



THE THAMES LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

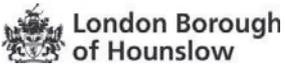
Weybridge - Hampton - Kew

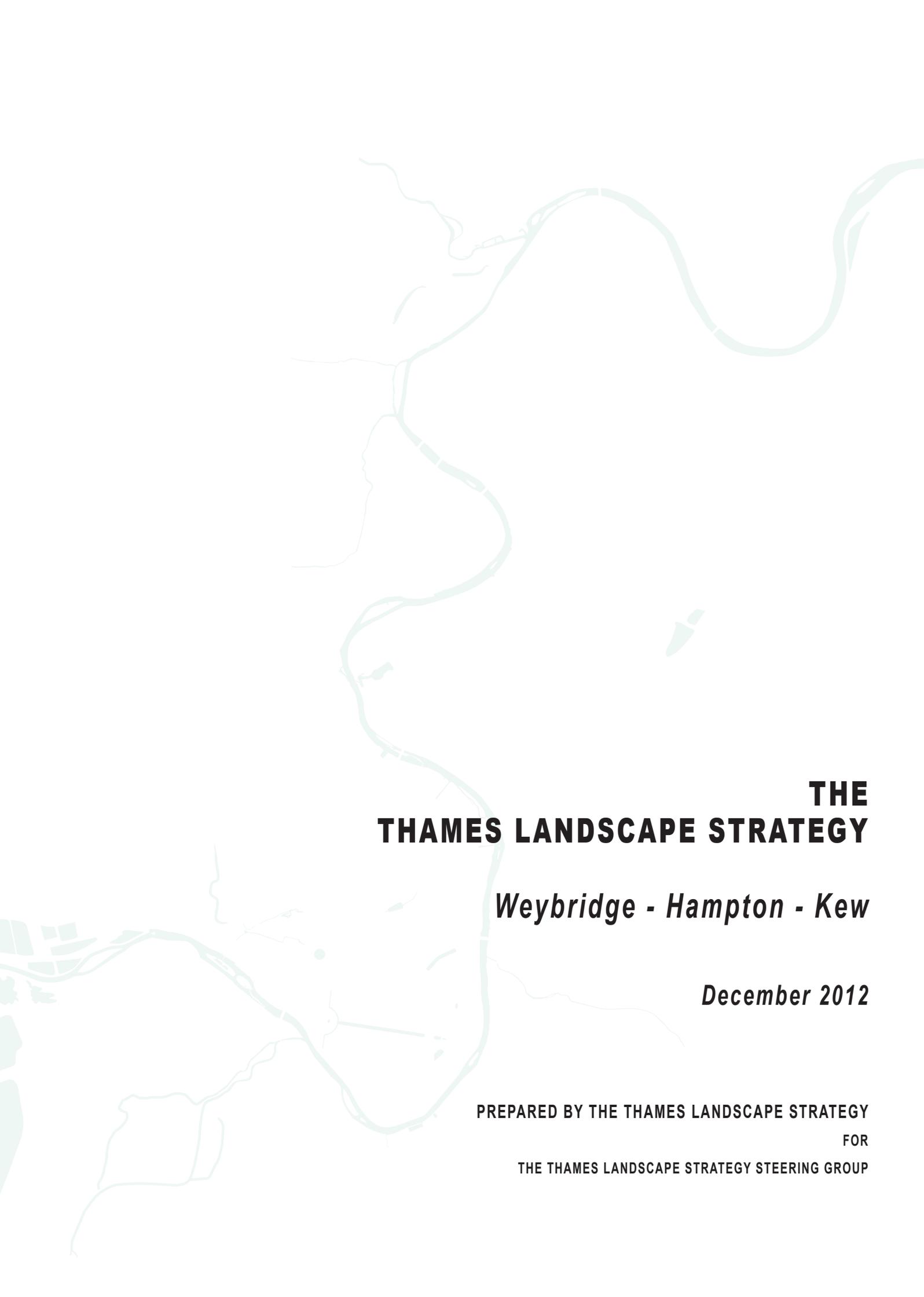


**Historic Royal
PALACES**



PLANTS PEOPLE
POSSIBILITIES





THE THAMES LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

Weybridge - Hampton - Kew

December 2012

PREPARED BY THE THAMES LANDSCAPE STRATEGY
FOR
THE THAMES LANDSCAPE STRATEGY STEERING GROUP



Sir David Attenborough

Patron of the Thames Landscape Strategy

A Message from Our Patron

I have been associated with the Thames Landscape Strategy for almost 20 years and have great pleasure in writing this message of support.

The Thames Landscape Strategy is a quite extraordinary phenomena. It is that very rare animal: an organisation with real popular appeal and an imaginative sense of what it is about landscapes that fires people's imagination. We should rejoice in having such an enthusiastic and committed partnership to guide the process of change along such a special stretch of river.

The number of conflicting interests and concerns that there are along both banks of the Thames is daunting. The great success of the Thames Landscape Strategy has been to bring together and organise this plethora of partners, boroughs and communities. By 'herding cats', it has achieved the impossible. The TLS has ensured that a varied wildlife habitat has been maintained, it has supported traditional river activities and has managed the landscape in a sensitive way that has complemented the marvelous historic buildings, nature reserves and parks that line this stretch of the Thames. The record of the Thames landscape Strategy is remarkable.

The ideas at the heart of the Thames Landscape Strategy were proposed by Kim Wilkie, whose ground breaking vision originally sparked the imagination of the community and boroughs along the Thames. Vision is quite easy to have when you start but to retain this vision; to survive the bureaucracies, finances, problems and meetings and, still to remain visionary after 20 years is however, a real achievement.

I congratulate the Thames Landscape Strategy for what they have done so far and offer my whole hearted support to this review. I look forward to continued success.

FOREWARD



Kim Wilkie

Author of the Thames Landscape Strategy in 1994

