

River Thames Scheme



Matters Raised

Executive Summary

This document outlines our response to the feedback received during the second public consultation of the River Thames Scheme that took place between 8th November 2022 and 20th December 2022. In particular, this report focuses on the matters that were highlighted in The River Thames Scheme Second Consultation Summary Report (June 2023) which is available at www.riverthamesscheme.org.uk/consultation.

Introduction

The River Thames Scheme will be a scheme which aims to achieve the following goals:

1. Reduce the risk of flooding to homes, businesses and infrastructure.
2. Improve access to quality green open space, connection with wildlife and more sustainable travel network.
3. Create a network of high-quality habitat and achieve biodiversity net gain.
4. Facilitate sustainable and inclusive economic growth.
5. Support carbon-reduction goals set by the Environment Agency, SCC and partners.

The River Thames Scheme is designed to unlock the economic, health and environmental benefits of the river between Egham and Teddington. It represents a new landscape-based approach to creating healthier, more resilient, and more sustainable communities. This scheme is being delivered through a partnership approach between the Environment Agency and Surrey County Council, alongside other local authorities and stakeholders.

Scheme Vision

The River Thames Scheme will reduce flood risk to people living and working near the Thames, enhance the resilience of nationally important infrastructure, contribute to a vibrant local economy, and maximise the social and environmental value of the river.

Consultation

Following the first public consultation that was held in 2016 we invited members of the public and other key stakeholders to participate in a second public consultation in 2022. This built on our ongoing engagement with the public, local residents, landowners, local councils and regulatory bodies to ensure that all matters and concerns are considered by the project team and contribute to the scheme's development. Feedback to the consultation was collected via hard copy and electronic feedback forms which were made available for the duration of the consultation. The questions included in the feedback form related to the scheme's design and construction approach and were as follows:

Questions 1 and 2 included questions that were designed to understand the demographic of the respondents to the feedback form.

Q3a. Just downstream from Desborough Cut we are proposing lowering the riverbed. How much do you agree or disagree with this approach?

Q3b. It will help us to consider any necessary changes in the scheme if we understand why people agree or disagree with this proposal. For example, there may be information which you feel we have missed out. Please tell us why you agreed or disagreed with the question above?

Q4. How do you think we should provide better access to new green open spaces? For example, how would you want to get to the new spaces, should we provide pedestrian gates, should we provide parking or bike stands, should we provide places to launch canoes or places for fishing, and so on?

Q5. How do you think we could allow users of the new green open spaces to connect with wildlife? For example, do we plant trees or wild areas to encourage wildlife, do you want notices to point out what wildlife is around, do you want board walks that allow you to get into wetlands, should we provide bird hides to allow you to observe wildlife, and so on?

Q6. How do you think we could create a more sustainable travel network in Surrey? For example, providing cycle/walking paths connecting places of work, schools, railway stations, and linking to other existing footpaths and trails, and so on?

Q7a. We will need to balance these factors in the design we develop. We would like to know which of these you value most. Please rank the factors, with 1 the most important to you and 3 the least important.

- Access to new green open spaces
- Connection with wildlife
- More sustainable travel network

Q7b. Why do you say that?

Q8a. While we are committed to providing green open spaces, creating habitats and increasing biodiversity, there may be areas where we need to balance these. We would like to know which of these you value most. Please tick one.

Q8b. Why do you say that?

Q9. Is there anything else we should take into account in our scheme design?

Q10. Is there anything we should take into account in our approach to construction?

Q11. Finally, is there anything else you think we should consider as we develop our proposals for the River Thames Scheme further?

Four hundred and forty-seven responses were received through the feedback form, with a further 40 being received via email. These responses were analysed, and a summary of the key themes contained in the responses to each of the questions was set out in The River Thames Scheme Second Consultation Summary Report (June 2023).

This Report

This report has taken the key themes that were outlined in The River Thames Scheme Second Consultation Report (June 2023) (available online at www.riverthamesscheme.org.uk/consultation) and has identified within them specific matters that were raised. These matters have been grouped under the general headings relating to views on Desborough Cut riverbed lowering, provision and access to new green open spaces, creating a sustainable travel network in Surrey, maintenance/management, construction, and further scheme proposals. Some references to respondents (displayed as a 'RTS_code' identification code rather than a name) are provided, alongside their direct quotes. This report details how these matters have been/are being addressed as part of the latest scheme design presented at Statutory Consultation.

