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**The Port of London and its Future**

Dr Katherine Riggs

*With London already Europe’s biggest metropolitan consumer market and continuing to grow, and the move to ever larger container ships in the Port, what is the future for the River Thames? Will it continue to be an industrial hub, a centre of population with the growth of high-rise blocks, or a focus for recreation?*

**Introduction**

Through nearly half a million years of history, since it was diverted on its current course during the Ice Ages, the River Thames has sustained the development of the city from its naissance as Londinium through its evolving forms and into the city it is today.

The River Thames has been central to London’s evolution, shaping its communities and underpinning its economy. Culturally, the Thames is part of what makes London, celebrated in poetry, prose, art and music. As we have cleaned up the river in the last two generations, it has become increasingly enjoyed by millions of people, sustaining a vibrant marine environment for wildlife.

The Thames Vision is a 20 year view of the river’s future, developed and to be delivered by the Port of London Authority (PLA) – the Custodians of the tidal Thames - with stakeholders. This is part of the PLA’s role as a Trust Port to hand the tidal Thames on in a better condition to succeeding generations.

The Vision is to make the most of the Thames’ potential for the benefit of all. It’s the first of its kind, covering 95 miles of the tidal Thames, running through London to the North Sea.

Previous lectures at Gresham College on the subject of Maritime London have covered parts of the changing relationship that is the City and the River. This lecture looks to the future through a Vision for the Thames – a river that is as iconic as the global city it runs through - and the Port it supports. A Vision which sees the value of the Thames being better understood and its potential realized over the next 20 years. I will set out the enormous opportunities for growth on and alongside the Thames in all aspects, from transporting people and goods to providing a blue space for sport, recreation and culture.

**Context**

The Thames Vision comes at a time when London is growing ever bigger, and there is a major focus on how to meet growing demand. The capital’s population is expected to grow, on current projections, from today’s 8.6 million people to 10 million by 2035, and to 11 million by 2050.

A lot of the opportunity for this growth could be delivered along the River Thames at Barking, Bexley, Greenwich, Havering, Newham and Tower Hamlets in London, and in Kent and Essex. These opportunities for significant new housing, as well as commercial space, infrastructure and other development, frame how the Thames and its banks will develop over the next two decades.

The new Mayor of London has set out the vital role that the River Thames plays in London’s economy, the movement of freight and passengers, and the wellbeing of all Londoners. The Mayor’s Transport Strategy is to be published next year. At the same time, Lord Heseltine is leading a 2050 Thames Estuary Growth Commission, announced in the 2016 Budget[[1]](#endnote-1) and the National Infrastructure Commission[[2]](#endnote-2) is to be an Executive Agency. These together provide the opportunity to consider an integrated river and land-based approach to meeting the growing needs of transport, recreation, environment and well-being as well as housing.

Development of the strategic transport network to meet the needs of the growing city and the wider region will be essential. Investment in river crossings will be part of this. New crossings need to be in the right place with the right design, taking full regard of the importance of the river as a navigational waterway enshrined in common law – so that the economic, environmental and social benefits of river use continue to be realised. It means considering a ranges of crossings: including ferries (creating destination points along the Thames), tunnels and bridges. Similarly, the response to housing should not be to close off the opportunity to further develop cargo-handling facilities that provide opportunities for the sustainable movement of goods. The last major wave of docklands development did not make the most of the riverside locations. This time developments such as Battersea Power Station (where 20,000 homes are being built alongside the provision of a new riverbus service) and Fulham Reach (where the community now benefits from an excellent new watersports facility as part of a housing development) show how the opportunity of including the river as part of the new communities being created brings benefits.

*Thames Tideway Tunnel*

A second significant context for the Thames Vision is the Thames Tideway Tunnel. This is the biggest single investment in water and sewerage infrastructure in London since Balzalgette’s Victorian scheme created the London embankments in the nineteenth century. Like the Victorian scheme, the £4 billion Thames Tideway Tunnel will have a transformative effect on the cleanliness of the river. With the tunnel in operation, the Thames will be the cleanest it has been since the Industrial Revolution. At the same time, the river will provide the artery for transporting up to eight million tonnes of spoil and construction material for this project. This is a very important demonstration of the strategic importance of the tidal Thames in supporting infrastructure development projects. There are numerous ways in which the public can benefit from a cleaner river and at the same time transform the perception of the Thames.

