



# **Preliminary Environmental Information Report**

## **Volume 2**

### Chapter 21: Next Steps

## 21 Next Steps

### 21.1 Consultation during the DCO Process

- 21.1.1.1 Under the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008) we have an obligation to consult with statutory and non-statutory consultees. Statutory consultation forms part of the pre-application stage of the Development Consent Order (DCO) application process. We have produced this Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) for the River Thames Scheme (RTS) to allow consultees to develop an informed view of the project and its potential likely significant environmental effects.
- 21.1.1.2 For major infrastructure projects, the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process is governed by the Infrastructure Planning (EIA) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations). These regulations make the pre-application publicity and consultation requirements for the EIA process consistent with those of the Planning Act.
- 21.1.1.3 Regulation 12 of the EIA Regulations requires that the applicant's Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) prepared under section 47 of the PA2008 must set out whether the development for which development consent is being sought is EIA development and, if it does, how the applicant intends to publicise and consult on the preliminary environmental information.
- 21.1.1.4 As required by section 47 of the PA2008, we published a SoCC. It set out how we proposed to consult people living in the vicinity of the land about the proposed application, including this PEIR.
- 21.1.1.5 Our SoCC set out:
- When the consultation will take place and the length of the consultation;
  - What proposals we will be consulting on;
  - Who we will consult;
  - How we will consult (including where people can view documents, request information, attend both in-person and online events);
  - How people can respond to the consultation; and
  - What happens after consultation ends.

- 21.1.1.6 We are consulting on our proposals for the RTS, including the new green and blue open spaces, priority areas for habitat creation, enhancement or mitigation, the proposed channel sections and weirs, and our approaches to materials management and construction.
- 21.1.1.7 The RTS is an 'EIA development' under the EIA Regulations. As a result, we are also consulting on preliminary environmental information as part of this consultation. Our full PEIR and a non-technical summary of this are available on the project website for this purpose.
- 21.1.1.8 Following the close of this consultation, the feedback will be reviewed and analysed to understand key themes and concerns. This will be summarised and presented in a consultation feedback report, which will be made available on the project website.
- 21.1.1.9 When finalising the proposed application, we will have regard to all relevant feedback received from this consultation which will be set out in a Consultation Report.
- 21.1.1.10 If our application for a DCO is accepted by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), on behalf of the Secretary of State, an Examining Authority will review the application. During the six-month examination stage, anybody with an interest in the project can participate and make representations in writing, or verbally at hearings.
- 21.1.1.11 After the end of examination, the Examining Authority will have up to three months to report its recommendation to the Secretary of State, who has a further three months to make a final decision whether or not to grant a DCO for the project.
- 21.1.1.12 Further information about the DCO application process can be found on the PINS website: [The process | National Infrastructure Planning](#)
- 21.1.1.13 The PINS website will also provide updates on the project's application process, including providing access to the submitted DCO application documents.

## 21.2 Environmental Impact Assessment

### 21.2.1 Engagement and Further Work to Inform the ES

21.2.1.1 Feedback from statutory consultation and ongoing engagement with designated stakeholders and the public will inform our continuing development of the project design and EIA.

21.2.1.2 In addition, the EIA will be supported by several further detailed studies, including for example (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Habitats Regulations Assessment;
- Water Framework Directive compliance assessment;
- Lighting Impact Assessment;
- Completing a study of project effects upon the setting of historic assets;
- Use of results from ground investigations to refine predicted amounts and types of materials to be dug;
- Computer modelling of water quality effects;
- A flood risk assessment; and
- A transport assessment.

21.2.1.3 The collection of baseline data will also continue in 2023 and 2024 to inform the EIA, including for example (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Archaeological investigations;
- Traffic surveys;
- Air quality monitoring;
- Water quality monitoring;
- Habitat and species surveys;
- Summer and winter viewpoint photography; and
- Ground investigations.

21.2.1.4 The detailed studies and continued baseline data collection will inform the detailed environmental topic assessments within the Environmental Statement (ES). The ES will be prepared through 2024 and early 2025, and this will be submitted as part of the DCO application.

## 21.2.2 Proposed Structure of the ES

21.2.2.1 The structure of the ES will broadly follow the same order of chapters that are presented within this PEIR, however changes may need to be made to address the requirements of the EIA Regulations, consultation feedback or the evolution of the project.

21.2.2.2 The indicative outline structure of the ES is as follows:

- Non-Technical Summary;
- Details of the applicant team and statement of competence;
- Chapter 1: Introduction;
- Chapter 2: Legislation and Policy Context;
- Chapter 3: Project Description and Alternative Options Considered;
- Chapter 4: Stakeholder engagement;
- Chapter 5: EIA Assessment Methodology;
- Chapters 6 – 18: Technical Topic Chapters;
- Chapter 19: Cumulative Effects Assessment;
- Chapter 20: Summary; and
- Chapter 21: Environmental Action Plan.

