

## Access to the Thames

Scrutiny of the Thames Foreshore and Path

John Biggs AM

On behalf of the Planning and Spatial Development Committee

August 2003



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**Greater London Authority  
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**Published by**  
Greater London Authority  
City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
London SE1 2AA  
**[www.london.gov.uk](http://www.london.gov.uk)**  
enquiries **020 7983 4100**  
minicom **020 7983 4458**

**ISBN 1 85261 507 9**

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## Rapporteur's Foreword



This scrutiny was initially charged with examining the provision of a Thames Path and access levels to the Thames foreshore. However, by addressing these issues, we have tapped into an ongoing and much wider debate about the whole riverside environment.

For example, what benefit is a riverside path that is overshadowed by an apartment block and is gated off and poorly signed, therefore discouraging access?

What became clear to the London Assembly's Planning and Spatial Development Committee is that the Thames' understandable attraction as a location for exclusive residential development not only compromises the adequate provision of a riverside path but also results in the Thames being barricaded from its immediate hinterland and the rest of London.

And in East London, where so much anticipated economic growth could see the Thames Gateway flourish over the next few years, there is an opportunity to ensure that past mistakes are not repeated and a new, more inclusive riverside is created. This new eastern frontier is an opportunity that must be seized upon and this requires the political will of the Mayor, local boroughs, strategic regional partnerships and the support of statutory bodies such as the Countryside Agency.

However, this report does not wish to be overly critical and acknowledges that excellent work is being done. We acknowledge the standards set down in the Mayor's draft London Plan and applaud the work done often on very limited budgets by local authorities and agencies in providing Londoners with a riverside path. We especially applaud the efforts of voluntary groups and bodies who encourage and have increased safe access to the Thames' foreshore.

Our evidence suggests that there is room for improvement and this report explores how this may be achieved. Whether it is the management and reporting structure for the riverside path or the ownership and liability issues surrounding access points to the foreshore, the scrutiny has attempted to advance the debate over the future nature of public's access to the Thames. And we believe that although the Blue Ribbon Framework set out in the Mayor's London Plan is a good framework from which to build, it needs clear political leadership and regular monitoring to avoid corners being cut and poor quality being allowed to slip through. The Thames is a jewel in London's offer and its setting must be preserved, championed and protected.

The evidence this Committee has received serves to confirm my belief that there is a large well of support for projects along the Thames. Whether it is volunteers putting on their Wellington boots and cleaning parts of the foreshore or organisations and businesses adopting sections of the riverside, it is clear that Londoners value and cherish their river. I would like to thank those who have given so generously of their time submitting evidence to this committee, both written and oral, as well as the Assembly's team of officers for their support during this piece of work.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Biggs".

**John Biggs AM, Rapporteur**

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# Contents

	<i>Page</i>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	1
<b>Chapter 1 Introduction</b>	3
<b>Chapter 2 Developing London’s Riverscape: The Thames Path and Riverside Developments</b>	4
The London Plan	5
<i>Case Study 1: Coin Street</i>	6
Thames Gateway	9
<i>Case Study 2: Greenwich Peninsula</i>	11
<b>Chapter 3 The Thames Path</b>	12
National Trail Status	12
Transport for London	14
Cyclists vs. Pedestrians	15
Management of the Path	15
<i>Case Study 3: Arcadia in the City, Richmond</i>	16
<b>Chapter 4 The Thames Foreshore</b>	19
Introduction	19
Supervised Access to the Foreshore	19
Access Points: Ownership & Risk	21
<i>Case Study 4: Primrose Wharf, Greenwich</i>	22
Unsupervised Access to the Foreshore: Thames Access Project	24
<b>Annex A Maps of the Thames Path</b>	27
<b>Annex Ai Notes to maps of Thames Path National Trail</b>	52
<b>Annex B Case Study: Liability (Lyme Regis)</b>	64
<b>Annex C List of Recommendations</b>	65
<b>Annex D Terms of Reference</b>	67
Membership of the Planning & Spatial Development Committee	67
Terms of reference of this scrutiny	68
<b>Annex E Organisations and individuals who submitted evidence</b>	69
<b>Annex F Orders and translations</b>	70
<b>Annex G Principles of Assembly Scrutiny</b>	71

# Executive Summary

This scrutiny, led by John Biggs AM rapporteur<sup>1</sup> to the London Assembly's Planning and Spatial Development Committee, explores two ways of enjoying the River Thames. The first is via the provision of a riverside path and the second is through public access to the Thames' tidal foreshore. The arguments that surround the provision of a Thames path and increasing public access to the foreshore are part of a much wider debate about the whole riverside environment with which this scrutiny engages. This scrutiny assesses how the Mayor, the wider GLA family and local authorities can help to protect and enhance this environment.

## *New Developments*

Part of the enjoyment of any river is not only the river itself but also the relationship between the river and its landscape. A consideration of this relationship must lie at the heart of any riverside development. The Committee is concerned that the Thames is being barricaded from the rest of London by riverside developments that fail to consider how they relate to the river and its immediate hinterland. New riverside developments do normally make provision for a riverside path but such provision is compromised if the path is only a part of a river frontage made up of identikit apartment blocks. Consequently, the Planning and Spatial Development Committee will conduct a scrutiny into large riverside developments referred to the Mayor since May 2000 to see whether the policy framework designed to enhance the Thames, as set out in the Mayor's draft London Plan, is strong enough and has been rigorously applied.

## *The Thames Path*

The Thames Path is enjoyed by millions of Londoners and tourists every year and is considered by Transport for London as one of London's six most important walking routes. However, the path itself often suffers from various symptoms of neglect such as poor signage and vandalism. The National Trail Status, which was given to the majority of the riverside between Hampton Court and Greenwich, was an attempt to raise the standard of the path across this area. The Committee feels that the National Trail boundary should be extended to include the whole of Greater London, especially to the east of its current boundary. However it also feels that attempts to improve the quality and reach of a riverside path have suffered through poor reporting mechanisms and a patchy level of attention across London's riparian boroughs. To tackle this issue, the Committee will ask the Mayor to consider a warden scheme to cover the path.

## *The Thames Foreshore*

The Thames' previous reputation as a dirty, polluted body of water has radically changed over a relatively short period of time thanks to a great deal of investment from a number of organisations. One benefit of this change has been the increased use of the foreshore as a location where people can engage with some of London's most vibrant natural environments and most important archaeological sites. However, the foreshore can also be dangerous and liability and ownership issues, as well as a lack of funding, has hampered the development of this welcome trend. The Committee supports a greater level of public access to the foreshore and will ask the Mayor to conduct a consultation to

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<sup>1</sup> A rapporteur takes personal responsibility for the conduct of a scrutiny, working with scrutiny support officers, up to the point where the report is presented to the relevant committee for review and approval.

establish a comprehensive directory of access points and their ownership in order to remove these significant barriers.

The Thames is London's greatest natural asset. The Committee hopes that this report can accelerate the process that ensures that the Thames' defining environmental, geographical and historical role at the heart of the capital can be further enjoyed, protected and enhanced.



# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Thames defines London's geography and history. London owes its location as a trading and administrative centre to its river. As the Thames' economic importance has declined, Londoners have slowly re-discovered the river as an amenity, as a visual theme and as a place to visit.
- 1.2 In a material world, that a riverside apartment can add a six-figure sum to its price states the value of this amenity in a language we can easily understand. This report is about whether Londoners as a whole are benefiting sufficiently from the value the river can add to London as a place to visit and to live in. Indeed, a recurrent question is whether in parts of London the pursuit of high-value riverside development has marginalised other value that the river can provide.
- 1.3 The Thames flows through 13 London boroughs and a range of historical, industrial and rural landscapes. The riverside path and foreshore and the stairs and other accesses between them are the most obvious and accessible points through which Londoners can enjoy these landscapes.
- 1.4 We have not considered the broader issues of new economic uses or of use of the water itself – these are areas for possible future work – but have concentrated on the boundary between river and land – the river edge and foreshore – and how it is managed and treated. This is because the management of this boundary is of particular spatial and planning importance. Our terms of reference are printed in Annex D.
- 1.5 The Committee consulted over 200 relevant organisations across London, went on site visits and held an evidentiary hearing. We have also contributed to the production of a new map of the Thames Path National Trail in London (Annex A). The keyed access information on the map reflects issues raised during our investigation.
- 1.6 We considered potential new management arrangements for the Thames Path, queried the current National Trail status and its boundaries and looked into the role that borough UDPs and the Mayor's London Plan play in the future of the Path.
- 1.7 We were keen to engage in a debate over foreshore access. The foreshore debate is framed by the issue of liability, driven by the obvious risks the river presents. We have examined work done to date on the foreshore where access is supervised and looked at how it might be possible to secure unsupervised access to the foreshore at those places where it is safe and demand exists.
- 1.9 The Port of London Authority (PLA) identified in the mid 1990s over 250 access points to the foreshore in London – stairways and slipways – a legacy from previous eras when the Thames was London's principal thoroughfare. These access points are often poorly maintained, some are blocked off altogether and, few, if any, provide signs to advise about foreshore safety. We have considered this matter. The survey of the Thames Path, with which we helped, has begun to map (Annex A) these access points to the foreshore and has keyed into the map the type and quality of access. This survey work is very much a work in progress.

## 2. Developing London's riverscape: the Thames Path and riverside developments

*The river has become too popular.... We are loving the Thames to death.*<sup>2</sup>

- 2.1 There is a real danger that enjoyment of the River Thames is being lost to Londoners. When the then Secretary of State for the Environment designated the Thames Path a National Trail in 1989, it was in recognition of the unique opportunity the riverside offered to enjoy London and its main river. Equally, property developers have been quick to recognise how the River could be enjoyed from an office or riverside flat.
- 2.2 Consequently, for some people the River is in danger of becoming barricaded or hidden from the rest of London by new development. While there are exceptions, the river to some commentators has become "a thin strip of affluence, existing in a bubble that has nothing to do with life in the rest of the city just a street behind<sup>3</sup>". A "sterile monoculture"<sup>4</sup> has sprung alongside London's greatest natural asset. The worst examples of this are to be found to the East of Tower Bridge, with the Thames canyonised between seemingly endless riverside apartments, with each development providing, as required by planners, a windswept and often forbidding riverside path for public use.
- 2.3 This is a problem, because the enjoyment of the Thames consists in large part of the visual pleasure of both the river itself and its relationship to the land and buildings around it. Merely to provide a narrow strip of pathway in front of often undistinguished buildings destroys this. To prevent this from happening the London Rivers Association (LRA) argue that riverside developments require approaches that are "holistic and based on an understanding of the spatial relationships and linkages between the water-space, inter tidal area, waterfront and the hinterland<sup>5</sup>." We support this view. Changes to the riverside are not the problem. It is the type and quality of the change that requires rethinking. Developments such as the Tate Modern, Coin Street and Millennium Wheel have given stretches of the river back to Londoners via a healthy mix of uses and attractions and offered examples of what can be achieved. (*See Case Study on Coin Street below*)
- 2.4 The riverside ought to be treated as a critical part of London's environment. In places it is essentially a linear park, in others more of a thoroughfare, but in all cases, it forms a link to the river. We suggest that the Thames be considered in the same way as other famous public spaces in London such as Hyde Park or Kew Gardens and not simply a route by which to go to from A to B or a viewing gallery for a stretch of water. This means providing a thoughtfully designed path, but also, at places this needs to break into the land behind. It also means, if we are serious that the Thames is an asset that London sells itself by, better quality design of riverside buildings. Not all are bad but not enough are good.

