

## Response to proposals for a new river crossing between Rotherhithe and Canary Wharf

08 January 2018

1. London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) is the largest capital-focused business advocacy organisation representing the interests of over 3,000 companies from small and medium-sized enterprises through to large, multi-national corporates. Our member companies operate within a wide range of sectors across all 33 London local authority areas – genuinely reflecting the broad spectrum of London business opinion.
2. As the voice of London business, we seek to promote and enhance the interests of the capital's business community through representations to central government, the Mayor and London Assembly, Parliament and media, as well as international audiences. Through member surveys and commissioned research, LCCI seeks to inform and shape debate on key business issues.
3. The business community in East London is strongly represented amongst LCCI membership, particularly through our East London Chamber of Commerce branch.

### Do you support a new river crossing between Rotherhithe and Canary Wharf for pedestrians and cyclists?

4. LCCI believes that new East London river crossings have a vital role to play in securing the capital's competitive future, and we have actively campaigned on the issue in recent years through our 'Bridge East London' campaign<sup>1</sup>.
5. **The lack of fixed river crossings east of Tower Bridge has hampered the sub region's economic development for decades.** The combination of over congested, low-resilience and archaic road river crossings in East and South-East London means that an important area of the capital is relatively inaccessible compared to other parts of London.
6. An additional tunnel at Silvertown is vital to relieve congestion at the Blackwall Tunnel, but one new road tunnel alone is not enough to meet the capital's needs. **Therefore, LCCI has advocated multiple new East London fixed river crossings to future-proof the capital as it heads towards 'megacity' status and a population of 10million plus.**
7. East London's transformation over the past few decades has been aided by crucial transport investments like the construction of the DLR, the Jubilee Line Extension and London City Airport. However, parts of East and South-East London are still isolated and underdeveloped. Half of London's population calls East London home, yet **there are just two road river crossings east of Tower Bridge.** Without sustained investment in transport infrastructure, the East London success story is at risk.
8. LCCI broadly supports the proposals put forward in Transport for London's (TfLs) consultation on a new river crossing between Rotherhithe and Canary Wharf. By 2020 the capital is forecast to reach a population of nine million and, by 2027 have over ten million citizens. Given over one third of London's population growth over the next decade is forecast to occur in the eastern boroughs of the capital, we agree with the need to consider innovative ways to improve connectivity.

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<sup>1</sup> [LCCI Bridge East London Campaign launches to push for new river crossing](#)

9. However, in relation to the proposal for a new crossing between Rotherhithe and Canary Wharf, LCCI has to emphasize that a river crossing to only facilitate walking and cycling users falls well short of what is required to underpin the development of the sub-region.
10. With London growing to the east with more homes being built and more businesses starting -up in eastern boroughs, there are questions about how to supply and service the area. Freight and deliveries for millions of people do not move on bicycles.
11. We support the proposals with the proviso that its construction should not replace, distract from or make unfeasible new fixed road crossings at Gallions Reach and Belvedere. Rather, this crossing should be seen as complementary to those schemes.
12. We have previously highlighted the essential economic role of being able to move goods and services easily around the capital. LCCI believes, consequently, that to future proof the East London economy TfL's original proposals for fixed road crossings at Gallions Reach and Belvedere – including a public transport element – should be prioritised urgently. We are concerned that under the draft Mayor's Transport Plan, plans for these crossings have been kicked into the long grass.
13. Indeed, following its consultation on proposals for new fixed road crossings in East London at Gallions Reach and Belvedere, TfL noted in 2016 that “there will always be vital delivery (...) trips that cannot be undertaken by public transport” and that “There will continue to be a need for a (...) road network to cater for such journeys”.<sup>2</sup> TfL further noted the ‘overwhelming’ public support for Silvertown, Gallions Reach and Belvedere<sup>3</sup>.
14. Additionally, at this early stage of the project we are concerned about how the project will be funded. At approximately £225-300 million<sup>4</sup>, on the face of it the cost of the project could stand at almost double the direct costs of the Silvertown tunnel (once finance repaid during the operating period is taken into account)<sup>5</sup>.
15. At this early stage, the only certainty is that these costs will be met by TfL's £550m Growth Fund. However, given the budgetary constraints TfL is currently facing it would be prudent to include a full costing and economic case as early as possible so the project can be fully scrutinised and considered against other priority projects.
16. Although options for location and height are given in the consultation, questions remain over the operation of the bridge and whether it would have to be closed for extended periods to handle river traffic. It is vital that the designs for new crossings cater for all different types of transport users, and are fully integrated into the existing public transport network. These issues must be resolved through detailed consultation and planning. Recent projects such as the Garden Bridge Project have underlined the importance of this approach.

## **Conclusion**

17. LCCI broadly supports a new river crossing between Rotherhithe and Canary Wharf if the project is fully integrated into existing plans for river crossings across East London. Our goal remains a full range of crossings to secure region's future growth and prosperity.

## **Further information**

18. LCCI would be happy to clarify or provide further comment on any matter raised within this response.

Please contact:

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<sup>2</sup> [TfL: Gallions Reach and Belvedere river crossings](#)

<sup>3</sup> [TfL: Overwhelming support for further river crossings in east London to help support growth](#)

<sup>4</sup> [TfL: A new river crossing between Rotherhithe and Canary Wharf: Factsheet 2](#)

<sup>5</sup> [TfL: Programmes and Investment Committee](#)

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