

Date: 18 July 2013

Item 12: Garden Bridge

This paper will be considered in public

1 Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to introduce to the Committee the Garden Bridge project, a new footbridge and public open space proposed to be built across the River Thames in Central London. TfL has been asked to help in the feasibility and planning stages of this bridge. There is no funding allocated to this project in the Business Plan, and therefore TfL proposes to proceed on the basis that the cost of construction and future operations will be covered by third party funding. Costs will also be incurred in undertaking this feasibility and planning work; TfL will also seek to recover these costs, but it should be noted that there is a risk that it will not be possible to recover all costs incurred at this stage.
- 1.2 TfL's role also includes assisting with the establishment of an independent charitable entity which, under the proposed delivery structure, will act as the scheme promoter. TfL will assist the charitable entity to raise the third party funding necessary for the scheme to be constructed and maintained and to deliver the scheme; and, potentially, to provide project management expertise during the construction phase.

2 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- (a) note the paper;**
- (b) note that TfL intends to progress with the feasibility and planning stages for the Garden Bridge;**
- (c) note that TfL intends to assist in the establishment of an independent charitable entity, and to provide project management expertise;**
- (d) grant financial and project authority of up to £4m for project development costs for the feasibility and planning stage, provided that further approvals will be sought at the appropriate level if the substance of the proposed delivery structure for the Garden Bridge changes;**
- (e) note that although TfL will seek to recover all expenditure on this project there remains a risk that it will not be possible to recover all costs incurred at this stage.**

3 Background

- 3.1 The Mayor has asked TfL to develop plans for a new footbridge, incorporating a major new garden, across the Thames in Central London between the South Bank and Temple (see Appendix 1). This bridge would provide a valuable new pedestrian route across the Thames helping to improve connectivity for pedestrians while providing a major new open space in the centre of the city. The bridge would contribute to the delivery of a number of policies and proposals in the Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS) and the London Plan including:
- (a) MTS Challenge: Improving transport connectivity, through improved cross-river access and new walking infrastructure;
 - (b) MTS Challenge: Improving accessibility, through a safer and better quality urban realm;
 - (c) MTS Proposal 60: Providing safe, comfortable and attractive environments for pedestrians;
 - (d) London Plan Policy 2.10: the Mayor will improve infrastructure for walking within the Central Activities Zone. The proposed footbridge would provide additional capacity for pedestrians and encourage walking by ensuring an improved public realm, which is supported by Policy 6.1 of the London Plan;
 - (e) the cultural, environmental and urban realm benefits of the proposed bridge are supported by Policies 2.18 (Green Infrastructure), 4.6 (Support for Arts, Culture, Sport and Entertainment Provision), and 7.18 (Protecting Local Open Space);
 - (f) London Plan Policy 6.4: Enhancing London's transport connectivity; and
 - (g) London Plan Policy 6.10: Improving conditions for pedestrians.
- 3.2 TfL has been asked to develop the plans for the proposed bridge on the basis the cost of construction and its future maintenance would be met by third parties and TfL would not be in a position whereby it could be held liable for these costs. TfL is taking the role of "enabler", securing the necessary powers and consents, helping to secure the funding for construction and future maintenance from third parties, helping to establish an appropriate structure for its delivery and, potentially, providing project management expertise during construction. There is no intention that TfL takes ownership of the structure, or responsibility for its ongoing operation and maintenance.

4 Current progress

- 4.1 Following competitions for a concept design and engineering consultants, TfL has procured a design team to develop plans which would be capable of securing the necessary planning consents. This would also enable the costs and risks to be better understood. This team includes Arup, Heatherwick Studio and Dan Pearson (garden design). The design team is now working to develop the original concept into a proposal that could be taken forward as a planning application by April 2014.