As I trudged and paddled up and down the Thames twenty-two years ago marvelling at the landscape, I had no idea what it might lead to. The river is determined. It has a way of taking hold of you, swirling together minds and passions and creating a combined momentum that is as unexpected as it is unstoppable.

I am amazed and elated that the first wild ideas which a small group of us fumbled with so long ago not only came together to create the Thames Landscape Strategy, but has grown in strength and ambition to the point where a review is now needed.

The great ambition of the Thames Landscape Strategy was to agree policies and projects for the next hundred years; the time it takes for a tree to reach maturity and the timeframe where recommendations that appear impossible in the short-term, such as removing inappropriate buildings, may seem feasible when the life span of a structure reaches an end. I see that some of these ambitious projects, such as the replanting of the Great River Avenue, the restoration of flood plains and the removal of unfortunate late twentieth-century block buildings are still encountering choppy waters, but I hope that the Strategy will never lose its vision and courage.

The major triumph of the last twenty years has been the passion and engagement of the local community and the expanding connection with the local and national authorities. The real credit for this should go to the two co-ordinators, Donna Clack and Jason Debney. In turn, they have galvanized a diverse community to work together and inspired generations of volunteers to give time, money and sweat to the landscape. This is a relentless and exhausting job; keeping very different groups not only engaged but actively involved in the future of their land and water.

The Thames between Hampton and Kew flows through one of the most beautiful landscapes of any capital in the world. The Strategy and its growing support have helped keep the place alive, relevant and cherished for nearly quarter of a century; but the coming decades will be even more of a challenge. The uncertainties of climate, economics and even politics will make the landscape more vulnerable and the Strategy more important than ever. I hope this is the first of many reviews that mark the ownership, commitment and power of the people who live in and love this extraordinary landscape.

The Thames Landscape Strategy Review 2012

This is the first review of the Kim Wilkie Thames Landscape Strategy Report prepared for the Thames Landscape Strategy Steering Group in 1994.

