

Terms of Reference

Strategy Group - Your Tidal Thames Pilot Catchment Planning

Name of the group: Strategy Group – Your Tidal Thames Pilot Catchment Planning

Background to the initiative: A pilot plan for the tidal Thames Catchment will be developed through a process of collaborative working that will involve individuals, groups and organisations who have an interest in the water environment. The overall process will be managed and coordinated by **Thames21 (T21)** working jointly with **Thames Estuary Partnership (TEP)** through a **Project Team (PT)** who in turn will be guided by a broad based **Strategy Group (SG)** of key stakeholders.

Overview of the Strategy Group: The Strategy Group is an invited panel of people, representing groups and organisations that have a direct relationship with tidal Thames catchment issues. They will be knowledgeable in their field and be able to offer advice, resources (such as data, information, access to other groups) and practical support to the initiative. They are also likely to include organisations who may play a big part in the planning and delivery of the final Catchment Plan and so are key partners to the initiative. The Strategy Group is not a decision making forum, its role is to support, refine and improve the process as it develops. The PT will however pay close attention to the SG's suggestions and recommendations and not without reason challenge its work. PT representatives will also sit on this group, in an unpaid and paid role to bring the PT's own knowledge and experience to the group.

Aims of the Strategy Group:

- To draw on their own experience, resources and constituencies to provide guidance, support, information, data and advice to the initiative (PT-the coordinating team) to make sure the right people are consulted, in the right way about the right issues and have the most up to date information available.
- To review the plan at various stages in its development and make comments and suggestions.
- To support the final working version of the plan before it is submitted to DEFRA on 22nd Dec 2012 for their comments. The intention of the PT is to seek further funding for 2013 onwards to continue adding to and refining the working catchment plan. Due to the size of the tidal area covered, it is regarded as a living document which constantly reflects change and emerging information on the issues and opportunities for improvement in WFD standards.

Membership: Membership of the SG will be by invitation from the Project Team. The PT will aim to bring together a broad cross section of key stakeholders to the initiative to maximise different areas of knowledge, influence and access to different sectors that the project needs to reach. The PT will welcome suggestions for membership but the decision of the PT will be final. The electronic version of the draft catchment plan is however intended to be more widely circulated by all members if they wish, to aid constructive additions and participation. Contributions to the plan will be sought from as wide a range of stakeholders as possible, although it is accepted that the sheer scale and range of stakeholders in the catchment area means that it will not be possible to engage all.

The selection criteria used by the PT in inviting members and the attributes that Strategy Group members will have are as follows:

- Be knowledgeable about the wider sector that they are representing. Members should be willing to actively speak about the interests of their stakeholder sector in discussions and engage positively in the process.
- Have awareness/understanding of other sectors engaged in the process.
- Be respected and trusted by their sector to represent their views at meetings and engage wider if wish to.
- Be able to commit time to attend a limited number of meetings. A deputy may be nominated but it is the responsibility of the SG member to fully brief the deputy on progress prior to any meeting attended. Deputies must be identified and operate within these terms of reference.
- Be able to represent and liaise with their stakeholder sector outside the meetings to help encourage others views and concerns are raised. Members shall try to represent the views of their stakeholder sector as a whole but are not expected to be solely responsible in their comments and advice but to help where possible., because it will not be possible to have every individual stakeholder on the SG.

Operation of Meetings: The expectations and commitments for the effective running of meetings.

- Members must be willing to listen, understand, communicate and respect other members.
- To encourage free expression in meetings, participants can request that their views are not attributed. The meeting record will not normally attribute comments unless requested in a specific instance, e.g. where agreed and necessary for clarity in the record.
- Meetings will take place on June 27th 2012 and on one or 2 occasions following that date, depending on need .As much work as possible will be done to use Strategy Group member's time efficiently by circulating a draft plan for comment by email as the wider participants entries are collated and added.
- Meetings will be timetabled and located as fully as possible with the agreement of members and appropriate notice will be given.
- Members are expected to have read papers circulated and be appropriately prepared. This will be complemented by meeting materials being circulated with appropriate time for reading and preparing.
- All present will contribute as fully and openly as possible (while respecting, for example, commercial confidentiality).
- Decisions will be reached by consensus. When they arise, insurmountable differences of view will be clarified and recorded (including attribution where necessary).
- Full notes will be made from each meeting and circulated to all participants (and any sending apologies) as soon as possible after meetings.
- It is the responsibility of each member to check the meeting notes for accuracy and raise any concerns as soon as possible with the Project Coordinators (Alice Hall and Amy Pryor). If additional information is requested to be included within the report after an event, it will be included but clearly differentiated as 'post event'.
- Final and agreed notes will be available to anybody via the 2 project coordinator websites (T21 and TEP) and/or on request.
- Meetings will be facilitated by an external independent facilitator.
- Smaller, task-focused work may be needed from time to time in order to carry forward any work of the group and this would be supported by the project team visiting individuals or organisations where needed between full meetings.

Communications

The following agreements are designed to ensure that there is accurate reporting of the work of the project so rumours or inaccurate information is not circulated.

All members agree to work together to ensure that communication of the groups' business is clear, consistent and accurate. In this spirit, all members agree:

- Not to talk for the group unless mandated to do so by the group. This role will be fulfilled by the Project Team coordinating together on external messages.
- To notify the Project Coordinators in advance of any intention to communicate widely¹ about the initiative and the groups' business so that communication opportunities can be coordinated and maximised;
- To use existing forms of words or other agreed text where possible to describe the groups' business in their own communications;
- To make the Project Coordinators aware of inaccurate communication or reporting by others, so that the group's view(s) can be clarified;
- The Project Team has the mandate to manage urgent communication issues on behalf of the group, for example responding to media requests etc and may call upon members of the group for further information or support.

I/we agree to these Terms of Reference for the Strategy Group – Your Tidal Thames Pilot Catchment Planning.

Signed:

Organisation:

Date:

¹ For instance, speaking at a conference or mailing their sector or organisation