

Parallel Lines

The London Assembly Transport Committee's review of the East London
and Greenwich Waterfront Transit schemes
December 2006

The Transport Committee

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The Transport Committee's general terms of reference are to examine and report on transport matters of importance to Greater London and the transport strategies, policies and actions of the Mayor, Transport for London, and the other Functional Bodies where appropriate. In particular, the Transport Committee is also required to examine and report to the Assembly from time to time on the Mayor's Transport Strategy, in particular its implementation and revision.

The Transport Committee agreed the following terms of reference for this review on 8 June 2006.

- Examine the potential of the both schemes to regenerate the communities which the ELT and GWT will serve
- Examine the current routes proposed for the first phases of both the East London and Greenwich Waterfront Transit –including frequency of buses and stops, vehicle capacity and the methods by which road space will be dedicated to the services
- Examine the mode of vehicle which will serve the routes and the long term ability of TFL to adapt these routes to other potential modes
- Examine the deliverability of the timetables for both schemes outlined in TfL's five year business plan and the mid-longer aspirations for other proposed branches and extensions of both routes
- Examine the viability of the both schemes should the Thames Gateway Bridge not be built though excluding an assessment of the suitability of the Bridge itself.

The Committee would welcome any feedback on this report. Please contact Danny Myers on 0207 983 4394 or via e-mail at danny.myers@london.gov.uk if you have any comments. For press queries, please contact Lisa Moore on 020 7983 4228 or via lisa.moore@london.gov.uk.

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Chair's Foreword



Transport for London's plans for transit schemes in the Thames Gateway are a highly appropriate subject for scrutiny by the London Assembly. The Government plans a new community the size of Leeds in the Gateway, which will be one of the largest regeneration projects in the United Kingdom.

On 22 November, the Secretary of State for Communities, Ruth Kelly, launching the Thames Gateway Interim Plan, sought to create the conditions for 180,000 new jobs and 160,000 homes over the next ten years. TfL have to respond to this with a scheme that is fit for purpose.

The Summary Report on the "Greenwich Waterfront Transit" produced and published by TfL Integration in July 2001 describes the need for a "high priority surface intermediate mode". Its Executive Summary estimates capital costs for "a reduced cost scheme with trolleybus technology" and for "a full 16km scheme with tram technology". No costings are offered for a bus scheme.

There has therefore been considerable surprise, not least in the boroughs of Greenwich and Barking & Dagenham, that what is now offered is a bus scheme, both north and south of the Thames, albeit using reduced-emission hybrid-engined buses with enhanced bus priority measures. This reflects TfL's assessment that there is not enough demand for a tram.

I believe there is a profound difference between providing trams or buses for an existing community and creating an appropriate system for a demand that will come from new, planned residential developments. By building a state-of-the-art, high capacity, zero-emission rapid transit system you actually attract financial institutions and developers to the area you seek to regenerate. You create the demand rather than responding to it.

Moreover, along a largely 'brownfield site' route, there is a unique opportunity to build a tramway without the huge costs of ripping up existing roadways and re-siting all the sub-surface infrastructure like gas and water mains.

Thames Gateway regeneration is being planned by central Government in collaboration with a whole raft of local authorities, agencies and consortia and it must be known at least in outline how the populations and employments will grow. The Mayor of London told the London Assembly that "once the ..Transits have been running for a year or two, given the growing population in the Thames Gateway area, we will be looking at upgrading them, to say a tram or a DLR extension." Londoners will wonder why it is not possible to plan this in a coordinated way from the outset.

We have listened to evidence which seeks assurances that the two “transits” north and south of the river will be rapid (‘limited stop’), high capacity, low-emission, with maximum segregation and high priority, with distinctive branding, and with governance arrangements that enable local authorities and communities to have a strong influence on the overall vision for the schemes and how this is developed.

This scrutiny seeks to examine whether Transport for London have risen to this challenge.

Geoff Pope

Chair, London Assembly Transport Committee

Executive Summary

I do not have the slightest doubt that once the East London and Greenwich Waterfront Transits have been running for a year or two, given the growing population in the Thames Gateway area, we will be looking at upgrading them, to say a tram or a DLR extension.

Mayor Ken Livingstone, June 2006

...I do not see a business case emerging on either for the two routes we are talking about now or in the foreseeable future. The level of demand would not justify that additional marginal expenditure from....a scheme using trams. The expenditure would be enormous.

Dick Halle, Director of Strategy, Surface Transport, TfL June 2006

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It's 2016. If TfL's ambitions have been realised, London has trams. From Uxbridge to Shepherd's Bush; from Camden to Peckham; from Beckenham to Wimbledon; and from one end of Oxford Street to another, trams are a prominent feature of London's cityscape - shaping and changing the character of many of the capital's main roads. To the West, across the South West, from North to South and through the heart of the West End, Londoners hop on buses, tubes, trains **and** trams.

There is one point on the compass that won't feature on this list - the east.

It's 2006. Despite local support, despite apparent enthusiasm from the Mayor, despite indeed firm commitments in the London Plan and despite the oft-repeated stress placed on the need to regenerate London east of its traditional centre, there are no plans for a tram to service the Thames Gateway.

The Proposals for East London

What is on the table for East and South East London is not insubstantial: an extension to the DLR potentially as far east as Dagenham Dock; the ever-present promise of Cross Rail; and the Thames Gateway Bridge will, once delivered, radically alter and improve transport provision for the sub region. Linking this new infrastructure with the new housing developments will be two new bus services. These will essentially be upgrades to the current bus services that operate either side of the Thames.

The word transit, which has been attached to the East London and Greenwich projects since their conception, has proved to be a frustratingly slippery term. TfL's 'transit' option implied the possibility of a tram, and considered the options of other bus/tram technology, but has eventually settled on what most would commonly recognise as a bus. The transit is now a bus.

Albeit, an excellent bus. By 2008 the residents of Greenwich, Barking and Ilford will have new services that operate along on existing routes with new stops, new vehicles, new branding and a variable degree of segregation. The type of vehicle to be operated has to be yet settled on; but we understand that a diesel-electric hybrid bus is the most likely option.

In the medium term, as new housing developments become established and the Thames Gateway Bridge may be completed, there is also the possibility of an expanded bus

network operating north and south of the Thames along increasingly segregated roads promising ever faster journey times. As yet, the only funding allocated for this expansion is for the development rather than the construction of these potential expansions.

The Committee's concerns

The Committee is troubled by the proposals. We accept that there is a need for an immediate improvement in transport provision in Greenwich and East London. We remain sceptical though that the travelling public themselves will be convinced that what they will be presented with by 2008/09 is a 'step-change' in public transport for the area. This perception could threaten the necessary enhancement of the scheme in the medium-long term.

The Committee is confident that the scheme proposed for Greenwich could provide significant improvements to journey times resulting from the greater proportion of segregation planned for Phase 1. The historical layout of the proposed route has afforded TfL more flexibility in allocating a greater amount of segregation.

However, the proposals for Phase 1a in East London are more troublesome. Ilford Lane, a narrow and busy local high street, is identified as a pinch point and most journey time savings appear to be extracted from the depedestrianisation of Barking High Street – a significant alteration to the town centre, which the local council have considered a high price to pay for relatively limited gain.