*Climate change*

A third context is the world’s changing climate, as greenhouse gases continue to accumulate in the atmosphere. Over the next 20 years, we can expect continuing global warming, sea level rise, significant changes in UK weather patterns and more extreme weather events[[3]](#endnote-3). Managing flood risk throughout the Thames Estuary continues to be a high priority. The Thames Barrier will need replacing in due course, though this is not expected within the 20 year timeframe of this Vision. Environment Agency data shows that there will need to be continuing investment in both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ flood defences along the Thames Estuary to protect people and property.

*Europe*

As part of the Vision, we will prepare for any changes as a result of the UK’s vote on membership of the European Union.

*Safety*

An underlying assumption throughout the vision for the future is that growing river use has to be achieved with high levels of safety. The PLA, ship and terminal operators, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), RNLI and emergency services work together to maintain and improve river safety. Initiatives include working with operators and groups to raise safety issues, providing improved safety guidance (e.g. the Rowing Code of Practice and the Riverside Code).

**Thames Vision to 2035: Goals and priority actions**

The Vision sets out the enormous opportunities for growth on and alongside the River Thames, and its importance for the wider growth of London, Kent and Essex. Economic analysis shows that today the river supports over 40,000 jobs in the ports, logistics and transport sectors, generating over £4 billion of gross value added a year. In addition, there are a further 99,000 jobs in tourism and related businesses in the riparian boroughs alongside the river.

By 2035 we will see greater use of the Thames in all aspects: from port trade to passenger transport, sport and recreation to cultural enjoyment. Achieving this will require long-term thinking and strong partnerships across public, private and voluntary sectors.

The goals for the future are:

1. The busiest ever Port of London, handling 60 – 80 million tonnes of cargo, on the doorstep of Europe’s biggest metropolitan consumer market.
2. More goods and materials routinely moved between wharves on the river – every year over 4 million tonnes carried by water – taking over 400,000 lorries off the region’s roads.
3. Double the number of people travelling by river – reaching 20 million commuters and tourist trips every year.
4. Greater participation in sport and recreation on and alongside the water.
5. The cleanest Thames since the Industrial Revolution, with improved habitats and awareness of heritage.
6. A riverside which is a magnet for ramblers, historians, artists and others, whether living nearby, on the river or travelling from further afield.

The paper considers each of these goals in turn.

**Port of London – More trade, more jobs**

*Today, 2016*

The River Thames is home to the second biggest port in the UK, on the doorstep of London and the South East, the biggest markets in the UK. With 96% of UK imports/exports by volume coming in or leaving by sea, it is an essential part of the UK’s infrastructure[[4]](#endnote-4). This strategic asset serves London, the South East and markets across the UK with life’s essentials: food, fuel, building materials and household goods.

There are 70 independently run terminals and wharves along the tidal Thames. The port handled over 45 million tonnes of goods and materials in 2015 and provided employment for 43,000 people, of whom 27,000 were directly employed in port operations, with a further 16,000 jobs in the supply chains that support the port and other indirect impacts. In total, the overall the Gross Value Added of the Port of London in 2015 was £4 billion[[5]](#endnote-5).

The port comprises a wide range of terminals, including:

