

Date: 5 October 2023

Title: Silvertown Tunnel

This paper will be considered in public

1 Summary

Silvertown Tunnel					
	Existing Financial Authority	EFC	Existing Programme and Project Authority	Additional Authority Requested	Total Authority
Gross TfL Direct Costs	£254.5m	£255.6m	£251.9m	£2.7m	£254.6m
Reimbursement	-£78.4m	-£78.3m	-£78.4m	-	-£78.4m
NET TfL Direct Costs	£176.1m	£177.3m	£173.5m*¹	£2.7m	£176.2m

Authority Approval: The Committee is asked to note the paper and approve additional unbudgeted Financial Authority and Programme and Project Authority of £2.7m for associated bus infrastructure improvements.

Outputs and Schedule: The Silvertown Tunnel consists of a new road tunnel connecting the Greenwich Peninsula and Royal Docks, alongside road user charging at the Blackwall and Silvertown Tunnels, cross-river bus services, and a number of other local improvements to the network. Once open in 2025, this will address the significant issues of traffic congestion, poor reliability and a lack of resilience at Blackwall, and the consequent negative effects these have on travel, the economy and the environment across east and south east London.

Notes:

*¹ TfL Direct Costs comprise all net TfL costs involved in the development of the Scheme, allowing for an amount to be financed by the Project Company (Riverlinx Limited) and paid back through availability payments. This excludes £4.7m of historical scheme development costs incurred by TfL and held outside the Silvertown Programme and costs for the tunnel user charging which have been transferred to Road User Charging Programme. The original authority granted was net TfL Direct Costs.

- 1.1 This paper provides an update on the Silvertown Tunnel Programme (the Scheme), including construction progress following completion of the main tunnelling works in July 2023. It also covers progress on the wider scope of activities underway, and the further approvals required from the Board and the Secretary of State for Transport, to support Scheme opening in 2025.

- 1.2 Supplementary information is included in Part 2 of the agenda for Members. This information is exempt and is therefore not for publication to the public or press by virtue of paragraphs 3 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 in that it contains information relating to the business affairs of TfL and legally privileged advice. Any discussion of this exempt information must take place after the press and public have been excluded from the meeting.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 **The Committee is asked to note the paper and the exempt supplementary paper on Part 2 of the agenda and:**

- (a) approve additional unbudgeted Financial Authority and Programme and Project Authority each of £2.7m for associated bus infrastructure improvements, bringing the total Financial Authority to £178.8m and the total Programme and Project Authority to £176.2m;**
- (b) note the matters for which Financial Authority and Programme and Project Authority is sought above include commitments beyond the period of the 2023/24 Budget and provision will, therefore, need to be made for those commitments in future Budgets; and**
- (c) note that Procurement Authority for the various initiatives will be sought at officer level in accordance with Standing Orders.**

3 Background

- 3.1 The Scheme has been developed to address the significant issues of traffic congestion and unreliability at the Blackwall Tunnel and the consequent effects these have on travel, the environment, the economy and growth across the wider east and south-east London area. The Scheme has long been recognised as an essential investment to support the objectives set out in the Mayor's Transport Strategy.
- 3.2 The Scheme consists of a twin bore road tunnel providing a new connection between the Greenwich Peninsula and the Royal Docks. There will be two traffic lanes in each direction with one lane reserved for buses, coaches and Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs). New junctions will be constructed to link the tunnels into the existing road network and new portal buildings to house the equipment necessary to operate the tunnels.
- 3.3 To ensure that traffic levels are managed and that the benefits of the Scheme are secured for the long term, a user charge will be implemented at both Silvertown and Blackwall Tunnels. The user charge is expected to be an effective mechanism for suppressing induced traffic, and the revenue from the charge will also help pay for the Scheme.
- 3.4 The Secretary of State for Transport designated the Scheme a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project in 2012 and granted a Development Consent Order (DCO) on 10 May 2018, which provided us the powers to construct and

operate the Scheme. This includes the powers to introduce road user charging at both the Silvertown and Blackwall Tunnels.