Neither of these schemes offers an express alternative to what is already provided. The number of stops between current services and those proposed does not vary. When the schemes open therefore, residents of Barking, Ilford and Greenwich will be offered an improved service; but not necessarily a new alternative. **The Committee calls upon TfL to reconsider the number of stops for the schemes with a view to reducing the number of stops to provide an enhanced express service.**

The Committee's conclusions

The East London and Greenwich Bus transits offer a viable, affordable and welcome improvement to the transport network in Ilford, Barking and Greenwich. However, the proposed schemes fall some way short of providing the necessary strategic and long-term transport infrastructure improvements that will be required for the sustainable regeneration of the wider Thames Gateway.

The relief of congestion along western and central corridors is deemed as a priority and with no funding as yet committed from central Government for either the West London Tram or Cross River Tram, TfL has to prioritise its major schemes. The Committee appreciates that the proposals put forward for the East London and Greenwich schemes are realistic and attainable. Unlike the West London and Cross River Tram, the proposals for East London and Greenwich as outlined will happen by 2009, irrespective of future spending reviews.

However the process through which these conclusions appear to have been reached and various assumptions made has disillusioned and confused London boroughs and other key stakeholders. TfL should have been more candid throughout and made clear what was on offer. They should now seek to ensure that the ongoing governance and management of the project is transparent to all key stakeholders.

The Committee therefore recommends that the scheme's future development and operation be governed in such a way that local boroughs are regularly and collectively kept informed at Programme Board meetings and that the London Development Agency is fully incorporated into the Programme Board.

The London Plan states that the Thames Gateway requires 'the impacts of major new transport infrastructure and of programmes of land assembly [to] stimulate a virtuous circle of development and environmental improvement'. However, the questions asked of transport bids are loaded against making this virtuous circle possible – hence a business case by definition will only be attainable when a transport corridor is already heavily congested. Something has got to give to kick start this necessary 'virtuous circle'. Before the new transport capacity required for the Thames Gateway can be provided, new questions need to be asked because the solutions required for the Thames Gateway by their very nature sit outside the traditional cost: benefit ratio framework. The Thames Gateway is a "predict and provide" scenario; not a "realise and react."

The Committee recommends that TfL radically rethink the medium-long term ambitions of the East London and Greenwich schemes and lobby Government on the benefits that a more ambitious scheme might achieve along the corridors identified in the proposals for East London and Greenwich.

The Mayor who is the Chair of TfL does not have the "slightest doubt" that a service upgrade will be sought' and indeed land has been safeguarded to ensure an upgrade can take place. Therefore it was disappointing to note TfL's lack of enthusiasm for a future upgrade.

Given the Mayor's desire and expectation for the routes to undergo a "service upgrade", given the LDA's concern that the proposals do not represent the necessary "step change" and given the evident local enthusiasm for a more ambitious scheme, it is time that TfL pushed at this open door, stopped playing down the prospect of a service upgrade and began preparing the case for one.

1. Introduction

“We want the [Thames] Gateway to be a place where people choose to live and stay, where business choose to locate and where investors choose to invest.”

Yvette Cooper, Minister for Housing and Planning, November 2006¹

“East London is the Mayor’s priority area for development, regeneration and infrastructure improvement. Developments in this sub-region will continue well beyond the plan period (2016) as the impacts of major new transport infrastructure and of programmes of land assembly stimulate a virtuous circle of development and environmental improvement.”

London Plan, 2001

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- 1.1 East London, the tip of the funnel that is the wider Thames Gateway, is undergoing a transformation. Even before the 2012 Olympic and Paralympics Games were awarded to London, the region was identified as in need of massive regeneration. But it was a two-way street. London and wider South East region also need East London and the Thames Gateway to tackle massive housing shortages and to accommodate more widely London’s development as a World City.
- 1.2 Until now there had been very good reason why huge stretches of land east of London’s traditional centre had remained unpopulated. Much of the area remained inhospitable to development due to marshland and often contaminated industrial brownfield sites. But that has had to change. Local, regional and national government are all working together to ensure that new homes, new jobs and new sustainable communities are developed. Up to 2005, 24,000 new homes had been built for the sub region; over the next ten years a further 160,000 new homes are sought on top of 180,000 additional new jobs.²
- 1.3 And with new jobs and new homes comes the need for new infrastructure; the need for new transport links. £1.8 billion is being invested in this infrastructure. The Docklands Light Railway (DLR) is undergoing extensive development. Upgrades, extensions and new stations are being worked on serving Woolwich, Lewisham, Stratford and City Airport (see below). And there is an agreement in principle among key stakeholders³ for an extension to the DLR further east that would hug the north bank of the Thames from Gallions Reach to Dagenham Dock.

¹ Department for Communities and Local Government, Thames Gateway Interim Plan Policy Framework, November 2006

² Department for Communities and Local Government, Thames Gateway Interim Plan Policy Framework, November 2006

³ London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, Transport for London/GLA, English Partnerships/Bellway

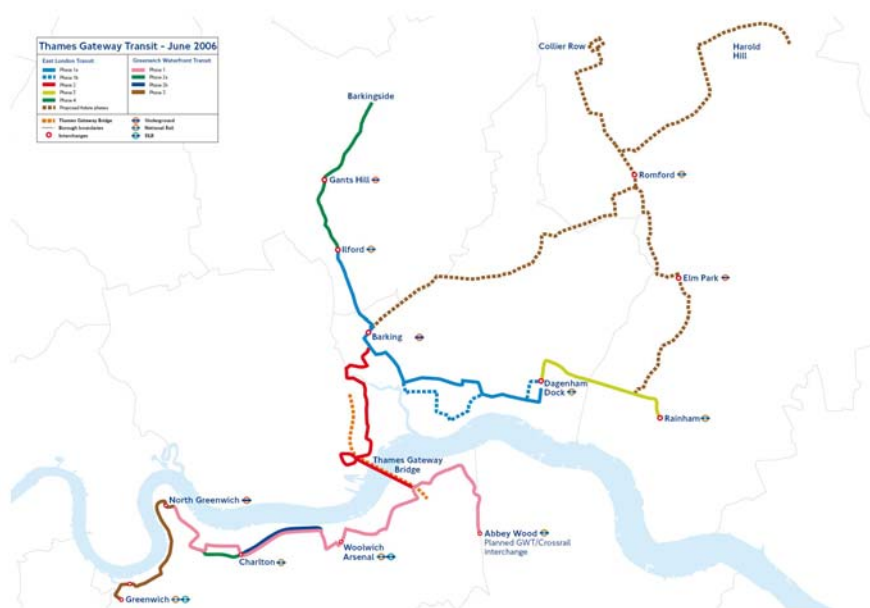


- 1.4 Also on the table are the East London and Greenwich Transit schemes. Initially conceived as potentially tram or trolleybus schemes, the existing proposals are now bus based, delivering faster journey times along existing bus routes through a combination of faster boarding times, new traffic management measures and most importantly entirely segregated lanes (which physically prevent other vehicles from using them). The schemes' introductions are phased; in East London Phase 1a will open in 2008 and will operate between Ilford and Dagenham Dock. In Greenwich, Phase 1 will open in late 2009 or early 2010 and will operate between Abbey Wood and Greenwich. Over the course of the next ten years further phases are expected to both schemes (see Chapter 2 and Appendices 1 & 2 for more details).
- 1.5 These schemes are designed to provide a vital connection to the wider transport network that is being expanded upon or extended to other parts of East London. The schemes will serve many of the new developments that are due to be complete in the next few years as well as existing communities, many of which have been identified as in need of regeneration. For example along Barking Riverside it is anticipated that 10,800 new homes will be developed, qualifying the site as "one of the biggest development[s] in the country and central to the regeneration and development of Thames Gateway."⁴ If the Thames Gateway Bridge is given approval and built, the two schemes will integrate to provide one network.
- 1.6 This review seeks to establish how the scheme has evolved and if the schemes proposals as they currently stand could be improved upon. The Committee has received valuable views from strategic bodies such as Transport for London and the London Development Agency; from sub regional partnerships such as the Thames Gateway London Partnership; and from the boroughs immediately impacted by the first phase proposals as well those boroughs who may become part of the network should the scheme be further developed beyond current spending rounds.

