

# Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM

City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
London SE1 2AA  
Tel: 020 7983 4000  
Web:  
[www.london.gov.uk](http://www.london.gov.uk)

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Howard Carter  
General Counsel  
Transport for London  
55 Broadway  
LONDON  
SW1H 0BD

Dear Howard,

## **Concerns about the selection process - Rotherhithe to Canary Wharf Bridge**

I am writing to you to raise some very serious concerns that I have with the selection process for the design options for the proposed Rotherhithe to Canary Wharf pedestrian and cycle bridge.

In recent weeks I have twice raised a number of questions and concerns directly with the Commissioner of Transport for London, Mike Brown. On both occasions the project sponsor has replied, and the Commissioner has refused to look into the issues I have raised. It is due to the unsatisfactory nature of the replies that I have received so far that I have decided to take up this issue directly with you, whilst also bringing my serious concerns to the attention of the Mayor of London, the Deputy Mayor for Transport and the Chair of TfL's Audit and Assurance Committee.

I strongly support an open procurement process which should avoid any potential for conflicts of interest, whilst actively seeking ideas that have the potential to bring benefits for the public. However, the current process rules out a design from the start, without allowing any independent assessment.

My understanding is that TfL has appointed and paid for services from Arcadis (with expenditure already between £0.5m to £1.00m). Arcadis have clearly recommended to TfL that a bascule design bridge should not be considered.

Despite TfL officers claiming that a bascule design has not been ruled out, the framework bidders will inevitably be influenced by the Arcadis report, leading to the exclusion of a locally well-known and long standing architectural practice with a design for a bascule bridge, and potentially other designs from other companies for a bascule bridge.

I appreciate that a number of documents are not yet fully in the public domain, but I have seen the Arcadis reports and other documentation and there are a number of

specific points that I wish to highlight having had a chance to examine the detailed documentation.

## 1. Arcadis Report on Typologies

This was issued as part of the documents given to the multi-disciplinary teams invited to bid to develop the single design for consultation. Page 10 of the Arcadis Report states;

### *"Conclusion*

*The type of openable bridges has been reduced to 2 options:*

- *Lift Bridge*
- *Double Leaf Swing Bridge*

*These options have been compared and have been found to have different advantages and disadvantages. Further work has to be done to better define the constraints and requirements of a moveable bridge for the Rotherhithe to Canary Wharf crossing to assist with the development of **these** options." (My emphasis)*

## 2. TfL's Scope for Rotherhithe to Canary Wharf Crossing Engineers & Architects

In TfL's own document issued to the multi-disciplinary teams invited to bid to develop the single design for consultation, page 12, item 2.4.1 specifically says:

*"The Consultant will take the single preferred option through the Concept Design stage with the **ambition** to improve upon and refine the existing design from the (Arcadis) feasibility study (to be produced by the Employer early 2018)." (My emphasis again)*

I do find it hard to understand how TfL can claim that no options have been excluded, when its own documentation sets out the process of deciding options for the bridge. Indeed, this is confirmed when TfL states:

*"As part of the design, the consultant team will need to provide: 'a' The typology of the bridge, although the feasibility work suggests it will either be a swing or lifting bridge depending on the exact alignment/location, taking into account any PLA requirements and consents."*

It is clear in black and white that the documentation sent to bidders rules out a bascule bridge and therefore this is not the open and transparent process that TfL claims.

### **Further concerns**

A further concern I have is that Arcadis repeatedly make references to supposed technical and operational challenges which they suggest would solely relate to a bascule bridge. For example, it is stated that all people would need to be removed from a bascule bridge before it could be lifted. However, in reality, such challenges would exist with other bridge options as well? The idea that pedestrians and cyclists could realistically be left on a swing or lift bridge while shipping passes through is simply hard to accept.

I am also concerned that TfL appears to be placing no emphasis on the appearance of the bridge for local residents and visitors. Yet a well-designed and appealing bridge will make its progress more acceptable with local residents and businesses and possibly become a further tourist attraction for London.

I am also aware that an independent study was carried out in the preliminary work with Sustrans for a bridge – spending a figure I believe to be around £200,000. In this piece of work it found that a bascule bridge was a suitable option.

Furthermore, how can it be right that TfL has paid for work by a company Arcadis – where they have effectively ruled out one form of bridge, and then the process allows Arcadis to bid for this piece of work. This does not feel comfortable at all and am sure in terms of the public's view, they would think that TfL is not acting properly and allowing all options to be assessed.

I would therefore ask that in your role as General Counsel at TfL you fully investigate the issues I have raised. I would like you to review and consider whether the options for the design of the Rotherhithe to Canary Wharf pedestrian and cycle bridge - whatever its intentions - are in practice being closed down at a premature stage by the process officers have chosen.

I also think clarification is needed as to the role that Arcadis will be playing in the future progress on the design of the bridge. I specifically wish to know whether Arcadis will, in any way, be able to financially benefit from any further stages relating to progressing the design and building of the bridge.

I fully support this bridge, in fact it was a project I put forward and the current Mayor has adopted. However, due to the process which officers have adopted, I fear that TfL may once again face a damaged reputation and potentially a legal challenge unless this process is truly transparent and inclusive and reviewed.

Finally, on grounds of transparency it would be useful if TfL could now publish Arcadis' reports, which have been funded by TfL, in full on TfL's website.

I look forward to a prompt, full and detailed response from you personally on the specific issues I have raised.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely,



**Caroline Pidgeon AM**  
**Liberal Democrat London Assembly member**

CC Mayor of London Sadiq Khan  
Deputy mayor for Transport Val Shawcross  
Chair of TfL's Audit and Assurance Committee Anne McMeel  
Director of Resources GLA Martin Clarke

