River Action Plan
2012 was a momentous year for London — and the River Thames played a major part in its success. Londoners and hoards of visitors flocked to the riverside in their masses to marvel at the splendour of the Diamond Jubilee pageant and vast numbers travelled to the Olympic and Paralympic Games via its slick, silvery stream.

The river’s vital role as both an artery for transporting people through the heart of London and as a playground for people to explore the wonders of the city were on show for the world to see. A trip along the Thames reveals 2,000 years of riparian history. From the Roman walls at Tower Hill, and the Victorian wharves and warehouses to the soaring peak of The Shard — providing a stunning vista of London’s past and present.

I am determined to capitalise on the achievements of the past year and to safeguard the river’s central role in the future success of our great city. That is why I have set a target to increase passenger journeys on the Thames to 12 million a year by 2020 and maximise its potential for river travel.

Transport for London (TfL) has identified £10m of investment to make these improvements. This will enable us to increase capacity at Embankment, Westminster and Bankside Piers, as well as transforming the signage, information and ticketing facilities. We will also be rolling-out iBoat real-time arrivals information across piers, introducing the new contactless ‘Wave and Pay’ ticketing on river services, and delivering new cycle parking and cycle hire facilities by the river.

These improvements will also encourage new developments to emerge along the river and with them new pier facilities, like the one at Plantation Wharf. TfL will be working with developers and planners and other stakeholders to maximise opportunities for new piers. This will enable us to collaboratively expand and progress the true potential of the River Thames in modern day London.

Boris Johnson
Mayor of London
The Mayor and TfL want river services to become a truly integral part of the transport network in the Capital. After all, the river offers a relaxing way of travelling across the city, an appealing form of transport for commuters and an exciting attraction for visitors. However, the Mayor and TfL recognise that London’s river passenger services are not yet reaching their full potential and that action is required to bring about transformational change.

This plan outlines a number of specific measures to be taken by TfL and other stakeholders to help boost the number of river trips in line with achieving the Mayor’s target of 12 million passenger journeys a year by 2020.
Chapter 2

Demand for river services

The use of the river for passenger and freight travel has long provided an important component of transport and tourism in London.

Around 6.5 million passenger journeys were made on the Thames in 2011/12. Total journeys on the river for the current year to 31 March 2013 are expected to be at a similar level. While there has been continued growth in river bus, tour and charter journeys, total journeys have been offset by a drop in journeys made on the Woolwich Ferry, reflecting the fall in traffic levels experienced during the Games.

As shown in Figure 1, use of river services has increased over the past 10 years. This rise has been driven by a growing number of attractions and developments along the river, as well as substantial investment in services by TfL and the operators.

During 2012/13, TfL has been evaluating the adoption of an alternative method for counting passenger journeys made on the river. This is based on an internationally recognised mandatory ‘Automatic Identification System’ (AIS), which uses more accurate actual passenger count data collected by boat crews in real-time. TfL is proposing to move to AIS data from April 2013.

Barriers to growth
There remains a range of factors affecting the wider expansion of passenger services on the Thames. These include:

- Lack of public awareness of river services, particularly for tourists
- Cost of travel, particularly for commuters
- Lack of integration with other parts of London’s transport network
- Constraints on pier capacity in central London
- Journey times for commuting passengers
- Gaps in the pier network outside central London
- Many different pier owners, leading to inconsistency in pier facilities and appearance
- Lack of boatyards to ensure adequate capacity for the maintenance of boats and piers
New opportunities for passenger growth
Significant opportunities lie in serving the major developments being built or planned along the Thames and in capturing more of London’s growing tourism.