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<sup>2</sup> Deyan Sudjic, *Sold down the River*, The Observer, May 18, 2003

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> LRA, Evidentiary Hearing, 11 March 2003

- 2.5 Where it does not exist, or is in poor condition, the provision of a Thames side path for public use is generally secured when planning applications for riverside developments come forward. All riparian boroughs require this, unless there are exceptional reasons not to do so, and will specify standards for access, width and finishes. Such standards are reinforced in the Mayor's draft London Plan.
- 2.6 Often the footway will be linked to requirements set by the Environment Agency for retention, repair or replacement of river walls. The scale of riverside development in recent years in London has meant that great stretches of the Thames are now served by a path although, as elaborated in Chapter 3, this provision is still in some places patchy and has left a legacy of gated apartment blocks that prevent access for a path and which fail to recognise the public realm
- 2.7 A number of developments in Tower Hamlets and Southwark during the 1980s and 1990s give "the impression that the Path is not accessible and makes walkers feel unwelcome"<sup>6</sup>. For organisations such as Thames 21, there has been "a constant battle to keep gates unlocked and open"<sup>7</sup>. Walkers are often encouraged to embark on a tortuous route to reconnect to the Path, unaware that it may have been their right to proceed. Although there has been a significant improvement in the last few years, the Path has on occasions fallen victim to a failure to enforce Section 106 agreements. The report considers how to tackle this problem in Chapter 3.
- 2.8 In future it should not be sufficient to view the path as the only public element of a development. A riverside path is just one of many components that define the boundary between river and land and in itself can be of limited value if all it offers is a route along a wall of unimaginative riverside apartments. New development sites are an opportunity to harness the good practice enjoyed along parts of the Thames and to better integrate the river with its hinterland in ways that improve the sense of connection between the river and the city. There is a particular opportunity to achieve this in the developing 'Thames Gateway' area to the East of London. And there is a further need to examine the quality of buildings at the river edge and the role they play in defining this boundary.

### **The London Plan**

- 2.9 The London Plan, when it is adopted as planning guidance, will be a powerful regional planning tool providing the standards that boroughs and sub regional partnerships will apply to major development including riverside developments.
- 2.10 The Mayor's draft London Plan<sup>8</sup>, also seeks to encourage improved access to the 'Blue Ribbon Network'<sup>9</sup>, London's network of rivers and canals, at the heart of which lies the Thames. The Plan's Thames side policies are set out in Annex 2 of the draft London Plan, 'the Blue Ribbon Network'. The Plan requires boroughs to ensure that Thames-side developments incorporate provision for a riverside

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<sup>6</sup> Thames 21, Written evidence, February 2003

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> The publication of this report will coincide with the report to the Mayor of the Panel of the Examination in Public (EIP) into the Mayor's draft London Plan. The Mayor expects to complete the London Plan by December 2003.

<sup>9</sup> Policy BR20, Draft London Plan

*Case Study 1*

**Coin Street (between Waterloo Bridge and Blackfriars Bridge)**

Following the clearance of housing as part of the development for the Festival of Britain in the 1950s, a number of major developments began to take shape on the South Bank. Shell International opened its headquarters here in the early 1960s and many others have followed since. The Royal Festival Hall, the only permanent legacy of the Festival, was later joined by the National Theatre, the National Film Theatre, London Weekend Television, IPC Media, IBM and many others turning the South Bank into Europe's largest centre for the arts and media.

The few local residents that had remained (the residential population had fallen from 50,000 to 4,000 in the early 70s) were worried. "Many of the new office buildings were large and faceless with shops and facilities inside and 'dead' street frontages outside - Schools and shops closed. Increasingly those who lived in, worked in or visited the area described it as 'bleak'<sup>10</sup>."

To tackle this, since 1984 Coin Street Community Builders (CSCB) - a social enterprise and development trust - has sought to improve London's South Bank as a place in which to live, work and visit. CSCB has created and now manages Bernie Spain Gardens, Gabriel's Wharf, Oxo Tower Wharf and the riverside walkway as well as providing a programme of arts and leisure activities through the Coin Street Festival. CSCB provides 220 affordable homes in four housing developments for people in housing need.

These developments have frequently been held up as examples of good practice. The London Rivers Association when asked to cite an example of good practice felt that Coin St still stands out because "they didn't create just a linear route of the wall, of the riverside wall; they created a chink to preserve the river Foreshore, they created a bit of access there for the public to access that Foreshore, which is a beautiful beach. And then they created a permeability through the site. There's a market, there's lots of activities, there's places to eat. And then there's the pathway as well. So, it engages people, it attracts people."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> [http://www.coinstreet.org/his\\_frame.html](http://www.coinstreet.org/his_frame.html)

<sup>11</sup> LRA, Evidentiary Hearing, 11 March 2003

walkway in accordance with the Countryside Agency standards that are applied to a National Trail<sup>12</sup>.

- 2.11 These standards include recommendations that the path should be at *least* three metres wide, meet the mobility needs of everyone without affecting landscape, offer links to public transport and provide way marking, signposting and furniture.<sup>13</sup> The adoption of these standards in boroughs' UDPs would be welcome but there is a question about whether these Countryside Agency standards provide adequately for London's environment.
- 2.12 The London Rivers Association in oral evidence to the committee stated that Countryside Agency standards subscribed to in the draft London Plan have failed to grasp the "unique situation where you have got a national trail through an urban complex" which therefore "needs a completely different approach to it than the rural areas."<sup>14</sup>
- 2.13 Beyond the provision of a riverside walkway, the draft London Plan also sets out the conditions that riparian boroughs and/or the Mayor should address when considering riverside development. The annex states that any riverside developments should subscribe to "general principles of good urban design and improve the quality of the built environment"<sup>15</sup>. This includes sensitivity to local character along stretches of the river. Development should, in summary, need to be sensitive to the water space, providing

- a mix of public uses and public spaces
- walking and cycling routes
- clear signage, information and lighting to promote the use of waterside spaces by all
- a human scale of interaction with the street, public spaces and waterside
- integration with existing communities and places
- landmarks that are of cultural and social significance without causing undue harm to the cohesiveness of the water's edge

Developments should also "relate successfully in terms of scale, materials, colour and richness of detail, not only to direct neighbours but also to buildings on the opposite bank and those seen in the same context with the river or other locally identified prospects and views."<sup>16</sup>

- 2.14 The Thames Policy Areas, mapped out roughly in the London Plan, will cover the immediate hinterland and at sensitive sites, such as Richmond Park, extend quite a distance from the river. Developments within these identified areas will have to conform to policies on height, impact on the riverside's natural environment and the impact of design upon the immediate living environment around the Thames.<sup>17</sup> Any development within the Thames Policy Area which is higher than 25 metres can be referred to the Mayor.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Policy 3C.18, Draft London Plan

<sup>13</sup> The Countryside Agency, *Sense and Accessibility*, May 2000

<sup>14</sup> LRA, Evidentiary Hearing, March 11, 2003

<sup>15</sup> Policy BR23, Draft London Plan

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

<sup>17</sup> BR24, Draft London Plan

<sup>18</sup> Under the Town and Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2000

- 2.15 These policies create a framework that will enable London to achieve the more holistic approach the Committee wishes to see applied to riverside development. Assuming this part of the draft London Plan is confirmed what is then needed is the will and attention to detail to ensure that the relationship of development to the Thames, and its public enjoyment, becomes a major driver of design and is actively pursued as a part of the planning process
- 2.16 The Committee welcomes the impressive aspirations set out in the Blue Ribbon Annex and would welcome a vigorous implementation of these policies via riverside planning applications and Section 106 agreements. It is the Assembly's role to ensure that policy is being delivered and it is therefore suggested that the Planning & Spatial Development Committee should conduct a further scrutiny after a time into riverside developments to see whether these guidelines are securing a more holistic approach to riverside development.

*Recommendation 1*

**The Planning and Spatial Development Committee should conduct a further scrutiny to review progress, considering riverside developments referred to the Mayor since May 2000, to assess performance against the objectives outlined within the Blue Ribbon Annex to the Draft London Plan.**

- 2.17 We support the Blue Ribbon Strategy but it must be given teeth and actively championed, and be a primary driver of the consideration of riverside development, to avoid its objectives being diluted in competition with other objectives of development. For example, London's riverside should not be allowed to become the preserve of the wealthy in order to maximise affordable housing at less profitable locations and consideration should always be given to the provision of accessible amenity space adjacent to the river, not just hard-landscaped footpaths. The river is valuable to Londoners and the principle of wide use, of public enjoyment and of showcasing should dominate our treatment of it.

*Recommendation 2*

**Although the Blue Ribbon Network sets out a potentially suitable framework for Thames side developments, clear political will and leadership is needed to provide the framework with impetus. A statement of strategy from the Mayor is needed as to how he will ensure that delivery of an improved Thameside environment, driven by the Blue Ribbon Network, will be championed and procured.**

- 2.18 The river is an understated jewel in London's place as a world city. Access to it and the treatment of its boundaries deserves a far greater priority than has been recently afforded to it. While the framework exists to develop a river edge in London that enhances its role as a primary attraction for visitors and amenity for Londoners, too often development of the boundary is mediocre, with for example token footways and poor building design. A clear statement of support for and

ownership of a strategy to reverse this should be made by the Mayor, boroughs and other development agents and partners. The aim should be to prioritise quality in development and public access to and enjoyment of the River's, underlining the Thames' role as London's greatest natural asset.

