



The Alliance of British Drivers

London Region: PO Box 62, Chislehurst, Kent, BR7 5YB; Tel: 020-8467-2686; Web: www.abd.org.uk

River Crossings Consultation
Transport for London

Via Email: rivercrossings@tfl.gov.uk

29 December 2012

Response to Consultation on the Options for New River Crossings in East and South East London

Dear Sirs,

The following are our comments in response to the above consultation on behalf of our members (numbered as per your questions in the survey form):

Question 3. To what extent would you support or oppose the option of a new road tunnel between Silvertown and the Greenwich peninsula?

We strongly support this proposal because of the desperate need for new river crossings and the fact that the existing Blackwall Tunnel is obviously grossly inadequate for existing traffic volumes. The location is also suitable because it has good connections to the existing network of main roads both north and south of the river at that point, and an additional crossing point near to the centre of London is essential.

Bearing in mind the first tunnel was opened in 1897, and the second in 1967, whereas the population of transport requirements of east London have increased very substantially in recent years, the provision of additional river crossings is well overdue. The congestion with its attendant delays that now happens not just in the mornings but now sometimes repeatedly during the day wastes the time of road users, wastes fuel and creates excessive emissions. We suggest that this makes it essential that the new crossing is finished far earlier than 2021; this will boost economic activity in the area and substantially reduce congestion.

Question 4: To what extent would you support or oppose the option of a new ferry at Woolwich to replace the existing service?

We have the view that a ferry should be maintained at this point on the basis that there would clearly be some benefit in retaining a crossing at that point where there are direct links to the North and South Circular. We suggest that as it might be required to be out of action for some time so as to be improved, that the proposed Gallions Reach ferry or bridge/tunnel be implemented first and then a replacement Woolwich ferry be implemented. That implies of course that the existing ferry has to be capable of being maintained for some time.

Question 5: To what extent would you support or oppose the option of constructing a new ferry at Gallions Reach by 2017?

We have the view that it would be preferable to construct a bridge or tunnel at that point even if it is more costly and might take somewhat longer. Ferries are never well liked by users as they delay vehicles and are of course subject to delays due to fog and for other reasons (much more susceptible to breakdown for example). They are also expensive to operator and maintain. We consider a ferry as only a "stop-gap" measure at best, as it will not support large volumes of traffic and is economically simply too short-sighted. We would only support a ferry at this point if a bridge or tunnel were out of the question.

Question 6: To what extent would you support or oppose the option of constructing a new bridge or tunnel at Gallions Reach by around 2031, if a ferry does not adequately address the area's needs?

We do not support the suggestion that a ferry be constructed first with a decision made later on a bridge or tunnel. It is a short sighted and financially inept proposal which simply postpones a sensible solution to the need for extra cross river road capacity.

Question 7: To what extent would you support or oppose the option of constructing a new bridge or tunnel at Gallions Reach, which could not be delivered before 2021, instead of a ferry?

We support the proposal for a bridge or tunnel at Gallions Reach instead of a ferry for the reasons given in our response to Question 5.

Question 8: These crossings could bring significant benefits for the East and South East of London but are currently unfunded. In order to pay for the proposed river crossings and manage traffic, we are proposing a toll for the new crossings and also the Blackwall Tunnel. To what extent would you support or oppose this?

We oppose any charging for new river crossings. We always oppose tolls as simply being more taxation on travel, when the Government raises much more tax from road users than is expended on the road network.

The justification for retaining tolls on the Dartford Crossing (and more recently increasing them) was to finance other Thames river crossings but that tax revenue is now of course being diverted into general Treasury coffers.

The other reason for opposing tolls is that there is no simple and economic way of collecting them (and the proposed "free-flow" system at the Dartford Crossing has many disadvantages which we will be spelling out in response to the consultation on that matter). All toll systems are intrinsically expensive to operate and hence it is best if new road or bridge/tunnel construction is financed from general taxation on road users of which currently only a very small proportion is used to finance the road network.

Please note our comments above.

Yours sincerely

Roger Lawson
London Co-Ordinator
Email: roger.lawson@abd.org.uk

About The Alliance of British Drivers (ABD)

The Alliance of British Drivers was formed from a merger between the Association of British Drivers and the Drivers Alliance. The ABD is the leading independent organisation which represents the interests of private motorists in the United Kingdom. We campaign to protect the rights of individual road users and believe that road transport is a beneficial and essential element in the UK transport infrastructure. We oppose excessive taxation of motorists and are against tolls and road usage charging. We also campaign for more enlightened road safety policies. The Alliance is a "not for profit" voluntary organisation which is financially supported primarily by its individual members. More information on the ABD is available from our web sites at www.freedomfordrivers.org (London Region) and www.abd.org.uk