- 3.1 In May 2019, the Committee agreed the relevant authorities for awarding the contract to design, build, finance and maintain the tunnel and the contract was subsequently awarded to the Riverlinx consortium in November 2019. The Committee has been updated on progress at regular intervals since then, and this paper provides the latest update on Scheme progress, including a lookahead to Scheme opening in less than two years.

4 Riverlinx Progress and Performance

Safety, Health and Environment

- 4.1 Despite Riverlinx holding the principal responsibilities and duties for safety, health and environment across their site, we continue to actively monitor their performance in this area as a priority. A new Riverlinx health and safety plan is being put in place as the project captures lessons learned and moves from the current “heavy civils” phase towards the next stage of fit out.
- 4.2 We also review Riverlinx efforts to reduce and manage the environmental impacts of the construction works in line with our contract requirements and relevant policy. For example, we have been pleased to see continued use of the river to transport of materials. There have been more than 1.1 million tonnes of material transported by river to date. This equates to more than 60 per cent of all materials associated with construction and means we have avoided more than 65,000 HGV journeys on the road network.

Jobs, Skills, Inclusion

- 4.3 In line with our contractual requirements, Riverlinx drives a positive legacy of the Scheme as a construction project through significant opportunities for employment and training for local people. To date, more than 100 apprenticeships have been supported across the site alongside a number of graduate opportunities, more than 1200 days of work experience, and job opportunities for more than 70 people who were previously ‘workless’. Many of these opportunities have been secured by residents in the local boroughs of Greenwich, Newham and Tower Hamlets. Riverlinx has also delivered a number of educational activities in the local area, and engaged through initiatives such as our Women into Transportation and Engineering programme.

Design and Construction

- 4.4 The majority of design is now complete with the final packages of landscaping improvements planned for submission to the local planning authorities by the end of 2023. Once the Scheme is complete in 2025, the road network either side of the river will be transformed with significant improvements in walking, cycling and green spaces forming the basis for planned regeneration schemes, as shown in the images presented in Appendix 1.

- 4.5 The images in Appendix 2 show highlights from the main construction works where we have seen excellent progress including completion of the main tunnels on 23 July 2023. This involved the UK's largest ever Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) successfully completing its journey first south and then north under the River Thames at low cover and with limited impact to surface structures. The rotation of the TBM in Greenwich was a UK first and builds confidence in the industry's ability to complete complex projects such as this with a single TBM.
- 4.6 Cross passages are now under construction alongside the cut and cover and open cut approach structures, tunnel portal buildings, and works to tie into and improve the existing highway network either side of the river.
- 4.7 From early 2024, we expect the site to transition from one dominated by heavy construction activities to one focused on fit out, testing and commissioning. This requires a shift in focus from both the TfL and Riverlinx teams. To support this work, we have recently commissioned external support to assess our preparedness and that of Riverlinx. This includes the resource capacity, capability and processes in place to successfully transition from construction to operation.

5 TfL Scope

- 5.1 In addition to oversight of the agreement with Riverlinx to design, build, finance and maintain the new tunnel itself, we hold several direct responsibilities to enable the opening of the Scheme and ensure its benefits are delivered.

Land Acquisition

- 5.2 Using the powers secured under the DCO, we are responsible for securing the temporary land and rights required for construction and the permanent land required to operate the Scheme. During 2023 we have completed the final "General Vesting Declarations" forming a key part of the permanent land acquisition process.
- 5.3 While our works currently occupy a significant area, particularly on the north side of the river, we are beginning to take temporary land back from Riverlinx and hand this back to permanent landowners ready for redevelopment. This includes, for example, the planned "Thameside West" development in Silvertown.

Securing the Scheme's Benefits

- 5.4 We are undertaking a range of monitoring, modelling and assessment work to ensure we have up-to-date information to understand the Scheme's impacts in operation. We have plans in place to keep these under review post-opening. This comes alongside our wider work to deliver on the objectives of the Mayor's Transport Strategy, such as the expansion of the Ultra-Low Emission Zone.
- 5.5 This work is supported by extensive consultation through the Silvertown Tunnel Implementation Group (STIG) which includes representatives from 12 London Boroughs, alongside the Greater London Authority and National Highways.

