



YOUR TIDAL THAMES

Minutes

Your Tidal Thames (YTT) Strategy Group Meeting

24th February 2014 10am-4pm Thames21, Walbrook Wharf.

10.00-10.30 Arrival and refreshments and introduction to meeting.

The Chairman Roger de Freitas gave a brief introduction to the meeting and outlined his background. He's been involved with cleaning up the River for over 15 years, working with community groups interested in the tidal Thames and sharing learning between similar projects globally. Roger expressed enthusiasm for the YTT Strategy Group as it is the only group of its kind bringing expertise from across the estuary together. Roger asked attendees to briefly describe what they wanted to get out of the session today.

Feedback from individuals included:

- Benefitting conservation,
- Working together,
- Bringing expertise into group,
- Learning more about how the group operates, what it wants and the direction of travel,
- Gaining a collective focus on the river, leading towards things being done and being done better,
- Want to see the health of the river transformed and people using it, opportunity to make a real difference,
- Offer comments from residential boat owners,
- Joined-up thinking, linking together initiatives and other catchment partnerships,
- Focus on delivering outcomes on the ground,
- Understanding dynamic of room and people involved,
- Recognise that a lot of knowledge sits in the room and within the wider network,
- Representing interests of recreational user groups, understanding other initiatives and get a more strategic view of the river,
- Linking Greater London Authority (GLA) environment team outputs with aims for the river,
- Bringing project aims to life,
- Maintaining a healthy river whilst negotiating conflicts between different users and interest groups.

10.30-11.30 Presentations

River Basin Planning, Thames River Basin Liaison Panel and Challenges and Choices consultation - Dominic Martyn, Environment Agency:



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Making the Water Framework Directive (WFD) meaningful is something we all have to contribute to, often over and above daily jobs. All strategic plans and policies e.g. WFD and Flood Risk regulations need to join up to deliver action on the ground. Ecological status on the Thames has declined by four points since 2009 when baseline monitoring begins. However, this is mostly an indication of a refinement and improvement of the data and monitoring methodology. More sites have been added over the years which are better investigated, revealing higher confidence in the reasons the ecology fails and more work to be done.

The current updating of the Thames River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) has been informed by Working Together and Challenges and Choices. There is opportunity to influence what goes into this second cycle plan right up until it is submitted to Defra in December 2015. The Minister will review the RBMPs in Sept 2015.

Once the recent consultation responses have been incorporated the updated draft RBMP will be sent to catchment managers to liaise with the public on the issues that were raised. Cost Benefit Analysis (CoBA) is being undertaken for draft RBMP and this will be discussed later in the day.

The River Basin District Liaison Panels (RBDLP) reported that during the first round of RBMPs they felt removed from process. Now they have representatives from sub catchments on the panel with e.g. Jill Goddard (TEP) and Tanya Ferry (PLA) on the Thames RBDLP who communicate with others within their and adjacent catchments. There are 36 Thames Catchment Partnerships – (see attached map) and each catchment has interpreted catchment planning in different ways.

Local communities are engaged through ecological failure investigations and options appraisal before these are put through the CoBA. CoBAs will be included in each Catchment Summary which will form part of the RBMP. The sector impact assessments will devise who will pay for what and how this will be done will be discussed at the next RBDLP meeting.

There is an opportunity coming up to get local communities involved through a series of events around World Rivers Day – 29th September, 2014 e.g. Source to Sea – wet wellies and waders programme *now called Rivers and Wetlands Community Days as it better describes what this new possible programme does*. The EA would like to hear from anyone who wants to be involved and share best practice, the responsibility for event planning, health and safety and fundraising. Events will look at key themes such as dredging and promote projects that are already taking place.

To register interest just email: dominic.martyn@environment-agency.gov.uk of Shaun Leonard Wild Trout Trust Director director@wildtrout.org

Q&A:



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Q: How do the interests in the room get represented by the COBA?

A: The National Water Environment Benefits Survey and ecosystem services play part of the COBA and are refined through the RBMP. The COBA presentation will cover this in more detail (see below)

YTT Update, the London Catchments Partnership and Thames21 River Watch – Chris Coode (Thames21) and Jill Goddard (TEP)

Chris gave a brief overview of the YTT project to date. In 2011, there was an opportunity to bid for a catchment partnership through the Environment Agency to pilot the Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) to river management. Both TEP and Thames21 bid separately and were asked by Defra to co-host the pilot on the tidal Thames area. The pilot was on going throughout 2012 - Phase 1 - which is now complete. The co-hosting arrangement was extremely successful as the two charities have wide networks of contacts and engage with local authorities, national agencies, industry, voluntary bodies, local community groups, local residents and environmental volunteers.