Views on Desborough Cut riverbed lowering

Matter raised: Impact on the river	Our Response
<p>A common matter raised by respondents was the impact on the river of the bed lowering downstream of Desborough Cut, including bank erosion and faster river flow.</p> <p>RTS_226: “What happens to the section of river downstream of the deeper channel to Sunbury weir? The section is short but will suffer from increased flow rate and hence bank erosion”.</p> <p>RTS_97: “This could result in more dangerous river conditions for the many rowers and canoeists on this stretch of the river”.</p>	<p>The bed lowering downstream of Desborough Cut will be approximately 20 metres in width and an average of 0.7 metres in depth and will include built-in resilience against siltation. Based on our preliminary environmental appraisal, as only the central third of the river will be excavated, no impact on the banks of the river is anticipated. Based on our flood modelling, bed lowering will also not increase peak flow or volume in this stretch of the River Thames. Instead, bed lowering will create additional flow area that will allow for lower water levels in flood conditions and will reduce the amount of water that enters the floodplain. In non-flood conditions, water levels will remain unchanged as they will be controlled by the gates downstream of Sunbury weir. As such, the bed lowering downstream of Desborough Cut will not result in more dangerous river conditions.</p>

Matter raised: Flood risk/control	Our Response
<p>Respondents raised concerns around the perceived flood risk associated with lowering the riverbed.</p> <p>RTS_205: "I'm concerned that the extra water flow will cause flooding downstream".</p> <p>RTS_319: "If this lowering of the bed is required to compensate in part for the increased flow of flood water into this area around Walton Bridge, then over the time the effect of this work will diminish and therefore the flood risk will increase further".</p>	<p>The bed lowering downstream of the Desborough Cut has been designed using detailed flood modelling of the river and will be beneficial in reducing flood risk up to Shepperton weir. There will be no rise in flood levels at any location due to bed lowering or any of the downstream measures and new channel. At each location, the flow passing downstream will equal the flow arriving from upstream. The bed lowering downstream of Desborough Cut, along with the capacity improvements at Sunbury, Molesey and Teddington weirs, will fully negate the small increase in peak flows which arise from keeping water in the new flood channel (up to 5-10 metres³/s or 1-2% of the total flow). The bed lowering will include built-in resilience against siltation. After construction, bed levels will continue to be monitored by the Environment Agency periodically to measure the depths of water and detect any changes in siltation over time, and measures will be taken to remove any accumulated silt. As such, we have confidence that the bed lowering is a long-term and sustainable design.</p>

Matter raised: Dredging	Our Response
<p>Some respondents suggested the need to dredge the River Thames.</p> <p>RTS_35: "The whole Thames should be dredged".</p> <p>RTS_130: "Dredge the river".</p>	<p>Widespread dredging (the removal of sediment and/or debris that forms on top of the riverbed) of the Thames within the RTS area was previously considered as an option. However, this would only reduce flood risk in some places by a small amount. As such, it would not reduce the risk enough to protect most homes against a repeat of the 2014 floods.</p>
Matter raised: Impact of the Desborough bed lowering on wildlife and environment	Our Response
<p>Respondents highlighted the need to consider the impact of the bed lowering on wildlife and the environment, particularly potential disruption on the ecological life of the river.</p> <p>RTS_283: "Clearly, there will inevitably be ecological repercussions for the river course & priority aquatic biodiversity as a result of this".</p> <p>RTS_125: "We do not object in principle provided that there are adequate environmental safeguards in place and habitat restoration/replacement".</p>	<p>We will prioritise environmental issues to protect the natural environment and minimise negative effects to wildlife during construction. As part of this, our Environmental Impact Assessment process includes consideration of the effects of bed lowering upon the River Thames and the biodiversity it supports. We have been conducting surveys to understand baseline conditions and will take steps to minimise and mitigate potential significant effects where required.</p>

