

**Garden Bridge Review
Meeting transcript**

Event: MH/Isabel Dedring

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Isabel Dedring
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DAME MARGARET HODGE (MH):

Now, just take me through. You start. You tell me, go on, how it all came about. I'm not here to say, is it a good idea/bad idea? I'm here as the VFM and process.

ISABEL DEDRING (ID):

Okay. Shall I just offer a potted history based on what I remember? Because I didn't think it was too useful for me to go back, read loads of paperwork. It's probably most important is what I actually remember happening.

So I obviously joined City Hall in 2008 but looking after environment until 2011. So the origin of this, as I recall - but just hearing third hand - was since the beginning of the first term. Boris was very interested in the whole idea of a living bridge, garden bridge - something like that. There was a whole set of meetings around the idea of having a bridge like the Ponte Vecchio.

And there were a load of discussions with architects about that, I think, around 2009/2010. Again, that was Anthony Browne and Simon Milton who were involved in those discussions because it was seen as more of a planning thing. Then there was a whole set of discussions around gardeny -type bridges. There was some conversation about a bridge at Vauxhall, Battersea; that area.

MH: As a garden bridge or a pedestrian bridge?

ID: Yeah. Sort of in the ether. I wasn't in these conversations but I remember hearing about them at team meetings. That was led by Simon and Anthony, all of that exercise. So it was the quest for something that could either have buildings on it and then there was a separate set of discussions around something that was a garden. The NLA, I think, did an exhibition about those --

MH: Who?

ID: The NLA. The New London Architecture people, on Store Street. So they do all sorts of stuff about the built environment and I think I remember they put out some book in 2010. There was a competition about garden bridges in London and if I remember right, it was around that time. They put out a book and it had all these pictures of crazy ideas about garden bridges. Various architects contributed, as they usually do.

The point is, there was some ongoing, multi-year, live discussion about this whole set of questions. Then I gather that it came up in discussion with Thomas Heatherwick because he was then talking about the Cauldron or the new bus for London and I think Heatherwick also bid on the Olympic sculpture that ended up being the Orbit. So there was a live series of discussions with Thomas.

MH: Between who, Thomas and ...?

ID: Between the Mayor and Thomas Heatherwick. Boris would typically -- if he had something on his mind, then anyone he met, he'd go, "And we've got this idea for a

living bridge or garden bridge. What do you think?" So the impression I got was that it had come up, in discussion, that way round. Then I know there was a discussion with Joanna, as well, that I wasn't in initially. So that's the swirling context.

MH: I've got that you initiated a discussion with her.

ID: I think that might have been later. I was definitely in some conversation with her at some point in time, if not maybe two ... from memory, I think there were two meetings.

MH: In 2012 she wrote to Boris.

ID: Yeah.

MH: But you're telling me it was already an idea in his head before then.

ID: For sure and I know because I remember these Monday morning team meetings. People would go round the table and talk about, "What am I working on? What are the key things coming up this week?" I just remember multiple discussions, in that context, over 18 months, probably. A series of updates around this idea of doing something in this space.

MH: So it was more Tom's than Joanna's or ...?

ID: That, I wouldn't really know.

MH: You wouldn't know?

ID: No. I remember Joanna telling a long story about how she had been driving up and down on this side of the river and looking for a place for the Garden Bridge, where could it possibly go?

Then separately there was an ongoing discussion. Again, completely different angle about bridges generally, the lack of crossings in certain parts of the city, east London obviously, Silvertown, the Rotherhithe Bridge - the cycle bridge that's now coming up. Talking about a bridge at Nine Elms because of the lack of connectivity between Westminster and the development at Battersea.

So in that context I remember there was some map that various people put together which was about where the lack of connectivity across the river was the most significant problem and all the crossings that you can do. Which culminated ultimately in a strategy that we put out in 2015 which was primarily focused on east London crossings.

MH: By 2015 you'd taken a decision on this one? Way before that?

ID: Exactly. But I'm just saying it's just the contextual things. There's the kind of living bridge/garden bridge something. There's the "We need more crossings in London, all the way across the city, with a primary focus on east London" but a whole series of bridges being debated, west of Tower Bridge as well. And then, you know some conversations anyway with Thomas.

Then the other contextual point is there was some set of discussions with Apple as well, which goes to that California conversation around computers in schools and various other things that Boris wanted to do with Apple and various discussions with Thomas in a broader sense.

So I think what's happened is this particular project ended up somehow being at the confluence of a lot of these different things but somewhat by complete happenstance. There was a series of independent things going on, which ended up overlapping in this space.

MH: So were you told, by Boris, he wanted the Garden Bridge?

ID: Well, he had this longstanding desire to build a bridge that either had buildings on it, trees on it - something like that - that was going to be an icon for London. That would be globally interesting and significant. I vividly remember that, although it wasn't my patch, being a joke within our team meeting discussions for quite a while. I'd need to look back what the actual events were, which led to the Mayor issuing the Mayoral direction to TfL saying, "Let's put some money into this and develop the concept of a garden bridge in more detail ". I can't remember exactly what happened.

MH: Okay. Well, let me just tell you what I've got and tell me --

ID: Yeah, and then I say whether that sounds right.

MH: A letter from Joanna to Boris pretty soon after the election --

ID: In 2012?

MH: Yes. So you're saying a lot of this stuff went on pre-2012?

ID: For sure because Simon was still alive and Anthony was there who then left either in or around 2012. It was all looked after under the economic development --

MH: Not by you?

ID: No, well, anyway environment wouldn't really have come into it, but even after 2011.

MH: And then you met with both Joanna and -- I'm not sure whether Heatherwick was at the meeting until 2012.

ID: I don't remember. No, I don't remember.

MH: But it seems to have grown from that. That seems to be the key meeting in June 2012.

ID: I do remember that discussion but I was mostly bedazzled by meeting Joanna so I don't actually remember -- I know Boris was there because it was in his room and I do remember being there and I remember her talking about walking along the banks of the river and looking for a place for this bridge.

MH: Was Heatherwick at this?

ID: I don't remember. I have no idea who else was there and I don't even remember really whether at that time she was suggesting that location for the bridge. I remember her talking about Vauxhall because she lives out there, doesn't she? That came up in the discussion was that she lives somewhere around Battersea and that she thought "Look at this area of the river and it's all underutilised and it's badly connected. Shouldn't we do something like this and wouldn't it be wonderful?" And that she had this longstanding desire to do something with that.

She had somehow heard that Boris had a longstanding, but less longstanding, desire to do something and surely we could make something happen here of some description. She, I think, had already concluded that it couldn't work in that location and we subsequently - if I remember right - did a bit of looking at it. It's quite a big span, I think, in Vauxhall: it would be quite difficult to construct the bridge.

MH: I'm slightly bewildered by that in that in the papers there is some reference to quite a lot of work being done on the Vauxhall/Battersea and then a discussion as to whether you shouldn't tender for the two together.

ID: I don't think she was aware of this but there was a pre-existing and I think even pre-dating Boris idea that there should be a bridge in that location. Because it's central London yet the connectivity is so poor, hence, the northern line extension.

Let me get this right, I think Wandsworth has wanted to build that bridge for a long time but Westminster has never wanted to build the bridge because they don't want connectivity across the river. It's the wrong connectivity, wrong direction. There's a desire from the south to the north but not from the north to the south. That was all dressed up as a "We don't know where we want the bridge to land". So that had been a long-running but low level rumbling discussion between Westminster and Wandsworth which was then being brought into relief by the fact that the Battersea development was coming forward. The developers and also us at City Hall wanted clarity about that and so, "Okay, we'll look at that at the same time" but that pre-existed all the Joanna discussions and all of that --

MH: So why didn't you go for a design on both of them together.

ID: I wasn't involved in that at all.

MH: But the evidence appeared that there was a recommendation from the officials to say, "Why don't you tender for the two together? It seems to make sense". And then somebody decided not to. You don't remember that at all.

ID: I don't remember that point in time. That sounds right to me now that you say it. But I do know that that bridge was the subject of political debate between Westminster and Wandsworth where basically --

MH: You wouldn't have got Westminster --

ID: Yeah. not to put too fine a point on it, Westminster -- I'm trying to remember. Could this be right? I think there was a by-election in that ward which encompassed one of the landing points for the bridge and basically Philippa Rowe said, "We don't need this big debate about the bridge in the middle of this by-election". But, anyway I know there were discussions with Westminster where they said "This isn't the right time for us". Not being party political about it but it was "If you put forward any discussion about this bridge we will just have to say that we're going to kill it".

So "we're happy to have this conversation but in a year's time when the politics have settled down." That's right. It was a marginal ward. I can't remember which one it is but I can dig it out somewhere. It's somebody Square. It was a marginal ward and one of the landing options landed in that location and that was the preferred landing option. They said, "If you come forward with this bridge" -- which we were actually quite keen to push because it's the right thing to do anyway, and we needed it for Battersea -- "then we'll just have to just deny all knowledge. Kill the whole thing stone dead. If you come back in a year or two and the Battersea development is more formalised and it's clear that something is happening and our politics have settled down and we know that's a Tory ward or not..."