- 5.6 The outcomes of our refreshed assessment work are being used to inform development of the opening year bus network, the initial road user charges, and any further required local highway mitigation.

Tunnels User Charging

- 5.7 An update was provided to the Committee in December 2022 as part of the Road User Charging Programme, explaining how we have now agreed a delivery strategy and awarded contracts for the infrastructure and systems required to operate this new charging system, known as Tunnels User Charging.
- 5.8 Alongside this, our updated monitoring, modelling and assessment work, and ongoing consultation with the STIG, is being used to inform the setting of the user charges. This includes decisions on the opening year charges, as well as the discounts, exemptions and support that will be available to Londoners. We currently plan to seek a decision on the charges from the Board in autumn 2024, allowing us to further inform customers and finalise the charging systems prior to scheme opening in 2025.

Cross-river bus services

- 5.9 In November 2022 we launched a consultation on our proposals for the opening year cross-river bus network, which will take advantage of the opportunities provided by the new tunnel and encourage more journeys by public transport.
- 5.10 The consultation closed in January 2023 and we published our consultation report in March 2023. This set out our intention to, from Scheme opening in 2025:
- (a) continue operating the existing 108 service between Lewisham and Stratford via the Blackwall Tunnel, with some modifications to the route enabled by the scheme improving passenger journey times;
 - (b) extend the 129 route to operate from Lewisham to Great Eastern Quay (via the Silvertown Tunnel and the Royal Docks development zone); and
 - (c) introduce a new express bus service (Superloop 4) between Grove Park and Canary Wharf, via the Silvertown Tunnel and running express between Sun-in-the-Sands roundabout and Orchard Place.
- 5.11 We have subsequently awarded contracts to Go-Ahead London for the operation of these services and are working with them to prepare for Scheme opening in 2025. This includes work to ensure all buses will be zero-emission and that appropriate driver and customer facilities are provided along the bus routes. The bus driver and customer facilities are the subject of the £2.7m authority request set out in this paper.
- 5.12 We also launched a consultation on our proposals for a bespoke “cycle shuttle bus” in August 2023. The consultation closed on 10 September 2023 and we are in the process of considering responses before deciding next steps. This follows our commitments under the DCO and further investigates how we could improve cross-river facilities for pedestrians in cyclists in this area.

Wider TfL Scope

- 5.13 Other TfL activities underway to support implementation of the scheme include wider highway improvements. This includes signage changes, modifications to our control centres, and other specific obligations under the DCO such as the construction of additional noise barriers along the A102. These activities are progressing to plan to ensure the scheme can open in 2025.

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 The majority of the scheme costs are privately financed by Riverlinx, which takes the majority of risk associated with construction and responsibility for any associated cost overruns. In return, we will pay Riverlinx “availability payments” over 25 years following Scheme opening, subject to its performance in maintaining the new tunnels. We are not requesting any change to the authorities previously approved by the Committee in respect of the availability payments.
- 6.2 The immediate “TfL Direct Costs” associated with the scheme fund the activities referenced in section 5 above. Like much of our investment programme, we have seen significant cost pressures on the TfL Direct Costs, including as a result of inflation and the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. We have taken steps to offset such cost increases through effective management of the programme and have secured several savings opportunities, including through risk mitigation. Our EFC is currently £174.6m compared with authority of £173.5m. However, we are not currently seeking an associated increase in authority. Instead, we will seek to continue managing costs within the current approved budget, reviewing this position with significant spend to go and further risks and opportunities between now and Scheme completion in 2025.
- 6.3 Alongside this, we are also exploring specific items of additional scope which offer the opportunity to enhance the outcomes enabled by the Scheme. This includes an expanded scope of works to support the planned new bus services which we estimate will cost £2.7m. This is currently unbudgeted but will be funded as a priority through agreement of our revised Budget and Business Plan. In advance of this, to progress initial work to deliver these bus network enhancements, the Committee is asked to approve additional unbudgeted Financial Authority and Programme and Project Authority of £2.7m. The incorporation of this additional scope and cost will result in an increased EFC for the TfL Direct Costs of £177.3m.
- 6.4 Other considerations include more expansive customer communications to support Scheme launch and additional local active travel improvements. The prioritisation of these is being considered through development of our revised Business Plan and Budget and, should they be agreed, could also be incorporated and result in further increases to the EFC for the TfL Direct Costs. We are not currently considering any changes that would affect the contract with Riverlinx.
- 6.5 Further details on these costs and the commercial and financial performance of the Scheme are set out in the paper on Part 2 of the agenda.