Provision & access to new green open spaces

Matter raised: Parking	Our Response
<p>Some respondents highlighted the opportunity for car parking and the need for car parks to provide better access to new green open spaces.</p> <p>RTS_316: "Provide car parking spaces so that people can travel to enjoy these spaces".</p> <p>RTS_221: "Free parking so that the recreational areas are truly available to everyone".</p> <p>However, other respondents stated the need to limit parking opportunities to minimise impact on habitat opportunities and local communities.</p> <p>RTS_222: "Whilst local residents should have various access points, these should not encourage any increase in non-resident parking demand, which is already problematic".</p> <p>RTS_115: "Any parking would need not to impact on space that could be used for biodiversity".</p>	<p>It is intended that the three main new blue and green open spaces would all be provided with car parking (with some overflow). The exact locations of car parks are still under consideration, but our latest proposals can be seen in the River Thames Scheme Map Book for Statutory Consultation. We are currently seeking feedback on the location of car parks as part of the overall proposals for our new green open spaces. More information on what is being considered and how to provide your feedback can be found in Chapter 9 of the River Thames Scheme Statutory Consultation brochure and the River Thames Scheme Statutory Consultation Feedback Form (both can be found online at www.riverthamesscheme.org.uk).</p>

Matter raised: Facilities	Our Response
<p>Several types of potential facilities were highlighted by respondents, such as bike storage and recreational facilities such as picnic areas and playgrounds.</p> <p>RTS_126: "Areas for children to explore and have fun, something which is currently lacking in parts of the area currently (Egham to Chertsey)"</p> <p>RTS_148: "Maybe areas for coffee shops or cafes, well maintained toilets, seating areas"</p>	<p>As part of the development of the Landscape and Green Infrastructure (L&GI) design for the River Thames Scheme, the project team are seeking views during statutory consultation on the recreational activities and facilities that could be provided by the new green open spaces. The types of activities that are being considered include low-key, passive uses for the open spaces (such as walking, jogging and informal kickabout), as well as more active, intensive recreational and sporting uses (such as skating/BMX, sport pitches and adventure play). Additionally, the scheme is also seeking comments and suggestions on preferences for facilities in the supporting visitor buildings, education-based facilities or uses, opportunities to incorporate art into the green open spaces, and entertainment-based facilities or uses. More information on what is being considered and how to provide your feedback can be found in Chapter 6 of the River Thames Scheme Statutory Consultation Brochure and the River Thames Scheme Statutory Consultation Feedback Form.</p>
Matter raised: Safety of users	Our Response
<p>Comments associated with safety of users were raised, such as the need to separate walkers and cyclists where possible.</p> <p>RTS_157: "I think cycle paths and pedestrian paths should be clearly separated or demarked so that users of both can do so without risk of accidents".</p> <p>RTS_183: "The river is used heavily by both pedestrians and cycling traffic and more clear separation would ensure there is less contention between these".</p>	<p>To ensure the safety of users of the scheme area, it is intended that the central route for active travel that will stretch the length of the scheme will be fully segregated between cyclist and pedestrian users.</p>

Matter raised: Vandalism and anti-social behaviour	Our Response
<p>Concerns were raised regarding potential vandalism and antisocial behaviour/visitors ignoring rules.</p> <p>RTS_338: "Access to open spaces needs consideration on how they are used. For instance, in Teddington the Lock Island is currently shut from public access due to anti-social behaviour".</p> <p>RTS_258: "I have witnessed first-hand during two summers where folk could not go abroad to see the amount of environmental vandalism wreaked on our river fronts".</p>	<p>Safety and security are a key part of our design considerations. While it will be difficult to fully prevent issues surrounding anti-social behaviour and vandalism, a key consideration in the landscape design is to increase usage (footfall) into areas that are not currently publicly accessible or where access is limited (and where we know there are existing issues with antisocial behaviour). By doing so, this may reduce antisocial behaviour and improve public safety. The RTS team will continue to consider and include safety measures within the scheme design which will be developed taking on the suggestions and feedback of stakeholders.</p>
Matter raised: Incorporating open space	Our Response
<p>The desire to have open spaces/areas incorporated into the scheme design were raised by respondents.</p> <p>RTS_125: "It would be helpful to create new areas of green space through the construction of the River Thames Scheme including new green spaces and habitat along the route and country parks in appropriate locations".</p> <p>RTS_414: "It would be good if it was just the green space for people to explore on their own and be lost in their own thoughts".</p>	<p>To create a distinctive and scenic landscape, the scheme will see the development of two new green (land-based) open spaces at Royal Hythe, west of the A320 and south of Egham Hythe, and Sheepwalk which would span Chertsey Road to the west of Old Shepperton (and thus encompasses the previously separate site of Land South of Chertsey Road (B375)). Additionally, a blue (water-based) open space at Abbey 1 Lake, known as Penton Park (with associated green space), is also being considered as well as a further significant new wetland at Desborough Island. A number of priority areas for habitat will also be created. The plans for these sites can be found in the River Thames Scheme Map Book for Statutory Consultation and the River Thames Scheme Integrated Scheme Description.</p>

