

Transport Committee – 9 January 2013

Transcript of seminar: river crossings

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): Welcome to this Transport Committee Seminar that we are holding at City Hall. I am sorry we're not in London's Living Room where we normally host seminars. There was another event already booked today. It is great to see so many members of the public along today and judging by the number of tweets and bits of correspondence we have had already this is a very timely meeting to have and very topical, particularly in parts of east and south-East London.

A couple of housekeeping points I have to mention before we start. If we have to leave City Hall in the event of an emergency you are going to hear an announcement asking you to leave the building immediately and you will be directed by staff and security to follow the fire escape signs on the ramp outside the chamber. You would congregate on Potters Field Park, next door to City Hall. Please also make sure your mobile phones are switched off or on silent please. That would be helpful for everyone today.

Obviously our focus this afternoon is on river crossings in London. We are going to split the seminar into two halves. The first half I will be chairing and that is going to consider issues relating to whether there is actually a need for any new river crossings and issues around the impact on road congestion, economic development regeneration in the environment. The second panel discussion will be chaired by Val Shawcross and that will look at Transport for London's (TfL) specific proposals for new river crossings, including the Silvertown Tunnel and Gallions Reach Ferry. We are going to be tweeting during the event from the Assembly and it is going to have the hash tag river crossings, for anyone who likes to contribute to the debate online. We would like your feedback from this, I think in your packs there should be a feedback form, so please do let us know any comments relating to our discussion. Shortly after this we will be publishing a short report detailing the issues that have come up today at our seminar, ready for the deadline of 1 February for TfL's consultation.

For the first session I am delighted to introduce our first three panellists, so Michèle is going to be staying for both parts. Michèle Dix, who is the Managing Director for Planning at Transport for London and she is responsible in her team for leading the consultation on the Mayor's proposals for these new river crossings.

Next along we have got John Dickie, welcome, John, who is the Director of Strategy and Policy at London First. John's organisation represents businesses in London, so he is going to be talking about the relationships between river crossings and London's economy.

Finally, at the end we have got German Dector-Vega, who is the London Director at Sustrans, and German is the sustainable transport expert and brings experience of working in surface transport at Transport for London before he joined Sustrans, so he had a wealth of experience there.

Our panellists are going to have five minutes each to present their evidence, if you like, their case. We will then, as Members of the Committee ask a few questions and then most of the time will be allocated to all of you, both in the gallery and on the floor here, with roving mics to make your points and ask your questions.

I should just say I did have apologies from a number of our members: Steve O'Connell, Victoria Borwick, Joanne McCartney, Jennette Arnold and Andrew Dismore and John Biggs is joining us today as a local Assembly Member for one of the areas that will be affected by this. Welcome, John, today.

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): Shall we start off with --

John Biggs (AM): I am here as Joanne McCartney as well.

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): Because it is a seminar though I am told we do not have substitutes in the same way, but you are very welcome, John, all the same.

If we could start off with maybe John [Dickie] actually, would you start and set out in five minutes the view from London First?

John Dickie (Director of Strategy and Policy, London First): I would be very happy to, Chair, and thank you for inviting us today.

I think the start point would be that our members tell us, those businesses in East London, that one of the principle barriers to growth and to regeneration in East London is the absence or the poor availability of river crossings. If you go seven miles east of Tower Bridge there are only five fixed crossing compared with the 16 that we see going an equivalent distance west, seven miles west of Tower Bridge. We simply do not have the levels of economic activity we could, because of the difficulties of getting across the Thames. You look at some of the regeneration successes, some of the iconic developments in and around the area, the Canary Wharf, Excel, the O2 Centre, Westfield Stratford, London City Airport, all of those are driving increased demand for travel and all of them in different ways feel that their ability to generate economic activity is hobbled by the lack of connectivity.

The development of the Royals, the enterprise zone at the Royal Docks, Greenwich Peninsula, that will further drive demand for increased connectivity across the river. It is worth reminding ourselves, not that you need it I guess here, that almost half of the London Plan's opportunity areas for London for intensification are in East London. We are forecasting through the London Plan of the order of 780,000 more jobs with a very substantial percentage of those being in East London. 1.2 million is the forecast increase in population. As we know the census has shown the London Plan is underestimating rather than overestimating likely growth. Of the order of a fifth of that is going to be in East London. So while we have seen quite substantial increases in capacity across the Thames for public transport, we have seen the Docklands Light Railway (DLR), the East London line being upgraded, the Jubilee line, of course we will have Crossrail. There has been no increase in surface capacity since 1972, with the remodelling of London Bridge.

While Londoners are obviously in many cases using this new public transport capacity to go about their journeys, some obvious consequences have happened. You cannot take goods on the Tube with you. You cannot take your van on the Underground. There are plenty of journeys happening, people moving, but there are plenty of journeys that are not happening and there is substantially increased congestion in the area, which is a real problem both for local people and for businesses. Road users on the approach to the Blackwall Tunnel and then the boroughs around it experience very substantial delays. I think Transport for London has estimated the cost of delays of congestion on the Blackwall Tunnel is about £60 million.

Taking all of that together you will be unsurprised to hear that we think there is a very, very strong case for further fixed crossings to increase capacity and to cut congestion, and we have long supported both the proposed tunnel at Silvertown and we did support strongly, the now longer with us, Thames Gateway Bridge at Beckton

We do think, for the avoidance of doubt, that we should be thinking about further surface crossings as a public transport resource as well as a private transport resource. I do want to put this in a wider environmentalist and public policy context. One of the things we need, I think, when thinking about new road capacity in London, to be very conscious of, is the commitment the Government has to the decarbonisation of surface transport, which underpins really the whole of the Government's climate change objectives. If we do achieve the decarbonisation of surface transport, many of the local environmental impacts, by no means all, but many of them go away. The carbon impact goes away, as does the omissions arguments. I think the numbers I have in front of me tell me that based on the independent climate change model we are going to see something like a reduction of 44% in omissions by 2030. This will be a big change which I think should be part of the discussions about the local environmental impact.

Finally, I guess I should say something about funding and how we bring forth these schemes. Our start point is that London already pays a very substantial amount in tax and is of course a tax exporter to the rest of the country. The starting point for new public infrastructure in London is it should be funded by the public purse, because essentially we are already paying for the infrastructure we need. Having said that, we are also supportive of congestion charging to manage demand on scarce resources, so we are not against the idea that there should be some kind of charge to manage transport across scarce capacity or restricted capacity. Taking those two together I think where we land is that we are pragmatic about how it is funded. What we really need is the investment in the infrastructure. Thank you.

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): Thank you very much indeed, John, for that, very concise as well. Perhaps we can next move to German to give the views from Sustrans.

German Dector-Vega (London Director, Sustrans): Thank you very much for inviting us, we are quite happy to be here. If you will forgive me, I will read mostly from my presentation, because I want to get things right.

The first thing that we have to say is we all agree on the challenges around East London and we need some opportunities in the area.

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): Could you perhaps speak more into the mic, German, the acoustics are quite bad in here today.

German Dector-Vega (London Director, Sustrans): Just to recap that we all agree on the challenges for East London and the opportunities and the needs in the area. We have a range of different views about the scale, type and location of a new river crossing. I think for us, more importantly as well, when to build it. I think it is not a question of whether it needs to be built or not but when and what type. We have a range of different views about the scale, type and location, as I said, and consensus will be difficult, but what we truly believe is that if we allow for transparent critical thorough assessment we should be able to reach consensus.

I do not have the means, unfortunately, to drill down into the specific statistics for the modelling and analysis, but as part of this presentation I would like to remind ourselves of some of the truths that we have encountered over the last 30 years, six points. The first one, we must be certain that we have explored and exhausted all other possibilities before we embark on an expensive infrastructure programme like this. Unfortunately these programmes have a very high cost of opportunity. In some cases the money can be spent on other alternatives like public transport alternatives, or even other programmes, like we behavioural change programmes, for example.

I think we also need to remind ourselves, very importantly, because we forget about the timescales and the life of these projects is that they come sometimes with very high maintenance costs. We should not forget the mistakes we have made in the past and also remember the ones we did not make. I am sure I probably speak for everyone here that we wish we had not built the Bow Flyover. I am sure that I speak for everyone here that we are glad we did not knock down St Pancras to build us a motorway. We just need to make sure with a proposal like this, with so many people potentially affected, that we must make the right choice and for that we need transparent critical appraisal.

The second point, I will have to paraphrase Professor Phil Goodwin [Professor of Transport Policy] in what is perhaps a very uncomfortable truth, but it is true, “The intention for an infrastructure project to promote economic growth will not succeed in doing so by simply of that intention”. What I mean, in other words, is not just because we say that a project will promote growth it will necessarily do it. So, again, we need to make the right choice. We need transparent critical appraisal.

The third point, the premise of growth, to promote growth, is one that has been widely and successively disproven. I will paraphrase John Dales from Urban Initiatives, “We have to be careful not to have blind faith in an imaginary healing power for road capacity”. I do not want to sound negative. I think this can work but the success of any river crossing will depend strongly on active policy intervention to manage demand I think has been mentioned. Without this the benefits will be eroded very quickly. By extra traffic and negative impacts we will end up having more pollution, more congestion, more accidents and more health problems if we do not make sure that we build the right alternative.

I will be much more specific. Sustrans thinks that a river crossing package must include a suitable walking and cycling option. This is one that we prepared earlier, it is a proposal that we have had for some time now, this is a pedestrian river crossing from Rotherhithe to Canary Wharf. We worked on the benefit cost ratio of this proposal. It is achievable, it is doable. We were trying to make it look better, so it is a bit practical but it can look a lot better.

I agree as well tolling should be explicitly used to manage demand and promote sustainable transport and not only to raise capital to build the infrastructure. What I strongly believe is that we need some outside the box thinking for options. Pedestrians, cyclists and public transport only. I agree with the challenges of freight, very much so. There is no reason why we could not have a no-car option where public transport, walking and cycling is allowed, cars are not.

The fifth point, again I will paraphrase Professor Phil Goodwin he has painfully pointed out in the past that although good too, "There are faults in traffic forecasting and we must not assume that predictions of traffic growth are accurate. They have not been in the past. More importantly that they are not immutable and that they must be met with physical provision". There has been a structural shift in diverse personal travel. This is what we now call 'peak car'. I am not advocating for 'peak car' yet, neither and I suggesting that we have a discussion about it now, but the fact is there is evidence pointing to what is a possible phenomenon and this must be considered for any river crossing proposal.

The other interesting thing is growth in car travel has reduced significantly since the 1990s in every western world city. This is specifically true for London. What we must not do is try to buckle this trend. We have to make sure that we maximise on this trend. To summarise that point, the decision for a river crossing must not be driven solely by traffic forecasting. Surely with the problems that this city has, and we have a few of them, we have an obesity epidemic in London, and this is not something to be light about, we have an air pollution problem, we have a huge global energy security issue, so surely a solution should be to promote sustainable transport. That should be prioritised over everything else.

