

Cabinet

27 March 2019



Title	New Jetty for River Thames		
Purpose of the report	To make a decision		
Report Author	Keith McGroary		
Cabinet Member	Councillor Colin Barnard	Confidential	No
Corporate Priority	Economic Development		
Recommendations	Cabinet is asked to: Approve the construction of a new jetty with access from the bandstand in Staines-upon-Thames		
Reason for Recommendation	The introduction of a new jetty for the exclusive use of commercial riverboat operations would increase the competitiveness of Staines-upon-Thames as a destination and increase the number of visitors to the town which would support our retailers.		

1. Key issues

- 1.1 Spelthorne Council has one of the longest stretches of the river Thames along its border outside of the London Boroughs, this extends for around 11 miles. The river Thames has always been regarded as a key asset of the Borough, but the council has never been able to maximise the potential that the river offers.
- 1.2 Spelthorne council has been keen to exploit the benefits of the River Thames and recognise that there are limited opportunities for riverboat companies to offer regular public trip to and from Staines-upon-Thames. Salters provide such trips from their moorings at Victoria Gardens in the town, but this is the sole provider of public boat trips along the Thames. French Brothers would also like to be able to offer trips along the Thames and attract more visitors to our town, but there are no facilities available to allow them to do so.
- 1.3 The reason more companies have never been able to exploit the opportunity Spelthorne offers, particularly in our main town of Staines-upon-Thames, is that they have never had exclusive access to moorings. This is essential to any riverboat operation as they need to advertise the days and times that they are going to stop off and collect or drop off passengers. Potential customers then know when to turn up and take a trip.

- 1.4 The current position with moorings is that any boat can stay at our mooring sites for 24 hours in any 48 hour period, which means that the riverboat businesses wanting to use the current mooring sites in Staines-upon-Thames cannot be sure if they will be able to moor and passengers embark / disembark. Potential passengers may take wasted journeys and confidence in the service and uptake will decline.
- 1.5 Economically there are some really important benefits to increasing greater use of the River Thames, especially around Staines-upon-Thames encouraging more visitors. Staines-upon-Thames would enhance its position as a tourist destination for sight-seers and those who wish to travel to other destinations on a boat; this would bring a new clientele into the town who would be able to catch the riverboat in the town. The same people may also visit our shopping area, take a meal and purchase goods from our retail outlets. This would add much needed additional footfall and spend for retailers who are competing in a very tough climate. The new jetty would also be a point for passengers to disembark from other locations to visit our town and then catch the riverboat back home again later in the day.

2. Options analysis and proposal

- 2.1 The proposal for the new jetty comes from the River Thames Task Group which consists of officers, councillors as well as local businesses and people who have a life-long interest and significant knowledge of the Thames. The group have a budget of £25,000 in order to stimulate activity on the River Thames. He preferred option: The proposal that the Cabinet is asked to support is the building of a new jetty near to the bandstand for the exclusive use of commercial boat trips.
- 2.2 Another option to facilitate boat trips along the Thames would be to provide a licence for exclusive use of part of the moorings opposite the old Town Hall, but this would have an adverse effect on regular users of the Thames as it would reduce the mooring opportunities available.
- 2.3 There has been a very strong demand for a stopping off point for commercial boat trips along the Thames in Spelthorne for many years, we believe that the risk of no uptake of this opportunity is remote.

3. Financial implications

- 3.1 A feasibility study has been carried out which shows that the proposal appears to be deliverable. A guideline estimate of £25,000 was provided by Company A for the works. A written quote has also been obtained for less than that amount.
- 3.2 One of the riverboat operators has already expressed great interest in the proposition and would be willing to pay a licence fee to access the jetty; other riverboat companies will also be contacted for expressions of interest. Use of the jetty would produce an on-going income stream for the council.
4. We will consider adding the requirement that any successful licensee would as a condition of that licence need to service the jetty annually and pay for its upkeep.

5. Other considerations

- 5.1 Access to the new jetty would be provided by an existing concrete path giving physically challenged people easy access to participate.

6. Timetable for implementation

- 6.1 In order to develop the new jetty permission would need to be in place from the Environment Agency, a planning application approved and licences for use of the jetty agreed. We would also need to go out to formal tender for the works.
- 6.2 Should work get under way quickly, a new jetty could be in place in the 2019 calendar year.

Background papers: None

Appendices: None