Matter raised: Access for water users/water infrastructure	Our Response
<p>Respondents suggested the provision of safe access points to the river for water activities and recreational purposes, including kayaking, canoeing, and fishing.</p> <p>RTS_441: Consideration towards anglers and water borne activities should ideally be implemented”.</p> <p>RTS_84: “Access to recreational users on the water – canoes, kayaks and paddle boards – needs to be thought about up front”.</p> <p>RTS_447: “Bridges being constructed over the channels need to have a suitable air draft for canoes/kayaks to pass underneath in both augmented flow and flood flow. Where this isn’t possible then there should be landings either side and suitable portage routes constructed to enable easy passage”.</p>	<p>There are a number of considerations about whether and how water-based recreation might be possible within the scheme, including the more accessible sections of the channels and some lakes within the scheme area, including safety, existing use of land and access for users. In some locations water-based recreation would not be feasible, but in others there may be opportunities.</p> <p>We already know motorised boats will not be able to use the channel. We also know the vertical clearance from overhead structures like road bridges will likely restrict paddleboarding, canoeing, kayaking and other non-motorised water activities.</p> <p>We are keen to receive feedback on the types of water based recreational activities that people would like to see as part of the scheme design whilst considering factors such as the above. More information and how to provide your feedback can be found in the River Thames Scheme Statutory Consultation Brochure and the River Thames Scheme Statutory Consultation Feedback Form where specific questions on the types of water recreation is asked.</p>

Matter raised: Biodiversity increase/Habitat improvement	Our Response
<p>Respondents emphasised the need to consider the enhancement of habitat and biodiversity as part of the development of the scheme.</p> <p>RTS_277: "I think the priority is to use the spaces we have and to improve the quality of these habitats".</p> <p>RTS_316: "More nature-based habitats would improve the quality of green spaces".</p> <p>RTS_203: "Increased biodiversity and high-quality habitats is essential for wildlife".</p> <p>RTS_277: "Many of the green open spaces along the river have not been managed sympathetically with biodiversity in mind; one or two or three species of tree/hedge is dominant".</p> <p>RTS_RTS_199: "Biodiversity is under threat and anything that can be done, should be".</p>	<p>The scheme aims to create an extensive nature recovery network spanning the length of the channel and beyond, supporting diverse habitats and biodiversity. To create a network of high-quality habitat and achieve Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), the River Thames Scheme is currently developing the design of priority areas for habitat creation, ecological enhancement or mitigation. More information and the locations of these sites can be found in the River Thames Scheme Map Book for Statutory Consultation and the River Thames Scheme Integrated Scheme Description document.</p>

