicular river crossings, we have previously supported the Silvertown tunnel proposal including the need for tolling and subject to various conditions below. Similar conditions should also apply to any new crossing proposals.

We recognise the in principle case for additional crossings east of Silvertown because of the need to regenerate east London and particularly to accommodate London's new growth forecasts following evidence from the Census 2011 and from major new developments now in the pipeline. These will mean a large rise in population, on both sides of the Thames in east London. This in turn will mean a large rise in travel demand. We have no preference on which particular crossings should be progressed - much will depend on detailed evidence and on proposals to mitigate the risk of substantial increases in traffic on some local roads including bus routes and potential future bus routes. We would therefore be concerned to see further, in depth consideration of how this should best be mitigated and levels of traffic managed, including the modelling of options for tolling and /or roads pricing and for bus priority.

If the proposals were to proceed the Board has previously said that they would want to see the proposals be conditional upon suitable safeguards and assurances which are outlined below:

Bus service frequency

A guarantee of the minimum frequency and capacity of public transport links to be operated through the tunnel (e.g. not less than 20 crossings per hour in each direction during weekday peak periods, and not less than 10 at other times)

The frequency suggested is illustrative of that needed to encourage maximum use of public transport by offering a "turn up and go" service which minimises waiting times and therefore maximises its attractiveness to users.

Bus lanes

The proposal should include bus lanes and other means of giving priority to buses. Bus passengers tell us that they see the improvement in journey times and the reliability and consistency of these as their priorities for improvement. See <http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/4152>

A tolling regime and measures to prevent release of suppressed demand on parallel links

There would need to be a tolling regime to ensure, as far as is practicable, that congestion levels in the tunnel and its approaches are managed and that the benefits of the additional capacity results in more reliable journey times for both public and private transport. Appropriate measures may also be needed on any adjacent crossings.

Protection for buses on feeder road network

Free passage of buses through the Silvertown tunnel and any new crossings will be of limited value if they are prevented from reaching it unhindered by other classes of vehicular traffic. An area-wide traffic management scheme (with bus priority) is therefore required, both on Transport for London's and the boroughs' roads, to ensure that the entire network operates with maximum efficiency, free from conflicts with other road users.

Improvements and protection for cyclists and pedestrians on the feeder road network
There needs to be a full evaluation of the effect of the scheme on cyclists and pedestrians using the feeder roads to the tunnel to ensure that current safety measures are either not compromised or hopefully improved.

If you have any questions please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Vincent Stops
Policy Officer.