In particular, TfL believes customer demand will come from:

- Links from new riverside residential developments in west London, central London, Canary Wharf and the wider Thames Gateway, plus new cross-river links for passengers in east London (potentially an additional 1.5 million journeys a year by 2020)
- Connections from inner-London riverside developments and town centres in both east and west London to the City and Westminster (potentially an extra 0.5 million journeys a year by 2020)
- Expansion of the river tours market by capturing a higher proportion of the growing number of visitors to London with new experiences and new destinations (potentially another two million trips a year by 2020)
- A new cruise ship terminal at Enderby Wharf
- Continued growth in riverside tourism and leisure in the Greenwich area following the re-opening of the Cutty Sark, the launch of the Emirates Air Line cable car, and on the South Bank with the relocation of the London Dungeon next to the London Eye
- Population and employment growth, resulting in more river passenger journeys

Understanding growth potential
TfL has identified piers located in Opportunity Areas (as set out in the Mayor’s London Plan), where the possibility for growth is greatest. It is estimated that by 2031, riverside Opportunity Areas could account for 100,000 new homes and 220,000 new jobs.

Work to understand further the potential of Opportunity Areas for increasing use of the river by 2020 is being carried out by TfL. This will validate the plans for piers that require specific enhancement and, in particular, where new piers are needed.

TfL has established a survey covering travel behaviour and passenger opinions about current services; the results of the first survey using this methodology are now being reviewed. The results, plus research into London’s growth areas, will help TfL build a computer model during 2013 to analyse future demand.

It is expected that this future growth of passenger demand on the river will be supplied by river bus services, river tours and charter services. Underpinning this growth and outlined in this plan will be:

- Improvement and development of piers, both east and west of central London
- Improved pier facilities to enhance the customer experience and create additional capacity
- Better visibility, information and integration of river services
- Improvement in the quality of the public realm integrating the river pier to the city and other transport interchanges
- Enhancing ‘place’ value of piers for tourists as well as locals
- Provision of new and more frequent routes by boat operators
- Improved real-time information, including online and mobile apps
- Improved marketing and branding by TfL and operators and the introduction of more innovative tourist services and higher-quality vessels by leisure operators
- Better promotion of the Thames as a destination
- Improved group embarkation facilities, including coach parking
- Providing new cross-river links for passengers in east London

These and other actions are grouped into four key themes: better piers, better information and integration, better partnership working, and better promotion and better partnership working. Chapter 4 provides more details.

Use of the river for freight
Freight transport on the Thames within London is expected to increase substantially over the next 10 years or so, primarily owing to a commitment by major infrastructure projects, including the Thames Tideway Tunnel and Northern line extension, to maximise use of the river, but also through increasing modal shift. The Port of London Authority (PLA) is confident that the Thames can accommodate this predicted rise in freight movements, together with the proposed increase in passenger journeys. Where there are local issues, these will be managed by the PLA.

Consultation on options for new river crossings in east and southeast London
TfL has recently consulted on new river crossing options in east London. These include the possibility of a new ferry service at Gallions Reach which could be in place by 2017.

Pedestrians and cyclists would benefit from improved comfort, convenience and service information at the terminals and on board vessels. High-quality walking and cycle routes to the terminals would also be provided.
There are many organisations involved in facilitating and providing river services. The River Concordat Group was launched by the Mayor in April 2009 to promote greater use of the river through improved integration and to ensure readiness for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. It brought together more than 40 organisations including the PLA, the Greater London Authority (GLA), the Olympic Delivery Authority, TfL, river service providers and ‘riparian’ boroughs (which are those that border the river).

To meet the Mayor’s target of 12 million passenger journeys on the river by 2020, a smaller TfL-led Concordat Steering Group has been formed, meeting every two months, to discuss more strategic issues on the river and to oversee the delivery of this plan. The wider Concordat Forum will meet once a year to ensure the continued support and involvement of the wider river community, supplemented by regular communication with members.

