

## Executive Summary

The River Thames lies at the heart of London and touches the lives of most people in the capital - whether as a focus of economic activity; a place where people live, work or spend their leisure time; a transport artery; a natural environment and habitat for wildlife; a leisure and recreation resource or simply as a source of inspiration and pride.

It has a vital contribution to make to the city's future and its status as a World City. But it remains an underused and in some places, a neglected asset, too often seen as a barrier rather than as a positive, unifying element.

The Thames Strategy - Kew to Chelsea was commissioned in 1999 by a steering committee that includes the West London River Group, Greater London Authority (formerly Government Office for London and London Planning Advisory Committee), Environment Agency, English Heritage, English Nature, Port of London Authority and riparian boroughs. The Steering Committee shares a common belief that it is time to rediscover the Thames, to reconnect it to the rest of the city, improve the riverside environment, promote high quality urban design and bring the River Thames back to life.

The Strategy covers the area between Kew and Chelsea and reflecting the rich diversity of this stretch of the river, from the historic waterfront of Strand-on-the-Green to the industrial riverside of Nine Elms, promotes a long term vision. It seeks to

provide the basis for a more holistic approach to the many complex and interrelated issues relating to its planning, management and use - issues which require the involvement and commitment of the public, private and voluntary sectors and local communities in active partnerships.

It is also a response to the lack of comprehensive guidance recognising the distinct characteristics of individual stretches of the River Thames, the conflicting pressures for change and the potential to protect and enhance the value of the River for all Londoners. It has been devised with the requirements and objectives set out in the Strategic Planning Guidance for the River Thames (RPG3B/9B) in mind and is intended to provide the basis for managing long term change. Additionally, the Strategy addresses the need for an effective delivery mechanism and co-ordination between a

number of key organisations with responsibilities and interests in the Kew to Chelsea stretch of the river.

Community participation has been central to the development of the Strategy and has involved discussions with numerous organisations with responsibilities and interests in the study area and the active involvement of representatives of local groups, organisations and local schools, in addition to public exhibitions and open days.

## Policy Recommendations

### The River Channel

- Encourage riparian owners and riverside developers to improve appearance and ecological value of river walls



*Access to the foreshore Duke's Meadow*

- Consider potential for retired defences
- Review public access to foreshore. Clarify legal position and responsibilities for public safety
- Consistent safety approach based on RoSPA guidance
- Protect historic steps, slipways, hards and drawdocks
- Encourage new pontoons and jetties
- Upgrade/encourage provision of riverside facilities
- Rediscover and protect "lost rivers" feeding the Thames



*Battersea Bridge built by Sir Joseph Bazalgette in the late 1880's*

- Prevent encroachment into river except for improvement of river-related recreational or river transport facilities
- Prepare river impact statements for new waterfront development schemes and river infrastructure

### **Heritage and Conservation**

- One Thames:One Policy approach to management, identification and protection of archaeological resource
- Designate foreshore as Archaeological Priority Area
- Appoint Thames Strategy Archaeological Officer
- Review and update UDPs to reflect the river's industrial significance. Identify industrial heritage sites
- Adopt consistent approach to development of Conservation Area profiles and the funding of enhancements
- Restore integrity of buildings in historic settings
- Conserve and restore historic parks and gardens ; reinstate visual and physical connections to the river
- Identify/develop key cultural associations of people, events, places. Connect and interpret historic places
- Promote traffic management and street scene improvements in riverside Conservation Areas



*Important local view:  
Hammersmith Mall from opposite bank*

### **Views and Landmarks**

- Identify important local views and prospects on UDP maps. Consult on development proposals within viewing cones
- Road/railway bridge improvement to include illumination, painting, facilities for pedestrians/ cyclists
- Redevelopment to include restoration of visually important external features of industrial landmarks
- Reach character, important local views/ prospects/local landmarks to inform siting of landmark buildings
- Protect setting, skyline and backdrop of historical waterfronts from adverse impact of new development
- Prepare co-ordinated lighting strategy