The project has now moved into Phase 2 and has enhanced the team to include Thames Strategy Kew to Chelsea (TSKC), Thames Landscape Strategy (TLS) and the Port of London Authority (PLA). Meetings have been held on a regular basis and the project team is continuing to work the Strategy group to represent the tidal Thames.

The new project team has been able to enhance communication across the length of the tidal Thames and has been seeking funding to continue after March 2014 and support local, measurable results on the ground. The project team completed the mapping of EA data and has developed a website designed to be a catchment management tool that could be used by everyone – both the public and for use by strategic groups and industry.

Several funding bids have been written:

- Big Lottery Awards For All bid for £10K led by Thames Landscape Strategy to continue the Catchment Partnership and fund the website development and launch. This has been preliminarily confirmed and is pending submission of charity accounts and signatures.
- Hammersmith and Fulham Borough Council bid for £9.5K to deliver the website only (no salary costs) and led by the West London River Group and facilitated by Thames Strategy Kew to Chelsea. Pending decision after February 2014.
- Defra have one more round of the Catchment Partnership Fund available and as a whole catchment YTT is eligible for £18-20K which would allow us to continue on one day a week.



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- Esmée Fairbairn bid for a three year project to continue the Catchment Partnership and deliver engagement with the commercial and development industries aiming to develop as many projects as possible to the point of funding bids. Recent confirmation that the Stage 1 application has been unsuccessful and the team is trying to get feedback as to why this is the case. We think it could be a misunderstanding over the CaBA and the funding body may believe this is a non-eligible government initiative. The team will revise the current bid pending feedback and resubmit.
- Project team is currently looking for other funding bodies for three year's funding so that the Catchment Partnership can be delivered full time and not in this current piecemeal approach.

London Catchment Partnership Group:

This recently convened group brings together all of the London Catchment Partnerships, plus EA catchment coordinators and technical specialists to define the catchment and distinct challenges. The group has met once in December 2013 and is convening again in March 2014. Through this group we can also share urban rivers experience nationally via the Rivers Trust. The group has established some subjects to take forward – e.g. flood consent, urban diffuse pollution and guides on how to deliver projects on the ground. The group will continue to meet quarterly, update each other as to sub-catchment progress and develop opportunities for joint working wherever possible.

Thames River Watch:

Thames21's Thames River Watch Project, is a three year project which started in July 2013. The project aims to enable Londoners to better understand of the health of the tidal Thames through engaging people in monitoring the river through citizen science. Monitoring will include water quality, invasive non-native species and litter surveying. The project will help people to understand where the river is now and where it could be in the future. Each year there will be a Big Count of the data that have been collected. Each year there will be a Big Count of the data that have been collected. The project has been successfully launched in February 2014. Thames21 is looking for regular support in terms of who can collect the data but also expertise – from the whole Thames Community. For more information or to get involved see the Thames21 website: www.thames21.org.uk or contact Julia Makin.

Q&A:

Q: *With the difficulties around short-term funding, have we considered having a short-term sub-group to concentrate purely on funding?*

A: *We haven't, but would be open to looking into this*



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Action: Propose a meeting with project team to establish funding opportunities and successes that have been demonstrated so far.

Q: The Mersey, Humber, Tyne and Ribble well-developed tidal estuary project – would be good to share experience with these groups and other TRaC waters Catchment hosts.

A: Here we have a good focus on environmental data. And with the website we will be able to communicate these messages further and develop the Catchment Partnership

11.45-12.45 Presentations

Update from EA on Cost Benefit Analysis – Richard Penn and Angela Gorman

The presentation given by Richard Penn and Angela Gorman simplified the stages involved in the Cost Benefit Analysis (COBA) process. These notes are to be taken alongside the PowerPoint presentation.

1. COBA stage one – identify problem. A monitoring network has been out in the field and we have used data from 2009 to identify failures.
2. Stage two – Find out what's causing the problem – e.g. diffuse pollution
3. Stage three - Identify actions/measures which will improve situation

The purpose of this approach is to see where cost effectiveness may negate costly ideas e.g. 'take out Thames Barrier' then calculate costs of realistic potential measures against national standards, compared with benefits e.g. improving fish passage / restoring natural banks . Benefits reviewed are both monetised and non-monetised, using an ecosystem services approach.

