

Transforming Thamesmead Waterfront and Beckton Riverside

Revised September 2024

MAYOR OF LONDON





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Vision

To transform Thamesmead Waterfront and Beckton Riverside through better public transport, creating 10,000 jobs and 25,000–30,000 new homes

London has a critical housing shortage and the city's future success depends on delivering the homes Londoners need while also becoming London's green heartbeat in supporting low-carbon travel. Thamesmead Waterfront and Beckton Riverside are two of the largest remaining brownfield sites in London. There is a prime opportunity to deliver on the Government's growth ambitions and housing targets by unlocking 145 hectares of brownfield land and establishing two new residential communities of 25,000 to 30,000 homes and 10,000 jobs. The sites are at the heart of the Thames Estuary Growth Corridor, a major area of economic priority for the Government.

While the opportunity is huge, the development potential of these sites and the regeneration of the wider community in Thamesmead is constrained by the lack of direct access to rail services.

Jointly with the Leader of the Royal Borough of Greenwich, the Mayor of Newham and private sector partners Lendlease, Peabody, abrdn and St William (part of the Berkeley Group), the Mayor of London has committed to developing a case for transformative regeneration in Thamesmead Waterfront and Beckton Riverside. This collaborative partnership is working closely with Government agencies Homes England, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and

Local Government (MHCLG) and the Department for Transport (DfT). The public consultation TfL conducted in early 2024 showed high levels of public support for the scheme.

The proposals span two boroughs with entrepreneurial, diverse and young populations who also face significant inequalities. The London Borough of Newham is ranked 12th and the Royal Borough of Greenwich is ranked 60th of England's most deprived local authorities, with more than 50,000 households on their housing waiting lists. Both boroughs face barriers to opportunities.

This project sits alongside Old Oak Common as the Mayor's highest-priority infrastructure ambition for unlocking growth and regeneration. TfL is fully assessing the options for delivering a value-for-money and high-quality project.

To date, the project has been funded by the partners, who have raised around £3.5m and are funding the next stage to develop the proposal for submission of an outline business case. Delivery of the scheme is currently unfunded and there is an expectation that Government funding will be required alongside further contributions from other partners.



Thousands of new homes would be created in this part of London

Thamesmead Waterfront and Beckton Riverside

The last two major housing opportunities within the Thames Estuary without direct access to rail services are in Thamesmead and Beckton Riverside

Thamesmead

The town of Thamesmead fronts the Thames and has a population of 47,000. It straddles two boroughs: the Royal Borough of Greenwich and the London Borough of Bexley. Thamesmead forms the greater part of the Thamesmead and Abbey Wood Opportunity Area (OA), which has been designated as a growth area in the London Plan.

Thamesmead has been progressively developed since the 1960s, with the initial expectation that the town would be served by the planned London Underground Fleet line. However, this line (which was later built as the Jubilee line) never reached Thamesmead, and development of the area remains incomplete.

The site is owned by Peabody Trust, which is redeveloping wider Thamesmead. Peabody has formed a joint venture with Lendlease to develop the waterfront site.

Beckton Riverside

Beckton Riverside in the London Borough of Newham is located to the east of the Royal Docks Enterprise Zone and existing

residential community in Beckton. It forms part of the Royal Docks and Beckton Riverside OA, a designated growth area in the London Plan. Adjacent to the Thames Path, Beckton Riverside is in a prime riverside location, although this stretch of the river is currently closed to the public.

The development area covers part of the former Beckton Gas Works. The north of the area is owned by abrdn and is in use as the Gallions Reach out-of-town retail park, with the south of the site being largely vacant. The landowner, St William (part of the Berkeley Group), focuses on the regeneration of ex-industrial sites into vibrant neighbourhoods.

The area's industrial past has influenced adjacent land uses. The road network was built to serve these industrial sites, severing local connectivity with both Beckton and other neighbouring areas.