### **Thames Gateway**

- 2.19 The draft London Plan has also identified areas of opportunity and regeneration<sup>19</sup> that hug the Thames. These sites are largely to the east of Tower Bridge, in the Thames Gateway. They have been identified as the location for much of the projected economic and population growth within the draft London Plan and it is here that a new, radically different riverscape will emerge over the next few years. Already, the Planning Committee has heard evidence from developers who hope to shape this new eastern frontier at the Greenwich Peninsula (see below).
- 2.20 The Thames Gateway London Partnership<sup>20</sup> (TGLP) outlined to the Committee their role in shaping this rejuvenated living and working environment. TGLP is working together with the private sector, local communities and strategic agencies to deliver the economic, physical and social regeneration of the Thames Gateway in London<sup>21</sup>. TGLP, together with the GLA group are currently developing the sub regional framework, *Thames Strategy East* that will outline the development of these zones. This framework will cover everything east of London Bridge.
- 2.21 The Strategy aims to tackle developments along the Thames in two ways. The first will be via Supplementary Planning Guidance for riparian developments within the area. Developed with the Environment Agency, this guidance will address issues relating to the provision of a riverside walk as well as managing flood risk. This will be the mechanism that will deliver the standards and aspirations outlined in the draft London Plan. However, marrying the desire to have a vibrant and varied riverside environment and path with developing flood defences is an area where the "jury is still out as to actually how those two can be made more compatible."<sup>22</sup>
- 2.22 The second strand of work being developed is the Green Grid Network which aims to link riverside developments with the hinterland and its communities. At the Committee's hearing in March, TGLP stated that it was "very important that we consider that regeneration isn't just about developing on the new sites, but ensuring that everyone has inclusive access to the Thames."
- 2.23 Securing high quality riverside access via a riverside path and other hinterland developments is a clear aspiration for Thames Gateway riverside developments, to which all public agencies appear to subscribe. Section 106 agreements, the principal mechanism through which a path has been provided or improved in the past, will of course go some way towards achieving this. However, there will always be competition for the use of S106 resources, such as for the provision of new transport and social infrastructure, and in areas outside Central London with

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<sup>19</sup> Thames Side Areas of Opportunity are: Barking Reach, Dagenham Riverside, Belvedere/Erith, Deptford Creek/Greenwich Riverside, Greenwich Peninsula, Isle of Dogs, Royal Docks, Thamesmead, Vauxhall/Elms/Battersea, Waterloo. Thames Side Areas of Intensification are: Beckton, Woolwich Arsenal (Paragraph 40, Blue Ribbon Network, Draft London Plan)

<sup>20</sup> The partnership is a sub-regional alliance of 13 local authorities, 5 Universities, the London East Learning & Skills Council and the London Development Agency

<sup>21</sup> The Government has defined 14 major regeneration sites, six of which lie within the GLA boundary and within TGLP's area. All six are riparian site

<sup>22</sup> TGLP, Evidentiary Hearing, 11 March 2003

lower land values and thus lower potential for large S106 packages, the range of benefits secured in the centre of London may not be possible. It is therefore important that a clear planning framework for the Gateway is maintained, including aspirations for the provision of riverside open space and amenities, and that these act as key drivers to regeneration. And where necessary, such as at the excellent Thames Barrier Park, considerable public funds will be needed to secure public amenities on the riverside.

- 2.24 It is imperative therefore that these vital developments receive the support they need from as many agencies as possible, including the Mayor, TfL and the Countryside Agency (see 3.3 to 3.14), as well as local regeneration partnerships, land owners and the Boroughs. The mistakes and insensitive developments that sprang up during the 1980s and 1990s should not be repeated along other stretches of the Thames and in particular along London's new riverside frontier, the Thames Gateway. Warm words are being spoken which suggest that "lessons<sup>23</sup>" are being learnt from the past. Good policy and good intentions hasn't always been enough.
- 2.25 The draft London Plan is an opportunity to provide clear strategic guidance as to how a new, more inclusive and sensitive Thames riverscape may be created. But to provide these aspirations with further momentum, the Mayor, Countryside Agency, boroughs and sub regional partnerships such as Thames Gateway should begin to identify sites where the Blue Ribbon Network standards could and should be applied. The following recommendation places an emphasis on work that is already in some cases being done. However note that it does not exclusively apply to the Thames Gateway – there is considerable development to the West of Central London where equal rigour is needed.

Recommendation 3

**That the Mayor, Boroughs, sub regional partnerships and where appropriate other agencies identify key *individual* sites where best practice could be established in line with the standards promoted in the Blue Ribbon Network<sup>24</sup>. Opportunities for this may be available in the Thames Gateway and in particular in areas identified within the draft London Plan as areas of opportunity and regeneration.**

- 2.26 In this section we have identified the need for good quality design of riverside buildings. This means the creation of built forms which complement each other, which are not monotonous, which relate both to the river, the land around it, historic features and which are of a scale that makes sense at their location. We believe that the guidance set out in 'the Blue Ribbon Network' will facilitate this. We are not sure whether some further guardian of built form along the river is warranted. This could for example be through referral to the Mayor, through referral to a panel or through an informal or formal 'park authority'. Our view is that this issue is worthy of revisiting, as part of the work suggested in Recommendation 1.

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<sup>23</sup> LRA, Evidentiary Hearing, 11 March 2003

<sup>24</sup> Particularly BR20, BR21 and BR24



*Case Study 2*  
**Greenwich Peninsula**



On 4 February 2003, the Planning Committee, in a separate line of enquiry to the work conducted on the Thames Path, heard from Meridian Delta Ltd who are working on plans to redevelop the site around the Millennium Dome.

The plans for the site incorporate residential, commercial and leisure activities as well as a proportion of social housing. At the meeting, the Planning Committee were concerned that such a unique site should have a sense of the river throughout. Beyond the improvement and continuation of the river walkway, views to the river would be available from the development's central square.

In oral evidence to the scrutiny on the Thames Path, the London Rivers Association felt "a wider understanding [of the] concept of public access" was needed that meant "looking at issues of social inclusion, looking at types of measures that are taken to attract different communities to participate on the waterfront." Articulating this concern to the developers, the Committee wrote to Meridian demanding that riverside flats would be available to the social housing element of the development.

### 3. The Thames Path

- 3.1 As we have made clear in Chapter 2, we feel a more holistic approach should be developed regarding developments alongside the Thames. However if any such new approaches to the riverside are to be successfully adopted, an effective management structure should be in place to ensure their enforcement.
- 3.2 This chapter addresses the National Status given to large sections of the Path within London, the role that Transport for London plays in the provision of a riverside walkway and the general upkeep of the path (cycle routes, lighting, security and 24 hour access). The chapter goes on to make recommendations about the future management and day-to-day upkeep of the Thames riverside.

#### National Trail Status

- 3.3 The Thames Path National Trail within Greater London covers roughly the following area:
- Hampton Court to Kingston: solely on the north bank
  - Kingston to Teddington: solely on the south bank
  - Teddington to Isle of Dogs/Greenwich: both north and south bank
  - Greenwich to Thames Barrier: solely on the south bank.

The Secretary of State for the Environment gave National Trail Status to the Thames Path in 1989. The Path, opened in 1996, was “expected to become England’s most used National Trail”<sup>25</sup>. The Thames Path does not cover the whole of the Thames riverside in London.

- 3.4 National Trail status does not automatically confer any additional funding for its upkeep or development. It does however provide the chosen trail with legal protection<sup>26</sup>. The approved line of the trail can only be altered with a submission order agreed by the Countryside Agency and then formally approved by the Secretary of State. Since its designation as a National Trail in 1989, the line of the path has not formally deviated from its original line.
- 3.5 In its written submission to this scrutiny, the Countryside Agency stated: “Our key priority for the Thames Path National Trail is to complete and raise the existing standard of the path...to ensure that the existing route in London is raised to meet our national quality standards...Therefore at this time the Countryside Agency has no intention to extend the Thames Path National Trail. The suitability of the stretch beyond the Thames Barrier has not been discussed.”<sup>27</sup>
- 3.6 The GLA, TfL, Thames Gateway London Partnership, and the London Forum all support the extension of the Path to the east. The Forum feels that attributing National Trail status to the existing Path gave impetus to its creation and ongoing completion. However, some of the boroughs that would be directly affected who

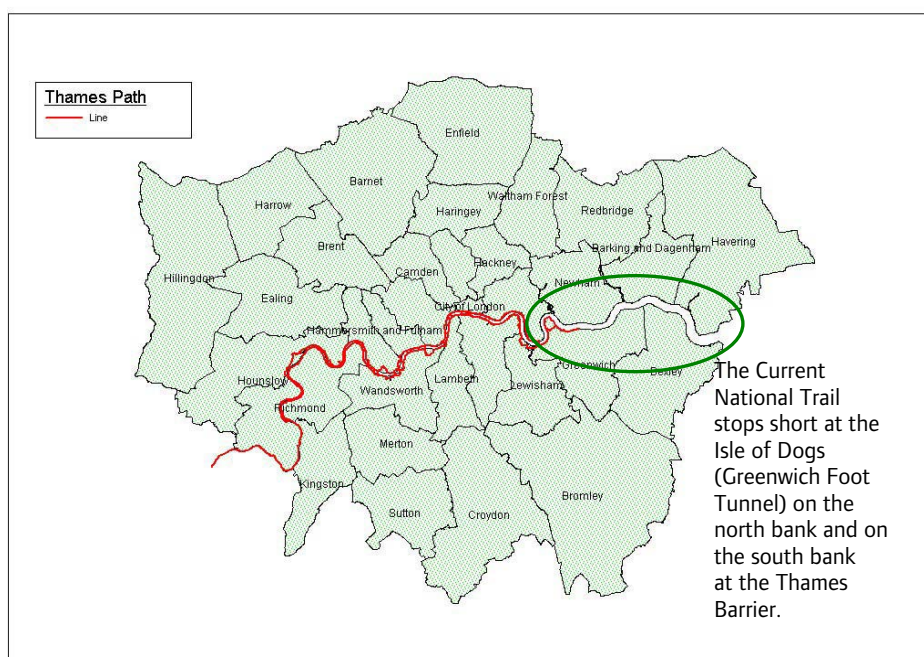
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<sup>25</sup> Countryside Agency, *The Thames Path: Development Plan Policies, A Good Practice Guide*, November 1998

<sup>26</sup> 1949 National Parks and Countryside Act, Sections 50-55

<sup>27</sup> Countryside Agency, written evidence, February 2003

responded to the scrutiny expressed concern about the funding and management implications that the status would bring.