Working out benefits in a quantitative way used the National Water Environment Benefits Survey (NWEBS) as a baseline (e.g. public value and perception leading to a willingness to pay). This is easier to apply to freshwater catchments, but the EA have successfully adapted it to transitional waters.

The next stage is to work out qualitative benefits e.g. heritage and culture. These benefits are much more difficult to classify. Angela Gorman presented an Appraisal Summary Table for the tidal Thames which contains a list of the quantitative and the qualitative benefits. The EA intends to look at the work that has already been done through YTT group consultation and take a summary of the strategy that was produced as part of YTT and also the Habitat Management Strategy which can be referred to. The projects in this list will be delivered post-2015. Other large-scale projects (e.g. TE2100 and the Greater Thames Marshes NIA and FutureScapes) are feeding into this list and the COBA.



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Q&A:

Q: *Might costs for the same measures be different in different regions?*

A: *COBA uses a standard approach to costs to help categorisation. Costs get refined once an initial decision has been made and publicised. Scrutinise throughout consultation period then refine after. Cost benefits present as a ratio e.g. good or bad. Those that are on the cusp need a little more interrogation. Naturally there will be a difference in costs delivered by charity vs consultants, local costs are used where possible, also an average can be used. Sewage issue a large problem – urban waste water directive may pay for these if appropriate but also benefits go to WFD.*

Q: *London has higher average costs than the rest of the country. How is this being factored in?*

A: *Urban catchments do very well on the benefits because of population size. We need to spend more time connecting the economic value of a healthy River Thames to all of these wider benefits heritage, culture and tourism benefits.*

Q: *If looking at entire costs and entire benefits, how do you whittle it down?*

A: *These have come from a detailed approach? E.g. soft banking across a water body– cost and then benefit associated with this. Also leaves an audit trail to describe why decisions have been made*

Q: *It's very hard to put a value on social aspects and the cost will often outweigh the benefit because we can't ascribe a monetary value.*

A: *Valuing benefits which aren't officially monetised means that we can ascribe a benefit to these things. We need to connect the benefits of improved water quality to the impact of tourism. We need to run an ecosystem services assessment. Defra are about to put out funding for a new project which asks people to scope out ecosystem services.*

Actions:

- A more updated Appraisal Summary Table will be circulated to the Strategy Group and any comments or additional information would be welcome.
- YTT Project Team will look into the Defra funding mentioned above.
- EA could also offer some one-to-one meetings to discuss Appraisal Summary Report and Final Appraisal Report. This is not a way of prioritising projects – it's a way of demonstrating how we use public money wisely and effectively. We have to measure the cost vs the benefit. It will also help us set new objectives e.g. moderate instead of good.

Decision Criteria Workshop – Afternoon Session Introduction – Tanya Ferry



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Tanya Ferry from the PLA introduced the workshop, explaining that the project team has been looking at projects that the YTT plan has brought together. In a similar process to that which the EA is going through to categorise ideas in a transparent way, the project team is looking to the strategy group to bring together critical information in order to assess the project against the WFD aims.

Q&A:

Q: *Please clarify the role of the group in terms of assessing budget given that we are not offering grants.*

A: *This is actually more about providing a tool to compare projects. A funder can have a look at this. We are creating a readymade wish list but with an objective view. If we label a project as beneficial then we need to have a system for presenting the benefit in some kind of structured way.*

Q: *It would be good to think about how the Thames Estuary could be the model for estuary benefit analysis. If we in the room could really think about what these benefits are.*

Q: *50K available as mitigation for the cable car that had delayed spending – this just shows how useful having a wish list is. Highlights the importance of having someone who has the overview.*

Q: *Is this website going to be a 'son' of River Restoration Centre?*

A: *This is quite separate and before WFD river basin planning. WFD has the education element and the view of the project team was that it didn't give the local level detail.*

13.30-15.30 Workshops and Plenary discussion

Decision Criteria Workshop - Table discussion feedback:

Timescale:

The group started by scrutinising the question - Timescales of what? It was felt that the following questions could be used to help people design a 'better', future proofed project.

- Delivery?
 - This was considered not important unless there are funding restrictions.
- Development?
 - This was considered not important unless there are funding restrictions.
- Benefits realised?



