

THAMES GATEWAY BRIDGE PUBLIC INQUIRY

JEREMY COTTON

SUMMARY OF PERSONAL CASE

1.0. Personal Details.

My name is Jeremy Cotton of 43, Whernside Close, Thamesmead, London, SE28 8HB.

1.1. I am a chartered Biologist and professional ecologist, now retired. I shall deal with ecological and nature conservation matters in proofs submitted on behalf of the Bexley LA21 Natural Environment Focus Group, of which I was elected chair at the AGM of 25th May 2005, and of the Greenwich Wildlife Advisory Group, of which I have been a member since it was set up in 1975, and of which I have been Vice-char for several years.

1.2. In my personal evidence I shall draw on my knowledge and experience of the area, having lived at the above address since September 1984, having served as an elected Board Member of Thamesmead Town from 1986 to 1994, as vice-chair of the company in 1987-9 and 1993-4, and as chair of the Audit Committee from 1989-94. Until about 1993 I travelled throughout the area by car, and since then by public transport. Before 1993 I also travelled by car extensively throughout London, or throughout England and Wales, depending on my employment at the time. I shall use all of this experience in writing my full proof and in carrying out cross-examinations.

1.3. At the time of writing (28-30th May) I have received neither the rule 6 statement nor the proofs of evidence of Transport for London, and only the rule 6 statements from the other parties. It is therefore impossible to specify any questions of clarification - I shall have to include any that arise in my cross-examinations - or to be precise as to which witnesses, either for TfL or the supporters, I shall need to cross-examine. I therefore have to give provisional notice that I may wish to cross-examine all the witnesses, for both TfL and their supporters, and hope to reduce the list once I have been able to study the evidence.

1.4. I expect to adopt part or all of the proofs of other participants in the Inquiry, usually, but not exclusively other objectors. I shall also refer to other documents, and hope to supply these if they have not already been deposited in the Inquiry library or referred to by other participants.

2.0. History.

As I indicated at both pre-inquiry meetings, I was involved in both the 1985-6 and the 1990-91 Public Inquiries, and have undertaken to deposit in the Inquiry library all the papers, including transcripts, from both those inquiries that are in my possession. Some are mislaid, others were never made available to me. The Department of Transport and the London Boroughs of Greenwich and Newham had more comprehensive sets of paperwork than I ever did, and should be able to fill in the gaps.

- 2.1. In particular, I shall refer to any or all of the transport models and figures from those two inquiries, including the rebuttal by DTp of an alternative scheme put forward by Simon Baines, and the maps of isochrones produced at a late stage by DTp, and to various points that arose in cross-examination or otherwise, including the closing submission by Charles George, Q.C. in March 1986 (brought forward because of the abolition of the GLC).
- 2.2. I shall also refer to issues concerning both details of landscaping and environmental impact arising from the 1990-91 Inquiry, and my own concerns about the potential for conflict between the Bridge and the flightpaths from the London City Airport.
- 2.3. I shall also discuss the history of the scheme since the Abercrombie Report of (about) 1943, including the genesis of the current proposals in the period 1992-4, and discussions with commercial interests at that time.

3.0. Transport.

- 3.1. I shall be particularly concerned over the impact of the proposals on the road transport network in this part of South-East London, including the whole of Bexley, and appropriate parts of Greenwich, particularly routes between Thamesmead and Woolwich, but also between the South Circular Road and TGB, between the A2 and TGB, and various issues involving the Blackwall Tunnel/A102M and other actual or potential crossings.
- 3.2. I shall also be concerned with the public transport network within the London Boroughs of Bexley and Greenwich.
- 3.3. I shall wish to test the assumptions on which the road traffic models are based.
- 3.4. I shall also wish to examine the bases of the public transport proposals.

4.0. Development and regeneration.

- 4.1. Underlying both of the above will be the real, rather than the imaginary, problems of access to the riverside communities south of the Thames, and especially Thamesmead, and the real, rather than the imaginary needs of development or regeneration.

4.2. I shall also attempt to deal with some of the social issues that need to be considered in making such development or regeneration effective and beneficial to those at whom it is aimed.

5.0. Environmental consequences.

5.1. I shall refer to the environmental consequences of the scheme, including noise, pollution, health and community severance. Some of these may also be covered in the evidence I shall present on behalf of the Bexley LA21 Natural Environment Focus Group and the Greenwich Wildlife Advisory Group.

5.2. These environmental consequences will have an impact on the community (my evidence will concentrate on Thamesmead) in terms of the stability or mobility of the community, the availability and value of homes, the viability of schools, etc.

6.0. Errors and Omissions Excepted.

6.1. It seems probable that when I am eventually allowed access to the proofs of evidence of the proposer and supporters other issues will arise on which I will wish to give evidence on the basis of my local knowledge and experience, including local business experience. It is not possible to predict what these may be until I have access to the relevant information.

7.0. Summary and conclusions.

7.1. My conclusions will include an overall conclusion that the scheme is not properly devised or thought through, and does not meet local conditions or local needs. Once I have seen the cases of the proposer and supporters I may be able to draft more detailed conclusions indicating how these inadequacies have arisen.