

## CABINET

21 October 2014

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| <b>Title:</b> Response to the Thames River Crossings Consultation  |   |
| <b>Report of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration</b>   |   |
| <b>Open Report</b>   | <b>For Decision</b>   |
| <b>Wards Affected:</b> All wards but especially River, Abbey and Thames.   | <b>Key Decision:</b> Yes  |
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| <b>Accountable Divisional Director:</b> Jeremy Grint, Divisional Director of Regeneration  |   |
| <b>Accountable Director:</b> Steve Cox, Director of Growth   |   |
| <b>Summary</b>   |   |
| <p>In July 2014 Transport for London (TfL) launched a third phase of a public consultation on a proposed package of new road based river crossings between east and south east London. The proposals, which include a new ferry at Woolwich, a ferry/bridge at Gallions Reach and a bridge at Belvedere, have been further developed following the last consultation exercise in Autumn 2012 and include more detailed analysis of the likely traffic, environmental and economic impacts of the various proposals.</p>  |   |
| <p>This report provides a summary of the four options set out in the consultation, and outlines some of the specific issues that may arise if they were to be implemented and the potential implications for the borough. The main issue for discussion is whether the Council remains in favour of a fixed link crossing at Gallions Reach, as detailed in its Officer level response to the 2012 consultation and also reconfirmed by Cabinet on 22 October 2013, or whether any of the alternative options would result in greater benefits for, or have fewer negative impacts on, the borough (Minute 47 refers).</p>   |   |
| <p>A new bridge at Belvedere or Gallions Reach could stimulate new retail and leisure development in Barking Town Centre boosting the aspiration for it to become East London's cultural hub. In addition the Belvedere option is forecast to deliver 1700 new homes in London Riverside and generate a more significant increase in new jobs throughout the borough than Gallions Reach through the boost it will give to industrial development and proposals such as the Billingsgate Market. Therefore whilst officers recommend that both fixed-link road crossings in east London should be supported; Belvedere should be built first due to its greater economic benefits.</p> |   |
| <p>When the Gallions Reach bridge is built officers consider that it must accommodate East London Transit. In addition to the Thames River Crossings a new road link across the River Roding to Barking Riverside is also necessary for local traffic and public transport to improve access to the Royal Docks.</p>   |   |

## **Recommendation(s)**

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- (i) Agree that the Council's response to the river crossings consultation:
- Supports both fixed-link road crossings in east London; Belvedere should be built first and be pursued as a top priority by Transport for London so that it is built by 2025 to support growth in Barking and Dagenham.
  - Requires improvements to the A13, including a replacement flyover at Lodge Avenue and Renwick Road Junction Improvements be completed by 2021 irrespective of which option is pursued;
  - States that if the Belvedere option proceeds then the impacts on boroughs roads to the north and A13 must be assessed in more detail and the appropriate improvements made in advance.
  - States that if the Gallions Reach option proceeds that it must accommodate East London Transit.
  - States that a new road link across the River Roding to Barking Riverside must be provided for local traffic and public transport.
  - Reiterates support for the London Overground extension from Barking Riverside to Abbey Wood, but that this should not be seen as an alternative to the proposed river crossings.
- (ii) Agree that the Council work with neighbouring North East London Strategic Alliance and Growth boroughs to press the case for a fixed crossing as soon as possible.

## **Reason(s)**

The creation of a new transport infrastructure has the potential to help grow the borough by providing residents and businesses with improved access to new/alternative job opportunities and markets through reduced journey times.

## **1. Introduction and Background**

- 1.1 Following an extensive consultation exercise in Autumn 2012, Transport for London (TfL) has further developed a set of proposals for new vehicle river crossings in east and south east London, with options including a new ferry at Woolwich, a ferry/bridge at Gallions Reach and a bridge at Belvedere. TfL has used the responses from the last consultation to develop the proposals further and is now encouraging the public and stakeholders to provide further comments on these to help determine which, if any, of the proposals to take forward. Separately to this consultation exercise, TfL is developing proposals for a new road tunnel at Silvertown and plans to undertake further consultation on this in Autumn 2014.
- 1.2 The proposed river crossings are designed to make the area more attractive to live, visit, and do business by reducing delays and making journey times more reliable. Alongside ongoing investment in public transport infrastructure (e.g. Crossrail), these additional crossings are designed to support the continued growth and regeneration of east and south east London.

- 1.3 This report provides a summary of the various proposals set out in the consultation, and outlines some of the specific issues that may arise if they were to be implemented and the potential implications for the borough. Additional information on scheme costs/funding arrangements is also provided.