Sixth and final point, again I will quote some recent evidence from Oxford University. Costs and benefits used in business cases and cost-benefit analysis, which I have done plenty in the past, that typically support projects like this are commonly significantly different from actual costs and benefits and are, therefore, poor predictors of the actual value and viability of project. Again, we need transparent, critical appraisal.

I just want to close by saying that a river crossing should be seen as an integral transport project and not just a way to relieve congestion from Blackwall Tunnel. All options should be explored and decisions should be based on transparent critical appraisal. Thank you.

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): Lovely. Thank you very much indeed there, German, I think the challenge is down for Michèle, for your contribution, Michèle, about how you have come up with the decision as TfL that there is a need for a new river crossing, and the issue of capacity in East London and South-east London. Perhaps you would like to, in this first session, outline that for us.

Michèle Dix (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London): Thank you and again thank you for inviting me to your seminar this afternoon. I think a number of the points I might have made that John and German have made, so I will try to be brief.

Effectively, there is a history of promotion of river crossings in this area, certainly going back to [Sir Patrick] Abercrombie [1879-1957, Town Planner] there was an identification of a need to link the river, because the river is a barrier. The river creates severance between the northern-eastern part of London and the southern-eastern part of London. An objective is to try to reduce that barrier in order that one can enable improved access to jobs and services.

As John said, there is a predicted vast growth in population in London. There is a predicted and hopeful vast increase in employment in London, and much of that population growth and much of that employment growth is actually in East London. The opportunities to those sorts of jobs from various homes, either north or south of the river are restricted by lack of crossings. We have been reviewing the need for a river crossing in this area for a number of years, under a number of administrations, but we wiped the slate clean in 2008 and started again to look and see if the need is still there. That growth is growth that we want to take place. As John said, a certain proportion of that growth has taken place already in terms of the population increases having occurred by 2011, that mean that some of the forecasts that we have previously made by 2031 may well come to fruition a lot, lot sooner. There will be a demand for connections, for people to be able to, as I say, make journeys where they cannot readily undertake that activity without making a journey.

If we actually look at the area joining areas of Beckton, Thamesmead, the Royal Docks, Greenwich Peninsula will increase opportunities for people to undertake jobs and services. There has been a package of crossing that has been promoted over the past two decades. A number of them stem from earlier studies, particularly to promote increased public transport crossings, and we have seen many of those come to fruition. As John said, some of the more recent ones are the DLR extension to Woolwich. You have the Jubilee line, the DLR extensions, you have High Speed 1 and very soon you will have Crossrail, which will provide a further public transport crossing across the River Thames. In terms of public transport capacity we have done a lot. We have also reviewed the need for improved cycling and pedestrian links, because they are equally important. If you look at the Mayor's Transport Strategy, on which the policy for the river crossings is based, then promotion of sustainable modes is very high up the agenda. Certainly managing demand and making the most of what we have, integrating land use, transport better. All things very much part of the Mayor's Transport Strategy but recognising that where you cannot fulfil the demands to support growth, jobs and employment, then some additional capacity may be required.

Going back to the pedestrians, where we have certain pedestrian crossings, not necessarily the best environments, already across the river, we have sought to provide a new pedestrian and cycle crossing as quickly as possible in the form of the Emirates Airline. So, that was very much part of the river crossing package, to enable pedestrians to get across the river, to enable cyclists to get across the river and also to enable people in wheelchairs to get across the river. That went up in the space of two years at an affordable cost. That does not satisfy all the demands. We have some specific problems that we need to address to meet the objective of

reducing the river as a barrier. We do have extensive problems in terms of congestion Blackwall, but we also have a real problem of resilience at Blackwall. If something goes wrong at Blackwall, if a heavy good vehicle (HGV) gets stuck, particularly tall HGVs, because the northbound tunnel is of substandard, that has severe knock-on effects on the whole of the south-east and north-east because of the blockages that can occur. So there is a resilience issue in terms of crossing the river.

We also know that even though the Woolwich Ferry has been running for many, many years, it is coming to the end of its natural life and we need to consider how we enhance that, either refurbish it further, replace it or provide a new crossing elsewhere, because we want to be able to ensure that further east connections are made across this particular area. We also have the problem, as I say, of making sure that the growth areas, north and south in the opportunity areas in and around this region are better connected than they are at present. So, we feel quite strongly that there is a need to improve those connections. Much has been done to promote public transport connections. Not every journey can be made by public transport and, therefore, some further capacity improvements are being considered to help some of those journeys that can't. Even if we did make some new surface road crossings they would also help public transport journeys as well.

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): Lovely, thank you very much indeed Michèle. Thank you for your contributions to start our debate on this. This section is on the need for a new river crossing, rather than the specific details of the options that TfL are consulting on at the moment.

Members, do you want to come in? Darren, I think you had something you wanted to come in on.

Darren Johnson (AM): It was part of the written evidence that we have had from a number of people who have written in and been raising questions about the robustness and the transparency of TfL's traffic modelling and the fact that there was not enough information about the potential impacts of the proposals to enable meaningful responses. Could you comment on that, Michèle?

Michèle Dix (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London): Yes, I can, in the sense that this still is an informal consultation in terms of the need, looking at the potential options. There has been some modelling done that is referred to in the Assessment of Needs Report, which is on the web, which has helped identify the potential of each crossing. There is not detail at this stage in terms of specific traffic impacts on all the locations because that will come if we take these proposals further forward.

Darren Johnson (AM): OK. Taking onboard John's point that there will obviously be some essential traffic, and essential business traffic and so on, that you do not want to be stuck in congestion, how much thought has TfL given to traffic reduction policies and traffic demand measures, whether it be tolling or whatever, to ensure that rather than build new capacity that we use existing capacity for the essential journeys and that other options are available for those who can be persuaded out of their cars.

Michèle Dix (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London): We have looked at other options in the very early work that was done, certainly as part of the Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS), when we were looking at a whole range of policy measures to see what different policies were required to support growth and development and satisfy all the other MTS criteria. We did look at different options. We did also recognise within the MTS there is potentially a role for tolling and for pricing, if all other areas had not been explored in terms of what one might do. In terms of promoting the use of greater public transport, walking and cycling, the MTS has an extensive range of public transport, walking and cycling improvements in it. It is against that background of assuming all those improvements you are still left with a problem in this area in terms of the amount of traffic, be it public transport traffic, or HGV traffic that needs to be addressed.

Darren Johnson (AM): The possibility of tolling the Blackwall Tunnel which would then bring in revenue, which could help pay for the new crossing, surely a simpler solution would be tolling on the Blackwall Tunnel to reduce demand and actually there may be no need for a new road crossing at all.

Michèle Dix (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London): Part of the work that was done back in the early 2000s, as part of a Greenwich proposal for a Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) was to actually look at tolling on Blackwall Tunnel and the effect that it would have. Tolling could reduce demand on Blackwall Tunnel. It does not necessarily improve the resilience in that area. As I said before, one of the big problems that we have in that area is actually HGVs that are too tall, going through a substandard tunnel that cause major tailbacks all over the place. So tolling was something that was considered, but it is not the solution to the problem in that area. All those crossings, in fact if you look at Rotherhithe, if you look at further up Tower Bridge, if you look at Blackwall, they all have restrictions on them in terms of the vehicles that can use them, and the type of vehicles that can use them. So, yes, tolling might help but it does not necessarily address the resilience problem that exists and it certainly does not deal with the problem that we are talking about in terms of Woolwich Ferry and the age of that that needs to be addressed, or crossings further to the east that would be required.

Darren Johnson (AM): I will leave it there, because I am sure there are other people in the audience who want to pick up points there. Thank you, Chair.

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): John wants to come in.

John Biggs (AM): One very short and one slightly longer question. I should declare I am quite a strong supporter of a road crossing, in fact I want two, but not at any price, I want there to be a lot of conditions attached that protect my constituents. The short one is in the proposal to date there is not much in the way of quantity of information on lost hours and business costs of congestion and other economic consequences of failing to building a crossing. The slightly longer one is a contextual one, which is I happen to have been a leader of Tower Hamlets Council roughly 20 years ago and amongst the East London boroughs we built a consensus, which was around there being a whole package of crossings. I think at that time five rail crossings and two road crossings. That is three Jubilee line, two DRL rail crossings. Since then Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) of course has crossed the Thames and Crossrail is in

construction. I put it to you that those five, and now seven, rail crossings are either built or in construction and we have got stuck on the road thing. It is worth, in the context of this looking at the modal split between having a range of types of crossing. The vast majority of capacity is public transport. Of course I have forgotten the cable car as well. I just wondered if there are any comments on that, because clearly with the right nudges and tolls or whatever, you could have what would be a very healthy modal split by my measure in terms of predominantly public transport but recognising a need for private transport across the Thames. People could simply nod and agree and give more time for the audience, if you like, but if anyone has any comments that would be great.

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): Who would like to come back on that?

Michèle Dix (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London): As you know, within our proposals, within the consultation leaflet that we have put out we have suggested that certainly to help fund river crossings and fund the proposal for the Silvertown link, because there is no specific funding in the TfL business plan, tolling would be an option to help fund it, but also help manage it.

John Biggs (AM): I think we might look at that in the second part of our questioning.

Michèle Dix (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London): Yes.

John Biggs (AM): I think in the first part do you accept, and is part of your foundation that there should be a modal split in river crossings in East London, which is predominantly public transport but recognises a need for some road vehicles, whether they are private or commercial, to cross the Thames?

Michèle Dix (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London): I recognise that and I would also say that is what we have. We have had a tenfold increase in public transport capacity and no increase in road capacity.

John Biggs (AM): OK. It is leading question and I think I have made my ...

John Dickie (Director of Strategy and Policy, London First): I think the point, Chairman, is exactly that, that there has been a very substantial increase in public transport capacity and no increase in surface transport capacity. It is worth reminding ourselves of a couple of things: one is that buses are a very important part of public transport and have the potential to be a very effective and very quick mechanism to support development and regeneration because you can put a bus route on very quickly to connect A to B, compared with the time it takes to, you know, extend the DLR. I think we should be conscious of the public transport importance for road capacity.

It is also worth, I think, being clear here there is absolutely a case for managing demand across bridges. What I think the thing we do not want to do is concentrate all of the road demand in South London into the Blackwall Tunnel, we want multiple crossings for road users, not necessarily so they have to drive way out of their way across London to cross the river. We may

then, perfectly sensibly, want to manage the demand and the cost of using that capacity, so as we are looking at it for the overall benefit of the London transport system.

John Biggs (AM): I guess also then, for the record, because we are going to produce something out of this, the fact is the Blackwall Tunnel does take busses but they are only single-decker hopper busses in the capacity and the height restrictions mean that you cannot get high volumes of bus passengers through the Blackwall Tunnel. Thank you, Chair.

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): Thank you. Richard wanted to come in next.

Richard Tracey (AM): Yes. Obviously in the second section of the seminar we shall be looking at the types of crossing, which it might be, whether it will be a tunnel or across the river on a ferry, or possibly a bridge, but I would like just to take a bit further with you all which groups you see advantages and disadvantages for. John was talking very much about the commercial side of it and I can see some commercial advantages, and particularly on the north of the river there are commercial areas. Of course the sides of the river are very residential and I can see some disadvantages instantly for them of suddenly disrupting the whole road pattern by either a tunnel or a bridge, but most certainly a bridge. Could you answer that?