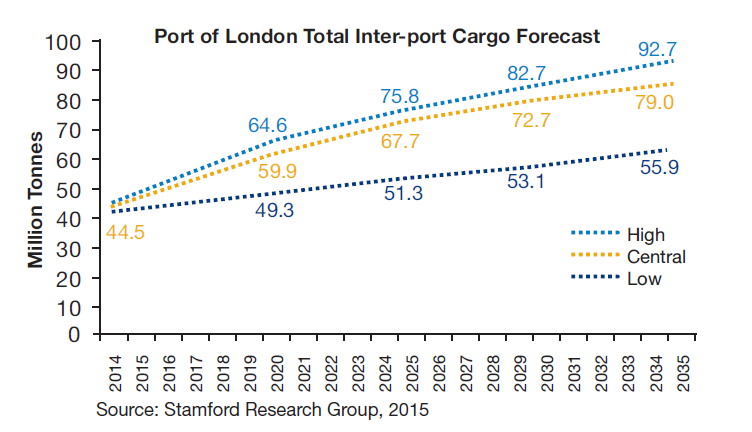
* multi-purpose Port of Tilbury handling containerised, roll on/roll-off and bulk commodities;
* London Gateway, a specialised container port;
* several oil storage terminals, including Navigator, Shell, NuStar, Esso and Calor;
* terminals handling building materials, owned by operators including Cemex, Hanson, Tarmac, Brett Aggregates and J Clubb. Over half of all the aggregates sold in London are handled at a Thames wharf.
* specialist terminals, including Europe’s largest cane sugar refinery, Tate & Lyle at Silvertown and Ford’s engine making and logistics hub at Dagenham.

*Forecast demand*

The Port of London is on the doorstep of Europe’s biggest metropolitan consumer market, with consumer spending in Greater London forecast to grow from £129 billion in 2014 to £199 billion in 2035. London alone accounts for approximately 22.6% of UK GVA, and as part of the wider South East that figure increases to 38%[[6]](#endnote-6). The Port of London is strategically placed to best service this already huge and growing market.

The PLA commissioned Stamford Research Group to undertake forecasts of growth until 2035. The forecasts are a combination of: (i) econometric modelling (from estimates of future traffic and economic activity in the UK, based on the relationship between traffic and economic activity) and (ii) market intelligence (from market research interviewing the port terminals). This market research was applied and forecasts were produced for all types of cargo handled in the Port of London, including intra-port traffic.

Stamford Research Group forecasts that total inter-port trade will increase to between 56 and 93 million tonnes in 2035, depending upon low or high assumptions. For comparison, the largest tonnage ever handled in the Port of London was 61.6 million tonnes in 1964.



*Vision, 2035*

The 20 year Vision sees the Port of London becoming the biggest it’s ever been, handling 60 – 80 million tonnes of cargo each year, on the doorstep of Europe’s biggest metropolitan consumer market. To achieve this goal in a safe and sustainable way, the following priority actions are set:

1. Sustain private sector investment.
2. Improve navigational access to the port.
3. Improve rail and road access to port operations/terminals, including:
   1. Lower Thames crossing downstream of Tilbury, by 2025.
   2. At least three further Thames crossings to the east of Tower Bridge, that allow continuation of river trade, the first by 2022.
   3. Widening of A13, by the end of 2018.
   4. Closure of level crossings affecting operational terminals, by 2020.
4. Deliver efficient, effective and sustainable PLA harbour and pilotage services to support growth.

**Inland freight – More goods off roads onto the river**

*Today, 2016*

The River Thames is a critical piece of the transport infrastructure, for the capital, Kent and Essex. It is by far the UK’s busiest inland waterway, and volumes moved have increased to the record level of 5.5 million tonnes carried by river in 2014 as a series of strategic projects contributed significant volumes of material being moved on the river. Over the last ten years, if we exclude major projects at Blackfriars Bridge (Thameslink improvements), Lea Tunnel, London Gateway dredging and Crossrail, a long-term average of 2.15 million tonnes were transported each year in the Port of London, with 1.8 million tonnes moved in Greater London.

The Thames and its wharves (cargo-handling facilities) are critical to the river borne supply of construction materials, spoil, household refuse and vegetable oils. Efficient handling of building materials and spoil is essential for both large construction projects and general building in the region now and to meet the forecast construction demand in the future.

In 2014, over 7.3 million tonnes of marine aggregates were landed at Thames wharves, with sales from London wharves increasing each year since 2010. Marine dredged aggregates provide 50% of all of London’s aggregates supply[[7]](#endnote-7). With continued population growth and depletion of land-won resources, demand and need for marine dredged and imported aggregates will continue to grow.

