

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]@btinternet.com

Our ref: MGLA071019-4151

Date:

Thank you for your writing to me about the Silvertown Tunnel, most recently on 4 October. I know my Deputy Mayor for Transport, Heidi Alexander, has written to you on my behalf several times over the last few months and has also met with you to discuss your concerns in more detail. I'd like to take this opportunity to reiterate my views on the scheme, and also to respond to some key matters.

I am committed to reducing car dominance, improving air quality and addressing the climate emergency. The current situation at the Blackwall Tunnel cannot continue as it fundamentally undermines these goals. The regular congestion and tailbacks that occur when the tunnel needs to close means the approach roads are some of the most polluted in London. Meanwhile, the lack of resilience means Transport for London (TfL) is not able to run a reliable cross-river bus service and encourage people to travel by more sustainable means. Building the Silvertown Tunnel with an associated user charge, and introducing a new user charge at Blackwall, is the best solution.

I reject the assertion that the information presented by TfL through the public consultation and to the Planning Inspectorate was incorrect and misleading.

The option of tolling the Blackwall Tunnel and not constructing the Silvertown Tunnel shows that, based on the same user charges assumed for the Silvertown Tunnel 'assessed case', demand would increase at adjacent, less suitable river crossings such as the Woolwich Ferry and Rotherhithe Tunnel, thereby exacerbated congestion and air quality issues across the network.

Further increasing the charge to reduce congestion at the Blackwall Tunnel corridor to a level akin to that expected for the Silvertown Tunnel scheme means that – coupled with the fact that no new crossing capacity would be provided – a significant proportion of traffic would re-route from Blackwall bringing unacceptable levels of congestion and worsened air quality to other river crossings and elsewhere on the network.

As no additional crossing capacity would be provided in a Blackwall only charge scenario TfL determine that the user charge levels would need to be significantly higher than those used in the 'assessed case' to achieve the same level of congestion benefits on the Blackwall corridor.

The reduction of congestion at Blackwall in a Blackwall only charge scenario would help to increase resilience to some extent, but wouldn't address the inherent constraints associated with its design which means that the tunnel experiences a disproportionately higher number of incidents and closures compared to other major UK highway tunnels. It also would not allow us to run double deck buses and make a step change in public transport provision.

In response to your assertion that traffic would be displaced onto other roads such as the A102, the TfL modelling has detailed that overall, there is a significant reduction in travel time (i.e. congestion), particularly in the peaks, as a result of the scheme.

David to provide a couple of paragraphs on the Blackwall Charge Only option that was assessed. Specifically need to respond to the assertion that TfL should have modelled more than one toll level and that this would have removed queueing, increased resilience and allowed for reliable bus service. Also respond to claim on page 2 of letter that traffic would simply be displaced onto other roads such as A102.

As Heidi outlined in her letter to you of 20 September, London's 1.5c trajectory takes the Silvertown Tunnel into consideration.

█ to respond to general questioning of whether scheme fits within trajectory as well as questions around general commitment to action on carbon in light of recent CCC letter etc. Essentially, want to be able to say that both the embodied carbon and the operational carbon will not undermine our ambitious target. Also feel free to add in anything else about decarbonisation of transport network etc. Are we able to provide the c40 independent assessment letter?

In concluding your letter, you say that you believe public policy should be made on the basis of the best possible analysis of value for money, air quality and carbon emissions. I can assure you that this has been the case for the Silvertown scheme and I would not be endorsing it if I thought otherwise.

I know you hold very strong views on the scheme, and I share your passion for protecting our environment for future generations. However, unless there are substantively new and different points you wish to raise, I feel additional correspondence on this issue is unlikely to add anything further.

Thank you again for writing to me.

Yours sincerely,

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London

MAYOR'S OFFICE ADVICE NOTES

(TO BE COMPLETED BY DRAFTING OFFICER AND UPLOADED WITH DRAFT FOR MAYOR TO SIGN)

Drafted By:

█, GLA Transport Team
█, GLA Environment

Or (delete either option as appropriate) Drafted by: XXXX obo XXXX (enter name of team or officer)	David Rowe, TfL
Unit/Team:	Transport Team
Cleared by (Line Manager): This includes approval of text used in ' as appropriate ' section - commending their work e.g. relevance/importance/value to community/City/society xxxxx	
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Background/Comments:

Add additional information here: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

If correspondence is urgent:

Provide reason(s) for urgency and specify if correspondence needs to be sent out by a certain date (if different to Write On 20-day deadline).