Michèle Dix (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London): I would say depending on the proposal and how the proposal is configured and managed, then in theory you should have advantage for all user, because you should be able to improve connectivity. If you manage the traffic as such that you are not creating increased congestion or increased air pollution then there should be improved connectivity. There are lot of knock-on problems onto the so-called non-crossing river network that occur because of the crossings. So, as I said before, if Blackwall Tunnel has a problem it is whole of the south-east network that clogs up, which will affect the people on busses further afield, it will affect people trying to cross roads further afield, it will cause delays in the various town centres. If you can manage that to reduce the likelihood of that occurring that should be an advantage, not just for the people who want to use the crossing but for people in that wider area.

German Dector-Vega (London Director, Sustrans): I think we have to be careful between local journeys and wider journeys. I think that we should not disadvantage local residents because of wider journeys. I think we have to be very careful about that. There are plenty of examples where a bypass has been built because there is a few of wider longer journeys and they seriously affect local residents. We have to be very careful about that. I do not know the answers of how many local journeys we have versus longer journeys and the balance on that is, but certainly that should be taken into account in the assessment. If it is predominantly local journeys it will be a very type of crossing, for sure.

Male Speaker: We will have those numbers.

Richard Tracey (AM): I guess we shall be hearing from the audience. I notice there are some representatives from both side of the river.

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): I think we will hear some view very shortly that will, I am sure, give us a feeling on that. Val, you wanted to come in, then Tom.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): Michèle, when you were modelling demand, did you model by each mode? Did you model what demand you expected or thought there would be on cycling, on pedestrians, on public transport? Because when we talk about river crossings there is a kind of implicit assumption we are only talking about traffic, but what modelling did you do for the other modes?

Michèle Dix (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London): There has been different types of modelling done at different levels and there has been an analysis of data at different levels. This has been evolving as we've sought to improve the models and improve the data. We are still collecting data as we speak, in terms of behavioural response data to better inform any further work that we might do. Quite a lot of it is based on observed data and quite a lot of it is based on modelled information that is either modelled within the large strategic model, the Local Transport Strategy (LTS) model, or traffic has been modelled in terms of what is called the East London Highway Assignment Model (ELHAM), which gives a better representation of what is happening on the actual road network. The linkage back to public transport and other modes is dealt with in the LTS model. Also the linkages back to how trips might redistribute, people take the opportunities to have a job elsewhere is done through the LTS model. So, it is not just one model it is just lots of different sets of data that have been used to inform the NTS.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): Using those other models did you, therefore, work up your assumptions about demand for pedestrian and cycling, public transport passengers?

Michèle Dix (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London): There are broad figures. In some instances with, say, demand for pedestrians and cyclists part of that is how much can you promote, how much can you encourage more people to cycle, how much can you encourage to walk, because they might not be doing that at present.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): This is not a hostile question, because I am hugely sympathetic to the demand issue, because we suffer on the Suffolk side from the log jamming where there is a breakdown of some sort and we know that. I am just trying to work out which figures it was that have driven the decision making in principle. From what you are saying, Michèle, it seems to be principally the traffic figures that have driven the decision making, and the other modes of being add-ons, rather than drivers of the decision.

Michèle Dix (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London): I would say if you look at them in terms of the proportion, as a percentage of what is happening crossing the river at the moment in that area, cycling and pedestrians, it is very, very low. If you look at public transport and vehicular road traffic that is much higher. In the models that we have got it is the public transport traffic, people who are using the public transport systems be it on rail or buses, and people in other road vehicles that are within our models. Whereas there is a capacity for public transport trips and whereas we have predicted the transfer to public transport trips from road, within the work that was done for the MTS, we are still left with this sort of additional

traffic on the road network that wants to make journeys by road. Quite a lot of that is light goods vehicles (LGV).

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): In terms of cycling demand, it seems to me that TfL generally are incredibly good at doing things like predicting rail passenger numbers and traffic numbers and a very impressive job was done on the congestion charge introduction, but the cycling numbers seem to be completely beyond TfL's realistic appraisal. Look at the work that has been done on Blackfriars Bridge, etc, etc, there seems to be big mismatches in what is really happening and what the real demand is in terms of cycling and what TfL understand and caters for. I am kind of waiting to hear something from you about what the cycling demand would be or could be on a potential fixed river crossing, for example.

Michèle Dix (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London): I know you asked this question before, because you asked it in relation to the MTS last time about cycling and pedestrian predictions. Because the base historically has been so low and because of the data that historically we collected was not substantial enough to know in the same way as we do know about public transport trips, the origins, the destinations of all this traffic, it requires us to keep on collecting more data, which we are doing. We every year do the household surveys across London to get more information to understand what is happening in households across London about their use on cycles and about better understanding of their use as pedestrians, so we can start to build up that information. That takes time because the samples obviously are small to start off with and then each year, when we do more surveys we can develop those samples to better understand what is happening in terms of cycling in those areas, but more importantly what is the potential for cycling. So a whole load of work was done last year about the cycling potential in the various parts of London. Then there is further work being done to understand that where there is potential, how we can capture that, how we can make that happen, what are the different measures that are required to encourage that cycling.
(overspeaking)

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): I think broadly what we would agree is that the modelling of those sustainable modes is pretty undeveloped really and it is a bit of a Cinderella state and I think we would all benefit from better development of it.

Michèle Dix (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London): We would benefit from better development of it, but as I say, it is in terms of the proportion of trips that are made across the network by those modes which is quite small relative to the others, but we need to capture more data to make our predictions more accurate.

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): Tom wanted to briefly ask about the cable car, which we have just learnt is one of the new pedestrian and cycling routes. That would be interesting. I do want to take it up to the floor and then we will bring Nicky in after that. So, Tom.

Tom Copley (AM): Thank you, Chair. I suppose the cable car is what one might describe as a more unorthodox river crossing. What lessons has TfL learned from the cable car, in particular the very low usage rates?

Michèle Dix (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London): The cable car was promoted as a pedestrian and cycling river crossing package, to enable pedestrians and cyclists to get across the river. It was promoted to help regenerate both side of the river in the Royal Docks area and in the Greenwich Peninsula area to actively encourage more trip making between those areas. It was never promised as an Olympic deliverable, ignoring the Olympics, our first year estimates for usage on the cable car, given that both sides of the cable car are not fully developed at present and there is a whole load of further development to take place, that is completely in line with our forecasts.

Tom Copley (AM): It is currently operating at 10% of capacity.

Michèle Dix (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London): Yes. Given that this is the first year of operation, before all the additional homes and jobs that are forecast for those areas have been put in place. So, in many ways it was a scheme to help promote regeneration in those areas. It is also a scheme that also offers some resilience to other public transport forms, particularly from the Greenwich Peninsula, which has buses going further south and it has the Jubilee line, but if there is an issue with the Jubilee line, it is another way of getting across the river and getting on the DLR to other crossings there. So it increases resilience, but importantly it is a crossing for pedestrians and cyclists.

Tom Copley (AM): What are your forecasts going forward?

Michèle Dix (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London): Our forecast going forward are as the area develops more people will use it, but our forecasts in terms of the first few years were based on those figures, so that is totally consistent with our business plan for it.

Tom Copley (AM): That seems to me quite a vague forecast. In terms of lesson there are things that have been raised by Assembly Members and others, and including the fact that it is not integrated properly with the ticketing system. Is this something ...?

Michèle Dix (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London): It is integrated with the ticketing system in the sense that you can use (overspeaking)

Tom Copley (AM): No, it is not within the Travelcard ticketing system, which surely does present the problem in terms of take-up.

Michèle Dix (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London): I think because we offer the saver ticket, which is you can buy ten tickets for the cost of £1.60 a trip, which is substantially less than the Oyster Card ticket, that encourages frequent movements if people wanted to make those.

Tom Copley (AM): There has been very low take-up of this so far.

Michèle Dix (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London): The take-up is consistent today with forecasts.

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): OK, I will leave it there. Thank you. I want to open this up the floor and then I will come to you afterwards, Nicky, because we only have 15 minutes left on this section.

Nicky Gavron (AM): It is a modelling question.

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): If people could indicate from the audience who would like to speak, and if you say your name, and if you are from an organisation, or which borough you live on, and this is specifically on the need for a new river crossing or not, and the next section will be on the actual specifics, the proposals. I have seen the lady who has her hand up there in the red. Then we will come down, there is a gentleman in the back row here.

Jenny Bates (Friends of the Earth London Campaigner): We were invited to take part in the panel but unfortunately the invitation did not get to us, so I am doing what I can from here. We have very clear views that there is clearly no new need for road river crossings. TfL have not shown that there is. The needs assessment that went up on the website not that long ago basically just says that they want to address a gap between demand and what there is already available. That is to effectively predict and provide, which we cannot do. There is more growth in population, but the more there is in jobs and population growth the more we need to invest in public transport. The more there is a potential increase the more we have to concentrate on the right things. Just because there has been investment in public transport before that does not mean that that is not the right thing to concentrate further investment on. In fact, I say it is.

There is talk about there is always going to be a need for motorcar journeys and other vehicles, yes, but we are not proposing closing down all the roads in London., so of course there is a continued need for that, but it does not mean you have to cater for it by increasing space. That is very clear. Most of the development we are talking about is around both sides of the river, literally facing each other across the river. You do not need road crossings to join up Royal Docks and Greenwich Peninsula.

Transport for London have ignored key evidence, apparently, about how any road crossing would actually add to the problem, rather than solve the ones they say they want to address. Professor Goodwin was mentioned. I have just tweeted is article about induced traffic. It is absolutely known by Transport for London that more road space generates new traffic. It is also known that you increase congestion in the area when you do that. You do not actually resolve it and it is not a resilience-solving issue either.

I am going to suggest you hear briefly in a moment from John Elliott, who is a transport consultant, who basically showed back in the Greater London Council (GLC) days that the last time Blackwall Tunnel doubled in size from two lanes to four lanes traffic more than doubled on that route within a year at peak time.

I also want to draw your attention to the Thames Gateway Bridge Public Inquiry, which the inspector found was likely to cause increased congestion. Those sorts of road crossings do not help, they hinder. The inspector on the Thames Gateway Bridge also found that the

regeneration claims did not stand up, it was not going to regenerate. Fewer people were going to walk, cycle and take public transport if they built the Thames Gateway Bridge - that is despite having a separate walking and cycling route and a separate two lanes for public transport. Yet still 94% of the benefits were going to go to road users in an area where only up to three-quarters did not have a car, so there is key evidence about this. I will pass you to John in a second.

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): No, I have a gentleman in front who has got the microphone. You can have one more sentence, Jenny. You can put a written submission in to us.

Jenny Bates (Friends of the Earth London Campaigner): I will. Air pollution. We have to cut traffic levels by 20% to 30% in order to meet European Union (EU) air pollution limits, according to Professor Frank Kelly of Kings College, not add to them.

