

TRANSPORT FOR LONDON

SURFACE TRANSPORT PANEL

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON BLACKWALL TUNNEL NORTHBOUND
REFURBISHMENT**

DATE: 9 NOVEMBER 2010

1 PURPOSE AND DECISION REQUIRED

1.1 This paper updates the Panel on the Blackwall Tunnel Northbound Refurbishment Project.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 BAM Nuttall commenced construction works on 7 February 2010, with a planned completion date of December 2012, including programme risk. Works are being undertaken during overnight closures from 9.00pm to 5.00am, Sunday to Thursday, as well as during a number of planned weekend closures.

2.2 The refurbishment project will deliver across the board improvements to safety systems, including:

- (a) new fire, communication and incident detection systems;
- (b) an auto tunnel closure system to stop traffic entering the tunnel following an incident;
- (c) more emergency points for motorists and better access for emergency services;
- (d) a new CCTV camera system; and
- (e) lighting and ventilation system improvements.

2.3 The improvements to the tunnel will increase TfL's capacity to detect accidents, control fires and remove smoke from the tunnel, and evacuate motorists safely in the event of an incident. The works will also improve the resilience of the tunnel's equipment, reducing the number of future closures required to undertake repairs and maintenance works.

3 PROJECT PROGRESS

3.1 Excellent progress has been made and a six month time saving has been achieved, with completion brought forward to June 2012, ahead of the Games. This has been achieved by a willingness to challenge construction methods and through improved collaboration across the whole project team. As a result, the number of weekend possessions has also been reduced from the planned ten to eight.

3.2 Following the first weekend closure, TfL revised its traffic management arrangements to minimise traffic disruption. The most significant change was to run both lanes of the Rotherhithe Tunnel in a southbound direction only. The Woolwich Ferry operating hours have also been extended during the week and additional ferries operated during weekend closures. These measures have helped to reduce the impact of the closures. The fourth and final weekend closure in 2010 was successfully completed on 15-18 October. The dates for the closures in 2011 will be confirmed in the New Year.

3.3 Work completed so far includes the installation of new ventilation fans and concrete floors in two of the tunnel's four shafts, as well as the temporary installation and relocation of the lighting, CCTV, fire main cabling and communications systems, which will allow the old systems to be removed and replaced. Work has commenced to install the permanent lighting system, safety niches, concrete tunnel lining in the shafts and power transformers. Two of the four ventilation shafts have been demolished internally, noise attenuation measures have been constructed and work has started on the new shaft roofs. There are up to one hundred labourers and numerous vehicles and plant in the tunnel during each closure.

4 CURRENT FINANCIAL FORECAST

4.1 The project is within budget, with an overall Estimated Final Cost of £73.255m.

5 RECOMMENDATION

5.1 The Panel is asked to NOTE the paper.

6 CONTACT

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