

River Thames Scheme

Project update

November 2022

River Thames
Scheme



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WELCOME

Welcome to the River Thames Scheme newsletter

We're entering an exciting phase of the River Thames Scheme project with a 6 week consultation period running between 8 November and 20 December. We're really looking forward to getting back out into communities to talk to you face-to-face about the scheme and hear your thoughts. This is something we've missed over the last couple of years but the team have been working hard behind the scenes to ensure the design of the scheme delivers the environmental and quality of life benefits we'd all like to see.

The River Thames Scheme covers an area from Egham to Teddington and aims to create healthier, more sustainable and more resilient communities. The Scheme will reduce the risk of flooding to thousands of homes, businesses and vital infrastructure. It will improve access to green open spaces with recreational facilities, connect people with wildlife, and provide sustainable travel connections to link communities together.

We'll deliver these improvements by creating new public green spaces along the river, which will provide opportunities for leisure activities. We will create new footpaths and cycleways to encourage active travel. We will create high quality habitats and increase biodiversity. This will include new wetlands along the river

or the new channel sections which will attract a wide range of fish, birds and other wildlife, and we'll make improvements to grassland and vegetation which will increase the variety of plants and animals. The Scheme will support sustainable and inclusive economic growth. Riverside businesses and the local economy will receive a boost as more people come to, and use, the river and surrounding area.

We previously consulted on the Scheme proposals in 2016 and the feedback we received helped inform our decisions about the different options and the Scheme design has now evolved. We will be creating a new river channel in two sections, through the boroughs of Runnymede and Spelthorne in Surrey. In addition, our plans include improvements to the weirs at Sunbury, Molesey and Teddington, and lowering the riverbed downstream of the Desborough Cut. The new channel will fit into the landscape and look like a river that's been there for years.

The large scale of the River Thames Scheme means it is treated as a project of national significance. Projects that are determined to be of national significance need to go through a special planning process called a Development Consent Order



(DCO). This is because of their scope, size and complexity, as well as their benefits to the country.

We are now consulting with a diverse range of people to gather feedback about the revised design proposal. We want the areas that we are creating around the River Thames Scheme to offer the best mix of benefits for our communities. We want to hear your views on what you would most like to see in the new, green open spaces, as well as your thoughts about wildlife and their habitats in the area, and how you would like to get involved as we develop our plans. We will use all the information and comments we receive to help further develop the Scheme.

Our current consultation began on 8 November and will run for 6 weeks, with a further consultation planned for 2023. After our consultations, we will finalise the plans for the scheme and submit them to the Planning Inspectorate. They will consider our application and make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs who has the final decision on whether a DCO should be given to the Scheme.

I hope you find this newsletter useful. If you have further questions about the River Thames Scheme, please do get in touch or come along to one of our upcoming public engagement events. You can find more information about events and how to contact us below.



Jeanne Capey
Project Director



Ongoing survey works

We have carried out a significant amount of ecological and environmental surveys over the last few years and these have helped inform the design of scheme. They help us develop measures to avoid or reduce any negative impacts but also increase the beneficial effects of the scheme. We collect information about the wildlife using the lakes along the flood channel corridor, as well as information about groundwater and water quality. Our recent surveys have included bats, overwintering birds, invertebrates, fish and macrophytes (plants living in water) and benthic macro-invertebrates (animals that live in rivers or lakes).

We also carry out surveys to establish the presence of any invasive non-native species such as Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam. Where possible, we have also been carrying out treatment and removal of invasive non-native species and we're currently into our third annual cycle of treating Japanese Knotweed across the project area.

In addition, we are doing some sampling of the riverbed and lakes to check for possible contaminated sediment. This sampling will help us decide what monitoring methods may be required during works and whether we could reuse the soil we take from the riverbed or whether we need to dispose of it, after treatment, to landfill.

The sampling area runs from Egham Hythe to Teddington Lock and includes various waterbodies and watercourses surrounding the River Thames, as well as portions of the river itself. We mostly use vibrocore sampling and cable percussion drilling from a floating platform. We also use grab sampling, hand dug pits and laboratory testing for geo-environmental purposes.