Achievements to date
Since 2009, the River Concordat Group has achieved a number of significant milestones, including:

- Extensions to Tower and London Eye Piers, providing improved passenger facilities and extra capacity for increased services
- New piers opened at Imperial Wharf and St George Wharf, Vauxhall
- The extension of Oyster pay as you go fares on Thames Clippers’ river bus services
- A new roof installed on Greenwich Pier, benefiting passengers who used the facility during the 2012 Games and providing a key legacy
- Improved visibility of signs at piers
- Development of new passenger services maps and identity branding for river bus and river tours services
- Consistently high customer satisfaction scores

In addition, passenger numbers have increased by more than 25 per cent in the last four years and the Mayor and TfL want to build on this success by further improving and expanding river passenger services in London.
The Mayor and TfL will focus their efforts to develop river services to achieve the target of 12 million passenger journeys on the river by 2020. TfL’s Business Plan has allocated £10m over the lifetime of this plan to help finance the measures, with further funding anticipated to come from partners and commercial development. In addition, there will be direct benefits to river passengers of other multi-million pound TfL projects such as Barclays Cycle Superhighways, the expansion of Barclays Cycle Hire, Legible London wayfinding and the next generation ‘wave and pay’ ticketing system.

This River Action Plan sets out a number of clear and focused measures that will address the main barriers to growth on the river and transform the experience of accessing river services, whether for business or pleasure.

The actions are grouped into four themes:

1. Better piers – to ensure that London’s piers are strategically located, highly visible, attractive to use and provide sufficient capacity to accommodate the growth in services

2. Better information and integration – to provide clearer, simpler information about the services on offer, where to find them and how to access them

3. Better promotion – to promote the river as an integral part of London life, a key part of the transport mix and an unforgettable tourist experience

4. Better partnership working – to work more collectively with boat operators, London & Partners, boroughs along the river, the PLA, developers and others to increase further passenger journeys on the river

Over the course of this plan TfL’s focus will be to enable the growth of river passenger services through improving piers, information and integration, and promotion to enable the commercial boat operating companies to invest in new boats and to develop and expand their services.
Better piers

Passenger piers are the gateway to river travel. Improving access to piers and the experience of using them are vital to attract more people to the river and enhance the journey experience. It is essential to improve the management and operation of piers to enable operators to use the pier efficiently and provide smooth and reliable services. It is also important to encourage high-quality design that makes the piers ‘places’ linking the city to the river.

TfL has identified a network of key piers for improvement. These are in locations already served by river bus and/or river tour and charter services, usually where there is also a major interchange close by.
By 2020, the aim is that the London passenger pier network will have expanded to serve a number of key new developments along the river, including Battersea Power Station and locations in the Thames Gateway. It is expected that within this timescale at least three new piers will be opened. Of the potential piers highlighted on the map on the right, Plantation Wharf, Battersea Power Station and Enderby Wharf have all been given planning consent and are committed, commercially funded projects.
Actions to deliver better piers will include:

I. A consistent pier experience
   • TfL will improve the experience of locating and using piers by developing a consistent ‘look and feel’ for all of its piers. They will have:
     - Standardised illuminated signage
     - More consistent ticketing facilities
     - Visibility enhancements
     - Clearer branding and information
   
   This work will begin with two ‘pier pilot’ upgrade projects at Westminster Pier and Embankment Pier during 2013.

   • TfL will work with private pier owners to roll out the improvements from the pilots to strategic private piers, for example branded ‘archway’ entry to the pier.

II. Efficient management of the piers
   • As demand for river services grows, the effective management of piers is increasingly important to ensure the smooth and safe movement of passengers. Through the training and development of pier staff, TfL will ensure consistently excellent standards of customer care. TfL will also encourage its pier staff and boat crews to work together and make the most of available berthing capacity. This will be achieved by introducing a berthing plan during 2013 at all TfL piers to make best use of the available time slots.

   • At the busiest piers used by river bus, river tour and charter services, it is beneficial to separate berthing and queuing arrangements for the different types of service. During 2013, TfL will implement queuing arrangements at Tower and Greenwich Piers. At Westminster, Embankment and Bankside Piers, this will be done following extension work to create the additional berthing and passenger capacity referred to in section III.
III. Infrastructure improvements to the pier network

- A new pier is expected to open at Plantation Wharf (near Battersea) during 2013. During the lifetime of the plan, other key piers may open serving new developments including Battersea Power Station, the eastern side of the Canary Wharf peninsula and the western side of the North Greenwich peninsula, and the Thames Gateway. TfL will work with the boat operators to encourage them to provide regular services to these piers as they are added to the network.

