

# FIRST LOOK



The bridge at Poplar Reach will join a dead end path with a former gasworks' site and residential estates.

## Connectivity underpins 5th Studio's Lea Valley vision

5th Studio has unveiled plans for a "Fatwalk" to connect the Olympic Park with the Thames, the primary project in realising the Lea River Park.

"It has taken 70 years for these first steps to be achieved," said practice director Tom Holbrook, referring to Patrick Abercrombie's original ambition to connect the Green Belt to the Thames, set out in the 1944 London Plan.

The first phase, to be completed by May 2012, comprises a strategic series of links and stitches to increase access to the river and join up a fractured route of dead-ends and off-limits industrial edges.

"It's all about facilitating access to this amazing landscape," said Holbrook, "making it central rather than peripheral."

The majority of the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation's £28 million budget for the project has gone towards land assembly, as well as three major infrastructural interventions. The first is a connector that hangs beneath the A13 bridge, delicately weaving through the Victorian



Twelvrees Bridge will contain a lift and staircase and link Three Mills with the eastern bank.

iron structure to complete the riverside walk.

Next is a major new river crossing at Poplar Reach to connect the dead end of an existing path with a former gasworks site and the residential estates of Poplar. "These are the vanguard top-down infrastructural moves that will enable further, bottom-up projects to happen on these riverside sites," said Holbrook.

A third intervention sees a tower structure containing a lift and staircase — as well as nesting space for swifts — at Bromley-by-Bow, enabling a connection between Three Mills and the eastern riverside via Twelvrees Bridge.

### LEA RIVER PARK



View of the riverside walk at the A13 bridge.



The connector through the ironwork beneath the A13 bridge.