
Garden Bridge Trust

Summary of Public Benefits

October 2014

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1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1.1. The aim of this paper is to explain the public benefits of the proposal to build a Garden Bridge across the River Thames in Central London. The document is split into two sections, the first sets out the public benefits for London and the second focuses on the benefits the bridge will bring for local communities.
- 1.1.2. The Garden Bridge Business Case and documents submitted with the planning application support this note.

2 Public benefits of the bridge

Pedestrian connectivity

- 2.1.1. The bridge will improve pedestrian connectivity by providing a more direct, accessible pedestrian route which is free from traffic and connects Waterloo station and the South Bank to Temple London Underground (LU) station and beyond to the Strand and Covent Garden. It will provide a quicker, safer and more pleasant route for commuters, visitors and for local residents. Pedestrians currently have to walk further than is needed using routes that are busy, polluted and unattractive and this therefore deters walking (Business Case 3.1.2).
- 2.1.2. The ramp and lift access will ensure inclusive access and a safe way for all to cross the river. It is not easy for pedestrians to get on to Waterloo and Blackfriars bridges from the Thames Path, which can act as a barrier or deter the use of these bridges by pedestrians.
- 2.1.3. The distance between Blackfriars and Waterloo bridges is already wider than in many similar cities, and at around 850m at mid-river is more than double the distance between bridges elsewhere in central London (the typical range is 300-400m (Business Case 3.2.3)). The effect is to reduce connectivity and consequently the level of cross river pedestrian journeys that might otherwise take place.
- 2.1.4. Encouraging more journeys on foot will have a positive effect in reducing congestion on the London Underground and on local buses. From Temple LU Station it is only 350 metres to reach the South Bank, but it requires people to double the walk by using Waterloo or Blackfriars Bridge (Business Case 3.2.4). This means that Temple LU station is under utilised while Waterloo and Embankment stations are busy.

2.1.5. Thousands of people move through Waterloo station daily and seek to continue their journeys using bus and underground. If those people had access to a bridge at the proposed location for the Garden Bridge, it would encourage them to walk and relieve pressure on the transport links from Waterloo. It has been estimated that there are 37,600 potentially walkable journeys from Waterloo Station. Currently over a quarter of the commuters with a destination just to the north of Waterloo Bridge do not walk even though it is just a few hundred metres (Business Case 3.2.5). In the 8:00-9:00AM peak hour it is estimated that 156 bus trips out of Waterloo Station could switch mode and walk over the Garden Bridge (Transport Assessment 7.1.17).

Green infrastructure and open space

2.1.6. The bridge will bring a new green space to Central London, a space which local people and visitors will be able to enjoy. The available open space per person is slowly decreasing as London's population increases and the pressure on parks and open spaces in central London is expected to increase even further.

2.1.7. When the Garden Bridge opens, it will provide 8,000 square metres (0.8 hectares) - of public space. The space will be an asset where the local community can relax, unwind and meet friends and family. There will be no vehicles or cycling on the Garden Bridge. It will be a unique new green space in the centre of London. According to Lambeth's Open Space Strategy Addenda, February 2013, there has been a small loss of open space in recent years (0.1 hectares was lost in 2010-11). The Garden Bridge will reverse this situation by providing a net gain. Westminster's Open Space and Green Infrastructure Booklet (July 2014) emphasizes the importance of establishing connections between open spaces and green infrastructure to help to ensure local access to green spaces and enable greater connectivity.

Health

2.1.8. Through the provision of a new green space and a new pedestrian link the bridge will encourage walking. Regular walking is linked with reductions in premature mortality and by encouraging people to walk, it is forecast that the Garden Bridge will prevent 0.37 to 0.70 deaths per year, giving a current value of total benefit of between £12,131,000 and £23,078,000 over the thirty years of the appraisal period. The modelling for this is set out in the Health Impact Assessment submitted with the planning application.

- 2.1.9.** Analysis carried out to compare the difference in walking routes has revealed that routes involving the Garden Bridge have 20% - 30% lower No₂ concentrations. The Garden Bridge will give pedestrians the choice to be able to move away from crossing the river on busy roads with heavy traffic onto a bridge which has no traffic. (Source: The Garden Bridge – Summary of the strategic outline business case, May 2014). Less exposure to air pollution helps to improve health and the quality of life.
- 2.1.10.** Through providing a garden in which people can relax and unwind the bridge will bring psychological benefits (Health Impact Assessment 1.1.7).

Regeneration

- 2.1.11.** As a new crossing point across the River Thames, the Garden Bridge will support regeneration and economic growth on both sides of the river, especially the north bank area and the Waterloo Opportunity Area on the South Bank. The crossing will link the West End, Covent Garden and the City to the South Bank and Waterloo Station
- 2.1.12.** Plans have been started to regenerate the Strand/Aldwych area which is relatively quiet especially at weekends. A North Bank Business Improvement District (BID) has been set up to co-ordinate efforts with major local businesses. The Garden Bridge would enable easier access to this area and in turn contribute to its regeneration through connecting it with the vibrant South Bank. The Garden Bridge Trust (GBT) is committed to working with the North Bank BID to help to achieve its objectives.
- 2.1.13.** More people walking around the city will promote greater footfall for local businesses.

Tourism

- 2.1.14.** London is well established as a tourist destination but its future growth will depend on continuing to attract people from emerging tourist markets and also continuing to innovate with sights that will attract people over the coming decades.
- 2.1.15.** The Garden Bridge is an example of an innovation which refreshes the offer so that previous visitors make repeat visits and new visitors have another reason to visit. Increased tourism leads to increased investment which in turn leads to increased jobs in the local economy on both sides of the river and an increase in total UK tourism revenues.

