

Committee/Meeting: Cabinet	Date: 1st December 2010	Classification: Unrestricted	Report No:
Report of: Corporate Director Communities Localities and Culture Originating officer(s) David Farrell, Head of Environmental Health, Environmental Protection		Title: Thames Tideway Tunnel Consultation Response Wards Affected: St Katherine's & Wapping, Shadwell, Limehouse, Millwall	

Lead Member	To be appointed
Community Plan Theme	A Great Place to Live
Strategic Priority	Improving the environment and tackling climate change

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report has been brought before Members to consider the implications of the proposed Thames Tideway Tunnel. The current public consultation exercise seeks comments on the proposals which include major tunnelling beneath the Borough and also construction sites which are likely to impact on residents.
- 1.2 The Thames Tideway Tunnel is a strategic London-wide project to deal with the overflow of sewage into the Thames and it directly affects 14 Boroughs. The Council needs to confirm support for the solution to the problem and influence the details of the proposals to ensure that they are effective, have no unnecessary impact on Tower Hamlets and that best practice is employed in the construction and use of the tunnel.

2. **DECISIONS REQUIRED**

Cabinet is recommended to:-

- 2.1 Approve the draft response to the Thames Tideway Tunnel consultation attached at Appendix 1 and instruct officers to submit the response.

3. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 3.1 A decision is required to ensure the officers technical response to the consultation is endorsed by Cabinet.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Members, if so minded, could determine not to respond to the public consultation. However, officers would not recommend this course of action as the promoters of this strategic London-wide project may infer that the Council has no interest in influencing the choice of route and construction arrangements.

5. BACKGROUND

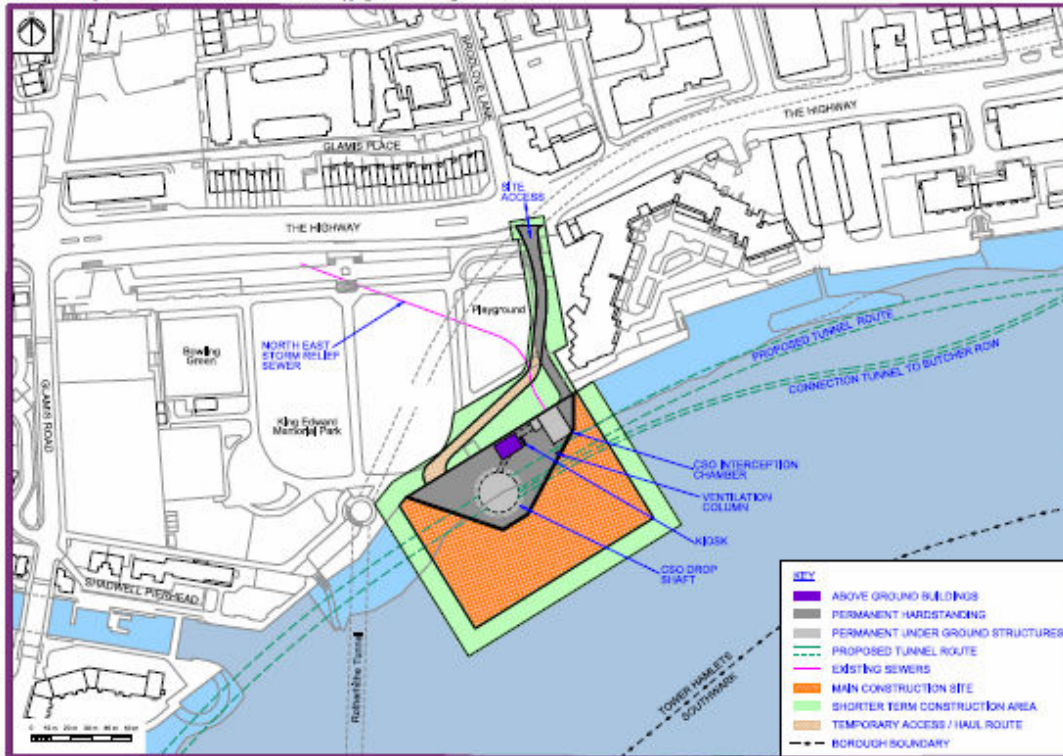
- 5.1 The Urban Waste Water Directive requires the Government and by implication, Thames Water, to stem the annual flow of 39 million cubic metres of dilute sewage from 54 combined sewer overflows into the river by 2020.
- 5.2 London has a complex drainage system which was designed and installed in the Victorian era. Part of the legacy is a series of major sewers which serve the whole of the city today. They collect foul water from homes and businesses, as well as surface water from roofs and roads. The sewers are known as combined sewers because they collect both forms of waste.
- 5.3 Under normal dry weather circumstances the sewers discharge into ten major sewers which pump effluent to the treatment works east of London. However when there is heavy rain, the additional rain water that enters the system often overwhelms the capacity of the sewers which run down towards the river on both the north and south banks. The only escape is for the extra volume of liquid to bypass the collection sewers through overflows and out into the Thames. These are known as Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO's).
- 5.4 It is of direct concern to the Council that 1.4 million cubic metres discharge each year from the North East Storm Relief Sewer and the Holloway Storm Relief Sewer CSO's at points in the river wall at King Edward Memorial Park and Narrow Street.
- 5.5 The Thames Tideway Strategic Study (2005) identified four potential solutions:
1. Adoption of source control and sustainable urban drainage;
 2. Separation of foul and surface drainage and local storage;
 3. Screening, storage or treatment at the discharge point to river; and
 4. In-river treatment.

