

**Date:** 4 June 2011 17:01:07 GMT+01:00  
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**Cc:** <[OlgaSaliba@tfl.gov.uk](mailto:OlgaSaliba@tfl.gov.uk)>  
**Subject:** **Olympic Route Network**

I am writing in response to your letter of May 15 with comments on the initial proposals concerning the Olympic Route Network. I am copying this to an address I was given by Land Securities just in case I have made an error in the main address. Please could you acknowledge receipt.

I write in my capacity as Chairman of City Quay Management Company (CQMC). City Quay (CQ) is a development of 214 apartments around two edges of the East Basin of St Katharine Docks and by the side of both East Smithfield and Thomas More St. CQMC is charged with looking after the interests of the c 500+ residents and leaseholders of CQ. Can I just say that it would seem that none of the CQ residents received the May 15 letter – I only heard about it from a friend in Mews St. Can I ask you please to review your communications set up for the future. Personally, I would much rather receive material like this by E-mail if that is possible, but I would certainly like to receive it!

Can I say first of all that I and many CQ people see the Olympics as a huge opportunity for London and for the whole country. We recognise that there is a need to strike a balance between:

- On the one hand, ensuring that the Olympics go smoothly and impressively;
- While on the other hand, minimising the adverse impact (congestion, delay etc) on residents and business in one of the world's great cities.

We recognise that trade offs are needed and do not wish to adopt a “nimby” approach.

Having said that, I would make 3 main points:

## 1. Alternatives:

I imagine that three broad alternatives were considered in looking to identify the main axis for accessing the Olympic area from the West:

- A. Whitechapel Rd/Mile End Rd/ Bow Rd
- B. Commercial Rd/East India Dock Rd
- C. East Smithfield/The Highway/Limehouse Link/Aspen Way

The apparent advantages of C (your chosen route) are pretty obvious – it appears to offer the most direct access to the Limehouse Link and Aspen Way which provide a fairly rapid route from West to East. I imagine this is why you have chosen it. Let me just note that A has the advantage that it seems to offer the most direct route to the Olympic area. B could also provide fairly ready access to The Limehouse Link and Aspen Way.

There are two big downsides in your choice of C:

Firstly, **regular traffic seeking to avoid C can go only in one direction** – namely, to the North of C. With either A or B, regular traffic has a choice – it could go either to the North or to the South of whichever is chosen as the main axis of the ORN. With either A or B, the additional congestion would therefore be spread over a wider area and thereby lessened.

Secondly, the choice of C (plus the turn restrictions proposed) has the effect of **“walling in” the whole of Wapping and Shadwell - including CQ**. Access to, and egress from, this whole area will be hugely constrained. I pick up a particular aspect of this in #2 below. This will not only impact the many thousand residents of these areas, but also the substantial business activity within it – some of which is currently rather fragile owing to the general state of the economy.

In addition, my own impression from driving/walking around the area is that peak hour congestion at present on C is

greater than on either A or B. I am sure you have quantitative data on this. Of course, the presence of Games Lanes in both directions will halve the capacity of C and, even taking account of traffic diverted or people not travelling by road at all, must significantly exacerbate congestion in the area. This effect is likely to be worse if the starting point involves a higher level of congestion.

Assuming the work to examine alternatives was thorough, as I'm sure it was, then I am confident that you have a full assessment of the above (and perhaps other) alternatives. I cannot see any reference to this on your website but I may have missed something. I would ask that you re-examine your assessment of alternatives in the light of the above points. I would also very much like to see your assessment so that I can satisfy myself that the inevitable trade-offs that have to be made in this situation have been made properly.

## **2. The Junction of Dock St/Vaughan Way with East Smithfield/The Highway**

Currently, there are many ways to access the "walled in" area from the West – by turning right at one of many points along East Smithfield. For example, to access CQ and its underground car parks, residents, employees, contractors and other visitors can turn right either at the Elephant Gates or at Thomas More St – or even at Vaughan Way. All of these right turns are forbidden under the current proposals. As are many other turns off The Highway from the West.

Indeed, it appears that under your proposals the only way of accessing CQ, or anywhere in Wapping/Shadwell from the West will be to loop to the North and then go down Dock St, across into Vaughan Way and then move from there. In addition, to leave the "walled in" area (including CQ) with the intention of going East will, on your proposals, involve going West to the Tower Hill gyratory system first. This would significantly increase the congestion in an already congested area which will become even more so on your proposals.