List of appendices to this report:

Appendix 1: Permanent Scheme Design

Appendix 2: Construction Progress

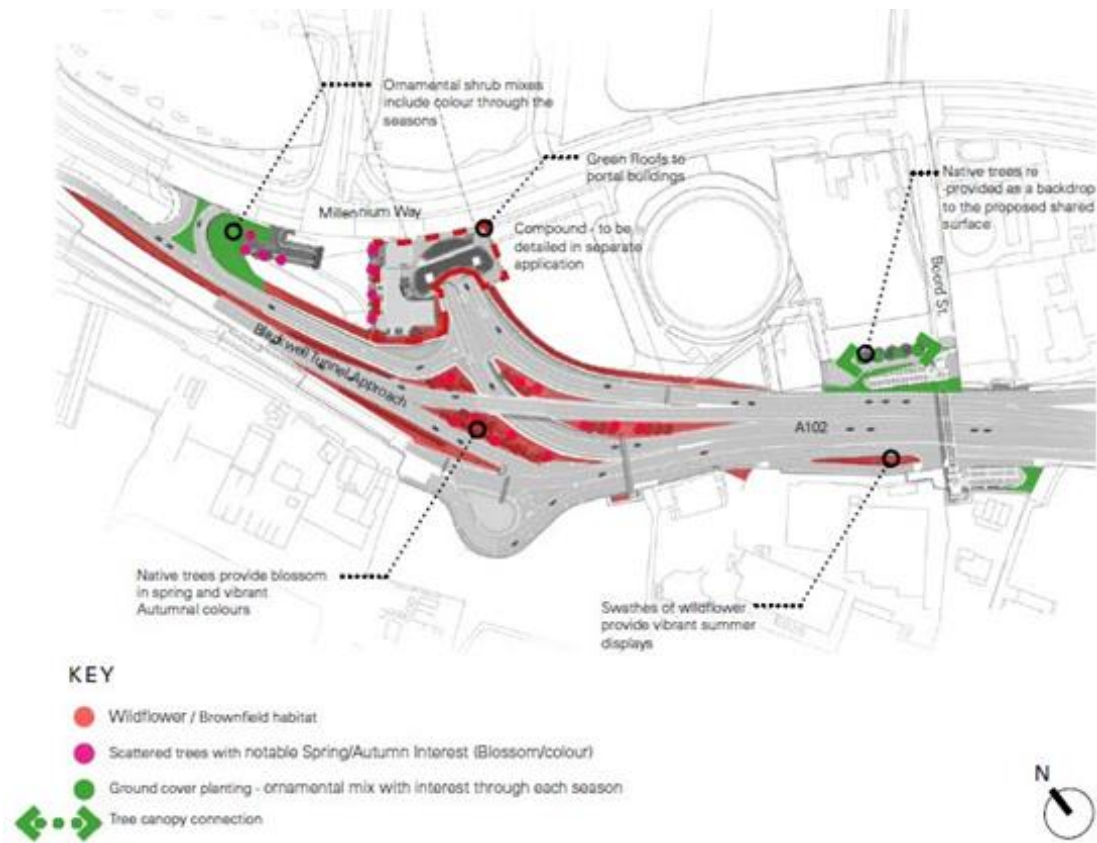
List of Background Papers:

