

## Response to Transport for London river crossings consultation

### From Campaign for Better Transport, September 2014

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#### Q1-Q9. Views on the four proposals presented

1. A new ferry at Woolwich by the early 2020s
2. A new ferry service at Gallions Reach by 2022-2025
3. A bridge at Gallions Reach by 2022-2025
4. A bridge at Belvedere by 2025-2030

Among these four proposals, we would only support the timely renewal of the ferry at Woolwich and strongly oppose all the others.

While we would support new crossings for public transport, walking and cycling in this area, there is no need for new crossings for motor vehicles. In fact, the provision of new road capacity would be profoundly risky in terms of induced traffic, traffic and congestion levels on local roads, public transport, walking and cycling uptake and air pollution. For more details, see our response to Question 10.

#### Q10. Further comments

We oppose new road-based river crossings in East London primarily because we believe they would lead to increased traffic across a wide area, increased car dependency, increased air pollution, noise and other problems associated with congestion, including deterring people from walking and cycling and delays to buses.

Campaign for Better Transport was one of the objectors to previous plans for a crossing at Gallions Reach in 2007 and it is worth looking again at the Inspector's report for that scheme – the Thames Gateway Bridge (TGB) – to see the problems that new road capacity in this area would bring.

Key problems with the TGB proposal, as described in the Inspector's report were:<sup>1</sup>

*9.145 The evidence is that if the scheme were built, then there would be more traffic than if it were not built. In fact, the aim of the TGB is to enable people to travel further within a given journey time, whether by public transport or by car. The criterion of accessibility used by the promoters treats people travelling further to make 45 minute journeys by car as a benefit. The whole justification of the TGB is based not on reducing the need to travel, but on increasing it.*

*9.187... I have concluded that, on balance, the scheme would be likely to cause increased congestion.*

*9.85 It would ...not improve safety for all road users.*

*9.93 [It] would reduce travel by cycling and walking.*

*9.155.....that public transport ...would be less well used [with the scheme] than ...without.*

*9.416 ... air quality would be worse in 2016 with the bridge than without the bridge. In an area in which air quality has historically been low, and where it is identified as a current problem, [he] did not regard that as acceptable.*

*The inquiry also looked in detail at the claimed economic and regeneration benefits of the river crossing and found that:*

*9.302 ...the potential of the scheme for giving rise to negative economic effects has not been assessed by the promoter. The evidence is that it would be likely to be associated with an increase in deprivation.*

*9.422 ....the key to this is the economic regeneration benefits claimed for the scheme. .... [Here the Inspector] did not consider the evidence to be strong enough or reliable enough to outweigh substantially the disbenefits of the scheme*

In our view, both a new ferry service and a new bridge at this location would suffer from the same problems as the Thames Gateway Bridge and similar problems would be caused at the new proposed location for a bridge at Belvedere. Indeed, the impacts outlined in the consultation documents include new traffic on many nearby roads that already suffer from excess vehicles and high air pollution.

The fact that in all the impact diagrams the proposed Silvertown Tunnel is included as already built is also a problem – the consequences shown would be in addition to the extra traffic generated by this proposal and the cumulative impact of these proposals is not made clear to the people being asked to respond. The Silvertown Tunnel has not yet been through the planning process and a business case has not been agreed so there is also no guarantee it will be funded.

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<sup>1</sup> Extracts from the Inspector's Conclusions in the Thames Gateway Bridge Inquiry. Campaign for Better Transport, October 2007 [http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/sites/default/files/research-files/Extracts\\_TGB\\_Inspector\\_Report\\_2007.pdf](http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/sites/default/files/research-files/Extracts_TGB_Inspector_Report_2007.pdf)

### The case against new motor crossings

The case for new motor crossings in this area is very weak. The consultation documents say:

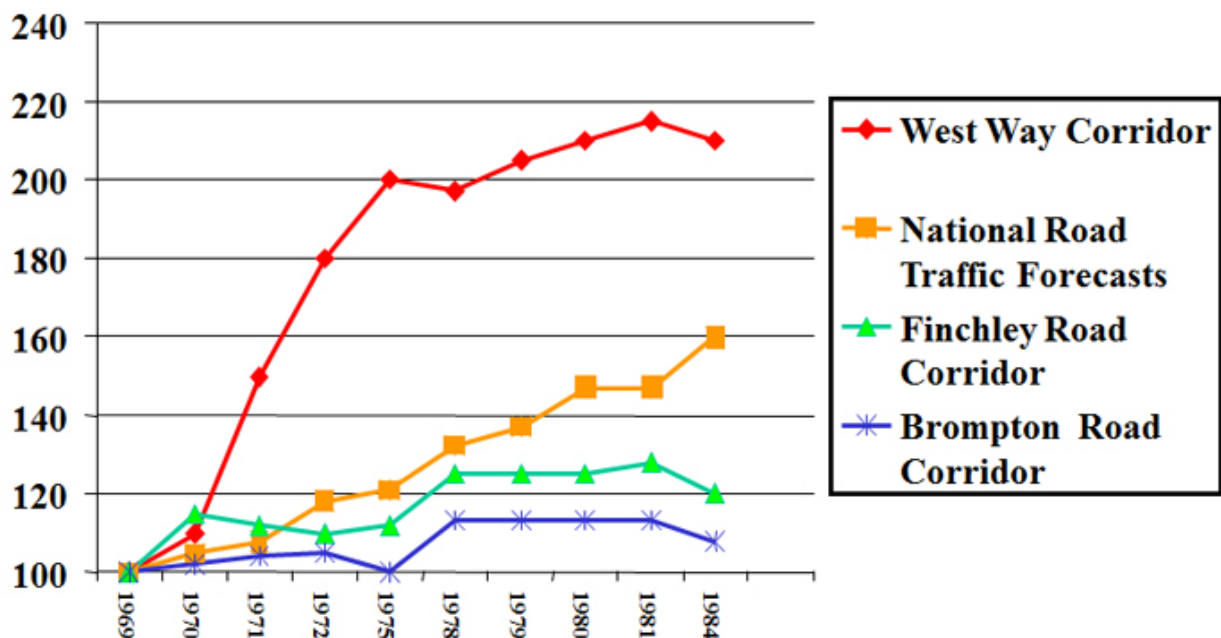
*"Over the last 20 years we have invested a great deal in cross-river public transport capacity, including through the extension of the Jubilee line, DLR network, improvements to the East London Line and introduction of the Emirates Air Line. The first Crossrail trains will enter service in late 2018. Nevertheless, there will always be a need for some journeys to be made by road, including by bus or for freight and provision for road transport across the Thames has remained largely unchanged over this time."*

This statement reflects a positive approach to transport investment over time, and the gradual reduction in car dependence that has followed, and does not justify a return to road building in the area. As the TGB public inquiry demonstrated, new road crossings are likely to do more harm than good to the local economy and would not benefit local people or public transport users.

Evidence for the likelihood of even larger amounts of new traffic being generated by these proposals than the consultation documents predict is also very strong.

The principle of 'induced traffic' has been demonstrated repeatedly since 1925,<sup>2</sup> and the fact that it is most sharply seen when new road capacity is built in urban areas of existing congestion and suppressed demand was shown by the London roads studies of the 1980s, summarised in the chart below by John Elliott.<sup>3</sup> The same studies also showed that the widening of the Blackwall Tunnel in 1969 (doubling capacity) led to more than 100% of new traffic within one year of opening.

### GLC London studies 1966-1986 showed induced traffic on the widened West Way road corridor:



<sup>2</sup> Induced traffic. Again. And again. And again. Phil Goodwin, Local Transport Today 450 (2006) 24

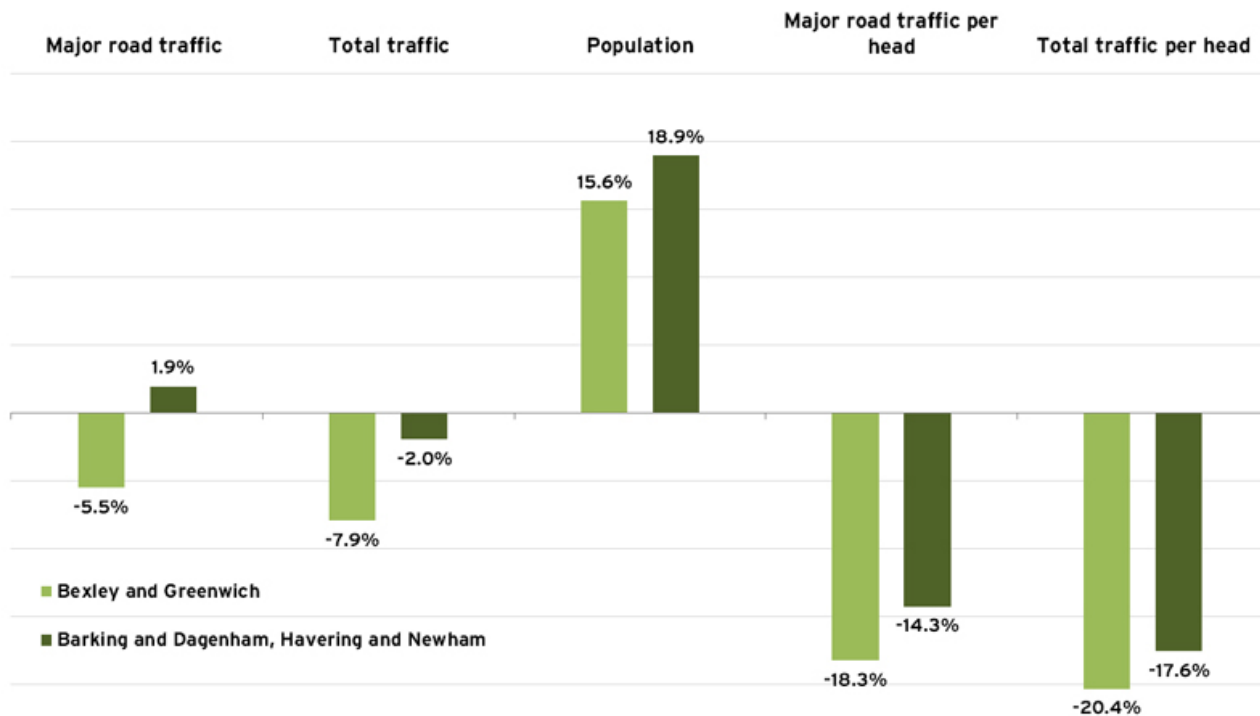
<http://stopcityairportmasterplan.tumblr.com/post/19513243412/induced-traffic-again-and-again-and-again>

