

**PLA Thames Vision 2035
Passenger Transport Growth Study**

Tender Specification

1 Objective

- 1.1 The aim of this study is to identify options to achieve safe and sustainable growth in passenger journeys on the Thames in London, Kent and Essex as part of *'The Vision for the Tidal Thames – Thames 2035'* (Thames Vision 2035). This approach will seek to challenge underlying assumptions and provide new analysis of opportunities for, and barriers to, growth. It will provide innovative options for action to be taken by PLA, TfL and other stakeholders that will unlock growth and achieve an increase in passenger journeys on the river.

2 Background and Context

- 2.1 The Thames Vision 2035 was launched in July 2016, after extensive stakeholder consultation over the previous eighteen months. Six goals were established for increasing use of the river across port trade, inland freight, passenger transport, sport & recreation, environment & heritage and community & culture.
- 2.2 As part of the evidence base for the Thames Vision 2035, a study was commissioned, focusing on how capacity in Central London could be maximised to support the growth of vessel traffic: *'Assessment of vessel traffic capacity on the river Thames in central London'*, Marico Marine (2016). Navigational and pier capacity in central London are recognised constraints to a growth in passenger numbers and this study made a number of recommendations - some of which have been achieved (such as the extension of Bankside Pier) and others are still under consideration (such as increased capacity at Embankment Pier). This analysis could be supplemented with consideration of vessel capacity data.
<https://www.pla.co.uk/assets/thamescapacitystudy-executivesummary.pdf>
- 2.3 The Thames Vision is underpinned by the commitment to be delivered safely and with climate change resilience in mind. As a sustainable plan, consideration must be given to the economic, social and environmental impacts of all actions within the Thames Vision. The stated Environment goal is for the Thames to be 'the cleanest since the industrial revolution'. Subsequently, PLA published the Air Quality Strategy for the Tidal Thames in 2018 – a first for the UK. The objectives of this strategy, along with improvements in water quality included in the wider Thames Vision Environment goal, should underpin any growth on the river.

The aim of the Air Quality Strategy is: 'The reduction in harmful emissions to air from marine sources within the tidal River Thames, whilst facilitating the Port and London's future growth'. The strategy sets challenging targets, including a reduction in nitrogen oxides (NOx) and particulate matter (PM) by 50% in 25 years, with a 20% reduction by 2026. It will be delivered through an initial Five Year Action Plan, covering 2018 to 2022, following which a further review of progress will inform future commitments.

<https://www.pla.co.uk/Environment/Air-Quality-and-Green-Tariff/Air-Quality>

- 2.4 The TfL Passenger Pier Strategy is due to be launched, including a vision of 'Facilitating the promotion and safe, sustainable growth of piers to make river services an integral part of London's world leading public transport network'. This strategy is considered to align with and

support the Thames Vision 2035 goal. Four strategic aims set out the key themes of the strategy:

- Safety - Putting safety first on London's piers
- Commercial viability - Supporting London's growth and economic prosperity
- Customer experience - Maximising the iconic experience
- Environmental sustainability - Cleaning London's air and waterways

2.5 Another contextual factor is the Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA) consultation on the proposed Safety Standards for Domestic Passenger Vessels ('Grandfather Rights'). This could result in a number of vessels no longer meeting regulatory requirements for operation in Central London by 2021/2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-the-results-of-the-review-of-standards-for-older-uk-passenger-ships>

2.6 The Thames Vision 2035 goal for passenger transport, and subsequently for planning policy, is to double the number of passenger journeys by river from 10 to 20 million a year. However, despite having this growth target in place, numbers have remained broadly static since 2014/15 (see Appendix 1).

3 Requirements

3.1 This study needs to provide an objective and informed perspective on how realistic the Thames Vision 2035 goal is, given the static nature of passenger numbers in recent years, offering a pragmatic but ambitious approach to opportunities and options for safe and sustainable growth. Innovative methods to look at this issue are welcomed, although we anticipate the following methodological approaches will be relevant.

3.2 Analysis of current and potential market demand and supply is required, including market segmentation (commuter, leisure and charter), drawing on existing data and insight research. Contextual forecast data, such as economic, housing, transport and tourism trends should be taken into account. Desk based research may also include consideration of international examples.

3.3 Primary research with stakeholders is required to understand perceptions, behaviours, barriers and opportunities. Interviews should be semi-structured, to cover areas of interest but to allow stakeholders to raise ideas and issues. Stakeholders include PLA and TfL (Steering Panel), passengers, general public, riparian authorities (London, Kent and Essex), river service operators, Environment Agency, London First, developers and tourism bodies/riparian attractions.

Demand-side factors to investigate include but are not limited to:

- awareness of services – marketing and visibility of piers and river services and how this can be improved;
- affordability and scope to improve this;
- perception of services and how could this be improved; and
- where new routes are needed, including cross river services.