⁴Written submission from the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, September 2006. Copies of the written submissions received by the Committee are available on request from the London Assembly Secretariat.

2. The ELT and GWT proposals

- 2.1 The central idea of the Thames Gateway Transit is to link East London, north and south of the Thames, through a network of largely segregated bus routes linked by the Thames Gateway Bridge. If the Thames Gateway Bridge is constructed, the network will be made up of two separate, distinct schemes; the East London Transit (ELT) and the Greenwich Waterfront Transit (GWT).
- 2.2 Both schemes have funding committed for their initial phases. In East London, from 2008, a new bus service will operate between Ilford and Dagenham Dock via Barking (Phase 1a). South of the river, by late 2009 or early 2010, a new service will link Abbey Wood to North Greenwich and the Millennium Dome via Woolwich and Charlton (Phase 1). The combined cost of both schemes is currently set at £44.7m.⁵
- 2.3 TfL is currently consulting on, fine-tuning or scoping the later phases of the scheme illustrated below. Should these ambitions be realised, the scope of the scheme will be considerably enhanced; stretching further east and north into the Thames Gateway north of the river and west toward Greenwich Town Centre south of the river.



The East London Transit

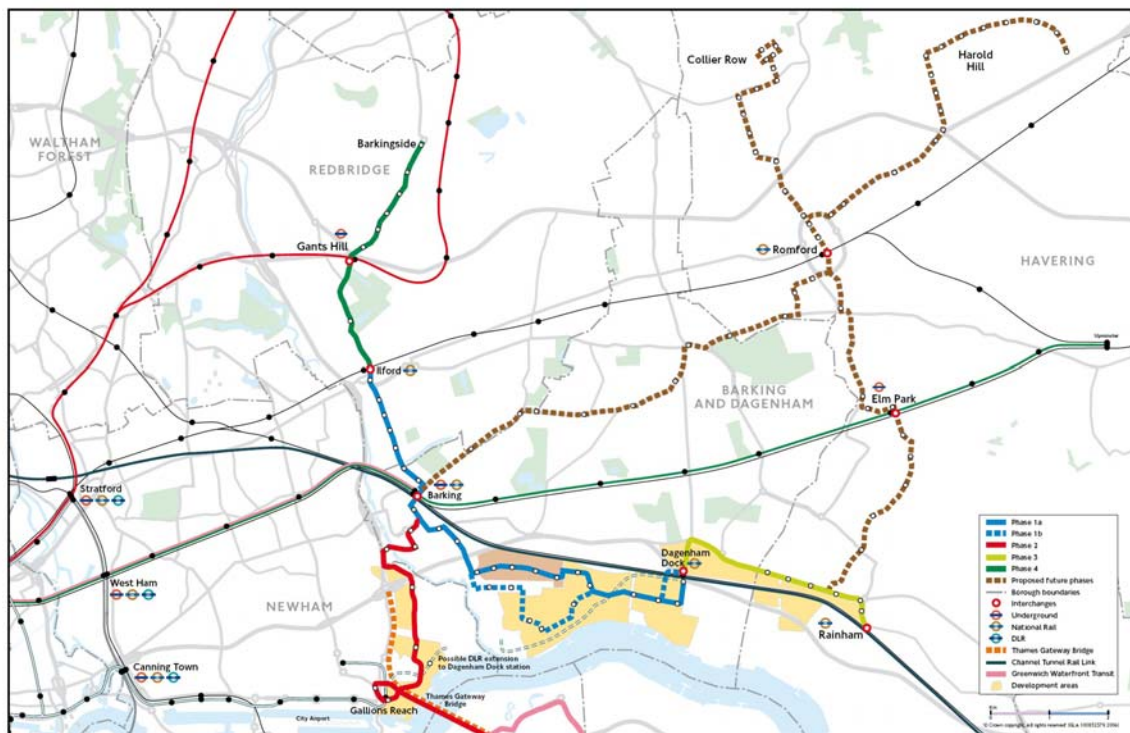
- 2.4 The East London Transit (ELT) will run from Dagenham Dock through to Ilford via Barking (Phase 1a) and Barking Reach (Phase 1b).
- 2.5 The East London Transit (ELT) will probably be served in the short term by the type of hybrid bus recently launched by the Mayor.⁶ The buses will use a combination of diesel and electric power but in appearance appear not dissimilar to the traditional double decker that currently services most of London's bus routes.

⁵ Transport for London, 5 Year Investment Programme, 2006-2010, December 2005, pp 287-88

⁶ [See Mayoral Press Release 546, 31 October 2006](#)

- 2.6 These hybrid buses would run, where feasible, on separated or segregated routes, with high-quality stops and next-arrival information – the kind of information passengers expect from a rail-based mode like a tram or the DLR. Initially most of the ELT will use bus lanes in combination with strict parking restrictions and enforcement, and priority at junctions. Later, as new developments are constructed on brownfield sites by the river, fully segregated lanes will be built to serve these.
- 2.7 The scheme is costed at £18.2m in TfL's five-year investment programme, with the service to be up and running by February 2008. The transit scheme, which is replacing the 369 route, is expected to deliver a 10% reduction in journey time compared to the bus route.

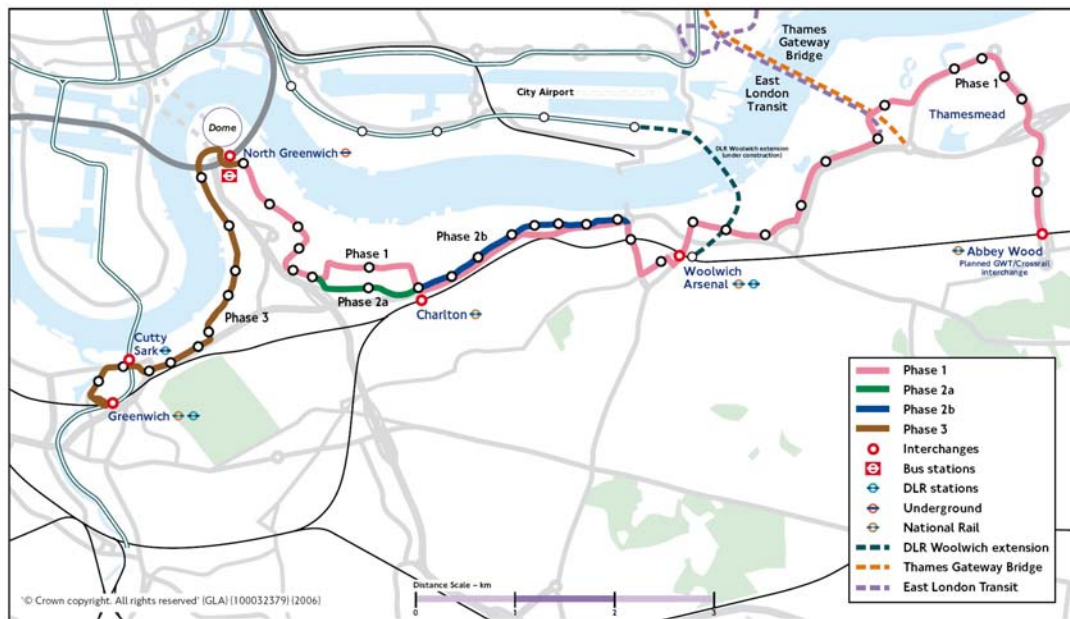
East London Transit – June 2006



The Greenwich Waterfront Transit

- 2.8 Phase 1 of the GWT will create a service between Abbey Wood Station and North Greenwich tube station. Phase 1 has been allocated funding in TfL's five-year investment programme and this section of the service should be running by late 2009 or early 2010.