MH: Did you go back?

ID: Yes. There was then a subsequent -- Wandsworth then ran the design competition for that bridge in the end. I don't think for any particular rationale.

MH: Okay, and it's stuck somewhere --

ID: I think it's not dead but I wouldn't know what happened to it. I remember there were various designs. There were four designs. I think they were in the newspaper and they've done a costing exercise and the TfL officials provided technical support to that. So that has gone forward in the sense that there's been a discussion of landing options, broadly speaking, what could the design be. I don't think it's been designed up in engineering terms. It's been designed in architectural terms. But what's happened to it since then I don't know.

So that's the only thing I know about why that bridge didn't come forward at that point in time.

MH: At some point you met Joanna Lumley. Are you then told by Boris, "Go ahead and do it"?

ID: Yes. I seem to recall there's a mayoral direction.

MH: No, the Mayoral direction comes much later.

ID: Is that not for the £4 million, the initial £4 million spend?

MH: It does come later. It comes after Heatherwick's done all the work on it.

ID: You see at that point I wasn't involved anymore because it was over with the officials. As I recall, there wasn't really any -- there was certainly no substantial discussions with the Mayor.

MH: I've got down, meeting in June was the point that you met Joanna.

ID: This is 2012, yeah?

MH: I've now got a meeting between all of you in September, another meeting in November, this is all 2012.

ID: Yeah, with Joanna?

MH: Visit to the Emirates air line.

ID: I don't think -- I wasn't at that.

MH: You weren't at it but you were involved in setting it up --

ID: Yeah, that could be right, yeah.

MH: With both Arup and Heatherwick. That was in January.

ID: January 2013?

MH: So at some point you must have been told, "Go ahead with this" at some point.

ID: What I remember is that there was an allocation of £4 million to do some technical feasibility internally. TfL was told to work up the proposition, see whether business case stacked up --

MH: Can you check the date for that, Margaret. Check the date for when there's an instruction to TfL?

ID: There is a note that Roisha used to always do after the TfL meeting.

ID: We used to have our weekly meeting with TfL and there was a note that Roisha always sent round afterwards which was very sparse but it would have said if the Garden Bridge was discussed. At that point it wasn't called the Garden Bridge - whatever it was called – but it would be clear on there. That might be dig-out-able and that would say what had happened.

MH: But in the meantime Tom Heatherwick was developing the idea.

ID: Yeah. Similar to what a lot of architects have been doing. As soon as they got wind that Boris was interested in all this stuff, there were various other people that came in and had all kinds of crazy ideas. Again, I didn't meet any of them but I remember hearing about them.

MH: You met Heatherwick a couple of times I think.

ID: Yeah, for sure. Well, I met him more than that because he designed the new bus for London. There were various other reasons.

MH: On this?

ID: Yeah I'm sure that's right. I definitely remember meeting him when we were out in California seeing Apple.

MH: We'll come to that.

ID: And I'm sure that I met him in City Hall as well. It's just that because I saw him quite a few times on a range of different things, notably the new bus. That was the main thing that I had to do with him.

MH: What I'm trying to get at is were you told that we want to go for a garden bridge?

ID: I just remember there were all these different discussions. We could do something that would be creative, different, iconic; something like that. Heatherwick's been in talking about this or Joanna's been in with her idea which, I guess that's the same idea, ultimately. Various other architects have come in, showing pictures of what they could do, over several years. So now let's do something. It certainly wasn't "Let's build that particular bridge". I remember it being something that would be eye-catching, iconic - whatever - which, in Boris's mind, was something to do with having trees on it or buildings. So a living bridge, in the sense that it was more than a bridge for movement.

MH: Who else had come in to show that big idea?

ID: That, I don't know, because I was looking after the environment brief. Anthony Browne was Boris's partner in crime on that whole set of discussions and I just vividly remember because we would always tease him about it. We all thought it was a crazy idea and was never going to happen. So I do remember, poor Anthony; always mocking him about this and he was like, "No, no, it's going to happen" and we're "It's

never going to happen, dude". So I remember him saying that he'd seen various people and he then showed pictures to Boris. I know that there were other discussions going on but again, it was totally outside my territory at that time.

So then "Let's do the feasibility on this". The thing that I remember was some discussions around what the business case was and we had endless discussion about footfall and what was the realistic number in terms of footfall in that location. Because you've got Waterloo Bridge and whatever the other adjoining one is and how many people might realistically use this bridge.

MH: Let's come to the business case because the business case happened after Heatherwick had already got the initial contract.

ID: Is that right?

MH: Yes.

ID: I don't -- because we weren't like directly involved in any of that stuff.

MH: Well, you were, Isabel, because you --

ID: No, in terms of when you got what contract and who procured what and all that stuff. We wouldn't have been involved in any of that process.

MH: Well, you were, I'm afraid. I think you were because there's various emails --

ID: We were informed of it. I'm sure that right and that must be true but I was not involved in any of the actual procurement of the bridge design or bridge conversations or all that stuff. I'm happy to be proven wrong. The perils of having too much to do and you blank everything out in the end. Hold on a sec, let me find... there's some timeline on some bit of paper. Here we go.

MH: Okay. Yes, there's a big briefing note, 16 January 2013, "proposed next steps".

ID: Yeah. From TfL to the Mayor?

MH: From TfL to all of you, yes. It says there, in that thing:

"Following some informal discussions with Arup [so Arup had been in on informal discussions] it appears that there's been an element of engineering design already undertaken by the team working with Heatherwick which includes Arup and Mace. In the absence of further funding it's unlikely that Arup and Mace ..."

So the money wasn't there but they had done all this. That's when the officer's suggests two bridges should be secured together.

There was also a suggestion - this was all to you so you did have to decide - that Heatherwick should lead on the proposal and seek sponsors but you decided not to do that because Heatherwick would have had to do it for nothing. So you then decide to go for a tender. So you were actually involved, from what I can see in the documents.

ID: I can't remember that, no.

MH: That note of 16 January to and froed and there were lots of versions of it and then deciding the procurement methodology which allowed Heatherwick to win.

ID: That doesn't ring any bells but I'd be very happy to look at it again.

MH: Would you?

ID: Yeah, very happy to. I just genuinely don't remember any of that.

MH: Because one of the things that I'm looking at is whether the procurement process was ...

ID: Yeah, totally understood, above board or robust, yeah. So 16 January...?

MH: Well, there's a 16 January document which had been to and fro and I think, if my memory serves me right, you had commented on various drafts. There are emails toing and froing with your name on it.

ID: Okay...

MH: The procurement process was decided out of that and it was designed in a way that enabled Heatherwick to win it and that's what I'm looking at. Heatherwick had, until the pro bono comment, done quite a lot of work as had Arup and as had Mace.

ID: So you're saying the debate was should Heatherwick basically be just told to carry on developing - or that consortium should be told to carry on developing this - at their expense. Or whether we're saying, "We want to build a bridge in London and therefore we GLA family through TfL will now do a bunch of design work to do a procurement".

MH: You decided not to go through the OJEU process.

ID: I think that's a separate thing because this is way below the OJEU threshold.

MH: But you decided to go below that. That was one of the decisions.

ID: No but the piece of work was so small that it didn't hit the OJEU threshold anyway.

MH: Yes but you decided to do that as a mechanism.

ID: That doesn't ring any bells to me. , OJEU is 130,000/150,000, something like that. , you'd never hit that cost anyway, apart from anything else, in doing a high-level design of a piece of infrastructure.

MH: No, a lot of cost went into the Arup contract.

ID: No, no but it would never hit that. It wouldn't be a debate about OJEU or not OJEU because it's not something that would ever hit OJEU limits at all. That's what I'm saying.

MH: Okay. Were you expecting Heatherwick at that point to be the designers? Was it as taken at that point?

ID: No, I don't think so. What I do remember is having some discussion about how many people, which was more just like; where, what's going on, FYI type of conversation, and I remember TfL saying, "There's four people who have bid" and I think like two of them were pretty bog standard and they weren't very enthusiastic about them and two of them were both quite good and so they were looking at those two more seriously – "update to follow". Now, that conversation I do remember.

MH: So how did you spend all this time with Heatherwick and Arup at that point, for example, taking them on a visit, "look at this other project". You spent a lot of a time.

ID: No, I never met Arup in any of those discussions. I'm sure of that. Even now I don't know who worked on the Garden Bridge from the Arup side. That's just not true. But the cable car visit I vaguely remember hearing about that. I didn't particularly organise it but I do remember it vaguely.

MH: And Arup went on that?

ID: I don't know. Again if there's something that I can look at that's in the public domain I'm very happy to look at that but that doesn't ring any bells to me whatsoever. I've only been on cable car once and it was with my family. Then in terms of Arup visiting, possibly. It may have been in some bit of paper that's lying around but that's the first I've heard of that.

MK: So do you remember the 16 January briefing note to the Mayor?

ID: No, but I'll happy look at that.

MK: I think you must have been at the meeting at which it was discussed.

ID: That I'm sure. I'm sure that's right because if it was presented to the Mayor at the TfL meeting unless I was on leave or something, sick, then I would have been there. But I'm very happy to look at that note.