- 2.1.16.** The bridge will attract visitors from the rest of the country and all around the world, much like the London Eye.
- 2.1.17.** The average holiday visit including a stay in London in 2012 was around 5 nights with an average spend per night of £125. 64% of all overseas visits include seeing a park or garden so if just 5% of those overseas visitors spend an additional hour at the Garden Bridge, the estimated additional annual tourism revenue generated by the Garden Bridge could be in the region of £2.5 million. (Source: The Garden Bridge – Summary of the strategic outline business case, May 2014).

Horticultural knowledge

- 2.1.18.** The Garden Bridge proposal is to host specially chosen plants and trees, selected and presented in a way that promotes horticultural interests and education. The GBT is engaged in dialogue with various institutions, including the Royal Horticultural Society, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew Gardens, the Eden Project, the National Trust and the Jubilee Gardens Trust, enabling it to learn from their vast knowledge and experience. The GBT will look to build on these relationships and to engage more widely with schools and horticultural organisations to share knowledge and understanding and to promote gardening to a wider audience.

3 Benefits for Local People

Employment

- 3.1.1.** The Garden Bridge will generate local employment. There will be a planning obligation with any grant of planning permission to secure the most appropriate package of benefits. The GBT are discussing this with the London Borough (LB) of Lambeth and Westminster City Council.
- 3.1.2.** The Garden Bridge is expected to create employment for 250 full time equivalent (FTE) roles during construction (Business Case 7.3.32). These roles will include apprentices who will learn invaluable new skills enabling them to build a career, or people with experience who may not be currently employed.
- 3.1.3.** Once the Garden Bridge has been constructed, there will be opportunities for further employment. Posts could include gardeners, cleaners and security staff. There would also be related staff employed at the GBT. Jobs will be

available with the GBT, working with local schools and community groups, managing and maintaining the Garden Bridge.

- 3.1.4.** The GBT will establish a Garden Bridge Opportunities Group. This group will include representatives from business, educational institutions, local authorities and key community groups already established on both sides of the river. This group would consider the volunteer programmes, training and development opportunities and apprenticeship programmes. The Opportunities Group would work with business groups to secure a programme of training and employment opportunities that have been made possible through the Garden Bridge.

Schools/Young people

- 3.1.5.** The GBT are committed to involving schools and other local groups in the construction process. The GBT would appoint a Construction Liaison Manager who would be responsible for developing a schools programme to update local schools in the planning and construction of the bridge. They will also organise opportunities for tours, talks and joint project work based around the Garden Bridge.
- 3.1.6.** The GBT envisages working closely with local schools during the operation of the Garden Bridge ensuring they have access to the bridge for educational purposes. This will provide young people with an invaluable opportunity to discover and learn about all aspects of the bridge.
- 3.1.7.** The Garden Bridge Opportunities Group as described above would compile a local schools programme. The aim of this group would be to develop a programme to proactively help young people access new opportunities on either side of the river, which are made possible by the connections created by the Garden Bridge.
- 3.1.8.** A Youth Board would also be established to ensure the interests of young people are properly reflected in the operation of the bridge. The Youth Board would inform other groups and forums, including the Operational Reference Group, the Garden Bridge Forum and the Opportunities Group. The intention would be to have this group in place prior to commencement of construction of the bridge and maintain the group throughout the life of the bridge.

Local involvement

- 3.1.9.** The GBT would establish a Community Liaison Group on both the north and south banks following the grant of planning consent. The purpose of these groups would be to engage with the local communities prior to construction

to understand their concerns and where possible, shape the construction methodology and mitigation. The groups would be retained throughout construction. It is proposed that established local community organisations/groups would be invited to join the Community Liaison Group.

- 3.1.10.** As described above, the GBT would establish the Garden Bridge Opportunities Group. This group would include representatives from community groups. The GBT is committed to facilitating a volunteer programme from the local community and the Opportunities Group would enable this.
- 3.1.11.** The Opportunities Group would also provide the mechanism for continued collaboration and partnerships with local organisations based in Lambeth and Westminster such as Roots and Shoots, the Garden Museum, Coran's Fields and the Northbank BID. The Trust is keen to involve as many local organisations as possible, and continues to actively engage with volunteering groups.

Local green space

- 3.1.12.** The Garden Bridge would provide the local community with a new green space.
- 3.1.13.** The public consultation undertaken for the scheme has demonstrated that residents want new green spaces and parks, designed with residents in mind rather than tourists. They aspire to places where they can meet without having to buy food and drink. The Garden Bridge will work with the local community to meet that community aspiration.
- 3.1.14.** The GBT would establish a Garden Bridge Forum to discuss the events strategy and programme. Local authorities, stakeholders and community representatives would be invited to join the forum. The forum would provide the opportunity to work together to research and generate ideas for community related events, including events specifically for local communities and stakeholders.
- 3.1.15.** The GBT is committed to providing a high quality public space. The Garden Bridge draft Operation and Management Plan (OMP) sets out some of the procedures and principles to ensure that the Garden Bridge is properly maintained. The final OMP will be a condition on any grant of planning permission. The Garden Bridge Trust would set up an Operational Reference Group. This group would be established in early 2015 to help inform the emerging OMP. This forum would be attended by senior

operations managers from organisations both sides of the river, including both LB of Lambeth and Westminster City Council. The group would continue post opening of the Garden Bridge to coordinate event management, safety & security and accessibility.

4 Next Steps

- 4.1.1.** This report has identified some of the key public and local benefits of the Garden Bridge. The GBT are committed to delivering these benefits. The GBT will discuss the best planning mechanism for securing these benefits with Westminster City Council and the LB of Lambeth