Supply-side factors to investigate include but are not limited to:

- overcoming barriers to new piers and developing commercial activity (e.g. retail income and experience)

- key points for TfL's revised Pier Design Guidelines for local authorities and developers and pier licenses (e.g. making environmental goals part of the license to operate);
- what the shape of the market should be and how we can get there; and
- which routes could be enhanced, such as, and including, potential cross river cycle ferries.

3.6 Supply-side analysis will also include an audit of existing, proposed and potential piers (including private piers), which must be undertaken to assess capacity needs, planned investment and opportunities for development. This should take account of potential multiple uses of piers, such as light freight, in addition to passenger services. This will include knowledge from the panel as well as site visits, where necessary.

3.7 The research and analysis should culminate in an options appraisal including four forecast growth scenarios:

- what growth would look like without additional intervention and investment (the 'do nothing option'); and
- what growth would look like with three different levels of intervention and investment by the PLA and other stakeholders. One of these growth scenarios should show what would be required to meet the existing Vision goal of doubling the existing figure to reach 20m annual passenger journeys by 2035.

Safety and environmental impacts should not be traded for growth. Therefore each of these scenarios should represent no increase in safety risk as well as a reduction in the environmental footprint in line with the Thames Vision 2035 and subsequent documents. Consideration of the opportunities and barriers highlighted through the pier audit, desk-based and stakeholder research, including safety implications and mitigation measures, should be reflected. Specific actions that would be required by all stakeholders to facilitate or deliver reduction targets, in line with the air and water quality objectives, should be included as part of each of the growth scenarios.

Each growth scenarios should assume that growth should be achieved within a competitive market and without allowing any single operator to gain a monopolistic position, which would be counter productive in the long-run. Therefore any recommendations should be made on how the PLA and/or TfL can ensure a healthy level of competition is maintained.

The interventions and investment in each of these growth scenarios should be presented in the form of recommended actions, programmed on a 5-yearly basis to 2035. They should reflect which investments are considered most likely lead to the greatest return in terms of safe and sustainable growth of passenger numbers.

3.8 Analysis should include a review of the TfL Passenger Pier Strategy, to identify how the actions in each scenario will help deliver the strategy. Also, to assess whether the strategy is sufficient to deliver on these growth scenarios and how it might be built upon, through actions to be taken by TfL, PLA and other stakeholders.

3.9 Any recommended changes to the overall Thames Vision 2035 goal for passenger transport should be informed by the above options appraisal, combined with a top level sustainable development impact assessment. Assuming safe and sustainable growth can be achieved, an overall benefit case should quantify the economic, social and environmental costs and benefits that this would deliver. This should inform a position on the role (and potential role) of the river as part of the strategic transport infrastructure and sustainable development of the region, so as to provide a benefit case to support the recommended growth target.

3.10 A full report with detailed analysis should be made available for the Steering Panel, to assist in decision making, as well as a summary report, with publishable/aggregate data and 'calls to action' for wider stakeholders.

4 Timeline

- July 2019 – Interviews with shortlisted candidates 25 July PM/
Project inception meeting for successful candidate 29 July
- August 2019-Oct – Field work (including operator engagement) and analysis
- November 2019 – Draft report and presentations
- December 2019 – Final report and summary

5 Submissions

Tender submissions must include:

- Team member roles and their relevant experience (30% weighting)
- Research methodology and delivery plan
 - Methodology, including understanding of the requirements and approach to be taken (15% weighting)
 - Delivery Plan, including timeline (15% weighting)
 - Key delivery risks and mitigation measures (10% weighting)
- Cost items and resourcing levels, including consultancy days allocated by team members for each task (30% weighting)

Please note consortia bids are welcome, with a lead bidder identified.

Please send submissions to nadine.collins-smith@pla.co.uk by 18:00 PM on Wednesday 17 July 2019.

Appendix 1. River Passenger Journeys - Source: TfL

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
River Bus	862,573	1,270,195	2,328,315	2,534,829	2,631,292	2,721,924
River Tours (inc charters)*	1,888,064	1,767,182	1,560,298	1,675,316	1,508,488	1,414,363
Woolwich Ferry	2,509,520	2,249,000	2,291,276	2,088,788	2,481,336	2,466,420
River total	5,260,157	5,337,368	6,179,889	6,298,933	6,621,116	6,602,707

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
River Bus	2,809,221	3,442,700	3,827,478	3,794,296	4,058,708	4,081,048
River Tours (inc charters)	1,358,023	3,019,600	4,448,510	4,775,569	4,699,693	4,107,311
Woolwich Ferry	2,110,000	1,948,900	1,746,680	1,730,999	1,861,722	1,828,446
River total for London**	6,277,244	8,411,200	10,022,668	10,300,864	10,620,123	10,016,805

*Passenger numbers may be underestimated pre-2013/14; please discuss further with PLA

** Data for Kent and Essex to be provided