At the moment the majority of goods moved on the river are from construction projects. These have shown what is possible in terms of moving out construction and excavation waste and bringing in construction material by river. The recently started excavation works for the Northern Line extension at Battersea will transport 600,000 tonnes of waste to Tilbury in Essex. This will remove over 40,000 lorry journeys by road and prevent 2,000 tonnes of carbon emissions[[8]](#endnote-8).

What is critical is growing the baseload of goods and materials routinely moved by river. This will sustain the industry at a higher level, providing the incentive for further private investment. All riparian sites will be considered, not just for the major infrastructure projects such as the Northern Line extension but other scales of projects too as we have seen at Battersea Power Station and at Fulham Wharf.

There is a strong environmental case for using the tidal river for the transport of goods and materials. Every 1,000 tonne barge on the river takes up to 100 lorry movements off the roads. This delivers a number of wider benefits. It reduces congestion on the roads with benefits for road safety, particularly for cyclists and pedestrians which is a key priority. It is the most environmentally sustainable option. Transport by barge is estimated to produce about one third of the greenhouse gas emissions per kilo carried compared to the equivalent journey by lorry[[9]](#endnote-9).

Critical to making the most of the river for moving freight, cargo-handling facilities must be available throughout the capital, Kent and Essex, to get goods and material on and off the river and to maximise the benefit of the river’s east to west link. This means both retaining viable current operational facilities and reactivating that not in operation.

*Forecast demand*

With strong demand for new development and the resultant pressures on land in London, it is more important than ever to protect viable wharves and to bring into use those currently vacant wharves. These will serve the needs of the construction sector and other sectors, and provide new opportunities to transport a wider range of goods by river. In the consultations there was a strong call to transport more and a greater range of these materials and new goods by river over the next 20 years.

As London grows to the East, there is potential to supply these new communities, with the transport of more household and containerised goods by river too. This would potentially enable the creation of better living environments, with fewer lorry movements and improved safety for residents.

With the concentration of container ports at Tilbury and London Gateway and the growth of logistic parks and regional distribution centres on the banks of the Thames to the East, it makes sense to look at the potential for transporting more of the goods that have come in by sea, along the river to the largest consumer market in the UK. This would potentially include consolidation operations for construction, supermarkets and home deliveries, and unloading infrastructure to deliver these by sustainable road vehicles. This has the added advantage of making the Port of London more attractive to importers – the quicker the flow through time for goods from arrival at port through the logistics centre to arrival with the end user, the more attractive the offer.

Overall the Vision is proposing a step change in inbound and outbound movement of goods and materials by river, rather than by road, setting a target for the underlying, routine transport of goods, rather than a target that includes the major infrastructure projects that are inherently more volatile in terms of volumes. This type of modal shift will require significant buy in and support at Government and Local Authority

*Vision, 2035*

The 20 year Vision sees more goods and materials routinely moved between wharves on the river – every year over 4 million tonnes carried by water – taking over 400,000 lorry trips off the region’s roads. To achieve this goal in a safe and sustainable way, the following priority actions are set:

1. Double underlying intra-port freight carried by water (i.e. excluding infrastructure projects) to over 4 million tonnes.
2. Champion the Thames as a default choice for moving spoil and materials from infrastructure projects close to the river.
3. Maintain or reactivate viable cargo handling facilities, with at least five facilities brought into operation by 2025.
4. Extend the River Concordat to promote freight movements by water.
5. Develop the Thames Skills Academy to provide the skills needed on the Thames.

**Passenger transport – More journeys**

*Today, 2016*

The River Thames is an iconic piece of the capital’s passenger transport infrastructure. The Thames adds much needed transport capacity. Boat trips are an attractive part of the tourist offer and services provide access to the 35 Thames riverside attractions. These are increasingly important with the limited coach parking available in central London.