**In any case, the Dock St/Vaughan Way junction with East Smithfield/The Highway will become crucial to many thousand people and many businesses.**

Dock St Southbound is already a notoriously congested bit of road – partly due to the phasing of the lights at the junction, and partly due to the fact that the junction is often gridlocked by traffic moving along East Smithfield/The Highway. If the eventual plan is anything like this proposal then I would strongly recommend that you implement some or all of the following ways of ameliorating the problem:

- Making this junction a yellow box junction with prominent cameras linked to the lights and warning signs of the cameras' presence;
- Putting police traffic control at this junction at least at key points in the day;
- Radically re-phasing the lights at the junction to provide more time for the (much increased) traffic going from Dock St to Vaughan Way;
- Looking closely at the route into Dock St Southbound to make it easier to access eg Cannon Street Rd/Cable St, Leman St, Royal Mint St;
- Relocating the Barclays Bike Stand at the top of Vaughan Way which currently makes a constriction.

I would also point out that this junction will be the only feasible point of access for trucks servicing businesses in the “walled in” area. There are many of these which provide crucial services to CQ and other residents. I would particularly draw your attention to the Waitrose supermarket which is the main source of regular groceries for many thousand people.

I'm sure others who are more greatly affected will make this point, but I would emphasise that the Elephant Gates are the main/only point of access for many people wishing to visit or deliver to the homes and businesses in Ivory House, Commodity Quay and perhaps Tower Bridge House.

### **3. Other Points and Suggestions**

This list is in no particular order:

- Are the Emergency Services clear that they will be able to provide prompt fire and ambulance services to the whole of the affected areas and particularly to the “walled in” area? We will make our own enquiries of the Fire and Ambulance Services in respect of CQ specifically.
- Will taxis and buses be able to use Games Lanes? If necessary, would it be worthwhile to move the Games Lanes to the nearside to enable taxis and/or buses to use them? This may slow the Games Lanes a bit but would take a significant load of the lanes for regular traffic – the trade off may well be worthwhile.
- The Olympics run from Jul 27 to Sep 9. The Games Lanes are variously described as being in operation from late June to mid September and Mid July to Mid September. Why do they need to be in place more than a day or two before and after this period? How long will the Games Lanes take to establish/remove ie for how long will they cause disruption?
- Has consideration been given to having the West to East and East to West Games Lanes running along different axes, thereby spreading the disruptive effect over a wider area? For example, one of them along Whitechapel Rd/Mile End Rd/Bow Rd and the other along Commercial Rd or East Smithfield/The Highway and then into the Limehouse Link.
- It may be politically incorrect to suggest it but the Paralympics will generate much less traffic volume than the Olympics. Would it be sensible therefore to ease the restrictions significantly immediately after Aug 12 rather than keeping them in place for a further month? Looked at this way, the Paralympics appear to be the cause of about two thirds of the disruption caused by the ORN. Is this necessary or warranted?

- In any case, why do the restrictions need to be in place for the 2 weeks between the Olympics and the Paralympics?
- Why do the Games Lanes need to be in operation for such a large part of the day – some for 24 hours, others from 6am to midnight? Restricting these durations to lesser periods would significantly reduce the impact on the area.
- Likewise, having the turn restrictions only operate for the peak Games traffic period would make a huge difference.
- With the much more limited width of permissible road for regular traffic, breakdowns or accidents will be even more crucial than usual. Will breakdown crews be made available nearby to ensure that breakdowns can be dealt with rapidly? Will breakdown vehicles be permitted in the Games Lanes?
- Will it be permissible to move into a Games Lane in order to overtake a bus stopped at a bus stop?
- At present, Tower Bridge lifts during peak hours can cause chaos around the Tower Hill gyratory. What steps are going to be taken to limit Tower Bridge lifts?
- Tower Bridge Approach is shown as an “Alternative Olympic Route Network”. What does this mean? Does it imply that there will be additional limitations on use of Tower Bridge for regular traffic? If so, what limitations? And what would be the implications for congestion charging if Southwark/London Bridges had to be used?

Thank you for your attention. I look forward to hearing from you on all of the above.

Paul Garwood