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): Great, thank you very much, Jenny. The gentleman here, if you would like to say your name and where you are from please.

Francis Sedgemore: I live in Lewisham Borough and I am involved in the London Cycling Community but speaking in a personal capacity.

TfL claims to be thinking long term, ie 30 years ahead. In that case, given the prospective economic growth in the Thames Gateway, east of Beckton and Thamesmead, are the proposed new river crossings, tunnel and bridge, not too far to the west? Also just a brief second question: has TfL factored in the costs of providing for pedestrians and cyclists in these proposals?

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): OK, thank you very much. The gentleman over here.

Ian Bond: Thank you. I am the Deputy Leader of the London Borough of Redbridge but speaking in a personal capacity as a ward representative, as my ward has both the M11 and the A406 running through it. The issue for me is that some of the traffic modelling done in support of the previous proposals for new river crossings across the Thames demonstrated a potential for increase in through traffic in my ward of up to 20%. We already have some of the worst air quality in London. In fact the air quality management point in my ward regularly tops the table for the highest levels of pollution in London. So, the two points I put before you are firstly any new river crossing does have the potential to influence traffic levels, not just near the river, but across a wide area of both north-east and south-east London, affecting potentially millions of resident. Therefore, I would ask that before any decision is taken there is a need for quite a comprehensive assessment of the impact on traffic levels, because the assessments done in support of the previous proposals were widely seen as inadequate. The second point is of course that if there were the potential to increase through traffic by 20%, in a residential area that already has very poor air quality, that would not be a trivial matter at all.

The final point I would make is I think the impact of the tolls that the Dartford river crossing is actually quite significant at the moment and I would suggest particularly at weekends, nighttimes and early morning, because the Dartford river crossing is tolled and the other river

crossings are free, we actually get a lot more through traffic in north-east and south-east London that should be on the M25 and going across the Dartford Tunnel or the Dartford Bridge but uses the Blackwall or the Woolwich Ferry to avoid those tolls. In fact, I think the one thing that could have the biggest impact in reducing traffic volumes in both north-east and south-east London, were if the promise to lift the tolls at Dartford that was made when those crossings were constructed were kept. Speaking personally, my mother lives in Kent and I use the Blackwall Tunnel in preference to the Dartford crossing even though you know it takes longer, typically to avoid the tolls booths. Of course what we want is through traffic outside London. There is nothing regenerative about through traffic. I think a lot of the traffic crossing the river is passing through or around London, it is not coming through London. Therefore, I think the tolling issue is critical. The Dartford Tunnel at the moment is the least attractive from a financial perspective. Thank you, Chair.

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): Thank you very much indeed, Ian. The gentleman here in the front row.

Peter McBeath (Transport Consultant): I have designed a 300,000 vehicle a day crossing further down the river, and that should take most of the heavy transport clear of London and the M25. It is going to run it on to the M11 outside of London. I think that will have a very big impact on your proposals.

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): OK, we are coming onto the specific proposals in the next section. This is about whether there is really a need and some of the issues.

Peter McBeath (Transport Consultant): A lot of the vehicles are coming in from out of London, coming from the costal ports, or whatever, and using these crossings as a diversion from Dartford, because of the tolling.

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): You have sent us a presentation, so we have details of that in our pack. Lovely, thank you. The gentleman next to you.

Kim Bromley-Derry (Chief Executive Newham Council): There are two things really, one is an accuracy issue in terms of the briefing you have there. Newham is not against the river crossings - actually it is against two fixed-link river crossings, it is for two fixed-link river crossings. Our big issue is about the economic and regeneration value of any crossings. Certainly we have stated work with our colleagues in the Royal Borough of Greenwich, and we have commissioned a piece of work on the regeneration and economic benefits, which we will be submitting as part of the consultation. The issue for us is the missed opportunity for development in both the Greenwich Peninsula and we are working at Barking and Dagenham as well as the Royals, around the future capacity of those areas and the future demand in those areas. If you just think about it in terms of 35,000 houses and also the developments we already have in plan, the issue for us is the potential to completely gridlock the whole of the north of the river and suppress the development opportunity. So, we will be submitting that.

The other thing I was really going to say is around the whole issue around insufficient in the consultation around future demand and both the London Plan and all the development plans

within the local authorities. It does not seem to have been taken fully into account about the major demand increases that are likely in that part of London.

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): OK, lovely, thank you. We have the lady up there in the back row. If there is anyone here who is from the boroughs. We have heard from Newham, but if we have anyone from perhaps the boroughs of Greenwich or Bexley who want to make a point, I am just thinking if they could indicate. We will take the lady up here first.

Clare Neely (London Cycling Campaign): I am interested in what reduction in current use would free up the congestion. Second to that, what percentage of people currently using the Blackwall Tunnel, which seems to be the one that is driving this, are doing journeys that are unnecessary, could be done by another mode, short or whatever?

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): We will come back to this in a minute from our panel. I think that is a very interesting point that Clare has made there. Is there anyone here who is from Greenwich or Bexley? I have got the gentleman there in yellow and the gentleman here in the suit, and there are some other people over here. Yes.

Stephen Nelson (Principal Director SE London Chamber of Commerce): I am the Principal Director of South-East London Chamber of Commerce which represents Greenwich, Bexley, Lewisham and Bromley. We do a quarterly economic survey of our members and we did chuck a question in about river crossings, very straightforward, "Do you think we need more river crossings to the east of Tower Bridge?" Over 90% replied that they agreed with that statement that we do need more river crossings. Could I also ask that we have to remember Dubai Ports is going to be opening fairly soon. I think that will increase the demand on crossings enormously. Also, can I ask that we forget about the Emirates Airline as a river crossing? It really isn't. It is a fairground ride and it is great fun. Can I just say that I would imagine there has been more people on it this year than there will be, because Londoners see it as a little day out? Once you have done it you have done it. It is not a valid river crossing. Thank you.

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): Thank you. The gentleman over there, and that lady from Bexley Council. Yes, OK.

Chris Smith (Greenwich Liberal Democrats): Just to follow up on the point from the gentleman from Redbridge, to compare Western and East London crossings, I think one has to focus on the fact that a lot of West London crossings are for local journeys between parts of London that have been developed for many, many years, whereas in East London we have orbital and through route traffic for areas that are not developed. We have just heard good evidence with development of the Emirates Cable Car that the most recent crossing has been done before any development has taken place. I would caution on the fact that unless you are going to build a specifically local crossing that any of the ones currently proposed I am sure will be largely used by orbital and through-route traffic.

The other thing with regard to Greenwich, other than one of our councillors saying that it would be very useful for cab companies, a lot of the development being planned at the moment in

Greenwich is residential and not industrial. I will leave aside my bigger debate on that. That again raises concerns for us in Greenwich. Thanks.

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): OK, thank you. There is a lady from Bexley Council in the back row there and then what we will do is I will then bring Nicky in and then we will just hear from the panel and then we will move onto the next section and you will be able, some of you who have not been able to come in on this, come in on that. Do you have the mic there please?

Jane Richardson (Deputy Director for Strategic Planning and Regeneration, Bexley Council): We were not particularly going to contribute in the first session, but as you invited us to, perhaps I will just outline the position. In fact, some of the issues that we have already heard from colleagues from Redbridge and issues raised by Mr Tracey about the residential nature of some of the areas certainly have a resonance with us. We support in principle the Mayor's current proposition, his current package. We also echo some of the comments that have been made, however, about evidence base and we very much look forward to receiving further modelling information going forward. We will be assuming that you will be looking back at the comments made by the inspector when the Thames Gateway Bridge was previously considered. Because we would just like to remind all colleagues in the room, and I will just read now - less I conflate the facts - that in fact the topography of Bexley has not changed since the proposition for the Thames Gateway Bridge. So, there are still roads in the borough that were going to become key routes where we have gradients as steep as 12% in places, where the double carriageway is only 5.1 m in places, where the roads run through ancient woodland, designated of metropolitan importance for nature conservation. I could go on. We are very interested and we are very glad to be here today and we welcome all of this cautiously and I am sure we will contribute in the next hour.

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): Lovely, thank you very much indeed for that.

Nicky, you had a question you wanted to ask on the modelling, which seems to come up a lot.

Nicky Gavron (AM): Yes, it is about modelling and sustainability. Has there been modelling, or is there going to be modelling on the measuring, in a way, looking at the increase in journeys? It touches a bit on John Biggs' question. The increase in journeys and the increase in CO₂ as a result of vehicles travelling from the east, because we are pretty well served in the west of the east Thames Gateway, it is the east of the east Thames Gateway that is the issue, I think. Looking at the number of vehicles that actually have to go around three sides of a square, rather than just going straight across, in conjunction with that you would have to look at differential tolling for through journeys and more local ones, has anything been done on any of that?

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): Michèle, if you want to pick that up and if there are any points that have come up from the audience the rest of the panel want to pick up as well, let us know. Michèle.

Michèle Dix (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London): Thank you. I will pick a few points and with Nicky's point if I have written them down clearly enough and I can read my own writing.

In terms of evidence, particularly the sort of stuff that Jenny referred to, that John did, roads generate traffic. I worked for John at that time at the GLC. Very much like aware of all the issues that existed then and the work that was done. We were very aware of those issues now, in term of are you building a road that would attract people that otherwise were making a journey by some other means, back into making a journey by car? Obviously you do not want to do that. So if you do provide some new capacity, who are you providing it for, how are you going to use it, how are you going to make sure you can manage it so you do not get the adverse affects that Jenny and Nicky are referring to?

The gentleman from Lewisham was saying, "Are we building these bridges too far to the west?" We will go onto it as to why we are proposing what we are proposing where within the area, but it recognising we need to look at what is going on downstream with Dartford and potentially lower Thames cutting and look at the needs within the area. So no, I do not think we are.

In terms of a number of statements that were made about Blackwall Tunnel, and it carrying longer distance through traffic, and it being attractive to people that might otherwise use Dartford, in the Assessment of Need Paper we demonstrate that much of the traffic that is using Blackwall Tunnel actually has a destination or origin within London, quite a lot of it immediately around the area, so people may well cross the Kent border but they are going to somewhere in the locality, so it is not like the longer distance through traffic that should be on the M25. It is traffic that has a journey purpose within the area.

In terms of Nicky's point we are looking at those but that is why we want to understand what different management is required.

Nicky Gavron (AM): The extra miles; the CO₂; the differential tolling.

Michèle Dix (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London): Some of it is extra mileage but some of it is less mileage. If you have someone who is going along, across and back again, you can simply go across and that has reduced journeys, mileage and CO₂.

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): John and German, did you want to respond to any of the points raised particularly?

