

chapter

8

the riverside





KEY OBJECTIVE 5:

To promote and enhance use of the River and the Riverside

- 8.1 Kingston's origins and development are intrinsically linked to the River Thames, which provided food and transportation and led to the development of trade and industry, with wharves to transport goods. Much of the riverside was privately owned and not publicly accessible, so the town turned its back on the river. The decline of riverside industries over the last 50 years led to large scale redevelopment, notably Bishops Palace House, the John Lewis store and Charter Quay. Residential, retail and restaurant/café/bar uses now occupy the riverside and attract visitors. Charter Quay completed the riverside walk in 2001 and improved the link between the Market Place and the riverside. Some poor links between the core and the riverside remain.
- 8.2 The Council is an active and committed partner in the Thames Landscape Strategy (TLS), a partnership organisation formed in 1994 to promote and co-ordinate policies and proposals to protect and enhance the use of the river and the riverside. Early community engagement on this AAP identified the riverside as a major strength, but an underused asset requiring a range of improvements. This led to the Council in partnership with the TLS launching the "Putting the Thames Back into Kingston" initiative in July 2005. This involved identifying river-related issues with residents and a survey of river users to provide information for a Moorings Business Plan. The initiative has generated the vision to create a welcoming, attractive and interesting waterspace and riverside to encourage visitors and provide a positive experience for all.
- 8.3 London Plan policy (4C.1 Blue Ribbon Network) seeks to protect the River Thames as part of London's open space network, to improve riverside access, enhance its potential for sport, recreation, leisure and educational activities and tourism.

POLICY CONTEXT FOR CHAPTER 8	RIVERSIDE
London Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4C.1 The Blue Ribbon Network
Community Plan	<p>Vision: an environmentally conscious community and sustainable borough</p> <p>Priority 3: Local Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • retain and restore the natural environment • implement the Biodiversity Action Plan • implement the Hogsmill Walk Strategy
UDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STR7 Safeguarding and enhancing Open Land • STR7a Biodiversity • OL4 Metropolitan Open Land • OL11 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance • OL13 Footpaths & Bridleways • OL14 – OL17 Thames Policy Area; Riverside Uses; Moorings; The River and Water Environment
Other Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thames Landscape Strategy (1994) • Thames Waterway Plan 2006 – 11 (2006) • RBK Hogsmill Valley Walk Strategy 2006 (Update report)

8.4 To accord with the London Plan, the 2005 UDP designated the Thames Policy Area (Policy OL14). The Thames Landscape Strategy – Hampton to Kew (1994) provides a detailed appraisal of the river and its environs and a strategy to protect and enhance the riverside, but needs updating. The Council is working with the TLS on revising the Strategy, as it applies to Kingston.

8.5 The riverside north of Kingston Bridge is part of the Thames Path National Trail. Most of the town centre's 1,250m stretch of riverside is within the Old Town Conservation Area or the Riverside North Conservation Area. The northern stretch in Canbury Gardens is Metropolitan Open Land (UDP Policy OL4) and the Thames is a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (UDP Policy OL11). The Community Plan includes a series of priorities that will be embraced by a strategy for the riverside.

8.6 The Thames Waterway Plan, prepared by the Environment Agency on behalf of the River Thames Alliance in 2006 will also guide improvements. Partnership working will be required to implement its key objectives which are to:

- Improve and promote access and information for water and land based visitors
- Improve and maintain river infrastructure, facilities and services
- Contribute to enhanced biodiversity, heritage and landscape value
- Increase use of the river and its corridor

POLICY K13: RIVERSIDE STRATEGY (Plan 10)

The Council, through the exercise of its planning powers and through initiatives with partners, will promote the River Thames to encourage greater use of the river and riverside and seek improvements to:

- River-based and riverside recreation and leisure activities and attractions
- Facilities for boat users, including moorings, support facilities (wharfs, jetties, landing stages and slipways), club facilities and information
- The quality of the riverside environment, including the riverside walk, open spaces, biodiversity and links to the riverside from the rest of the centre including from Kingston Station and bus stops
- The quality of riverside development

Financial contributions may be sought towards riverside improvements in connection with major development proposals, through S106 planning obligations.

Proposals for riverside development and improved facilities will need to demonstrate that there will be no unacceptable impact upon navigation, biodiversity, flood risk or the special character and appearance of the river and riverside. Visual impact assessment may be required.