Matter raised: Access to nature/wildlife	Our Response
<p>The ability to connect users of the scheme to nature and wildlife was highlighted by respondents.</p> <p>RTS_145: “Boardwalks to be provided to access wetlands”</p> <p>RTS_290: “Bird hides are a must. Great way to connect people to looking at nature”.</p> <p>However, respondents also commented on the need to restrict access to nature and wildlife where appropriate to protect existing habitats.</p> <p>RTS_111: “However, there must be some space set aside for wildlife alone, without easy access for the public”.</p> <p>RTS_121: “Better access to green open spaces is important but also important is that this open access doesn’t disturb wildlife that makes its home in this space (so should be controlled with gates/fencing for protection of more environmentally sensitive areas)”</p>	<p>Where possible, the priority areas of habitat creation, ecological enhancement or mitigation will feature within areas of the landscape and green infrastructure design that will also provide recreation benefits and active travel routes to enhance opportunities for the public to access and enjoy nature and wildlife. However, additional priority areas which would be more focussed on habitat creation, enhancement or mitigation and would therefore be more separate from publicly accessible spaces are also being considered. More information and the locations of these sites can be found in the River Thames Scheme Map Book for Statutory Consultation and the River Thames Scheme Integrated Scheme Description document.</p>
Matter raised: Design	Our Response
<p>Suggestions were raised around the design of the new green open spaces, particularly around keeping a natural appearance.</p> <p>RTS_999: “But keep the banks and river side natural, do not turn it into a PARK”</p> <p>RTS_309: “Ensuring that the area isn’t over developed and is shared equally with wildlife would be key”</p>	<p>The River Thames Scheme aims to create a unique and scenic landscape design. This will include the development of natural landscape across the new green open spaces, comprising a mixture of terrestrial habitats, such as meadows, grasslands and woodlands. Additionally, where achievable the channels will be constructed with softer edges and will include in channel and riparian (riverbank) habitats. The designs being developed also include planting along sections of the flood channel, tree planting and enhancing the environment for wildlife such as hedgerows and other existing habitats.</p>

Matter raised: Working with local groups/experts	Our Response
<p>Respondents raised the need for the project team to cooperate with subject matter experts as part of the design process of the scheme.</p> <p>RTS_04: “The most important thing would be to consult with relevant professionals including ecologists, arboriculturists, engineers etc”.</p> <p>RTS_402: “The Greater London Authority and Transport for London should be consulted as the design of the scheme is developed”.</p> <p>RTS_216: “In addition to biodiversity experts, consult historians and archaeologists in the design and construction”.</p>	<p>We have engaged a range of subject matter experts (such as ecologists, arboriculturists, and engineers) who, alongside local planning authorities, TfL, Historic England, Natural England and other stakeholders, are helping us develop the scheme.</p>
Matter raised: On site notices	Our Response
<p>Respondents were keen to see the inclusion of on-site notices as a source of information and education at green open spaces and the habitat creation areas, such as for providing information about wildlife and habitats as well as about the active travel route.</p> <p>RTS_01: “Board walks would be good and signage about plants/trees/animals”.</p> <p>RTS_126: “A nature walk with things to spot and boards with further information would make the area interactive”.</p>	<p>The design team are currently considering the provision of education-based features as part of the landscape design, including exhibition space, interpretative walking routes, and heritage trails. We are currently seeking comments and suggestions on preferences for these types of facilities. More information on what is being considered and how to provide your feedback can be found in the River Thames Scheme Statutory Consultation Brochure and the River Thames Scheme Statutory Consultation Feedback Form.</p> <p>Following statutory consultation, the landscape design will carefully consider the location, choice of materials and maintenance needs of any information boards or signage along the route of the River Thames Scheme to ensure that they remain in good condition for as long as possible.</p>

Creating a sustainable travel network in Surrey

Matter raised: New accessible walking routes	Our Response
<p>Responses in relation to sustainable travel mentioned requests for more walking paths.</p> <p>RTS_203: "More walking paths or signposted walking paths, create a Slow Ways network map to link up existing options".</p> <p>RTS_216: "Plan for circular routes along new 'rivers' in the new scheme".</p>	<p>To support the achievement of better access to new open spaces, a central route for active travel for cyclists and pedestrians of around five and a half miles is proposed. Stretching the length of the scheme, the route will run as a continuous route connecting the two new primary new green open spaces at Royal Hythe and Sheepwalk (Land South of Chertsey Road) and the new potential 'blue' open space at Abbey 1 Lake. The route also includes the building of two new bridge crossings for non-motorised use over the River Thames, connecting Chertsey to Laleham to the north of the existing M3 river crossing, and at Desborough Island to Ferris Meadow Lake.</p>