- 3.7 Any extension to the east – from the Isle of Dogs to Aveley Marshes on the north bank (a distance of 23 km), and from the Thames Barrier to Crayford Ness on the south bank (a distance of 15km) – would require additional funding to the Countryside Agency or a reorganisation of the management and maintenance arrangements that are currently in place. Alternatively, other sources of funding would need to be sought.
- 3.8 The issue needs consideration. The Thames Gateway has been identified, by both the Mayor and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, as the area that will absorb much of London’s anticipated population growth in the future. The Thames will lie at the heart of this development. Commercial and residential developments will soon flank the eastern riverside.
- 3.9 The eastern sections of the Path are very different from the Thames of Central and West London. Industrial sites and working wharfs that exist to the east were identified as a barrier to the path’s extension in written evidence to the Committee. The Committee accepts that the River is “multi-functional<sup>28</sup>” and that any Path should respect the working nature of the River. There are sections of the riverside that are entirely inappropriate for a path to run adjacent to the Thames but these are at a minimum of locations. Clear signage can navigate any problems this may present as it does frequently along the current National Trail.
- 3.10 The lack of identifiable destinations that an eastern extension could feature was a concern raised by LB Barking and Dagenham. “It is difficult to identify existing landmark destinations further east than the Thames Barrier. If the path is to provide a true route, thought needs to be given to the creation of destination points – otherwise the path will just be used by dog walkers and its true intent will be lost.<sup>29</sup>”

<sup>28</sup> LRA, Evidentiary Hearing, 11 March 2003

<sup>29</sup> LB Barking & Dagenham, Written Evidence, February 2003

- 3.11 The Thames Path on the north bank stops just after Canary Wharf and opposite the Cutty Sark. If the work of the Thames Gateway London Partnership (see Chapter 4) and regional and national plans are realised, further landmarks to the east on both banks of the Thames will be created. Before this new riverscape for London develops, the importance of the riverside to all London warrants the recognition and protection that National Trail status can bring. And there are in any event a range of attractions on the river to the East of the Thames Barrier.
- 3.12 The Countryside Agency should reconsider its position on the potential extension to the east of the National Trail. The responsibility for the safeguarding and provision of a riverside path should not be limited to the Countryside Agency however. The Mayor, boroughs and Government need to be aware of the responsibility they have in delivering a holistic new river environment.

*Recommendation 4*

**We recommend that the Thames Path be extended beyond its current Eastern Boundaries towards the Greater London Boundary, on both sides of the Thames.**

- 3.13 The adoption of this recommendation, which is directed at the Mayor, the Boroughs, Government and the Countryside Agency is particularly important given the large number of development sites and opportunities in the Thames Gateway in coming years.

**Transport for London**

- 3.14 The Thames Path National Trail was identified in the draft Walking Plan for London as one of Transport for London's (TfL) six strategic walking routes. The route offers a "largely traffic-free" east-west walk into London. Even though the Plan highlights the Thames Path National Trail as only one of its six strategic routes, TfL in their oral evidence to the committee confirmed that TfL were happy to consider expanding the length of the strategic route beyond the eastern boundaries of the National Trail status.
- 3.15 As part of the work carried out to complete these six strategic routes TfL have been funding local authorities to repair parts of the path that may not meet Countryside Agency standards. The Thames Path Online Project, with which the Assembly have cooperated with in the work done to produce the new map of the Thames Path (Annex A), has been instrumental in identifying such sites. TfL have also provided funding for the provision of both cycling and walking along the Thames Path where it was deemed appropriate.

*Recommendation 5*

**That TfL extend the Thames Path strategic walking route identified in their *Draft Walking Plan for London* to include the whole of Thames riverside. As the path is extended and completed downriver it should be added to the signed route network.**

*Recommendation 6*

**That to supplement the work already carried out for the Thames Path Online Project, TfL ensure that the mapped information (Annex A) is updated regularly and that the survey work done is extended to include the eastern section of London not covered by the National Trail.**

### **Cyclists vs. Pedestrians**

- 3.16 A persistent issue for users of the path is the conflict that exists between cyclists and pedestrians. TfL state that for both to co-exist satisfactorily the path must be at least five metres wide<sup>30</sup>. This is not possible on all sections of the path, especially where the path may run adjacent to important historical or environmental sites.
- 3.17 Sustrans, in partnership with relevant local authorities, have played a large part in providing Thames side cycle paths in recent years. Between 1995-2000, as part of the London Cycle Network, Sustrans developed their Thames Cycle Route. The Thames Cycle Route does not follow the Thames Path exactly, deviating away from the Path at a number of points. However, it is clear from the Thames Path Map, that even where the path may be wide enough, actual marked out cycle provision is still rare.
- 3.18 We support the view adopted TfL in their evidence to the Committee that “provision for cyclists should also be made where this can be achieved without risk to the safety of pedestrians. Wherever possible a segregated cycle path should be provided, either separated from the pedestrian route, or if this is not possible then designed so as to allow use of the space by both cyclists and pedestrians but on segregated surfaces<sup>31</sup>”.
- 3.19 However, the cycle route as mapped on the London Cycle Network takes a circuitous route to avoid the Path where the standards outlined above are not met. Consequently, the urge to get from A to B as quickly as possible means that cyclists ride along sections of path where only pedestrians should have access.

### **Management of the Path**

- 3.20 There is a clear problem. Enforcement responsibilities rest largely with the Borough as local planning or highway authority. However, set against other priorities the level of attention and resources that Thames Path enforcement attracts compared to other more urgent needs often means that the powers are not energetically exercised. For example, the main barrier to diverting cyclists away from inappropriate sections of the Path is enforcement. Maps and signs are fine, but without enforcement cyclists continue using sections of the path oblivious that they should not be.

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<sup>30</sup> TfL, Evidentiary Hearing, March 11, 2003

<sup>31</sup> TfL, Evidentiary Hearing, March 11, 2003

*Case Study 3*

**Arcadia in the City**

The Thames Landscape Strategy Partnership consists of the London Boroughs of Richmond, Hounslow and Kingston, Elmbridge District Borough Council, the Environment Agency, English Heritage, English Nature, Countryside Agency, Wild Parks Agency and the National Trust. One of the projects that the Partnership is responsible for is Arcadia in the City.

Its mission statement states: “*Arcadia in the City* will encourage universal access and enjoyment of London’s Arcadian Thames through the enhancement, conservation and promotion of the natural and built heritage of the Thames Landscape Strategy area<sup>32</sup>.”

The project will receive a £3.5 million Heritage Lottery Fund, and covers the area of riverside between Teddington and Isleworth. One of the drivers behind the work was that there were such limited resources along the river, and so few organisations that can carry out the work, including the long-term management, that a new approach was required.

In his presentation to the Committee, Jason Debney, the project’s coordinator told the committee was that the single most important aspect of the project was the progress made on “the long-term day-to-day management” of the area. To date, new mechanisms for maintaining the river work to the river’s timetable rather than the Council’s. For example, cutting the grass is not cut immediately after the spring tide, but instead is cut during the different neap tides. Litter is collected at low tide. The Project has been able to double the resources previously committed to the area.

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<sup>32</sup> Arcadia in the City, written evidence, March 2003

- 3.21 Access denied and then not asserted can be easily viewed as a ‘victimless crime’. What is clearly needed is a sense of greater ownership and priority than the current arrangement allows. The means of achieving this, if, as we believe, it is a priority, is a matter for some further discussion.
- 3.22 The riverside of the Thames appears to be supported by a strong local and regional policy framework. Borough UDPs and the draft London Plan all serve to protect, enhance and where possible extend the provision of a riverside path within a hinterland environment that remains sensitive to the unique setting the Thames offers.
- 3.23 However, subsequent management of this network to date has not always matched up to original intentions. The riverside environment is still plagued by uneven access (including areas in South West London where the high tide can render the path unusable), litter and vandalism. An accessible riverside environment may be desired, but between planning, implementation and day-to-day use this desire is being lost somewhere. The implementation of UDPs, the London Plan and the Walking Plan need to be monitored. They need to be policed.
- 3.24 The scrutiny looked into the possibility of TfL assuming management responsibilities for the whole of the Path. However, TfL felt that there were considerable benefits to local boroughs remaining responsible for their section of the path; not least the knowledge of the local area, the relationships developed with local communities and the expertise local authorities have in dealing with large planning applications.
- 3.25 The Committee agree. The ultimate responsibility and management for the Thames Path and surrounding area should remain with local boroughs – for the time being. Already enshrined with borough UDPs is an adequate framework for the protection of the riverside environment. Some excellent policy has been developed and agreed. However, the reporting, maintenance and implementation mechanisms has struggled to deliver on these policies aims.
- 3.26 It is our view that these arrangements should be reviewed. A case may develop for a greater coordinating responsibility to be developed if voluntary arrangements lead to a poor and patchy enforcement and management of the Thames Path. The question of whether change will be needed depends upon both delivery and the priority that London stakeholders choose to give to the Thames. We suggest that the Assembly, and the Mayor’s office, periodically reviews the adequacy of management arrangements.
- 3.27 On-going maintenance and enforcement along the Path was identified as a problem by a number of submissions<sup>33</sup>. The problems that prevent the Thames Path becoming a priority has resulted in a “patchy<sup>34</sup>” provision for the path. A suggestion made<sup>35</sup> was that a warden scheme should be explored as a mechanism

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<sup>33</sup> Bexley, Barking and Dagenham, Wandsworth, Groundwork, Thames Gateway London Partnership, Thames 21, Southwark Heritage Association, LB Tower Hamlets, West London River Group, River Thames Society, Ramblers Association, Sustrans – Written Evidence, February/March 2003

<sup>34</sup> Thames Gateway Local Partnership, Written submission, February 2003

<sup>35</sup> Groundwork, Southwark Heritage Association, Written Evidence, February 2003

for tackling the overall upkeep of the path. Although arrangements are in place in pockets along the Path, these arrangements rely on volunteers and do not have immediately to hand the local and regional network of contacts that can help tackle any problems that may be identified.

- 3.28 A warden scheme would be able to update riparian boroughs where a litterbin is overflowing, where a sign has been vandalized or where there is persistent infringements regarding cyclists. It may also be able to provide added protection to the foreshore work being conducted by the Thames Access Partnership (see Chapter 4). The wardens would be the eyes and ears of the Thames area. If the Thames is a linear park, it seems only right to have a park warden.
- 3.29 TfL is already playing a part in the funding and upkeep of the path and is in the process of developing valuable relationships with riparian boroughs. The work done on the Thames Path Online Project is a valuable contribution to the improvement of the Thames Path. But the improvements achieved through this must be maintained. The Committee would therefore like to recommend the following.