### **Landscape and Open Space**

- Prepare open space strategies and integrated land management plans for Metropolitan Open Land (MOL)
- Establish comprehensive project areas eg Duke's Meadow, to improve appearance and use of MOL
- Establish more effective controls on covered sports facilities and floodlighting on riverside MOL. Retain playing fields/sports pitches as open recreational land
- Protect, enhance, manage green chains and corridors



*Wooded Tow Path, Barnes*

- Work with communities to restore/enhance public riverside parks and gardens. Maintain environmental quality and nature conservation interest of private riverside gardens and grounds

- Protect wooded Tow Path to provide diversity of age and structure. Upgrade /enhance riverside walkways
- Recognise importance of cemeteries as open breaks in urban fabric . Protect and look at ways to create allotments within river corridor

### **Biodiversity**

- Identify and target key polluting discharges and promote sustainable urban drainage systems
- Recognise and protect tidal Thames as a fishery
- Develop strategies for habitat protection, management, restoration and expansion based on "Tidal Thames Habitat Action Plan"
- Protect and manage Oliver's Island and Chiswick Eyot
- Tree planting programme before mature trees die
- Research alien species and manage effects/ eradicate
- Promote nature conservation interests, including measures to make sports pitches attractive to wildlife
- Environmental education programme targeting user groups, those responsible for riverside development sites, schools and general public. Encourage involvement in conservation projects



*Chiswick Eyot and foreshore at Chiswick*

### **Recreation and Tourism**

- Encourage rowing, sailing and canoeing
- Protect existing riverside facilities and provide well-equipped visitor moorings close to visitor attractions
- Encourage passenger boats to attract wider public and promote tourist potential of the river
- Encourage view of Thames as shared resource and need for tolerance of others
- Protect existing rights of way, safeguard Thames Path National Trail. Improve access to and along the river
- Encourage riverside cycling, with the aim of creating traffic-free cycle routes, segregated from pedestrians
- Protect historic water fronts as focus of activity/heritage. Promote arts, culture and entertainment



*University Boat Race 1961*

- Promote festivals and events to realise tourist potential and focus for waterside education/ community projects
- Promote sustainable "green" recreation and tourism
- Co-ordinate information and publicity material
- Develop a co-ordinated recreation and visitor strategy

#### **Movement**

- Improve public transport interchanges. Enhance existing facilities, security and passenger information
- Improve pedestrian/cycle links
- Investigate new river crossings for pedestrians/ cyclists
- Improve access to river and require high quality public right of way as part of riverside development

- Ensure accessibility to disabled people
- Retain/upgrade existing piers and encourage new piers at focal points of activity subject to navigation impact
- Increase regular river passenger travel. Introduce new services integrated with land-based public transport
- Integrate land/river services - fares/ticketing/ information
- Encourage river transport of spoil and building materials
- Retain freight handling facilities and safeguard wharves to encourage freight movement by river
- Retain existing riverside facilities eg boat building sheds, marine services, slipways and docks

#### **Shaping Development**

- Prepare overall vision, including development sites/areas in transition, design framework and link creation

- Adopt design guidelines for riverside development as supplementary planning guidance
- Encourage developers to undertake detailed character assessment and contextual analysis
- Establish palette of preferred built forms and materials
- Identify development and activity hubs
- Promote mixed-use and sustainable development
- Retain, replace and provide river-related facilities
- Prepare master plans for new open spaces
- Consider proposals for high buildings in relation to local context, environmental impact, quality of design, regeneration and sustainable objectives
- Encourage architectural competition
- Encourage legal agreements from developers for riverside treatment, long term maintenance and new facilities



*Cheyne Walk*

## Local Opportunities



*Chiswick Quay, formerly Cubitt's Basin*

### Kew Riverside

- Manage Tow Path and vegetation
- Restore Kew Railway Bridge
- Improve passenger facilities at Kew Pier
- Restore Westerley Ware Gardens
- Public benefits from riverside development

