

DECISION OF THE FIRST SECRETARY OF STATE AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
TRANSPORT NOT TO VARY THE DATE, TIME AND PLACE FOR THE
THAMES GATEWAY BRIDGE INQUIRY

Date: 17 May 2005

Dear Sir/Madam

**THAMES GATEWAY BRIDGE –
PUBLIC INQUIRY 7 JUNE 2005 AT CHARLTON ATHLETIC FOOTBALL CLUB**

1. Further to notifications you have been sent about the above Inquiry and associated meetings held, we are writing to advise you that, for reasons given below, the First Secretary of State and the Secretary of State for Transport (“the Secretaries of State”) have decided **not to vary** the date, time and place for the Inquiry. **The Inquiry will open, as previously announced, on Tuesday 7 June 2005.**

Pre-Inquiry Meeting/Further Procedural Meeting (4 and 28 April 2005)

2. Following a further procedural meeting held on 28 April the Inquiry Inspector, Mr Michael Ellison, has reported to the Secretaries of State on the request for postponement of the commencement of the Inquiry.

3. Having considered the arguments for and against postponement, the Inspector concludes that the crucial considerations are that the date of the Inquiry has been known since 25 February 2005; the full statutory periods of notice for procedures have been given; a postponement would place avoidable costs on a public authority; but that there needs to be time available to allow funds provided to objectors to be put to proper use.

4. The Inspector considers that these circumstances allow for -

(a) The Inquiry to be opened as planned on 7 June to hear the cases of the promoters, the supporters, any statutory bodies who object, any statutory objector, and any non-statutory objector who wishes to proceed in that first Inquiry session; and

(b) Upon conclusion of that first session, for the Inquiry to adjourn until 13 September 2005. Remaining non-statutory objectors should be heard at this reconvened Inquiry session and would in doing so be allowed further time, until 16 August 2005 under the Inspector’s revised timetable, in which to provide their proof of evidence. Those non-statutory objectors would have the option of cross examining the promoters’ witnesses either immediately after presentation of the promoters’ evidence in chief in the first Inquiry session or alternatively at the time at which their objection was to be made in the reconvened Inquiry session.

*The Secretaries of State Decision on the variation of the Inquiry Date/
Other Arrangements*

5. The Secretaries of State agree with the Inspector in his views. Therefore, it is decided that the Inquiry date will not be varied by them, but that the inquiry will commence as scheduled on 7 June 2005. The Inquiry adjournment will be a matter for the Inspector to

formally announce once the Inquiry is opened. However, non-statutory objectors who are to opt to be heard in this adjourned session, rather than the first Inquiry session should be aware of that intention and of the timetable they need to work to for it. The Secretaries of State advise, therefore, that the adjourned Inquiry would be intended to reconvene -

Date: On Tuesday 13 September 2005

Venue: At London Borough of Greenwich, Town Hall, Wellington Street, Woolwich, London SE18 6PW.

Revised Timetable for delivery of Proofs, documents etc: This is included as an Annex to this letter (Other than for non-statutory objectors who are to elect to appear in the reconvened Inquiry session, it remains as previously notified in the Note of the Procedural Meeting).

6. The Secretaries of State agree also with the Inspector that, if there is a demand for them by those objectors who have stated an intention to appear at the Inquiry, two evening sessions north of the river and two evening sessions south of the river at locations other than Charlton Athletic Football Club or Woolwich Town Hall, should take place during the reconvened Inquiry session. If any objector wishes to avail themselves of a hearing at such an evening session they should notify the Programme Officer, ahead of the Inquiry start: -

Graham Groom, Programme Officer, Thames Gateway Bridge Public Inquiry, Persona Associates, West Point, Springfield Road, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 2PD

Telephone: 01403 219899

Fax: 01403 217790

E-Mail: grahamgroom@personaassociates.co.uk

7. Any arrangements made for evening sessions would be announced at the Inquiry and notified by the Programme Officer to those stating an intention to attend to present their objection thereat.

8. A copy of the Inspector's report on the request for postponement of the commencement of the inquiry has been posted to the Inquiry website at www.persona.uk.com/thamesgateway/index.htm [A copy will be sent to any party who requests one in writing from the Programme Officer].

Yours faithfully



PHIL HAMMOND
The Planning Inspectorate,
4/03 Kite Wing, Temple Quay House,
2 The Square, Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6PN
On behalf of the First Secretary of State



JULIE HUME
Local Authority Orders, Citygate, Gallowgate,
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4WH
On behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport

ANNEX

THAMES GATEWAY BRIDGE INQUIRY – TIMETABLE FOR PROVISION OF PROOFS OF EVIDENCE AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

10 May 2005	Transport for London (TfL) proofs of evidence to be delivered. *
10 May 2005	Statement of Common Ground to be delivered by Transport for London and the London Boroughs of Greenwich and Newham. *
20 May 2005	Request for any document to be a core document to be made. *
24 May 2005	Local authorities, statutory bodies and supporters intending to appear at the Inquiry to deliver proofs of evidence. *
31 May 2005	All objectors to provide an outline of their evidence and a list of the issues on which they would wish to cross examine the promoters' witnesses. *
7 June 2005	Inquiry opens.
14 June 2005	Statutory objectors and non-statutory objectors intending to appear during the first session of the Inquiry to deliver their proofs of evidence by this date. *
21 June 2005	First date for listing of supporters to be heard at Inquiry.
16 August 2005	All remaining non-statutory parties wishing to appear at Inquiry, in the reconvened session, to deliver their proofs of evidence. *
6 September 2005	Rebuttal proof (of TfL) for first objector to be heard during second Inquiry session to be delivered by today and each subsequent rebuttal proof five days before the programmed date for hearing of the objection. *
13 September 2005	Inquiry reconvenes to hear remaining non-statutory objections, representations and closings.

* All documents to be delivered to Graham Groom, Programme Officer, Thames Gateway Inquiry (as detailed in paragraph 6 of letter)

* Where any timetabled date affords more time for the production of proofs of evidence in relation to objections to the Scheme and Orders, than is specified under The Highways (Inquiries Procedure) Rules 1994 and The Compulsory Purchase by Non-Ministerial Acquiring Authorities (Inquiries Procedure) Rules 1990, the Secretary of State for Transport hereby allows, under Rule 28 and Rule 19, respectively, of those Rules further time to the specified timetabled dates for the taking of those steps.