

Danger of roadworks put in by place by TfL and Riverlinx for the Silvertown Road Tunnel

Image of Caroline Russell AM

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Dear Sadiq,

Danger of roadworks put in by place by TfL and Riverlinx for the Silvertown Road Tunnel

CC: TfL and Riverlinx

The works on the Silvertown Road Tunnel are now at an advanced stage and Riverlinx and Transport for London (TfL) are now welcoming media to the site to show their progress in digging the tunnel. There have now been several years of roadworks altering the routes taken by people walking and cycling, particularly at the Silvertown side in the Royal Docks where Dock Road was closed in late 2021.

As you know I have campaigned against this tunnel from the start, but have also been raising concerns along with other Assembly Members about the dangers from both the construction and the operation of the tunnel for people walking and cycling.

From the earliest stages of the roadworks there have been problems with the information given to people who walk and cycle in the area. At present the disrupted [National Cycle Route 13 has no diversion signage](#), and the steps that go down to the Lower Lea Crossing from the Silvertown Way are closed with a barrier but have no signage on a diversion for pedestrians.

My staff and I repeatedly meet people who are confused by the layout, and see people give up because diversions are not signed adequately so they just start walking in the road. There needs to be a full review of all signage for diversions, maps should be provided for diversions so they are clear, and all closed infrastructure should have the correct signage.

I am concerned that the current situation at these roadworks is not in line with your Vision Zero policy, and your other guidance. I do not understand how TfL has let such a dangerous situation be put in place by its contractor.

Before any roadworks were even put in place, TfL did [a full pedestrian \(PERS\) and cycling \(CLOS\) audit to assess the dangers present in the existing road layouts](#). You also have your own guidance on roadworks, the [TfL Temporary Traffic Management Handbook](#). I have seen TfL and its contractors successfully implement the lessons from your audits and handbook previously, and would like an explanation about why these lessons are not being implemented by Riverlinx.

At the time of the Cycling Level of Service (CLOS) assessment made for the Silvertown Road Tunnel proposals by TfL, the now closed Dock Road was described as the [“main area of cycling activity” with an estimated 60-100 people cycling per hour](#). In the context of the increased lorry traffic for construction, it was recommended that uncontrolled cycle crossings should be given signal protection for those crossing, this has only happened in the latest layout of roadworks.

In the current layout traffic joining the Lower Lea Crossing is making a sharp right turn and then reaching a signal controlled crossing. This crossing has no visible painted stop line on the road, as it has been worn away by heavy traffic and mud from the Silvertown Road Tunnel work site. Staff from my office have now seen vehicles go through red lights at this crossing for several days. Despite raising this with staff at the Silvertown Road Tunnel site, no action has been taken, which is very concerning.

I also understand that a ramp that was put in place with asphalt on the Lower Lea Crossing when the cycleway was diverted has not been properly removed. This has added to existing problems with this cycleway and footway having a poorly maintained surface, encroaching vegetation and damaged drainage. Given that TfL will likely maintain the Lower Lea Crossing in future, I do not understand why it is being further neglected by Riverlinx on TfL's behalf.

Can you organise an urgent check on all basic elements of the roadworks put in place by Riverlinx, and ensure any basic safety features are immediately corrected, and also ensure that they are making their own regular checks, and that they respond to issues when they are raised with them?

Finally, I have spoken with local campaigners in Newham Cyclists about the new layouts for walking and cycling that Riverlinx are delivering. I can see that there are issues in the layout being constructed – for example there is no tactile delineation or height difference between cycleway and footway in some areas, and islands where people may be forced to wait when crossing motor traffic are smaller than some types of bike.

I understand that despite press releases saying that local stakeholders would be engaged with, [local campaigners had to make two freedom of information requests to get details of the layout already under construction](#). I do not have the time before the pre-election period starts to consider these layouts in detail, but I am surprised that you have not proactively published these designs, and engaged with Londoners on them.

I look forward to a detailed reply on these issues, and I hope that you will treat these concerns on safety as a priority to resolve.

Yours sincerely,

Caroline Russell

Green Party Member of the London Assembly

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