



Frequently Asked Questions

An overview of our scheme, and extensive information its benefits and impacts can be found in the consultation documents available on our [website](#).

You may find it particularly useful to read our [consultation booklet](#), which summarises the Scheme. Our [Guide to the Consultation Documents](#), explains all the detailed technical documents available for you to examine.

The following sections provide short answers to some of the most regularly asked questions about our proposals.

1. Why are you building a crossing here not somewhere else?

Two of our principal objectives are to reduce congestion at Blackwall tunnel and to provide an alternative crossing in case of any closures or incidents there. By locating the tunnel as proposed we would provide a solution to both these challenges –the number of vehicles needing to cross the river would have a choice of two crossings, meaning traffic would flow more freely, and if there should be a problem at the Blackwall Tunnel, vehicles could readily use Silvertown Tunnel instead.

We are also investigating several other crossings to follow this and form a full package of new crossings in east London, including at Thamesmead-Beckton and at Belvedere-Rainham. Highways England is also developing plans for a new lower Thames crossing to relieve the Dartford Crossing.

Further information on this matter is available in the [Preliminary Case for the Scheme](#) and the [summary factsheet](#) on alternative options considered.

2. Why is it taking so long to open?

The Secretary of State for Transport designated the Silvertown Tunnel scheme a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). This means that an application for planning consent (known as a Development Consent Order, DCO) must be made to build and operate the scheme. The statutory planning process for such an important scheme can take several years. Once started, in approximately 2018, construction of the Tunnel is expected to take four years, meaning that the new tunnel could be complete by 2022/23.



Further information on this matter is available in the [Preliminary Case for the Scheme](#) and the [Preliminary Engineering Report](#). More information on the DCO process can be found at: <http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/the-process/>

3. What public transport will the Scheme offer?

The Scheme provides the opportunity for significantly enhancing the bus network, through enabling new and extended cross-river bus services. These could potentially increase from 12 single-deck buses crossing via Blackwall Tunnel per hr to 75 per hr (mainly double-deck) across both crossings

Over the past 25 years there has been a significant increase in rail transport in the local area, meaning that the majority of cross-river trips in east London are made by public transport already. However, our investigations into alternatives to the Silvertown Tunnel, such as further rail-based extensions showed that these would have very limited impacts on resolving the challenges of congestion, closures and incidents, or lack of alternative road crossings at Blackwall.

Further information on this matter is available in the [Preliminary Case for the Scheme](#) and the [Preliminary Transport Assessment](#).

4. Why isn't there more for pedestrians and cyclists?

TfL is strongly committed to enhancing the quality and number of cycling and pedestrian journeys in the capital. Since 2000, there has been a 99% increase in cycle journeys in the Capital. The opening of the Emirates Air Line cable car (EAL) in 2012 was in recognition of the need for a pedestrian and cycling crossing in the area of the Silvertown Tunnel.

We investigated options for pedestrian and cycling access within the main Silvertown Tunnel bores or in a separate tunnel, but given the length of the crossing and modern safety requirements, such a split approach would not be appropriate. Nor would it be or cost effective given the existence of the EAL crossing. A foot and cycle bridge is also not a viable crossing option for a number of reasons including the need to allow tall shipping in this section of the River Thames.

Opportunities to improve the environment for pedestrians and cyclists around the approaches to the tunnels have been identified by TfL.

A pedestrian, cycling or public transport crossing alone would do nothing to improve the road network's ability to deal with closures at the Blackwall Tunnel, and would do very little to relieve congestion on the local road network in general.

Further information on this matter is available in the [Preliminary Case for the Scheme](#), the [Preliminary Transport Assessment](#) and the [summary factsheet](#) on alternative options considered.

5. If Blackwall Tunnel has traffic issues, how will you make sure Silvertown Tunnel won't?



The original Blackwall Tunnel opened in 1897 and the additional bore added in the 1960s were designed to meet the traffic demands of the day. However, whilst Blackwall Tunnel has been upgraded it remains fundamentally unsuited for the volume and type of traffic that now seeks to use it. By adding the Silvertown Tunnel nearby, and charging for both, we would add capacity and manage traffic demand, ensuring that the additional tunnel is a sustainable solution to the problems of the Blackwall Tunnel.

