8.1 This hearing statement from the Port of London Authority (PLA) specifically addresses question 8.1 on ‘Strategic Transport’ of the Matters, Issues and Questions Discussion Note under matter 8 on transport. Specifically this statement addresses part (ii) of question 8.1 which states:

“8.1 Strategic Transport: Is policy INF1 justified, effective and consistent with national policy as expressed in section 4 of ‘the framework’, and in particularly with regard to:

(ii) Whether the proposed river crossings would be designed to allow for the full range of river uses to continue, especially for large sea-going vessels?”

8.2 This statement sets out the PLA’s position with regard to any proposed river crossings within the London Borough of Newham, with the purpose of ensuring that any crossing does not prevent the full range of river uses to continue, including large sea-going vessels in order to continue to enable growth in port trade and the transport of goods and materials by river.

8.3 Broadly, the PLA, as stated within its Vision for the Tidal Thames (‘The Thames Vision’) document (2016) considers that there is a pressing need for better river crossing infrastructure to enable the transport of freight, and improved connectivity for people, and that these need to be sited and designed so that they allow the full range of river uses to continue, especially large sea-going vessels.

8.4 The PLA considers that this approach is supported by the current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) within section 4 on promoting sustainable transport. Paragraph 35 of the NPPF specifically states that:

“Plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people”

8.5 This is further supported within the draft NPPF (March 2018), which, under paragraph 105 reiterates the current NPPF by stating the planning polices should identify and protect sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure.

8.6 The Local Plan, by including a statement that any proposed river crossing will be designed to allow for the full range of river uses, protects the River Thames for the use of sustainable transport modes, particularly for the movement of goods. If, as a result of a new river crossing access for larger vessels is restricted to and from certain Safeguarded Wharves, then the future viability of those wharves would be at risk, therefore potentially resulting in the loss of those facilities.

8.7 The Greater London Authority (GLA), has recently launched a consultation on a review of the network of Safeguarded Wharves (May 2018), in support of the draft London Plan (2017). Within this review, as part of the individual site assessments, a number of Safeguarded Wharves in the London Borough of Newham will continue to be safeguarded. Specifically, with regard to Thames Refinery Wharf in Silvertown it is noted that the main jetty provides the deepest wharf in Greater London;
sufficient to accommodate very large bulk carriers. This statement was also included within the March 2013 Safeguarded Wharves Review (Final Recommendation). The Safeguarded Peruvian Wharf is also described in both documents as a viable wharf, with the capability for the berthing of sea going vessels at or near high water. In order for these and other Safeguarded Wharves in the Newham area to remain as viable wharf locations, any proposed river crossings must ensure that they are designed to allow unrestricted access for vessels travelling to and from these sites.

8.8 Within the London Borough of Newham’s Local Plan Review Proposed Submission Draft November 2017 (as consolidated with Proposed Minor Amendments February 2018), under policy S3 (Royal Docks) paragraph 5.42 there is a statement that in order to allow for the full range of river uses to continue, especially large sea-going vessels, the PLA are a consultee for any river crossing proposals which is welcome. For consistency throughout the Local Plan the PLA recommends that this statement is reiterated under paragraph 6.206a of policy INF1 to add more weight to this policy with regard to supporting part xiv of policy INF1 in river crossings.