MH: Did you ever play a role at all in the letting of these contracts?

ID: Never. We would hear about them like "Just to let this has now gone out" or we would say "What's going on? I haven't heard anything about this." But it was mostly in the context of programme delivery assurance, checking that everything was actually on track. I'm trying to think of other examples. There was such a wide-range of things that we used to do.

On the Rotherhithe Bridge, at the very end of the cycle bridge, Richard and I and Michelle and others had quite a few discussions about whether we wanted to do something. Sustrans was promoting the bridge and there was some discussion about whether we should help with some technical feasibility work and so there was a whole load of discussions about were we going to do it or not and then how long it was going to take to procure the work and stuff like that. I wouldn't know how to procure anything if my life depended on it. I've never procured anything. I don't know what you do.

So it would be the total exception but from time to time it would be one of those things where you'd go, "how long is this going to take?" But it wouldn't be "this is the approach that we should take".

MH: But by the time you were procuring you knew you were procuring a garden bridge, didn't you?

ID: As I remember, there were the four people who had bid and that procurement was very much about a bridge of some type that was supposed to be -- and I can't remember what TfL ended up using as the language in the actual procurement -- but the discussion with the Mayor was around something iconic, unique, something that serves two functions. It serves a movement function and it also has something else that's unique about it which was going to be something about living bridge of some description.

The thing that I remember particularly was that it was in the context of the cycling debate at that time there was this huge drama about Blackfriars Bridge and where now there's the North-South Cycle Superhighway and everybody was very concerned about taking capacity away from that bridge. So it was how many of the pedestrians on Blackfriars and on Waterloo could you put on to this bridge as a way of relieving the side bridges so that you could then basically put more cyclists on to those bridges. So there was a big debate about that. That bit of it I remember quite clearly. And how could you better connect the north and south from a pedestrian perspective so that's to take the pressure off of Waterloo because there was huge flows across Waterloo in the morning, from Waterloo Station, and which is why you can't put a proper cycle lane on that bridge because there's too many pedestrians and too many vehicles. So we said "Well, why don't we put all the pedestrians over there and then we can fit more cyclists on the bridge".

So I definitely remember that which is why we got into all the stuff about how many people could fit on the bridge. So at that point in time it wasn't a garden bridge, it

wasn't Heatherwick's garden bridge; it was a bridge of some type, in this location, but which had to have this. It wasn't just supposed to be a pedestrian bridge.

MH: Why did you spend time with Heatherwick?

ID: I don't remember spending loads of time with him.

MH: Team meetings and then what's it, Peter Hendy, three meetings? Everybody was having endless meetings with him. This is all pre-contract.

ID: Yeah. But remember he was doing the Cauldron.

MH: No, no, this was about the Bridge.

ID: There were others. He was always coming up with like, , "Here's another crazy idea I've got. Let me come and see the Mayor about that". I wasn't involved in a lot of those discussions. I know Munira [Deputy Mayor for Culture] was -- in the context of some of the sculpture at Olympic Park, which was the Orbit that didn't end up being the Orbit.

There was the new bus which had a lot of teething problems, the issues with the windows and all that other stuff like "How do we get everybody to buy the new bus in the rest of the world?" and all that other drama. I wouldn't be able to say which of those meetings. I'd be happy to look at them and look at the agendas but I don't know which of those were about what but for sure a lot of the discussion with Heatherwick was about a lot of other things.

MH: The agenda's gone.

ID: I'm not sure we ever had agendas for everything.

MH: It would have been easier to look at.

ID: Yeah. I don't remember. Put it this way, for the record, I don't remember being in three meetings with Thomas about the bridge, definitely not. I definitely remember being in somewhere between three and six meetings with Thomas over the course of being at City Hall which included many of which were about nothing to do with the Garden Bridge, in particular around the new bus.

MH: So you went to the studio to look at the bridge?

ID: I went to his studio once, if I remember right. I think it was once. And it was about a whole range of things. I remember he said "Oh, come and see the studio" and then we had a chat and I remember we were talking about the bus as well. The model for the bridge must have been there at that point, so I remember seeing that but there's like a bazillion things there so I don't remember. I guess the bridge model must have been

there at that time. I'd seen it before though so I wouldn't have like particularly remembered that.

And there were other things that he wanted to talk to me about, what did I think about 500 other ideas, none of which I remember anymore. He showed me something he was building for New York and goodness knows what.

MH: Okay. Did you do any interrogation at all on Heatherwick getting that first contract, the design?

ID: No, but I we always tried to stay out of anything to do with procurement. Partly because I don't know anything about it but partly because like TfL were very clear that that would corrupt the process.

MH: And Richard because?

ID: Well, Peter Hendy's in charge of TfL, Michele ran planning. Richard and Michele and some combination with the procurement guys at TfL ran our procurement process.

MH: So what did they bring to you? Do you sign it off?

ID: No. God, no. No, never.

MH: You didn't sign anything off?

ID: No. They're buying millions of pounds a year, billions of pounds worth of rolling stock on the Underground.

MH: And you never saw any of it?

ID: We would never see any of that stuff. On the board we would sometimes see that stuff because procurement above a certain level would go to the TfL Board and that was part of the reason why the Mayor doesn't see a lot of those things -- well, doesn't really see anything unless there was some particularly unique exceptional circumstances. I can't remember anything where we would have gotten involved in that. The mayor obviously chairs the board so the board sees things above -£50 million. The finance committee sees things above £25 million --

MH: If you see the toing and froing, Isabel, honestly, there is so much toing and froing. It's very hard to understand.

ID: I'd love to see that. Honestly, I [inadible] cannot remember.

MH: There's lots and lots of commenting, in a very, very detailed way.

ID: Yeah, I honestly cannot remember any of that but that's not unique. There's many things I can't remember so I'd be super happy to look at that if I could. If you want me to have a look at it and then say, "Oh, okay, it's all come back to me now."

MH: Let me have a look through and if there's anything I want to bring back to you.

ID: Yeah. I'm super happy to and I'm not trying to misrepresent anything. I just genuinely don't remember that. I don't remember a note going in there on this subject at all. I really don't know.

MH: Okay.

ID: But I would love to see it.

MH: Okay, then Arup get it. And Arup originally come out seventh out of the original assessment. And they had already, of course, been in discussions. They had done a lot of the technical work before. They'd been to visit the suspension bridge. They'd been quite involved and miraculously although they were seventh they get it and they also were rung up and asked to reduce their day rates where no other bidder was asked to do that. You were unaware of all that?

ID: I now know about it because I've heard about it but that we wouldn't have gotten involved in that at City Hall.

MH: Somebody must have wanted Arup to win it. Somebody must have wanted both Heatherwick and Arup to win it. You look at those papers.

ID: I didn't know Arup from a hole in the wall so like I wouldn't care whether they won it or didn't win it or whatever. It's got nothing to do with..., City Hall wouldn't care who designed the bridge.

MH: But somebody did. Somebody did.

ID: My only narrow point is City Hall and I would have thought TfL wouldn't care about, what skin off their nose is it who designs the bridge. I could see how we might have a view on what it should look like and that's why I remember them saying, "We've got these four bids back on the design contract and two of them are interesting enough". Because they thought, City Hall, that's relevant for City Hall because if the Mayor wants something iconic and that's not iconic.

But then who's the best engineer to build a bridge. Obviously I wouldn't have the vaguest clue. I don't know anything about engineering so I would not be the right person to talk to about that. So, no, we weren't whether somebody said, "This is what's happening" or something like that I don't remember any of that happening at the time and I don't see why anybody would have mentioned it to us at City Hall particularly.

There is a separate question about whether it may have come to the board at some point but again I doubt it because the board didn't like these kinds of things because there was an involvement of the Mayoral direction process. The board doesn't like mayoral directions because it's like we should be deciding everything and quite rightly really.

MH: But the Mayoral direction to give TfL the power.

ID: Right, but effectively all mayoral directions bypassed the board so because it bypasses TfL's normal governance processes as well to a degree, TfL then needs to execute the Mayoral direction in a governance friendly way.

MH: It's a general point. You have no role or your post, personally your post, both you and Eddie, the two of you, have no role at all in authorising contracts.

ID: No.

MH: No role ever.

ID: Never. In fact quite affirmatively.

MH: As a minister I would have done.

ID: Yeah. It's a really important and interesting point anyway because the signalisation of the subsurface lines, which has ended up creating this massive cost overrun. It went to the board. Okay, the board should have applied a lot more scrutiny on that I would say as a member of the board now, in retrospect, because we bought the thing for £350 million. It ended up being more than a billion. That's not a small overrun. That's like massive misjudgement and I'd be the first person to say that. But who that was going to be awarded to, how the contract was run -- in fact I remember on the board we had a big debate about how involved the board should be and what you actually want out of those contracts, what standard of performance should TfL be demanding. But City Hall never got involved in any of that stuff but it's an interesting question because ministerially, that would go through --

MH: And Audit by the board?

ID: Audit would but that's ex post facto. Yeah, there's an audit committee.

MH: And DeCani, who was he talking to?