### Strand on the Green

- Conserve historic waterfront
- Restore river structures
- Repair and restore river wall
- Improve links to adjoining areas
- Olivers Island Management Plan

### Mortlake

- Environmental improvements - eg restore Tow Path and historic passages
- Enhance Jubilee Gardens
- Improve access to the river
- Restore Small Profits Dock

### Barnes Terrace

- Traffic management and public realm improvements
- Replace flood defence wall
- Restore Barnes Railway Bridge and new cycleway
- Future of police station

### Duke's Meadow

- Management and landscape plan
- Reconcile recreation, conservation and leisure roles



*The White Hart PH, and recent riverside development, Mortlake*



*Lower Mall, Hammersmith*

- Riverbank improvements eg retired defences and eradication of Japanese knotweed
- Use Chiswick Boathouse as focus for watersports
- Protect Duke's Hollow nature reserve
- Improve link to Chiswick Pier House

### Chiswick and Hammersmith Malls

- Conserve and restore riverside mansions and terraces
- Public realm improvements
- Conserve Chiswick Eyot
- Increase use of Chiswick Pier
- Enhance Dove Pier
- Potential for Chiswick - Barnes ferry
- Rediscover lost rivers
- River wall improvements
- Improved signage



*The Wetland Centre today*

### Lonsdale Road

- Manage the Leg of Mutton reservoir
- Protect the rural nature of the river bank and Tow Path
- Manage riverbank vegetation
- St Paul's School landscape plan
- Restore cobbled revetments

### Barn Elms

- Improve connections between Wetland Centre and river
- Create "Thames Discovery Centre"
- Green chain open space link to Richmond Park
- Enhance recreational facilities
- Potential for seasonal ferry
- Enhance Queen Elizabeth Walk
- Protect industrial archaeology
- Tree planting and enhancement of Tow Path

### Fulham Reach

- Enhance riverside walkway
- Riverside walk - improve access and create missing sections
- Restore Crabtree Drawdock and adjacent areas
- Open space improvements
- Interpret industrial archaeology

### Fulham Palace

- Fulham Palace conservation and management plan
- Palace and grounds as a heritage and visitor attraction
- Renewal of the mature trees along the riverside
- Further improvements at Bishops Park
- Protect important views
- Improve lighting and signage
- Public realm and access improvements



*Putney Pier*

### Putney Embankment

- Explore archaeological potential of foreshore
- Restore Putney Railway Bridge
- Improve pedestrian and cycle links
- Extend river walk under Putney Bridge
- Enhance Putney Hard for river sports
- Discovery/Education Centre at Ashlone Wharf
- Increase use of Putney Pier



*Mid-stream moorings off Wandsworth Park*

### Wandsworth Riverside

- Create activity hubs
- Wandle Delta riverbank improvements
- Wandle Promenade
- Public open space at Feathers Wharf
- Rejuvenate Wandsworth Park
- Improve links to surrounding area and public transport
- Reopen Battersea High Street Station

### **Hurlingham and Sands End**

- Safeguard wharves
- Enhance Hurlingham Park
- Upgrade river walk; improve links; missing section
- Restore Broomhouse Drawdock
- Protect archaeology

### **Chelsea Harbour and Chelsea Creek**

- Extend river walk over creek/under railway bridge
- Pedestrian link across Battersea Railway Bridge
- Chelsea Harbour/Imperial Wharf as leisure/activity hub
- Increase use of the existing pier/river services
- Enhance Chelsea Creek environmental/heritage value



*Worlds End*

- Maximise public benefits from new development
- New station and public transport improvements

### **Chelsea Embankment**

- Conserve historic townscape
- Restore Cremorne Gardens and street trees
- Increase use of Cadogan Pier
- Protect views from bridges
- Reinterpret Ranelagh Gardens and Royal Hospital