## 2. Proposal and Issues

### *The case for additional river crossings*

- 2.1 The need for improved river crossings in east London is driven by several important issues, namely to facilitate local road traffic movements that are essential to the proper functioning of east London and which are constrained by the lack of current connectivity; and facilitating the future economic and population growth in the area which will also have an essential component of cross-river road traffic which needs to be accommodated in an efficient manner. Other important considerations include the need to make a decision on a replacement for the Woolwich Ferry as the current ferry nears the end of its working life; and the need to address long-standing concerns regarding potential local traffic impacts in east London. A number of important issues in the case for additional crossings are described below:

- *Demand for cross river movements is well in excess of opportunities to cross, generating significant traffic congestion at existing crossing points of the highway network*, particularly at Blackwall Tunnel (TfL surveys indicate an average 19 minute journey time on northbound approach in the am peak – a delay of 11mins/km). The estimated economic cost of these delays is some £17.5m every year;
- *The lack of crossing opportunities is a barrier to movement and economic activity*. With a greater concentration of crossings, businesses in west London benefit from better access to markets than those in east London. The barrier imposed by the river also increases the cost of doing business in east London. Furthermore, a recent TfL survey indicates that a third of all businesses in east London see the river as a barrier to the development of their businesses;
- *The barrier to movement limits the size of labour market and retail catchments and inhibits economic activity*. Data suggests that east London boroughs have a much higher proportion of workers that live within the same area in which they work and that businesses generally have a lower labour force catchment area to draw upon. This is a potentially contributing factor to the lower employment density in east London. There is also evidence that the barrier effect affects the vitality of retail centres in east London;
- *The lack of crossings creates a lack of resilience with the existing highway network*. Cross river journey time reliability is poor in east London due to the poor resilience of the highway network, linked to the small number of crossings. In the event of a tunnel closure or reduction in capacity on any of the existing road crossings, the consequent traffic congestion and delays are widespread, and it can take time to recover. This can have a detrimental effect on quality of life and performance of the local economy. For example, in a recent survey of businesses in east London, 67% of firms considered that poor reliability of cross river travel acted as a constraint on or disruption to their business to an extent;
- *There are physical limitations on access for large vehicles at the Rotherhithe and Blackwall tunnels and Tower Bridge*. The Woolwich Ferry is the only option for some HGVs crossing the Thames between central London and the Dartford Crossing. The ferry is relatively low capacity and long delays can be

encountered. Congestion on both sides of the Woolwich Ferry caused by queuing traffic has negative environmental impacts in terms of air quality and noise;

- 2.2 East London is home to a high proportion of businesses that rely on good road links to access customers/suppliers, and there is expected to be further growth in road freight during the next 20 years, which is likely to generate additional road based trips from these road dependent industries, and drive the demand for premises with good highway accessibility. In addition, the area has also seen a rise in road based trips resulting from population growth, and in some areas travelling by road is still the fastest way to access many parts of east London. However, despite significant investment in cross river public transport infrastructure in east London in recent years (e.g. Jubilee line extension to Docklands/Stratford, DLR extensions to Lewisham/Woolwich, Crossrail), there has been no increase in cross river highway capacity since the construction of the southbound Blackwall tunnel in the 1960s and the QE2 bridge in Dartford in 1991.
- 2.3 In light of the above, TfL is proposing the development of several new road-based river crossings in east London, including a tunnel linking the Greenwich Peninsula and Silvertown (options for this are currently being developed separately) and a package of other options, including a new ferry at Woolwich, a ferry/bridge at Gallions Reach and a bridge at Belvedere. Further information on each of these proposals is set out below.

### **3. Options Appraisal**

#### **Option Selection**

- 3.1 A range of schemes and locations were put forward as options for consideration as part of the River Crossings programme, either identified by TfL or proposed by stakeholders and the public in response to consultation. The options have been examined over the last two years in a variety of technical reports and consultations and assessed in terms of their potential to address the wider objectives identified in section 2, above, and their broad costs and benefits.
- 3.2 A number of options were found not to meet the wider objectives or requirements and were not taken forward – this includes stand-alone options for walking/cycling, public transport and road user charging. However it was recognised that the needs of these modes need to be considered in any short-listed options. The conclusion from the assessment process was that a road-based crossing was required to fully address the wider objectives, and three locations – Woolwich, Gallions Reach and Belvedere were identified where such a crossing should be considered. A number of different crossing types were considered at these locations with four options identified as most likely to meet the wider objectives. These are:
- A replacement vehicle ferry at Woolwich;
  - A new vehicle ferry at Gallions Reach;
  - A new road bridge at Gallions Reach; and
  - A new road bridge at Belvedere.

These are shown on the map below. The ferry and the bridge at Gallions Reach follow the same alignment across the Thames so are represented by B. The replacement vehicle ferry at Woolwich is A and the Belvedere crossing is C.