ID: Who? When?

MH: Richard DeCani, all the way through. He assessed it himself. What's the process? Who oversaw this?

ID: Well the Mayor directs Peter in the case where you have a mayoral direction. Normally Peter runs the organisation. It's his structure and he's ultimately accountable for what happens within TfL for the stuff that's the day-to-day operations of TfL. Michele is running planning and Richard worked for Michele and, as I understand it, purely from reading papers and seeing stuff and talking to Richard, there is a panel for procurements. There's never one person who decides a procurement anyway, as I understand it.

So there was Richard. There was somebody from procurement and there was someone else - I don't know who - on the panel if I remember right but, again, this is all me finding this out years later. So that there isn't a single person making a decision and to make sure that it's always fair. That then had to go to Michele who had to sign off whatever the recommendation is, as I recall from reading all this various stuff, and ultimately I guess Peter's responsible for it but all that stuff would be delegated to the managing directors for something sufficiently small, there's stuff that happens obviously much further down the chain.

MH: The contract to Arup was £8 million - £9 million, I can't remember. It's about £8 million or £9 million but I can't remember now.

ID: No, I know, but in the grand scheme of TfL's budget, which is £10 billion a year, it's quite small. I agree with you but I'm just saying, that's a fact. So the procedures are all set up around that. Are you talking to Richard?

MH: I assume I am.

ID: It's very important to talk to him, if you don't mind me saying, because he's one of the straightest people I've ever met. The stuff he's been exposed to in the press is not okay. It's very upsetting and it's also morally wrong because some of the stuff that's been said about him is just extraordinary and completely out of line with his character and I would be really grateful if he would have the opportunity to set the record straight with you. Everybody was like, "Oh, it's this guy's fault" and it's like, "This is insane. There's a huge organisational structure and set of procedures".

MH: That's why I'm asking whether there were instructions. I don't mind the Mayor having instructions actually, that's his job and he might have pet projects which are entirely legit. That's what he's there for but it's very difficult to decipher here who was pulling the strings.

ID: So you see because I wasn't directly involved in any of all that, ins and outs --

MH: Well, you did write a lot of emails.

ID: Well, around that thing but that's not a fair statement. All that procurement of all of these people --

MH: When I read the emails it looks to me like you were pretty engaged. That's the impression I get.

ID: I guess so.

MH: That's the impression I --

ID: In terms of the general thing of the bridge Boris was every week going, "What's going on with the bridge?" Yeah, sure, but in terms of the actual procurement of Arup or whatever that just wouldn't have been something that City Hall would ever get involved in but equally there would have been many people at TfL who were involved in that decision. So the idea that somehow Richard was like some Lone Ranger off on some mission is just absolutely insane.

MH: Well, I agree with that.

ID: I know but it would be great to have the record set because people trust you and so if that's your view and you're able to articulate that that would be helpful because he's very upset about it and his career is being affected by it and that's not fair.

MH: I hear that. I think probably I see him towards the end, because he's a key player.

ID: Because he will also remember all the ins and outs and all the times.

MH: The feel you get is that he was following some instructions so this is what I'm trying to find out. Was he following your instructions? Was he following Ed's instructions? Were you both following the Mayor's instructions?

ID: Yeah, I hear what you're saying. Well, I would have thought that in infrastructure generally, if there was an existing relationship -- let's say Heatherwick and Arup had been working together on many projects over time obviously they will both want to work together on something. Also I know they've worked together on other things and it is a trope in the infrastructure industry that, if three people work together a lot then they'll want to carry on working together because they know each other and all that stuff. So they would have wanted to work together, one assumes, because that would be logical but we would not, as City Hall, or I'm sure TfL, care who would do the technical work on a bridge like that because who cares.

MH: Well, somebody did because, (a) Arup ended up seventh of 12 for the first assessment and somebody chose to ring them up so that their rates would change.

ID: Only having spoken to Richard subsequently about it on that particular point, I'd rather he tell you himself. But what he said to me was that one of the things was like totally out of whack with everybody else's and therefore the panel decided the best thing to do is call them and find out have they misunderstood what this thing is because why are they totally different from all these other bidders. He said, "In retrospect I should have phoned everybody up or let everybody know that we're clarifying that this

particular dimension is about this because some of you have possibly misunderstood it". So he said that is what now, looking back on it, he feels he should have done. That was the story as he told it to me but again, better if he tells you that and I didn't know anything about all of that at the time.

MH: I'm sorry I'm jumping a bit from the Heatherwick because the two are connected. Heatherwick has not really designed any bridge, except the Paddington; that little Paddington Bridge.

ID: Yeah.

MH: Did you ever question that? Whereas the other two, there were only two other ones there, weren't there three? One had designed 20, the other had designed 12

ID: I've heard that subsequently but again, because we weren't involved in the selection. A set of other reasons why we would have been talking to him anyway and I never saw their submission, nor did I see anybody else's submission. Maybe we should have looked at that, I guess, but again, it was one of these like, "Let's let TfL form the view".

MH: The assumption was that they would win it.

ID: Yeah, yeah, I can understand that. All I'm saying is I didn't see any of that --

MH: But it wouldn't have mattered in a private sector organisation. When it's public money, you just need the processes that are transparent and fair.

ID: Or, put another way, all those bits that came back under that process, we never saw any of them. So you could argue, "Well, if the Mayor's taking such a strong interest in doing something like this, issued a mayoral direction, surely he'd have an interest in seeing all four of them and having a really detailed discussion of all the things that came back under that". The engineering contract I think less so because --

MH: Why did you never decide to a real big design competition? If you think back on it, this is an iconic bit of London and the Mayor wants to do something really brilliant and different, if I take you at what you said, and the obvious thing is to have gone, "No, that's the convention so you broke with the convention there". Why did you decide to do that?

ID: I don't remember any discussions around that.

MH: There was advice suggesting that you run a competition.

ID: I have a vague memory that we had tried something like that with the Anthony Browne(?) Living Bridge idea and we didn't get anything decent back or something like that. And I have a vague memory that we were in a similar conversation about, "That's not going to work because all you get is a bunch of rubbish from people who don't really want to build anything anyway". -

MH: What it feels like, that might be the interpretation, "We're committed to Heatherwick; let's go with him".

ID: I don't remember that debate but I vaguely remember a discussion around 2010/2011 about the Living Bridge thing and saying "this hasn't worked".

MH: This is advice in 2012.

ID: No, I understand but it was in another context. Again, I just don't remember any discussion or debate around that. It may well be in that bit of paper, many of which I didn't read but obviously that one I must have done; I was commenting on it. Is that in January 2013? The design competition thing?

MH: Let me see if I can find the one that says to you should go out to a design. There's one that tells you you should go out to a design. I'm probably not going to find it there but let me have a look.

ID: Okay, yeah. Well, in fact if there's something you want me to look at, I'm totally happy to and again, very happy to look at anything.

MH: Sorry we'll just look. Heatherwick weren't on your framework even because they hadn't built bridges.

ID: So how did they even bid for the ...?

MH: Because of the way you designed the competition.

ID: Oh right, that... the procuring of the design contract or whatever it was.

MH: Yes, there's a briefing note on 16 January --

"Rejected using existing framework because Heatherwick was not on the framework"
"Didn't do OJEU." "Officers suggests that two bridges should be procured together."

They weren't.

ID: Yeah, that one, I'm sure, was because of the politics. It's so annoying. If I'd access to my old emails, I could dig out some of that stuff.

MH: Legal advice on the Heatherwick contract said, "A design competition through OJEU might be...". So it was legal advice which must have come to you.

ID: No, City Hall would never get any of that legal advice, whatever stuff. We would rely on the TfL note. Not that it makes a difference, just so you know. So legal advice says, "You should have a design competition".

ID: So that note says that the legal advice was to have OJEU?

MH: Yes.

ID: Why?

MH: Well, because it was probably quite a lot of money.

ID: I think the point is that OJEU is always a pretty straightforward, "If it's going to be above this or could end up being above this".

MH: Sorry Arup, it was 7 out of 13 - it started off 7th out of 13 - they were still interviewed.

ID: Richard does all the ins and outs of that, yeah.

MH: And they were rung up to review their rates, no other --

ID: Yeah. Well, Richard said to me was that there is one particular thing that he thought they'd misunderstood because their rates were so out of whack with everybody else's. Anyway he can tell you about that.

MH: Can you explain your trip to San Francisco?

ID: So again, I wasn't in the beginning of the conversation with that but there are some set of conversations the Mayor had had with Apple. Somehow or other he had met either -- it must have been Tim Cooke(?) back then or other people on the management team at some -- either they'd come to London to see him or he'd met them at Davos, anyway, there was some set of conversations.

I think Eddie may have been involved in those and he had this idea, at the time, he wanted computers in schools or that he wanted them to donate a million old computers or goodness knows what; something to do with that. Then there was something else that I can't remember and then he said "And maybe they want to pay for a bridge in London" same way as with the cable car. It was like, "That's fine, people to pay for the cable car or, with the Orbit, we're going to get people to pay for the Orbit or cycle hire or whatever it is" Which is a good thing to do, if somebody wants to pay money to pay for some public -- , I think that's a good thing. So it was, "I'm going to go out and see them"

MH: So you went out for the purpose of --

ID: No, they were-- Obviously fancy people like Apple don't come to see you.