*Recommendation 7*

**That the management of the path remains in the control of local boroughs.**

*Recommendation 8*

**That the Mayor co-ordinates an overall review of current enforcement regimes along the River Path, to see whether good practice and better coordination can be developed.**

*Recommendation 9*

**That as part of this review, the Mayor considers funding arrangements for a warden service, or a pilot service, as part of TfL/ GLA's budget planning process, justified as an initiative to encourage tourism, the environment, pedestrian safety and economic development along the Thames corridor.**



## 4. The Thames Foreshore

### Introduction

- 4.1 The Thames' previous reputation as a dirty, polluted body of water has radically changed over a relatively short period of time thanks to a great deal of investment from a number of organisations. Thames Water for example are "keen that Londoners enjoy the benefits of this investment to its fullest – including a fuller engagement with the Thames and its foreshores."<sup>36</sup>
- 4.2 The foreshore covers the area beneath the high tide watermark that is exposed when the Thames reaches low tide. The foreshore environment varies enormously across London. It can be a fairly unwelcoming and potentially dangerous sludge, or a gently sloping, pebble beach. The foreshore is also exposed to the paraphernalia of a city of 7.5 million – it's tides have been known to wash up tyres, shopping trolleys, syringes and the odd discarded Christmas tree in January. However, it is the host to some of London's most vibrant natural environments and most important archaeological sites and is also a place where Londoners can engage more closely with one of the world's great rivers.
- 4.3 The River Thames' tidal range is up to seven metres and the water can rise rapidly. The foreshore includes hazards of mud and there are unseen risks, such as trenches, mud and hollows, in shallow water. There is therefore an understandable concern on safety grounds not to encourage general access to the foreshore. However, there is also a need to teach people about the river environment and the foreshore is considered an ideal place to achieve this. The "mutual contradiction"<sup>37</sup> between these two aims is being explored through a number of projects and organisations that gave evidence to the scrutiny.
- 4.4 This report seeks to address these issues by looking at two approaches to foreshore access that some of these projects have undertaken. The work done to date on supervised and unsupervised access to the foreshore encapsulates many of the issues faced when examining the potential use of the foreshore by Londoners.

### Supervised Access to the Foreshore

- 4.5 The Port of London Authority (PLA) is a public trust and owns the majority of the bed and foreshore of the River Thames<sup>38</sup>. The PLA state that "there is, in legal terms, no public right to pass along or across the foreshore". However, the PLA do accept that there is a public demand for access and go on to state that they are "willing to tolerate the continuation of public access at locations where it is appropriate and the risk to public safety are acceptable or low."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Thames Water, Written Evidence, February 2003

<sup>37</sup> Val Shawcross, AM, Evidentiary Hearing, March 11, 2003

<sup>38</sup> The PLA are responsible for the stretch of river up to the mean high water mark between the upper port limit near the Teddington Lock to a line drawn between the City or Crow Stone (Westcliffe/Leigh) to the London Stone (east of Yantlet Creek). The Crown Estate are responsible for those areas not covered by the area outlined above. (PLA, Written Evidence, February 2003)

<sup>39</sup> Port of London Authority, Written Evidence, February 2003

- 4.6 The keyword is *tolerate*. Other organisations seek to *encourage* access to the foreshore. It is the difference between these two attitudes that lies at the centre of the foreshore issue.
- 4.7 Every year the foreshore is enjoyed during one-off supervised events. The City of London Archaeological Society described how thousands of people had enjoyed the foreshore over the last six years via their Archaeological Open Day on the Tower of London foreshore. The Thames Festival, which had over 70,000 visitors last year, also uses the foreshore as a venue for some its events.
- 4.8 English Nature and the Thames Estuary Partnership among others are organisations who advocate encouraging supervised access to the foreshore. Supervised access alleviates many of the foreshore safety concerns and can provide access to valuable education about the foreshore’s environmental and archaeological importance.
- 4.9 Such access should strike a balance between “facilitating access and conserving and enhancing the natural environment and ecology of the foreshore”<sup>40</sup>. Some habitats and species are vulnerable and susceptible to access; some are rare and have localised importance, but good planning and appropriate consultation can avoid any potential conflict. As English Nature state in their evidence to the Committee, access and conservation do not have to have necessarily conflict. English Nature informed the Committee that “there can be... significant benefits to the natural environment through increased awareness and understanding among the public.”
- 4.10 A number of organisations seek to achieve exactly this aim. The Thames Explorer Trust seeks to promote education and awareness about the Thames and runs a number of school programmes, play schemes and workshops for over 10,000 Londoners and the foreshore plays a central role in these projects: “London is unique among world capitals in having a tidal river that twice daily uncovers a foreshore which in many areas is accessible<sup>41</sup>.”
- 4.11 In 2002, the Thames Explorer Trust produced guidelines, *Health and Safety Guidelines for the Thames and its Foreshore*. The guidelines produced with the support of a number of key organisations including the Port of London Authority<sup>42</sup>, comprehensively addresses the issue, including a chapter on protecting the river and its wildlife.
- 4.12 The guidelines are for supervised access to the foreshore only and seek to tackle the ignorance about the dangers of the foreshore. Alison Taylor of Thames Explorer Trust, pointed out that “people know about the dangers in parks, children climbing trees and falling out of them ...*but*... Londoners are very ignorant about what the risks on the foreshore are.”<sup>43</sup>
- 4.13 The PLA support the idea that education is the best and most sustainable way to improve safety to the foreshore. To this end, they have embarked upon a number of safety campaigns and have produced their own Riverside Code to work in line

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<sup>40</sup> LB Bexley, Written Evidence, February 2003

<sup>41</sup> Thames Explorer Trust, Written Evidence, February 2003

<sup>42</sup> The other organisations involved were: the Environment Agency, HM Coastguard, Metropolitan Police, Port Health Authority, RNLI, Creekside Education Trust and Thames 21.

<sup>43</sup> Thames Explorer Trust, Evidentiary Hearing, March 11, 2003

with the National Curriculum. However, Mark Lloyd of Thames 21 added that the foreshore itself, rather than the classroom, was the best venue to teach people about foreshore safety. As welcome as poster campaigns and school visits were, “there [is] no substitute for in situ education<sup>44</sup>”.

- 4.14 As part of its safety guidelines, Thames Explorer Trust stresses the need to constantly assess risks. The ever-changing nature of the river and the environment means that communication between regular providers of supervised foreshore access need to share this information among their peers. The Thames Explorer Trust in both their written and oral evidence stressed the need for “continued dialogue” and possibly an annual meeting to “discuss and update safety procedures”.
- 4.15 The PLA state that organisations such as Thames 21 and Thames Explorer Trust are to be “commended” in their work in educating people about the dangers of the foreshore. In seeking to provide “physical and intellectual<sup>45</sup>” supervised access to the foreshore such groups have helped tens of thousands of Londoners enjoy this unique environment.
- 4.16 The information we received on supervised and licensed access for environmental, archaeological, leisure and education purposes shows that there exists a small, dedicated and effective network of agencies who use the Thames Foreshore for organised activities. The Committee supports these organisations in their aim to develop Londoners attitude toward the foreshore from “something to look at<sup>46</sup>” into something to actively engage with.
- 4.17 We are however of the view that the scope for activity and for demand is potentially greater than current usage. Growth of use will place considerable pressure, and some risk, on the existing framework. The efficacy of current arrangements should be reviewed periodically.

#### **Access Points: Ownership & Risk**

- 4.18 Supervised access to the foreshore would normally, before any other consideration, seek to identify safe entry points to the foreshore. However, before any consideration of unsupervised access to the foreshore can be addressed, the first and largest barrier to be overcome is often the access points themselves. Many are “in disrepair, suffer from daily depositions of silt rendering them dangerous and are inadequately signed for public access to be permitted<sup>47</sup>”. Many are also blocked altogether.
- 4.19 Of the 84 access points surveyed along the Thames Path National Trail, 19 were gated off or locked. This presents a number of dangers. The existence of closed access points not only impairs those trying to get to the foreshore, but those trying to get out should they need to exit the river in an emergency.

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<sup>44</sup> Thames 21, Evidentiary Hearing, March 11, 2003

<sup>45</sup> Thames Explorer Trust, Evidentiary Hearing, March 11, 2003

<sup>46</sup> Thames Explorer Trust, Evidentiary Hearing, March 11, 2003

<sup>47</sup> Thames 21, Written Evidence, February 2003

*Case Study 4*

**Primrose Wharf, Greenwich**

On a site visit in January 2003 to East Greenwich, the rapporteur to the scrutiny, John Biggs AM, saw the work recently coordinated by Groundwork (Thames Gateway London South) in conjunction with the London Development Agency, the Deptford Discovery Team and the Environment Agency.

LB Greenwich representatives highlighted a project that had reclaimed a reed bed along the embankment that ran either side of a renovated Pier.

The environment along the Thames foreshore and path was considered the main barrier to increasing wildlife population rather than the pollution of the Thames. The Thames has become a lot cleaner in the last 20 years - the numbers of cormorants, whose only source of food was fish, were testament to that. There are a limited number of appropriate sites for a reed bed habitat along the Thames, but fortunately the foreshore either side of Primrose Wharf and leading up to Bay Wharf was identified as a potential site.

Terraced beds were re-introduced and planted with reeds that will be colonized by inter tidal species. This new environment along the Thames gives greater credence to the idea that the Thames is a living river. The jetty provides unobtrusive access to this new natural environment as well as great views of the riverscape. Improvements to the surface and access to the jetty had increased public usage and included in this improvement were renovations to allow greater disabled access.

- 4.20 Liability for an owner of an access point is one of the main reasons that they remain blocked. An owner of an access point may be exposed to liability in two ways. Firstly, should anyone injure themselves on the access point itself. Secondly, should anyone come to harm having used an access point. Perhaps as a consequence of this liability, establishing ownership of access points can prove difficult (see Annex B). The access points to the foreshore were primarily designed for the use of boat launching, not for pedestrian access. Therefore there will be access points to parts of the foreshore that are not safe.
- 4.21 Research in the mid 1990's conducted by the PLA identifies almost 300 access points to the foreshore. Some are owned by the PLA, some are subject to a PLA licence and others may be owned privately. However, there are a great number of access points where ownership is not clear.
- 4.22 Although the PLA feel that riparian boroughs should assume responsibility for these access points (as highway authorities), boroughs, not unnaturally, are not eager to take on this responsibility. As the core GLA stated in their submission to the Committee, the reluctance is understandable as "no public agencies are keen to take on additional financial burdens for a service which attracts neither any specific grants or funding nor any form of revenue<sup>48</sup>." Coupled with the safety and liability issues and the fact that some of these access points are as old as London itself, it is not surprising that reliable evidence about who owns certain access points can prove hard to find.
- 4.23 Beyond achieving access, the issue of liability remains. The two approaches we have looked at – supervised and unsupervised access (see below) – are summarised in crude terms below.
- Organisations who arrange trips to the foreshore are responsible for the safe management of the access to the foreshore. Should any incident occur to a person on a supervised visit, the organisation would be liable.
  - Should an individual, acting as a free agent, accessing the foreshore raise a claim it would possibly be the agency responsible for the access point that would be liable although this would be mitigated by a presumption of personal responsibility for safety.

As can be seen from Annex B, previous cases indicate that warning signs may or may not increase liability of an owner of an access point. That this can be the case naturally discourages the erection of signage, even if its purpose is to aid safe use.