### **Battersea Riverside and Park**

- Integrate public spaces
- Restore and enhance Battersea Park
- Potential for re-use of existing pier
- Connect to future leisure/transport facilities at Battersea Power Station
- Enhance river walk
- Improve interpretation facilities
- Restore Ransomes Dock

### **Nine Elms**

- Redevelopment of Battersea Power Station as leisure and regeneration hub
- Better links with surrounding area, eg Battersea Park and public transport
- Safeguard wharves



*Battersea Power Station*

- Potential for new cross-river pedestrian link
- New railway station and public transport improvements
- New riverside walk

### **The Way Forward**

The preparation of this Strategy is seen as a first step in working to provide for a better long term future for the River Thames between Kew and Chelsea and for promoting greater public use and enjoyment of the River. The Strategy will continue to evolve over time in response to new challenges and opportunities. Key decisions will need to be made about the delivery and management of the Strategy and how this will be funded and implemented. An Action Plan will be prepared with a programme of priorities and targets for delivery of the Strategy.

## Delivery and Management

The Strategy has already been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by the London Boroughs of Hammersmith & Fulham, Hounslow and Richmond-upon-Thames; this should ensure that the Strategy is given consideration in planning applications and decisions that affect the Strategy area. It is envisaged that the Strategy policy recommendations will also be considered in future reviews of the riparian boroughs' Unitary Development Plans to establish a more consistent and coherent approach to planning policies relating to the River and the consideration of development proposals.



*Chiswick Eyot with Chiswick Mall behind*

The Strategy also identifies a number of possible management structures for the implementation of the Strategy:

- Single entity implementation (individual stakeholders undertake projects within their defined area of responsibility on a project by project basis)

- Co-ordinate actions through existing initiatives and partnerships (for example other Thames partnerships)
- Establish a new partnership (the Cross-River Partnership and Thames Landscape Strategy-Hampton to Kew are examples of partnerships set up to address river-related issues and provide useful models)
- Establish a strategic partnership covering the whole of the Thames within London (potential for this clearer when the London Plan is published)

The selection of a Strategy management structure will be subject to detailed discussion between the Steering Committee and others.

## Consultation

This Strategy has already undergone a tremendous amount of public consultation. It is recognised that the Strategy will continue to evolve over the years, and further public consultation will be essential, particularly in project development.

## Community Involvement

The Strategy aims to promote greater community use and involvement in the river. Indeed there are a number of opportunities to work towards this:

- Creation of focal points of community activity
- Extended programme of community activities
- Involvement of local community trusts, organisations and individuals in development

and implementation of specific projects detailed in the Strategy

- Involvement of community at early stage in preparation of development proposals
- Establishment of a community organisation database
- Dedicated website



*Strand on the Green*

## Education

The Strategy recognises the need to develop the River as an educational resource, to introduce children and adults to the river and to provide training for decision-makers. The Strategy seeks to build on existing initiatives in the study area and sets out proposals including:

- Establishment of an education working group
- Website link to schools and the community
- Further development of educational resources

- New consultation approaches, e.g. Enquiry by Design
- Training for developers, decision makers and planners
- Establishment of local discovery centres



*Foreshore at Duke's Meadow*

### **Funding**

Funding will be required to maintain the day-to-day running of the Strategy and will also be required for specific project implementation. The fundraising will need to be carefully considered, co-ordinated and targeted. It is intended that the Strategy will draw funding from a range of potential sources, including:

- National, Regional and local Agencies/ Authorities
- Riparian boroughs
- Regeneration programmes
- Lottery Funding

- Developer contributions
- Sponsorship
- Fundraising

The Steering Committee has already submitted funding applications for the early stages of Strategy implementation and is working hard to identify and secure further funds.

### **The Action Plan**

The next step is to prepare an Action Plan that will prioritise and set targets for the implementation of the Strategy. The Action Plan will be reviewed regularly but initially will include:

- Prioritisation of strategic and local projects for development and implementation
- Finance review, identification of funding opportunities, funding application submissions
- Confirmation of consultation procedures



*Battersea Riverside*

## Local and Strategic Issues