### ***A - A Replacement Ferry at Woolwich***

- 3.3 Under these proposals, the existing Woolwich ferry service could be replaced by an enhanced service with new terminal infrastructure. The new ferry would have up to around 30% more capacity than at present and could be implemented as either propeller-driven or chain-driven. The cost of providing a replacement ferry is estimated at £100m - £200m, with annual running costs at around £5m. The earliest a replacement ferry could be in operation would be early 2020s.
- 3.4 The replacement ferry option has the following impacts:
- Connectivity – a new ferry service at Woolwich would have higher carrying capacity, but would not generate significant improvements in connectivity over the river;
  - Economic Development – this option would not provide significant support for economic development in the area;
  - Resilience – a new fleet of ferries would provide greater reliability compared to the existing service, but would still be subject to delays and cancellations, and would be unable to provide significant additional resilience when other crossings faced disruption.

### ***B1 - New Ferry at Gallions Reach***

- 3.5 A ferry at Gallions Reach would provide a link between Thamesmead on the southern side and Beckton on the northern side. It could offer some modest improvements on the current Woolwich Ferry service, including allowing a vehicle carrying capacity of up to double that currently offered by the Woolwich Ferry, with the ability to carry high-sided HGVs. The new ferry assets (likely to be propeller-driven due to environmental issues) would be expected to have a useful operating life of 30 years or more.
- 3.6 Although likely to cost slightly more than replacing the Woolwich Ferry in situ (current construction cost estimates are between £150m - £250m with an annual running cost of £5m), it provides the added benefits of providing a new cross river link in an area of poor current connectivity. Woolwich would remain connected to the Royal Docks by the foot tunnel and DLR, and shortly by Crossrail. It is estimated that a new ferry could be in operation by the early 2020s.
- 3.7 When assessed against TfL's wider objectives for river crossing, the Gallions Reach ferry option was found to achieve the following:
- Connectivity – a ferry service at Gallions Reach would allow the existing cross river connectivity between the Blackwall and Dartford crossings to be maintained and enhanced, with particular benefits for the hinterland on either side of the river in and around the ferry terminals;
  - Economic Development – this option would promote local development and allow increased employment and education opportunities;
  - Resilience – introducing a ferry in this location would have traffic benefits over a replacement ferry at Woolwich, due to additional space for waiting vehicles to queue away from the main road network.

- 3.8 Officers consider that the two ferry options are sub-optimal solutions which would delay the construction of a new river crossing and represent poor value for money. Therefore the remainder of this report focuses on a comparison between the two bridges to help inform the Council's decision on this issue.

### ***B2 - A Bridge at Gallions Reach***

- 3.9 A potential alternative to a ferry at Gallions Reach would be a bridge linking the A2016 Western Way in Thamesmead with the A1020 Royal Docks Road. The design of a bridge at this location would be based on the principal objective of its use being primarily by local traffic (with an origin or destination in east or south east London) and would be built with two lanes in each direction – one for general traffic use, with the second lane reserved for buses and goods vehicles only. Cyclists and pedestrians would also be able to use the bridge.
- 3.10 A bridge at this location would be a more expensive option (current costs estimated at £350m - £600m with annual operational/maintenance costs of £0.5m), and would take at least four years longer to deliver than either of the ferry options so would unlikely to be in operation until 2022 at the earliest. In the meantime, TfL would need to upgrade the Woolwich Ferry so it could continue to operate at least until the new crossing was complete.

### ***C - A Bridge at Belvedere***

- 3.11 Proposals for a river crossing at Belvedere came out of the 2012 consultation. Although not in current policy, TfL consider it warrants further examination as it appears capable of addressing a range of objectives.
- 3.12 The proposed site of a bridge at Belvedere is 10km downstream of the Blackwall Tunnel and 8km upstream of the Dartford Crossing and would link Belvedere in Bexley and Rainham in Havering. As with the Gallions Reach bridge, it would carry two lanes in each direction - one for general traffic and one potentially reserved for buses and heavy goods vehicles, and would be open to cyclists and pedestrian. The main bridge structure would be about 2,100 metres long and would be connected to the north to the A13 at the Marsh Way junction and to the south to the A2016 at the Picardy Manorway junction.
- 3.13 Due to the increased distance from London City Airport, the height available in which to build the bridge is less restricted than Gallions Reach. This means a wider range of bridge forms is possible and early design work has shown that a more conventional cable-stayed bridge (similar to the Queen Elizabeth II Bridge at Dartford) would likely be the preferred type of bridge in this location.
- 3.14 With the construction of a bridge at Belvedere there would need to be consideration given to whether the Woolwich Ferry would continue to operate or would be replaced by the bridge.