German Dector-Vega (London Director, Sustrans): I just want to say clearly I do not believe in gridlock. I am still waiting for it to happen here and in Jakarta, in Mexico City, in New York. We should not be driving conversations based on that congestion is going to bring the city to a standstill. Some of the cities that have seen the most development in the last few years are places that are considered congested. Yes, there are problems that come with congestion; I will not disagree on that; there are pollution problems, etc, but we should not think that congestion is going to stop development; there is no evidence to prove that. There is a perception of congestion that has been changing throughout the years so people always

think, you can read newspapers that say, “Oh, the city is congested” and that is why the Underground was built in the first place. That should not be a decision-maker at all. If we are clear that the river crossing is going to generate growth, address some of the local issues and is the right type of river crossing in the right place, fine, but we should not build things based on this myth that congestion is going to produce the end of the world. It is like the Mayan predictions.

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): OK. John, did you have anything you wanted to add?

John Dickie (Director of Strategy and Policy, London First): A couple of points if I may, Chair. One thing that has come from these discussions is the clear sense that while we need both robust modelling and a clear business case to be assembled for any further crossings, there is a strong sense from the business community this side of the river and from the representatives of the public either side of the river, that there is a very strong case for better connectivity and more crossings in East London.

It must be the case that 100% rail crossings and 0% other crossings is not the right mix. I am strongly in favour of multiple crossings in East London coupled with robust management rules to ensure that those are used wisely and we do not simply add capacity to add gridlock. It cannot be right for people to be driving a long way in one direction to cross a river and drive a long way in the other direction when there simply ought to be a point-to-point crossing with suitable management in place.

Finally I remind everybody about the subsidy carbonisation targets that the government is committed to, and at least some Members of the Assembly surely think government commitments can be relied on, which is that we are going to see a 44% reduction in road transport emissions by 2030. That will require 60% of journeys to be taken on electric vehicles with the remainder being ultra-low carbon but that will have a very substantial impact both on carbon emissions obviously, but also on air quality. Clearly that in and of itself is not enough. If we are going to see an increase in rail crossings there needs to be a very robust management of how those road crossings will interact with local road networks where the land either side of the river. Clearly this needs to be done well but it does need to be done.

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): Thank you very much indeed. So thank you, John and German, for your contributions to this first half. We are now going to swap our guests around and I will hand over to Val who is going to Chair the second half. Val.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): Thank you very much, Caroline. I hope John and German will stay with us in the room even if we have pushed you off the top table now. Can I invite Richard Bourn from the Campaign for Better Transport to join us and David Quarmby who is Chairman of the RAC Foundation, and Michèle, I am glad to say, is staying with us.

Richard has had a very long history from the Campaign for Better Transport. He has worked with them for very many years and I think you are a specialist in traffic reduction so you are going to talk to us about the impact of new roads on traffic congestion. David Quarmby is a very old friend. I first met him in the 1990s when Len and I were involved in the Southeast

London Transport Strategy Group. David has a wealth of experience having held a number of senior appointments in the transport industry and the RAC Foundation has just published a research report looking at car and rail trends in Britain so I think that should be quite insightful. David, I think we first met when you were chairman of the DLR so you are also a public transport man.

David Quarmby (Chairman, RAC Foundation): We did. I am, yes.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): We are going to kick off with your thoughts and then we will come around the Members and the audience again but the focus of the second session is to look at the specifics of the proposals from Transport for London for the Silvertown crossing and for the Gallions Reach Ferry. Also the consultation allows for alternatives to be proposed so we would like to hear if people have other ideas. I think, Michèle, you are going to kick off first this time if that is OK.

Michèle Dix (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London): OK, thank you. Further to what we said before about need and the fact that a package of measures had been previously identified in different administrations, different time periods, and many of those measures were taken forward – public transport links and pedestrian and cycle links – if we look at those the area of concern that we had was specifically to reduce the barrier effect and address some key problems as set out in our leaflet about the lack of resilience at Blackwall.

We are looking specifically for this consultation at the road based crossings rather than the rail and other crossings that we have put in place already. Blackwall Tunnel lacks resilience, it causes major problems and there are extensive congestion problems there. Importantly it is inadequate in terms of its height for allowing HGVs through it. Another crossing that would provide adequate provision for HGVs to go through it but also provide resilience; it would be a two-lane tunnel. We have not said how the two lanes would be used but it would be a two-lane tunnel effectively enabling the doubling of the capacity depending on how it was used is proposed in the form of a Silvertown crossing.

We had looked at bridges; we had looked at different forms of tunnels and concluded that the previous proposal for a bridge crossing in this area would not be appropriate because it would take away a lot of the development land either side of the crossing we were seeking to regenerate and promote, and that a tunnel solution would be a better solution in that regard. Certainly Greenwich supports the tunnel solution and would oppose a bridge solution. It opens up more opportunities for developing north side in the Newham area. We propose a tunnel that will provide connections to the local road network. In the south it would spur off the Blackwall tunnel approach and in the north it would connect in with Tidal Basin Road and allow access to the east and the local roads in the west.

Another problem that we highlighted that needed to be addressed in removing the barrier to movement in this area was that there is crossing further east – the Woolwich ferry crossing – but that needs a major overhaul with further monies put into it at some stage soon for complete rebuild. The question is: is rebuilding Woolwich the right thing to do or is there an opportunity to position it in a better position to improve connectivity in that area? With Woolwich there is

the cross-rail station going to Woolwich; there is the DLR extension to Woolwich; the Woolwich Tunnel; there are connections across the river in the Woolwich area.

The area where there is poor connectivity is in the Gallions Reach area. To address the immediate problems of what to do about Woolwich we seek to replace the Woolwich Ferry at Gallions. It would be, in our opinion, in a better position as the existing ferry can cause tailbacks from queuing to get on the ferry, which has knock-on effects on the town centre roads to and from the ferry. If we positioned a new ferry at Gallions (a) that would meet many of the needs of people who want to cross at Woolwich better in terms of its alignments; (b) it would be in a location that would cause less problems on the local road network; (c) it would allow us to build something relatively quickly and have it up and running before we closed the Woolwich Ferry; (d) it would allow us to provide a crossing at a reasonable cost in the short-term. If over time there is a need to provide a fixed link at a further stage that would be prevented. So any design for a ferry at Woolwich would seek to enable connections that you could have a local bridge or tunnel crossing, etc, there at a later stage.

The Silvertown Tunnel was promoted as part of a package with the cable car which would provide for pedestrians and cyclists however Silvertown Tunnel would not be a suitable environment for pedestrians and cyclists. The ferry at Gallions Reach would provide for pedestrians and cyclists to go across as well as other vehicles. We are determined that that package of measures to address the Woolwich and Blackwall problems is something that would help provide connectivity over the next ten years.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): Thank you very much. Who would like to come in next? Richard, would you like to come in next?

Richard Bourn (Transport and Planning Campaigner, Campaign for Better Transport):

Yes, thank you. I just wanted to make five points. First, the proposals for additional traffic capacity are being made against a background of traffic reduction in London; 10% reduction and a 9% shift from the private car to walking, cycling and public transport. This reflects, TfL says, increased public transport provision, partly the congestion charge and partly reductions and not increases in road capacity, and has resulted in London having a much better reputation for transport than it did in the 1980s and 1990s. It would be perverse to sacrifice that reputation now by starting to build new roads again and creating capacity for traffic growth in a large part of the city.

Secondly, the public inquiry into the Thames Gateway Bridge looked at exactly the sorts of proposals such as Gallions Reach, and it was concluded in the 2007 report that it would not improve safety for road users; that air quality would be worse with the bridge than without; that it would reduce travel by cycling and walking; that public transport would be less well used and that on balance the scheme would be likely to cause increased congestion. He also looked in detail at regeneration arguments for the bridge and found that the potential for the scheme to give rise to negative economic effects has not been assessed by the promoter, who in this case was Transport for London. The evidence is that it would likely be associated with an increase in deprivation, and finally he concluded that the key to this is the evidence for economic regeneration benefits claimed for the scheme are not strong enough or reliable enough to

outweigh substantially the dis-benefits of the scheme. It was a thoroughly discredited transport project and several of these would likewise be discredited.

Thirdly, while Silvertown link and other proposed road crossings of the river are not needed on transport grounds, there are big problems with Transport for London's argument that they are needed for regeneration. The evidence is that if transport and regeneration are the objectives there are much better ways of doing it than providing big flagship projects. It would be much better to repair existing roads and bridges, to make better use of public transport and also to make the roads fit for walking and cycling.

The argument is weak that West London has lots of river crossings and is wealthy, and East London has few river crossings and is poor and therefore East London needs more river crossings. There is not a causal link. There are lots of historical and geographical reasons why East London is poorer. Building new road crossings and creating a lot of traffic is not the way to make East London richer. TfL's consultation on the question of the economic benefits of these river crossings is frankly absurd. I ask you to look at this document called "more river crossings will help our city grow". It is possible to cite evidence in contradiction of every single one of the points that TfL makes. There are problems about the cost of the crossings and tolling. Will the toll revenue support the borrowing costs of the tunnel? Will TfL find a private sector partner willing to take the risk of funding it? How much will the tunnel really cost? The price has already doubled from £300 million in 2009 when TfL submitted a paper about river crossings to the board of TfL, and has doubled since then to £600 million now. What will it cost in another four years? Where will the tolling end? The Dartford crossing is already tolled. The Silvertown link and the Blackwall Tunnel are to be tolled we are told. There will have to be a toll to use the Rotherhithe Tunnel and then why not Tower Bridge, London Bridge, Westminster Bridge and all the bridges beyond? There will be no end to tolling, which I do not object to but why don't they say so?

TfL is obliged to explore all the options. We have heard already that their consideration of options has been weak and the consultation process has serious shortcomings already though it is not far advanced and is still only at an informal stage. TfL is also required to explore non-transport options including tolling the existing Blackwall Tunnel, congestion charging or road-user charging in a wider area. One of the options should be to toll the Blackwall Tunnel now to see if that releases the capacity and makes discussions of other road river crossings redundant.

Finally, we need to ask what sort of development do we want in East London? Do we want more roads? Do we want acres of car parks and traffic congestion and pollution? TfL is now proposing to build more roads. The Royal Docks have already got developments with parking for thousands of cars. Other such developments are planned and the traffic congestion and pollution will follow. This is not the way to make the area attractive to live or visit or do business in. Or do we want a development pattern in East London which is based on a mixture of land uses, on local services and amenities, good public transport and conditions for walking and cycling and a high quality urban environment not dominated by traffic? There are lots of other cities that know the answer to that question. Thank you.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): All right. David.

David Quarmby (Chairman, RAC Foundation): Thank you very much, Chair, and I am pleased to have the chance to contribute to this debate. I am Chairman of the RAC Foundation but as you observed I am a pretty multi-mogul sort of chap and I like to look at the issues objectively and on their merits.

I think it is very important that we look at the case for these projects in terms of the very specific geography of the river and regeneration areas; the problems and challenges of them. It is more helpful to do that than to trade generalities about congestion, pedestrians, falling traffic levels in London, which are true and I support those, but it is not relevant to the particularities of this case. I refer you to the map which shows not just the river and proposed crossings but the road network north and south, and indicates the areas of regeneration on both sides of the river; both the Barking, Dagenham section area to the north, and the Thamesmead, Belvedere area section to the south, and I will be referring to those.