<sup>3</sup> The Effects of Strategic Network Changes on Traffic Steve Purnell, Jillian Beardwood and John Elliott. World Transport Policy & Practice 5/2 (1999) 28-48 <http://www.eco-logica.co.uk/pdf/wtpp05.2.pdf>

This phenomenon has again been demonstrated recently in a study of the widening of the A206 in Crayford. This showed both induced traffic and increased pollution once the road was widened.<sup>4</sup>

Even the expected increase in population of the East London boroughs in the coming years is not a reason to add more road space. As the charts below show, since 2000, the boroughs north and south of the Thames in this area have seen rapid population growth without a corresponding increase in traffic – traffic per head has dropped between 14 and 20 percent in this period.<sup>5</sup>

### Traffic and population changes in East London - 2000 to 2013



### Better options for sustainable development and public transport, walking and cycling crossings

The pattern of relatively sustainable development that has been seen in East London in recent years should be maintained as the Thames Gateway is further developed, and every effort made to reduce car dependency further, not to encourage more car use by new residents.

Campaign for Better Transport's Masterplanning Checklist,<sup>6</sup> published in 2008 sets out a range of ways to develop this area while reducing the need to travel, and in particular reducing the need to travel by car.

<sup>4</sup> Degradation in urban air quality from construction activity and increased traffic arising from a road widening scheme. Anna Font, Timothy Baker, Ian S. Mudway, Esme Purdie, Christina Dunster, Gary W. Fuller. Science of the Total Environment 497-498 (2014) 123-132 <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0048969714010900>

<sup>5</sup> Chart data from DfT Traffic Counts website <http://www.dft.gov.uk/traffic-counts>, London Datastore <http://data.london.gov.uk/datastore/package/office-national-statistics-ons-population-estimates-borough> and DfT Traffic Statistics table TRA 8901 [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/road-traffic-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/road-traffic-statistics)

<sup>6</sup> Masterplanning Checklist for Sustainable Transport in New Developments. Ian Taylor and Lynn Sloman, September 2008 [http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/sites/default/files/research-files/Masterplanning\\_Checklist\\_2008.pdf](http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/sites/default/files/research-files/Masterplanning_Checklist_2008.pdf)

For more sustainable, less risky, less costly and better value for money river crossing ideas, Transport for London should look again at the Thames Gateway Bridge alternatives report it commissioned in 2007,<sup>7</sup> which found all these options to be better value at the Gallions Reach location:

- Cable Car
- Ferry
- Walk, cycle and bus bridge
- Light rail bridge with walking and cycling (and potential travelator for pedestrians)
- Improved transport policy and traffic management

## **September 2014**

Sian Berry  
Campaign for Better Transport

Campaign for Better Transport's vision is a country where communities have affordable transport that improves quality of life and protects the environment. Achieving our vision requires substantial changes to UK transport policy which we aim to achieve by providing well-researched, practical solutions that gain support from both decision-makers and the public.

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<sup>7</sup> Thames Gateway Bridge, Alternatives and Options for Improving Public Transport. John Whitelegg, Carmen Hass-Klau and Phil Goodwin, May 2008 [http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/sites/default/files/research-files/TGB\\_options\\_final\\_report\\_edited\\_11\\_5\\_2008.pdf](http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/sites/default/files/research-files/TGB_options_final_report_edited_11_5_2008.pdf)