### ***Delivery Timescales, Costs and Funding Options***

- 3.15 Both bridge options are major engineering projects. The construction of the Gallions Reach bridge is easier in terms of the fact that land has already been safeguarded

for the route. The Belvedere bridge would take longer to build as some land assembly is required. The earliest possible opening date for the Gallions Reach bridge would be 2022, but could be as late as 2025, whilst the earliest possible opening date for the Belvedere bridge would be 2025, but could be as late as 2030.

- 3.16 The cost of implementing the Gallions Reach bridge is estimated at between £350m - £600m. Implementing a new bridge at Belvedere could cost between £500m - £900m. The additional cost of extending the life of the Woolwich Ferry until either bridge option is delivered would also need to be factored in – this is likely to be lower than the estimated £100m - £200m required for a replacement ferry.
- 3.17 There is currently no funding set aside in TfL’s budget for any of the river crossing options and a means of paying for them would need to be identified. TfL consider that the most appropriate way to fund the projects would be to charge a toll for using the ferries or the bridges. Tolling would provide a new revenue stream to pay for the crossings, and would ensure that those who benefit most from these projects (i.e. the users) help to pay for them in return.
- 3.18 As well as helping to fund the new infrastructure, TfL are of the view that tolling would be necessary to manage traffic demand (in theory, a toll may encourage drivers to consider whether they could use an alternative route, or travel at a different time). However, if a toll was applied to any new crossings in the area, the Blackwall Tunnel, and the proposed new Silvertown Tunnel, would also need to be tolled due to its close proximity to these crossings. TfL currently has no plans to toll the nearby Rotherhithe Tunnel as it believes this primarily serves a different set of destinations and would therefore be unlikely to be affected significantly by traffic changes as a result of the new crossings.
- 3.19 Significant additional work is required before a tolling scheme for any new river crossings could be formally proposed. Further consultation would also be required. Particular issues to be considered include:
- *Toll charges* – The charges are likely to be similar to the tolls charged on the Dartford crossing (currently £2 for cars, £2.50 for two-axle goods vehicles, and £5 for HGVs). Charges at around these levels should help to manage traffic while not constraining economic activity and growth. In addition, because traffic is heavier northbound in the morning and southbound in the evening, the toll could vary depending on the direction of travel, the time of day, and the day of the week. There could also be discounts for individuals, organisations, or account-holders;
  - *Toll timings* - Tolls might only apply during certain hours of the day (e.g. there might not be any tolls at night when there is less traffic);
  - *Toll collection* - It is not intended to have toll booths but to allow ‘free flow’ tolling as will be implemented at the Dartford Crossing from October 2014. Drivers could also be offered various ways of paying, to ensure that paying the toll was as easy and convenient as possible.

### ***Bridge Options Benefits and Impacts***

- 3.20 The proposals outlined above could potentially make a huge difference to some of the biggest transport problems in east and south east London. They are designed to improve connections between areas that are separated by the River Thames, and

