

River Services Letter

Aerial view of central London

Key information

Publication type: General

Publication date: Thursday 21 December 2023

1. River Services Letter

The Mayor must appoint a River Commissioner if London is to see the true benefits of transport services on the River Thames, according to the **London Assembly Transport Committee**.

As part of an investigation into London's river transport services, the Committee found that the patchwork of different authorities, pier owners and boat operators, with responsibilities for different aspects of the River Thames, means that cooperation can be challenging.

Evidence provided to the Committee suggests that a dedicated role like that of London's Walking and Cycling Commissioner could provide a focus to co-ordinate strategy on the River Thames. This would remove barriers to expansion of services and allow London's river transport services to grow.

The Committee sees a significant opportunity for using the river more, for both passengers and freight. It should be considered as a genuine option for travel across the capital in future years and should be utilised more effectively for light freight deliveries across London.

Because of this, the Committee has written to the Mayor with **seven** recommendations including:

- The Mayor should appoint a River Commissioner in 2024-25 to accelerate progress on better using the Thames for passenger and freight transport, including through working closely with the PLA, industry and local authorities.
- The Mayor should continue to support future light freight trials and work together with other stakeholders to find ways to scale the volumes of freight being transported and overcome current barriers.
- The Mayor should publish an update to his pier strategy in 2024-25, which should be expanded to cover both passengers and light freight. It should include:
 - updating projections for further growth in passenger travel;
 - proposals for TfL to increase pier capacity in central London
 - options for providing electric charging infrastructure for vessels on TfL piers; and
 - research into new ways to increase the capacity for roll-on/roll-off (RORO) ferry support and other methods that can more efficiently load and unload light freight and bicycles in key locations.

[Read the Letter](#)