Matter raised: Connection to existing cycleways	Our Response
<p>Respondents raised the suggestion for new cycle and walking paths to be linked to existing ones.</p> <p>RTS_01: “Footpaths and bike paths to link up to existing ones. Would love there to be a road free way of cycling from Staines to Sunbury that school children could use”.</p> <p>RTS_28: “Cycling lanes connecting to the local network would be great”.</p>	<p>The design of the active travel route takes account of completed Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) and aims to connect to existing walking and cycling infrastructure. For example, the active travel route will connect to the current Thames Path at Staines upon Thames, Laleham and Desborough Island.</p> <p>In addition to the Active Travel Route, we are proposing Thames Path enhancements which runs along the River Thames from Staines to Walton-on-Thames to improve user experience and safety and further deliver improvements to connectivity and access to green open space.</p>
Matter raised: Connection to key amenities	Our Response
<p>Respondents highlighted that the provision of active travel should link users to key amenities such as schools, shopping areas and towns.</p> <p>RTS_121: “Connecting where possible to work/school/transport hubs will help this scheme to be useful as well as environmentally important”.</p> <p>RTS_02: “Better connections in general for sustainable forms of travelling between the towns of Runnymede/Spelthorne/Elmbridge to reduce the reliance on cars that blight these areas”.</p>	<p>The proposed active travel route will comprise of multiple links to connect local communities such as Staines, Egham Hythe, Thorpe, Laleham, Chertsey, Shepperton Green, Old Shepperton, Weybridge and Walton to develop a strategic walking and cycling corridor that provides sustainable, high quality and continuous networks that enhance leisure and economic connectivity. A geographic run through of the active travel route and its connections can be found in the River Thames Scheme Statutory Consultation Brochure and are shown on the River Thames Scheme Map Book for Statutory Consultation.</p>

Matter raised: Surfaces	Our Response
<p>The need for improved surfaces as part of the development of the active travel route and new green open spaces was highlighted by respondents.</p> <p>RTS_325: "I walk along the Thames Path every day in Laleham and although I don't want to see a concrete pavement there is improvements that could be made".</p> <p>RTS_216: "The surface of paths/cycle routes is important – it MUST be in keeping with natural spaces, AND suitable for cycles and wheelchairs (not tarmac, but minimising tree-route obstacles".</p>	<p>As part of the scheme's landscape and green infrastructure design, we are considering the design of the active travel route, including surfaces, segregation of cycle and pedestrian users, the inclusion of bridges, and lighting. We are seeking comments on preferences for this element as part of the statutory consultation. We are also proposing improvements to certain parts of the Thames Path (as shown on the River Thames Scheme Map Book for Statutory Consultation) and suggestions on what you would wish to see done are welcomed. More information on what is being considered and how to provide your feedback can be found in the River Thames Scheme Statutory Consultation Brochure and the River Thames Scheme Statutory Consultation Feedback Form.</p>
Matter raised: Public transport	Our Response
<p>Respondents commented that improvements were needed to public transport services to provide a more sustainable transport network.</p> <p>RTS_152: "Add the bus service in and a joined up transport network. Should be in place in advance not after".</p> <p>RTS_209: "Provide stable, well publicised public transport network in the area".</p> <p>RTS_306: "A more integrated transport system that connects public transport, cycling and walking paths to all the relevant areas".</p>	<p>Public transport services are provided by external operators and so improvements to them are not within the remit of the scheme.</p>

Maintenance/ Management

Matter raised: Management	Our Response
<p>Respondents highlighted the need to manage the assets of the scheme, including regular monitoring.</p> <p>RTS_16: "Local weirs are often chocked with debris and plant growth -this should be cleared on an annual basis, preferably late summer early autumn before river levels and water flow increases".</p> <p>RTS_359: "The design must include careful thought about how the scheme will be operated and by whom"</p>	<p>Once the scheme is complete, the Environment Agency will own and maintain the blue infrastructure while Surrey County Council will own and maintain the green infrastructure.</p>
Matter raised: Maintenance	Our Response
<p>Respondents requested the provision of bins throughout the scheme area as part of the general maintenance of the scheme.</p> <p>RTS_440: "Provide adequate public bins especially dog poo bins and empty bins on a regular basis".</p> <p>RTS_118: "Sufficient litter bins along any paths used by walkers and cyclists, as well as signs encouraging people to take their litter home with them".</p>	<p>Public bins will be provided throughout the scheme to ensure the maintenance and cleanliness of the landscape.</p>