The tunnel will be designed and operated in order to optimise its effectiveness. For example, one of the major causes of delays at Blackwall is overheight vehicles getting stuck at the entrance. Silvertown Tunnel will be large enough for both double-deck buses and large HGVs so that the frequent overheight vehicle incidents experienced at Blackwall each year will be effectively eradicated.

Further information on this matter is available in the [Preliminary Case for the Scheme](#) and the [Preliminary Transport Assessment](#).

6. Why are you charging for Blackwall Tunnel and Silvertown Tunnel but not other crossings?

A charge is being proposed for use of the Blackwall and Silvertown Tunnels. This is necessary to manage the traffic demands to use the tunnels and ensure that the local road network can accommodate the associated traffic flows effectively. This will reduce congestion at peak periods and the associated environmental impacts. Based on our traffic modelling assessments there would be no need to implement user charging at existing adjacent crossings.

The other principal reason for introducing a user charging is to help pay for the construction and maintenance of the new tunnel. Without the user charge TfL would have no effective means of managing traffic demand and would not be able to fully fund the scheme.

Further information on this matter is available in the [Preliminary Case for the Scheme](#) and the [Preliminary Charging Report](#).

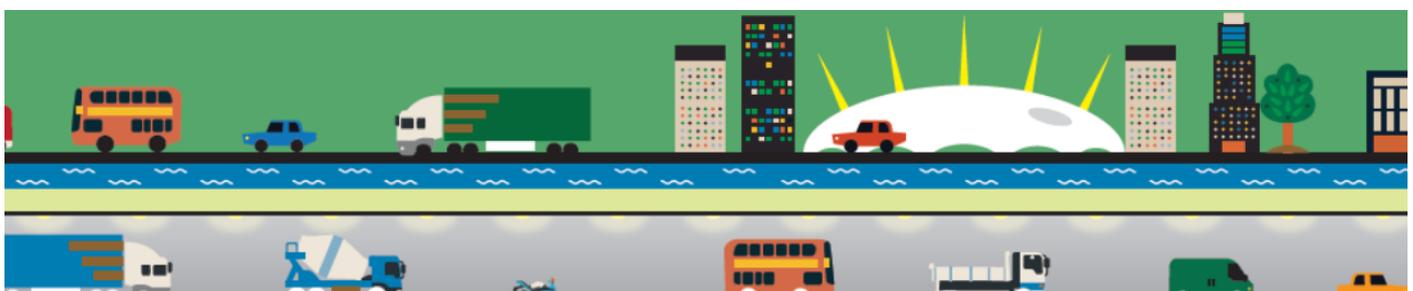
7. How can you start charging for Blackwall Tunnel it has always been free?

The charge is a core element of the Scheme as it would manage the level of traffic demand, which would relieve congestion and safeguard improvements in journey times. It would be impractical to leave Blackwall free whilst charging users of Silvertown as this would simply lead to congestion at Blackwall that would in turn disrupt access to Silvertown.

By implementing the Scheme, with user charging, people and businesses will save time and benefit from environmental improvements resulting from reduced congestion.

Further information on this matter is available in the [Preliminary Case for the Scheme](#) and the [Preliminary Charging Report](#).

8. I can't afford to pay to cross the river, what can I do?



We propose that Rotherhithe Tunnel and Woolwich Ferry will remain free to use, however would encourage those wishing to reduce the cost of crossing the river to consider other options, such as:

- Using public transport, such as the increased bus service whenever possible –buses will not be charged to use the tunnels;
- Consolidating journeys –eg use the tunnel twice a week instead of three times;
- Establishing or using car sharing –eg for the commute or school run;
- Shifting journeys to off-peak times to take advantage of lower charges.

Further information on this matter is available in the [Preliminary Social Impacts Appraisal](#) within the [Outline Business Case](#) documents.

