Non-Executive Report of the: **Council** 27ᵗʰ July 2022	 **TOWER HAMLETS**
Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	**Classification:** Unrestricted
Petitions to Council	

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
Wards affected	All wards

SUMMARY

1. This report sets out details of the valid petitions submitted for presentation at the Council meeting on Wednesday 27ᵗʰ July 2022. The text of the petition received for presentation to this meeting is set out in the attached report.

2. The Council's Constitution provides for up to four petitions to be heard at each ordinary Council meeting. These are taken in order of receipt, except that petitions for debate (those in excess of 2,000 signatures) will take precedence. Should more than four petitions be received, all remaining petitions will be listed to be formally noted by Council.

3. For Petitions listed as to be heard:

   a. Petitioners may address the meeting for no more than 3 minutes.
   b. Members may then question the petitioners for a further 4 minutes.
   c. Finally, the speaker will invite the Mayor or (at the Mayor's discretion) the relevant Lead Member or Committee Chair to respond to the petition for up to 2 minutes. The petition will then be referred to the relevant Corporate Director for attention who will provide a written response within 28 days of the date of the meeting.

4. Members, other than a Cabinet Member or Committee Chair responding at the end of the item, should confine their contributions to questions and not make statements or attempt to debate.

5. For Petitions listed as to be noted, petitioners may not address the meeting. The Speaker will state where they will go for a full response.

6. Responses to all petitions will be sent to the lead petitioner and displayed on the Council's website.

PETITIONS FOR DEBATE

There are no petitions for debate.

PETITIONS TO BE HEARD

5.1 Petition regarding Keep Antill Road vehicle filter submitted by Amanda Franco and others

We the undersigned, Residents of Antill Road E3 and surrounding streets, welcome the imposition of the traffic gate which has been a great success by

(i) dramatically reducing the vehicle traffic rat running down our street
(ii) reducing pollution resulting in much cleaner air
(iii) making walking, scooting and cycling safer and more welcoming
(iv) making it is safer for children to cross the road

We urge the Mayor and his administration to respect our wishes and keep the traffic gate in place.

5.2 Petition regarding Silvertown Tunnel submitted by Dr Jackie Applebee submitted by and others

We are residents of Tower Hamlets with grave concerns about climate change and as such are against the related issue of the construction of the Silvertown Tunnel. You may remember that a group of Tower Hamlets GPs wrote to you during the recent local election campaign to ask you to join with them to oppose the Silvertown Tunnel. They set out their major concerns regarding the negative impacts that the tunnel would have on the health of the people living nearby due to the increase in air pollution. They also pointed out that the building process will have a huge carbon footprint and as new roads ultimately always lead to an increase in traffic, the tunnel will increase carbon emissions when the world is on course for catastrophic climate change unless radical action is taken to reduce such emissions.

The GPs didn't hear from you but we are hoping that you will respond to this letter which is signed by a much wider group of Tower Hamlets residents.

One of the arguments used to support the building of the tunnel is that something must be done to relieve congestion at the Blackwall Tunnel however all the evidence shows that any reduction in traffic volume will only be temporary.

https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/news/building-new-roads-just-creates-more-traffic-heres-the-proof/

Another argument used is that as cars transition to electricity emissions will go

down. However the fuel used to generate this electricity is, at present, overwhelmingly provided by fossil fuels meaning that CO2 emissions are not reduced but just shifted elsewhere. Global warming doesn't distinguish from where the emissions come, the planet just warms up! There is a large carbon footprint to manufacturing cars and air pollution is not only caused by exhaust emissions but by car use in general, for example by the production of fine particles of break dust. We need less cars on the road not more!

Far better would be to invest the money spent on the Silvertown Tunnel into much cheaper and more reliable public transport, active forms of travel and safer streets. This would have multiple benefits to the health of the residents of Tower Hamlets. Improved confidence to walk and cycle if the streets were safer with respect to motor vehicles would not only reduce pollution but improve health. Affordable public transport (at present the tube in particular is prohibitively expensive for some Tower Hamlets residents) would encourage people to leave their cars at home. A walk to the bus stop is further than a walk to a parked car so also helping fitness.

It has been argued that a charge to use the Silvertown Tunnel would limit traffic and that the tolls collected could be used to mitigate the damaging effects of the tunnel. However two separate sets of legal advice obtained by Greenwich Council and by the Stop the Silvertown Tunnel Coalition state clearly that future Mayors have no more obligation to charge to use Blackwall and Silvertown than they do any other London road.

Greenwich council have recently joined Newham, Hackney and Lewisham in opposing the construction of the tunnel.

https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/mar/17/greenwich-fourth-london-council-oppose-silvertown-tunnel

We urge you to put the health of Tower Hamlets residents first, to be bold and to begin to take meaningful action against climate change and to join these four councils and oppose the Silvertown Tunnel.