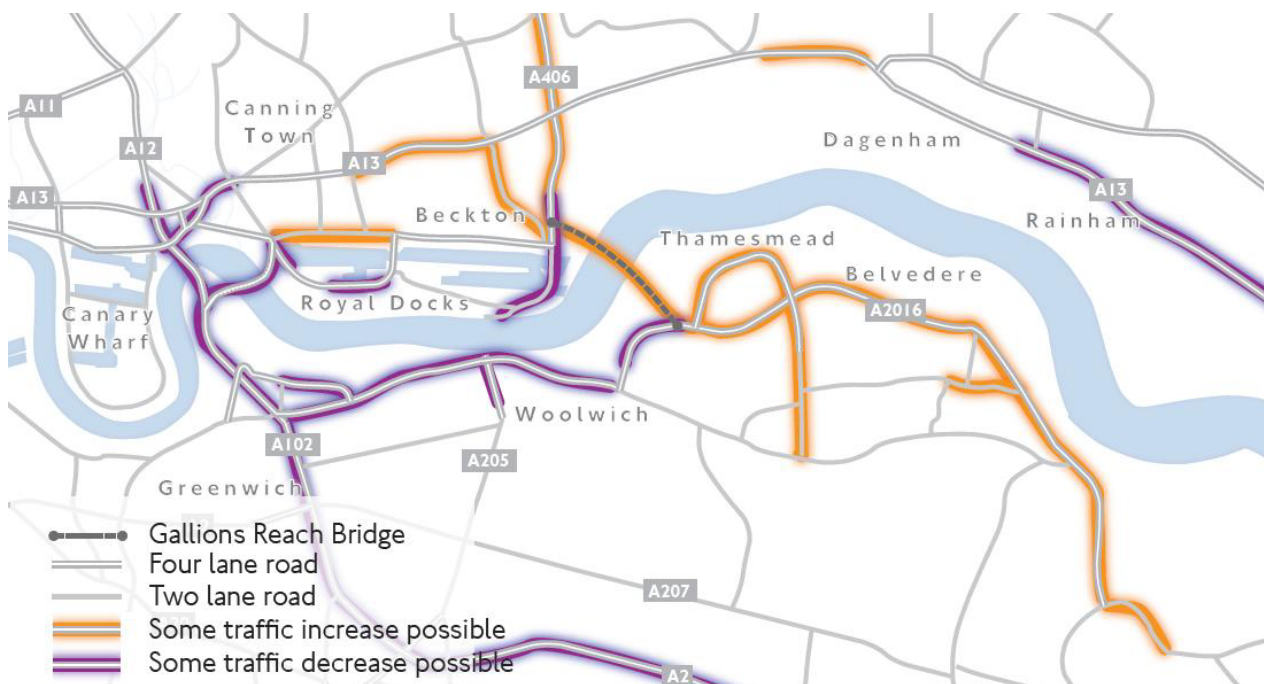


help boost the economy of this growing part of London. Improved crossings could also help to reduce delays and congestion, which in turn would save people and businesses time and money, as well as contributing to a more pleasant environment. The key traffic, environmental and economic benefits and impacts of the two bridge options are considered in further detail below.

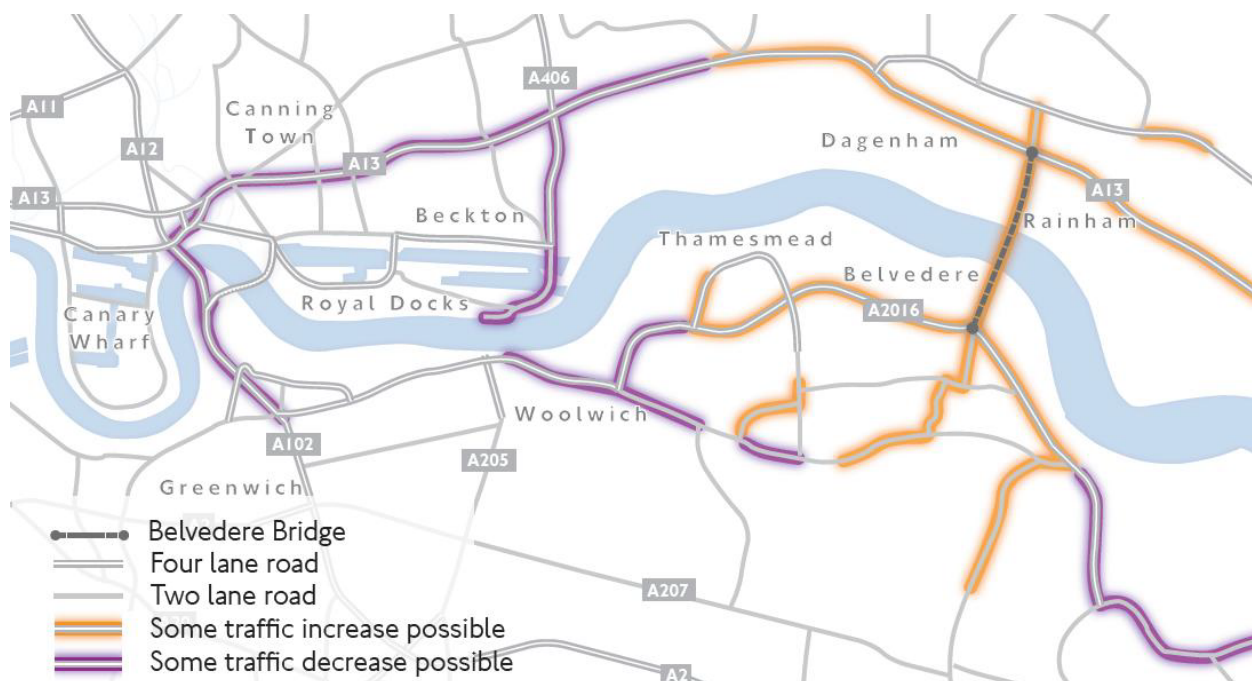
### **Traffic Impacts**

3.21 By 2021 (referred to as the 'baseline case' in TfL's modelling work) due to population and business growth, delays on the A13 are forecast to grow by over 30% in Barking and Dagenham in the morning and evening peaks, with the Lodge Avenue and Renwick Road junctions particularly affected. Analysis suggests that neither crossing option will significantly improve these traffic impacts, and it is likely that congestion on the A13 and A406 will be worse in the future (see Figures 1 & 2, below). Therefore officers recommend that improvements to the A13 particularly a replacement flyover at Lodge Avenue and Renwick Road Junction Improvements be completed by 2021 irrespective of which option is pursued.