9. How will the charge be applied?

There will be no physical booths or barriers to pay the charge; it will be collected based on automatic detection of a vehicle's use of the tunnels (e.g. number plate recognition).

TfL anticipates that the majority of users will be account holders –those who have signed up to an automated-payment arrangement through which the charge is automatically paid from a designated account when they pass through the crossing. The overwhelming majority of Congestion Charge payments are made in this way and TfL has extensive experience of running this type of system.

Account holders will receive a discount to the headline charge via a peak and off peak charge which will be cheaper than the headline charge. The peak charge is proposed to apply only between 6-10 am going northbound and 4 to 7 pm going southbound, with off peak charge applying at all other times, except for overnight from 10pm to 6am which would be free.

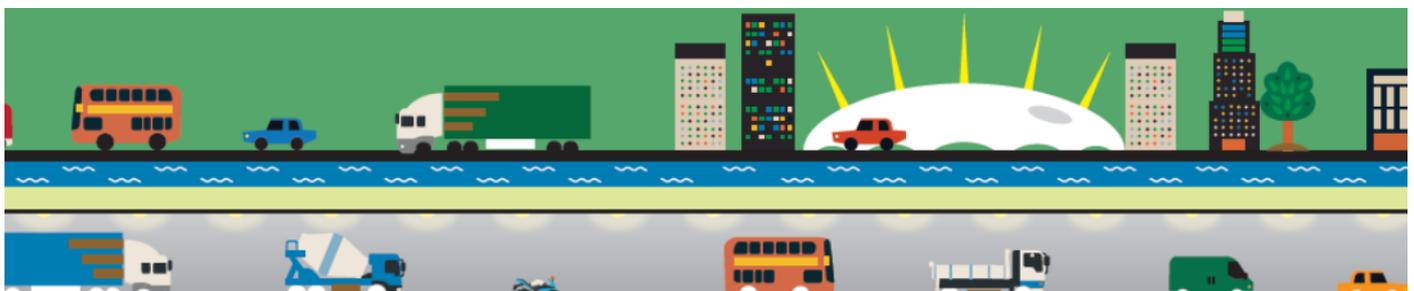
Users who do not register for an account will need to pay through one of the other designated payment channels, such as via a website and will be able to do so in advance of using the tunnels or within a limited time after the journey is complete. Non - account holders will also pay the headline charge at all times. This will be the advertised maximum charge that will be applicable to the vehicle class during the charged period (i.e. from 6am to 10pm).

Enforcement for the charge will be a civil process similar to the existing Congestion Charging scheme. The focus will be on making drivers, including non-UK drivers, aware of the charges and on making it easy and convenient to pay the charge.

Further information on this matter is available in the [Preliminary Charging Report](#).

10. What discounts are there for locals and businesses?

Discounts and exemptions will be provided in a similar way as for the Congestion Charge, which includes disabled users, emergency services and some large passenger vehicles (coaches and



buses), . However there will be no local resident or business discount as this would undermine the effectiveness of the user charge as a demand management measure.

Further information on this matter is available in the [Preliminary Charging Report](#).

11. How and when will the exact charge be decided?

It is expected that user charges will apply from the date of opening of the Silvertown Tunnel. The charging regime including the level of charge is not being set now. It will be set closer to the date that the Silvertown Tunnel opens to traffic. This will ensure that the charging regime reflects the conditions that exist at the time and is set at a level which will manage cross-river demand at the Blackwall and Silvertown Tunnels most effectively.

To ensure that the user charge remains responsive to changing conditions, TfL will be seeking the ability to vary the charge in the future. For the purposes of consultation, we have identified an indicative charge based on the conditions we predict would exist at the time the tunnel opens in 2022/23. These are:

	Indicative off-peak charge with an account	Indicative peak charge with an account	Dartford Crossing Charge
Motorbike	£1	£2	Free
Car & small vans	£1	£3	£2.50/£3.00
Large van (less than 3.5 tonnes)	£1.65	£5	£3
HGV (more than 3.5 tonnes)	£4	£7.50	£6

Indicative charges for account holders

In setting and varying the charge, TfL will have regard to the two main objectives of managing traffic and contributing to the cost of the scheme as well as the other consequential benefits such as positive impact on the environment and economy.

