



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

T:  
helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk  
www.gov.uk/defra

[REDACTED]

(by email to [REDACTED]@gmail.com)

Your ref:  
Our ref: RFI 6256  
Date: 10 February 2014

Dear [REDACTED]

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: ESTIMATED COSTS TO THE TAXPAYER OF THE THAMES TIDEWAY TUNNEL PROJECT AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Thank you for your request for information about the estimated costs to the taxpayers of the Thames Tideway Tunnel, whether an impact assessment has been carried out and when work is expected to start, which we received on 30 January 2014. As you know, we have handled your request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs).

Thames Water estimates the Tunnel's capital cost at between £4.1bn and £4.2bn, using 2011 prices & excluding financing costs. In a Written Ministerial Statement to Parliament in November 2011

(<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm111103/wmstext/111103m0001.htm#11110358000003>), it was stated that the Tunnel was estimated to have a maximum annual impact of £70-80 on the average Thames Water customer's sewerage bill. Regarding the cost of the proposed Tunnel to the taxpayer, the November 2011 statement outlined that the Government had agreed in principle to provide contingent financial support to the project during the construction phase. This would only be called upon in exceptional circumstances, and if that did not happen then the cost to the taxpayer would be zero. In the event that the Government support was called upon during the Tunnel construction, then the cost to the taxpayer would depend on the specific circumstances of the case at the time, and it is not possible to provide any cost estimates as a result. The Government's intention is to ensure that the likelihood of any call on its financial support is as remote as possible.

The Thames Tideway Tunnel is a private sector project, and as the project sponsor Thames Water has submitted an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to the Planning Inspectorate, which is currently examining the application. The Inspectorate is due to make recommendations to the Secretaries of State for Communities and Local Government, and for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in early summer, who are then expected to make the final decision on whether to grant the DCO in the autumn. If the DCO is granted, then construction of the Tunnel is expected to start in 2016.



INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE

The Government carried out a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) of the Tunnel project in 2007, and following a review of this, published an update in 2011 entitled 'Creating a River Thames fit for our future – a strategic and economic case for the Thames Tunnel' along with 'Costs and Benefits of the Thames Tunnel'. As this information you have requested is already publicly available and easily accessible to you in another form or format, regulation 6(1)(b) of the EIRs exempts Defra from providing a copy in response to your request.

The 2007 RIA is available at:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120307083328/http://archive.defra.gov.uk/environment/quality/water/waterquality/sewage/documents/overflows-ria.pdf>

The 2011 strategic and economic case is available at:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120307083328/http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13677-thamestunnel-businesscase.pdf>

and the 2011 cost-benefit analysis update is available at:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120307083328/http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13677a-thamestunnel-costsbenefits.pdf>

Your question about the reasons for the Environment Agency relocating from Phoenix House should be directed to the Agency at [enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk)

I attach an annex giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service that you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

T: 020 7238 [REDACTED]  
e: [REDACTED]@defra.gsi.gov.uk

## **Annex**

### **Complaints**

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision under section 17(7) of the FOIA or under regulation 18 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to Mike Kaye, Head of Information Standards, Area 4D, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR (email: [requestforinfo@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:requestforinfo@defra.gsi.gov.uk)) and he will arrange for an internal review of your case. Details of Defra's complaints procedure are on our [website](#).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, section 50 of the FOIA and regulation 18 of the EIRs gives you the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Please note that generally the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF