

# AGENDA ITEM 8

**Briefing paper to  
Meeting Date  
Prepared by  
Subject**

**London Waterways Commission  
19<sup>th</sup> February 2007  
Jim Walker/Kevin Reid  
Olympics sub Group Olympics Transport  
Plan**

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## **Recommendations**

- 1 That the Commission discusses the attached draft letter to enable the Chair to write to the Olympics Delivery Agency.
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## **Background**

The Olympics sub group met on 22<sup>nd</sup> January and discussed issues in relation to the transport aspects of the Olympics proposals. The attached letter represents a broadly agreed range of issues for the Chair to raise with the ODA.

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**Olympic Transport Plan Team  
ODA Transport  
Olympic Delivery Authority  
22<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
One Churchill Place  
Canary Wharf  
London E14 5LN**

**Dear Sir/Madam**

**Response from the London Waterways Commission to the Olympic Transport Plan**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Olympic Transport Plan. The London Waterways Commission is particularly pleased to see acknowledgement, in chapter Six, of the significance and opportunity that the 100 miles of rivers and canals of London provide as transport corridors to access the various competition venues.

The waterways of London provide a unique and unprecedented attractiveness to the Games and their Legacy. In our opinion the Olympics will add an opportunity to showcase London's waterways to thousands of people who may not previously have been aware of their existence. We sincerely hope that the ODA will capitalise on these opportunities and ensure that the waterways are in a good state and utilise the transport options.

The current Plan makes several commitments for more research and feasibility studies to assist with understanding the potential relevance of the waterway network. This should include before, after and during the Games and include:

- research into the demand and potential demand for using the waterways
- understanding the capacity for extending and enhancing existing river services
- researching the potential to improve existing, and creating new, piers
- feasibility of enhancing the East London canal links
- research into the viability of a shuttle service at Limehouse Basin
- potential for water borne accommodation including cruise ships and private boats

The London Waterways Commission have established an Olympics Subgroup to assist you with these tasks and look forward to the opportunity to be more involved in the detail of planning the waterway proposals for the Games in due course.

In addition to the published list the Commissioners would like to draw the Transport Team's attention to the following issues and very much hope that they can be integrated into the studies and form part of the investment programme to help with the delivery of the games and to ensure a sustainable legacy for London.

**ISSUE 1. To encourage maximum sustainable use of the waterways network for transport.**

The Commission would like to ensure that the ODA utilise the waterways network for freight transport, passenger transport and recreational purposes. This should enable the reduction of lorry miles, the creation of alternative attractions for the area and leave a sustainable legacy for post Olympics regeneration.

### **Freight Transport**

The decision with regard to Prescott Lock will be important. This will enable the reduction of lorry miles throughout the construction period. Additionally, well thought out proposals should enable water transport to be used both out to the river Thames and north along the Lee Navigation post 2012.

### **Passenger Transport**

The design of the Olympic Park should enable operators to provide services via the Thames and Bow creek.

### **Recreation**

There could be many opportunities for recreation on the water surrounding the Olympic Park. Rowing, canoeing, pleasure boat tours etc could all add to the visitor experience.

## **ISSUE 2: To encourage and promote more walking and cycling along waterway routes**

The Commission wish to draw your attention to the principle waterways which connect the Olympic venues to wider walking and cycling routes and provide more than 100km of adjacent towpaths. :

- River Lea (North and South of Olympic Park)
- City Mill River
- Waterworks River
- Lea Navigation / Limehouse Cut
- Regent's Canal / Hertford Union Canal
- The Thames Path (Northern Embankment)
- The Thames Path (Southern Embankment)
- Deptford Creek / Ravensbourne River)

The ODA, in partnership with other bodies, have a significant opportunity to improve the accessibility and safety of these routes so that they are as enjoyable as possible for as many people as possible. Some constituent members of the Commission are also members of the Active Travel Advisory Group and have commented in more detail specifically on this issue but we would draw your attention to the opportunity to improve the connectivity of the network to established destination points including modal interchanges; to providing more rest areas, art work, signage, wayfinding and maps.

## **ISSUE 3. To remove the barriers which affect the continuous enjoyment of the London Waterway network**

With innovative designs the Commission is confident that the ODA can work with partners to overcome the existing barriers on some of these routes such as:

- the lack of towpath alongside the River Lea (north) underneath the A11 immediately east of the A11/A12 interchange
- the lack of towpath alongside the Three Mills Wall River to pass at grade or underneath the A11 Stratford High Street
- the poor grade of towpath alongside the River Lea (south) at Bow Creek to connect the north-south spine route to the River Thames

Generic barriers to route improvement include land ownership, accessibility issues, legality of tow path use and capacity. The Commission would welcome your attention to exploring these issues and resolving them at specific pinch points so that there is a consistent quality for users to confidently be able to enjoy the network. Investment programmes will need to fund improvements to surfaces, signage, safety, gradients, lighting, connectivity and gateway access points in particular. Some measures such as consistent and reliable signage should be relatively easy and inexpensive to implement.

#### **ISSUE 4. To provide new solutions to encourage crossing of the River Thames**

The Commissioners would welcome the ODA supporting creative ways of ensuring the River Thames is not a barrier to connecting Olympic venues. Services to link the O2 Dome area and Trinity Buoy Wharf and Limehouse Basin are of a particular concern. More opportunities which link Canary Wharf and Hilton Hotel are also of interest. There are expected to be some significant investments in river ferry services starting in summer 2007 and the Olympics should examine the opportunities to use this form of transport to supplement the traditional means.

#### **ISSUE 5. To providing users and potential users of the Waterways with information both before and during their journey**

The potential for existing users to explore the waterway network further and for new users to be attracted to the resource is partly dependant on quality information being provided at the right place, in the right way both on site and in advance of their journey. The Commission would welcome the ODA to work with the relevant authorities to ensure this information is coordinated to a consistent high quality and promoted to spectators, the Olympic Family, the workforce and local people.

Issue 5 Minimise and explain disruption to use of towpaths and waterways during construction and the Games.

The Commission understands that there will be a certain amount of disruption during the construction period. This may affect the use of towpaths and the ability to navigate the waterways. Further, the Commission also understands that during the Games certain security measures including fences, may mean that it is no longer possible to use the towpaths or tow navigate around some parts of the waterway system. This disruption should be minimised and clear advance notice should be given.

We look forward to seeing the final version of the Plan and to working with you to ensure a significant coordinated investment in London's Blue Ribbon Network to help maximise the use of the waterways for freight, tourism, recreation and public transport before and during the games and in legacy to help promote social inclusion, tackle deprivation and discrimination and make London a more attractive, well-designed and green city.

Yours faithfully

**Murad Qureshi**

Chair, London Waterways Commission