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Our ref: LG
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Blackfriars Bridge Layout Concerns

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing as the Liberal Democrat Transport spokesperson, to set out concerns with the new Blackfriars Bridge road layout proposals by Transport for London.

I recently went on a site visit to Blackfriars Bridge with TfL, including one of the engineers working on this layout. I was very surprised at the seemingly inflexible attitude to any suggestions I made.

I welcome the surface level pedestrian crossings in place of the subways. I think this is a good step and will have a positive influence on the pedestrian experience on the bridge. However, I was wondering if this might be a suitable location for a "Tokyo" style junction crossing? I think this could work really well looking at the layout of the junction, taking into account the number of pedestrians who use these junctions collectively and who will want to go in different directions across the road junction.

In particular I would like you to consider the following suggestions, hopefully with a view to consensual agreement and finding a way forward.

- The current temporary 20mph at the northern end of the bridge makes cyclists and pedestrians feel safer. I understand that traffic cannot usually travel over 20mph during the daytime; however it sends a clear message to drivers that this is a 20mph zone and more care and vigilance is needed. I believe that not only should the 20mph zone be retained once the new road layout is introduced, but it is extended across the entire bridge to make the whole bridge safer for pedestrians, cyclists and the motorists themselves.
- One option to consider is the reduction in the number of lanes for vehicular traffic at the northern end of the bridge in order to facilitate a side cycle lane in keeping with the desire to encourage increased cycle use and introduce clear cycle lanes?
- At the Southern end of the bridge, I have had groups contact me expressing concern over the road layout. Is it possible to consider reducing the number of traffic lanes from the bridge to the Stamford Street lights? In addition, the narrow and unnatural central cycle lane clearly needs replacing with a North to South bound one as described above. I think the whole bridge needs and junctions either end should be considered as a comprehensive scheme rather than in parts.

- Pedestrians strongly want to see the retention of the east–west temporary pedestrian crossing over New Bridge Street, as this will ensure that less mobile pedestrians avoid lengthy detours over several crossings as they cannot access the subway? The Tokyo style crossing proposal would assist with their concerns too I believe.
- I understand there is a structural problem with the “tear-drop” island. What assessments have been carried out on this island? Would it be possible to take back and utilise any of this space whatsoever, as it seems like a waste of valuable space on this very tight piece of road? Also, can you provide the cost of repairing this structural problem and indicate whether there is any room in the budget to sort out this problem? It seem apparent that using some of this space more widely would allow for the two lands of vehicular traffic and a cycle lane and more pedestrian space. A win for all road users.

Overall, from the feedback I have received by many constituents and interest groups regarding this scheme, I feel that the proposal is not fairly balanced. It favours smoothing the traffic flow for motorists and worsening conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. I hope TfL will look closely to my suggestions and from other interested parties to try to redress this balance.

I look forward to your detailed response.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



Caroline Pidgeon AM
London Assembly Liberal Democrat Group Leader