

## The Big Waterways Clean Up 2012

ITEM 4

### Steering Group Briefing prepared for The London Waterways Commission Meeting 7.2.2011

#### 1. Objective:

To engage and involve Londoners in a mass Volunteer Campaign to improve London's rivers and canals by July 2012, producing heightened community activity and connection with local waterways, bringing about a beneficial, lasting legacy to Londoners and the environment.

#### 2. Background:

A pristine Olympic Park in East London is being prepared for the Games in July 2012. The Park is likely to be in sharp visual contrast to surrounding locations which suffer from environmental issues including littering and fly-tipping, graffiti, and invasive vegetation. Locations are characterised by the rivers and canals which form a network in East London and flow through the heart of London - drawing the eye, framing the most high profile views and vistas and giving personality and focus to local neighbourhoods. Concerted, practical action is needed to avoid international embarrassment and local disengagement in July 2012.

#### 3. A Local Focus:

Local community leadership will be key to delivering long-lasting, sustainable benefits and we are discussing the initiative with community groups in key locations, to help shape Campaign delivery. The Campaign links directly into the Big Society and will showcase what can be achieved locally with local leadership and local participation with targeted support from established stakeholders.

The Queen's Diamond Jubilee will take place in 2012 and celebrations will centre around the first week in June, driving expanded community interest and involvement in the Big Waterways Clean Up and linking firmly with a future of transformed waterways and treasures such as the new Queen Elizabeth Park which will follow the Games.

Close liaison and partnership will be co-ordinated with landowners and those organisations represented on London's Waterway Commission. In addition, other stakeholders such as the Olympic Park Legacy Company, London Boroughs, statutory undertakers, the Field Studies Council, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, the London Wildlife Trust, Groundwork, Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, local businesses and housing associations have a key role to play and will be asked to support and help steer certain aspects of the programme.

Youth involvement will be encouraged through schools and clubs such as Scouts and Guides. Possibilities include: competitions for project delivery; the development of an Award; the identification of 'local pearls' -places where real improvements can be made; and local Mayors adopting their waterway for 2012 as their 'personal' project.

#### 4. Practical logistics and delivery:

Thames21 will co-ordinate, organise and deliver an effective, rewarding and safe volunteering programme of activities using its 16 years' experience organising and delivering waterway improvements with volunteers throughout London. Aspects that the charity will organise and deliver within the Campaign include: practical activity organisation, volunteer link-up into activities, training for volunteers, , site visits, risk assessments, volunteer support and supervision, equipment provision to and from waterway locations, debris removal and public liability insurance. We will also be looking to others to help support and deliver additional training programmes to provide people with the skills they need to care for their local spaces after the 2012 Games.

## **5. Funding:**

The support and backing of the Mayor of London will be sought and play a pivotal role in helping to secure the financial support required. A fund raising strategy and budget will be developed for the programme once the Mayor has expressed his support for the proposal.

Initial discussions will focus upon securing lead support for the campaign from a key funder.

## **6. Publicity campaign:**

The Big Waterways Clean Up 2012 will seek a key Media Partner to spread the message across London, driving commitment, volunteer participation and reporting outstanding community achievements during four months of concerted activity in the Spring and early Summer of 2012.

We will get Local Press involved with a focus upon Civic Pride, calls for local commitment to uplift their area, to develop Community Spirit, and opportunities for all to contribute.

Pro bono marketing and new media support would have a huge impact on the Campaign and contacts are being approached by the Steering Group to explore this possibility.

A Communications Strategy and protocol will be developed to ensure strong, consistent Campaign Messages are delivered.

## **7. Planned Outcomes:**

- Transformed river and canal areas around the Olympic Park and at other locations, when London is the focus of world attention. The Big Clean Up will include locations on the Lee Navigation, Hertford Union Canal, River Lee, Bow Creek, Limehouse Cut, the Channelsea and Abbey Creek, as well as key locations on the River Thames.
- London communities brought together through practical opportunities for participation and pride in their local community, their city and their country through the galvanising impact of the Games.
- Many more Londoners connected with the capital's fantastic resource of rivers and canals, and provided with opportunities to care for and benefit from them and to learn new skills - not only during the Campaign, but on into the future.
- A major contribution to the Legacy of London 2012, and the creation of a motivated, skilled resource of volunteering and community engagement for ongoing maintenance of the Olympic Park's open space and waterways and other areas throughout London.
- More active, outdoor lifestyles encouraged in urban communities through practical volunteering and increased use of London's waterspace for leisure and recreation, improving health and combating obesity.

**8. Timeframe:**

January 2011 – September 2011	Planning and detailed preparation
September 2011 – July 2012	Publicity campaign for wider public engagement
March 2012 – July 2012:	Practical Programme delivery
July 2012 – ongoing	Avenues and opportunities provided for skilled, motivated volunteers to continue to care for and enjoy London's rivers and canals

**9. Steering Group Membership:**

The Steering Group for the Big Waterways Clean Up is a Sub-Group of the London Waterways Commission, and consists of the following members representing their organisations:- Murad Qureshi (Chair), Debbie Leach (Thames21), Richard Rutter (British Waterways), Alistair Gale/James Trimmer (PLA), Dave Wardle (Environment Agency), Roger Squires (Inland Waterways Association). Archie Galloway OBE (London Councils), Councillor Stephanie Eaton (London Councils), Simon Robbins.

*January 2011*