Project information paper

How we chose our preferred sites

We require two main types of worksite to construct the Thames Tunnel project:

- worksites near the existing combined sewer overflows (CSO sites), so the overflows can be intercepted and connected to the main tunnel
- worksites to build the main tunnel (main tunnel sites).

The initial search for suitable main tunnel sites covered an area of land 500 metres either side of the River Thames.

The main tunnel needs to broadly follow the route of the River Thames to connect the CSOs, which are located along both sides of the river, to the main tunnel.

Locating main tunnel sites by the river allows us to use river transport, wherever practical and cost-effective, and helps minimise the structures under which the tunnel will pass – reducing the potential for buildings and structures to be affected by ground movement.

Initial site search area
Our search area for CSO sites was localised to the area near where the CSO discharges into the river. This is because it is preferable to have sites which can either directly intercept the existing CSO, or where only a short connection to the main tunnel is required.

In the initial searches for CSO and main tunnel sites we excluded two types of areas:

- World Heritage sites – the Palace of Westminster, Westminster Abbey and St. Margaret’s Church, the Tower of London and Maritime Greenwich
- existing housing in residential areas.

Our site selection process has three separate stages.

**Stage one: Identification, consideration and assessment (Spring 2009 – Summer 2010)**

- Firstly, we created a ‘long list’ of potential sites by conducting desktop surveys of the land within the identified search areas, for example using aerial photographs and Ordnance Survey maps.
- We then collected information on these sites and carried out a high level, multidisciplinary assessment of the ‘long list’. This used engineering, planning, environmental, community and property considerations. This led to the creation of a ‘draft short list’ of potential sites, which we assessed against more detailed considerations to create a ‘final short list’.
- Next we developed more detailed site suitability reports for each of the final shortlisted sites. We also developed a report to identify the viable options for building the main tunnel, known as ‘drive options’.

The potential drive options were based on the final shortlisted sites, which we grouped into geographical zones. Each drive option links a different set of zones together, and defines the tunnelling direction between zones and the site type (drive or reception site) in each zone.

- We then considered the findings of the site suitability reports to identify preferred CSO sites. The most suitable site in each zone was identified first; then the drive options were assessed and the preferred one was chosen.
- Our ‘preferred list’ of sites was established for the three tunnel routes. The Abbey Mills route was chosen as the preferred route. The preferred sites and route made up our preferred scheme presented at phase one consultation.
- All these activities were based on the professional judgement of our multidisciplinary team.
Stage two: Consultation on our preferred scheme (Autumn 2010 – Spring 2012)

- At phase one consultation we presented our preferred sites and route. We also presented details of all the shortlisted sites, which we identified and assessed during stage one of the site selection process but did not select as preferred sites.

- We then analysed all the consultation responses received and provided our response to these in our Report on phase one consultation. We reviewed the preferred sites presented at phase one consultation, taking into account the responses received, engineering design developments and any new information which came to light during or after phase one consultation.

- Where preferred sites are no longer available or significant new information was identified, we repeated stage one of the site selection process to check site assessments. This resulted in our preferred scheme for phase two consultation.

- As part of phase two consultation, we are gathering feedback on our phase two consultation preferred scheme.
Site selection

Stage three: Selection of sites (Spring 2012 – Summer 2012)

- After phase two consultation, we will analyse all consultation responses received and again feedback our response to these comments. This will set out how the consultation process informed our final selection of sites. We will produce a final report to cover the complete site selection process and publicise our final scheme for the Thames Tunnel project, detailing each of the sites we propose to use before submitting our application for planning consent.

Related documents

Project information papers
- Transport
- Route and tunnel alignment
- Build

Technical reports
- Site selection methodology paper
- Report on phase one consultation
- Phase two scheme development report

For further information see our website: www.thamestunnelconsultation.co.uk or call us on 0800 0721 086.
Phase two consultation (Autumn 2011)