

Are response to 'A City for all Londoners', by Team London Bridge

Team London Bridge (TLB) is a Business Improvement District representing approximately 400 businesses in Southwark, covering an area between London Bridge to the west, Tower Bridge to the east, and south towards Bermondsey. The GLA sits within the TLB area. TLB has a strong remit from businesses since 2015 to deliver the [London Bridge Plan](#). Our mission is to ensure London Bridge excels as a leading place for global commerce and continues to develop as a pioneering local centre for enterprise, culture and entertainment.

TLB would like to respond to relevant points in the new Mayor's 'A City for all Londoners' document and engage with policies as they develop. As a mature stakeholder of the area, since 2005, we are taking a more strategic approach to change, and can only do this by working closely with the GLA, TfL and the borough – for example on achieving greenery and workspace through new development, supporting local creative industries, reducing pollution and congestion, and making streets attractive to walking and cycling.

#### Accommodating growth

1. We are very supportive of policies to protect land used for employment in the Central Activities Zone (CAZ). London Bridge is a successful centre for global business and a busy town centre. While there is only a 1% vacancy rate locally, employment space is under threat as new investment flows primarily into new residential projects. This undermines the potential for commercial growth of the area.

#### Good Growth

2. We are very supportive of strong and enforceable policies around **green growth**.

Too much development has been allowed to take place with scant regard for greening or resilience, to the detriment of the area. For example, St Thomas Street, which includes the Shard development and is on the TLRN, has plastic hedges and no street trees in a newly laid road, despite being in a critical drainage area.

In the rapidly developing 13<sup>th</sup> Arrondissement in Paris, all new buildings and street infrastructure have abundant greenery: on roofs, covering wall membranes, on balconies and in all public spaces including along tram lines – a requirement of planning. This is leaving London behind. Through the BID plan, we are left to do expensive and less impactful retrofit – as greenery is prioritised through our consultation.

3. We are very supportive of a **cultural plan** which supports the development of a diverse, creative and vibrant city.

While the London Bridge area attracts headquarters for international businesses, it also has a significant local economy, of makers and independent shops, markets and social enterprise, as well as cultural institutions. These cannot compete on the same financial terms, but make up what is distinctive about the area, and what global firms find so attractive about London as a destination for business.

We would like to see innovative policies in place that preserve and enhance this diversity in Central London - of creative industries and independent enterprise and retail. This will require solutions through the planning system, which will need to be implemented in partnership with boroughs and stakeholders including BIDs.

A particular example of 'cultural infrastructure' that we have in the area are the railway arches – otherwise known as the 'Low Line'. It is crucial that space is preserved for creative activity to take place. We are exploring ways of delivering this through the Southwark Local Plan, but it will make a great difference if this is encouraged and supported at a London level, backed up by funding opportunities.

4. We are supportive of innovative and ambitious policies to take pressure off the limited roadspace, as well as rebalancing of roadspace away from vehicles through initiatives such as **Healthy Streets**.

We are currently working with Southwark to create 'Delivery and Servicing Plans' (DSPs) with a range of local businesses – including the GLA - as a means of minimising local traffic. A significant change can be made working collaboratively with businesses through the BID structure, but we also rely upon strategic measures that must be done at borough or London levels – for example creating consolidation centres, banning polluting vehicles, or dealing with growing expectations for personal deliveries. Deliveries put huge pressure on the road network, and are often essential. But this pressure conflicts with the placeshaping aims that businesses have for this area – creating clean air and encouraging walking and cycling. Personal deliveries are a particular challenge – we have some evidence that the vast majority of courier deliveries are personal. We must be smarter about developing solutions that work for people and help ease the terrible congestion and pollution.

Family friendly policies can be supported that mean people can work from home to reduce the demand on traffic, develop healthy work-life balance, and take personal deliveries away from Central London. This is an area that the GLA may be able to support – in particular by working with rail operators to reduce the travel costs when used three or four days per week.

There are great opportunities for rail and river freight in this area that are not being utilised. Also, more deliveries can be made on bike. We would like to explore how to do more.

5. We support measures to support **rough sleepers** and **homeless** people. Through our Corporate Social Responsibility projects, we are able to support local charities, such as St Mungos, and help people get back into work, through our gardening and maintenance contract. The business community can support the Mayor to combat these problems. The Mayor can support by providing a framework through which we can ensure that CSR is delivered efficiently to those that need it most.
6. We are supportive of policies which support **affordable housing**, and a range of options that include various levels of affordability. We know that the average age of the local workforce is young, below 30. For businesses to thrive in Central London, they need to be able to attract people that can commit to working and living in London for the long term.

