

# London River Services

## Westminster Pier Qualitative Research (August 2015)



# Summary

The majority of customers liked the image, describing it as bright, colourful, fun and simple.

It was mainly viewed as as a picture/mural that provided information on the landmarks/attractions. Customers had already been provided the information they needed for their travels either online or from the ticket office so most knew where they were going and were not using the image to help with travel plans, instead referring to the leaflet they were given at the ticket office.

Only around half of customers actually noticed the blue line and white circles running through the river before being prompted. Most rightly identified the white circles were piers, however there was some confusion over the blue line. Some customers said it looked like the underground map, and although they had already been given information on which piers their route served, would assume from the image in isolation that there was one service that served all the piers shown.

Not many customers had seen the river services map but were clear that this would be better for route/service information. To stop any confusion some customers thought it should be made clearer that the wall image did not provide any route/service information.

## Key finding

**Overall customers saw the wall image as a picture/mural showing landmarks/attractions on the river. Very few were using it to plan their travels as they already had the information they needed. However the concern would be that if the image was available in an area where customers were uninformed, some may use the image for route information and to plan their travels. This should be taken into consideration before further rollout.**

# Background

A wall image showing the London attractions that can be reached/seen by river boat was recently installed in the waiting rooms at Westminster Pier.

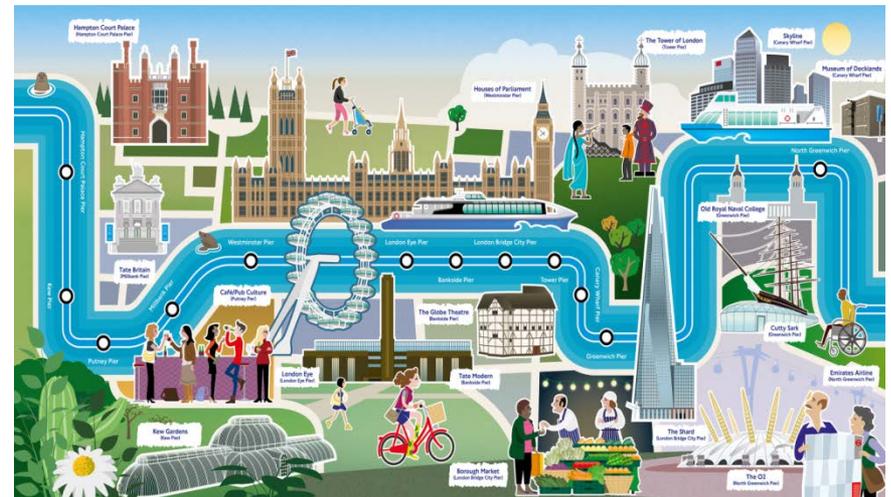
The image is designed to improve customer experience by livening up the pier, and is part of a wider set of pier upgrades outlined in the River Action Plan.

However a concern was raised that the image could be confusing for customers with the blue line running through the middle of the river being misinterpreted as a continuous route that serves every pier shown (the white circles).

52 qualitative interviews were conducted at Westminster Pier to understand customers' interpretation of the image before a decision is made to roll it out further.

## Objective

**To determine whether any changes are needed to the new London River Services wall image before further rollout.**



# Sample demographics

Total 52 interviews

## Residency

- London – 6 (12%)
- Elsewhere in UK – 24 (46%)
- Outside of UK – 22 (42%)

## Age

- 18-34: 17 (33%)
- 35-59: 23 (44%)
- 60+: 12 (23%)

## Gender

- Male: 24 (46%)
- Female: 28 (54%)

*The sample broadly represents demographics for journeys originating at Westminster Pier on London River Services CSS*

# Unprompted findings

## Observation and initial thoughts on the wall image

- Around three in five customers saw the image before being surveyed
- The vast majority were positive about the image, with words used to describe it including: beautiful, bright, clear, colourful, creative, cute, eye-catching, fun, informative, modern, simple, vibrant, and well-structured. Some mentioned it was child friendly, while one said it was good for people with learning difficulties.
- Some were neutral about the image, describing it as: descriptive, informative and straightforward.
- A few were negative, saying that the image was too busy and/or complicated.
- Only two customers referred to the image as a map at this stage.