It is clear from the 2005 reports that the most appropriate solution sits within the option of storing and treating the sewage as capacity allows. The report

indicates that a large diameter storage and transfer tunnel running from Hammersmith and connecting with the Beckton Treatment Works would permit the maximum proportion of combined sewer overflows to be intercepted.

6. BODY OF REPORT

- 6.1 Thames Water have launched a public consultation exercise for the proposed 7.2 metre diameter, 22 kilometre long Thames Tideway Tunnel. This consultation closes on 20th December 2010.
- 6.2 The consultation invites the public and interested parties to respond to the proposals for the preferred route and the work sites needed to build the scheme by 2020. Thames Water sent a letter and leaflet to 160,000 residents living within a 250 metre radius of proposed worksites and have provided helpful background information together with details of proposals on the consultation website: www.thamestunnelconsultation.co.uk/.
- 6.3 The Council will need to respond to the consultation as Thames Water indicate that the preferred scheme has two major construction sites located in the Borough. The tunnel will be more than 50 metres below the surface of the Thames and the proposed route will take it inland under Limehouse Basin and then under the Limehouse Cut as it heads to the Abbey Mills Sewage Pumping Station in Stratford.
- 6.4 *North East Storm Relief Interception*
 - 6.4.1 The preferred scheme includes a construction site which will be set up on the foreshore of the river along much of the length of King Edward Memorial Park, in order to intercept the North East Storm Relief Sewer. The site will be occupied for three and a half years. The works will include the construction of an 8 metre wide access way from The Highway to the south east corner of the park, following the line of an existing track. A temporary 8 metre wide access will also be used along most of the southern length of the park to allow contractors to access the foreshore site.