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- This should be a questions put to projects submitting as it encourages projects to develop longer lasting impacts/benefits indicating sustainability
- How does it fit with other projects?
 - Is it big scale or small scale?
 - If it is small scale what would be the cumulative impacts/benefits?
 - This would help to understand whether it may be better to develop several small scale projects or one large scale project depending on the size of the benefits realised and their longevity.
 - A long delivery time with long term benefits versus quick wins and short term impacts
 - Quick wins are always popular with Government departments and the group felt there should be more pressure on them to invest in bigger projects over a longer term
 - Depends on other restrictions e.g. funding terms
 - Maintenance after completion is an issue – Section 106 funding
 - Capital costs are easier to fund in comparison to maintenance and monitoring costs

Thames Vision

Discussions then focussed on how these questions interacted with the other topics of the workshop. The group stated that they thought the Strategy Group should develop a 'Vision for the Thames' - a framework of what a healthy modified estuary should be. In this way any pots of money could be used to improve the overall mosaic of the estuary and prioritise or influence projects for the best effect e.g. is the geographical position of a proposed project the best place to benefit the ecological functioning of the whole river.

With the huge amount of expertise on the group, the Strategy Group would be very well placed to develop this vision and enable it to be realised. The group asked the question: In the next 30 years what should the estuary look like? This will:

- Help raise awareness
- Help develop education targets
- Help people visualise Good Ecological Status and Good Ecological Potential e.g. GES may mean reedbeds and floodplains.



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- Can be used as an engagement tool to highlight how small scale projects have their place alongside big scale projects.
- Can Google Street View, which has just completed the 'view' of the river walls from the river, develop the same tool for underwater views in the Thames? Graphics to highlight the ecological traffic under the water.

A suggested route for developing the vision was to create a timeline dating back 50 years to the time when the Thames was declared ecologically dead. Then in 25 year increments to present day and 50 years into the future, highlight:

- How the estuary has/will change
- Examples of good project design
- Cumulative benefits already achieved and how they contributed to ecological improvement
- How a submitted project fits within the mosaic, how it will help to achieve the vision and why.

In order to achieve this, the Strategy Group would need a 'shopping list' of current and future opportunities that fit with the different agendas, legislative criteria and ecological needs. This list can be sourced from the existing EA WFD opportunities, the Tideway Tunnel Biodiversity Group list and the YTT project ideas already submitted as well as any projects submitted via the new website once launched including any projects the Strategy Group members' organisations wish to include.

Funding:

- Does the project have any funding attached? Yes, part-funding, no...
- If part or no, we could give guidance – what support do they need?
- Could come up with a leaflet or a guide to show people
- Lots of funding sources (main orgs) but there are other benefits to companies and private interest
- Capital much easier to bid for than salaries – how do we get around this?
- Have you looked at combining your project with another project?
- What stage of development is the project currently at? Conceptual, design, approved, implemented? These questions are easy to answer fairly quickly
- Who are your partners and what relationship do you have with the landowner and do you have a good relationship with them?
- Look at developers...
- Approval – processes to make sure you are aware of licences etc...



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- Implementation – how did your project get implemented? To give others inspiration
- Have you got any baseline data prior to project?
- Should we be talking about ‘resourcing’ rather than ‘funding’
- Do we need to manage expectations – because YTT won’t be giving out the funding?
- How many groups think ‘I’m delivering towards WFD’? most groups are thinking in terms of delivering a project on the Thames which is geared towards their interest.

Development: What stage of development is the project currently at?

- Conceptual, Design or Approved.
- Who are your partners?
- What are your relationships with the current landowners/Council?
- Can you access funding that the Council cannot access?
- How much funding do you need and what can the grant providers give? (Most grants require match funding of between 10 and 20%)
- Have you got an outline design? If not who will do it?
- Who will take the project lead?
- Is there a main developer in the area where funding can be achieved through Section 106?
- Has the project had the approvals required? (P.L.A, E.A, Landowner, Council)?
- Is the project part of a wider strategic plan?
- If the project has been implemented elsewhere look at how the project got implemented. Provide case studies on the Website.
- Monitoring
- Could you provide a track record for further project funding?
- Could you look at other examples of monitoring?
- Have you any baseline data before you start and when you finish on the way the project was run?
- What outcomes are there for economic, social and Environmental benefit?

Feasibility:

- Feasibly how would you actually deliver? E.g. do you have permissions?
- List of questions doesn’t cut it. Need to think in terms of a tool kit to help people. Simple set of questions which then lead them onto another source of information. Who has the long term liability for the project? Is it the landowner? If so have you had those discussions? Do you have liability insurance to do this work? This brings it back to scale of project – large-scale vs otter holt.