MH: But your presence was because of the bridge.

ID: Yeah, exactly. So there were like -- as I remember, there were something like four things on the agenda; the computers in schools thing, the bridge and two other things.

I can't remember because it hadn't anything to do with me or did the computers in schools thing but I remember that's the focus of it, initially.

MH: Boris said, "You come with me and we're trying to fund the bridge".

ID: Yeah. He said, "You come along ..." My presence was because of the bridge element, exactly. And so we went out there, saw those guys.

MH: And how come Heatherwick was there?

ID: Again, this is... there's some pre-existing stuff but basically, he and Johnny Ive know each other, he's the lead creative guy at Apple and he's British. So Thomas and Johnny Ive know each other... so he is the one who invented the iPhone and all this other stuff. So they've known each other for a long time. He had asked Thomas to come to see all of Johnny's team and they would have some design geeking-out thing where they all talk about design and Thomas would sort of share his thoughts and Johnny and the team would share their thoughts.

And I gather this is something that Johnny does, quite regularly, with different famous architects and designers. And so Thomas was going to go and see Johnny and Boris was going to go and see -- I guess Tim Cooke was the original thing, with a few other people. And somehow or other this was, sort of like "We'll overlap and do this at the same time" or it was going to happen at the same time anyway. I wasn't involved in the orchestration of that but there were two separate things, which then came together.

MH: But they deliberately came together.

ID: I don't really know the ins and outs of the scheduling of all that. I was just told, "We're going to California, like, on this day and you're flying economy". I remember I ran into Tom Edwards the other day and he said "The thing I think is the most interesting is why did you have to fly economy and everyone else had got to fly business class?"

MH: But the interesting thing is this was all before you'd left the tender to Heatherwick.

ID: Yeah, I think that's right.

MH: So he comes along to raise money for something which you haven't even got the tender for.

ID: Yeah but there were these two preceding things, which were then contemporaneous in time but Thomas was going to see Johnny and Boris was going to see Tim Cooke.

MH: Yes but he comes in, on a meeting, to discuss the specific idea which he's developed and then I have to believe that you hadn't decided on this idea.

ID: Yeah, totally understood. However it came to pass that these two things ended up being contemporaneous in time; I'm not sure.

MH: Which suggests to me that somebody had taken the decision, which is why I ask who was putting the pressure on. I'm sure Richard is a perfectly solid bureaucrat --

ID: Yeah, yeah, well, and obviously why would he care?

MH: So somewhere -- Isabel, if you were sitting in my --

ID: No, I totally understand. I think on the particular issue of California, it was all slightly odd anyway but Boris is quite like that.

MH: If he had said, "I've been talking to Thomas. I want Thomas and I want Joanna. I'm instructing TfL to do that."

ID: Yeah, yeah, but --

MH: But collectively, people are saying you have to have a completely open, undecided procurement all the way through.

ID: I guess it's one of those things where I remember when we did the procurement for the design of the bridge - and I vividly remember being really interested in what was going to come out of that and maybe something amazing is going to come forward.

MH: But it wasn't. You decided not to do it, as I understand.

ID: No but that it would have attracted that interest and that people would have been with some amazing stuff, then I vividly remember thinking, "It'd be really great if something really exciting comes forward". But at the same time thinking, "But probably Thomas is the most likely person to get it". You could easily see that somebody might just go, "They just want a pedestrian bridge so here you go, here's your pedestrian bridge". And I've never looked at the actual materials that we used for the procurement but who knows what we actually said in there? If we wanted something really specific then we should have asked for something really specific.

MH: Well, I think, really, by then, you wanted a garden bridge. Did you want a garden bridge? Were you clear, by the time you went up, you wanted a garden bridge?

ID: No, I think it was, "There's all these discussions that we've had and they were all very stimulating but we want something unique and Thomas has got a great idea and other people have come forward with great ideas so let's see what comes out of that". As far as I'm concerned, what I interpreted Boris to want was something that was like the Thomas Garden Bridge or the Ponte Vecchio or anything that was equally exciting and stimulating. If they'd have come back with an answer that said, "Here's something that's way better than that little model that Thomas showed you", as far as I'm

concerned, that would have been a, "Right, that's the one we're going for". But that didn't come back.

MH: It wasn't what was asked for in the tender document.

ID: I gather that the document itself doesn't transmit the ambition or whatever. I haven't looked at it but from what I've understood, from talking to people, it was quite dry or whatever. Yeah.

MH: Very difficult, and I can't think you're in that machine.

ID: No, no, no, I totally get it, yeah.

MH: I thought, "They're putting pressure on you, Isabel". That's what I was coming out thinking. Because you were the probably the non-bureaucrat most closely involved on the day-to-day.

ID: It was a bit of a funny one because it fell between the stools.

MH: Yes but there's more, in the email trails, of you saying, "Why is this? What's that?" than there is with Ed, if I'm honest.

ID: Yeah, understood. I'm very happy to be that person. It was always a little bit of a funny topic because public realm and transport so where did it really fall?

MH: We've been around the houses. , is there anything else, afterwards, that you wanted to come to me to but it just looks that both those procurements need some explanation --

ID: Yeah, I think talking to Richard will be really helpful and illuminating and I'm very happy to have a further chat or clarify anything, in writing, after that. But just going back to your general point, I think when you're in the role that I was in, in that old job, you've got Boris, super enthusiasm, "Join us as this", he was always talking to Richard Rogers and Fosters and people like that. "Wouldn't this be great? Thomas has got this model like that and it can have trees and we're going to have people like that. Do it".

But then, equally, we're in a public procurement process and we definitely can't just give it to somebody. But he wasn't saying, "Give it to Thomas". He was saying, "That's so exciting, look at that, and this is exciting too and let's do something like this and, "Let's make it happen". So then TfL are saying, "We've been told to procure this so we're happy to procure it and we need to make sure it's above board ". What we couldn't end up having was a procurement that would end up with just a really tedious pedestrian bridge of any type, that you could get a million of.

Then you've got TfL going, "But it's not your business to run the procurement", they would not show us documents that go out, request for proposals, all that stuff would never get run past City Hall. But we might get a memo saying, "We're going to procure

this, responses back in April". There'd be a memo about it but you wouldn't see the thing itself.

So the translation function, isn't it, you're going, "For sure, we can't just go out and buy this from Thomas or buy it from Fosters or buy it from whoever else or get Joanna to draw it on a piece of paper ". But we, equally, need something that isn't going to be left to its own devices, large bureaucracies will just grind out yet another pedestrian bridge which is a thing on stilts. I'm not really answering the question but you're trying to find that middle ground of "this has to be done in a way that's going to be above board and work from a public procurement standpoint". We definitely don't want to give it to that guy, that guy, that guy, but how do we lift everybody's aspirations and how do we articulate that in the document.

MH: You might look back and look at that January note. Right. Let me ask, what did you think of the strategic business case?

ID: For the bridge itself? I never saw the business case itself, as far as I remember. I think I saw some of the summary content from it.

MH: Well, it would have come to you at the TfL board because it had to be agreed by TfL.

ID: No, because it's not enough money to go to the TfL board and it's a mayoral direction so it wouldn't come on that basis anyway. Because money that was spent on the basis of a direction.

MH: So who would have overseen that?

ID: The actual business case itself? "This is good or not good or whatever" --

MH: Yeah, "This is okay, this is good".

ID: In terms of the overall business case-- Again, I think that's probably a failing of the Mayoral direction process, isn't it? What's another example, something you do a mayoral direction on? Fares. So there's no business case for fares; it's just the Mayor decides, TfL produces a paper saying, "Here are some of the options".

MH: So the Mayor just signed it, "I'm going to spend £4 million" that means --

ID: Isn't that the first mayoral direction, is that right? Is that the first -- When the direction came out? I thought there were two or three and one of them was -- when the £20 million/£30 million stuff all started swirling around, yes, I remember there being two but again, but again I would need to look back. But I thought there was one on the initial £4 million?

MK: Is it £4 million?

ID: I think, or around that number, I think that's right.

MH: So once that happens, how you spend the money is subject to what?

ID: I don't know the answer to that.

MH: [To MK] Can you check that for me as well? Once there's a mayoral direction that's going to spend either £4 million or £5 million or whatever the hell it was, developing the concept of a garden bridge, what are the mechanisms for ensuring probity and value for money?

ID: I think the audit committee of the board does not ever see any of that stuff. I'm pretty sure because the board had a big ongoing fit about this because they were saying, "Well, theoretically, the Mayor could mayorally direct all of TfL's budget, if they wanted to, and totally bypass the board".

MH: There must be some mechanism --

ID: I think what happens is it goes to GLA, there's some internal audit, within City Hall, over the Mayoral directions but whether that's over governance as opposed to spend, I don't know the answer to that. The Jeff Jacobs-type process or IPB or somebody likes that looks at them. But this was the heart of what the board was arguing on the MDs because they're being asked to balance the budget and then a huge source of money comes from fares, for example, but they never see any of that stuff. It doesn't make any sense, logically.

