

Transport Environment and Leisure Services

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Ms Tot Brill

Director for Waste Management, Culture, and Leisure

Peter Ramage

David Dolan
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28 April 2011

My reference:

Your reference:

Please ask for: Peter Ramage

Dear David

At our last meeting you asked for our views about the option of putting the works associated with the Tideway Tunnel on shore at Cremorne Wharf and Chelsea Embankment. You sought a response from us by the end of April. I have as promised drawn together my colleagues from the Directorates involved, and I have spoken to Ward Councillors in Cremorne and Royal Hospital Wards. But given the time pressure I have not yet had a chance to clear this response with the Cabinet Members involved, and I ask you to bear that in mind.

Cremorne Wharf

We could entertain a continuing dialogue with you about the option of moving the works on shore, noting that strong concerns are likely to be expressed by other agencies about the need for foreshore development now that you have developed a new strategy for ventilation.

Our discussion of on shore options will start from the premise that you will respect our existing policies in relation to Cremorne Wharf. On shore works, and the location of any shaft you sink, should not compromise the integrity of the site nor its capacity to deliver the Council's policy objectives, notably the use of the site for waste management, and the construction of a Thames walkway. You are aware of the safeguarded status of the Wharf, and we would expect your plans to respect that. We will continue to resist strongly any use of Cremorne Gardens in connection with the project, whether temporary or permanent. The protection of the Gardens is a very high priority for us.

Moving on shore would change the way the works affected residents and local amenity. We will seek more detail of the precise effects as we discuss this option further with you. We can say now, though, that we will continue to insist on the highest practicable level of mitigation to ensure that residents suffer the least possible disturbance and harm during the works. In addition, you will need to demonstrate that there is no increase in the environmental impacts associated with any on shore proposal compared with those predicted for the foreshore proposal. In particular we could not support any move on shore if that implied that spoil could no longer be removed by river; taking spoil out along Lots Road would not be acceptable to us due to the adverse impacts on residential amenity, and the likely increase in traffic congestion and the resulting impact on air quality.

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It almost goes without saying that we expect you to fund all our reasonable costs associated with the temporary relocation of the waste management and highways maintenance activities currently on the Cremorne Wharf site. We expect to keep talking to you about this issue as the proposals firm up.

Chelsea Embankment

At our last meeting we steered you towards a discussion with the management of the Royal Hospital, whose land would be affected by the on shore option you outlined. I gather that you have spoken to a representative of the Hospital, and I myself have spoken to Maj-Gen Peter Currie.

Since our meeting I have spoken to Cllr Donaldson who represents Royal Hospital Ward. He was very disturbed to hear of the possibility that Ranelagh Gardens might be used as a temporary site for construction. He has told me that he predicts a furious reaction against such a proposal from local residents. My conversation with Maj-Gen Currie indicated that the Royal Hospital were also strongly opposed to any such proposal. As a Council we will support and reflect back to you this local opposition.

Even setting aside local feeling, if that is possible, my colleagues have some serious reservations about what you have suggested to us. The likely loss of trees in Ranelagh Gardens would be a severe blow, and we would seek an absolutely compelling statement from you demonstrating how you would ensure long-term ecological and arboricultural improvements following any development on the site. We are particularly concerned about the fact that on shore development in Ranelagh Gardens would require the removal of spoil by road, not river. This would generate a number of adverse environmental impacts in relation to noise, traffic, dust, and air quality, and we would seek from you convincing evidence that you would control these additional adverse impacts.

We note that your proposals would retain the linearity of the embankment wall and river at this location, and would avoid the need to construct a coffer dam. It may well be that using Ranelagh Gardens instead of the foreshore would have lower long-term impacts, notably on the appearance of the embankment and on the views over the river towards the Royal Hospital. These points are in favour of your proposal. However, having taken soundings about local opinion, it is clear that the arguments against the on shore option at this location significantly outweigh the advantages, and we cannot support it.

I am aware that you have considered other options at Chelsea Embankment. We encourage you to keep talking to us about your emerging thinking about this site.

Timetable

In relation to both sites, can I ask you to let me have details of the timetable you are working to in relation to 'freezing' any design and other significant decisions. I would appreciate seeing this timetable as soon as possible – even if that means providing provisional information if you are unable to pin everything down at present.

Yours sincerely

Peter Ramage
Director for Waste Management, Culture, and Leisure