7. We would like to see more in the report, particularly under the **Economy** section, about the supportive role that BIDs can make to support the Mayor to be pro-business. BIDs play a large role in establishing a quality environment for business to flourish, galvanising local skills, demonstrating business leadership, being innovative, and linking local communities with opportunities.
8. We are very supportive of the idea of **Creative Enterprise Zones**, for the reasons articulated in point 3 above.
9. **Tourism** spend in London is above £15bn per year, employment in UK tourism has risen by 19% in the past 6 years and the Mayor is targeting an extra 5 million visitors by 2020, therefore tourism should be given more credibility as an economic driver for London and more consideration in planning and policy. Too often the visitor economy concerns itself with promotion and marketing, rather than experiences and quality. London communities are a finely tuned balance of tourists, residents and workers, and the needs of each segment should be considered in relation to the other two.
10. The target of 40,000 additional hotel rooms by 2036 is very positive. However, quality should be prioritised with location, design, concept and service levels considered London wide, to ensure we are not left with concentrations of budget accommodation that offer less in terms of improving the local environment and developing careers in this sector.
11. Under the Mayor of London umbrella, London & Partners is a very effective organisation for promoting the capital. However, its business model is restrictive and ensures it cannot represent London for all, as it will understandably favour its paying members and promote those places and attractions that have the resources to contribute financially to larger campaigns.
12. We strongly agree with policies which will improve London's air quality and reduce congestion – to create **Healthy Streets**. We think there needs to be better monitoring of air quality and public information: currently there is very little, even on a busy street like Borough High Street. We have delivered excellent projects like the 'Fresh Air Square', taking up two parking spaces and bringing in kerbside greenery – but this does not come close to dealing with the scale of the issue. The London Bridge area has the first whole zero emission hydrogen fuel cell bus route (RV1) and we support a rapid move away from diesel (particularly in taxis and buses, and through ULEZ policies). This is now widely recognised as a critical public health issue, particularly in central areas with busy main roads like the London bridge area – and we are looking at a green screening project with a local primary school on Tower Bridge Road. Deliveries and private hire taxis have been allowed to mushroom across Central London, and there is urgent to counter this (see point 4). We hope that the policies put in place go far enough to ensure that air quality and congestion are dealt with, though it seems that other cities are doing more to address issues: monthly car free days across Paris, streets closed to traffic in Barcelona, banning of diesel in Madrid, road charging in Oslo.

Our London Bridge Plan shows that our stakeholders want to prioritise walking and cycling for this area, and both modes are growing. We are

supportive of measures that bring 20mph not only in residential areas as mentioned, but on the TLRN – such as Tooley Street (building on the success of nearby Southwark Street). We know that the West End Company (another BID) has been supportive of plans to part-pedestrianise Oxford Street. We would like to see similar ambition shown in main roads in the local area and are playing an active role in realising these aims.

Tooley Street and St Thomas Street are excellent opportunities for the Mayor to show his ambition about streets and public space on the doorstep of the GLA, as they are currently undergoing works – they can be the exemplar Healthy Streets. We would like this to be addressed urgently. Cycling provision needs to improve – and we hope to see the CS4 come along Tooley Street. This should also see more cycle hire bikes available at London Bridge station.

13. We would welcome a formal management approach that considers London **transport interchanges** / hubs as a whole, that allows Network Rail, TfL, the boroughs and BIDs to look at important locations such as London Bridge as one entity, improving efficiency, quality and functionality.
14. We agree that new buildings should be **air quality** positive, with greening a key element of this as outlined in point 2.
15. We are very supportive of policies which promote excellent **public space**, **good architecture**, promote **high density**, and promote local **heritage**. We hope to be able to draw on strong London policies and expertise, which can help us to push for new development to be world class.

New buildings need to interact positively with heritage, so we are pulling together a list of 'placemarks' – alongside Bermondsey Village and Shad Thames areas with which we share much common history - to include in the new local plan: which can include views, buildings, open spaces, trees, public art, street furniture, and rights of way. These help define the local character, or 'place value' of the area, which new development should respond to and enhance.