Beckton Riverside

Thamesmead

Areas of transformation: Thamesmead and Beckton Riverside



London faces high population pressure, with east and southeast London and the Thames Estuary central to meeting housing need

Population growth and housing need

The population of London has grown rapidly over the past 20 to 30 years and is projected to rise above 10 million by 2041. East and southeast London have experienced a high share of this growth, and housing supply has not kept pace with housing need.

Local people face severe housing pressures, which contribute to economic and health inequalities. The London Borough of Newham and the Royal Borough of Greenwich are identified in the London Plan as two of the top three boroughs for housing need, with more than 50,000 households across both boroughs on waiting lists.

London Borough of Newham:

Second

highest housing targets in the London Plan



33,000

people waiting for affordable housing



Royal Borough of Greenwich:

Third

highest housing targets in the London Plan

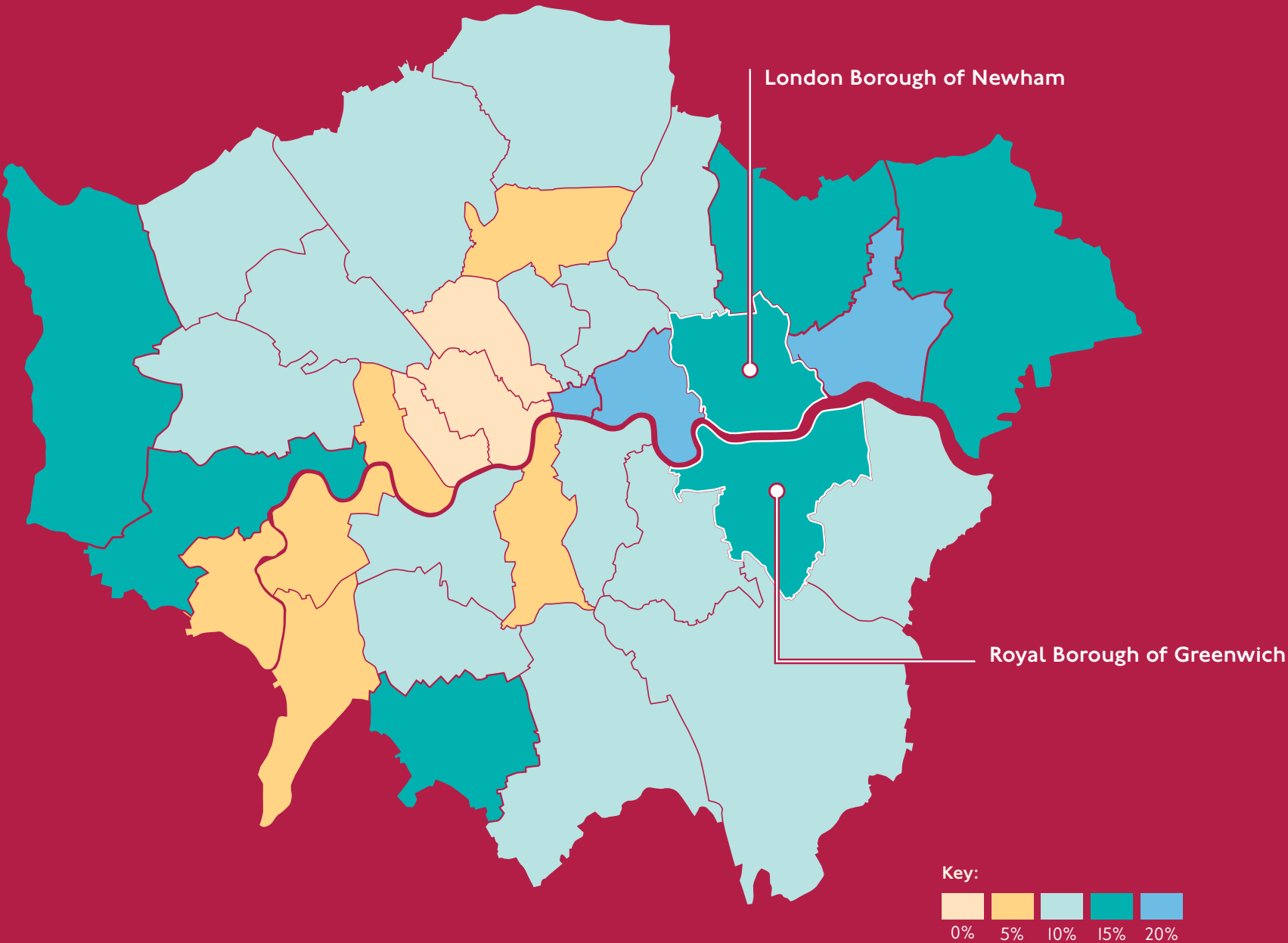


19,000

people waiting for affordable housing



Population growth between 2011 and 2021



East and southeast London have pockets of high deprivation and environments that prioritise cars over people

Deprivation and inequality

The London Borough of Newham ranks as the 12th most deprived local authority in England and is in the top five per cent most deprived of all local authorities. Some 60.7 per cent of households in Newham are classed as 'deprived' and nearly 50 per cent of children live in poverty.

The Royal Borough of Greenwich also suffers significant levels of deprivation. It is in the top 20 per cent of most deprived local authorities in England and more than 50 per cent of households are classed as 'deprived'. In Thamesmead West (where the Thamesmead Waterfront site boundary falls), 56.1 per cent of households are classed as 'deprived'.

In-work poverty, where a working person's income does not meet their cost of living, remains high in both boroughs: the London Borough of Newham has the second highest level of in-work poverty in England and the Royal Borough of Greenwich has the fourth highest.

These sustained socio-economic challenges are reflected within both sites by their poor connections to key economic markets, which has a significant negative impact on the employment ambitions of local residents.

Environment

Parts of the Thames Estuary are poorly connected to the rail network, resulting in high car dependency and use. Air quality is poor, causing the highest rates of deaths in England as a result of exposure to toxic pollution. Both boroughs are designated Air Quality Management Areas (where air pollution levels have exceeded national air quality objectives).