Further information on this matter is available in the [Preliminary Case for the Scheme](#) and the [Preliminary Charging Report](#).

12. How will you stop the new tunnel attracting more vehicles to the area?

By charging at the Silvertown and Blackwall Tunnels the demand for the improved crossings is managed, and the benefits of the additional capacity can be realised. These benefits include reducing traffic impacts on the local road network such that journey times will be improved and there will be almost no queues at the Blackwall or Silvertown Tunnels in the peak periods.



Whilst some users will be prepared to pay the charge for the improved journey, there will also be current users who may opt to take fewer journeys, switch to public transport, change origin/destination or may use alternative crossings.

To ensure that the user charge remains responsive to changing conditions, TfL will be seeking the ability to vary the charge in the future. This will enable traffic demand to be managed to reduce congestion and the associated environmental effects.

Further information on this matter is available in the [Preliminary Case for the Scheme](#) and the [Preliminary Transport Assessment](#).

13. What if the charge doesn't fix the problem

To ensure the scheme does not give rise to adverse impacts on the wider road network we would monitor traffic levels before and after the opening of the new tunnel and take appropriate action as necessary.

The ability to vary the user charge would be an important tool to mitigate any negative traffic impacts. The exact charge will be decided closer to tunnel opening and will be designed to maximise the positive impacts of the scheme, such as reducing congestion, and to enable these benefits to be maintained over time as circumstances change.

TfL will also use other measures to manage and mitigate any negative effects that might occur as a result of the scheme. Working closely with the relevant local authorities these measures could involve adjusting traffic light timings or other traffic management measures.

Further information on this matter is available in the [Preliminary Case for the Scheme](#) and the [Preliminary Charging Report](#).

14. Other crossings will still be free, so won't people just drive to those, moving the congestion problems elsewhere?

We have modelled the effects of the charges currently proposed on traffic in the wider area (this is known as the Assessed Case). The impact on nearby river crossings is expected to be minimal. Our modelling indicates that overall demand for the adjacent crossings is not expected to change significantly, and in fact could reduce marginally at the times when they are busiest and traffic demand exceeds their effective capacity.

Changes in all cases are small; of these, the most notable are outside of the busiest periods. Effectively, users that do decide to divert to crossings such as Woolwich or Rotherhithe are expected to be offset by people who currently choose to use those crossings but will instead start using the Blackwall and Silvertown Tunnels due to the reduced congestion and shorter, more reliable journey times.

Further information on this matter is available in the [Preliminary Case for the Scheme](#) and the [Preliminary Transport Assessment](#).



15. I live or drive in the area –what impacts will the Scheme have on traffic here?

The biggest traffic impacts of the scheme would be seen in the local area surrounding the scheme (i.e. the Blackwall and Silvertown Tunnels and their approach roads).

The scheme is expected to result in the same total number of cross-river vehicle movements over the day as at Blackwall, whilst virtually eliminating queues for the Blackwall Tunnel –thereby reducing congestion, improving reliability and shrinking journey times. Current regular delays of up to 25 minutes at busy times would be eradicated.

The Scheme is not expected to lead to people diverting onto local residential roads or cause problems across the wider road network. It will however increase the proportion of passenger trips made on buses or coaches from just over 10% through the Blackwall Tunnel currently to approaching 30% through the Blackwall and Silvertown Tunnels combined.

Further information on this matter is available in the [Preliminary Transport Assessment](#).

16. I live in the area, what impact will the scheme have on air quality?

Traffic congestion is a major contributing factor to poor air quality in London. At the moment traffic is queuing at Blackwall but the Silvertown tunnel will take that queue away – therefore improving overall air quality on the main approach routes to and from the Blackwall Tunnel.