Contributions towards the cost have come from the TLS partners and from the Father Thames Trust.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The 2012 Review of the Thames Landscape Strategy has been commissioned by the Thames Landscape Strategy partnership. The report updated the original 1994 document and has been managed by the TLS Officers Steering Group and the TLS Co-ordinator. Updates have been written by Mike Adams, Jenny Pearce, Jason Debney, Clare Smith and Andrew Lynch.

1994 TLS Report

The Report has been commissioned by the Thames Landscape Steering Group and written by Kim Wilkie and Marco Battaggia of Kim Wilkie Environmental Design with Mavis Batey and David Lambert of the Garden History Society, Henrietta Buttery of the Countryside Commission, Jenny Pearce of the London Borough of Richmond, David Goode of the London Ecology Unit and David Bentley of English Nature. Ian and Arthur Kellas, Jane Crawley, John Cloake and Alan Urwin have helped to edit the text.

The Strategy has been guided by the Thames Working Group, composed of Mavis Batey, David Bentley, Krysia Bilikowski, Henrietta Buttery, Richard Copas, Alastair Driver, David Lambert, Jenny Pearce, Chris Sumner and Kim Wilkie, chaired by Mike Dawson.

The Project has been overseen by the Thames Landscape Steering Group, made up of the Working Group, representatives from the four Boroughs, Paul Calvocoressi, Robin Clement, Michael Hill, David Coleman, Gilly Drummond, David Goode, David Jacques, Hal Moggridge, Paul Velluet and Paul Walshe, chaired by Sherban Cantacuzino.

Administrative support has been provided by Surrey County Council and Sue Forsyth Associates. Chapter heading illustrations have been painted by Jenny Pearce and the Landscape Character Reach drawings have been sketched by Kim Wilkie. Photographs are by Marco Battaggia and Kim Wilkie, except where credited.

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The report is dedicated to the memory of Alessandra Battaggia.

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PREFACE TO THE 2012 REVIEW

The Thames Landscape Strategy 1994

The Thames Landscape Strategy (TLS) 1994 Report was a pioneering document that set out to celebrate and understand the exceptional landscape character of the Arcadian Thames, creating a 100-year strategic vision for the river corridor that has stood the test of time.

The publication of the Strategy coincided with a growing concern to find a way of carrying the special character of the riverside – both natural and man-made, into plans for the future. As such, the Strategy's ground-breaking approach to integrated environmental planning quickly caught the imagination of the four local planning authorities, statutory agencies and local interest groups. It was also adopted as the template for the rest of the river by the Secretary of State's Thames Advisory Group in 1995.

The 1994 Commission that had been established to oversee the production of the report evolved into a dynamic partnership and although the Thames Landscape Strategy remains essentially a strategic document, much of the widespread support for the organisation is due in a large measure to the tangible signs of landscape enhancements that have been seen on the ground.

In 2009 the TLS Steering Group resolved and agreed to extend the Thames Landscape Strategy (Hampton to Kew) to include that part of the River Thames that is located in the Elmbridge Borough from Molesey upriver to Weybridge. An addendum to this Strategy has been prepared for this section.

Recommendations for the Review

The 1994 TLS report recommended that there should be regular reviews on a 10-year basis. In March 2008 the Environment Agency funded a scoping study to identify options for updating the Thames Landscape Strategy (Hampton to Kew). This report found that the essential analysis of the historical influences on the present urban landscape and riverside remained robust, yet there was a need to recast the policies in the document as recommendations in order for the document to sit within the current hierarchy of statutory planning documents.

The report recommended how the Thames Landscape Strategy (Hampton to Kew) should be updated to address new issues such as flood risk that was agreed by the TLS Steering Group. This Review has been drafted as an evidence-based document to support Borough statutory plans and implementation. The Review does not have the status of Supplementary Planning Guidance but is treated as a Material Consideration. To strengthen the weight of the evidence it contains, the Review highlights changes that have been carried out during the past 15 years to demonstrate the practical delivery of Thames Strategy policy objectives and changing considerations to landscape planning.

