

# Overview & Scrutiny



23 March 2021

<b>Title</b>	<b>River Thames Task Group update</b>
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To note
<b>Report Author</b>	Jackie Taylor Group Head of Neighbourhood Services
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Richard Barratt
<b>Confidential</b>	No
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Economic Development
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>The committee are asked to note the actions and achievements of the River Thames Task Group (RTTG)</b>
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>

## 1. Key issues

- 1.1 The River Thames Task Group (**RTTG**) was set up in September 2018 to improve and enhance access and activities for Spelthorne's prime 12-mile border on the Thames.
- 1.2 The task group aims to achieve this by working practically with river-users, partners, and the community. To this end the committee's membership includes people from river interest groups, businesses and other relevant organisations and individuals who share a common interest in the river.
- 1.3 The task group aims to inspire, motivate and deliver short-, medium- and long-term improvements along the river, engaging with the community through practical participation and by engendering a local sense of ownership and responsibility.
- 1.4 The Thames has a great deal to offer - from daily boat trips to simply wandering along its banks and enjoying its tranquil scenery. The locks enjoy a deserved reputation for attractively maintained gardens including those at Penton Hook, Chertsey, Shepperton and Sunbury.

Many of Spelthorne's attractive parks and open spaces are also situated beside the river, and include:

- Lammas Recreation Ground Staines
- Memorial Gardens Staines
- Laleham Park Laleham
- Shepperton Tow Path Shepperton
- Manor Park Shepperton

- Riverside walks from Staines to Sunbury
- Kings Lawn Sunbury
- Rivermead Island Sunbury

- 1.5 In October 2019 a river boat event took place which enabled over 40 passengers including residents, river groups, river users, councillors, MOP, and officers on a trip from Staines through to Sunbury. This gave those not used to seeing Spelthorne from the river a better understanding of what river users see when travelling on the Thames through the borough.
- 1.6 This trip further enhanced the general view that the Thames had a lot to offer especially in Spelthorne and the borough needed to take more advantage of the asset. It was evident that our riverbank is of a very high standard and whilst there wasn't a lot that needed attention in terms of green maintenance, we need to be sure that it remains at this standard.
- 1.7 The task group has developed a series of short-, medium- and long-term tasks and improvements (**Appendix 1**) which it hopes to achieve within the lifecycle of the task group. To aid and move these ambitions and aspirations into positive actions the Council have provided the task group with a budget of £25k for 2019/20, £25k for 2020/2 and a further £25k for 2021/22.
- 1.8 The main aims of the task group are to:
- Deliver practical projects with tangible outcomes and benefits
  - Achieve effective community engagement by working directly with local communities and neighbourhoods
  - Working with key partners to help deliver achievable outcomes
  - To attract more people to the Borough and therefore increase the level of spend with our local businesses
- 1.9 Several projects (**Appendix 1**) which have already been delivered include:
- Improvements to the area around Shepperton Lock**
- Improved parking surfaces
  - Lining for parking spaces to increase parking capacity
  - Refurbishment of lock toilets
  - Improved waste facilities for residents and river users
  - Outdoor water fountain to be installed summer 2021
  - Removal of redundant and damaged fencing
  - Cutting back of greenery to improve parking areas
  - Reduce traffic speed
  - Better use of road space
- Mapping out areas of responsibility**
- Identify areas or responsibility along the riverbank in Spelthorne
  - Produce maps of all areas

### **River safety**

- Upgrade life-saving stations along the river
- Increase staff awareness of how to use equipment
- Equip various officers with throw lines for use in an emergency

### **Increase public awareness of the RTTG**

- A new web page has been developed at <https://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/article/17565/The-River-Thames>

### **Rivers clean up**

- Land and river areas have been cleared of litter and dumping in Staines by task group members and volunteers

### **Engage with Thames Landscape Strategy (TLS)**

- SBC is now a member of the strategy
- Officers and members have attended various group meetings
- Work is being undertaken on vegetation clearance along the river in Sunbury and Shepperton
- The TLS can provide expertise and funding opportunities pertinent to the future RTTG plans

### **New passenger jetty in Memorial Gardens Staines upon Thames**

- A new passenger jetty has been installed in Memorial Gardens Staines and is due to be officially opened later this year
- Engaged with potential suppliers of passenger boat ferries

### **New and improved signage along the river**

- Sought sponsorship from various local companies for the new signs
- Improve no mooring signs along the river

### **Other projects being explored as part of the RTTG include**

- Help with the project to provide electric hire boats at the Lammas
- Improve access for the disabled along Kings Lawn
- Seek a potential base for the Sunbury skiff & punting club
- Produce new maps of the river and its surroundings
- Protect and improve wharf areas
- New passenger ferry services between Spelthorne & Elmbridge
- Identify additional mooring locations
- Research options for management of existing and any proposed new mooring sites along the Thames in Spelthorne
- Working with neighbouring boroughs and go out to consultation to seek views on a public space protection order (PSPO) for the river

## **2. Options analysis and proposal**

2.1 There are 2 options

### **Option 1 (preferred)**

To continue with current programme of projects and work towards achieving the mission statement of the RTTG

### **Option 2**

Complete projects already underway but then close the RTTG with no further ambitions or aims being achieved

## **3. Financial implications**

3.1 The task group has already been provided with a budget of £25k for 19/20, £25k for 20/21 and a further £25k for 21/22

## **4. Other considerations**

4.1 The RTTG has at all stages considered the Equality, Diversity and Sustainability of the projects it undertakes some examples are as follows: -

### **Equality**

The RTTG are aware of the limited access along the river for disabled river users and are actively working towards finding a solution to enable those with very limited walking ability to be able to disembark at Kings Lawn in Sunbury

### **Diversity**

Access to the river for many is not possible for many different reasons, the jetty in Staines upon Thames and the electric boat project at the Lammas will give residents and visitors the opportunity to be more diverse in their leisure and work activities

### **Sustainability**

It has already been established that the Thames has much more to offer for residents, visitors, and businesses in the borough. Working with the economic development group we aim to make river users more aware of the offering behind the river in terms of shopping, eateries and general leisure and business opportunities.

## **5. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications**

5.1 The proposal to enable more people to use the river and make use of electric powered botas to enjoy and cross the river will help to reduce the harmful emissions produced by fuel powered engines.

## **6. Timetable for implementation**

6.1 The RTTG is already working on a few projects and will continue to do so until either the task group is ended or all projects have reached their final agreed outcome.

## **Background papers:**

### **Appendices:**

#### **Appendix A Short-, medium- & long-term task group aims**