# Prompted findings

## Information provided / help with travel plans

- Most customers viewed the image as a picture/mural that provided information on the landmarks/attractions that can be reached/seen along the river and which pier was closest. A few referred to the image as a map but were clear that it was primarily a picture/mural also using words such as simple, tourist and child-like. Most were clear it should not be the primary source of information to plan your travels. A couple mentioned it showed the route of the river boat services.
- Customers had already been provided the information they needed for their travels either online or from the ticket office so most knew where they were going and were not using the image to help with travel plans, instead referring to the leaflet they were given at the ticket office. A few did use the image to sense check where they were going, but not as a main source of information:

*"Would like to find out more from the picture if possible, however, I can't get much information from it"*

- Customers had mixed views when asked if they would use it for future travel plans. For those who said yes, it was suggested that it should be located somewhere near the ticket offices for reference before purchasing tickets, while for those who said no the main reason was they know it is not a map, so will only use it as a guide.

# Prompted findings

## Interpretation of blue line and white circles

- Only half had noticed the blue line and white circles when specifically asked about them. Once aware, most customers realised that the white circles represented piers where they could get on / off to visit certain landmarks/attractions.
- For the blue line there was some confusion over what it represented. Some customers did not think it told them anything, while others commented that it looked like the underground map. For the latter, many of these customers knew it would not stop at every pier from the information they already had (from ticket office / online / leaflet), but looking at the map in isolation there was an assumption that the blue line was a route/service that would stop at all the piers shown. A few were unsure where their service stopped despite the prior information given, and although they said that they would check with staff before boarding, they were misinterpreting where they could disembark when just using the image. Some others said that although they would assume it was one route/service, the style of the image told them they could only use the information given as a guideline and would need to look elsewhere for further information.

*"[the image] is not a map, but it looks like a map, it is artistic... If I knew it wasn't a map I would see it as a piece of art"*

*"I would not use it now to plan my travels as I already know by this stage [in the waiting room] but would have before this point. It would have been useful by the ticket office when I was planning my journey"*

*"it looks like an underground map ... I would assume it is showing a route but I would not use it for information [to plan my travels]"*

*"it shows where you can get on and off but no route information – I would use the leaflet. For tourists."*

*"I noticed the blue line and would assume, like the tube line, that it was one service"*

# Prompted findings

## Interpretation of blue line and white circles (II)

- Some other feedback from the image included:
  - It was a little confusing which pier you should get off for each landmark – some correctly saw the pier labelled under the landmark/attraction title, others assumed it was they should disembark from the pier (white circle shown on the blue line) closest to the picture of the landmark/attraction
  - It would be good to mark the current location in the picture
  - A couple of customers actually thought the white circles represent tube stations

# Prompted findings

## River service map observation and comparison with wall image

- Only a few customers had actually seen the river service map, either in the waiting room or elsewhere. More had seen the wall image due to its size.
- Although many expressed their preference for the wall image as it was easy to look at and not too detailed, they understood that it was a picture/mural and designed to show what landmarks/attractions are on the river, while the river service map provided clear route/service information and should be used when planning their travels. Some customers did prefer the river services map, as they thought it was clearer and more informative.
- On seeing the river services map, the wall image did appear more confusing to customers who had thought the blue line represented a route/service. They felt that it should be made clearer that the wall image is not showing route/service information and/or that the route service map is presented alongside.

*"it is clear that [the river service map] should be used for route planning as it looks more detailed like a tube map but I think they would need to be together"*

*"it is confusing ... I would assume [from the wall image] that there is one service and I could stop at all the piers"*

# Observational findings

- In both waiting rooms the wall image was on the far end wall from where most customers entered, meaning many were looking at it from afar, possibly helping them to see it as a picture/mural showing key landmarks/attractions rather than a map. This was more prominent in waiting room 3 (Thames River Services) as the next boat service generally docked 15 minutes before departure and even if customers were not boarding they were queuing at the far end of the room (or even outside) ready to board. In waiting room 4 (Circular Cruises Westminster) the next boat service generally only docked a few minutes before departure so customers spread out in the waiting room and did walk down to the wall image to have a closer look.