Project Assurance Report

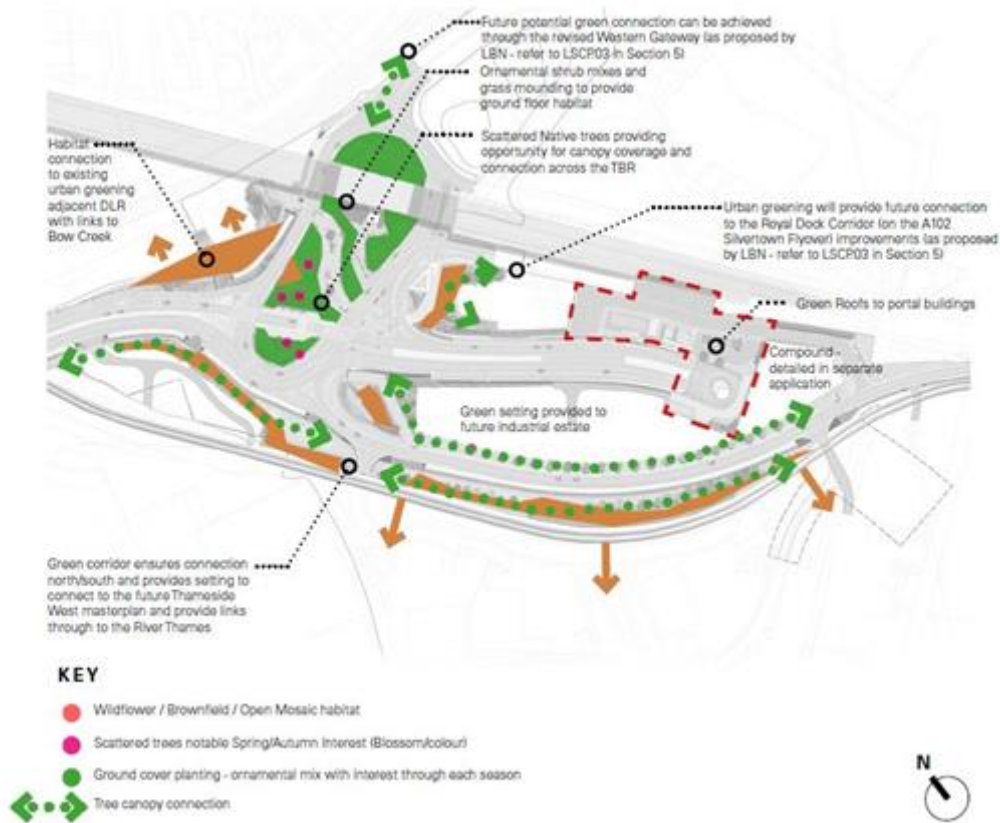
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Appendix 1: Permanent Scheme Design