GWT Phases - June 2006



- 2.9 Phase 2 will create a new bus route and bus lanes between Woolwich Ferry roundabout and the start of the Millennium Transitway at Sainsbury's in Charlton.
- 2.10 Phase 3 will create a new bus route and bus lanes between North Greenwich Station and Greenwich town centre. Both Phase 2 & Phase 3 are subject to funding being available and are provisionally scheduled for completion in 2016.

3. Developing the schemes: tram, trolley bus or just bus?

- 3.1 The proposals for the East London Transit and Greenwich Waterfront transit have been ten years in the making. The Committee learnt that between 1996 and 1999 London Transport (the predecessor to TfL) settled on the conclusion that the schemes designed for the Thames Gateway would be best served by a bus.⁷ The option of a tram was retained until 2001 in Greenwich due to strongly held local views.
- 3.2 The decision to proceed with a bus was made considering a variety of factors. Projected passenger numbers and service frequency were mapped against the need to provide an entirely segregated route and a partially segregated route. London Transport on handover to Transport for London recommended that, having weighed the cost and benefit of the various options, there was not a business case for a tram in either Greenwich or East London. The cost of providing an entirely segregated route that would be required for a tram was too high to be offset by the benefits. Put simply, there would not be enough passengers to justify the extra cost.
- 3.3 It is not difficult to understand why a tram might be considered too expensive. Tram schemes, according to TfL, “cost between about 10 to 20 times more than a bus-based scheme”, although LB Greenwich regard these costings as “overly pessimistic”⁸. And the more segregation there is available along a route, the stronger the case for a tram. Hence, in Greenwich the prospect of a tram was considered for longer than in East London. The scheme in Greenwich benefits from a relatively modern and spacious road network which makes feasible the prospect of greater segregation. The pinch point along the ELT route is Ilford Lane and the other apparently insurmountable restrictions along the Ilford stretches of the East London Transit weaken the case for a tram in Ilford, Barking and Dagenham.
- 3.4 Even allowing for the greater segregation in Greenwich, the benefits accrued by entirely segregated bus lanes is such that an upgrade to the substantially more expensive tram could not be justified. As Dick Halle, Director of Strategy for Surface Transport at TfL, concluded you simply “cannot make a business case to spend the money.”⁹
- 3.5 The case for a tram or trolleybus in Greenwich was evaluated in 2001. A Transport for London report, *Greenwich Waterfront Transit*, was produced which

⁷ Transcript of London Assembly Transport Committee 8th June 2006, Page 2. Minutes and transcripts of Transport Committee meetings are available at www.london.gov.uk/assembly/xxxx or on request from the London Assembly Secretariat.

⁸ “Consultation with TfL’s planners from the beginning of the transit project, and the specifications subsequently used for calculating land reservation for transit in planning agreements means that the whole of the Phase 1 route allows for tram upgradeability. It is the achievement of this amount of land reservation that also allows for the level of planned segregation on the current TfL preferred route. A major part of the TfL calculations in their business case is that a bus based transit system on Phase 1 between Abbey Wood and North Greenwich would have a journey time 50% faster than the current route 472 which it is set to supersede (23kph against 15kph). It is with reference to this land reservation that TfL’s figure of a tram system being 10 to 20 times more expensive than a bus based system seems overly pessimistic.” London Borough of Greenwich, Written Submission, September 2006

⁹ Transcript, London Assembly Transport Committee 8th June 2006, Page 5.

considered the benefits and costs of both a trolley bus and a tram for the route in Greenwich. The report concluded that the route would not support the extra cost of a tram and that a trolley bus or a bus could provide the necessary improvements should enough segregation be provided. The report also concluded that an upgrade to a tram in the long term should be protected with road engineering and the necessary land safeguarded to ensure that any future upgrade would be feasible.¹⁰

- 3.6 The boroughs gave way on the possibility of a tram, recognizing that a bus-based scheme would for the short term suffice. However, the case for a tram along both routes remained a long-term aspiration of local boroughs and sub regional partnerships.

The Committee's concerns

- 3.7 The emerging consensus between TfL and the boroughs was built on the understanding that the new bus based scheme would, if not be a tram, be "tram-like". A Department for Transport study into high quality buses in Leeds concluded that "that there is no clear evidence that a bus-based system providing most of the attributes of a tram system would not attract similar levels of patronage and deliver similar levels of benefit."¹¹ Bus based solutions are not automatically inferior as long they possess tram-like qualities.
- 3.8 The Thames Gateway London Partnership highlighted five characteristics that are distinctive to the schemes being operated or promoted in Crawley, York and Swansea, and particularly in the recently opened section of Fastrack in Dartford.
- Extensive priority measures including segregated route sections and priority lanes at traffic lights and junctions wherever possible;
 - Real time information using satellite vehicle location technology;
 - Dedicated stops, further apart than bus stops would usually be placed, with level boarding;
 - Dedicated high quality vehicles with unique appearance; and
 - Unique branding and livery to involve inclusion on the London Connections Map.

Segregated route sections

- 3.9 Segregation varies greatly across the two schemes. The initial phases, which have funding committed in East London and Greenwich, do not have the same high level of segregation that latter phases will possess. TfL informed the Committee that Phase 1a of the East London Transit has just 5% segregation, supported by a further 5% standard bus lane operation. 90% of the route will mix with other traffic on the road. However, Phase 1b, will possess 70% segregation and Phase 2 will invert the level of segregation for Phase 1a and have 90% of the route entirely segregated.¹²

¹⁰ Greenwich Waterfront Transit, Summary Report, Transport for London, July 2001

¹¹ See http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_localtrans/documents/page/dft_localtrans_610538-02.hcsp#P72_10332

¹² Transcript, London Assembly Transport Committee 8th June 2006, Page 4.

- 3.10 Phase 1 of the Greenwich Waterfront Transit Scheme has roughly an equally three way split between entirely segregated bus lanes, conventional bus lanes and shared use with traffic. Similarly the proportion of complete segregation expands as the latter phases are introduced.
- 3.11 There are also priority measures in place at junctions to help speed up bus journey times as well as other traffic management measures – particularly along Ilford Lane as described previously – which will aim to speed up journey time. Another key component will be speeding up how passengers get on and off the bus. However, many of the measures to be implemented to achieve this outcome, such as ticketless operation and multi door entry and exiting, are already in place across some of the bus network and will be even more mainstream by 2008 and 2009. When these schemes open, this does not present passengers with anything, which by then, will be regarded as “new”.