Construction

Matter raised: Access for pedestrians and cyclists during construction	Our Response
<p>Respondents asked for access to the river as well as provision of access for pedestrians and cyclists to be maintained during the construction phases of the scheme.</p> <p>RTS_185: “Ensure that existing footpaths and bridleways remain open during works”.</p> <p>RTS_441: “River and locks to remain open, especially during the boating season”.</p>	<p>Whilst the scheme aims to minimise disruption to the local area during construction, during this phase of the scheme, temporary closures of some public rights of way will be required where there is a likelihood of danger to the public. These closures will be minimised solely to facilitate the construction works. In most locations where closures are required, short, diverted routes will be created close to the exiting routes to minimise disruption to users. However, several public rights of way will require extended closures and diversions to ensure the safety of the public. We will continue to engage with local authorities in respect of how these impacts will be managed.</p>

Matter raised: Traffic disruption	Our Response
<p>Respondents raised concerns over traffic disruption from construction traffic and highlighted the need for this to be minimised during the construction phase.</p> <p>RTS_110: "Use the river as much as possible to reduce road traffic",</p> <p>RTS_136: "It is inevitable that construction will create major disruption to the local area, but please minimise closure of existing roads and footpaths".</p> <p>RTS_412: "Stagger the construction to avoid as little disruption as possible".</p>	<p>To manage traffic disruption during the construction phase of the River Thames Scheme, we will plan specific routes for our construction traffic to follow. Where possible, we will create temporary haul roads through our working areas to avoid the local highway network and other nearby public roads. We are also considering the use of river transport (barges) at certain work sites to move construction materials. Off-site parking and dedicated buses for construction workers will also be put in place to reduce traffic on local roads. More information on how the scheme will minimise traffic disruption to communities can be found in the River Thames Scheme Statutory Consultation Brochure. Appendix 17.2 and Figure 17.1 of the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) indicate our current understanding of potential HGV movements required for the project.</p>

Matter raised: Environmental impacts	Our Response
<p>The impact of construction activities on the environment was raised as a concern by some respondents.</p> <p>RTS_336: “Only to make sure that areas under construction take into account the local habitat and wildlife”.</p> <p>RTS_344: “Be aware of potential secondary environmental impacts (e.g., carbon footprint of material sand emissions from machinery) and use as many nature-based interventions as possible”.</p> <p>RTS_173: “Also concerned about landfill sites and poisonous gasses from any digging”</p>	<p>During the construction phase of the scheme, we are committed to adhering to standard practices for environmental protection and community engagement, implementing measures to manage construction impacts like noise, traffic, and air quality, and focusing on health and wellbeing, and habitat and biodiversity enhancement. We will prioritise environmental issues to protect the natural environment and minimise negative effects to wildlife during construction, such as avoiding sensitive habitats where possible, using sensitive construction techniques, adapting to different seasons, and replanting areas once construction is complete Relevant permits/licenses will also be obtained from Natural England and the Environment Agency to ensure their requirements are complied with)</p> <p>As part of these commitments, we will undertake a range of risk assessments and modelling as well as put in place suitable measures to limit effects on the environment. These will be secured through a Code of Construction Practice or similar control document.</p> <p>The scheme will obtain and comply with environmental permits for waste to mitigate the spread of pollutants to the environment. All works within landfill sites involving waste will be subject to an environmental permit under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016.</p>