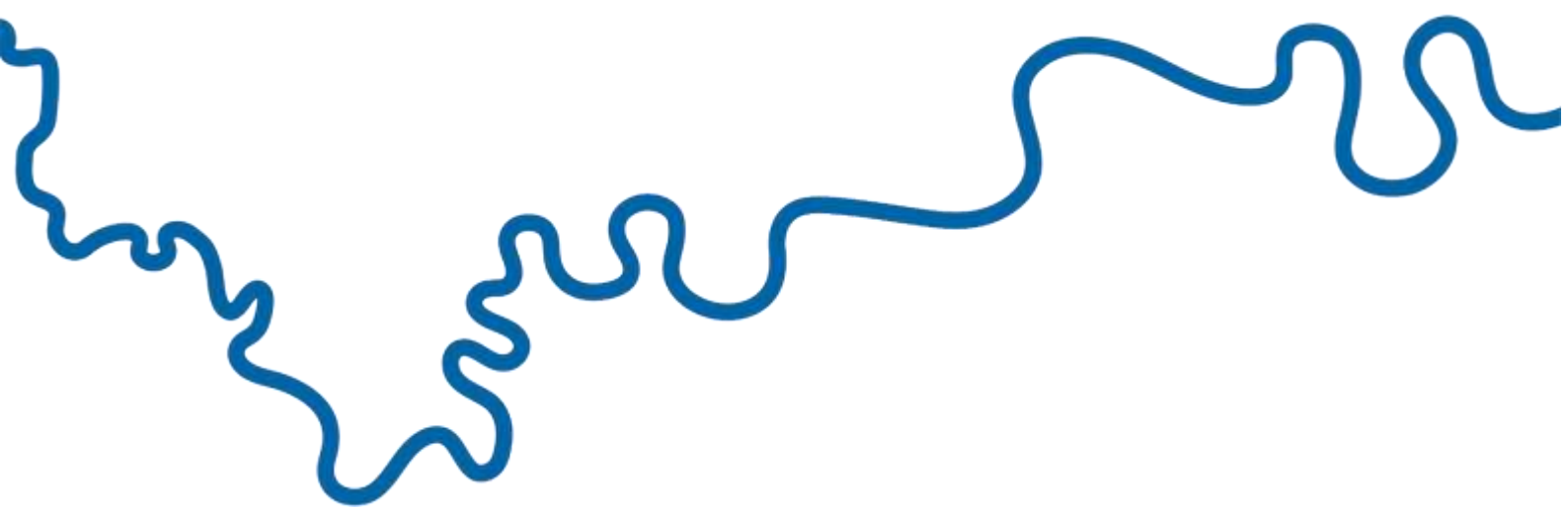
## 21.3 Find Out More and Have Your Say

21.3.1.1 The following materials have been developed for the statutory consultation to help people understand the proposals for the project and provide their feedback:

- **Consultation brochure** - The consultation brochure provides an overview of the proposals, including maps and information on key design elements of the project.
- **Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR)** - This report provides information on our preliminary assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the project.
- **Non-technical summaries** - The suite of consultation documents includes non-technical summaries of the PEIR and flood modelling report.
- **Map book and flood maps** - Supporting paper and online interactive maps detailing the project and key elements. These maps are available in their full technical formats sourced from the technical reports and simplified formats.

- **Project website** - The project website [the River Thames Scheme](#) has been updated with the Statutory Consultation materials.
- **Feedback form** - The consultation feedback form allows stakeholders and the public to formally respond to the consultation.

- 21.3.1.2 We are providing information on our project website, and also in hard copy, available at deposit locations and also on request. We are also hosting in-person and virtual events to allow attendees to explore the proposals and ask questions.
- 21.3.1.3 Copies of selected consultation documents are available for reference at Information Points (local libraries and community centres)
- 21.3.1.4 A series of around 10 public information events are being held for communities to find out information about the project and the consultation and talk to representatives from the project team in person.
- 21.3.1.5 We are seeking feedback from consultees on the proposed design and approaches. The feedback form provides a series of questions that request information on particular elements of our proposals. However, all feedback will be considered.
- 21.3.1.6 Feedback can be submitted in the following ways:
- **Online feedback form:** hosted on Citizen Space with a direct link included in the project website [The River Thames Scheme](#).
  - **Paper feedback form:** available for collection at information events, information points or upon request. Completed forms are to be sent to the address set out below.
  - **Written feedback:** other written feedback can be sent to either the freepost address or email address set out below.
  - **FREEPOST address:** FREEPOST RTUK – RBLY – XUBT, RIVER THAMES SCHEME.
  - **Email address:** [enquiries@riverthamesscheme.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@riverthamesscheme.org.uk)
- 21.3.1.7 The deadline for submitting responses to the statutory consultation is 11:59pm on the last day of the consultation on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024.



The River Thames Scheme represents a new landscape-based approach to creating healthier, more resilient and more sustainable communities by reducing the risk of flooding and creating high quality natural environments.