I have an intimate knowledge and understanding around the issues around there having lived in Blackheath for over 40 years, less than a mile from the Blackwall Tunnel southern approach, and not just as a local resident. I was Chairman of DLR and 14 years ago I introduced Greenwich Council to the vision for extending the DLR from City Airport to Woolwich, which hooray, hooray, opened a few years ago and is very successful. I am also a Board member of the Woolwich Regeneration Agency and in that capacity I understand very closely the vital need for access for jobs to those living in Thamesmead, and access for supplies and markets for the businesses along the Thames from Woolwich to Thamesmead, and particularly in the area of the Belvedere industrial estates. I campaigned with local Member of Parliament (MP) Nick Raynsford and leader of Greenwich Council Chris Roberts to have Woolwich Station reinstated in the cross rail plans and I am delighted that they were so agreed. Finally, in this very room when I was a Board member of TfL ten years ago I was part of the discussion, consideration and vote for the Thames Gateway Bridge which has not happened, certainly in the way planned.

There are two crossings under consideration: (1) the Silvertown Tunnel, and (2) a crossing, bridge or ferry at Gallions Reach. I consider them as serving two very different purposes: (1) strategic for congestion relief, and (2) supporting and encouraging local regeneration by means of a local or sub-regional cross-river link. Those distinctions are very important. The Blackwall Tunnel, like it or not, is part of London's strategic road network. It connects a wide swathe of places across southeast London and beyond to a similar huge swathe of locations in East London, Northeast London and inner East London. The kinds of journeys that can never be made by public transport otherwise why would people be willing to queue for 20 minutes every morning, and as they did this morning at 7.30am, if they had a good public transport alternative? For the journeys they are making, there is not a good public transport alternative. This traffic includes vans, goods vehicles and cars used for business. Let us not forget that one in six of all traffic on London's main roads is vans and goods vehicles and 70% of personal travel in the middle and outer suburbs of London is by car.

The Blackwall Tunnel approach on the south side is the second most congested piece of road in the United Kingdom. According to INRIX, the traffic data monitor, congestion on the Blackwall

Tunnel approach lasts on average for seven hours every day - actually this was in 2010 - with an average speed of nine miles an hour. So for seven hours every day the southern approach is congested. The intensity of demand is not surprising with only Rotherhithe Tunnel and Blackwall between Tower Bridge and the M25. I will not make too much comparison with West London but just imagine how crowded and congested it would be in West London if there were only two river crossings between Vauxhall Bridge and the M25 at Staines instead of the 15 bridges that there are now.

Silvertown Tunnel: two lanes in each direction is, in my view, a good solution but I think with a better ability needed to disburse to the strategy road network on the north than is currently provided in the plans. The fundamental point is it is absolutely critical to lock in any benefits of new capacity so it does not just fill up and we go on having five mile queues back down the A2. We must manage demand deliberately as part of this plan. The local roads will benefit too from better managed traffic and less congestion. The only practical way is a toll which should be set at a level that manages the traffic demand to achieve this objective. It can be done by free flow methods. The technology for doing this is no longer an issue; indeed the Highways Agency is currently procuring a system for free flow tolling for the Dartford crossings. The toll will also raise revenue for the construction of the Silvertown Tunnel which is the only way it can, in practice, be made to happen. The application of tolling revenue to the construction would mitigate the traditional concerns about additional road charges. Personally I would go further than TfL propose and apply the toll when construction work is about to start. The toll can be varied by time of day and direction to manage the traffic demand most effectively.

The other crossing at Gallions Reach, I believe it should be designed as a local crossing benefiting residents and businesses on both sides of the river. Both sides, but particularly Thamesmead, are areas of poor accessibility and considerable social and economic deprivation. The regeneration policy objectives require accessibility to be dramatically improved and this is the concern we have heard from the Chief Executive of Newham.

Whilst much development and regeneration has taken place in Greenwich and on the Woolwich reach there has been no significant development or regeneration in the Thamesmead area in the ten years since a crossing was last considered. The argument for a road link is as strong now as then in spite of the successful opening of the DLR from City Airport in Stratford to Woolwich, and as we know Woolwich and Abbey Wood are to be on cross rail in about five years time. Rail links are excellent for concentrated travel, especially to central London and Canary Wharf but cannot handle the disbursed origins and disbursed destinations typical of outer London. A road vehicle crossing for cars, vans, HGVs, buses, motorbikes and cycles is needed for these disbursed journeys for access to work and for businesses to thrive. A crossing here would connect the north circular A13 on the north side with the through dual carriageway along Thamesmead to the M25. It is a dual carriageway with lots of roundabouts and an awkward pinch point at Thames Road, Bexley, where it goes under the railway bridge. I think that is a problem, not an advantage, as there is no strategic route facing south.

I believe it is essential that a differential toll is inserted to discriminate against the longer distance through traffic while providing the essential movement conditions for local traffic and

from the north circular traffic could and should be diverted along the A13 either to the M25 or the Silvertown Tunnel and not cross at Gallions Reach.

A bridge or a modern high-capacity ferry: although it could be provided more quickly, 2017, compared with a bridge in 2021, I am not sure a ferry would improve accessibility sufficiently to make enough of a difference for regeneration and access to jobs and markets for the people and businesses that are located there. If however a bridge solution is adopted then the Woolwich Ferry can be gracefully retired. A ferry solution at Gallions Reach would require the Woolwich Ferry to be retained and the toll revenues could be used to fund its major upgrade. Thank you.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): Thank you very much indeed. I have a couple of Members who want to come in first and then we will come to the audience. Richard, I had you down.

Richard Tracey (AM): Thanks, Val. We have heard quite a convincing case about connectivity and one about the commercial benefits of the links. I wonder whether we have got to a point when we can eliminate a bridge from the consideration. There seems to be great support for a tunnel somewhere around the area of Silvertown and indeed for the ferry at Gallions Reach. I did detect from some of the contributions from the audience a definite hostility to a bridge. Did you detect that?

David Quarmby (Chairman, RAC Foundation): Yes, I do understand what you are saying and there is no doubt that a bridge would give better connectivity between north and south and I know the two boroughs either side strongly support that and I understand why they do. I am concerned about the long distance through traffic that a bridge would attract and the difficulties of providing for the dispersal of that traffic south of its landing point in Thamesmead. Apart from wending your way through the east side of Woolwich town centre to get onto the south circular there is no obvious southbound route and the only strategic route is the eastbound one that takes you to the south side of the Dartford Tunnel. I think it could be managed, and tolls I think are the obvious way to do it. I am unsure whether the reduced connectivity that a ferry would give you, good though it is, would make sufficient difference, but it is probably worth trying as the first step as you can do that earliest.

Richard Tracey (AM): I detect greater support for the use of a tunnel in either location.

David Quarmby (Chairman, RAC Foundation): At Silvertown, yes.

Richard Tracey (AM): Certainly at Silvertown but there is also mention in the notes we have received about a possible tunnel at Gallions Reach as an alternative to a ferry.

Michèle Dix (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London): As you may recall there was in informal consultation last year in February 2012 where the ferry option at Gallions Reach and the fixed crossing at Silvertown were proposed. What came back from that consultation was a lot of people saying, “Why aren’t you considering a fixed link at Gallions?” and expressing some of the beliefs about the benefits of the Gallions Reach Ferry. As a result of

that we have included as an alternative a fixed crossing at Gallions, either as something that could be developed later or instead of. We are asking people as we speak what their views are on those options. We can have a ferry there and just leave a ferry. Have a ferry there and some ten or so years later build a new bridge there if the demand requires it and the case demonstrates that it is still necessary after you have done Silvertown. Or proposal and start working on a fixed link there, be it a tunnel or a bridge. Those are the options people are being asked to comment on.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): Does Richard want to comment on any of this?

Richard Bourn (Transport and Planning Campaigner, Campaign for Better Transport): I thought it was accepted that the Silvertown link would be a tunnel; I did not think a bridge was under consideration.

Richard Tracey (AM): You are correct about that. It is Gallions Reach dealing with that.

Richard Bourn (Transport and Planning Campaigner, Campaign for Better Transport): The first matter that is being considered for Gallions Reach is the ferry obviously. I cannot see what difference there might be between the bridge that could occur sometime in the future at Gallions Reach and the bridge that was condemned by the inspectors following the public inquiry in the 2000s.

Michèle Dix (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London): I would just clarify that the bridge proposed as part of Thames Gate bridge crossing was a three-lane bridge. It had grade separated junctions. There was an issue about the impact of that bridge and the traffic either side of the crossing and if one was to consider a fixed link pier one would very carefully consider what the bridge was and how it was connected into the local road network to manage any increase in demand.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): I am trying to save some time for the audience.

Richard Tracey (AM): There was mention made of these tail backs leading to the Blackwall Tunnel from the south side and it seems to me there could be some serious tail backs for Silvertown Tunnel as well.

David Quarmby (Chairman, RAC Foundation): I think you would get tail backs unless you set out from the beginning to manage the demand through tolling. The whole point is you put the extra capacity in and toll it so you get the benefit of that capacity and people do not have to queue any longer and they go through at a reasonable speed, but because you have the extra capacity you have the benefit of getting through all the people who previously were queuing but put the tolling in to stop the queuing happening all over again.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): Thanks, David. John?

John Biggs (AM): My longest delay on the Blackwall Tunnel northbound is two hours once but it is normally ten, 15, 20 minutes getting through. I was struck by Richard Bourn's point

about capacity and I have no hesitation about advocating the demolition of Westminster and Albert Bridges in return for building a Silvertown crossing. That is a ridiculous proposal but within that is a serious point which is the people of East London deserve an opportunity to seize the job opportunities and economic growth in East London. I put it to you that there is a case that if we are to have a prosperous East London it will be one secured through connectivity including some road traffic.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): Richard, you have had the gauntlet thrown at you.

David Quarmby (Chairman, RAC Foundation): Can I respond to that? Reports in the past have concluded that providing better roads and bridges into an area where access is limited is as likely to suck economic activity out of that area as it is to encourage economic activity to occur within that area. You want to be careful about the impacts of providing transport infrastructure that is being discussed at the moment.

John Biggs (AM): I have a question about getting the methodology right and ensuring it does not create massive environmental and congestion problems as a consequence of its construction, but also securing health benefits for people. I hope Michèle Dix can assure us that the proposal will go into that in some detail. My anxiety is that the traditional Department for Transport (DfT) road evaluation methodology does not go into things it cannot measure and often does not address concerns like public health and environment which are really important. There is an anxiety in Newham that if we build Silvertown without building a reasonable capacity crossing at Gallions we will simply funnel even more problems into the area unless we design it very carefully. The proposal needs to address that anxiety as well.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): Can I bring Murad in and then the audience and leave that comment there, John.

Murad Qureshi (AM): Thank you, Val. Can I declare an interest as Chair of the London Waterways Commission? One reason we have so many bridges in West London is it was easier to build bridges down there because it was less wide and we did not have working docks in the way we had in East London. My concern is the Thames itself. TfL does not manage it as such; it is managed by the Environment Agency and Ports of London Authority. I wonder how much liaison you have done in the proposal of the Gallions Reach Ferry with those two agencies.