We are working closely with the Environment Agency's Waterways team to keep river users and local communities well informed and to avoid any disruption to navigation on the River Thames.

Cable
percussion rig on
a pontoon at
Walton on Thames



Businesses – register to be informed about the River Thames Scheme

Whether you're a major contractor, a local firm or a small to medium-sized enterprise (SME), if you can help deliver the River Thames Scheme we'd like to hear from you.

Phase 1 of the market engagement process enabled us to inform prospective tier 1 contracting organisations about our procurement strategy for the construction phase. By seeking valuable feedback for our contracting approach we have been able to incorporate the comments from the contracting community into our procurement strategy.

Tier 2 contractors and local SMEs also have an important role to play, both in the market engagement process and the supply chain.

Phase 2 of the market engagement is focusing on these enterprises – giving them the opportunity to share information, provide feedback on our proposals and help us understand where they can contribute and add value. A Prior Information Notice is available on the Government's Find a Tender site.

We will be sharing more Phase 2 updates and documents via Defra's eSourcing portal Bravo. It's important local businesses and SMEs register on the site if they want to be part of the market engagement process and help shape the Scheme.



There's more about the River Thames Scheme on our website. You can also email the market engagement team with any questions at
RTS_Commercial@environment-agency.gov.uk

Please note the RTS will not be carrying out the procurement of tier 2 services. This will be the role of the tier 1 construction partner.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

River Thames Scheme team at recent community events

In advance of the public engagement events we're planning for later this year, we have been out and about at some local community events, including the Water Safety Day in Walton on Thames and the Chertsey Agricultural Fair. We really enjoyed being back out talking to members of the public about the scheme and answering their questions. If you see us at any local events, please do come and say hello and find out more about the scheme.

Most recently, some of our team attended St John's annual Eco Church event to raise awareness of the scheme with the local community and publicise the public consultation taking place in November. We were delighted in the amount of interest and questions received during the afternoon and are looking forward to meeting the community again at our consultation events later this autumn.



Some of the River Thames Scheme team at St John's annual Eco Church event

Have your say

We are progressing the design of the scheme and want to hear your views. There will be lots of opportunities to talk to us. We will be holding events in nearby communities as well as a series of webinars to tell you more about the scheme. We will be holding pop-up events in various locations including lock sites, local markets and shopping centres. You can find details of these on our website at

www.riverthamesscheme.org.uk/about/news/come-and-meet-the-team

Our scheduled consultation events are below:

- 08 November, 1pm to 7pm, The Hythe Centre, Staines-upon-Thames
- 16 November, 1pm to 7pm, Hazelwood Centre, Sunbury-on-Thames
- 19 November, 12pm to 6pm, The Molesey Centre for the Community, West Molesey
- 22 November, 1pm to 7pm, The Easter Centre, Egham
- 23 November, 1pm to 7pm, St John's Parish Church, Walton-on-Thames
- 25 November, 1pm to 7pm, Wraysbury Village Hall, Wraysbury
- 26 November, 10am to 4pm, Richard Mayo Centre, Kingston upon Thames
- 29 November, 1pm to 7pm, Peter and Paul Centre, Teddington
- 03 December, 10am to 4pm, Shepperton Village Hall, Shepperton
- 07 December, 1pm to 7pm, St Peter's Church, Chertsey

We will be holding online webinars on Microsoft Teams as follows:

- Thursday 10 November 2022, 6pm to 7.30pm
- Saturday 12 November 2022, 10am to 11.30am
- Thursday 24 November 2022, 6pm to 7.30pm
- Monday 28 November 2022, 1pm to 2.30pm

You can book a place on one of our webinars or request further information by emailing
RTS@environment-agency.gov.uk

Visit our website



We are on social media!

Follow us on social media for more frequent updates on the scheme:

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River Thames Scheme @ThamesScheme · Sep 29

This Autumn the River Thames Scheme is doing some sediment sampling to help guide our designs. We are currently at Walton Bridge and will be spotted at a number of locations along the river in the coming months. To find out what we're up to, go to: orlo.uk/X845h