- 4.24 At the time of our scrutiny, the PLA had three liability cases ongoing, one of which the insurers had instructed the PLA they should make provision for. Of the tens of thousands of people who have gone on trips organised by Thames21 only four have been injured. All were minor injuries. However, actual risk and perceived risk are different things and the difference is expensive. The PLA's insurance premiums have risen "extraordinarily<sup>49</sup>" over the last two years. The proliferation of "no win no fee" damages cases has also exposed organisations such as the PLA to greater risk.

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<sup>48</sup> Greater London Authority, Written Evidence, February 2003

<sup>49</sup> Port of London Authority, Evidentiary Hearing, March 11, 2003

- 4.25 “Members of the general public cannot close their eyes and turn away from taking reasonable precautions themselves and then blame the occupier if they become injured”<sup>50</sup>. The Committee agrees. Equally we feel, the PLA and others responsible for the foreshore need to take “reasonable precaution” themselves as they rightly seek to improve the quality and quantity of access to the Thames foreshore. Clarity on the questions of liability and personal responsibility will help to secure a better-maintained and signposted series of access points to the river.

### **Unsupervised Access to the Foreshore: Thames Access Project**

- 4.26 The Thames Access Project (TAP) comprises a number of organisations including the PLA, Crown Estate, Thames 21 and GLA, that seek to tackle this issue. The group have identified five sites<sup>51</sup> where access is considered plausible. The hope is that the perennial issues that have blocked access in the past can be tackled by the Partnership. Establishing ownership, developing signage and obtaining a satisfactory level of general maintenance will also be looked at, on top of the redevelopment of the access sites themselves. This redevelopment would include the implementation of handrails and non-slip stairways and other measures to make access easier. Should these pilot projects prove successful, it is hoped that the benefits of the schemes would be used to inform a wider policy on accessing the foreshore.
- 4.27 The kind of signage that these areas might provide would include tidal timetables and safety warnings about tidal flows and other risks (such as the litter that can sometimes be washed up on the foreshore). However, as the PLA stated in their oral evidence to the Committee, the “signage ... on... slipways get vandalised and defaced as a matter of course.”<sup>52</sup> Tidal times would also have to be updated. Whilst funding may be secured for the actual redevelopment of the site and the initial launch of the scheme, a source for ongoing costs is more difficult to identify.
- 4.28 To date, beyond the joint Thames 21/PLA Debris Clearance Operation<sup>53</sup> scheme, a lot of the work done to maintain the foreshore has been conducted by volunteers. Thames 21’s *Adopt A River* scheme for example has two officers who co-ordinate over 5,000 volunteers. On average the volunteers give about eight hours a year of their time on river projects including cleaning the foreshore.
- 4.29 However, the foreshore and its access points should not need to rely on the kindness of strangers to be maintained. Until now, there has not been a statutory duty to clean litter beneath the watermark of the Thames. The Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) have been looking into extending local authority powers to improve the maintenance of public spaces. *The Living Places: Powers, Rights and Responsibilities* consultation paper (October 2002) presents two options: to either extend the litter duty to include aquatic

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<sup>50</sup> John Cooper’s Legal Focus, Duty of the public to protect themselves against particular risks, May 2002, considering the Lyme Regis Case - ([http://www.justis.com/news/jc\\_020523.html](http://www.justis.com/news/jc_020523.html))

<sup>51</sup> The sites are Goat Wharf in Brentford; Battersea Park; Festival Pier, Bankside; Queen Steps in Greenwich, and Shadwell Dock in Tower Hamlets.

<sup>52</sup> Port of London Authority, Evidentiary Hearing, March 11, 2003

<sup>53</sup> Thames21 co-ordinates the work of the PLA’s Debris Clearance Operation which involves two mobile vessels sweeping the surface of the water and removing cars and shopping trolleys from the intertidal foreshore. It also makes use of 6 passive debris collectors (PDCs), which are moored in the river channel and collect floating litter.

environments or to establish a voluntary code of practice among responsible authorities. DEFRA are now considering responses and a course of action.

4.30 The extension of a litter duty has massive resource implications for boroughs for whom resources are already stretched. Although a code of practice would offer no direct funding to the schemes proposed by the Thames Access Partnership, it could provide a fresh impetus for the improvement of access points to the foreshore. If the riverbed and foreshore's litter were subject to a code of practice, then access to the foreshore would have to be improved in order to allow this code to be enforced.

4.31 A code of practice for the condition of the foreshore would also have benefits beyond foreshore access. It would ensure that the Thames which is at the centre of so much tourist, leisure, residential, commercial and industrial activity would be a safer, cleaner and more attractive focal point for Londoners and visitors alike. A cleaner, more litter free Thames would also benefit London's bio-diversity.

The Committee supports the development of voluntary agreements and associated codes of practice with local authorities and other partners for controlling the amount of litter on the Thames and its foreshore, as set out in DEFRA's *Living Spaces* consultation paper, while noting the potential that DEFRA might give statutory responsibility for this task at a future date.

4.32 The issue of liability for, and management, of both supervised and unsupervised access to the Thames, including responsibility of access points, signage and conduct on the foreshore is a complex and potentially legally contentious issue and needs further consideration. The *Living Spaces* agenda also provides an opportunity for those concerned with the foreshore environment to put in place sustainable management arrangements for the Thames foreshore. Therefore the Committee recommends:

*Recommendation 10*

**With a view to increasing public access to the foreshore, the Mayor should facilitate a consultation between the relevant different agencies to:**

- **Clarify boundaries of responsibilities for resources and management issues presented by supervised and unsupervised access to the foreshore**
- **Develop a directory, either by Borough or for the whole London Thames area, of access points and the rights attaching to them, ownership and repairing responsibilities**

**The results of this consultation to be reported back to the Planning Committee at a later date.**

## Annex Ai: Notes to maps of Thames Path National Trail

The following comments were submitted to the committee from witnesses and provide a commentary to the previous appendix, the maps of the Thames Path.

### Map 1 – Silvertown - Greenwich Barrier

#### Sites in need of attention

*Comments from Thames Gateway London Partnership:*

- West of the Thames Barrier
- Convoys Wharf (owned by News International, currently being master planned by the Richard Roger’s Partnership)
- Leamouth area (from Trinity Buoy Wharf)

#### Examples of good practice

*Comments from LB Newham:*

- Thames Barrier Park – North Bank



## **Map 2 – Blackwall - Greenwich Peninsula**

### **Sites in need of attention**

*Comments from the River Thames Society:*

- North Bank – Tower Hamlets to West India Dock – intermittently to the East India Dock (but with restricted opening hours).

*Comments from the Ramblers Association:*

- As public parks close path off at night it is not unreasonable for private property to do the same. The majority of these arrangements are in the Wapping/ Limehouse area. Consistency of hours would be helpful.

*Comments from Thames Gateway London Partnership:*

- West of the Thames Barrier
- Convoys Wharf (owned by News International, currently being master planned by the Richard Roger's Partnership)
- Leamouth area (from Trinity Buoy wharf)

*Comments from Lee Valley Regional Park:*

- Leamouth - working wharves seem extremely problematic in this respect.
- Southern section of the Lee Valley Pathway just north of Bow Creek

*Comments from LB Tower Hamlets:*

- Klein's Wharf on Westferry Road, which forces the riverside walkway to follow the main road (Westferry Road), instead of going via riverfront.

### **Examples of good practice**

*Comments from Thames Gateway London Partnership:*

- Thames Gateway London Partnership commend the quality design of the land-river interface at Tate Modern and Deptford Creek as examples best practice, and believe that the retired flood defences on the Greenwich Peninsula exhibit how responding to climate change and new development can result in a win-win situation where proactive planning and early dialogue in the planning process is initiated.

### **Map 3 - Isle of Dogs/Millwall – Greenwich**

#### **Sites in need of attention**

*Comments from River Thames Society:*

- North Bank – Tower Hamlets to West India Dock – intermittently to the East India Dock (but with restricted opening hours).

*Comments from Ramblers Association:*

- As public parks close path off at night it is not unreasonable for private property to do the same. The majority of these arrangements are in the Wapping/ Limehouse area. Consistency of hours would be helpful.
- Bad - President's Quay

#### **Examples of good practice**

*Comments from Thames Gateway London Partnership:*

- Thames Gateway London Partnership commend the quality design of the land-river interface at Tate Modern and Deptford Creek as examples best practice, and believe that the retired flood defences on the Greenwich Peninsula exhibit how responding to climate change and new development can result in a win-win situation where proactive planning and early dialogue in the planning process is initiated.

### **Map 4 – Isle of Dogs – Deptford**

#### **Sites in need of attention**

- *No comments received*

#### **Examples of good practice**

- *No comments received*

### **Map 5 – Poplar/West India Dock – Rotherhithe**

#### **Sites in need of attention**

*Comments from Thames 21:*

- East Southwark & parts of Tower Hamlets, where the path weaves in and out of residential areas, there are several gates that leave the user uncertain as to their rights of access and signage is poor.

#### **Examples of good practice**

- *No comments received*

## **Map 6 – Shadwell – Bermondsey**

### **Sites in need of attention**

#### *Comments from Southwark Heritage:*

- Shad Thames/Angel pub – a building site and a barrier to travelling eastwards to Rotherhithe.
- Mayflower at Rotherhithe - passage has been locked.
- 106 agreement not enforced just west of Spice Island pub (Rotherhithe Street) - a public pier has been mistakenly blocked off with gate with permission from LB Southwark.
- 106 agreements in Old Rotherhithe have not been strict enough – it tends to be spent on general expenditure rather than the area disrupted.

#### *Comments from the Ramblers Association:*

- Sequence of developments can block access for a long time.
- Gun Wharves; New crane Wharf; Orient Wharf; Cinnabar/Capital Wharf; Pelican Stairs/Prospect of Whitby; Hilton Hotel.

#### *Comments from the GLA (Mayor's Office):*

- There are, however, cases where the access is designed or managed in such a way as to give the path the feel of a private rather than a publicly accessible path. For example, this is the case on the north bank of the River Thames going west of Vauxhall Bridge where the path runs very close to a new residential development and in Wapping where gates are located on the path.

#### *Comments from Thames 21:*

- East Southwark & parts of Tower Hamlets, where the path weaves in and out of residential areas, there are several gates which leave the user uncertain as to their rights of access and signage is poor.

### **Examples of good practice**

- *No comments received*

## **Map 7 – Tower of London/City/City Hall, London Bridge**

### **Sites in need of attention**

*Comments from Southwark Heritage:*

- Areas around Southwark Cathedral and Borough Market are poor for disabled people.

