



The Association of British Drivers

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Press Release – ABD London Region

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Thames Gateway Bridge – A Victory for the Luddites?

It seems the proposed Thames Gateway Bridge may be history. Indeed all major bridges may be based on the result of the public inquiry into this proposal which recently produced its final report after two years of work. The inspector, Michael Ellison, recommended to the Secretary of State for Transport that permission be refused. His major reason for doing so was simply that it might encourage people to travel!

Under Planning Policy Guidance 13 ("PPG13") planners need to take account of "*the impact of the proposal on traffic generation and overall travel patterns having regard to the desirability of achieving development that minimises the need to travel, particularly by private car*". Although Transport for London (TfL) argued that the bridge was needed for "regeneration" of the area, the inspector suggested that they had not proved their case. So if other inspectors follow the same approach, it is going to be almost impossible to justify any new bridges.

The general attitude of the inspector can be gauged from this paragraph in the report which refers to the results of the public consultation: "*It was clear, for example, that a disproportionate number of individual motorists had responded to the consultation. The results were then presented without adequate warning of their shortcomings*". As so often nowadays it tends to suggest that motorists are in some way being classed as second class citizens and should be ignored whatever they say.

But the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Hazel Blears, has subsequently announced that the public inquiry will be reopened. It will be asked to look again at the regeneration and environmental issues.

What a farce! This bridge was being talked about for more than 30 years. It was needed then, and it is needed now, but has still not been built. The public inquiry took much too long,, ignored the financial benefits of the bridge and the other benefits it would bring to the users, and was ultimately hobbled by the ridiculous and luddite PPG13 regulation).

More background information is available at:

http://www.bromleytransport.org.uk/Thames_Gateway_Bridge.pdf

Note that the full Inspector's report on the bridge proposal can be read at:

http://www.persona.uk.com/thamesgateway/DECISION/Planning_report.pdf

For further information, please contact:

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About The Association of British Drivers (ABD)

The ABD is the leading independent organisation which represents the interests of private motorists in the United Kingdom. We campaign to protect the rights of individual road users and believe that road transport is a beneficial and essential element in the UK transport infrastructure. We oppose excessive taxation of motorists and are against tolls and road usage charging. We also campaign for more enlightened road safety policies. The Association is a "not for profit" voluntary organisation which is financially supported primarily by its individual members. More information on the ABD is available from our ABD London web site at www.freedomfordrivers.org

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