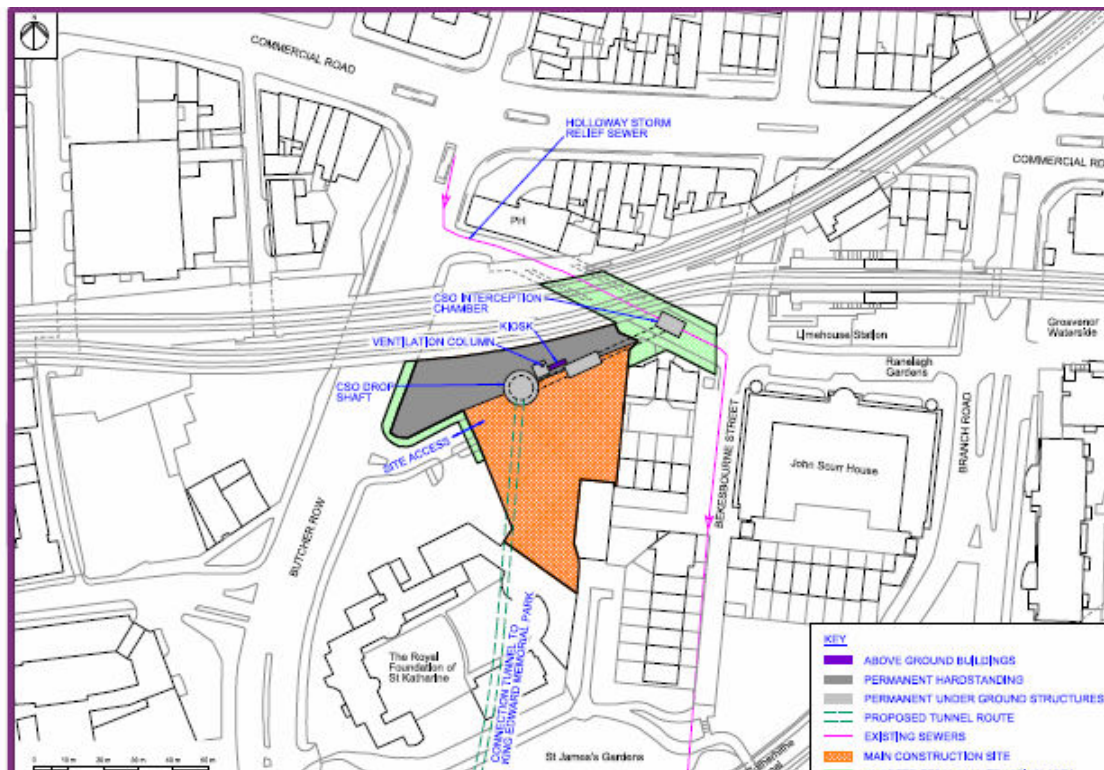


Proposed site at King Edward Memorial Park showing sewer diversion construction

6.4.2 Construction of a 20 metre diameter shaft will take place on the foreshore site. The shaft will drop directly onto the main river tunnel and will provide intermediate access to it. Tunnel spoil and materials for the main shaft will enter or exit from Abbey Mills in Stratford and may not directly impact Tower Hamlets.

6.5 Holloway Storm Relief Interception

6.5.1 Thames Water's preferred scheme site for the interception of the Holloway Storm Relief Sewer is situated in the vacant site to the north of the Royal Foundation of St Katharine in Butcher Row, E14. The site will be occupied for two years whilst a 2.2 metre diameter connection for the sewer situated in Ratcliffe Lane, is driven 650 metres to the shaft constructed in the foreshore to the south of King Edward Memorial Park. It is recognised that sections across Ratcliffe Lane will be partially disrupted during the construction for 6 to 9 months but the road is expected to remain operational for the period.



6.6 Site selection, alternative routes and negotiations to date

6.6.1 It is recognised that the preferred route and the selection of preferred sites have been identified using the Projects rigorous Site Selection Methodology. The selection process was the subject of two rounds of consultation with affected London Boroughs and pan-London stakeholders. Thames Water has taken this as approval for using the method for selecting preferred sites. The Council accepts the appropriateness of this multidisciplinary, iterative approach which takes account of community, planning, environmental and engineering constraints.

6.6.2 It should be noted that at this stage of the public consultation process Thames Water confirms that they have not yet made any final decisions. They have advised that where possible they may amend their proposals in the light of public consultation responses.