*Comments from the Ramblers Association*

- Bad diversion - Tower Bridge Wharf

*Comments from Richard Moberly (LRA)*

- Inland via Clink Street to St. Mary Overie dock - No access to foreshore as far as Tower Bridge.
- Office block diverts walker from river either to tunnel under London Bridge Foot to Tooley St, or to riverside walk in front of Hays Galleria.
- No access to foreshore other than locked steps in front of London Bridge House until steps through office block, downstream of Tower Bridge. Look as though probably locked at night.

*Comments from the Corporation of London*

- Sir John Lyon House and Broken Wharf (has been relying on the completion by way of a negotiated agreement). Corporation may have to resort to compulsory purchase powers to enable completion of this section. Outcome would not be guaranteed.

*Comments from 41 Tate*

- Blackfriars Bridge (particular bottle neck).
- Increased pedestrianisation of neighbouring streets around Bankside would be helpful

*Comments from Thames 21*

- Walbrook Wharf - it is difficult to suggest a solution other than ensuring that the "diverted" route is as well-signed, pleasant and accessible as possible (see Walbrook Wharf)

### **Examples of good practice**

*Comments from the Ramblers Association*

- Diversions are sometimes welcome - Palace of Westminster, Clink Street.

*Comments from the GLA (Mayor's Office)*

- The GLA has also been involved in pre-application discussions in relation to Three Quays House, the building on the north side of the River Thames next to the Tower of London. The proposals would enhance the existing riverside walk by widening the path and through the provision of additional seating.

## **Map 8 – Blackfriars Bridge – Westminster Bridge**

### **Sites in need of attention**

*Comments from Colin Saunders (author of London - the Definitive Walking Guide)*

- Blackfriars rail bridge – gate and fence restrict access – at peak times substantial queues form. This is also a poor site for wheelchair users.

*Comments from Richard Moberly (LRA)*

- Westminster Bridge-foot - Tunnel under. Steps bolted shut. Facing steps immediately upstream of bridge blocked by scaffolding owing to bridge repairs.
- County Hall - Upstream steps, gates bolted shut. Downstream steps to stony beach, blocked by stall holder's wares. Walkway apparently owned by Japanese purchasers of County Hall. Sign saying that merchandise and ticket touting are forbidden but this does not apparently apply to a Bureau de Change, a ticket stall for cruises, and chairs and tables belonging to a cafe, all of which, combined with skateboarders, cyclists and parties of school children and boards advertising Exhibitions mean that passage along this section of the Thames Path is restricted.
- Appeared to be a shortage of lifebelts, between Westminster Bridge and Gabriel's Wharf. At the latter there are two lifelines (without buoys).

*Comments from Guys & St Thomas*

- In general we are in support of developing the path along the full length of the river but are concerned about the section of the path by the hospital – they will not allow the path to open into the hospital. This section should have no commercial activity along it

*Comments from the Corporation of London*

- Sir John Lyon House and Broken Wharf (has been relying on the completion by way of a negotiated agreement). Corporation may have to resort to compulsory purchase powers to enable completion of this section. Outcome would not be guaranteed.

*Comments from 41 Tate*

- Blackfriars Bridge (particular bottle neck).
- Increased pedestrianisation of neighbouring streets around Bankside would be helpful

### **Examples of good practice**

- *No comments received*

## **Map 9 – House of Parliament – Vauxhall Bridge**

### **Sites in need of attention**

*Comments from the Ramblers Association*

- Diversions are sometimes welcome - Palace of Westminster.

*Comments from the GLA (Mayor's Office)*

- There are, however, cases where the access is designed or managed in such a way as to give the path the feel of a private rather than a publicly accessible path. For example, this is the case on the north bank of the River Thames going west of Vauxhall Bridge where the path runs very close to a new residential development and in Wapping where gates are located on the path.

*Comments from the Tate Gallery*

- Path from Westminster Abbey to Tate Britain is a "significant bar to tourists."

*Comments from Mrs M.D.U. Muriel*

- West bank, south of Vauxhall bridge - In order to climb up to the embankment from the foreshore it is necessary to walk under Vauxhall bridge past the Tate Gallery and its new pier/wharf until eventually coming to some stone steps near Lambeth Bridge, climbing up them, over a locked gate and down some more steps to the Embankment. Therefore, there should be some steps at Vauxhall Bridge (north side).

### **Examples of good practice**

*Comments from the City of Westminster*

- Most of path with CoW is complete (points to Brown Reach along Grosvenor Rd which has been opened up).

## **Map 10 – Eagle Wharf – Chelsea Bridge**

### **Site in need of attention**

*Comments from the Ramblers Association & London Forum*

- Battersea Power Station

### **Examples of good practice**

- *No comments received*

## **Map 11 – Festival Pier (Battersea) – Battersea Reach**

### **Site in need of attention**

- *No Comments received*

### **Examples of good practice**

*Comments from the GLA (Mayor's Office)*

- Falcon Wharf in Wandsworth, a planning application for housing and offices, will result in the formation of a new section of the Thames Path. It was secured in line with Wandsworth Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on the Thames Path and via a section 106 legal agreement. The development also includes a footbridge over a redundant dock.

## **Map 12 – Battersea Reach/Wandsworth – Hurlingham Club**

### **Sites in need of attention**

#### *Comments from Ramblers Association*

- Lack of redevelopment in the foreseeable future (see Hurlingham Club, Twickenham, Chiswick and Wapping).

#### *Comments from West London River Group*

- Putney Bridge to Cheyne walk – north bank
- Putney Bridge to Battersea Power Station ; on both banks the group wish to see link below bridges.

#### *Comments from Peter Coulson*

- The Broomhouse Rd, Fulham draw dock (next to the boundary wall to the posh Hurlingham - its undergoing rehab work but it should be open to all 24/7).
- Steps at Prospect Quay (Surrey Bank), by Ghillies Restaurant need restoring. Incidentally large blocks of stone lying in the mud are part of the first railway line, the Surrey Iron Railway!

### **Examples of good practice**

- *No comments received*

### **Map 13 – Wandsworth Park – Craven Cottage**

#### **Sites in need of attention**

*Comment from Colin Saunders (author of London - the Definitive Walking Guide)*

- South bank between Teddington Lock and Putney Bridge – parallel tracks may be more suitable.

*Comments from LB Wandsworth*

- St Mary's Church; high level walkway at refuse transfer station
- Recent developments have been helpful - borough UDP enforce riverside walk and cycle paths (see Chelsea Wharf, Putney Wharf)

*Comments from West London River Group*

- Putney Bridge to Cheyne walk – north bank
- Putney Bridge to Battersea Power Station ; on both bank the group wish to see link below bridges.

*Comments from Peter Coulson*

- The Putney Embankment and drawdock - no more roadworks making it difficult to get wagon access to the drawdock. Also I wish we could have kept the old horizontal railings but I think Wandsworth Council got worried about liability as they didn't meet Building Regs!
- The draw dock at the end of Brewhouse St Putney SW15 - part of a new development and the danger is that the developers claims it as theirs! It's not!
- The steps on the Surrey and Middlesex banks by Putney Bridge
- The draw dock at the end of the old Fulham High St (16th century)- the Eight Bells - I want it re-opened.

#### **Examples of good practice**

- *No comments received*

### **Map 14 – Fulham to Hammersmith**

#### **Site in need of attention**

*Comments from Colin Saunders (author of London - the Definitive Walking Guide)*

- South bank between Teddington Lock and Putney Bridge – parallel tracks may be more suitable.

#### **Examples of good practice**

- *No comments received*



### **Map 15 – Chiswick –Barnes Borders**

#### **Site in need of attention**

*Comments from Colin Saunders (author of London - the Definitive Walking Guide)*

- South bank between Teddington Lock and Putney Bridge – parallel tracks may be more suitable.

#### **Examples of good practice**

- *No comments received*

### **Map 16 – Grove Park – Barnes**

#### **Sites in need of attention**

*Comments from Colin Saunders (author of London - the Definitive Walking Guide)*

- Barnes Bridge –diversion onto unsigned busy road.
- South bank between Teddington Lock and Putney Bridge – parallel tracks may e more suitable.

#### **Examples of good practice**

- *No comments received*

### **Map 17 – Grove Park – Brentford**

#### **Sites in need of attention**

*Comments from Colin Saunders (author of London - the Definitive Walking Guide)*

- South bank between Teddington Lock and Putney Bridge – parallel tracks may be more suitable.

*Comments from the River Thames Society*

- North West Bank – Brentford/Grand Union Canal. Kew Bridge westwards is bewildering to walkers.

#### **Examples of good practice**

- *No comments received*

### **Map 18 – Brentford – Royal Botanic Gardens**

#### **Site in need of attention**

*Comments from Colin Saunders (author of London - the Definitive Walking Guide)*

- South bank between Teddington Lock and Putney Bridge – parallel tracks may be more suitable.

#### **Examples of good practice**

- *No comments received*

### **Map 19 – Isleworth – Old Deer Park**

#### **Site in need of attention**

*Comments from Colin Saunders (author of London - the Definitive Walking Guide)*

- South bank between Teddington Lock and Putney Bridge – parallel tracks may be more suitable.

#### **Examples of good practice**

- *No comments received*

### **Map 20 – Richmond – Marble Hill Park**

#### **Sites in need of attention**

*Comments from Colin Saunders (author of London - the Definitive Walking Guide)*

- South bank between Teddington Lock and Putney Bridge – parallel tracks may be more suitable.
- North bank between Teddington Lock and Twickenham – many undropped kerbs where wheelchair access is difficult.

#### **Examples of good practice**

- *No comments received*

### **Map 21 – Richmond – Strawberry Hill**

#### **Sites in need of attention**

*Comments from Colin Saunders (author of London - the Definitive Walking Guide)*

- South bank between Teddington Lock and Putney Bridge – parallel tracks may be more suitable.
- North bank between Teddington Lock and Twickenham – many undropped kerbs where wheelchair access is difficult.

#### **Examples of good practice**

- *No comments received*

### **Map 22 – Teddington Lock – Canbury Gardens**

#### **Site in need of attention**

*Comments from Colin Saunders (author of London - the Definitive Walking Guide)*

- South bank between Teddington Lock and Putney Bridge – parallel tracks may be more suitable.
- North bank between Teddington Lock and Twickenham – many undropped kerbs where wheelchair access is difficult.