In 2015 there were 10.3 million passenger journeys, continuing growth in passenger travel of more than 150% over the last decade. We are well on the way to reaching 12 million passenger journeys by 2020. Transport for London is raising awareness of river transport through the ‘Open up London by Boat’ campaign in 2016, and the breadth of what is on offer is increasing: from commuter services to 23 piers from Putney to Woolwich Arsenal; with the commuter offer at Putney upgraded considerably with two new vessels; dinner cruise and leisure boats; the Gravesend to Tilbury and Woolwich ferries; a paddlesteamer from London to Southend; and fast RIB experiences.

Over £2 billion of GDP is generated by tourism in the wards immediately adjacent to the Thames’ banks. In total there were 23.4 million visitor trips to attractions beside the Thames, of which 4.7 million have a direct maritime connection – such as the Cutty Sark at Greenwich or HMS Belfast at Tower Bridge[[10]](#endnote-10).

*Forecast demand*

Demand for river commuter travel is set to grow. This will be driven by population growth, close to the river. There is also increasing demand for leisure services, for example new destinations close to the Thames (e.g. the proposed London Paramount theme park on the Swanscombe Peninsula in Kent) and to different venues (e.g. travelling by boat to concerts at the O2) as well as from increasing the leisure offer of the Thames itself. In 2015, the Thames hosted *Viking Star*, the largest ever cruise ship in at a central London mooring; the ship is recognised as the cleanest cruise ship afloat. Some £68 million investment in passenger and cruise related services is planned over the next five years5.

Jointly with Transport for London, the PLA commissioned Marico Marine to ascertain the capacity of the river to accommodate passenger and freight transport in central London. The evidence showed that there is considerable capacity for more transport on the river – passengers and freight – with management. This is especially the case if more navigable space is made, and if we look to increase passenger journeys in the early morning and evenings, and outside of summer school holidays.

*Vision, 2035*

The 20 year Vision sees double the number of people travelling by river – reaching 20 million commuters and tourist trips every year. To achieve this goal in a safe and sustainable way, the following priority actions have been set:

1. Make more efficient use of piers and river space, including new timetabling to manage peaks in traffic.
2. Innovate to achieve more passenger journeys at current low peak times.
3. Develop and implement a long-term pier strategy.
4. Convene a consultative forum to address issues of wash from growth in passenger transport.
5. Secure the infrastructure required for growth in the transport of passengers and goods on the Thames.

**Sport and recreation – More participants**

*Today, 2016*

The tidal Thames is home to a wide range of sports and recreation. There are more than 100 sport and recreation clubs along the Thames: rowing clubs, that are predominantly up river of Putney; and paddling clubs and water-sport centres offering canoeing, stand up paddle boarding and windsurfing up river of Putney, below Tower Bridge and out towards the estuary. There are also cruising, yacht and sailing clubs along the length of the Thames, as well as a number of scout groups and sea cadet units.

Every year, the Thames plays host to more than 80 major sporting events, including the University Boat Race, the race for Doggett’s Coat and Badge (run every year since 1715) and the Great River Race. An estimated 5,800 people row on the tidal stretch of the Thames each year10.

The Thames Path provides a place for walking and cycling in the heart of London. There are at least 10 million walkers or cyclists on the Thames towpath each year. Joining it up from source to sea will raise its profile, and attract more people to enjoy it. A conservative estimate suggests the value of people participating in sport and recreation on the Thames or its towpath is £132 million a year in terms of health and wellbeing benefits10.

*Forecast demand*

With a growing London, Kent and Essex over the next 20 years, there is potential for growth in participation, by developing capacity and increasing awareness of the current sports provision. Sport England launched its strategy Towards an Active Nation in May, seeking to get everyone engaged in physical activity. The River Thames, on the doorstep of millions of residents and visitors. This provides the opportunity to help achieve Sport England’s goal as well as contribute to the delivery of London Sport’s vision to make London the most physically active sporting city in the world, with a target of getting 1 million Londoners more active by 2020. Preserving the existing provision for sport and recreation, enabling more to engage through better information and building the provision further – within new housing developments close to the river – will bring watersports to local communities.