East London is also identified as an area of high climate risk according to the Greater London Authority's Climate Risk analysis, which identifies climate exposure and vulnerability (including tidal flood risk) across Greater London. There is therefore an opportunity to deliver neighbourhoods that prioritise people and the planet, with sustainability at the heart of the redevelopment.

Thames Estuary Growth Corridor (within London)



The need to improve public transport

Better connectivity is needed to ensure the development of Thamesmead Waterfront and Beckton Riverside is both viable and sustainable

The scale of both sites means that, if developed to their full potential, up to 25,000 to 30,000 new homes and thousands of new jobs could be delivered, acting as a catalyst for wider development in east and southeast London.

However, putting the right infrastructure in place is critical. There is a strong track record of public transport supporting and unlocking homes and jobs in east and southeast London since the DLR was built in the 1980s. The opening of the DLR in east London stimulated social and economic growth, unlocking derelict brownfield sites that were previously inaccessible by public transport.

Since the first DLR opening, there have been five further route extensions – cementing the vital role of the network in east London's continued growth and expansion. From 2006–2019, more than 81,500 homes were built within 800 metres of the DLR or Jubilee line extension.

Transport infrastructure and development are also linked to planning policy and development viability. High-quality public transport can transform connectivity, improve capacity, and unlock access to opportunities and jobs, as well as support long-term growth and new homes.

Recent TfL network extensions, including the London Overground extension to Barking Riverside, Northern line extension to Nine Elms/Battersea Power Station and Elizabeth line delivery, have shown the success of an integrated approach to transport infrastructure and land use planning. They have been the catalyst for creating thousands of new homes and jobs.

The Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of an area is a key indicator of the density and type of development achievable. Thamesmead Waterfront and Beckton Riverside remain the only sites within the inner Thames Estuary that lack direct rail services, resulting in low PTAL scores. The SE28 (Thamesmead) London postcode remains the only one without a train or London Underground station.

Rail infrastructure provides high-quality public transport that improves PTALs and the market perception of an area. Rail services provide the capacity to support high-density development. For example, a seven-train-per-hour DLR service equals the capacity of 50+ buses per hour. Good public transport also enables homes to be delivered with lower car ownership.