6.6.3 The Project has considered two other routes for the tunnel and many more sites for launching tunnel boring machines and constructing interceptors for the relief sewers (CSO sites). The consultation website lists other sites considered in respect of the two non-preferred routes at http://consense.opendebate.co.uk/files/thamestunnel/3-Other_Shortlisted_Sites.pdf. Specific reference is made to the Limehouse and Westferry Road areas and six locations in the Borough. Three were identified in the initial short listing process as potential main tunnelling sites requiring an area approximately the size of three football pitches for a construction period up to six years. It remains a real concern that King Edward Memorial Park, Sir John McDougal Gardens and Shadwell Basin continue on the shortlist albeit outside the preferred route and construction proposals. The Borough is very

deficient in open space and this will become worse as density levels rise. Open space in the Borough is under pressure from a range of pan London construction projects and any loss of open space for a number of years will be keenly felt by residents.

- 6.6.4 It is encouraging that Thames Water may have listened to concerns raised by officers during the long listing and short listing process. So far this appears to have achieved the following;
- King Edward Memorial Park, Shadwell Basin and Sir John McDougal Gardens are not being included as a main tunnelling site options in the preferred route scheme;
 - Recognition for concerns about the shortage of open space in Tower Hamlets;
 - Maximising the use of the river foreshore for construction sites;
 - Maximising engineering options and reducing tunnel drives;
 - Avoiding public leisure facilities in King Edward Memorial Park;
 - Not disrupting the Cycle Superhighway at St James's Gardens; and
 - The proposed provision of additional open space on the foreshore of King Edward Memorial Park after construction.
- 6.6.5 However, it is important to have a robust, publically expressed consultation response which anchors the current proposal and asks for additional safeguards for the protection of Tower Hamlets residents.
- 6.6.6 Officers recommend that the Council's response to the consultation is considered and given approval by Members. Whilst informal negotiation with Thames Water has led to more acceptable proposals at this stage, it is likely that the project will come under pressure from other stakeholders, which may risk some of the negotiation gains made.
- 6.6.7 For instance, the main tunnelling site to receive the machines constructing the drives beneath the Limehouse Cut and from Tideway Walk is proposed to be located at Kings Stairs in the London Borough of Southwark, opposite Wapping.
- 6.6.8 The Project may be pressured to reconsider the use of King Edward Memorial Park for this purpose. This could entail using approximately 70% of the park area for six years in a locality which is already particularly deficient in accessible open space. The hugely increased construction activity could involve digging a 30 metre diameter shaft, including the removal of shaft spoil by lorry.
- 6.6.9 Similarly, the Environment Agency and the Port of London Authority may challenge the use of the foreshore, preferring King Edward Memorial Park to be the construction site for the proposed intermediate shaft.
- 6.6.10 There is an expectation that some residents will be concerned about potential damage to property arising from the tunnelling beneath their property. They may also raise concerns regarding disruption, disturbance and loss of amenity. Residents will want to be satisfied that the Council negotiates a

sufficient range of environmental safeguards to cover this and many other elements of the construction work.

6.7 *The Consultation Response*

6.7.1 The Consultation Questionnaire is divided into three parts covering;

- Part 1: Need, Solution and Tunnel Route;
- Part 2: Specific Sites – King Edward Memorial Park & Butcher Row;
- Part 3: The public consultation exercise.

6.7.2 The response to the consultation questionnaire is attached at Appendix 1 to this report. In summary, the response:

- Recognises the public health and other requirements for dealing with the sewage overflow into the Thames.
- Accepts that the proposed solution to the problem is a storage tunnel as developed by Thames Water.
- Confirms the Council's preference for the Abbey Mill route for the tunnel.
- Indicates that the Council recognises the Abbey Mill route has the least impact, is the best engineering and most cost effective option.
- Indicates that this route has less impact on King Edward Memorial Park and no impact on Shadwell Basin or Sir John McDougal Gardens.
- Makes reference to the need for impact mitigation, clarification regarding compensation, a ground settlement policy, high standard of odour control and appropriate planning policy.
- Makes specific mention of the Council's view on the proposals for the CSO sites at King Edward Memorial Park and Butchers Row.
- Gives conditional support to the proposals for foreshore and brownfield site construction.
- Recognises that both site options preferred by Thames Water are the least problematic for the Council.
- Finally provides constructive feedback on the public consultation exercise.

