

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
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19 January 2009

Our reference: 08_09 Thames Tideway Tunnel

Dear Sir / Madam,

**Thames Tideway Tunnel
Request for financial support for Consultancy Investigations**

Hammersmith and Fulham Council has received initial notification and briefing from Thames Water of the intended construction of the Thames Tideway Tunnel.

We learned that the main construction and spoil removal locations (5 or 6 in all) to the tunnel would require construction sites for eight years, in close proximity to the river, the size of three to four football pitches. Our immediate concerns, given the expected locations of one of these sites in the vicinity of Hammersmith, were about the risk to riverside open spaces and parks within the borough and the impact the loss of leisure facilities would have on residents.

The administration took an enquiring view to challenge whether the benefits and costs of this scheme had been properly thought through. They did not want to be negative about the alleged benefits of improving water quality in the Thames, but they had real concerns whether this very expensive scheme, currently £2bn plus, would really address the concerns over London's sewerage system and river water quality. The apparent absence of any flood relief from backfilling and surcharging sewers was an additional concern.

We believe that the impact of the construction alone has not yet been realised by those authorities fronting onto the river.

The current proposals to construct the intended 32.2km long and seven metre diameter tunnel, some forty to seventy five metres below the ground, will take around eight years to construct. The tunnel will require some forty five construction sites at various construction and combined sewer overflow locations along the length of the project which will utilise river side sites adjacent to the Thames. Up to eleven of these sites will be for access and

construction purposes each requiring land ranging from two to four football pitches in size and each operating twenty four hours a day over the eight year construction period. The remaining thirty four riverside sites will require land for construction purposes of approximately two tennis courts in size.

On 17 November this authority, along with the London Borough of Hounslow, held a joint public meeting where presentations were given from a range of speakers which included Thames Water, the Environment Agency and the Consumer Council for Water. Of the six hundred attendees at the meeting a total of 123 people submitted comments following the meeting. Despite assurances being given that both our two major Hammersmith riverside parks would be unlikely candidates for the major tunnel construction access/spoil removal sites, around 70 people (64%) were opposed to the project.

As a consequence we have been asked to seek more professional advice over the suitability of tideway tunnel scheme as we believe residents are more concerned over sewer flooding issues and the potential future cost of water bills which may place many families in water poverty.

We have suggested that an independent study should look at the proposal and alternatives to the Thames Tideway Tunnel which should include:

1. To look at every aspect of the scheme and the range of options already considered and whether there are better solutions that have less impact and/or less cost.
2. To challenge the cost benefit analysis of the Thames Tideway tunnel on economic, environmental and social grounds
3. To challenge the rationale for preferring the current scheme, focusing on cost-benefit analysis of each option, including more modest tunnel options which might include the identification of alternatives to the current proposal which have been looked at (including picking up fewer CSO's, only those east of Putney, only the Lea/Beckton tunnel, etc)
4. To carry out a broad brush high level technical appraisal of possible alternatives to the Thames Tideway Tunnel, particularly any options that would avoid prolonged blighting of land during any construction phases and minimise disruption to borough residents

As the Thames Tideway Tunnel project will affect some fourteen riparian boroughs we are keen for both your collaboration in challenging this scheme and your shared financial support. If there is no support, we will do this on our own but with a budget of £30k the results will be very limited. The more boroughs that are willing to contribute, the more extensive and robust the consultant's work will be. We intend shortly to invite proposals from a shortlist of two or three consultants and would ask that you indicate your willingness to support this consultancy by making a budget contribution available not exceeding £20k.

I would appreciate a response indicating whether you are willing to be financially contribute to this work by 27th February 2009 by writing to Gordon Prangnell at gordon.prangnell@lbhf.gov.uk.

If you would like to discuss this proposal please do not hesitate to contact me or our lead officer in respect of this project, Gordon Prangnell on 020 8753 3002 indicating whether your borough is interested in collaborating and offering further financial support.

Yours sincerely,

Nigel Pallace
Director of Environment

Sent to the following Chief Executives:

London Borough of Hounslow
London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
London Borough of Wandsworth
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
London Borough of the City of Westminster
London Borough of Lambeth
City of London
London Borough of Southwark
London Thames Gateway
London Borough of Tower Hamlets
London Borough of Lewisham
London Borough of Newham
London Borough of Greenwich