Providing high-quality public transport will transform connectivity



National, regional and local contexts

These proposals are supported by national, regional and local planning policies

National policy

A key part of the Government's legislative programme is its plans to prioritise development of brownfield sites and new towns to help deliver economic growth and more homes. Meanwhile, the Thames Estuary will have strategic importance in stimulating economic growth for the region and the wider UK, and the Thamesmead Waterfront and Beckton Riverside sites are at the heart of this.

Strategic intervention in these locations meets the Government's ambitions to kickstart economic growth and break down the barriers to opportunity by::

- Increasing opportunities in places where they are weakest
- Boosting productivity, pay and jobs
- Helping meet the Government's ambitious housing delivery targets

This proposal also aligns with the Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission, which was convened by Government and gives a strong backing for development in the area. The project is supported by the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework, which sets out the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policies for England.

The proposals to improve public transport and reduce car dependency in these areas support the Government's aim to accelerate the transition to net zero by ensuring that public transport, walking and cycling are the natural first choices for daily journeys.

Regeneration of the area enjoys policy support at all levels



The proposal is recognised in the Mayor's Transport Strategy

Regional policy

Both the Mayor's London Plan and his Transport Strategy set out his vision for Good Growth in the capital: building strong and inclusive communities, making best use of land, delivering new homes, growing a sound economy, and increasing efficiency and resilience.

These development sites are designated as OAs in the London Plan, with the potential for transformational growth. The GLA has worked with both the Royal Borough

of Greenwich and London Borough of Newham on OAPFs that support delivery of public transport to unlock the housing sites at Thamesmead Waterfront and Beckton Riverside.

The proposal to improve public transport here is recognised in the Mayor's Transport Strategy, where he has committed to investigating the feasibility of a potential DLR extension from Gallions Reach to Thamesmead.

Local policy

Both the Royal Borough of Greenwich and London Borough of Newham are currently reviewing their own Local Plans. These two boroughs face ambitious housing targets; therefore, these sites will play a vital strategic role in delivering new housing to meet London's housing shortage.

Within Newham's 2018 Local Plan, Beckton has a strategic site allocation to deliver a 'new hallmark mixed-use

area' with a new DLR station at Beckton Riverside. The Newham draft Local Plan of December 2022 (Regulation 18) supports the OA policy position.

In November 2021, site allocation proposals were published as part of the ongoing Royal Greenwich Local Plan review. This review confirmed that development capacity in the OA is linked to committed or potential improvements in public transport, such as a DLR extension to Thamesmead.

Collaborative partnership approach

A collaborative partnership approach has been created to explore this unique opportunity to transform two riverside locations to create new homes and jobs within the Thames Estuary.

- The GLA, representing the Mayor and Deputy Mayors
- Transport for London (TfL)
- Royal Borough of Greenwich
- London Borough of Newham
- Landowners: St William, abrdn and the Thamesmead Waterfront Joint Venture (Lendlease and Peabody)

This collaborative partnership has established a steering group and delivery board to develop a business case for investment, and is working with the MHCLG and the DfT. The high level of enthusiasm from partners for the scale of opportunity here is reflected in the significant investment they have put into the development of these proposals, and in the strong collaborative public-private partnership driving the ongoing development of the plans.



Working together to promote growth and regeneration

Developing an effective transport intervention

The collaborative partnership is dedicated to exploring options to realise the major opportunities presented at Thamesmead Waterfront and Beckton Riverside

The London-wide housing shortage and local need to level up have created an opportunity for action. The development aspirations cannot be realised without a transport investment that will achieve the following objectives:



Connectivity

Improve cross-river public transport to reduce barriers to movement between east London, southeast London and the wider Thames Estuary Growth Corridor



Place

Create high-quality spaces in which to live, work and play in line with the principles of Good Growth



Homes

Unlock and accelerate delivery of up to 25,000 to 30,000 new, high-quality homes



Economic growth

Promote economic growth and regeneration, which will contribute to tackling local deprivation



Environment

Deliver progress towards the UK's commitment to net zero by 2050 through energy-efficient homes and workplaces and a low-carbon transport network

In line with HM Treasury and DfT guidance, TfL is leading a three-stage optioneering exercise, which is considering in detail the various transport options to identify the best approach. This has been developed with the collaborative partnership and assesses a range of transport options to identify the scale of investment required to deliver the objectives.