**Figure 1: Traffic Impacts 2021 - Gallions Reach Bridge (B2)**



**Figure 2: Traffic Impacts 2021 - Belvedere Bridge (C)**



- 3.22 Modelling undertaken by TfL shows that the Gallions Reach option would increase delays in the morning peak at the A406, A13 roundabout and to a lesser extent on the approaches along the A13. However, overall delays in Barking and Dagenham decrease by 4%. In the evening peak, traffic flows would increase not only on the A406, but also on Alfreds Way west of Lodge Avenue and Ilford Lane, with consequential deterioration in junction delays in Barking Town Centre. However delays at the Lodge Avenue junction on the A13 improve.
- 3.23 Modelling for the Belvedere Bridge option indicates that in the morning peak traffic flows would increase east of Lodge Avenue, particularly between Marsh Way and the M25. However, there would be minimal additional delays to traffic in the area (and a benefit in this respect for Barking Town Centre), as well as a significant 7% reduction in delays for Thurrock. In the evening peak significant additional delays (6%) would be experienced on the A13, particularly at Renwick Road.
- 3.24 In terms of trip origins, modelling indicates that most journeys over the Belvedere bridge from the north would originate in the borough, East Newham, Havering and west Essex. Trip origins for the Gallions Reach bridge are more focused in Newham Redbridge and Barking. It is estimated that between 87-93% of trips made using a bridge at Gallions Reach would be local, with the figure rising to 91-97% for the Belvedere option.
- 3.25 If the Gallions Reach option is chosen then officers recommend that the A406/London Road junction be subject to detailed modelling with any improvements identified made before the bridge opens. It is also recommended that if the Belvedere option is chosen that further modelling is undertaken on the impacts on roads to the north of the A13 and the A13 itself. For example, modelling suggests a significant increase in traffic flows along Rainham Road, Heathway and Porters Avenue. As such, the Council would need to be confident this bridge would not worsen the blight already caused by HGVs trying to reach the A12 and M25 through

the borough. Officers are less concerned about the Gallions Reach option in this respect due to the direct access it provides onto the North Circular.

- 3.26 The Council has argued consistently that before the Silvertown Tunnel opens in 2021 that the Lodge Avenue Flyover and Renwick Road Junction improvements should be completed. The baseline data for 2021 shows that irrespective of when or where any new crossings are implemented these improvements are needed urgently.
- 3.27 The original Thames Gateway Bridge proposal included the plan to link East London Transit 2 with the Greenwich Waterfront Transit. This would also have provided a high quality transit link between Barking and the Royal Docks. Officers recommend that if the Gallions Reach option proceeds that the Council insists that it includes this original ambition thereby improving access from Barking Town Centre to the employment opportunities at the Royal Docks, the proposed Crossrail Station at Custom House and finally the regeneration opportunities in Woolwich.
- 3.28 Linked to this whilst the London Overground extension to Barking Riverside and potentially Abbey Wood is vital to the delivery of Barking Riverside and also the regeneration of Barking Town Centre this does not remove the importance of a link south of the A13 to the Royal Docks. It is therefore recommended that irrespective of which river crossing option is chosen that the Council makes the case for a link road for public transport and local traffic to be provided from River Road to Gallions Reach.
- 3.29 The Mayor's 2050 Infrastructure Plan includes the ambition to further extend London Overground services to Abbey Wood Crossrail Station. Officers recommend that this opportunity is taken to support this proposal which was originally suggested by the Council. However this should not be seen as an alternative to a new road crossing since they achieve different objectives.

### ***Environmental Impacts***

- 3.30 An environmental options study has been carried out by TfL to consider the various environmental impacts of the river crossing options, including the potential impacts on local heritage, ecology, and the environment. The key findings were as follows:
- ***Community and Private Assets:*** No significant impacts are likely to occur with regards to land-take or planned developments at Gallions Reach as the options fall within an area of vacant previously developed land. Demolition of industrial buildings on the south side of the river would be required at Belvedere if this option is taken forward;
  - ***Cultural Heritage:*** Both options would involve some risk of disturbance of archaeological remains;
  - ***Ecology and Nature Conservation:*** No significant adverse impacts on terrestrial ecology were identified for either option. There is the potential for disturbance of protected marine species during construction of the Gallions Reach bridge;
  - ***Effects on all Travellers:*** The Gallions Reach option would alleviate the severance between the communities of Beckton and Thamesmead. The transport links and connectivity are likely to be significantly improved allowing residents to easily access facilities on both sides of the river. The length of journeys between these two residential areas would be significantly reduced. The

