



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

The Lord Berkeley OBE
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

Baroness Hanham CBE
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

**Department for Communities and Local
Government**
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

Tel: 0303 444 3461
Fax: 0303 444 3291
E-Mail: baroness.hanham@communities.gsi.gov.uk
www.communities.gov.uk

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Queen's Speech Debate - 13 May 2013

Thank you for your letter of 23 May following the Queen's Speech Debate at which you asked questions about harbour improvements in the Isles of Scilly and the Thames Tideway Tunnel project. I am sorry for the delay in replying.

Thames Tideway Tunnel project

On the Thames Tideway Tunnel project, there are 3 key Government documents assessing alternative solutions:

- a) The Regulatory Impact Assessment 2007
- b) 'Creating a River Thames fit for our future - a strategic and economic case for the Thames Tunnel', and 'The costs and benefits of the Thames Tunnel', November 2011
- c) The Waste Water National Policy Statement, March 2012

The Waste Water National Policy Statement established the need for a Tunnel; this underwent Parliamentary debate in March 2012, with Parliament subsequently designating it on 26 March 2012. The purpose of the Thames Tunnel Evidence Assessment published by Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in 2012 was to ensure that due consideration had been given to the full range of evidence available on all the proposed options to address sewage in the Thames, and to provide an assessment of the nature of that evidence. It included an Annex listing the supporting studies and reports. All these documents can be found at the following link:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120405133325/http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/quality/water/sewage/overflows/>

In light of this, Ministers are not persuaded that there is a need for a further review of, or inquiry into, the Thames Tideway Tunnel.

Harbour Improvements

The Department for Transport is in close liaison with Cornwall on their business case for harbour improvements and look forward to receiving a finalised bid very shortly. The Department has also made it clear that a subsidy is not under consideration and that they encourage all the current efforts to ensure that operations can remain commercially funded.

I trust that this clarifies the position.

With kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jan', written in a cursive style.

BARONESS HANHAM CBE