6.7.3 The response seeks to mirror the balanced approach the Council took when successfully challenging detailed elements of implementation of the Crossrail Project whilst maintaining support for the Principle and broad approach. Officers will continue to press the promoters of the Thames Tideway Tunnel project for parallel Environmental Minimum Requirements, assurances and undertakings.

6.7.4 It should be noted that the response appears repetitive in places. This arises from the structure of the Thames Water online questionnaire and the requirement that responses are made through the form on the consultation website. It is recognised that Thames Water will use a computer database tool to analyse all responses and generate their report. Consequently the Council's response matches the information fields laid out in the questionnaire.

6.8 *Next Steps*

- 6.8.1 Thames Water will use the information from the current public consultation round to consider any necessary revisions to the scheme. They indicate that they may revise the proposals to address concerns arising from the consultation. A revised design for the scheme will then be the subject of a second round of public consultation in 2011 prior to a Planning Application being submitted.
- 6.8.2 The application will not be submitted to individual Councils seeking their specific consent. It will be submitted to the Central Government body which will replace the Planning Infrastructure Commission. It is understood that this will be the proposed Major Infrastructure Planning Unit in the Planning Inspectorate. Whilst Councils will be consulted at this stage of the process, they will not be the decision makers. Consequently it is critical that the Council makes its views known at each stage of the process as the scheme progresses towards the start of construction in 2013.

7. **COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

- 7.1 No specific financial implications arise from this report which seeks Cabinet approval to the draft response to the Thames Water Tideway Tunnel consultation attached at Appendix 1.

8. **CONCURRENT REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (LEGAL SERVICES)**

- 8.1. The report identifies that the Thames Tideway Tunnel (“TTT”) project may involve major construction sites in Tower Hamlets and may affect the borough’s limited open spaces. The Council is empowered under section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 to do anything which it considers likely to promote the social, economic or environmental well being of Tower Hamlets, provided the action is not otherwise prohibited by statute. The power may be exercised in relation to, or for the benefit of: (a) the whole or any part of Tower Hamlets; or (b) all or any persons resident in Tower Hamlets. In exercising the power, regard must be had to the Community Plan. The links to the Council’s Community Plan objectives are referred to in the report. It is open to the Council to make a submission on the TTT consultation, having regard to the potential impacts on the borough, the Community Plan objectives and its statutory functions.

9. **ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS**

- 9.1 Protection of vital open space and recreation facilities, particularly in the area of the borough subject to Thames Water’s proposals is an essential element of the Health and Well Being Strategy for the whole Borough. Tower Hamlets

is deficient in accessible open space and the consultation response confirms to the promoters of the project that the Council promotes active life styles and the use of open space to reduce incidences of childhood obesity.

10. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

10.1 The draft consultation questionnaire response confirms the Council's commitment to protecting and enhancing habitats, particularly in the area of the borough subject to Thames Water's proposals.

11. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no immediate risk management implications arising from the response to the public consultation. The Council will work with the Promoters of the project to ensure that they manage risks arising from construction.

12. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no specific implications arising.

13. EFFICIENCY STATEMENT

13.1 There are no specific implications arising.

14. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Thames Tideway Tunnel Consultation Questionnaire Draft Response

**Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)
List of "Background Papers" used in the preparation of this report**

Brief description of "background papers"	Name and telephone number of holder and address where open to inspection.
Thames Tideway Tunnel Consultation Website	David Farrell - 020 7364 6896 http://www.thamestunnelconsultation.co.uk/