Overview of Greenwich landscaping proposals



Overview of Newham landscaping proposals

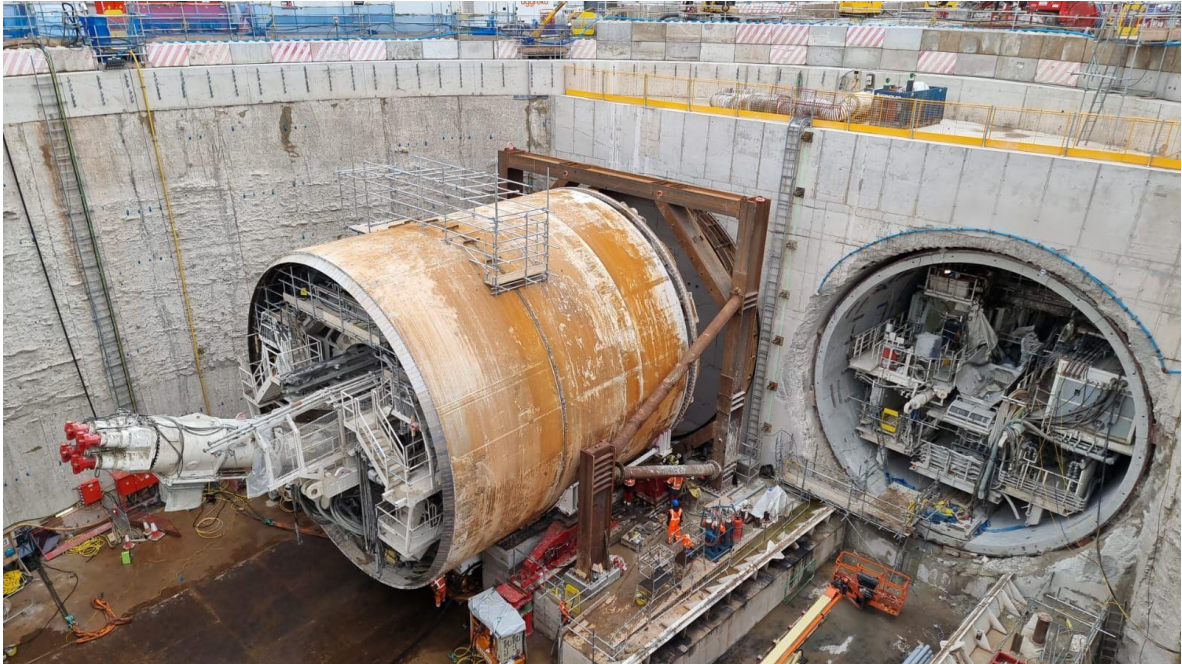


Sketch of the expanded Tidal Basin Roundabout, looking back towards Newham portal