MH: So you never saw the original business case? As Deputy Mayor on the transport you wouldn't --

ID: We wouldn't have seen that for anything, any project. We would get memos "Here's the summary, here's the headline --" but no, not even that. It might be mentioned in passing in a memo, on the board we would see business cases for big investments, so the Cycle Superhighways, that business case came to the finance committee you would see all the numbers and all that stuff.

I'm just trying to think if that's like strictly true. I can't remember a time when we saw the business case for anything because that was all a function of TfL. But it's an interesting point, isn't it? I think the idea is business cases are handled by TfL, above a certain amount they go to the board. Hence mayoral direction, if you want to tell TfL to do something, but that doesn't mean that it should be exempt from normal fiscal strictures. That's a good point.

MH: So the money when it was given to the trust, there were constraints on what they could spend on preconstruction costs and they are now well over that.

ID: It was the thing that would have come up verbally with the Mayor just "How's it going?" type of thing.

MH: And who --

ID: Would have scrutinised that?

MH: -- on behalf of the Mayor would have scrutinised to make sure --

ID: Nobody really.

MH: Jesus.

ID: That would be in line with all the other mayoral direction type of stuff, but equally all the Mayoral direction is doing is saying, "I would like you to do this" and then the management of that instruction should be handled by TfL.

MH: I'm going back on another thing, so there is legal advice that you should go for an OJEU, there's legal advice you should go for a design competition. That never comes to you but yet you are responsible for the decision.

ID: Hang on, because the Mayoral direction says, "I want you to do a feasibility study into the bridge" and then there's an envelope for the direction, which is you spend up to this amount. Whether that's done in a legal way with probity and the right processes and whatever, then transfers over to TfL like everything else that TfL does. So all the Mayoral direction is doing is they basically just say "Purpose of this thing, this is the context, we'd like you to do this, envelope that, end of by, signed off by --". All it is, is the Mayor articulating for TfL to do something, which is either reserved to the Mayor or in TfL's view, is ultra vires or otherwise just slightly odd for TfL to do.

I remember when we did some stuff around environment, the TfL felt, "Well, hang on, this isn't really within our remit because it's about transport but it isn't" and we had an MD on that. And it's within the Mayor's rights to do that; it's in the GLA Act, that says that you can do it. But then once TfL then goes to do that thing, that's handled through all of their normal processes.

MH: Okay, well, I'll have a look at that.

ID: Now, whether the City Hall should have some more oversight of that, or somebody should, the board potentially, that's a good point.

MH: Did you ever get involved, for example, with looking at the impact of the Garden Bridge at congestion at Waterloo?

ID: Yes, definitely. I remember talking about the business case. We had discussions around the business case but I never saw the actual bit of paper, because... which was around the broad outline-- I would have weekly meetings with the guy who ran the underground, the guy who ran the roads, planning, whatever, and so we'd just have updates on whatever was going on at that time. And I remember there was a

conversation about "what's the likely footfall on the bridge", because to what extent is this a transport case versus a non-transport case.

And kind of who cares, because it's been directed as a thing that TfL should look at so it didn't matter if it was going to be a sculpture, that would be okay, but it was trying to construct which element comes from where. I seem to recall there was something like 8 million people or 4 million people, huge numbers of people, flooding over Waterloo every morning and creating congestion at the roundabout, and I remember we talked about like what was the footfall on the South Bank because how much of that might realistically then use that bridge. And there were issues around whether it would be overly congested, too many people attracted onto it, is that going to work. But it was more of "Here's what we're looking at and here are the kind of questions that we're asking ourselves". I remember looking at the maths just to check that we weren't like either under or overegging it.

MH: It comes to 864 people journeys a day. It was being suggested in journeys, as opposed to destination journeys.

ID: I've never seen any of those numbers. I just remember looking in the round. I said, "If the South Bank is 15 million --" I just remember sense checking it. I seem to remember there was something like they said, "We're going to have 15 million a people a year on the bridge", I said, "Okay, what's that made up of?" and they said, "That many per cent coming from Waterloo and Blackfriars onto this bridge, that many people who go along the South Bank deciding to walk across the bridge" and I remember going, "Yeah, that sounds about right, yeah" and that was it. But I had no formal role in those figures but it was just-- I didn't want us going out-- if that isn't the case for the bridge we don't want to be constructing a case like that.

MH: Now, when Westminster Council gave planning permission and then said they wanted it underwritten, they wanted the maintenance and management costs underwritten by the Mayor or TfL, part of the planning approval.

ID: Yeah, I remember the caveat.

MH: You then did get involved in looking at that issue about should there, shouldn't there be approval. Did you look at the management and maintenance document that the trust had produced?

ID: No, definitely no.

MH: Well, who would have checked? when the Mayor was undertaking to underwrite, with a real knowledge that people didn't want extra public money going into it, the credibility of their plans was hugely important so who checked that?

ID: That document itself I never saw. I do remember having a very extensive discussion about what the cost was and what made up the cost because we issued the Mayoral direction saying that we would underwrite it but that effectively TfL would be the

backstop for that, or I think we split it between the GLA and the TfL. I think it's the maintenance of the bridge structure itself is underwritten by TfL, and the maintenance of the garden on top of the bridge is underwritten by the GLA, from memory that was the position.

There was a discussion between the Mayor and Peter and everybody at the weekly TfL mayoral meeting which looked at what are the maintenance costs for the bridge elements that we would expect to see, the maintenance costs for the garden broken down just to check that that made sense. Let's say a detailed table, but it wasn't a long document, it was a summary though of the position, it was pretty detailed, and then there was an explanation, "how did we come up with this number, we based it on this".

MH: Did you look at income or just cost?

ID: Then we also looked at the income side, which was the retail at the landing points, events on the bridge I think was one of the things. We had a big debate about whether that was credible, with TfL participating, and then there were going to be various fundraising events and those sorts of things, weren't there, and "That all looks fine, we're all happy with that"

MH: You were happy?

ID: Yeah, I remember there was a discussion with the Mayor about that.

MH: You didn't think it was optimistic?

ID: No, because I remember we went through in some detail all the plans of how many events and how much are you charging people per head, we looked at the retail cost per square metre or whatever it was that they wanted to charge on the south side.

MH: It is way above anything else. just to give one example, they want to charge £60,000 to hire it, one of those half a dozen occasions when they hire it out. You can get Tower Bridge, I've been to a wonderful party there for £20,000 and the bridge only takes 200 and the party I went to must have had 600 people.

ID: I'm trying to remember. From memory it said, "This is how much we're going to get in total for the year, that's going to be this many events --"

MH: Yeah, for £60,000 per event.

ID: I don't remember a £60,000 per event number; definitely not. Is that in the detailed document? You see, we didn't see that, we saw a table and I remember it said something like £1 million or £1.5 million from events on the bridge and it only said that that would be based on a certain number of events and we're going to charge that much per head of something like that. At that level I remember it looked quite, believable basically, and for each thing they would say, "We've benchmarked this

against" fill in the blank thing. So in the case of the park the tree maintenance is based on experience from parks.

MH: So you came to the view that it was quite credible?

ID: Well, on the basis of this table that we discussed in the round at the TfL Boris meeting, yeah.

MH: So 70 per cent came from philanthropic sources.

ID: yeah, the 70 per cent was based on the fact that there were a number of donors that had already said they would put -- that they would be interested in contributing to, what do you call that --

MH: An endowment.

ID: Something like that, yeah, exactly.

MH: Yeah, they've only got one donor I think.

ID: Well, anyway, at that time that was what the table said.

MH: And then the Mayor had to give his undertaking. You were reluctant it looks, again looking at the emails, for that to go into the public domain, "Do we have to put this publically?" It felt as if you were trying to hide the commitment he was giving, and he certainly was trying to hide it because he somehow forget he had given it.

ID: Well, no, we had to do the Mayoral direction. I think it was more about the language that we were going to use and exactly what were we actually committing to versus not committing to, that I remember. But that was about making sure that we were crystal clear that we were committing to these particular costs, not these other costs. There was something about the catastrophic risk of collapse of the bridge versus the ongoing maintenance of the bridge, and then on the surface of the bridge it's maintenance of the garden. There was a whole discussion about like, "We need to be very precise about which risks." We need to be clear anyway, and then on the surface of the document we need to be crystal clear about which risks we're taking on and which ones we're not taking on, and what we're guaranteeing and what we're not guaranteeing. That I remember very clearly because the MD as originally drafted was very incomprehensible basically, I couldn't understand what the heck we were guaranteeing. We wanted to make sure that he wasn't going to get -- because he had made a commitment not to guarantee the ongoing maintenance of the bridge previously long before the MD.

MH: No, that was after. "Maintenance costs will not be borne by the public sector."

ID: He'd already said that in front of the Assembly I think, so I was --

MH: He said it in the Assembly in questions in December: "I can't go further than to say I've made no such undertaking, nor do I intend." He then made an undertaking in February and then in March he said on LBC, "Maintenance cost will not be borne by the public sector".