#### **Examples of good practice**

- *No comments received*

### **Map 23 – Canbury Gardens – Hampton Wick**

#### **Site in need of attention**

*Comments from the Ramblers Association*

- Accessibility (route) is rarely weakened – attractiveness however can be compromised (e.g., felling of trees Canbury park Kingston and unsympathetic design)

#### **Examples of good practice**

- *No comments received*

### **Map 24 – Hampton Court**

#### **Site in need of attention**

- *No comments received*

#### **Examples of good practice**

- *No comments received*

### **Map 25 – Hampton Court**

#### **Site in need of attention**

- *No comments received*

#### **Examples of good practice**

- *No comments received*

## Annex B: Liability

### Case Study

*Staples -v- West Dorset District Council* [1995] PIQR 439

The PLA in the oral evidence to the Committee highlighted the above case as where an important principle was clarified on the issue of liability – that of dual responsibility. The PLA have used this case to “fend off<sup>1</sup>” claims.

### Obvious Risk

The case centred on a claimant who had slipped on a algae covered harbour wall at Lyme Regis. The claimant felt that the District Council liable because there was no signs warning him of the danger. The Court of Appeal held that there was no duty on the occupier, West Dorset District Council, to warn against the danger. Lord Justice Kennedy observed that “that it can only be said that there was a duty to warn if, without a warning, the visitor in question would have been unaware of the nature and extent of the risk.

“If the danger is obvious, the visitor is able to appreciate it, he is not under any kind of pressure and he is free to do what is necessary for his own safety, then no warning is required”. Accessing the foreshore in certain areas is an *obvious* risk. It is even more obvious if that access is blocked and a member of the public proceeds to access the foreshore. Other cases<sup>2</sup>, have concluded that in circumstances where access was blocked, the claimant was more than aware of the dangers already. Hence, the reluctance sometimes of owners to open up access points to the foreshore.

### Signage

Providing signs that highlight the risk may appear to be an obvious solution. This is not necessarily the case. Should a sign fall into disrepair, then an occupier is at risk. Lord Justice Kennedy also added that “there may be circumstances in which even an explicit warning will not absolve the occupier from liability.”

Such circumstances would include where “the occupier knows, or has constructive knowledge that the trespasser is in the vicinity, or may come into the vicinity, of the danger<sup>3</sup>”. As the PLA has stated there is no public right of way for the foreshore. Hence, anyone using the foreshore is technically a trespasser. Signs forbidding access to the dangerous parts of the foreshore would serve to underline this, but not necessarily alleviate the occupier, the PLA, of its responsibility.

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<sup>1</sup> 11 March 2002

<sup>2</sup> *Ratcliff vs McConnell* (1999)

<sup>3</sup> Occupiers Liability Act (1984). Section 1(3)

## Annex C: List of Recommendations

1. The Planning and Spatial Development Committee should conduct a further scrutiny to review progress, considering riverside developments referred to the Mayor since May 2000, to assess performance against the objectives outlined within the Blue Ribbon Annex to the Draft London Plan.
2. Although the Blue Ribbon Network sets out a potentially suitable framework for Thames side developments, clear political will and leadership is needed to provide the framework with impetus. A statement of strategy from the Mayor is needed as to how he will ensure that delivery of an improved Thameside environment, driven by the Blue Ribbon Network, will be championed and procured.
3. That the Mayor, Boroughs, sub regional partnerships and where appropriate other agencies identify key *individual* sites where best practice could be established in line with the standards promoted in the Blue Ribbon Network<sup>4</sup>. Opportunities for this may be available in the Thames Gateway and in particular in areas identified within the draft London Plan as areas of opportunity and regeneration.
4. We recommend that the Thames Path be extended beyond its current Eastern Boundaries towards the Greater London Boundary, on both sides of the Thames.
5. That TfL extend the Thames Path strategic walking route identified in their *Draft Walking Plan for London* to include the whole of Thames riverside. As the path is extended and completed downriver it should be added to the signed route network.
6. That to supplement the work already carried out for the Thames Path Online Project, TfL ensure that the mapped information (Annex A) is updated regularly and that the survey work done is extended to include the eastern section of London not covered by the National Trail.
7. That the management of the path remains in the control of local boroughs.
8. That the Mayor co-ordinates an overall review of current enforcement regimes along the River Path, to see whether good practice and better coordination can be developed.
9. That as part of this review, the Mayor considers funding arrangements for a warden service, or a pilot service, as part of TfL/ GLA's budget planning process, justified as an initiative to encourage tourism, the environment, pedestrian safety and economic development along the Thames corridor.

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<sup>4</sup> Particularly BR20, BR21 and BR24

10. With a view to increasing public access to the foreshore, the Mayor should facilitate a consultation between the relevant different agencies to:
- Clarify boundaries of responsibilities for resources and management issues presented by supervised and unsupervised access to the foreshore
  - Develop a directory, either by Borough or for the whole London Thames area, of access points and the rights attaching to them, ownership and repairing responsibilities

The results of this consultation to be reported back to the Planning Committee at a later date.

## Annex D: Terms of Reference

### Membership of the Planning & Spatial Development Committee

The Planning & Spatial Development Committee (formerly the Planning Advisory Committee and the Planning Committee) was established by the Assembly in May 2002. The membership of the Committee is as follows:

Bob Neill (Chair)	Conservative
Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair)	Liberal Democrat
Tony Arbour	Conservative
John Biggs ( <i>to April 2003</i> )	Labour
Len Duvall ( <i>from May 2003</i> )	Labour
Noel Lynch ( <i>from May 2003</i> )	Green
Darren Johnson ( <i>to April 2003</i> )	Green
Val Shawcross	Labour

The terms of reference for the Committee are as follows:

1. To examine and report from time to time on
  - the strategies, policies and actions of the Mayor and the Functional Bodies
  - matters of importance to Greater London as they relate to spatial development and planning in London
2. To examine and report to and on behalf of the Assembly from time to time on the Mayor's Spatial Development Strategy, in particular its implementation and revision.
3. When invited by the Mayor, to contribute to his consideration of major planning applications.
4. To monitor the Mayor's exercise of his statutory powers in regard to major planning applications referred by the local planning authorities, and to report to the Assembly with any proposal for submission to the Mayor for the improvement of the process.
5. To review Unitary Development Plans (UDPs) submitted to the Mayor by the local planning authorities for consistency with his strategies overall, to prepare a response to the Mayor for consideration by the Assembly, and to monitor the Mayor's decision with regard to UDPs
6. To take into account in its deliberations the cross cutting themes of: the health of persons in Greater London; the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom; and the promotion of opportunity.
7. To respond on behalf of the Assembly to consultations and similar processes when within its terms of reference

## **Terms of reference of this scrutiny**

In June 2002, the Planning and Spatial Development Committee decided to conduct a scrutiny of access to and along the Thames Path and access to the river foreshore.

John Biggs AM was appointed Rapporteur.

The scrutiny's terms of reference were to consider:

- *Completion of the Thames Path in the GLA area*: where missing links need to be filled, and extending the Path eastwards from the Thames Barrier to the GLA boundary
- *Individual development sites and riverside access*: securing best practice on negotiating with riverside owners when sites are developed, looking at management regimes (some sections of the Path are closed at night), considering enforcement issues when agreements are broken
- *Access to the foreshore via stairs and slipways*: identifying where and why this is blocked, looking at maintenance and repairing responsibilities, considering enforcement issues
- *Aspirations for accessibility*: rights to use, responsibilities for upkeep, striking a reasonable balance between openness and public safety



## Annex E: Organisations and individuals who submitted evidence to the Committee

Ref	Organisation	Ref	Organisation
AT01	Sport England	AT27	West London River Group
AT02	Thames Estuary Partnership	AT28	Thames Gateway London Partnership
AT03	More London Development		
AT04	Environment Agency	AT29	Greater London Authority: Policy and Partnerships
AT05	Jubilee Walkway Trust		
AT06	London Borough of Newham	AT30	member of London Rivers Assoc.
AT07	Colin Saunders (author of London - The Definitive Walking Guide)	AT31	Port of London Authority
AT08	London Borough of Bexley	AT32	Peter Coulson
AT09	London Borough of Barking & Dagenham	AT33	Lee Valley Regional Park
AT10	Bexley LA21	AT34	Brentford Cruising Club
AT11	River Thames Society	AT35	Guys and St. Thomas Hospital
AT12	Southwark Heritage Association	AT36	Thames Explorer Trust
AT13	The Countryside Agency	AT37	Sustrans
AT14	RSPB	AT38	Corporation of London
AT15	The Ramblers' Association	AT39	London Borough of Tower Hamlets
AT16	LDWA General and Kent Group Secretary	AT40	Chiswick Sea Cadets
AT17	Corporation of London	AT41	Tate
AT18	London Fire Brigade	AT42	Edith Slee
AT19	City of Westminster	AT43	Thames 21
AT20	Groundwork: Thames Gateway London South	AT44	TfL
AT21	London Borough of Wandsworth	AT45	Sylvia Wicks
AT22	Thames Water	AT46	Gargoyle Wharf Community Action
AT23	City of London Archaeological Society	AT47	The Ahoy Centre
AT24	London Rivers Association	AT48	London Forum
AT25	English Nature	AT49	Arcadia in the City
AT26	Thames Archaeological Society	AT50	London Rivers Association
		AT51	LB Hammersmith & Fulham

### Oral evidence was received from the following witnesses on 11 March 2003

James Trimmer and David Cartlidge (Port of London Authority)

Jessica McGarty (Crown Estate)

Mark Lloyd (Thames 21);

Alison Taylor (Thames Explorer Trust)

David Rowe (Transport for London)

Alex Nickson (Thames Gateway London Partnership)

Jason Debney (Thames Landscape Strategy; Arcadia Project)

Rose Jaijee (London Rivers Association).

**The transcript of the hearing can be found at:**

<http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/plansd/index.jsp#11>

## Annex F: Orders and Translations

### How to Order

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Haddii adiga, ama qof aad taqaanid, uu doonaayo inuu ku helo koobi ah warbixinta oo kooban iyo talooyinka far waaweyn ama farta qofka indhaha la' loogu talagalay, ama lauuqadooda, oo bilaash u ah, fadlan nagala soo xiriir telefoonkan 020 7983 4100 ama email-ka cinwaanku yahay [assembly.translations@london.gov.uk](mailto:assembly.translations@london.gov.uk)

## **Annex G: Principles of Assembly Scrutiny**

The powers of the London Assembly include the power to investigate and report on the decisions and actions of the Mayor, or on matters relating to the principal purposes of the Greater London Authority, and on any other matters which the Assembly considers to be of importance to Londoners. In the conduct of scrutiny and investigation the Assembly abides by a number of principles.

Scrutinies:

- aim to recommend action to achieve improvements;
- are conducted with objectivity and independence;
- examine all aspects of the Mayor's strategies;
- consult widely, having regard to issues of timeliness and cost;
- are conducted in a constructive and positive manner; and
- are conducted with an awareness of the need to spend taxpayers money wisely and well.

More information about the scrutiny work of the London Assembly, including published reports, details of committee meetings and contact information, can be found on the Assembly pages of the GLA Website at <http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly>

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