- TfL will create additional berthing and passenger capacity at Westminster, Embankment and Bankside Piers by the end of 2015 to unblock limitations to the further growth of services through central London.

- The Mayor has identified Opportunity Areas where the majority of new housing and employment land will be delivered. Through the planning process, TfL and the GLA will work with local planners, developers, commercial partners and the PLA, to maximise opportunities for new strategic piers and ensure that they are served by river services. Specifically:
  - Where new development has been agreed - working with the developer, local planning authority and river passenger service operator to maximise the integration of existing or planned piers with the development and local transport network.
  - For developments seeking planning permission along the river, working with developers and river passenger service operators to identify opportunities to enhance existing piers or develop new ones, as set out in London Plan policy 7.25 and Mayor’s Transport Strategy Proposal 37.
  - Working with boroughs and the GLA to help develop masterplans for redevelopment areas; identifying levels of demand, assessing viability, and developing a strategy to market the service(s), develop wayfinding and pier infrastructure.
  - Working with boroughs contributing to their Local Plans and Infrastructure Delivery Plans, identifying opportunities for development of new river piers for passenger services.
  - The Further Alterations of the London Plan being published later this year provide an opportunity to make specific references to this Action Plan. It will also be included in the next update of the London Plan Implementation taking place in summer 2013.
  - TfL is already working with Thames Water to relocate Blackfriars Pier by 2015 to accommodate construction of the Thames Tideway Tunnel. The existing pier will be replaced by a new one with better accessibility and more space for passengers and boats.

- Feasibility studies will be undertaken at these three piers by September 2013 with the aim of developing two piers as destinations or ‘places’ in themselves. This will require a financial contribution from a joint developer or sponsor.

- TfL and the GLA will pursue opportunities to introduce permanent and temporary public art and signage at the piers which celebrate the river’s role in the history and evolution of London.

IV. Piers as destinations

- TfL will explore the concept of ‘piers as places’ with the aim of attracting more people to the riverside and then onto one of the river services on offer. In particular, TfL will look at Westminster Pier, a popular pier which could benefit from improvements to the surrounding area and to the overall visitor experience. In addition, TfL will investigate the possibility of upgrading piers such as Festival and Bankside, which would benefit from additional amenities on or nearby the pier. There are opportunities to explore high-quality public realms including small river plazas, seating, weather protection and other such facilities that make piers more attractive as public places.

- Feasibility studies will be undertaken at these three piers by September 2013 with the aim of developing two piers as destinations or ‘places’ in themselves. This will require a financial contribution from a joint developer or sponsor.

- TfL and the GLA will pursue opportunities to introduce permanent and temporary public art and signage at the piers which celebrate the river’s role in the history and evolution of London.
Passengers’ experience of river travel in London is shaped by the quality of the service information they receive before setting off. To encourage more use of the river as a form of transport, TfL needs to provide clear information on available services, how to access them and ensure excellent interchange.

In customer research, both commuters and tourists identify information provision and clear signage to piers as the most important improvements TfL can make. Measures TfL and its partners will introduce to achieve this will include:

**Clear wayfinding and signage to enable seamless interchange**

- During 2013, TfL will install Legible London wayfinding at all TfL piers. This will improve pier visibility, onward travel information (including to local attractions) and the visitor experience. This will require the cooperation of riverside boroughs.

- By 2014, TfL will ensure consistent interchange announcements for river services are included on all relevant Underground and Docklands Light Railway (DLR) services and stations and on London’s buses using the electronic iBus announcement system.

- TfL will work with the riverside boroughs and developers to ensure that all routes between piers and nearby Underground, DLR, rail and bus station interchanges have clear and highly-visible signs installed to make it easier to navigate to and from piers by 2014. TfL will work closely with Network Rail to ensure that river services are fully integrated into station upgrade programmes, including Blackfriars, London Bridge and Vauxhall.