Sketch of planned tunnel services building at the Greenwich portal

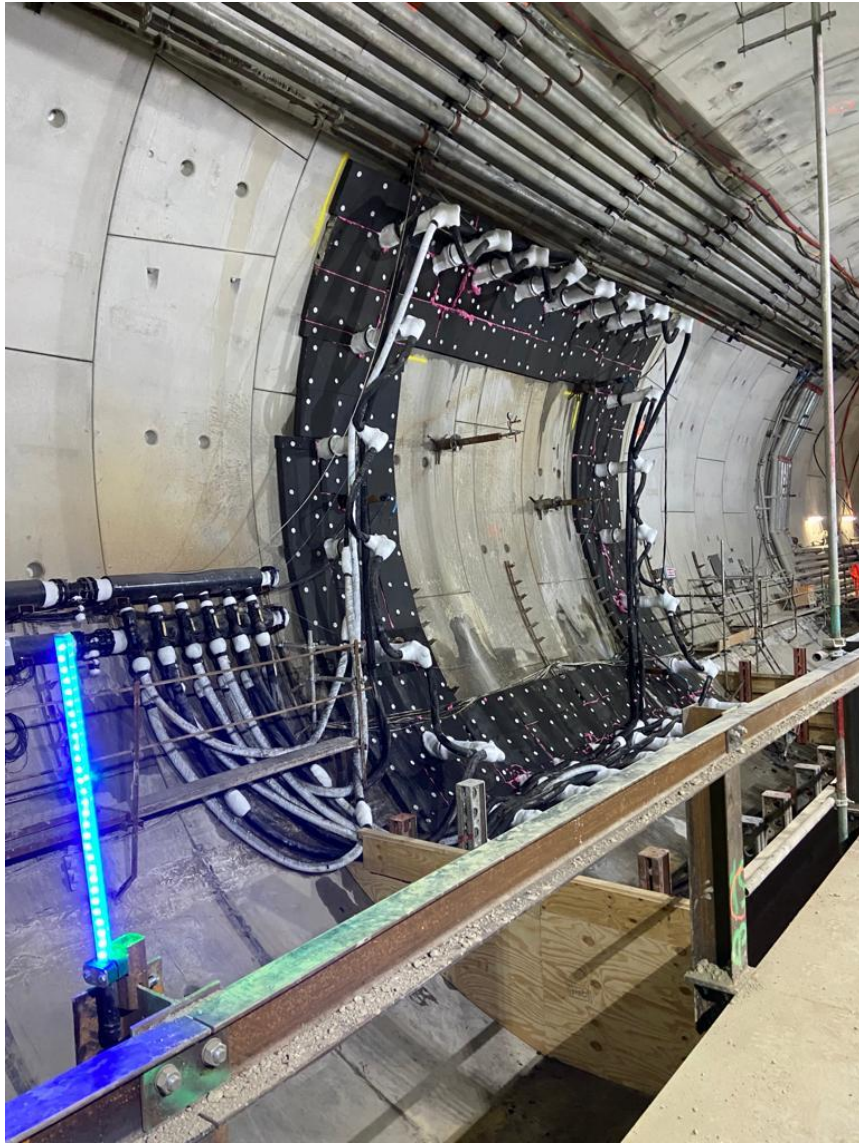
Appendix 2: Construction Progress



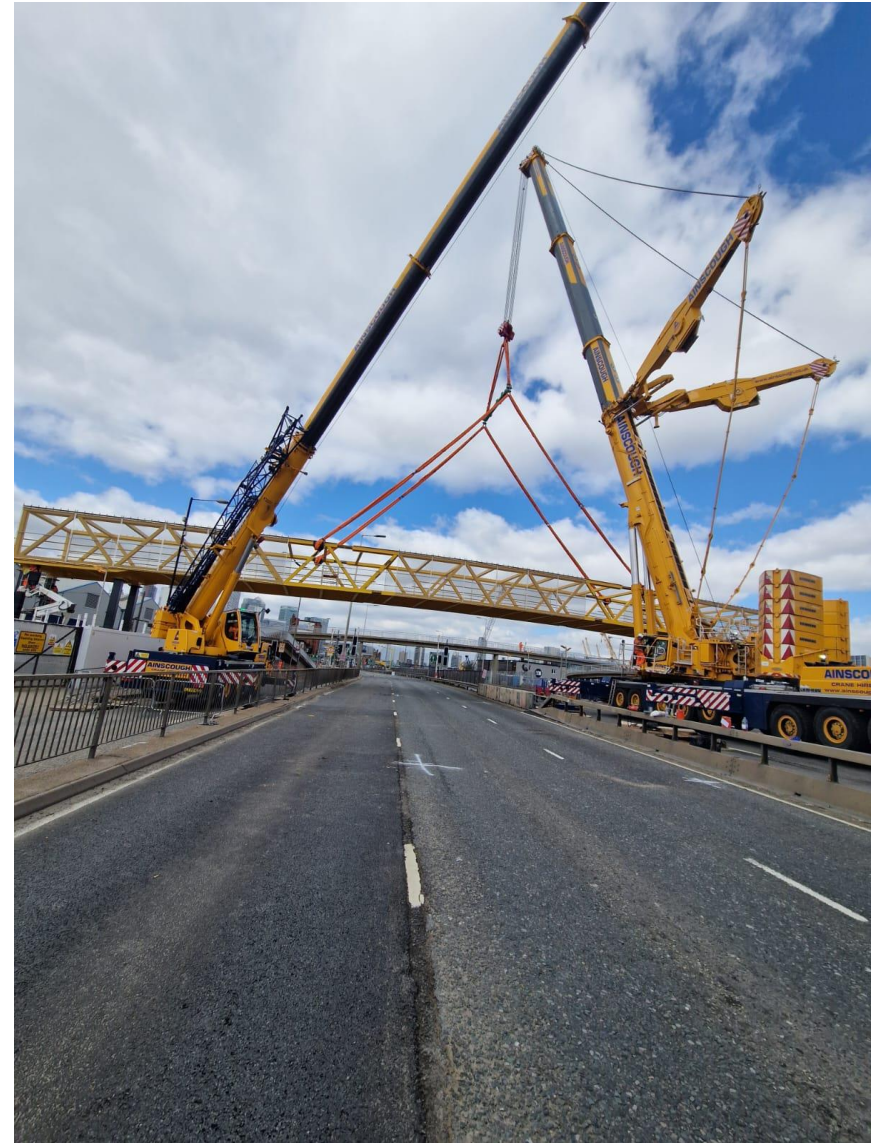
TBM “Jill” in the Greenwich rotation chamber having completed the southbound tunnel drive and rotation ahead of northbound tunnelling



TBM “Jill” in the Newham retrieval chamber having completed all tunnelling



Ground freezing in-progress to enable cross-passage construction



Installation of the new Boord Street walking and cycling bridge across the A102 during a closure of the Blackwall Tunnel