Belvedere option would alleviate the severance between the residents of Belvedere and Rainham as well as employees in industrial areas on both sides of the river;

- *Ground Conditions*: There is significant potential for contamination of groundwater and release of ground gas as a result of piling/foundation works at both the Gallions Reach and Belvedere crossings;
- *Materials*: The construction of a bridge at Gallions Reach would likely involve the removal of historic hazardous waste. The bridge option at Belvedere would require the demolition of various existing structures;
- *Water Environment*: Moderate adverse impacts with regards to the water environment are identified primarily with the bridge option at Gallions Reach;
- *Noise and Vibration*: A bridge option at Gallions Reach would result in a major adverse increase in noise levels on the A1020 Royal Docks Road. Increases are also indicated on Royal Albert Way and A117 Woolwich Manor Way. The Belvedere bridge options would lead to noise increases on the A13 close to the junction with Marsh Road, although this is considered to be a moderate adverse impact.
- *Emissions Impact*: Both options appear to have a broadly neutral impact overall but there is the possibility of increases in mono-nitrogen oxide emissions within Newham with a bridge at Gallions Reach, which could influence the concentration of nitrogen dioxide in the area.

3.31 Whichever option(s) is pursued, the study recommends further detailed environmental studies be undertaken and appropriate mitigation measures employed both during construction and operation.

### ***Economic Development Impacts***

3.32 For all four options the increase in access to jobs (by car) is greatest for residents living south of the river since the new crossings would give them access to the jobs north of the river. The increase is significantly less in the opposite direction as residents living in boroughs north of the Thames already have better access by road to jobs in areas such as Canary Wharf and the City. For example, when considering the Gallions Reach option, only a 4% increase in access to jobs is forecast for Barking, whilst the figures for the rest of the borough is 6%. In comparison, the figures for Thamesmead, Erith and Belvedere show increases of 148%, 231% and 211% respectively. There are similar disparities in business accessibility and access to economically active population.

3.33 The corollary of this is that the increase in access to the labour force (by car) is greatest on the north side of the river, because of the increased availability of labour from south of the river. This could potentially stimulate business investment in Barking and Dagenham where although increased access to jobs is modest, there is a more significant increase in the access to labour.

3.34 Therefore, the River Thames is not as much a barrier for residents north of the Thames as it is for those to the south. Consequently, new river crossings could increase the attractiveness of residential development south of the river, particularly in areas such as Thamesmead and Belvedere. That said a new bridge at Belvedere or Gallions Reach could stimulate new retail and leisure development in Barking Town Centre boosting the aspiration for it to become East London's cultural hub. In addition the Belvedere option is forecast to deliver 1700 new homes in London

Riverside and generate a more significant increase in new jobs throughout the borough than the Gallions Reach option through the boost it will give to industrial development and proposals such as the Billingsgate Market.

- 3.35 In conclusion, in terms of access to labour the Gallions Reach option is better for Barking businesses but in terms of access to jobs for local residents and the impact on new development the Belvedere option is better. Therefore the Belvedere option is better for the borough overall economically than the Gallions Reach option however this must be balanced with its marginally worse highway impacts.

#### **4. Consultation**

- 4.1 The River Crossings Consultation began on 7 July 2014 and closes on 12 September 2014. TfL will then review the responses and provide a report to the Mayor on the findings of the consultation, with a decision on which, if any, of the proposals to take forward expected in Spring 2015. In the interim, TfL is planning to undertake further consultation in Autumn 2014 on proposals for a new road tunnel at Silvertown.
- 4.2 In light of the findings outlined in section 3, above, it is recommended that the Council's response:
- Supports both fixed-link road crossings in east London; due to its greater economic benefits Belvedere should be built first and be pursued as a top priority by Transport for London so that it is built by 2025 to support growth in Barking and Dagenham.
  - Requires improvements to the A13, including a replacement flyover at Lodge Avenue and Renwick Road Junction Improvements be completed by 2021 irrespective of which option is pursued;
  - States that if the Belvedere option proceeds then the impacts on boroughs roads to the north and A13 must be assessed in more detail and the appropriate improvements made in advance.
  - States that if the Gallions Reach option proceeds that it must accommodate East London Transit.
  - States that a new road link across the River Roding to Barking Riverside must be provided for local traffic and public transport.
  - Reiterates support for the London Overground extension from Barking Riverside to Abbey Wood, but that this should not be seen as an alternative to the proposed river crossings.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

Implications completed by: Carl Tomlinson, Group Finance Manager

- 5.1 The report recommends that the option to build a bridge at Belvedere is supported although neither of the two proposed bridges will be situated in the Borough. However, due to the close proximity of both options, if either is adopted, there will be significant implications for the Borough's road network and local economy. The earliest that either of the proposed road bridges could be completed is 2022 and, with no certainty of how the national or local economy will be at that time, an accurate assessment of the financial implications of this report is not possible.