Michèle Dix (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London): Yes, as we did for the cable car and Silvertown Tunnel there has been a lot of liaison with them, particularly about the ferry as that will have impacts on shipping and the actual riverbed itself.

Murad Qureshi (AM): Just a small point --

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): Can we broaden it out, Murad, now?

Murad Qureshi (AM): Very small. I am told a very ancient way of funding infrastructure, and the people who will gain the most are the landowners on either side. Is there investigation to

look into how landowners on each side of the river will gain from that and what contribution they would make to such proposed infrastructure?

Michèle Dix (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London): In terms of funding, the same way we have looked at funding mechanisms, say, for the northern line extension where there is a community infrastructure levy and potentially business rates. None of these things are off the table.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): John is anxious for a reply.

John Biggs (AM): The kernel of it is not to do the bog-standard DfT evaluation.

Michèle Dix (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London): Yes, do it properly.

John Biggs (AM): I think Mr Quarmby is nodding in agreement with that anxiety.

David Quarmby (Chairman, RAC Foundation): Yes, I would.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): OK, let us get the rest of the audience in because I think we are going to have to overrun to give people a good chance to come in. Can I first see the people who have not come in in the first section who would like to come in now? I will start at the back and move forwards. The gentleman there in the brown jumper. Let us take them in groups of three.

Speaker 1: Hi, I am a Greenwich resident and live in the footprint of the proposed Gallions Reach crossing. I do not know why we are spending so much time concentrating on the Silvertown proposal. We should be focusing on the Gallions Reach fixed proposal to divert traffic to the Gallions Reach side. I also think if we have fixed crossing at Gallions Reach as opposed to the ferry, we would be able to get the DLR through there as well. Is that something TfL have or would consider?

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): So you are suggesting DLR on the bridge. I think a gentleman earlier thought Silvertown was too far west. Can we have another comment? The gentleman in the navy blue with the glasses.

Tom Bogdanowicz (London Cycling Campaign): I did not hear a response to the questions posed earlier by Clare Neely and I wondered if TfL or someone else had considered what reduction in current use at the Blackwall Tunnel through tolling would eliminate the congestion and also what percentage of Blackwall Tunnel journeys are not strictly necessary. I would have thought some of this had been considered in the work done already because in the Transport for London report it suggested if the Silvertown Tunnel did have a toll and the Blackwall Tunnel did not, the tail backs on the Blackwall Tunnel would increase substantially and that is why tolling was required across both tunnels. What increase in induced traffic capacity is going to happen as a result of the Silvertown Tunnel?

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): There are a lot of questions in that one. One more. Jo Negrini.

Jo Negrini (Director of Regeneration and Planning, Newham, London Borough of Newham): In Newham we have over 800 hectares of developable land, it connects with the Lee Valley corridor and the future of the Olympic Park, and its easterly boundary and how that links with Barking and Dagenham and effectively a growth area that runs from the river all the way up the M11 corridor, you are looking at a significant part of London. It is accepted traffic modelling is essential as part of the whole package of connections but in most major cities infrastructure is used as a driver for regeneration, job creation and growth, and in East London that is our absolute priority. In terms of what we think about the different elements of the package we are supportive of Silvertown Tunnel. We have issues about where it comes up at Canning Town; we have a £1 billion investment being developed for a new town centre and 10,000 new homes so where it comes onto Silvertown Way West is very important for us.

In terms of the much-maligned cable car we are very supportive of it. Yes, 10% is hitting its targets in terms of what it is doing but it is part of our ambition where people will have a great day out in East London where people will start in Greenwich and come across in the cable car and come up the River Lee. In terms of the fixed link bridge we are supportive of looking at this at Gallions in place of the ferry. Thames Gateway Bridge has been mentioned in terms of the inspector's report. There were also comments made by an inspector about the quality of the traffic modelling and the quality of the economic case. If we are looking at the fixed link bridge as a driver for economic regeneration in that whole area that work we are doing with Greenwich around looking at the economic benefits of it is essential so we have robust traffic modelling but also an economic case that sits alongside that.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): I am just going to take the lady next to you as well.

Kim Smith (Principal Transport Planner, Greenwich Council): Thank you, Chair. To echo what Jo and David said very eloquently we have a problem with resilience in Southeast London. When the Blackwall Tunnel collapses or anything goes wrong at Dartford our borough gridlocks. To allow businesses and developers to build out in the way we plan to build out we have to provide additional crossing capacity for road traffic. Public transport has, to a great extent, already been addressed. I am not saying there is not a need to carry on addressing public transport but road transport is lagging far behind.

Greenwich is very clear that we would like the case for a fixed link at Gallions to be looked at. We believe that if a ferry is put in £150 million, £170 million, £200 million, whatever the ultimate cost of the ferry is, that is money off the budget for a potential fixed link there. We will try to look at the benefits of a ferry versus the benefits that a bridge would give and have an informed view when we pass our consultation remarks back. Presently a lot of this is conjecture; we do not have the modelling or the economic case. I am not going to go into facts and figures but what we want to do is have an evidence-based response that shows the need for what we believe is the case, which is a fixed link at Gallions.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): Thank you. So three supporters of a fixed link bridge at Gallions and reference to the DLR extension and of course some criticism of the lack of demand management on the Blackwall. Michèle, do you want to kick off?

Michèle Dix (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London): A fixed link was suggested in the last consultation. If people want to comment on the need for a fixed link, we have not sought to design it in detail but are mindful of concerns expressed about the Thames Gateway Bridge – shape, form, connections, etc. Options for the Thames Gateway Bridge (TGB) were to run public transport along it, join up the East London transit schemes north and south to provide that link, as TGB was always a multi-modal proposal. If there were support for a fixed link over and above a ferry then we would look at that.

In terms of Blackwall Tunnel, what percentage reduction would be required to improve its operation, I do not have that figure in my head but if we provide the increased capacity without any tolling or managing demand we would lead to an increase in traffic. Managing that increase is vital; another lesson learnt from the Thames Gateway Bridge Inquiry.

In terms of traffic modelling and the economic case absolutely we have to get this right. There are lessons we learnt from the Thames Gateway Inquiry. A lot of criticism made about the traffic modelling was addressed in further work and certainly the models we have now are pretty good. We have been using those across London and are much more confident in their ability to forecast the changes that are being predicted.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): Thank you. Do David or Richard want to comment?

Richard Bourn (Transport and Planning Campaigner, Campaign for Better Transport): Can I take up the point that was made by Tom Bogdanowicz?

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): Yes.

Richard Bourn (Transport and Planning Campaigner, Campaign for Better Transport): He was asking what sort of reduction in traffic levels in the Blackwall Tunnel we might expect if tolling were introduced. It echoes a point that David Quarmby was making that tolling should be introduced at the same time that construction starts. If you are going to introduce tolling on the Blackwall Tunnel before the Silvertown Tunnel is complete and in use, why not do it now and find out the consequences, and then we will find out how much traffic can be deterred from using the Blackwall Tunnel and how much of it is necessary traffic and how much could travel by another means or route.

David Quarmby (Chairman, RAC Foundation): Yes, there is an economic argument for introducing tolling now. If you do the sums you would find it would be beneficial. We in the RAC support road-user charging generally but we know it is politically toxic. One way tolling can be made acceptable is if it is very obvious to people what you are raising the toll for and if you bring it in at the time of starting the construction the evidence is there for everybody to see. If you introduced a toll and did not produce the new capacity you would be suppressing demand even further and I am not sure that is in the economic interests of East London.

In some cases spending on transport infrastructure to support economic regeneration can suck the life out of it. You may find one or two case studies in Europe where that has happened but with the specifics of this situation that does not apply at all. Here we have two relatively deprived areas, both relatively inaccessible, and development is not taking place there and people are not finding it easy to access jobs, as the transport connectivity is very poor. I know what it is like for the people who live there because in my role on the Woolwich Regeneration Agency we have the evidence to show what is not happening in that area because of its poor accessibility and I have seen with my own eyes the current state and the opportunities for the developments in, if I might call it, the Bexley part of Thamesmead, particularly in the Belvedere industrial estate where there is a lot of potential and a huge amount of vacant land there but there is not the impetus to go there because it feels a very inaccessible area both for business to access markets and suppliers and to draw their labour. This should be at the heart of what this strategy is about. It is helping those needy parts of East London to develop and, as John Biggs says, have their share of the economic cake that is London's.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): OK. The gentleman at the back there.

Richard Bourn (Transport and Planning Campaigner, Campaign for Better Transport): Could I make one very quick point: I would like to remind the panel that the inspector did say in the Thames Gateway Bridge public inquiry that it was likely that it would be associated with an increase in deprivation.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): That is not my remembrance of it. I think we all need to go and revisit the old inspector's report. It was quite a detailed examination. The gentleman here.

Ray Hall (People and Places International): We have worked out how to enable the green energy private sector funded bridge at Gallions Reach as part of a bigger strategy to regenerate the east side of London. My question relates to a parallel conversation that is happening now concerning airport capacity for London and the United Kingdom (UK), one option of which is an estuary airport. If an estuary airport is decided upon what effect would that decision have on the regeneration potential of the east side and from there the conversation we are having today about river crossings?

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): The gentleman here with the beard in the middle.

Dick Allard (Chair, Westcombe Society): A slightly different point in terms of the process, I understand if this application goes ahead it will be treated as a national infrastructure project and, therefore, be subject to very extensive pre-consultation. Could I ask, therefore, that part of that, and several people have referred to the economic analysis and the environmental analysis, that it be made possible for that to be subject to robust criticism by a wide range of parties and furthermore for people to be able to say, "Well, it is a bit short here, can you not go back and do more?" We need confidence in the analysis and for a wide range of people to be able to contribute to that analysis if it is to be robust.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): OK, thank you, could you just say who you are please?

Dick Allard (Chair, Westcombe Society): Sorry, Dick Allard from Westcombe Society and I think I live even closer to the exit to the Blackwall Tunnel than David Quarmby.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): There is a lady in the back in blue.

Linda Bailey (Councillor, London Borough of Bexley): I am Councillor Linda Bailey; I am a Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Regeneration for the London Borough of Bexley and I am just putting down a marker now; Bexley is opposed totally to a fixed link and the Gallions Road across the link there. We do support the Mayor's proposals at the moment in principle. We know that the ferry would take twice as -- sorry, the solution to increase connectivity there with the associated regeneration benefits whole avoiding unacceptable local impacts. The fixed link at Gallions is out of scale with what is needed and it would take twice as long to deliver as a ferry and four times more expensive and it would put ten times more traffic into the local area, which has been previously proven. It will go into many streets in Bexley. I know the gentleman has been talking about the Thamesmead there and the Belvedere industrial area. Yes, we do have a lot of areas, but this traffic from there, if it is a fixed link, will go further than that and will be totally unacceptable to the residents of Bexley.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): OK, I think I am going to take another couple of; the lady with the white T-shirt. I missed you earlier, sorry.