**Real-time information**

- TfL will provide improved real-time ‘iBoat’ information on all piers served by river bus services to include the Putney - Blackfriars service, during 2013.

- TfL will release this iBoat data onto the ‘GLA datastore’ to encourage developers to produce new real-time arrival and departure apps.

- TfL will update its website and integrate all river-related information in one place (see Marketing and branding on p.25) to make sure river services are made prominent and improve the links between the river pages on the TfL and London & Partners websites.

**Integrated river services**

- Most river bus services are accessible to cyclists. As part of TfL’s ongoing cycle parking programme, the provision of secure and visible cycle parking near piers will be improved.

- During 2013, TfL will explore the possibility of providing Barclays Cycle Hire docking stations in the vicinity of strategic piers within the scheme area.

- In developing the central London ‘cycling grid’ with boroughs, TfL will ensure integration with strategic piers where possible.

- During 2013, TfL will liaise with the coach industry and the relevant highway authorities with the aim of improving provision of coach pick-up and set-down stops near to piers heavily used by coach companies. These include Millbank, Embankment, Westminster, Greenwich and North Greenwich.

- TfL will ensure that the new contactless ‘wave and pay’ ticketing system is capable of supporting the fare systems that apply to river services. With delivery by 2016, this will offer passengers a new and convenient way to pay for river services, supporting the development and availability of ‘off-boat’ ticketing.

- TfL will install the river bus and tours maps at all riverside ticket kiosks, at all piers, and nearby rail and Tube stations by June 2013.
Better promotion

The Thames has always been vital to London and it remains significant to London life today. It offers an important commuter artery from west to east and a stunning backdrop to explore and enjoy the city’s cultural heritage and riverside attractions.

TfL and the GLA intend to increase awareness of the river as both an important, reliable and comfortable mode of commuter transport and as a top tourist attraction. TfL and the GLA will work with the boat operators and tourist industry to foster further growth in the market for river tours and make taking a river trip a key part of a visit to London. Measures to achieve this will include:

**Marketing and branding**

During 2013, TfL will:

- Work with London & Partners to develop a marketing campaign to target domestic and international markets to position river tours as a top tourist ‘experience’ and a key part of a visit to London. This will be designed to complement the marketing initiatives of individual boat operators.

- Work with boat operators to engage with train and coach operators to market bundled ticketing promotions for commuters and leisure travellers.

- Promote the integration of walking the Thames Path with taking a boat journey.

- Work with the GLA, PLA, riverside boroughs and other stakeholders to explore options for promoting river services during the ‘off-season’ when demand is lower. This would involve assessing the feasibility of a winter festival on the Thames and the use of illuminations on bridges and along the embankments.

- Investigate the development of a new river Twitter feed.

By 2014, TfL’s website and Journey Planner will have been completely redeveloped. As part of this work, TfL will deliver improvements including:

- Live departures information for river bus services.

- Journey Planner river information presented on an equal footing to all other modes. A ‘near me’ feature will allow users to discover nearby piers as well as other transport modes and make a trade-off between journey time and ambience. For some customers, the nearest river pier may be further away than a Tube, rail, or bus facility, however river services may offer a more pleasant journey, especially at peak times. This approach is similar to the ‘I don’t mind walking’ option on TfL’s current Journey Planner.

- From autumn 2013, additional personalisation options providing opportunities to target river messages at customers.

**Engagement**

- During 2013, TfL will encourage and support boat operators to participate in local business forums and get involved with ‘community partner’ shops and attractions around piers.

- During 2013, TfL and the GLA will bring all the Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)/large developers together to discuss future investment in river services.

- TfL will also continue to engage with BIDs and business areas, including the South Bank and Embankment, to promote local river travel and river integration.
There is widespread support for making greater use of the river. However, it is clear that this will only happen through the continued success of partnership working. The success of the River Action Plan will depend on the sustained support and commitment to river services from members of the River Concordat, including the GLA, PLA, river operators, boroughs along the river, as well as developers and BIDs.