Matter raised: Materials	Our Response
<p>In relation to construction materials, respondents urged the scheme to use sustainable materials during the construction process of the scheme and for materials to be sustainably managed.</p> <p>RTS_102: "Using green/recycled building materials where possible".</p> <p>RTS_283: "This includes maximising the recycling/re-use of excavated materials and demolition arisings".</p>	<p>We plan to reuse and recover significant amounts of materials and waste within the scheme where this is required for the scheme design. This will help to reduce construction traffic, air quality and noise impacts as well as our overall carbon footprint.</p> <p>For the management of waste, the scheme will adhere to a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) which will set out the amount and type of waste and how it could be recovered, recycled or disposed of in accordance with legislation. Additionally, the scheme will follow the Waste Hierarchy which ranks waste management options according to what is best for the environment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prevention 2. Preparing for re-use 3. Recycling 4. Other recovery 5. Disposal <p>More information on our approach to materials and waste can be found in the River Thames Scheme Statutory Consultation Brochure.</p>

Further scheme proposals

Matter raised: Flood Risk	Our Response
<p>Some respondents made comments relating to where the scheme will impact flood risk.</p> <p>RTS_106: "Impact down river in Sunbury, Twickenham and Richmond".</p> <p>RTS_418: "Flood risk should be given higher priority in the Wheatley's Eyot area".</p>	<p>The design of the River Thames Scheme has been continually tested and refined using extensive flood modelling to best achieve flood reductions within the scheme area.</p> <p>The combined impact on flood risk from the new channel and the downstream measures will significantly enhance flood resilience and in turn will provide better protection to homes, infrastructure, and the environment for the areas along the River Thames. The flood risk reductions that the scheme will achieve will stretch from Egham to Teddington. The capacity improvements at Sunbury, Molesey and Teddington weirs, together with the bed reprofiling downstream of Desborough Cut will fully negate the small increase in peak flows which arise from keeping water in the new flood channels (up to 5-10 metres ³/s or 1-2% of the total flow). There will be no rise in flood levels at any location.</p> <p>Information on the locations that will benefit from flood risk reduction from the scheme can be found in Chapter 7 of the River Thames Scheme Statutory Consultation Brochure.</p>

Matter raised: Communication/ consultation	Our Response
<p>Respondents emphasised ensuring local communities are informed about the scheme and engaged with throughout the process.</p> <p>RTS_161: “Ensure that communication of progress is consistent and timely”.</p> <p>RTS_209: “I trust you will continue to consult & involve the local communities, especially in the areas where the new flood channels will bring major change”.</p>	<p>The River Thames Scheme has engaged with relevant stakeholders and interested groups including local residents in the development and refinement of the proposals and will continue to do so throughout its continuing development. In 2016 we held our first public consultation on the River Thames Scheme, with an evolution of the scheme design being shown at our second public consultation in 2022. Following our consultation in 2022, the scheme’s design has significantly advanced, shaped by feedback from our engagement with local communities, stakeholders, and ongoing assessments. We are now in the process of conducting a statutory consultation where we are once again seeking views from the public on the updated design. We will continue to use the comments and information we receive to help develop and refine the scheme. As investigations and assessments continue in the lead up to our application for a development consent order (DCO), we will ensure local communities and other stakeholders are provided with the latest information about the progress of the scheme. The River Thames Scheme website at www.riverthamesscheme.org.uk/ provides updates and information about the Scheme as it develops.</p>

Next Steps

The River Thames Scheme Statutory Consultation is taking place between 22nd January 2024 and 4th March 2024. This provides another opportunity for the public and other key stakeholders to view and provide their feedback on the latest scheme design. Prior to the submission of the Development Consent Order (DCO), we will review the feedback received at the statutory consultation and produce a consultation report which will summarise the findings. This report will also include information on how we have considered feedback and how this has informed any changes to our proposals or refinements of the scheme. The report will be submitted as part of our DCO application to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs via the Planning Inspectorate ('PINS') and will be available to the public following submission of the application, which is expected to be in early 2025.



Contact

There are lots of ways you can contact us or find out more about the scheme:

Telephone: **03456 009 009**

Email: **enquiries@riverthamesscheme.org.uk**

Web: **www.riverthamesscheme.org.uk**

Accessibility

If you would prefer this brochure in large text, a different format or language please contact using the details below and we will do our best to help.

Text (SMS): **07860 053 465**

(for the deaf or hard of hearing community)

Textphone (via Relay UK): **18001 03456 009 009**

British Sign Language: **www.surreycc.gov.uk/bsl**

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