Bus Stops

- 3.12 The ELT and GWT will operate with bus stops that will use the most up to date satellite technology and real time information. The stops will be distinctive in appearance and design and allied to curb readjustments will provide level boarding access to all passengers. The concern about bus stops is not so much about their quality as their quantity.
- 3.13 TfL conceded to the Committee that by arriving at their decision on the number of stops that would be used along the ELT route, they had “compromised” between the need to make journey times faster and “allowing the businesses and the residents to carry out their lives.”¹³ TfL explained that where the new service will replace existing bus services, the number of stops would remain by and large the same and match current passenger patterns. With the potential roll out of future phases however there is the opportunity to place stops at a greater distance and TfL informed the Committee that there “may be a situation where you see fewer stops.”¹⁴
- 3.14 This does not represent a commitment to fewer stops for later phases. The Committee shares LB Greenwich’s concerns that the failure to reduce the number of stops will limit the potential of the service to deliver significant journey time savings and encourage car users on to the bus as identified by the Department for Transport study. TfL refutes Greenwich’s claims that additional stops have been added to the ELT route but remain no-committal as to the number of stops that will serve the Greenwich scheme.
- 3.15 The Kent Thameside Fastrack, which opened in 2006, has a commitment to reducing the number of stops by half along new segregated sections of the route. The number of stops is just one of many factors which has the potential to change the perception of the transport services on offer in East London and Greenwich. In order to encourage modal shift, the ELT and GWT need to establish a “a particular position above that of a normal bus systems and closer to that of light rail, but below that of normal rail.”¹⁵ Part of this positioning requires an express service where possible, to make the service resemble a tram rather than a bus. Without a guarantee to increase the distance between stops,

¹³ Transcript, London Assembly Transport Committee 8th June 2006, Page 17.

¹⁴ Transcript, London Assembly Transport Committee 8th June 2006, Page 5.

¹⁵ Transcript, London Assembly Transport Committee 7th September 2006, Page 15.

the ELT and GWT will not necessarily register as a superior system with local residents to sufficiently encourage modal shift.

Recommendation 1:

The Committee recommend that TfL to re-examine the frequency of stops along the Phase 1a of the East London Tram in order and to guarantee that the distance between stops for latter phases of the route be significantly increased.

Recommendation 2:

The Committee also recommend that TfL reduce the number of stops along the proposed route in Greenwich and to offer a similar commitment to significantly increasing the distance between stops on latter phases of the scheme.

The vehicle

- 3.16 The other two characteristics that make a bus service “tram-like” relate to the vehicle used. Given the choice between a bendy bus and a traditional double decker bus, the idea of a bendy bus has been dismissed and a preference expressed for a diesel electric hybrid.
- 3.17 Diesel electric hybrid vehicles do deliver a tangible improvement in air quality but their outward appearance resembles a modern fleet of a traditional double decker bus – essentially nothing different to what already services the corridors. It is doubtful whether an engine type will be enough to prompt someone to leave the car at home and try the bus. TfL though reassured stakeholders and the Committee that both routes will carry distinctive liveries and will be marketed in such a way as to make it distinct from the wider bus service.
- 3.18 In many respects, the characteristics that the boroughs are seeking from the ELT and GWT schemes are being delivered by the proposals put forward by TfL. The routes will provide passengers with distinctive, high quality stops with real time information akin to rail and Tube, the vehicles will be of distinctive appearance if not type and will operate wherever feasible along entirely segregated lanes, albeit to varying degrees.
- 3.19 Councillors in Barking and Dagenham felt moved to withdraw their support for the scheme in a motion passed in June of this year on the grounds that the ELT scheme had “moved so far from its original concept that on balance it no longer merits the risk and disruption, particularly to Barking Town Centre.”¹⁶ This represents a significant threat to the Phase 1a of the ELT because, as we have highlighted previously, the depedestrianisation of Barking Town Centre will be a substantial source for the journey time savings anticipated along the route.
- 3.20 Both Barking and Dagenham and the Thames Gateway London Partnership have cited the schemes in Crawley and Dartford as models that they would wish to see adopted for the East London Transit. With the notable exception of stop

¹⁶ Written Submission, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham September 2006, Page 4,

frequency, in many respects what is on offer on both sides of the river conforms to the very characteristics highlighted in the Department for Transport research from which they cite.

- 3.21 The relative success of the Crawley and Dartford schemes has been achieved in locations that operate in a deregulated environment and serve communities who had previously had little or no adequate public transport provision. This is not the case in London. London's regulated bus network out-performs any other within the UK and has been unique in reversing the downward trend and actually increased its passenger numbers. The schemes in East London and Greenwich are designed to make a good service into an exceptional one. Most of London is already well served by buses.

Governance and communication

- 3.22 So, why if most criteria for a bus-based tram like system been met have the proposals put forward by TfL fallen so short of local expectations? Part of the reason is that TfL's thought process in developing the scheme appears to have been private rather than public, unilateral rather than consensual.
- 3.23 The Mayor concedes that the ambitions for the project have been scaled back. In July 2006, the Mayor stated

*"the original proposals were for state of the art stuff, but we are really talking about now an upgraded bus system."*¹⁷

It is through this process of scaling back that local ambition became detached from strategic expediency. Consequently, a degree of despondency developed, culminating in the motion passed at Barking and Dagenham's Executive Council on 18 July 2006, when the Council withdrew its support for the scheme unless specific material changes were met.¹⁸

- 3.24 The two schemes are overseen by a Programme Board, containing senior managers. Beneath this Board sit a number of Project Boards, which co-ordinates across TfL the management of each section of the schemes. The Project Boards meet every four weeks.¹⁹
- 3.25 The arrangements exclude direct involvement from local representatives or, as would be particularly pertinent in the case of the transit schemes, regeneration experts, such as the London Development Agency. This lack of regular involvement with the local stakeholders divorced groups such as the Thames Gateway London Partnership (TGLP) from the changing thinking behind the transit schemes. The TGLP called on TfL to adopt the model used by Kent Thameside Fastrack for the two-transit scheme:

*"...we want something akin to Thameside Fastrack with effective governance arrangements, working in equal partnership with the boroughs, TGLP, GLA regeneration representatives, government regeneration representatives and developers."*²⁰

¹⁷ Mayor's Question Time, 12 July 2006, Question number 1491/2006

¹⁸ Written Submission, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham September 2006, Appendices C & D

¹⁹ Written Submission, Transport for London, October 2006, pp 1-2

²⁰ Transcript, London Assembly Transport Committee, 7 September 2006, Page 1

- 3.26 Again the validity of a comparison with Fastrack is limited. Kent Thameside's governance arrangements are designed in the absence of a strategic transport authority and partially to negate the impact of a deregulated transport environment. London has its own strategic transport authority in TfL that by definition will sometimes see the need to overlook local demands in favour of a regional need. Consequently it is not surprising that TfL do not have local representatives on their Programme Management Board. However, there is still an information gap that has fostered suspicion and the Committee feels it would be mutually beneficial for all concerned if this were addressed.

Recommendation 3:

The Committee seeks from TfL a commitment to the following:

- **That all boroughs involved in the Thames Gateway Transit are invited to regularly attend TfL Programme Board meetings.**
- **That the monthly Project Boards invite the relevant authority on a regular basis.**

- 3.27 In addition TfL's management structure needs to take into account the regeneration issues that the transit schemes are seeking to tackle. Unlike the other high profile schemes TfL is developing like the West London Tram and Cross River Tram, the East London and Greenwich Waterfront Transits' primary aim is not to relieve congestion on the road or tube network but to assist in the wider strategic regeneration and development of a sub-region. Consequently, the Programme Board needs to have its sister strategic organisation integrated fully into the decision-making and development process.

Recommendation 4:

The Committee recommends that TfL invite representatives from the London Development Agency to be members of its Programme Board for the Thames Gateway Transits.

These governance arrangements should also be maintained through the appropriate forums once the schemes have been developed and are fully operational.