At which time you had actually weakened the undertaking because you had taken out "money had to be secured", so all you had to do was to show that there was "a plan in place to secure it". Indeed, talking to the Trust this morning, there is no way they're even going to start trying to raise it until they've started building the bridge. If they then don't raise it, the public sector carries the can.

ID: Yeah, I definitely remember various vague--

MH: You haven't said "funding in place, is secured by the trust and is in the bank". That was one of the early drafts of the agreement and that was all taken out.

ID: Agreement between?

MH: TfL and the trust.

ID: We never saw those documents, all I know is the Mayor made a series of not coherent statements, they were not coherent with each other, statements about to what extent we were guaranteeing paying for --. There was this whole issue about the ongoing operation of the bridge, risks associated with that, maintenance and all that stuff. And he had said something like, "We won't pay for any of it".

MH: He did say that and then you weaken. There are two things (a) he was economic with the truth, what's this new term in the British dictionary?

MK: Post-truth.

MH: Post-truth; it was a post-truth.

ID: [inaudible], yeah.

MH: I think this is a post-truth-ism. But there is also that you weakened the actual -- so they have got to do much less, they've just got to show you a plan for raising the money rather than securing it-- and they don't even have to secure the endowment.

ID: -- City Hall never had a kind of commitment with the trust or anything like that.

MH: No. But TfL would have come to you and the Mayor or maybe not you and/or Mayor to weaken that commitment. Is it your view that they're going to raise the money or do you think the public sector will have to fund it?

ID: How much of this is public record?

MH: Well, I can turn this off if you'd rather.

ID: No, no, that's okay, --

MH: We can turn it off, would you rather? Do you want to pause?

ID: No, that sounds really dodgy then. No, it's very hard to see how the bridge is going to happen, let's put it that way.

MH: Because of the maintenance or because of the capital?

ID: Just the overall package of stuff, it's the maintenance, the capital, and the planning issues on the south side in particular and the politics of the south side.

MH: When were you aware of those? I don't get why you hadn't sorted Coin Street at the first thing to do.

ID: Have you ever dealt with Coin Street?

MH: I haven't met them yet.

ID: My word, they're unique.

MH: But if you knew that it was always going to be difficult?

ID: No, I didn't know anything about that because I don't deal with planning so. I didn't even know who Coin Street were. As I understand it there were very extensive, prolonged, the Garden Bridge Trust has probably had 50 meetings with them, 30, I don't know, but there's been a massive effort.

MH: The very first thing I'd have done before I committed to anything would have been to get an agreement to get Coin Street on side.

ID: I don't want to say the wrong thing but Coin Street are very unique, they have a particular way of operating. You could say they're very good negotiators but they're very difficult to negotiate with, let's put it that way. I've only seen this from afar it was the Garden Bridge Trust's job to negotiate with them. I get what you're saying which is "why would you release money to them unless that was all signed, sealed and delivered with Coin Street." But, of course, Coin Street as they're concerned, like many other players in this, would say, "Well, unless this is actually happening then we're not even having a conversation with you" which would be a perfectly reasonable point to make. So even with all of the momentum behind it, it was quite difficult to get the dialogue going with them, quite understandably because they've got a very different view about what they want to do down there. But then there has been a very fruitful discussion and they've gotten closer and closer together. I have no idea what the latest state of play is on that. But I get what you're saying.

MH: There's the Coin Street problem, there's the raising the capital, then there is -- do you think, and this is a judgement for you, that they can raise the revenue to meet the management and maintenance cost?

ID: I wouldn't be the right person to ask because I've never been involved in doing anything like that. Mervyn, as I understand it, because doesn't he do the RA as well, , he'd have a very strong view on that I'm sure. As I understand it, that's always the hardest thing to raise money for, nobody wants to give money for maintenance, people want to give money for the capital side of things. But my impression has been that Mervyn is a brilliant fundraiser so if anyone can do it Mervyn can do it. It's not impossible. If we thought it was impossible then obviously nobody would have signed the thing off in the first place. I think there's quite a reasonable argument that you could construct. Out of the capital fundraising, the planning issues, and the revenue fundraising, I put the revenue fundraising by far at the bottom of that list of the three reasons why it might not happen. It's he least of your worries.

MH: The final thing is, you've gone to work for Arup and there is a question mark over how they got this contract. You tell me, if you've been working with a civil service, if you've been a minister, I'm not sure you've got the permission to do it.

ID: This is something I find really deeply upsetting for me personally.

MH: I can understand that but I've got to ask you the question.

ID: Yeah and thank you for that. I've tried to live my life with total integrity, I think anyone who knows me or has worked with me knows that, I don't like to even be anywhere near anything dodgy ever. From what you were saying earlier, like if it's true that ministers are involved in procurement decisions I could easily see why you're saying what you're saying.

MH: The Minister signed them off, you would vet the process, you're part of the check and balance.

ID: Yeah, exactly, in which case I could totally see what you're saying, I suppose, not knowing anything about that system but I can get the logic there. Because we're not involved in those sorts of things, we might be updated about those kinds of things --

MH: But you must know, Isabel, the question marks about Arup -- again, I haven't come to a view as to whether it's right or wrong but there are certainly question marks over how did this company that came seventh out of 13 and was the only one to be rung up and had been involved before anyway, working with Heatherwick (Overspeaking)

ID: All I can say is that, TfL procures billions of pounds worth of work every year from hundreds and probably thousands of companies within which --

MH: Yeah but it's scary because should we look at another one that may be as questionable as this one. One of the reasons for me doing this is to look at process.

ID: Completely understood. So, what's the word? Like causation versus correlation, isn't it? Like, anybody coming out of the public sector in infrastructure, who goes into the private sector, will, by definition, go and work for a company that's been doing some work for that same agency in the public sector --

MH: Which is why for government there'd be a pause --

ID: -- for any kind of employment

MH: Well, in the area in which you had worked.

ID: Right. So anything in transport infrastructure. We don't have any of those rules at City Hall and as I was never involved in any of the procurement, awarding contracts and all that stuff. I could see why it's never come up in City Hall, I don't actually think at TfL there's anything stopping you the next day to go and work for somebody you've been giving work to the day before.

MH: Where has Peter Hendy gone, out of interest?

MK: Network Rail.

MH: That's right, I did know that.

ID: But there's a difference between people working in different places across the field - what's a good example, , John Armit was on our board at TfL, he's the chair of National Express, National Express is one of the biggest operators of transport services in London. Is there a conflict of interest there? Probably.

MH: It's a very incestuous world, , I found that in the PAC, I found that a lot.

ID: In my whole time at City Hall, for sure on the Garden Bridge I never met anyone at Arup ever, and never had any direct dealings with them at any point on anything. I think we had some dealings with them when I did the infrastructure plan for London later on in 2015 I think when we did that, just because they happened to win some work at City Hall to support that as one of the suppliers. Like I said, it must be on some City Hall framework or something, so I had some dealings, limited dealings with them, not in awarding the contracts but just because I was running that project so I would see them at the project meetings. I had way more dealings with loads of other people in the private sector ranging from Bombardier to any of the advisory companies to any of the infrastructure companies, banks, and I could have gone to work for any of those people and indeed I looked at those kinds of jobs as well. So just because they operate in a space that I operate in is completely different from any connection between those two things so ... what I think is disconcerting is people just saying this could be a reason why something happened so they're putting that out there as an implication --. And there aren't any grounds on which people can say that.

MH: That's why there's this period that -- of --

ID: I didn't know that and we don't have that at City Hall and I think probably, if it would get rid of these sorts of things, these sorts of the imputation of wrongdoing then I would be all for it because it's really disconcerting for me personally, but it's also -- it's bad for us corporately.

MH: What do you do for -- I don't know what you do (Overspeaking)

ID: I run their transport business worldwide so I actually don't have that much to --, because I've got so much to do globally so I don't spend that much time on London clients or anything like that so for me it's less relevant. But for somebody like Richard who's been hired in to run UKMEA Planning, it's not good for his career that people are saying there's some pall of suspicion that he's -- it's just not right, it's not right. Whatever about the procurement process itself and whether we're happy with it or not happy with it, that is just like -- for Arup that is --, they've got a £1 billion turnover every year, the idea that somehow they would waste this extraordinary amount of money on me and Richard in exchange for what for them is a very small contract is absurd, apart from anything else.

MH: And what do you think about the trust letting the contract to construct before they had secured the money or the permissions?

ID: I don't know enough about it. So does that mean they're exposed financially as well? I don't want to say anything against the trust and -- I don't know where they are on the ins and outs of all of that. I'd really rather not comment on it because I feel like it's their business. I just don't know enough about the detail of it.

MH: I wonder -- I forgot to ask them but I wonder whether they sought and got authorisation by TfL.

[To MK] Can you write and ask them, did they get any authorisations from TfL as the accepted funder when they were -- I should ask them that.

ID: Basically after -- quite early on, it must have been 2013, Boris was very clear, "The Garden Bridge Trust is running this, it's not a City Hall project, TfL has been asked to help out by putting some money in but it needs to be the Garden Bridge Trust front and centre, it's their decision making". And so we would back right off, no involvement really.