Consultation on the Thames Landscape Strategy 1994 Review

The TLS Steering Group commissioned consultation between 1st November 2009 and 15th March 2010 to appraise the way that the Thames Landscape Strategy 1994 has worked in the past, changes to the baseline information and to gather ideas on future aspirations and potential projects. The responses to this consultation exercise are summarised in the Thames Landscape Strategy Review Consultation Report and the key findings have been used to inform this report.

Functions of the Thames Landscape Strategy Review 2012

The main functions of the Thames Landscape Strategy Review are:

- To provide a sub-regional context that is cross-referenced to planning policy in which decisions relating to the planning and management of the River Thames can be set;
- To review the progress made in implementing the TLS 1994 and to learn from that experience;
- To identify the likely impacts on the study area resulting from climate change and to make recommendations to mitigate these effects;
- To take account of the provisions of Flood Risk Management Strategies and the Thames River Basin Management Plan;
- To provide more detailed information on river infrastructure and to identify needs to be accounted for in proposals for development of riverside sites;
- To identify opportunities for environmental and urban design improvements in the form of an action plan for the next fifteen years;
- To engage local communities in decisions and practical projects concerning the River Thames and its landscape; and,
- To update the evidence base that underpins the Strategy
- To take account of the responses made to consultation on the Review that was undertaken from November 2009 to March 2010.

The Regional Planning Context

The national and regional planning context has developed significantly since the Thames Landscape Strategy was written in 1994. These have been addressed where possible in the Review.

The London Plan 2011 contains a comprehensive set of policies for the Blue Ribbon Network that includes the River Thames and other London waterways. Policy 7.29 encourages boroughs to identify Thames Policy Areas within their Local Development Frameworks and prepare detailed appraisals of their stretches of the river and its environs, and Paragraph 7.91 notes that the Thames Landscape Strategy (Hampton to Kew) fulfils this role. Para 7.93 suggests that strategies should be reviewed regularly and lists the matters which should be included.

Paragraph 7.95 sets out that the Thames Strategies should be used as guidance for LDFs and development control decisions. It also suggests that the Strategy should include specific implementation projects for local authorities and other organisations in a position to implement river-related projects. As such the strategies should be expressed through DPD policies or SPD as appropriate.

The Surrey bank of the river between Molesey and Weybridge is located in Elmbridge Borough. In the absence of any Regional Plans outside of London, the Elmbridge Core Strategy policy CS 12 provides the strategic policy framework for the River Thames Corridor and its tributaries up until 2026.

Form and Content of the Thames Landscape Strategy Review

Our principal challenge is to broaden the scope of the document to include the range of matters contained in regional guidance but at the same time to retain at its core the analysis of the distinctive landscape character of the River Thames with its important historical and cultural associations.

The approach adopted is to retain the analysis of landscape character in Chapter 2. A new Chapter 3 on river infrastructure is introduced to provide guidance relating to a number of issues that include climate change, adapting to flood risk, water quality, use of the river for transport and recreation and facilities for river users. Chapter 4 forms the more detailed appraisal and sets out the general strategy for the twelve landscape character reaches that embodies the strategic analysis of issues contained in Chapters 2 and 3. Four new reaches are included between Molesey and Weybridge.

Chapter 5 sets out the framework for planning and management and shows the inter-relationship between the Strategy guidance and the local and regional planning policy. Chapter 6 sets out the mechanism for implementation that will support the delivery of strategies and projects including volunteering, education and outreach initiatives.

The text is retained in its original 1994 format (with the exception of certain water-related themes that have been moved from Chapter Two to Chapter Three). Updates appear throughout the text in italic, preceded by the use of *2012 Update:* An example is provided below. All maps have been updated.

The project gradually evolved to cover an analysis of the character of the river landscape between Hampton and Kew as part of a vision for the river over the next century. [1994 text]

2012 Update: The Strategy's pioneering approach to integrated landscape planning was quickly recognised as a ground-breaking initiative, winning many national and international awards'. [2012 text]