- 3.28 This may prove uncomfortable but it is a necessary discomfort. In its submission to the Committee the London Development Agency stated that it had "raised concerns over the early phases of the project not delivering the dramatic step change required to make an impact on journey times and the perception of accessibility."²¹

The management and operation of the scheme

- 3.29 Once up and running, the day-to-day operation of the schemes will be franchised out in a similar fashion to bus schemes that currently operate in London. TfL plan to enable operators to utilise "enhanced service control

²¹ Written Submission, London Development Agency, August 2006, Page 4

information” which will provide controllers with “a robust and effective tool to help deal with the day-to-day operational issues that affect services.”²² The scheme is known as iBus and will be used across the entire bus network.

- 3.30 The franchise process presents the opportunity for TfL to differentiate the transit scheme from traditional bus routes. As part of the franchise agreement for the Transit Schemes, the Committee recommends that TfL should examine the possibility of requiring from bidders a commitment to additional transport engineers. The additional staff would be able to trouble shoot service issues on a daily basis so as to ensure that journey times do not decline.
- 3.31 Such a commitment may include a dedicated control room for example. This may appear to be a relatively minor issue compared to vehicle type or stop frequency or degree of segregation from traffic but this suggestion could have the potential to offer a visible demonstration of the transit’s difference and uniqueness within the wider London transport network. They could also, more crucially, enable the service to run more effectively.

²² Written Submission, Transport for London, October 2006, Page 4

4. The Committee's Conclusions

The short-medium term

- 4.1 The London Plan states that the Thames Gateway requires

“the impacts of major new transport infrastructure and of programmes of land assembly [to] stimulate a virtuous circle of development and environmental improvement.”²³

- 4.2 The East London and Greenwich Transits are TfL's contribution to stimulating this “virtuous circle”. The schemes' ambitions may be relatively modest compared to what is on the table in West and Central London. But that is because they need to happen now; they need to make that start. A commitment now to a tram scheme would hold up any transport improvements into the middle of the next decade and more pertinently, there simply isn't the case for a tram in east London or Greenwich as projections currently stand.
- 4.3 For example, projected demand along the Greenwich scheme by 2016 is currently 11.1m passengers per annum. Similar passenger projections for the West London Tram come in at roughly four times that figure. Those opposed to the West London Tram proposals or those seeking a tram in the Thames Gateway dispute these figures but even considering these concerns, the gap is significantly large. A valid transport case for a tram, which does not consider regeneration, in the Thames Gateway cannot feasibly be made. Yet.
- 4.4 The matter of whether the tram is a viable long-term option is a separate matter from whether the proposals as they currently stand are viable. The Committee feel the proposals can and should be improved. The number of stops needs to be brought down to upgrade the service from merely an improvement to the current bus services to the introduction of a new express service. Faster journey times are critical in delivering more passengers and achieving a significant modal shift.

Therefore the Committee concludes that, if the number of stops can be reduced and journey times consequently reduced, the East London and Greenwich Waterfront transits offer a viable, affordable and welcome improvement to the transport network in Ilford, Barking, Dagenham and Greenwich.

- 4.5 Car drivers can see the Croydon Tramlink on the London Connections Map. The Thames Gateway Transit network needs to have similar status and promotion as a new and distinct system. Unless it is appropriately promoted, TGLP and the Boroughs fear it will not provide the quality “step-change” in public transport that is needed to achieve a significant change from car use and thereby support regeneration and combat increasing congestion.”
- 4.6 The proposals as they are represent a start. Unfortunately, they also represent an awkward start as Phases 1 either side of the Thames are tackling the most potentially difficult sections of the whole network. Therefore the Committee is concerned that future phases of the project should be given the utmost priority

²³ The London Plan, Greater London Authority, paragraph 5.50, page 243

in the next round of spending plans that TfL produce post 2010. It is only when the benefits of greater segregation planned for the latter phases are felt that the success of the scheme can be judged and ultimately that the case for a tram or a DLR upgrade can be considered for the long term.

- 4.7 And whenever this case is put, TfL needs to consider too the benefits of certain sections of the route. The Ilford Town Centre/Ilford Lane stretch of the ELT route has been offered some imaginative solutions to what appear to be insurmountable problems. The road is simply too narrow and too busy.

- 4.8 **The Committee welcomes the proposed improvements to the streetscape, especially along Ilford Lane, but questions whether it's inclusion in the 1st phase is viable in the long term, given the problems concerning available space, congestion and the loading requirements of small businesses. The Committee remains deeply sceptical that this stretch of road should be included when any upgrade to a tram or any other mode is considered.**

The long term

- 4.9 Are the questions put in the transport bidding process providing the Thames Gateway with the necessary answers? Any business case that focuses on areas such as Ilford, Barking, Dagenham and Greenwich will be forced to adopt an incremental spend, an inch-by-inch, year-by-year, cautious approach. The Thames Gateway has a wider strategic and social importance for London's long-term future than the Uxbridge Road for example, and yet the always-contentious cost benefit process prejudices against any dramatic kick start. The Thames Gateway sits outside the traditional cost: benefit ratio framework. An ambitious, comprehensive transport network in the Thames Gateway could avoid a problem; the bidding process however seeks only to solve problems where they already exist.
- 4.10 It was disappointing to hear TfL when they spoke to the Committee not offering any positive endorsement to the long-term aspiration for a tram or similar service upgrade for the routes. The transport case cannot be made but the regeneration case is a valid one. Local boroughs, regeneration agencies both local and regional, and the Mayor himself wish to see a tram or light rail operate along the proposed routes in the long term.
- 4.11 The Committee agree. A bus based scheme falls short of providing the necessary, strategic transport infrastructure improvements required for the long-term sustainable regeneration of the wider Thames Gateway.

Recommendation 5:

The Committee recommends that TfL radically rethink the medium-long term ambitions of the East London and Greenwich schemes. TfL, in partnership with the London Development Agency, need to lobby Government on the benefits that a more ambitious scheme might achieve along the corridors identified in the proposals for East London and Greenwich.

Appendix A - Details of the proposed route in East London

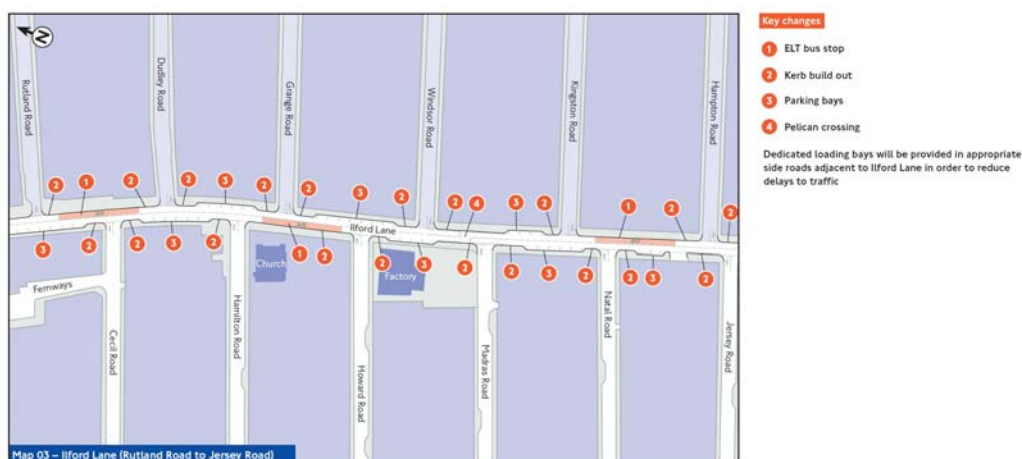
Phase 1a - Ilford to Dagenham Dock via Thamesview Estate

Phase One, due for completion in 2008, will be from Ilford town centre to Barking town centre and on to Creekmouth and Dagenham Dock station. It will run via Ilford Lane, Fanshawe Avenue and Longridge Road to Barking station. A third of this funding, roughly £6 million, is committed to 'urban realm' improvements along the route – i.e., improved paving, street signage.