Speaker 2: I am a Greenwich resident and I have one half-day's holiday, I had to take it to come to this meeting because it is so important to me. I have three things to say: (1) to check how to get here, I looked at the website and it does not mention how to cycle here; (2) I have been commuting into London for just over quarter of a century now, it is funny that you do not notice this because I feel like we are increasing in number from Greenwich into London. I currently work in Farringdon but I used to work in Canary Wharf and would have loved a quick way to get there. How you can consider the cable car a quick way of travelling, the foot tunnel, which you are not allowed to cycle through either at Woolwich or at Greenwich, and the ferry, they are not fast ways to get from the Dome to Canary Wharf. We should be cycling through there; there should be a cyclists' tunnel. That is what I want to say on behalf of myself; I am not speaking for the cyclists because a lot of other cyclists think there should be no tunnel full-stop. I have one more thing to say. They should not be providing free access for locals, so if the tunnel goes ahead everyone should pay the toll. Also, the bridge would be too windy for bikes; I prefer to go under a tunnel.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): Thank you. The gentleman here.

Howard Potter (Vice-Chairman, Institution of Civil Engineers' Expert Transport Panel): Yes, my name is Howard Potter; I am Vice-Chairman of the Institution of Civil Engineers' Transport Expert Panel. For eight years I was the chief officer responsible for transport in the Docklands area when the Docklands Corporation was going. A couple of points really. It is my belief, and I think we have heard some evidence already, that the area we are talking about, and particularly around Blackwall, is already in a super or a hyper-critical state of

congestion, potential widespread chaotic transport conditions. I think East Londoners, those existing now and those to come, deserve rather better than that; these are both the quality and choice of transport that is enjoyed by mostly the rest of London, and particularly on the western side.

The research that we did in the days of Docklands was careful market research about what kinds of transport investment would best (a) retain existing jobs and investment and (b) attract additional inward investment and we have heard points from Newham on that particular point. I think too that we ought to avoid the temptation to over-concentrate any additional capacity in terms of fixed links, particularly around the Blackwall area, so I personally strongly recommend another fixed link in the Gallions area. But it does raise the question that, by the very nature of the road network, that would become part of a north/south circular route, as it always was. The south circular is an absolute utter strategic disgrace; it is in no way a strategic route, so there are plenty of examples of seeing a strategic route and not operate as a strategic route, but I could go on.

On the reference of growth and traffic trends, we have seen a reduction in traffic, particularly in the Central London, and I think we know most of the reasons for that are related to recession and indeed investment in public transport. But the growth of the light goods vehicles has gone on relentlessly and is likely to continue.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): Goods vehicles have not really been mentioned very much. There was a gentleman in the day-glow jacket right at the back. Yes.

Speaker 3: Hello. Unfortunately I arrived here late, you may have already answered this question earlier, but if you add a link, have you considered the transfer of people, pedestrians or disabled, through the tunnel? My second point is, if you are going to have a cycling or disabled, what would be the gradient of any tunnel, because the gradient is critical. If you have it too steep you will make it very hard work. That is my question.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): OK, is there anybody else who has not been in yet? The gentleman there with the glasses, yes.

John Elliott: It is John Elliott; I have been involved with Thames crossings since Greater London Council (GLC) days. Just on the information point of view, the actual figures against model, be very careful, because again at the Thames Gateway Bridge they thoroughly underestimated - the last inquiry - the real generated traffic from building new roads; it is massive in London and Michèle [Dix] has referred to that. You will not get traffic relief by building more capacity, certainly in inner London and probably not even in outer London. So any promises of relief will not occur.

The second thing, putting all the eggs into the same basket at the Blackwall Tunnel crossing with the new Silvertown link will mean that place will go critical and all the way up and down you will get other breakdowns of flow when each bit of the road is pushed too hard.

The third point is a small reduction in traffic generally gives a big reduction in congestion, so you only need a small amount of that. Suppressing demand can improve economics; it certainly did in Oxford Street when the whole of the traffic was eliminated, so you can do it.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): I think there was one more person who had not been in before, the gentleman there, and then I am going to come back to the panel for closing comments and responses to some of those points. I am really sorry if there is anybody else now because it is 4.10pm and I think Michèle has to go.

Ian Blower: Thank you very much. My name is Ian Blower; I am from Greenwich, I am a member of Greenwich Cyclists; but I am also a pedestrian; I use public transport; and until this year I was a car driver and car owner who used the Blackwall Tunnel, I would not say frequently, but certainly on a regular basis during peak hours. What I have heard this afternoon is two key words: one is “resilience” and certainly when there is a major problem it seems to be largely caused by a high truck trying to get through a low tunnel and I would have thought better methods of avoiding that could be made in traffic management. Secondly, the regenerative impact of a new river crossing; I have looked in vain for a good study, or any study whatsoever, of the regenerative impact of the second Blackwall Tunnel; I have not found any. Could I ask anyone on the panel, is there one?

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): OK. For anybody who has not managed to come in, there is a form for people to fill in and of course you can respond directly to the TfL consultation. I am going to ask our panel to come back on those points and perhaps you could just start, Michèle, by confirming if this project is going to be a national infrastructure project and dealt with by the Government for planning?

Michèle Dix (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London): OK, well there are two projects we are talking about, the link at Gallions or the ferry at Gallions and Silvertown, and currently Silvertown, because it is part of that network of Blackpool, will be considered under a Development Control Order, which does require sort of like greater pre-consultation but also has a sort of streamlined process in terms of decision-making.

In terms of the fixed link and the opposition to a fixed link at Bexley and the concerns that were described, fully aware of those and that is not the proposal that would be considered if, say, one considered that further over and above the ferry proposal that one has already.

In terms of the tunnel for cyclists, we certainly would not want to put cyclists down the Silvertown Tunnel, which is why I say we provided a crossing for cyclists and pedestrians. The gradient of it, I do not know off-hand, for the gentleman who asked about the gradient.

In terms of growth, I support what Howard [Potter] says about the growth, there has been sort of suppression to a certain extent in terms of some of the traffic growth across London, but it has not really affected heavy goods vehicles (HGV)/light goods vehicles (LGV) growth in particular and it has come with increased congestion, so traffic levels have gone down; congestion has gone up, so it is not like they have gone down and congestion has gone down.

In terms of the link to the Estuary Airport debate, if there is to be a new airport in the Estuary the main concern is to ensure that there is vastly improved public transport links; you are not talking about connection into High Speed 1 (HS1) or connection into Crossrail; you are talking about brand new public transport links that would be required to support that, and that would have a bearing on the overall Thames Gateway area.

In terms of John [Elliott], about roads generate traffic, yes, aware of all those arguments, I think the case of Oxford Street though, yes, you can take traffic out of a shopping street, but when Blackpool is a strategic road you need to consider what the impacts of that would be.

In terms of, why can we not do something more simple to stop HGVs hitting the side of Blackwall or are there methods that you could put in place to stop it? There are new methods that were put in place, they have been in place for over a year, we still get 1,000 incidents a year where for some reason or other they just do not take any notice of all these things stopping them.

But other than that, please respond to the consultation; it finishes on 1 February and we welcome all your views.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): Thank you very much, Michèle. David, do you want to come in?

David Quarmby (Chairman, RAC Foundation): I would just like to make a brief comment to conclude. To the gentleman who lives in Greenwich and has given up his car recently, I do not think TfL are proposing, and certainly I would not be proposing – and I made it clear in my remarks – that the Silvertown crossing has anything to do with regeneration in that area. It is a strategic route and the point of strategic routes is to provide the ability to concentrate traffic that is of a strategic nature away from other residential areas and, suitably tolled, that is what this would do.

The regeneration issue is around the other crossing and it relates to, certainly on the south side, the Thamesmead area, the Belvedere area, and the ambition to bring to that area the regeneration that we have seen so successfully in so many other parts of London by making it more accessible for people, jobs and businesses.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): OK. Richard, I think you have the last word.

Richard Bourn (Traffic and Planning Campaigner, Campaign for Better Transport): I am very surprised by what David has just said that the Silvertown link, he would not pretend that the Silvertown link has anything to do with regeneration, but that --

David Quarmby (Chairman, RAC Foundation): Directly.

Richard Bourn (Traffic and Planning Campaigner, Campaign for Better Transport): -- is TfL's entire justification for the link almost, so they are at odds. But just three other very quick comments. First of all, I have been concerned as the discussion has gone on about the

traffic impact of the tunnel traffic on areas at either end of the tunnel and particularly it strikes me on Silvertown itself and on the road network leading towards Canning Town and so on in East London. I think that will be severe. Secondly, I do not think we have heard a convincing reason why there should not be a toll introduced on the Blackwall Tunnel without further ado; it should be done. TfL has not addressed that. Thirdly, and also another matter that Transport for London have not addressed, is that it put a paper on its consultation website this morning called an options paper. It appeared so recently and was, even though it was said to have been put on the website, so difficult to find that I have not seen it, I have not been able to base my contribution to this discussion on any consideration of TfL's paper on options. I think it was part of what we were intending to be discussing this afternoon. So this is a severe shortcoming in the consultation process. I think I would sort of ask the Committee to sort of look at how well TfL complies with consultation requirements and with the requirements that things -- but no, it is not that, it is a much more substantial -- there it is.

Male Speaker: But we do have this. This is what we have been asked to consult on.

Richard Bourn (Traffic and Planning Campaigner, Campaign for Better Transport): No, no, it is not that, the options paper is a much more substantial 90 or 100 pages. Michèle will know about it.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): We have picked up the problem of TfL's appalling website with them separately in another issues, but we can (overspeaking)

Richard Bourn (Traffic and Planning Campaigner, Campaign for Better Transport): It is not just how good or bad the website it, it is the late --

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): We can probably make sure there is a link on the Assembly page so that people can find it..

Richard Bourn (Traffic and Planning Campaigner, Campaign for Better Transport): Thank you. I think my point is made, so thanks.

Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair): All right, thank you. Caroline?

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair): Thank you, Val. I just wanted to say it has been a really fascinating and interesting discussion, so many points of view, I was trying to make notes to summarise it and I think it is almost impossible. We have had so many different views from different parts of London and the wider area, hearing about points earlier about must consider places like Redbridge and Selwyn and not just the immediate boroughs. Lots of concerns about transparency and the modelling and the data that is going to be used and the evidence behind this and making sure that is in the public domain, and concerns about whether this really will regenerate parts of London and so on, or whether it will just increase congestion and so on.

But I would like to thank all of the audience for coming along and for your participation today; you do have an opportunity in the form in your pack to feed in there, but also contribute to the consultation and also send us your responses.

I would also like to thank our panellists, and Michèle [Dix] who has been on for both sessions the whole afternoon, thank you, Michèle, very much appreciate that. Our guests earlier, German Dector-Vega and John [Dickie], and obviously Richard Bourn and David Quarmby, for your contributions this afternoon.

We will be writing this up and that will be available before 1 February and we will make sure that is clearly available on our website and mailed out to people who have come today. So thank you very much indeed and I will conclude our meeting.