K13 replaces relevant parts of Policy OL16

8.7 There are significant opportunities to capitalise on the river and its riverside, which is a very special asset. Promoting the river to raise its profile will encourage greater use and enjoyment of the river and riverside for a wide range of sport, recreation and leisure activities, including special events such as river festivals and regattas, whilst respecting the natural environment. The Council will implement this riverside strategy policy through: partnership working with the Thames Landscape Strategy, the Environment Agency, boat clubs and river user associations; the promotion of development on Proposal Sites P12, P13 and P14; and through the determination of planning applications.

8.8 Improving facilities will encourage and attract more river users and visitors and cater for leisure demand and tourism. Moorings and support facilities are vital components of an active and attractive riverside. Boating activity brings the river to life, adds interest and provides opportunities for sport and recreation. The Moorings Business Plan aims to provide improved facilities to help reverse the dramatic decline in boating activity on the Thames. A number of the boat clubs operate from substandard premises and improvements are required to help retain and attract more users.



Plan 10 RIVERSIDE STRATEGY

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS TO WHARF AND BARGE DOCK

IMPROVEMENTS TO CANBURY GARDENS ENTRANCE

IMPROVED DAY MOORINGS AND PROPOSALS TO REDUCE CAR PARKING AND ENHANCE RIVERSIDE SETTING

THAMES SIDE PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS (THAMES PATH NATIONAL TRAIL)

TURKS TRIP BOAT PIER

NORTHERN RIVERSIDE PROVISION OF NEW RIVERSIDE PUBLIC SPACE

POSSIBLE COMMERCIAL MOORING

POTENTIAL TRIP BOAT STOP

FRONTAGE AND USE IMPROVEMENTS

BISHOP'S PALACE HOUSE RIVERSIDE WALK IMPROVEMENTS (BRIDGE TO CHARTER QUAY)

EAGLE WHARF IMPROVEMENTS TO PROVIDE DESTINATION PUBLIC SPACE

PROPOSED RIVERSIDE WALK IMPROVEMENTS (EAGLE WHARF TO TOWNEND WHARF)

TOWNEND WHARF MOORING IMPROVEMENTS

✳ Proposed new/improved mooring facilities

✳ Proposed riverside environmental improvements

A riverside cycle route via a boardwalk is proposed in the longer term

- 8.9 The quality of the riverside walk is variable and requires improvement. In some places it is narrow, in others it lacks a continuous footway or has poor surfacing, seating, lighting and landscaping. Opportunities will also be investigated to provide a riverside cycle route in the longer term. The quality and nature of the pedestrian links to the riverside from the rest of the centre are poor especially from Clarence Street, Thames Street, Wood Street, Vicarage Road, Down Hall Road and from Kingston Station and bus stops and need to be enhanced to improved access to the riverside.
- 8.10 There is potential to improve open spaces which are linked by the riverside walk and to provide new ones. Eagle Wharf (Character Area 7 in Part C) is a poor quality space that has the potential to become a major attraction as a destination space for informal leisure activity, public art and special events including outdoor performance. The Northern Riverside (Character Area 5 Proposal Site P12 in Part C) is identified for the provision of a new riverside public space, adjacent to Horsefair Quay, in association with major development. The potential redevelopment and improvement of Bishop's Palace House (P13) also provides scope to enhance the links to the riverside and riverside open space.
- 8.11 There is generally limited scope for ecological enhancement along the riverside as it runs through the town centre, due to the hard engineered sheet piled riverside walls. There are some opportunities to improve biodiversity in Canbury Gardens by introducing small inlets and shorelines to provide habitats for waterfowl to nest and at Horsefair Quay (part of P12), a shallow backwater prone to silting, by providing reed beds with floating rafts to provide a nesting habitat.

POLICY K14: THE HOGSMILL RIVER

The Council will seek to enhance the Hogsmill Walk and biodiversity along the Hogsmill River.

- 8.12 The Hogsmill River, runs through the town centre, via the Guildhall Complex, under the ancient Clattern Bridge, through the Charter Quay development and into the Thames, via a culverted concrete channel. When the water level is low and the flow slow, the river provides for bird life, wildfowl and fish, but there is limited flora. It is desirable to try and improve biodiversity and there are some opportunities. However they are limited, as the river is subject to swift and substantial changes in depth and flow, as a result of rainfall and outflow from the Thames Water Hogsmill Sewage Treatment Works about a mile upstream and can change to a deep ranging torrent within a very short space of time.
- 8.13 The Hogsmill Valley Walk begins/ends in the town centre where the Hogsmill River joins the River Thames and runs to the south of the borough, forming part of a long distance walk (the London Loop and Thames Down Link Path). Enhancements are required to complete the walk (in places it deviates from the river) and improve its environment.