- 4.2 There are a number of key issues to consider including the landing points of the proposed bridge and their relationship with existing buildings; the use of materials and the layout/design of the garden. The two local planning authorities (Westminster and Lambeth) are represented at a regular steering group established to oversee the design development. The major landowners affected by the proposals have been contacted and further discussions are planned. To date, all of the discussions with stakeholders have been positive and constructive. The key milestones for the development of the project through the planning stages are:
- (a) June – September 2013: Design development to proposed single option;
 - (b) October – December 2013: Public consultation on the proposal;
 - (c) January – March 2014: Further design development and refinement;
 - (d) April 2014: Planning application submission; and
 - (e) July 2014: Anticipated planning approvals.
- 4.3 A delegation of the Mayor's powers is being progressed to support TfL's involvement in any non-transport elements of the proposed bridge, to be accompanied by a direction that they be used. If made, this will be reported to the Board in due course.

5 Costs and Funding

Costs

- 5.1 Only initial estimates of the cost of the scheme are currently available. These are that its capital cost would be around £60-100m. A firmer cost of the scheme will depend on the final design that is adopted and issues such as the agreed arrangements for landing points. The type of materials used for the bridge construction will also have a material bearing on costs. More detailed information on costs will be available by the end of September 2013, including appropriate allowances for risk.
- 5.2 In addition to the capital cost of the build, there will be a significant running cost associated with the bridge. This includes the cost of "heavy" bridge maintenance as well as the running costs for the garden. There will also be running costs associated with staffing the bridge – for gardeners and, potentially, security. At this stage, an annual running cost estimate of around £3-5m has been assumed. More detailed information on the approach to running costs will be available by the end of September 2013.
- 5.3 The cost incurred by TfL in progressing the work to the securing of planning consent is estimated at around £3-4m. This includes the costs of securing planning and other consents, initial design and development work, public consultation and the setting up of an independent charitable entity which will be responsible for raising the private funding needed to construct the bridge and subsequently to operate and maintain it. Further costs would be associated with

the development of the design beyond planning and the procurement of contractors.

- 5.4 There is no funding allocated to this project in the Business Plan. TfL proposes to proceed on the basis that the cost of construction and future operations will be covered by third party funding. TfL will also seek to recover the costs incurred in undertaking the feasibility and planning work but there is a risk that it will not be possible to recover all costs incurred at this stage. The project would only continue beyond the feasibility and planning phase should the charitable entity be in a position to fund the project; TfL may potentially provide officer support to the charity as described in paragraph 3.2.
- 5.5 TfL will progress the design of the project in accordance with the Gateway process, with a Gate A submission expected in autumn of this year.

Funding

- 5.6 There are a number of parties who have expressed an early interest in potentially funding a sizeable portion of the scheme. However, based on these discussions, it is most likely that more than one funder will be needed to cover all the costs of construction and subsequent operation and maintenance.
- 5.7 At this stage it is too early to say which of these will materialise but a common approach to all of them is the creation of a charitable structure with a company limited by guarantee, responsible for securing the funds and future ownership of the bridge. It will be necessary to ensure that the charitable structure is sufficiently flexible at this stage to work with a number of different funding solutions. The aim would be to have the charity established by September this year, in preparation for the consultation on the bridge proposals.
- 5.8 It will be important that mutually compatible and legally binding funding agreements are in place for all costs associated with the design, construction and ongoing operation and maintenance of the bridge, with the various parties, before procurement of a contractor commences.

6 Potential Delivery Timescale

- 6.1 The timetable for delivery beyond planning will depend on progress with securing third party funding and details of the funder(s). There is a critical interface with the Thames Water Thames Tideway Tunnel project; the new sewer will run underneath the proposed location of the bridge and the river foreshore to the east of Blackfriars Bridge will be used as a worksite during construction. The Port of London Authority has indicated that it would be highly desirable to have construction of any bridge completed by 2017, before significant barge movements associated with the tunnelling work for the Thames Tideway project commence.
- 6.2 Achieving this would mean proceeding from an agreed planning consent in summer of 2014 straight to procurement of a potential contractor (by the charity), who would need to be appointed by early 2015 and commence work in Spring 2015 for approximately two years. This would depend on the following milestones being met:

- (a) June-July 2014: Anticipated planning approvals;
- (b) Spring 2015: Commence construction; and
- (c) Spring 2017: Complete construction.

List of appendices to this report:

Appendix 1: location plan

List of Background Papers:

None

Contact: Michèle Dix, Managing Director, Planning
Number: 020 3054 7099
Email: MicheleDix@tfl.gov.uk

Location plan