MH: Except you had to be involved because you had -- (a) you've got money out of the Treasury, and (b) And the planning permissions were all done by TfL.

ID: No, sure, in terms of the work that TfL -- we had committed for TfL to put in some money and support them in the following ways, but in terms of the actual running of the trust or what the Garden Bridge was doing overall as a business and who they

were talking to and how they wanted to handle Westminster and Lambeth and handle their sponsorship arrangements and handle Treasury --

MH: No, but the planning applications would come through TfL.

ID: Yeah, TfL doing the technical work to support the planning application is different from us running the trust from behind the scenes or something like that.

MH: Yeah, but you got pretty involved.

ID: City Hall was not very involved at all. We were involved in the TfL's work supporting the trust and the Mayor was very explicit because it wasn't going to do the trust any good either if it was seen as like Boris's project. The whole idea was this is a non-profit that is raising money for a wonderful thing that is going to be built in the middle of London, that was the whole premise, and that the Mayor is now, "Let this little ship sail with a little bit of support and off it goes". That was the whole way this was going to work, and so my point is just that we just weren't into the ins and outs of what they were doing on a weekly, monthly, whatever basis, except to the extent that we needed to know in terms of the TfL's bit of it.

MH: Well you had to assure yourselves of that.

ID: Yeah, and I think that link didn't happen back to City Hall and I don't know to the extent to which that assurance was happening with TfL. I'm sure it was but I just don't know enough about it -- but the triangle doesn't really work because what should have happened --.

MH: I think my final, final thing on this is it's just the relationship between you and TfL. So there you are; you're the person charged by the Mayor to implement his transport policies and yet you make this constant distinction between City Hall and TfL. I don't understand it.

ID: No, I totally get it. I don't understand the ins and outs of how government works, for example, but it sounds like it's quite different. how would I describe this, we are not in the chain of command of the procedures within TfL I guess is the way I would describe it. So, what would be an example? when I did all the tube performance work in 2011 when I came into the transport job, so this was like we set a target, the tube performance is going to improve by 30 per cent, I had probably daily discussions with Mike Brown and others. But I wasn't involved in any of the memos to the organisation, the paperwork, the hiring and firing, how are we going to construct this team, all that stuff.

MH: No, no, no, I can see that. i'm trying to think, , the very helpful role you've played on the A13, if we'd left it to TfL, , they'd never have done anything because it was far too mad a project for them.

- ID: Yeah, and actually Richard played a really key role in getting that project up and running, yeah.
- MH: they thought that it was completely bonkers. So you did have a powerful role there in saying to them, "Look, I really want to do this, I want you to do a business case" we talked about the terms of the business case, we talked about charging, we talked about getting a private sector partner, we talked about land values, we talked about all sorts of details and, therefore, transposing that into Garden Bridge, which was high profile for the Mayor. The A13 wouldn't have happened but for you, Isabel.
- ID: I talk about this project wherever I go and talk I'm like, "And here's an amazing project that we're doing in East London", just in the hopes that eventually we're going to build it.
- MH: In a way Garden Bridge, likewise, wasn't your idea, it was the Mayor's little baby, but it wouldn't have happened; TfL wouldn't have done it. I've seen so many things and TfL saying, "We haven't got the money for this".
- ID: Yeah "What is this crazy thing?" Yeah, so if you look at the A13 for example, like I would never have like seen the detailed business case that went to Treasury, but at the same time it was like, "Okay, we know we need to do something about this".
- MH: It was a terrible business case. I've seen other business cases, this is a terrible one, that's why I think you should have seen it.
- ID: The Garden Bridge one or the A13 one?
- MH: The TfL one, the one on Garden Bridge you think, "Oh, what a load of --"
- ID: Oh really, is it really that bad? Oh my gosh, I must check it out, yeah.
- MH: It's not very convincing. I wouldn't have been convinced by it. On any ground.
- ID: That's disconcerting. That's probably --
- MH: Which is why it's fine to say, "I want to do it anyway" You could have done, you could have just said, "I want to do this, it's my idea, it's a good idea". Which is perfectly legitimate and might be very beautiful.
- ID: Yeah, the A13 stuff came out of this road strategy that we did in 2012 and then we said we're going to do all of these different things, there were like nine themes and then there was something about getting more road tunnels in London and the A13 came out of a big piece of work that was done around that about where could we stick stuff underground and then five projects came out of that. So there was this big, strategic campaign to do something on the roads over the course of three or four years. And I guess, like, the Garden Bridge is so different to that because it was this very left-field; something that popped out of the Mayor's head --

MH: It's a bit like the cable car. But if you look at the cable car business case it's quite a -- it's a good --

ID: Is it? I think there's definitely a real -- whereas the tube performance work I did, or the growth fund where we were trying to get more housing to happen. These were all like big, multi-year, thematic initiatives where I had a very broad-based engagement with TfL, where there was a strategic buy in. There was strategic argument about why we were doing this and a whole programme of activity, which is quite different from the cable car type example or the Garden Bridge or whatever. Basically things that I was less supportive of, I would spend less of my own time on, basically. As ever with your boss, you're like, "That's a really brilliant idea and I'm going to put my heart and soul into it". So cycling, for example; the Mayor really wanted to create a step change in London on cycling. That was something I felt was wonderful - really important - and save people's lives, "Right, okay, I'm going to, like, just throw myself into this with great passion".

Whereas something like the cable car or the Garden Bridge or other things, he's my boss, this is what he's passionate about and enthusiastic about and he wants to make a case for but it was something I was personally less enthused about and so there wasn't a requirement for me to spend a lot of my time on it so it was just like do the minimum to not be letting him down, but, equally, it's not something I want to spend my time on because there's road safety and cycling and pollution and all these other things.

One of the reasons I can't remember some of this stuff is because I was doing so many things across a really huge portfolio, virtually all of which I was more passionate about than this project, so -- but I don't want to be disloyal to Boris but I was like, "Okay, he says he wants to do something like this so we'll make sure we do something like this" but it wasn't something that I wanted to spend my time on, particularly. So I guess if it seems a bit sort of patchy, that was one reason why.

MH: Because I think you probably did look at the business case of the A13, didn't you?

ID: No, no, I've seen a one page summary of it. I looked at a table which basically --

MH: If there was a summary on the Garden Bridge would you have looked at that?

ID: Yes, I'm sure I would have done, if it had been stuck under my nose, put it that way.

MH: You wouldn't have thought, "I don't think this is very convincing"?

ID: If I'd been asked to look at it and looked at it and I didn't think it was very convincing I would certainly have said so, not least because that's not going to do anybody any good. Even if I'm on my do minimum, Boris said he wanted to do this so I'll do the minimum to make sure it happens well, it's not helping him if it doesn't have the right case. But, I never saw that. You're making me feel like it's all very -- it's all terribly

slipshod actually, City Hall as a general proposition. Yeah, it's interesting, there's a lot of lack of clarity I think, thinking about this conversation between Tfl and City Hall, about what comes to the Mayor. Basically nothing needs to come to the Mayor. The Mayor in his role as Mayor, nothing needs to come back to him really. We would have these weekly meetings with Tfl, they'd present a set of things, I would always try and shape the agenda and make sure we had the right stuff on there and if there were things coming up out it was largely at Tfl's discretion what they would bring forward.

MH: They certainly didn't bring the Garden Bridge up at the Board, did they, very often?

ID: It's very clear what the board's role is. The Mayor chairs the board but that's the Mayor as chair of the board, not the Mayor as City Hall. And you could argue that there needs to be more consistent reporting on the Mayoral directions but then there's also a broader question around, "Should the Mayor, as Mayor, have a more structured relationship with Tfl?" is an interesting question. Which, in the ministerial mode, he would but it's not created as a ministerial-type post but maybe it should be more in that way or even just highlighting, I guess, that that is different from central government and is that a good thing or is that a bad thing?

MH: What the checks are, what are the checks?

ID: Well, particularly with these kinds of projects, right, and then what happens is that actually they get, sometimes they get unfairly, away with more than they should, these kinds of projects, and then sometimes they get slammed more than they should. Is it a bad thing that if you could have a "vanity project" which then delivers something good for society? No but what you don't want is unchecked vanity projects that are totally pointless.

MH: And you've always got to remember it's public money.

ID: Yeah so how do you create a set of processes around these types of projects, within City Hall, that's going to create more clarity. People don't have to agree with it but at least "When we have something like the cable car, here's what we do", even just having to go to the Assembly, as a formal regular update or something like that; I don't know. It's true because it doesn't do anybody any good - it's not doing the Garden Bridge any good, it doesn't do the cable car any good, it then ends up being party political, which isn't helpful either.

MH: I don't think this is party political.

ID: No, I'm just saying -- but these kinds of projects often become party political.

MH: I can see that.

ID: Yeah.

MH: What haven't I covered, that you wanted to cover?

ID: I think that's fine. I just wanted to apologise for not knowing the ins and outs of the process and ... it's just such a busy time at City Hall and I had small children at the same time so I now, like, try and like remember anything --