

Kate Middleton,
32 Calvert Road,
London SE10 0DF.
Friday 17 December

Dear councillor,

Following the Transport, Regeneration and Culture Scrutiny Panel's recommendation last week, that the council call on the Mayor of London to pause and review the Silvertown Tunnel project, we write to ask you to support the call for this proposal to be discussed by the full council, as rapidly as possible, and accepted.

The project, if it went ahead, would have negative consequences for Greenwich residents over decades. The fact that it has not until now been discussed at full council is itself a failure of democratic process, that must now be overcome.

The discussion at the Scrutiny Panel was a reminder of just how serious those consequences could be.

It was made clear that the tunnel project is incompatible both with the Greater London Authority's climate targets,¹ and Greenwich's climate targets, including its ambitious and laudable aim to reduce car use by 45% by 2030.²

TfL representatives confirmed that the modelling on which the tunnel project was based has not been updated to factor in these targets. The modelling was flawed from the start, as it only covered scenarios in which there would be no extra trips across the Thames. Questioned by Panel members, TfL representatives could not point to any project, anywhere in the world, where traffic volumes have been held down in the way that TfL claims will happen in the case of the tunnel.

All TfL's claims that it can implement the project without aggravating the climate crisis, air pollution and traffic congestion, rely entirely on the charging scheme. TfL told the Scrutiny Panel that "tolls are essential to the scheme". TfL has itself estimated that without the tolls, traffic volumes would increase by 30%. And yet future mayors would not be bound to keep the charges in place. Our coalition has had legal advice to that effect,³ and when we reported that to the Scrutiny Panel, TfL's representatives did not dispute it.

On a positive note, TfL confirmed that cancelling the tunnel at this stage would be "difficult" but not impossible.

Under these circumstances, it would be grossly negligent for the Royal Borough of Greenwich not to ask the Mayor to pause and review the project. For this reason, and following the Scrutiny Panel decision, we asked to address the Cabinet meeting held yesterday (15 December) in place of the cancelled full council. We were refused.

Given the urgency of the situation, we ask you (1) to support the call for this matter to be discussed and voted on at full council, (2) to endorse the Scrutiny Panel's call for the Mayor to pause and review the project, and (3) to endorse the Scrutiny Panel's call for the council to cooperate with other councils to commission legal advice about the charging scheme.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of this letter, we are happy to meet with you.

With best wishes,

Kate Middleton,

co-ordinator, Stop the Silvertown Tunnel coalition.

¹ For details, see the Briefing: Stop the Climate-Wrecking Silvertown Tunnel, published by the Transport Action Network and others. <https://transportactionnetwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Silvertown-Tunnel-Briefing-Oct21.pdf>

² See Greenwich Carbon Neutral Plan 2021-2030, page 16

³ Copies of this are available from us on request