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A new river crossing between Rotherhithe and Canary Wharf

I have for a very long time supported a pedestrian and cycling bridge between Rotherhithe and Canary Wharf and I am delighted that this consultation is now taking place.

Such a crossing will help ease overcrowding for users of the Jubilee Line (where overcrowding is already a very severe issue, especially at Canada Water tube station) as well as on the East London Overground line. It will also create an alternative for bus users and motorists who face congestion in many places, especially near to the Rotherhithe road tunnel.

The proposed crossing will provide new travel options for pedestrians and especially cyclists from places such as Rotherhithe and Bermondsey, but also communities in many parts of north Lewisham and Greenwich, who frequently have no other options but to use Tower Bridge or the Greenwich or Woolwich foot tunnels when wishing to cross the Thames. The bridge will also help address some of the transport challenges that the creation of new development at Convoys Wharf will inevitably create. The new crossing will furthermore provide new travel options and opportunities for many people living in Tower Hamlets, including the ability to access some wonderful open spaces in the Rotherhithe area.

The new crossing will play a critical role in making a large part of east London easier to travel around by foot or bicycle. It will help to deliver many economic, environmental and health benefits for Londoners for decades to come.

In terms of specific comments I would advocate the following:

- Any bridge should be fully accessible and open to pedestrian and cyclists 24-hours a day (subject to only the periods when it needs to open for shipping)
- I strongly support proper segregation between cyclists and pedestrians on the bridge. It should be possible for pedestrians, whatever their age or ability, to safely walk across the Thames, without being hindered by cyclists, especially those travelling at relatively high speeds. At the same time cyclists should be able to ride across the bridge unhindered by having to negotiate past pedestrians. Ensuring that the needs of all pedestrians and cyclists are fully met will be critical to the long term success of the bridge.
- On fine balance, of the three potential crossings for a bridge, my preference would be for a crossing between Nelson's Dock Pier to Westferry Circus as this would appear to have the lowest impact on residents while providing a direct route through Pearson's Park to Salter Road and the cycle network. There are

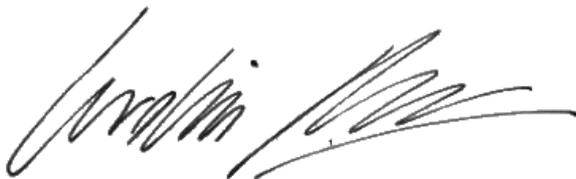
also key advantages for the landing being at Westferry Circus on the north side of the bridge.

- In terms of making a success of the bridge I would stress the importance of the crossing being of a high architectural standard and pleasing to the eye. The bridge should be an attraction in itself, as well as serving practical transport needs.
- I fully appreciate that the height of the bridge is a very complex issue, with competing pressures involving minimising cost of delivery; meeting the needs of people who want to cross the Thames without being disrupted by regular openings of the bridge everyday; the needs of shipping that needs to travel down the Thames and the need to minimise the landing space of a crossing on either side of the Thames. In terms of ensuring that the bridge does not regularly have to close to pedestrians and cyclists and reduces disruption to river transport I can see the merits of the bridge being on the higher range of the height options, although I would stress that this option must be coupled with a well designed bridge to ensure local residents find this option fully acceptable.

My last comment is that success of the proposed crossing cannot be seen in isolation from any other policies. The successful delivery (to a high standard) of Cycle Superhighway 4 is vital and indeed its route should be extended out to Woolwich. The further developments of Quietways are also vital. In addition the absence of the Cycle Hire Scheme in the Rotherhithe and Bermondsey area must be urgently addressed, with the scheme extended out to Rotherhithe before the bridge is opened.

To conclude I fully support a pedestrian and cycle crossing between Rotherhithe and Canary Wharf. Such a crossing is long overdue and if delivered to a high architectural standard has the potential to bring immense benefits to everyone in its locality.

Caroline Pidgeon AM

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Caroline Pidgeon', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Liberal Democrat London Assembly Member