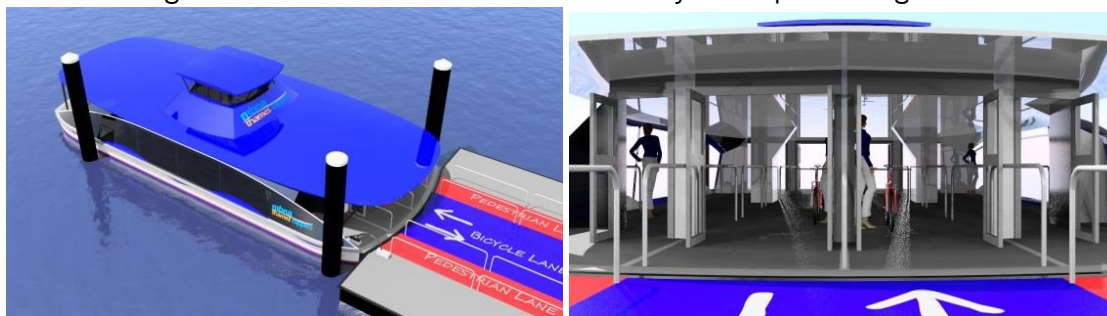


## Rotherhithe to Canary Wharf Crossing - New Electric Ferry Service Option

### 1 Background

- 1.1 MBNA Thames Clippers currently operates a cross-river pedestrian and cycle ferry service on a commercial basis between Nelson Dock Pier (DoubleTree Docklands Hotel) and Canary Wharf Pier. This service utilises a single vessel, which runs approximately every 10-15 minutes between 06:00 (09:00 at weekends) and 00:00 (22:30 on Sundays) and has a three minute journey time (excluding waiting, boarding, docking and alighting). Both of the piers are privately owned, with access on the Rotherhithe side through lobby of the DoubleTree Docklands Hotel that also subsidises the service.
- 1.2 Different options for providing a new or enhanced ferry service were considered as part of the strategic option selection process for the Rotherhithe to Canary Wharf Crossing.
- 1.3 The central ferry concept is for new electric powered roll-on / roll-off cycle and pedestrian vessels, as shown in Figure 1. The proposal would include pier upgrades at Canary Wharf and Nelson Dock to provide additional capacity to accommodate the river ferries, together with increased passenger demand, and to make the ramps a shallower gradient and therefore more accessible. Access at Nelson Dock would also be provided directly from the Thames Path, rather than just via the hotel, to improve convenience for users. This would help provide ease of access for cyclists and facilitate the efficient and rapid boarding and alighting needed.

Figure 1: New electric roll-on/roll-off ferry concept drawings



- 1.4 The provision of three new vessels could provide a higher 5 minute frequency service with reduced waiting times, while a subsidy could potentially allow the fare to be reduced or eliminated to encourage greater use of this link.
- 1.5 It is assumed that even with an increased frequency of service, there would be no disruption to navigation along the river in the event of a larger vessel passing up or downstream (because the larger vessel would have priority over the ferry). Disruption to a ferry service in these circumstances is assumed to be short in duration.
- 2 A new ferry service has a lower capital cost than a bridge or tunnel and could be introduced more quickly. However, is likely to be less attractive to potential users than a bridge or tunnel, given the need for cyclists to dismount and wait to board/alight. It is also less likely to deliver as significant economic benefits in the long term as it would not be perceived as a 'permanent' new link unlike a bridge.

### 3 Capital and Operating Costs

- 3.1 Our initial estimates of the ferry capital costs are given in Table 1. In addition to these, there would be costs for operation, renewal and maintenance of the ferries, expected to amount to an annual cost of £2.4m (2016 prices), including staffing, energy, maintenance and scheduled asset replacement. These costs amount to a Net Financial Effect (to the public purse) of the new ferry option of £121m (2016 prices) over a 60 year appraisal period, based upon a free ferry (i.e. with no fare revenue).

Table 1: Summary of new ferry capital costs (£m, 2016 prices)

	2016 prices capital cost only including risk	Outturn costs including risk, inflation and land costs, but excluding optimism bias
New ferry	32	64

### 4 Demand and Revenue

- 4.1 In 2017 a daily average of 1,200 passengers used the existing ferry service. The central concept for a new ferry service (free) with a 5-minute frequency is forecast to be used by around 4,800 pedestrians and 450 cyclists per day by 2031.
- 4.2 Demand forecasts will be significantly lower in a scenario where fares are charged. If TfL subsidised an operator to run the service with a reduced 'TfL Oyster and Travelcard' rate (less than currently charged by MBNA Thames Clippers) this would generate revenue, to the operator, estimated at around £1.06m per annum (2016 prices). Over a 60 year evaluation period this results in an operator income of £49m (2016 prices).

### 5 Benefits

- 5.1 A new ferry service (free) as described above is predicted to attract a similar number of pedestrian users as a bridge, but significantly less cyclists. Wider economic benefits are less likely to be realised due to the 'non-permanency' of the ferry option.
- 5.2 The BCR of the new ferry service (free) is estimated at 2.12:1, compared with the bridge which has a BCR of 1.1:1. A charged ferry offers a significantly reduced BCR, depending on the level of the charge, due to the reduction in demand.

### 6 Timescales

- 6.1 A new ferry service could be operational in a 3-4 year period from a decision to proceed with this option, including the time to complete further design work and consultation, acquire the relevant land interests and gain the necessary consents, tender for the new service, and build & commission the new vessels and infrastructure.

*Note: If resources or timescales are more constrained than as described for the central ferry concept, it would be possible to scale the enhancements accordingly.*