- 5.2 If either option is adopted, however, it is likely that traffic flows in the Borough will increase which will result in the need for more frequent and costly repairs to the local road network.
- 5.3 The costs of responding to the consultation exercise and any further consultation that becomes necessary will be met from existing Regeneration and Economic Development budgets.
- 5.4 The cost of any significant traffic surveys will be met by TfL.
- 5.5 The report mentions the need for a number of significant infrastructure improvement projects. These include a replacement flyover on the A13 at Lodge Avenue, improvements to the Renwick Road junction, a road link across the river Roding from River Road to Gallions Reach, improvements to East London Transit and the extension of the London over ground rail network to Barking Riverside.
- 5.6 If any of these projects are progressed, they will be the subject of separate Cabinet reports where the financial implications can be fully assessed. As large infrastructure projects, however, the Authority would not be responsible for their funding, the necessary finance would be provided by TfL with the support of Central Government.

## **6. Legal Implications**

Implications completed by: Paul Field, Senior Governance Lawyer

- 6.1 The implications of the proposals could be far reaching in terms of regeneration for the borough together with the effects of greater movement between the borough and south of the Thames. Such considerations and potential opportunities will inform the authority's Local plan going into the future.
- 6.2 The effect of some of the proposal may not only have economic effects but environmental and sustainability impacts too. For example works to the A13 could considerably improve people lives in terms of noise and emissions reductions and open up sites for development. For the Council to shape these proposals it may involve procurement and tending of expertise and such commissioning will be subject to European contract rules.
- 6.3 The Government acknowledges the need for local government to be able to speak up for communities and by Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 ("The Act") introduced a new "general power of competence" for local authorities, defined as "the power to do anything that individuals generally may do" and which expressly includes the power to do something for the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area. This power enables the Council to press its case more broadly for supporting the transport projects outlined in this report than on planning interests alone should Members so decide.
- 6.4 As the options crystallise there is likely to be a need to commission consultancy advice on the specific steps and measures the Council will need to take to secure the best interests of the community should the decision to construct a new crossing be finalised. As observed above the Council has the power to do so.

## 7. Other Implications

- 7.1 **Risk Management** – The report details the impacts of the river crossing options. Depending on the option(s) progressed; the Council will lobby TfL to ensure appropriate mitigation measures are put in place to alleviate these issues/risks. In the case of the Belvedere Option this means a detailed study of impacts on roads to the north of the A13 and in the case of the Gallions Reach option a study on impacts on roads within Barking Town Centre and in particular the A406/London Road junction. The Council will ask for Transport for London to undertake these studies and ensure appropriate funding for mitigation is provided on borough roads.
- 7.2 **Staffing Issues** – The location of a new river crossing at either Gallions Reach or Belvedere may result in reduced journey times to work for some Barking & Dagenham employees, particularly those living in south east London. However, the latter option may lead to increased congestion on certain parts of the borough road network, which in turn could lead to increased delays/journey times.
- 7.3 **Corporate Policy and Customer Impact** – The creation of a new river crossing has the potential to help grow the borough by providing residents and businesses with improved access to new/alternative job opportunities and markets through reduced journey times between east and south east London.
- 7.4 **Safeguarding Children** – The location of a new river crossing at either Gallions Reach or Belvedere may result in increased traffic flows on different parts of the borough road network, which in turn could lead to an increase in road casualties. This is a particular issue given the borough's growing population and, in particular, the large increase in the number of children. Therefore appropriate mitigation measures will be necessary on borough roads to deter rat running especially by HGVs.
- 7.5 **Health Issues** – Air quality adjacent to some sections of the borough's highway network is already poor and there are concerns that any increase in traffic flows as a result of the proposals could exacerbate the problem. Further analysis of the traffic and environmental impacts of all the options, and in particular the Gallions Reach and Belvedere bridge options, is required to understand the potential impacts to peoples' health. However a greater concern is the growth in traffic levels forecast up to 2021 which is a more significant issue than the more modest impact of the river crossing options.
- 7.6 **Crime and Disorder Issues** – Any future river crossing in the area would need to provide safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion.
- 7.7 **Property / Asset Issues** – The location of a new river crossing at either Gallions Reach or Belvedere may result in increased traffic flows on different parts of the borough road network, which in turn could lead to increased wear and tear on our highway assets and the requirement for more frequent, costly repairs.

**Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:**

- Consultation document on options for new river crossings in East London, TfL, July 2014;
- Crossing options Technical Reports (Engineering, Environment, Regeneration and Traffic).

**List of appendices:** None.