

15 February 2016



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By email to: thames.vision@pla.co.uk

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Dear Dr Riggs

Thames Vision: Consultation on Goals and Priority Actions

We welcome this opportunity to contribute to development of the PLA's vision, goals and priorities for the Thames.

The Thames Gateway Kent Partnership is a public-private partnership promoting sustainable economic-led regeneration and growth in the local authority areas of Dartford, Gravesham, Medway and Swale. Our interest therefore relates in particular to the "Thames Barrier to Southend" section of the river and estuary.

Port of London: more trade, more jobs (2.1)

The Partnership broadly concurs with the priority actions suggested. With regard to the Lower Thames Crossing, we will be responding to the Highways England consultation on the proposed route.

We suggest that this section, and the Vision document more generally, should acknowledge the relationship between the Thames and Medway Estuaries, and the importance of cooperation and collaboration to agree shared objectives between the PLA and Medway Ports, notably Peel Ports at Sheerness. Both estuaries and their Ports have roles to play in supporting economic growth in the south east of England and the commercial markets of Greater London in particular.

Inland freight: more goods off roads onto the river (2.2)

We concur with the PLA's objectives for increasing the use of the Thames for freight and movement of other goods and materials. We note the proposal to establish a Thames Skills Academy and would welcome clarification as to its relationship with the North Kent College's National Maritime Training Centre at Gravesend, which would be an obvious foundation for enhancing maritime training provision serving the Thames Estuary.

Passenger transport: more journeys (2.3)

We welcome the PLA's ambition to increase usage of the Thames for passenger travel, both for commuting purposes and leisure. As well as the potential for river-borne passengers to access the proposed London Paramount Resort, there may be scope for shorter-term enhancement of cross-river services to enable Kent and Essex residents to access employment opportunities on the opposite side of the river: subject to viability and local public transport connectivity, this could provide travellers with an alternative to the congested A282 road crossing. We would welcome

further engagement by the PLA with the North Kent authorities (Dartford, Gravesham, Medway and Swale), and our South Essex counterparts, in exploring potential opportunities.

Sport and recreation: more participants (2.4)

We recognise that participation in sports and recreation activity on the Thames is likely to be concentrated within the Greater London boundary, though sailing in particular is well-established further east in the Thames Estuary. Given the opportunities to promote sailing and other water-based activities in the Medway and Thames Estuaries, including at Gravesend, the Medway Towns and Queenborough on the Isle of Sheppey, we would welcome the PLA exploring with stakeholders in North Kent the possibilities for enhancing the offer and promoting greater participation. There may also be scope to explore whether there are any suitable sites on the North Kent bank of the Thames for provision of visitor moorings, perhaps linked to regeneration of waterside sites.

Environment and heritage: improved tidal Thames environment (2.5)

We welcome the PLA's commitment to improving the water quality of the Thames and objectives to maintain and improve the condition of the Estuary's many designated wildlife habitats.

We recognise the importance of the Thames Tideway Tunnel to the achievement of these goals and trust that the PLA will ensure, with Tideway, that tunnel spoil is, as appropriate, deposited in suitable receptor sites for restoration or habitat creation purposes, or utilised as primary aggregates.

We look forward to seeing more detail about the PLA's proposals regarding the joining up of a Thames Path reaching to the sea and urge positive engagement with local stakeholders to explore how this goal might be realised.

Community and culture: more people coming to enjoy the Thames and its banks (2.6)

We welcome the PLA's celebration of the cultural, historic and environmental assets along the Thames, both river and Estuary. We are keen to see how promotion and branding associated with the Thames might link with and complement the promotion of the Thames Gateway as an area of both economic opportunity and attractive quality of life, and we would welcome the opportunity to explore that potential further with the PLA.

We would also be interested to see more detail about potential opportunity zones for residential moorings: it is not clear whether the PLA considers there are any sites along the Kent side that could fulfil this role.

I trust these comments will be helpful and would be happy to discuss areas of common interest further with the PLA, including the next steps on developing the Thames Vision.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Liston-Jones". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

David Liston-Jones

Chief Executive

Thames Gateway Kent Partnership