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- Do we need to split this into two options – one large project where you know what you're doing and just recording it, or smaller group starting out. How are you going to encourage groups to fill out this information? What is the incentive – e.g. guidance and linking in with other groups?
- What value can you put onto these things? Aesthetic measures are often in the eye of the beholder?
- Are there opportunities to attached smaller project goals onto larger projects which are already funded?
- Things that need to be thought about rather than things that are easily answerable.
How can we help you and where is the hole in your project?

Collaborative working and society:

- Is it a collaborative project? If it is then this comes with weight
- How many groups are involved?
- What are the wider benefits of this group in the community or wider society?
- Who will benefit?
- Which organisations will be supporting your project
- Who's paying and how do we engage them? E.g. section 106 money (now Community infrastructure Levy) separates developer from interest and impact of any works
- Is the local Authority engaged with the project? This is a key body which will link to local catchment planning, spatial planning and Biodiversity Action Plans
- How will you mitigate the impact of the construction phase
- How will you manage communications and expectations at planning phase
- Are aims shared by multiple groups?
- Thought with regard to questions and important point that can be made, and started to order these into priorities?
- What types of organisations are involved?
- What do each of the groups what to achieve?
- What are the wider benefits of this project to people and wildlife?
- Is it sustainable and how does is operate beyond the project life – who has ownership

We distilled this down into:

- 1) What groups are involved?
 - How many and what type?
- 2) What does each of the groups want to achieve?
 - Are the aims of each group compatible?



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- Are the aims of the project compatible?
- 3) What are the wider benefits of this project for the community?
- Particularly with regards to people and wildlife

Q&A

Q: *Who improves quality of life?*

A: *Knowing what those benefits are and how it would work – you need to engage with marginalised groups. You can also attach economic components to this. Keep an eye on simple questions – these are important for groups.*

Q: *Do we have social-economic examples?*

A: *Projects on the Thames. South London Parks – fear of crime etc... not so easy on the tidal Thames. There is an opportunity for social change. Engaging people with ideas and education by exposing people to the problems first-hand. It might be a good idea to engage a social scientist with the project. Also health professionals, physiotherapists etc... engaging people in the outdoors*

Q: *Why don't we put our own value on non-monetary aspects? Engage with the public and ask them to come up with what they think is valuable.*

A: *The river is valued we know this but what we need is to establish is the value amongst corporates.*

Q: *Does YTT have an R&D budget? We could engage some students in a Social Change project – universities.*

A: *No, but TEP and Thames21 have strong links with UCL and KCL respectively so this is certainly an idea that can be taken forward.*

Q: *Who is going to be a custodian for this project?*

A: *YTT Catchment Partnership – Defra and Government. Strategy Group are ambassadors beyond the project group. Commitment from SG and project team to carry on the good work and act as caretaker.*

Q: *Could we have a popular figurehead – David Attenborough? Matthew Pincet?*

A: *Our intention is not to make the YTT project a separate organisation. The Working Catchment Plan is public at the moment on T21 and TEP website. It isn't a catchment plan in the same way as other organisations have done it because of the scale of the area but it might be worth having a public glossy document.*



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Q: *Could we open up the meetings to more groups – asking members to pay into the forum? This might be useful for corporate members; hitting up some of the big developers to attend these meetings.*

Q: *Is there a way of accessing developers via Thames Water? Whoever wins the T2100 and Thames Tideway Tunnels contract would be a good person to get here. National Home Builders developers joining up on World Rivers Day – go along to one of their events rather than getting them to come to you.*

Q: *Is there a Local Enterprise Partnership?*

A: *There is a panel but is not run in the same way as usual.*

We also tried to liaise with the New London Architecture forum. Check websites for free talks etc...

Meeting Close

Roger de Freitas closed by asking us to think about who will take on the reigns after us. Attention is turning to the Thames, particularly with the Thames Tideway Tunnel proposal and new opportunities for people to understand the invisible side to the Thames. We are hopeful that a multitude of organisations will continue to come together and raise awareness.

Next steps

The YTT project team will:

- Take all of the discussions within the workshop on board and use them to hone the questions asked as part of project submission on the YTT Catchment Plan website once we receive funding to progress it.
- Continue to seek substantial funding to coordinate the Catchment Partnership full time and start to develop projects on the ground. We will look into setting up a funding sub group comprising of willing SG members and the project team.
- Organise the next SG meeting once further funding is in place.
- Look into the development of a Thames Vision and Social Change research as per discussions.