The scheme would enable the delivery of 25,000–30,000 new homes



Different DLR extension options offer varying growth opportunities

We have tested a range of options analysing various scales of investment to ensure the chosen scheme provides a high-quality solution offering value for money and long-lasting benefits.

A number of options were considered but discounted for various reasons, such as their high cost, inability to meet project objectives or impacts upon network operations and capacity, including:

- Tram
- Cable car
- River bus
- National Rail
- London Underground
- London Overground
- Elizabeth line extensions

Several options were assessed in more detail, including::

- London Overground extension options
- DLR extension options
- Enhanced bus services at Thamesmead
- Bus transit option at Thamesmead

Through each assessment stage, the DLR and bus transit services were found to be effective at meeting the project objectives and capable of delivering good value for money.

Potential DLR options

Extension to Beckton Riverside only:

This is a single-stop extension from Gallions Reach station on the Beckton branch of the DLR to a new station at Beckton Riverside. It does not fully meet scheme objectives, as it stops short of the river and does not reach Thamesmead. However, as the shortest DLR option, it costs less and has some transport benefits.

Extension to Thamesmead with a stop at Beckton Riverside:

This is a two-stop extension from Gallions Reach to a new station at Beckton Riverside and then under the river in a tunnel to a new station in Thamesmead. It offers the cheapest way to provide rail access to Thamesmead. Costs are less than half of those of a London Overground extension, and this option also delivers more jobs and homes. This is our preferred option.

Phasing of the DLR across river:

A DLR extension to Thamesmead could be delivered in two phases, Gallions Reach to Beckton Riverside, then Beckton Riverside to Thamesmead, rather than in one construction phase. This is technically feasible, but would not deliver the desired level of growth, would increase cost and add delay and uncertainty, significantly delaying new development in Thamesmead.

Bus transit option

Current bus connections from Thamesmead have extended journey times as they can be impacted by traffic congestion elsewhere on the road network. A new bus transit route serving Thamesmead as a first phase of the project will provide a fast, reliable and dedicated bus service to support development. It will offer a significant improvement in capacity, and better connections to the Elizabeth line at Abbey Wood and Woolwich. It will include bus priority, improved bus stops and waiting areas, and branded vehicles. It will also support active travel along the route, including walking and cycling.

Consulting on our preferred option

The public have shown strong support for a scenario that best supports connectivity, jobs, regeneration and environmental improvements

DLR to Thamesmead via Beckton Riverside and Woolwich to Abbey Wood bus transit

Transformative scenario:



Approximately

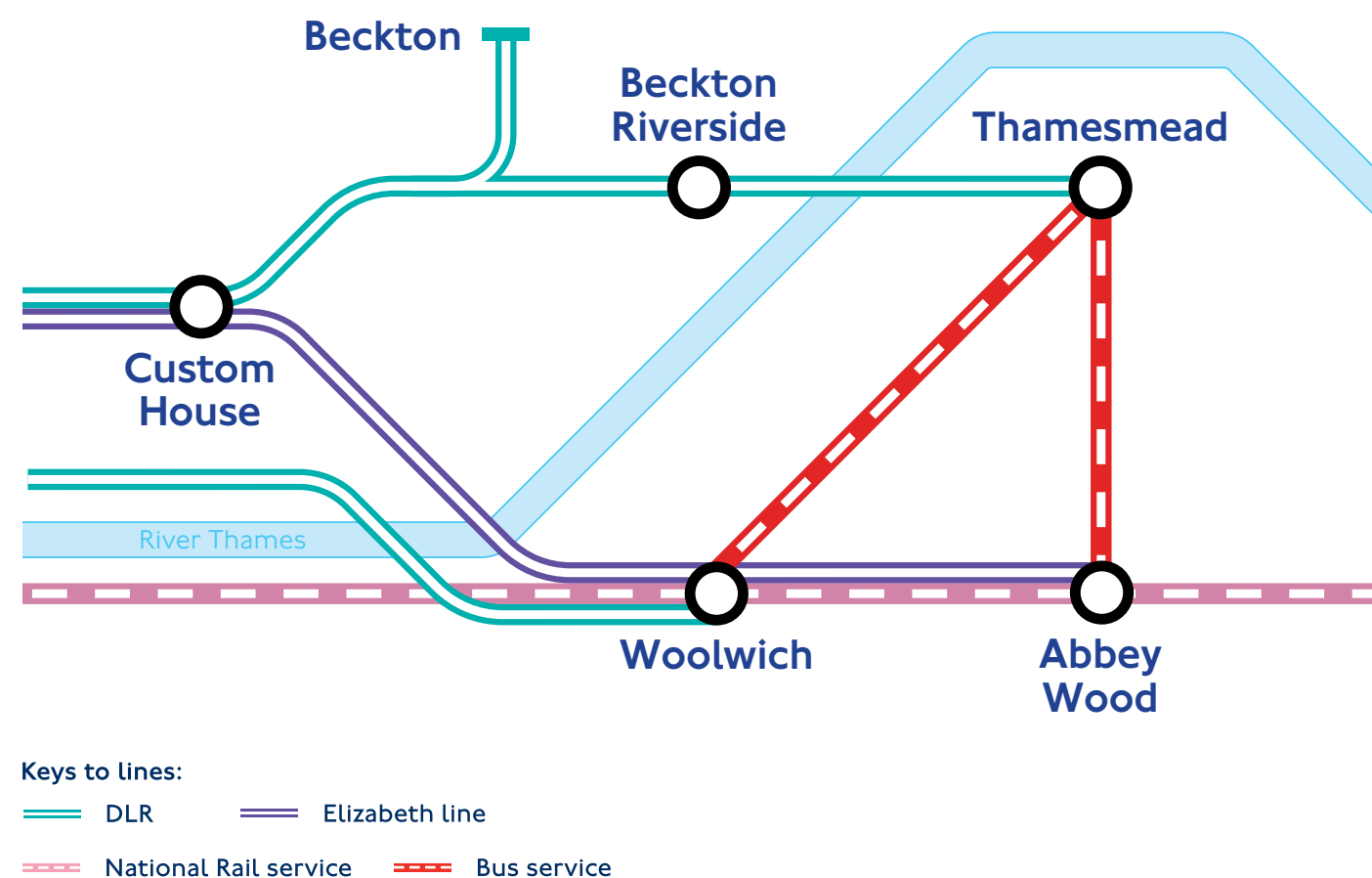
**25,000
to 30,000**

homes



Unlocks

housing sites at both Beckton Riverside and Thamesmead



Between 5 February 2024 and 18 March 2024, we consulted on our preferred option of extending the DLR to Thamesmead via Beckton Riverside.

We received 1,283 responses to the consultation, with a range of positive feedback, particularly about the improved access from Thamesmead and better connections to the wider public transport network. We also ran sample polling in Beckton, Gallions Reach, Thamesmead and Abbey Wood, with 85 per cent of those polled supporting or strongly supporting the proposals.

Having considered all feedback, we will continue to work with our partners to develop the case for the DLR extension to Thamesmead via Beckton Riverside, and a Woolwich/Abbey Wood bus transit.



Next steps

There is proven precedent for public transport unlocking transformational change. The collaborative partnership believes that now is the time to make this opportunity a reality

By taking a similar approach to that at Nine Elms/Battersea Power Station and Barking Riverside, with private sector landowners, there is an opportunity to deliver up to 25,000 to 30,000 homes across 30 years. Policy support is in place at all levels. Led by the Mayor of London and supported by two boroughs, we have significant private sector interest. A delivery structure is being developed, and now is the time to make this opportunity a reality. The missing link for Thamesmead Waterfront and Beckton Riverside is high-quality public transport.

Work is progressing with the collaborative partnership to develop a business case to support delivery of the project.