*Vision, 2035*

The 20 year Vision sees greater participation in sport and recreation on and alongside the water. To achieve this goal in a safe and sustainable way, following priority actions have been set:

1. Ascertain current levels of sport participation and work towards increasing participation on and alongside the Thames.
2. Extend sport opportunity zones on the Thames.
3. Realise new visitor moorings and publicise the availability of all visitor moorings effectively.
4. Join up the Thames Path from source to sea.

**Environment and heritage – Improved tidal Thames environment**

*Today, 2016*

The tidal Thames provides a range of diverse, thriving habitats for many different species of fish, birds, seals and other wildlife. It is home to nine Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), mainly inter-tidal habitats. Many of these have further international environmental designations such as RAMSAR Convention wetland sites or European designations. The whole of the tidal Thames in Greater London is identified as a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation lie alongside the river within Greater London (such as Rainham & Wennington Marshes, Erith Marshes, Battersea Park, Barn Elms, and Kew Gardens).

The latest surveys found over 900 seals and visits from 300,000 overwintering birds every year[[11]](#endnote-11).

However, there is a major challenge that the PLA-led Cleaner Thames campaign highlights one. Up to 300 tonnes of rubbish is recovered from the Thames each year, with the amount of plastic bottles growing year on year. A study by researchers at Royal Holloway, University of London and the Natural History Museum has shown that up to 70% of bottom feeding fish in the Thames has plastic fibres in their guts, which can then get into the human food chain[[12]](#endnote-12).

The River Thames has been a focal point of human occupation for over 440,000 years since the river was diverted into its current course during the Ice Ages. Through nearly half a million years of history, settlements have risen and fallen beside the Thames, leaving many traces of our past both as buried archaeology and as an unrivalled procession of standing buildings and structures. The Thames has been used for food, transport, ceremonial deposition, and also for burial. These are depicted in art, for example Canaletto’s ‘*London; The Thames on Lord Mayors Day’.*

From Tower Bridge to the Houses of Parliament, the great wharves and quaysides, and the offices of the Greater London Council, buildings addressing the River have been used to express the power of the capital. Before this, the riverside was lined with palaces to proclaim the individual status of monarchs, princes of the Church and the aristocracy, still clearly visible at sites such as Lambeth Palace, Greenwich Palace and Somerset House.

The river has been, and is still, at the heart of pageantry which is valued as part of a long historic tradition and a strong aspect of national identity. Great riverine events of pageantry such as Tudor processions for Royal weddings and coronations, and with the City of London, and the Livery Companies, and can still be seen in events such as the annual Doggetts Coat and Badge race and the Queens Diamond Jubilee river pageant for which the vessel *Gloriana* was commissioned. State funerals of great British heroes such as Admiral Lord Nelson and Sir Winston Churchill have also used the river as a key part of the ceremony, viewed by thousands from the riverbank.

*Opportunities*

The Thames Tideway Tunnel will make the river through central London the cleanest it has been since the Industrial Revolution. With more stable and higher water quality will come more biodiversity. There are already 125 fish species feeding on the abundant invertebrates in the river.

The Thames already has a number of environmental improvement projects like the Nature Improvement Area, Catchment Plans and Futurescape, led by an increasing number of non-profit organisations and charities such as the Wildlife Trusts, RSPB, Thames21 and the Thames Estuary Partnership. Projects are driven and resourced by enthusiastic volunteers up and down the Thames.

*Vision, 2035*

The 20 year Vision sees the river the cleanest since before the Industrial Revolution, with improved habitats and heritage. To achieve this goal in a safe and sustainable way, the following priority actions have been set:

1. Build and bring into operation the Thames Tideway Tunnel, by 2021.
2. Improve water quality by a range of measures including reduced litter in the river.
3. Improve biodiversity of sites recognised for their wildlife interest, and the connections between them.
4. Identify and improve access to, and appreciation of, the historic environment along the Thames.
5. Encourage uptake of new and green technologies to reduce the port’s environmental impact.

**Community and culture – More people coming to enjoy the Thames and its banks**

*Today, 2016*

The River Thames is a place to enjoy the sights of an historic world city and is a haven of peace in a bustling region. The city grew from the river and its history is weaved into the development of London, Kent and Essex. There are four UNESCO World Heritage Sites on the banks of one river: Kew Gardens, Westminster Abbey and the Palace of Westminster, Tower of London and Maritime Greenwich.