**Collaborative effort**

- Throughout 2013 and beyond, TfL will lead the River Concordat Steering Group to monitor delivery of the River Action Plan and discuss strategic issues affecting river passenger services
- During 2013, TfL will ensure effective engagement with sub-regional borough forums on issues regarding river services
- In addition, the River Concordat Group will continue to address the following issues on the River Thames:
  - Boatyards: TfL and the GLA are working with the river industry to create a new boatyard facility on the Thames in London by 2018 and ensure adequate capacity for the maintenance of boats and piers
  - Skills: TfL and the GLA will continue to support the Thames Training Alliance, which aims to improve standards of training for boat crews to ensure greater availability of suitably-skilled staff for expanding river services
  - Environment: TfL will work to encourage boat operators to adopt ‘eco-driving’ and explore other technical innovations (such as hybrid engine technology) to minimise the environmental footprint of river services
  - Safety and security: During 2013, TfL will conduct safety and security audits of all of its passenger piers, working in collaboration with the Metropolitan Police and the PLA on any required improvements
- During 2013, TfL’s Commercial Development Team will investigate and evaluate commercial opportunities, including sponsorship and advertising
Chapter 5
Implementation of the plan

Throughout the delivery of the River Action Plan, TfL will work closely with commercial boat operators to ensure that measures being taken will enable them to expand and improve services to meet the Mayor’s target of 12 million journeys a year by 2020.

The growth in demand is expected to reflect the three main delivery phases of the plan:

1. 2013 – 2014: improved pier management, signage and integration, plus new promotional activity
2. 2014 – 2015: completion of physical works to expand the capacity of key piers
3. Beyond 2015: occupation of new riverside developments

TfL’s Business Plan has allocated £10m to help finance the measures in this River Action Plan. Further funding is anticipated to come from partners and commercial development. The spend of £10m will follow standard TfL processes and any large spend will go through the business case approval process.

Chapter 6
Monitoring the plan

The progress on the plan’s implementation will be monitored and overseen by the Concordat Steering Group, with implementation following a project management approach. TfL will produce an update to the River Action Plan each year to track progress.

The success of the plan will ultimately be monitored through the change in passenger journeys data, collected and published in TfL’s annual Travel in London report and Key Performance Indicator 16 of the London Plan Annual Monitoring Report. TfL also conducts regular independent customer satisfaction surveys for river services.
### Appendix A - Summary of improvements in first three years of Action Plan

#### Better piers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Improvements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2013 | - Completion of pier pilot ‘look and feel’ upgrade projects at Westminster and Embankment  
- Implementation of berthing plans at all TfL piers  
- Introduction of improved passenger queuing arrangements  
- Opening of Plantation Wharf Pier serving Battersea  
- Completion of ‘piers as destinations’ feasibility study |
| 2014 | - Completion of ‘look and feel’ upgrade projects at remaining piers |
| 2015 | - Completion of additional berthing and passenger capacity at Westminster, Embankment and Bankside  
- Completion of new, improved pier at Blackfriars |

#### Better information and integration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Improvements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2013 | - Installation of Legible London wayfinding at all TfL piers  
- Extension of iBoat real-time information displays to the Putney - Blackfriars service  
- Exploration of providing Barclays Cycle Hire docking stations near to piers within the scheme area  
- Introduction of improved coach facilities |
| 2014 | - Completion of comprehensive signage between piers and nearby transport interchanges  
- Introduction of consistent interchange announcements on Tube, DLR and bus services  
- Introduction of Barclays Cycle Hire docking stations where feasible  
- Introduction of secure cycle parking at piers |

#### Better promotion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Improvements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2013 | - Launch of marketing campaign  
- Engagement with riverside boroughs and developers to promote the River Action Plan |
| 2014 | - Launch of redeveloped Journey Planner |

#### Better partnership working

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Improvements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2013 | - Completion of safety and security audits at all piers  
- Scoping and evaluation of commercial opportunities |
Appendix B - Interactive map of London’s pier improvements

Hold cursor over pier to view interchange information and actions due to take place over the next two years.

Click here to view the latest river service information on the TfL website.