

Response to TfL consultation on Extending the DLR to Beckton Riverside and Thamesmead

Image of Caroline Russell Green AM

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This is my response as a London Assembly Member to the consultation run by Transport for London (TfL) on extending the DLR to Beckton Riverside and Thamesmead.

Londoners are welcome to use my response as a basis to help shape their own responses to the consultation, which closes on 17 August 2025.

The consultation is hosted by TfL at: <https://haveyoursay.tfl.gov.uk/dlr-extension-consultation-2>, where you can complete their survey. Alternatively, you can email your views via haveyoursay@tfl.gov.uk, or write to: FREEPOST TFL HAVE YOUR SAY, no postage stamp required.

My response

A group of Londoners in Barking & Dagenham and Havering contacted me:

- Ruth Kettle-Frisby
- Louise Lee
- Daniel Nichols
- Anina Pletscher
- Mark Whiley

They raised the following points, which I support:

We greatly appreciate the investment by TfL in extending the DLR eastwards to Beckton Riverside and Thamesmead. The additional plan to build a new town centre for Beckton Riverside, including the social infrastructure that the existing and growing community will need is very welcome.

However, as a group of residents, workers and leaders of community projects and campaigns across both Barking and Dagenham and Havering, we have considerations for our boroughs that we would like to be voiced as part of the wider conversation around this DLR extension.

Barking Riverside

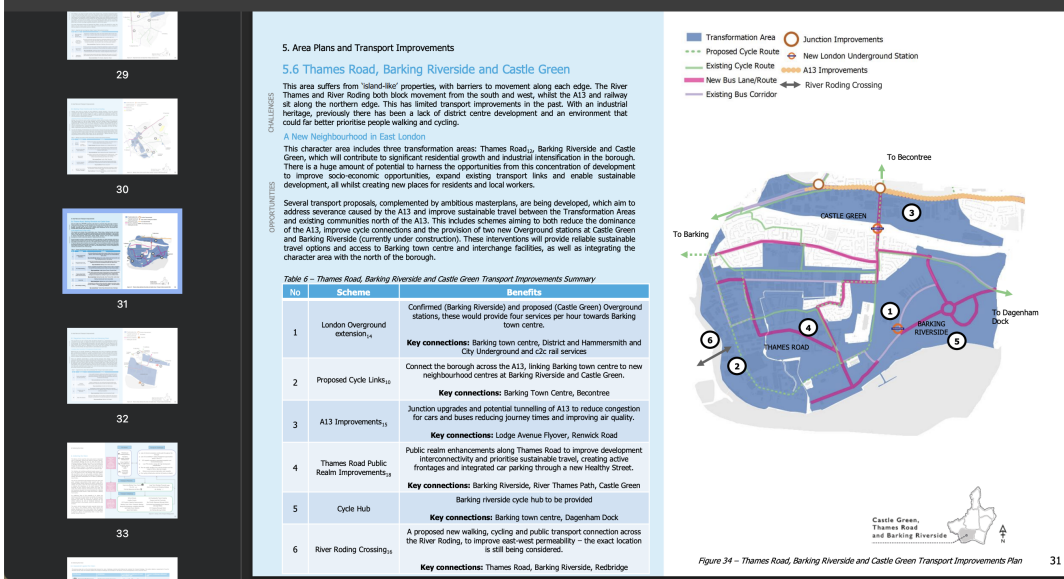
Located just across Creekmouth from Beckton Riverside, the community of Barking Riverside is around 10,000 people among the 3,500 homes either built or under construction. There is planning approval for 10,800 homes and they are seeking permission for 20,000. Therefore, the eventual residential population will likely be nearer six times current levels. This area is quite disconnected from central Barking, with just River Road serving as the main artery in and out from the development.

It has a lack of social infrastructure, with the nearest health centre for existing residents being the Thames View Health Centre, already serving approximately 4000 people in Thames View. It has one convenience store, a Coop, and one permanent coffee shop.

Rail connections between Beckton Riverside and Barking Riverside may be off the table for now, however **a bridge across the Creekmouth to connect the new Beckton Riverside town centre and Barking Riverside** could lead to dramatic improvements to the available amenities for Barking Riverside residents.

This could still be served by bus links to promote mass transit over car use, and be integrated within the existing cycle network, but also ensure Barking Riverside is not completely cut off when River Road is congested or closed.

Such a connection is referenced in the [LB of Barking and Dagenham Borough-Wide Transport Strategy document](#), under Section 5.6, “A proposed new walking, cycling and public transport connection across the River Roding, to improve east-west permeability – the exact location is still being considered. Key connections: Thames Road, Barking Riverside, Redbridge”.



Assembly members, [have](#)

[also argued](#) for light rail connections between Beckton and Barking Riverside previously.

Beam Park

The development just east of Barking Riverside straddles both Barking and Dagenham and Havering, without the promised rail station between Dagenham Dock and Rainham on the C2C/Great British Rail line. Again, this community could benefit from better transport connections across from Beckton Riverside through to Rainham, where Beckton Riverside may be seen as the main retail and social infrastructure hub on the north bank of the Thames in East London.

Nature Conservation, Green Spaces and Active Travel

We would also ask that thought is given as to nature conservation and protection along the Thames during any development projects, as there have been concerns with recent Barking Riverside developments of threats to rare wildlife habitat.

There are also opportunities to highlight this area as one of East London's treasures for green space, conservation and active travel from the future reopening to the public of Ripple Nature Reserve, the Creekmouth Open Space and of the RSPB café, with external support, at Rainham Marshes. These should be connected through a green corridor for walkers and cyclists.

Comment on the removal of safeguarding for the Thames Gateway Bridge

Given the removal of the safeguarding for the Thames Gateway Bridge, I would like to end this response with some points from myself as an Assembly Member about the need for TfL to plan strategically for active travel across the Thames.

Evidence has shown repeatedly that a variety of alternatives to the private car are necessary to enable lower levels of car ownership, public transport alone cannot solve every journey, and therefore a full active travel network that links both sides of the Thames is needed in East London.

The Thames Gateway Bridge was a poor proposal, but removing the safeguarding formally ends the last live proposal for future delivery of a new crossing of the Thames with space for walking, wheeling and cycling. The Silvertown Road Tunnel has been delivered with minimal cycling connectivity, provided purely by a low-capacity shuttle bus with inadequate connections, and the Rotherhithe to Canary Wharf cycle bridge has been abandoned due to cost before even having any land safeguarded.

No new permanent walking connection across the Thames has been built since the Millennium Bridge opened in the year 2000, and unlike many other major cycling cities London has only retrofitted cycling into existing crossings and has never added new permanent cycle crossings as part of a new link.

TfL needs to urgently consider how and when it can affordably deliver permanent, high-capacity active travel infrastructure alongside new connections like the DLR extension to Thamesmead and use new links across the Thames as part of completing the gaps in the cycle network in outer London. London will in future bear the growing opportunity cost that has been built up by not including permanent active travel in any recent crossing.