Ilford Town Centre & Ilford Lane

The consecutive roundabouts at the northern end of Ilford Lane are already heavily congested and a number of buses serve the town centre. The plans for the road system are to create a bus stand on Ilford Lane and to modify a junction.

The section of the proposed route immediately south of the Ilford town centre on Ilford Lane is a source of concern for the Committee. A relatively narrow road with commercial premises on both sides, illegal loading and the inevitable congestion this causes blight significant stretches of the road. TfL is proposing to install a variety of traffic calming measurements to design out illegal loading and to increase bus boarding and alighting times along the route.



The above section of the route illustrates some of the techniques that TfL is proposing to ease congestion. Kerb build outs in line with bus stops will prevent unwanted loading by bus stops, which have made it difficult for passengers to get on and off a bus. The theory is that by narrowing the road space, unwanted loading will become impossible without stopping all traffic all together – the measure seeks to effectively embarrass drivers out of loading and unloading illegally. Pedestrian crossings will also be shortened with the use of kerb build outs – again with the intention to limit the level of delays endured by buses along Ilford Lane.

Unlike other segments of both proposed transit schemes, a number of compulsory purchases would be required to make way any for any future tram scheme.

Barking Town Centre

The ELT will then travel through the pedestrianised Barking town centre via Station Parade and Ripple Road. This will require the relocation of the street market in the town centre. The forecourt space immediately outside Barking station will be reduced and this could also involve the relocation of a taxi rank.

Parking restrictions will be required particularly on Ripple Road, Movers Lane and in the Thames View Estate in order for the system to be effective. Retailers on the Ripple Road could face a loss of trade with the new parking restrictions.



The removal of the pedestrianisation section along Ripple Road buys the scheme significant journey saving times for the route – about 3-5 minutes. This represents about half of the journey time saving along the whole ELT route as set out in Phase 1a.

The ELT then carries on down Ripple Road to Movers Lane, and passes under the A13 where provision has already been made for it in the reconstruction of the junction here. It turns into the Thames View Estate at Bastable Avenue and uses Choats Lane to reach Chequers Lane, where it will terminate just south of Dagenham Dock station²⁴.

²⁴ **The full list of stations for Phase 1a:** Ilford, Ilford Station, Chapel Road, Rutland Road, Madras Road, St Luke's Avenue, Norman Road, Fanshawe Avenue, Barking Station, Vicarage Fields Shopping Centre, Ripple Court, Movers Lane, Hockley Mews, Curzon Crescent, Thames View Infants School, Chelmer Crescent, Abridge Way, Great Fleete Way, Environmental Technology Resource Centre for London, Choats Manor Way, Chequers Lane, Dagenham Dock Station

Phase 1b: Barking Reach Alignment

Further development at Creekmouth and Dagenham Dock will give rise to a new, segregated route through the development to the south of the current Creekmouth route. This route would interchange with the proposed DLR extension to Dagenham Dock at Barking Pier and Barking Riverside. Once newer developments on the Barking Reach are complete, an additional alignment may be built further south, serving the following stops between Barking and Dagenham²⁵.

Phase 2: Gallions Reach

Subject to future funding availability, the ELT service from Barking Town Centre to Gallions Reach is expected to start by 2012. A route through new developments between Barking and the DLR at Gallions Reach is proposed for Phase 2²⁶. A DLR extension is already proposed between Gallions Reach and Dagenham Dock via the new developments at Creekmouth to improve access to employment in the Docklands and for Royal Docks area residents to access new employment planned for Dagenham Dock.

Linking to Gallions Reach will enable through operation between ELT and Greenwich Waterfront Transit via the new Thames Gateway Bridge, resulting in integration of the two networks into a single Thames Gateway Transit network.

Phase 3 - Rainham extension

This extension would serve new housing developments planned for the long-term in the brownfield area known as Havering Riverside and would run from Dagenham Dock Station through to Rainham Station.

Later phases

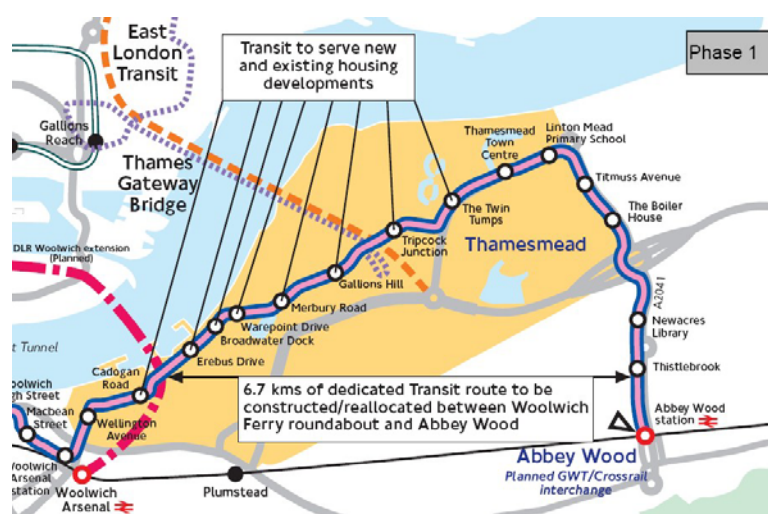
Future extensions and routes could see the Ilford line running northwards to Gants Hill, a route linking Rainham to Romford via Elm Park, and a route out from Barking via the University of East London to Romford. Harold Hill and Collier Row could be reached via Romford.

²⁵ **Stations for Phase 1b** – (stations common to 1a and in 1b in italics) :Barking Station, Vicarage Fields Shopping Centre, Ripple Court, Movers Lane, River Road, Thames Road, Barking Reach Primary School, Thameside Community Nature Reserve, Creekmouth, Barking Pier, Renwick Riverside, Ash Beds, Barking Riverside, Environmental Technology Resource Centre for London, Choats Manor Way, Chequers Lane, Dagenham Dock Station

²⁶ **Stations for Phase 2** – (stations common to 1a and 1b in italics) Barking Station, Vicarage Fields Shopping Centre, St Paul's Road, Gascoigne Road, The Clarksons, Showcase Cinemas, Gallions Reach Retail Park, Gallions Reach DLR, Woolwich Manor Way

Appendix B – Details of the Greenwich Waterfront Transit

Phase 1 – Abbey Wood to Woolwich to Greenwich



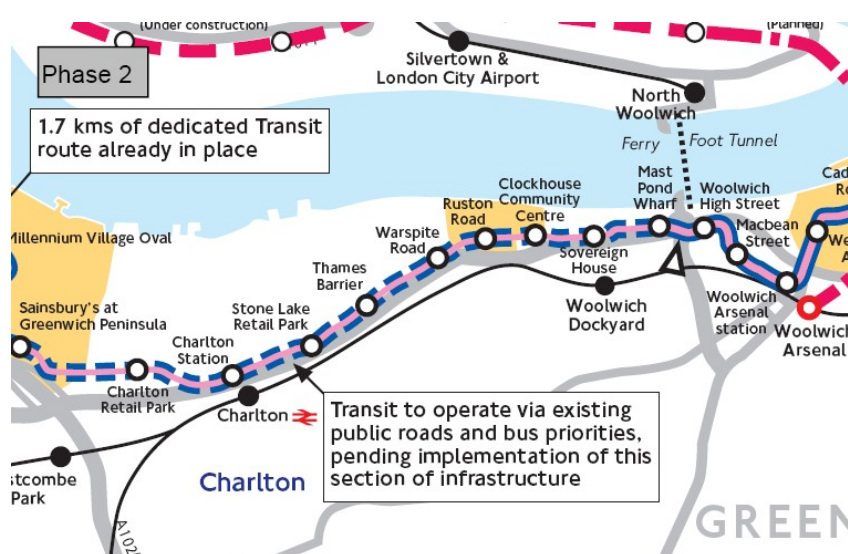
In spring 2004 a consultation was held on a single GWT route from Abbey Wood to Woolwich ferry roundabout. Significant issues were identified with the route in West Thamesmead and residents and businesses suggested other routes for consideration.

