

MAYOR OF LONDON

Ref: MGLA070819-9567

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]@btinternet.com

Date:

Dear [REDACTED]

It was nice to meet you on 2 August and thank you for your further correspondence dated 7 August and your letter and briefing note to the Mayor dated 15 August.

As the Mayor and I have made very clear previously, we are in full support of the Silvertown Tunnel. Building a new tunnel with an associated user charge, as well as introducing a user charge at the Blackwall Tunnel, will effectively eliminate existing congestion, lead to an overall improvement in air quality and allow TfL to operate frequent and reliable cross-river bus services. The scheme will improve our environment, encourage more sustainable transport choices and support growth in east and south east London.

In response to your specific questions:

1. A new carbon impact assessment of the whole TfL transport policy (with/without Silvertown tunnel) based on not breaching London's share of the IPCC global carbon budget for limiting climate heating to 1.5 degrees centigrade above pre-industrial levels. This approach is supported by the Mayor's recent climate emergency declaration.

Answer awaited

2. *A review of the business case and traffic forecasts for the Silvertown Tunnel, to take account of the climate emergency and the London-wide actions needed to achieve our carbon reduction goals. This should also include an assessment of the traffic and economic effects of using price mechanisms to fully de-congest the Blackwall Tunnel without building Silvertown Tunnel, and of a London-wide smart charging scheme.*

We have undertaken a detailed traffic assessment for charging Blackwall Tunnel without building Silvertown Tunnel. Sensitivity tests related to the modelled scenarios are publically available in the Traffic Forecasting Report which supports the Development Consent Order submission. This shows that, amongst other things, implementing a charge-only option at Blackwall would have a very small

impact in demand for the crossing at the busiest times and result in a notable increase in demand at other crossings in particular the Woolwich Ferry. A charge only option would fall far short from addressing the congestion and air quality issues at Blackwall. Additionally, such a charge would not solve the issue of the lack of alternative route to cross the river when Blackwall Tunnel is closed or offer the step change improvement to cross river bus transport.

The affect of a London-wide road user charging (RUC) scheme on the user charges for Silvertown and Blackwall tunnels depends on the specific objectives of that scheme. However, our Charging Policies and Procedures provide flexibility to cope with this and is linked to specific traffic, environmental and other objectives of the Silvertown scheme. Any future RUC scheme would need to address the obligations of the DCO and specifically the Charging Policies and Procedures which would continue to stand regardless of any wider RUC scheme. A couple of examples which might help:

- A wider RUC scheme might be designed to deliver further improvements to air quality but achieve this through major changes to the fleet rather than reducing demand. In this scenario we would look to maintain general user charge levels at Silvertown / Blackwall, but may remove certain exemptions for low-emission vehicles so as to reduce congestion, secure the reliability of the bus network and so meet other objectives of the Silvertown scheme.
- A wider RUC scheme might be designed to reduce demand on the road network across a wider area of London, including at Silvertown/Blackwall. This could result in reduced traffic at Blackwall/Silvertown but might encourage greater levels of specific vehicle classes due to a more efficient network e.g. HGVs. In this case we would look to maintain higher charges for HGV's or other relevant vehicle classes to continue to secure our beneficial impacts on air quality.

Regardless of a future RUC scheme, we will be required to assess its impacts and make changes to the Blackwall/Silvertown charges to ensuring we are meeting the environmental, economic and other objectives set out within the DCO.

3. *New air quality assessments that show clearly how air quality varies if future Mayors reduce or abolish the Silvertown and Blackwall tolls, as they have authority to do - and that include the effects of new land use i.e. the two new planned freight depots on each side of the tunnel.*

The Silvertown Tunnel Development Consent Order (DCO) enshrines in legislation a number of controls to ensure the charges will be maintained to meet our objectives in the short and long term. This includes the Charging Policies and Procedures that set the framework for setting and varying the user charge to ensure the scheme objectives are being met and to thoroughly assess any proposed variations. The Charging Policies require that we minimise any adverse impact on the environment, including health and equalities. Similarly we are required to consider the impacts of changes on the proposed variation of traffic, so that even if at some point in the future air quality became less significant an issue, we still need to ensure we are meeting our objectives in terms of effectively managing congestion and minimising any adverse impacts on communities.

Legally it is the TfL Board who approves the initial user charges and any subsequent variation to the charges must always be set/varied within the parameters of the Charging Policies and Procedures. For example, proposals for the charging levels must be supported by thorough and transparent analysis and consultation. Any changes will be proposed to the Board and in deciding whether or not to approve the proposed charges, the Board must only approve them if satisfied that we have complied with the Charging Policies and Procedures. The Board must also have regard to representations/recommendations made by the Silvertown Tunnel Implementation Group (STIG), which includes the relevant boroughs, in making their decision.

The impacts including affects on air quality for any new freight depots will be considered by the local planning authorities in accordance with local, regional and national guidance.

The work TfL has undertaken was subject to public scrutiny through a detailed sixth month public examination and four public consultations. It assessed in detail both traffic impact and environmental impact clearly demonstrating that the Silvertown Tunnel is the right approach.

Thank you again for writing to me.

Yours sincerely,

Heidi Alexander
Deputy Mayor for Transport

DEPUTY MAYOR'S OFFICE ADVICE NOTES

(TO BE COMPLETED BY DRAFTING OFFICER)

Letter Being Sent to:	
Topic:	<i>Silvertown Tunnel</i>
Drafted by: <u>Or</u> (delete either option as appropriate) Drafted by: XXXX obo XXXX (enter name of team or officer)	<i></i> , <i>Principal Policy Officer</i>
Unit/Team:	<i>Transport Team</i>
Cleared by (Line Manager):	

Timeline

Date - Correspondence passed over to TfL to draft reply:	
Date - Draft received from TfL:	
Date - Draft reviewed by Transport Team:	<i>09/09/19</i>

Background/Comments:

Add additional information here: this draft closes off *0128 and *9544

Reason for overdue case

Case received close to deadline
Lead officer absence
Officer delay
Waiting for line clearance
Sent back within TfL's 5 day deadline