The Thames is inseparable from the cultural heritage and art landscape of London, Essex and Kent, with people enjoying archaeological explorations on the foreshore along the Thames, visiting the National Trust property at Ham and the historic forts protecting the river at Tilbury and Gravesend.

Some 4.7 million people visit the Thames or maritime related attractions annually10. On top of that, there are many one-off national and regional events on the river, such as the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee River Pageant, and annual events including the University Boat Race and New Year’s Eve fireworks display. At least 23.4 million people visit the attractions located by the side of the Thames[[13]](#endnote-13). A river tribute as part of the Queen’s 90th birthday celebrations took part on the Thames, with the royal barge, *Gloriana,* leading a 45-strong flotilla down the Thames in June 2016.

Some 99,000 people are employed in the tourism industry in wards adjacent to the Thames, estimated to produce a £2.4 billion Gross Value Added contribution to GDP10.

The river connects its adjacent communities – along the Thames Path and, with crossings, across the water. Many stakeholders are keen to see more local river crossings.

The Thames festivals promote and celebrate the river. Totally Thames takes place every September with a season of art, cultural and river events along the Thames in London in London. Some 2.6 million people experienced 215 events in September 2015[[14]](#endnote-14). This year saw the launch of a Thames Estuary arts festival at the Kent and Essex stretches of the Thames, from Purfleet to Southend.

The Museum of London in Docklands opened in 2003 and its audience has since grown to more than 250,000 in the last year. From the outset the museum has told the story of the river, port and people of East London.

There are riverside nature reserves which too serve as education centres, such as Millennium Ecological Park in Greenwich and Rainham Marshes, as well as activities to raise awareness of the role of the river as London’s largest single natural feature in the shaping of the city.

The river is home to many residential moorings, located at 24 sites along the full length of the tidal Thames, with by far the majority located upstream of Vauxhall Bridge in West London. These moorings can add to the vibrancy of the Thames and meet the desire of people to live on the river.

*Opportunities*

The growth in London’s population, combined with forecasts showing increased numbers of tourists coming to London, Kent and Essex, brings the potential for a lot more visitors to enjoy the Thames and further boost its attraction and economic impact.

There is a lot of activity already in the river and on its banks. There could be further potential by providing information to what’s on offer and generating greater interest through a well-recognised Thames brand for environment, culture, heritage and community.

*Vision, 2035*

The 20 year Vision sees more people coming to enjoy the Thames and its banks. To achieve this goal in a safe and sustainable way, following priority actions have been set:

1. Enhance access to information about the Thames.
2. Educate local school children about the Thames.
3. Create new appropriate residential moorings accommodating suitable vessels.
4. Explore development of a Thames brand for culture, heritage and quality of life.

**Concluding remarks**

The tidal Thames sits at the centre of a globally iconic city and wider region, where projected demand for housing and jobs is unprecedented.

The river contributes the essentials of life – for example bringing in raw materials (fifty per cent of all London’s aggregates) and transporting out waste. Equally importantly it has the potential to contribute significantly to the liveability of the communities alongside the Thames, through sport and recreation as well as the amenity value of the iconic heritage and environment offer.

The Vision sees the river at the heart of new sustainable communities looking towards, not away from the Thames. The working River Thames will be back to being at the heart of city it runs through.

It is fitting to end by quoting Hudson Kearley, the first PLA Chairman, in his inaugural address at the opening of the PLA in 1909:

“The benefit will not be for the London of today and tomorrow, but we shall have laid the foundations of an enduring prosperity that will extend far into and enrich the future”.

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**Annex**

**Thames Vision:**

For more information about the Thames Vision go to:

www.pla.co.uk/About-Us/The-Thames-Vision

www.youtube.com/watch?v=4K2EDwFKOJk

Delivery, as well as development, is dependent upon a wide range of interested parties getting involved. If you’re like to get involved, please email Thames.Vision@pla.co.uk.

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