A second public consultation was held in West Thamesmead from November 2004 to January 2005. The consultation presented additional options between Royal Arsenal and Gallions Hill. 14.9% of those who were sent a brochure responded – a much higher figure than the 5% response rate to the consultation in spring 2004.

The key finding of the consultation was a strong public and stakeholder preference for a route along Western Way. TfL had previously favoured a route that would run along the north bank of the canal in Gallions Hill.

TfL has considered the views and concerns of respondents and after evaluating the options recommended the Western Way and Pettman Crescent route. On 13 September 2005 London Borough of Greenwich endorsed TfL's recommendation for a route in West Thamesmead via Western Way and Pettman Crescent. Phase 1 is now ready for handover from Major Projects to Surface Transport and a GWT service from Abbey Wood to Greenwich should be operational by late 2009/early 2010.

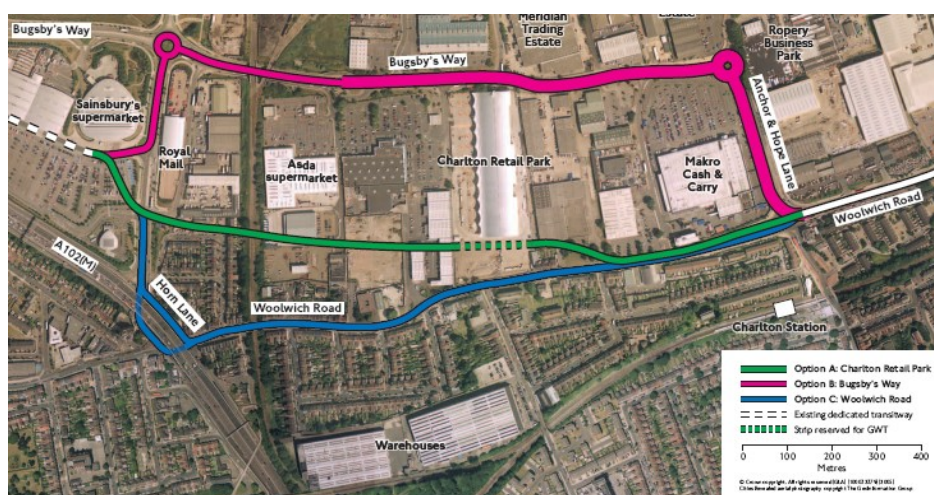
Phase 2 - Woolwich Ferry roundabout to Millennium Transitway (Charlton)



Although the GWT will run between Woolwich and Charlton from 2009/10, Phase Two of the GWT will develop busways and segregated busways between Woolwich Ferry roundabout and North Greenwich station. Consultation on the vital middle section of Phase Two in Charlton ended in Autumn 2005 and presented three route options between Anchor and Hope Lane and Pear Tree Way.

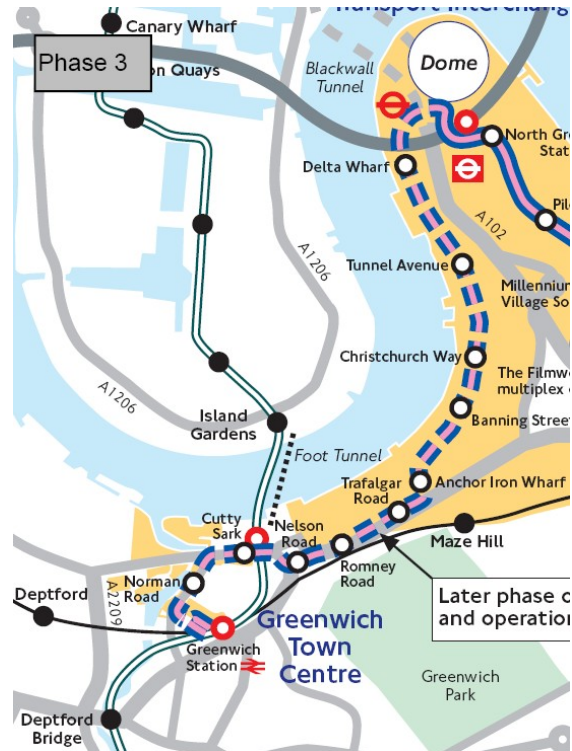
Phase 2 has been divided into two sections a) and b). Phase 2a runs from Woolwich to Charlton Station and Phase 2b) runs from Charlton station to Sainsbury's supermarket – and was the primary subject of the recent consultation.

62 percent of questionnaire respondents expressed a preference for Option A Charlton Retail Park (green line on the map below), with congestion on other routes, the provision of a high quality transport service being the most frequent reasons given for this preference.



Phase 3 – North Greenwich to Greenwich town centre

Route Options for Phase 3 of the GWT are being considered and have yet to be consulted upon.



Appendix C – List of evidence submitted to the Committee

The Committee would like to thank all the organisations who took the time to contact the Committee and submit evidence to the scrutiny.

If you wish to obtain any of the evidence listed below, you can e-mail danny.myers@london.gov.uk or download transcripts or submissions from <http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/reports/transport.jsp>.

Oral Evidence

London Assembly Transport Committee, 8 June 2006²⁷

- Dick Halle, Director of Strategy, Transport for London
- John Barry, Head of Network Development, Transport for London
- Tony Antoniou, Programme Director, Transport for London
- Pat Hayes, Director of Borough Partnerships

London Assembly Transport Committee, 7 September 2006²⁸

- Stephen Joseph - Deputy Chief Executive: Strategy, Thames Gateway London Partnership
- Peter Morley - Thames Gateway London Partnership
- Dr Alan Brett - Atkins
- David Higham - London Borough of Barking and Dagenham
- David Jessup - London Borough of Greenwich
- Dominic West - London Borough of Newham
- John Allen - London Thames Gateway Development Corporation
- Richard Hawkins - London Borough of Bexley

Written Evidence

- London Borough of Barking and Dagenham
- London Borough of Bexley
- London Borough of Greenwich
- London Borough of Havering
- London Borough of Newham
- London Development Agency
- London Thames Gateway Development Corporation
- Thames Gateway London Partnership
- Transport for London

All maps used in the report are courtesy of Transport for London.

²⁷ see <http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/transport/2006/jun08/minutes/transcript.pdf> or <http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/transport/2006/jun08/minutes/transcript.rtf>

²⁸ see <http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/transport/2006/sep07/minutes/appb.pdf> or <http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/transport/2006/sep07/minutes/appb.rtf>

Appendix D – Orders and Translations

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Appendix E: Principles of scrutiny

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Scrutinies:

- aim to recommend action to achieve improvements;
- are conducted with objectivity and independence;
- examine all aspects of the Mayor's strategies;
- consult widely, having regard to issues of timeliness and cost;
- are conducted in a constructive and positive manner; and
- are conducted with an awareness of the need to spend taxpayers money wisely and well.

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