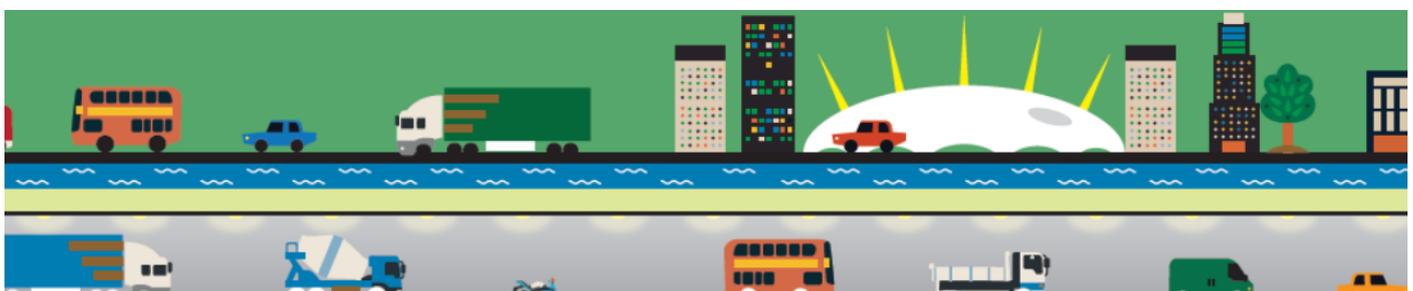
London as a whole is expected to see an improvement in air quality ahead of the proposed opening of the tunnel, as a result of greener vehicles and policies to improve air quality. However this improvement will be limited by factors such as congestion. Our Silvertown Tunnel scheme will reduce congestion and encourage the use of greener vehicles thus further improving the air quality of the City.

Whilst benefitting air quality over all, and close to the Blackwall Tunnel in particular, our modelling shows that in some localised areas –particularly where the Silvertown tunnel would emerge and connect to the Tidal Basin Roundabout north of the River, there would be a notable increase in emissions due to the presence of a new road.

This matter is discussed in greater detail in the [Preliminary Case for the Scheme](#) and the [Preliminary Environmental Impact Report](#).

17. How will traffic emissions from congestion at the Blackwall Tunnel get worse if the Silvertown Tunnel scheme is not built?

A. Without the Silvertown Tunnel scheme, future traffic flows through the Blackwall Tunnel are forecast to rise, and demand to use the Tunnel relative to its capacity is forecast to increase. The increase in demand would lead to greater congestion than is currently experienced, particularly at peak times. Congested traffic conditions produce more emissions than free-flowing traffic. As a result of cleaner vehicle technology there has been a trend of reducing concentrations of vehicle emissions and it is anticipated that this trend will continue in the future. However, despite the use of cleaner vehicles in the future, the increased congestion that would occur at the Blackwall



Tunnel would result in worse air quality in the surrounding area than if the Silvertown Tunnel was built.

This matter is discussed in greater detail in the [Preliminary Case for the Scheme](#), the [Preliminary Environmental Impact Report](#) and the [Preliminary Transport Assessment](#).

18. How have you assessed the Air Quality impacts?

Since 2013 a team of air quality specialists have been working with TfL to understand and assess the potential air quality impacts of the scheme.

In line with national regulations and industry guidance these specialists have monitored current air quality levels and predicted the change in future levels, both with and without the Scheme being in place.

This has been achieved through:

- Gathering data on existing air quality levels through organisations such as Defra, local authorities and London Air Quality Network.
- Gaps were identified in the data and a monitoring campaign was commissioned. NO2 diffusion tubes were installed at 75 sites over a 12 month period.
- Robust traffic modelling was carried out to generate emissions rates as accurately as possible;
- Air quality modelling has been carried out to show the dispersion of pollutants