The next steps are to develop the scheme design to greater detail and cost certainty, and a further assessment of key impacts and potential mitigation. The partnership is also developing the funding and financing case to inform the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review.

A prime opportunity exists to transform this part of London

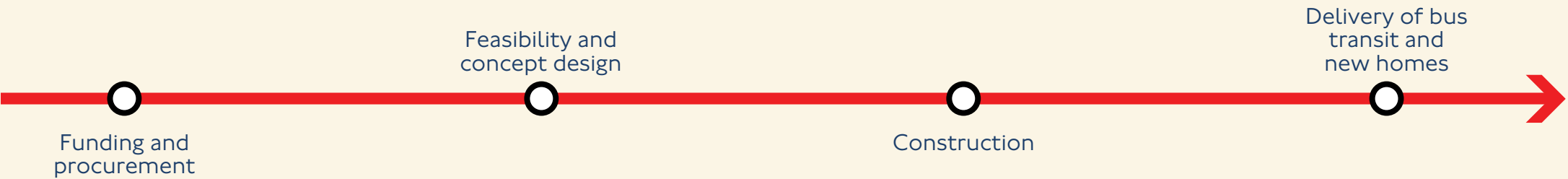
DLR extension: progress so far



Subject to Government approval and the development of our funding strategy, TfL would continue to lead the transport feasibility work, refine the investment options and initiate the consents process in 2026/2027, which would support the DLR opening in the early 2030s.

The indicative next steps of the project are as follows:

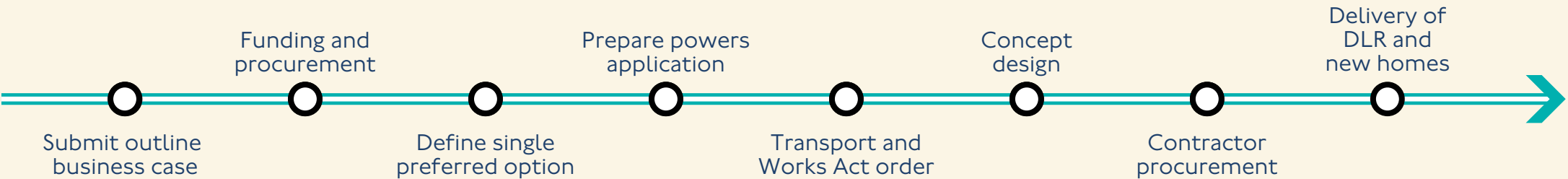
Bus transit



Value for money and affordability are critical success factors in the optioneering assessment, and while funding is not yet identified, the DLR to Thamesmead is the highest cost and most transformational option under consideration. Cost estimates are subject to refinement; however, based on 2021 prices, the estimated capital cost is between £700m and £1.2bn.

The collaborative partnership will remain in place and is committed to making decisions, supporting the funding of the scheme and in providing expertise to deliver the best value transport intervention to transform Thamesmead Waterfront and Beckton Riverside.

DLR extension



The collaborative partnership behind this project comprises: TfL, the GLA, Royal Borough of Greenwich, London Borough of Newham, Thamesmead Waterfront, St William and abrdn



We are one of the most diverse boroughs in London and one of Europe’s iconic visitor destinations. Our vision is of a flourishing economy that creates opportunities for businesses and communities to grow in an inclusive and sustainable way.



With a fast-growing population of more than 351,000 residents, we are the youngest and most diverse borough in London. We have ambitious plans to build more affordable homes, improve community spaces, and open up the riverfront to all our residents.