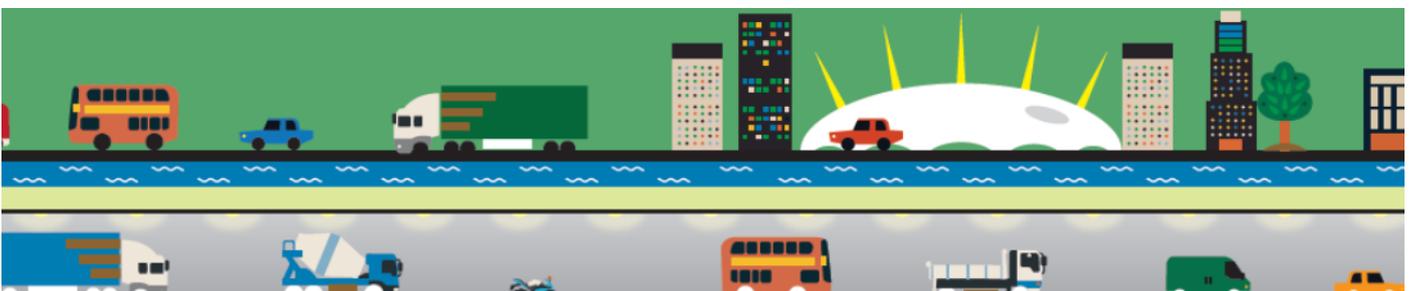
We have focussed on detailing and assessing the worst-case sensitive receptors at locations where air pollutant concentrations are expected to be highest such as those closest to roads and junctions or in areas currently experiencing poor air quality. We will continue to model additional locations, and undertake more detailed analysis, as we prepare the rest of our proposals ahead of applying for planning permission.

This matter is discussed in greater detail in the [Preliminary Environmental Impact Report](#).

19. Does your air quality modelling account for possible changes in air quality legislation, or the recent issue with Volkswagen cars?

As a transport organisation we keep a very close eye on all developments relating to traffic emissions and are in contact with the government bodies responsible for guidance in this regard. We will ensure our proposals take into account any changes in air quality legislation. We will also ensure that we appropriately consider any issues which may arise from the current motor industry once the necessary detail is available.

Further information on this matter is available in the [Preliminary Environmental Impact Report](#).



20. How will the Scheme help residents?

The Scheme provides a number of benefits for residents and users of the local area. It will:

- significantly reduce congestion and day-to-day journey times on the local road network, and make journey times more reliable during peak traffic periods;
- create substantial new cross-river bus links in southeast and east London, notably the growing employment areas in the Royal Docks and Canary Wharf;
- Reduce the environmental impact of traffic in local areas by reducing congestion;
- provide a nearby crossing to offer an alternative to Blackwall Tunnel in the event of any planned and unplanned closures;
- It will generate £1,367m of net user benefits over 60 years; and make the local economy more productive by at least £105m;
- Create a significant increase in access to jobs, with almost 250,000 additional jobs within 45 minutes travel time by car from Greenwich –or up to 9,000 by public transport;
- Employ approximately 700 construction staff during its peak construction period in 2022.

Further information on this matter is available in the [Preliminary Case for the Scheme](#) as well as in additional detail in the respective consultation documents for each topic.

21. I run a construction business how can I get involved?

All works and services will be subject to the Public Procurement Regulations, through a formal tendering process. Opportunities will be posted on the Tenders Electronic Daily (TED) portal and nearer the time potentially on the web portal CompeteFour. The main works and services are not likely to be posted until after the DCO planning application is submitted in 2016.

22. How can I have my say?

If you would like more information on our Scheme please visit our website for full information – including our [consultation booklet](#) and our technical [consultation documents](#), or come and talk to us at one of our roadshows.

To register your views on our proposal, please see our [consultation questionnaire](#). The questionnaire highlights the specific areas on which we are seeking your feedback. However, you are not limited to commenting on these topics and we welcome feedback on any aspect of the proposals.

If you would prefer to write to us with your thoughts, please email us at rivercrossings@tfl.gov.uk or use our freepost address. Simply mark your envelope 'TfL Freepost Consultations'.

Further information on this matter is available in the [Statement of Community Consultation](#).