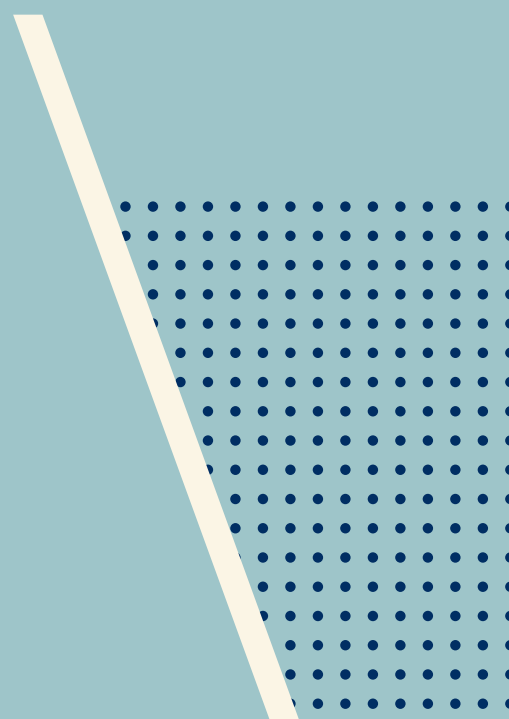
The Thamesmead Waterfront Joint Venture is a unique partnership between Peabody – one of the longest-established housing associations – and Lendlease, an industry leader in designing and building sustainable, innovative and thriving places.



St William is a former joint venture between Berkeley Group and National Grid, created to unlock some of the most technically complex regeneration sites in London and the South of England.



abrdn is pleased to be a part of this important private/public partnership project at Beckton Riverside. Aiming to improve social and environmental outcomes for residential communities there aligns with our goal of investing in the future built environment.



About us

Part of the Greater London Authority family led by Mayor of London Sadiq Khan, we are the integrated transport authority responsible for delivering the Mayor's aims for transport. We have a key role in shaping what life is like in London, helping to realise the Mayor's vision for a 'City for All Londoners' and helping to create a safer, fairer, greener, healthier and more prosperous city. The Mayor's Transport Strategy sets a target for 80 per cent of all journeys to be made by walking, cycling or using public transport by 2041. To make this a reality, we prioritise safety, sustainability, health and the quality of people's experience in everything we do.

We run most of London's public transport services, including the London Underground, London Buses, the DLR, London Overground, Elizabeth line, London Trams, London River Services, London Dial-a-Ride, Victoria Coach Station, Santander Cycles and the IFS Cloud Cable Car.

We manage the city's red route strategic roads and are responsible for the maintenance, management and operation of more than 6,000 sets of traffic lights across the capital. The London boroughs are responsible for all the remaining roads within their boundaries. The experience, reliability and accessibility of our services are fundamental to Londoners' quality of life. Safety remains our number one priority and we continue to work tirelessly to improve safety across the network for both colleagues and customers.

Our vision is to be a strong, green heartbeat for London. We are investing in green infrastructure, improving walking and cycling, reducing carbon emissions, and making the city's air cleaner. The Ultra Low Emission Zone, and fleets of increasingly environmentally friendly and zero-emission buses, are helping to tackle London's toxic air. We are also improving public transport options, particularly in outer London, to ensure that more people can choose public transport or active travel over using their vehicles.

That is why we are introducing the outer London Superloop bus network, providing express bus routes circling the entire capital, connecting outer London town centres, railway stations, hospitals and transport hubs.

We have constructed many of London's most significant infrastructure projects in recent years, using transport to unlock economic growth and improve connectivity. This includes major projects like the extension of the Northern line to Battersea Power Station and Nine Elms in south London, as well as the completion of the London Overground extension to Barking Riverside and the Bank station upgrade.

The Elizabeth line, which opened in 2022, has quickly become one of the country's most popular railways, adding 10 per cent to central London's rail capacity and supporting new jobs, homes and economic growth. We also use our own land to provide thousands of new affordable

homes and our own supply chain creates tens of thousands of jobs and apprenticeships across the country.

We are committed to being an employer that is fully representative of the community we serve, where everyone can realise their potential. Our aim is to be a fully inclusive employer, valuing and celebrating the diversity of our workforce to improve services for all Londoners.

We are constantly working to improve the city for everyone. This means using information, data and technology to make services intuitive and easy to use and doing all we can to make streets and transport services accessible and safe to all. We reinvest every penny of our income to continually improve transport networks for the people who use them every day. None of this would be possible without the support of boroughs, communities and other partners who we work with to improve our services. By working together, we are creating brighter journeys and a better city.

