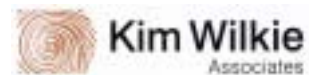


# THE THAMES LANDSCAPE STRATEGY Hampton to Kew



# THAMES LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

## Hampton to Kew



for the

**THAMES LANDSCAPE  
STEERING GROUP**

June 1994

**COUNTRYSIDE  
COMMISSION**



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Report has been commissioned by the Thames Landscape Steering Group and written by Kim Wilkie and Marco Battaglia 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.

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The report is dedicated to the memory of Alessandra Battaglia.


## FOREWORD

The Thames is one of the most important natural and cultural assets of London. It has played a major role in the growth and economy of London throughout its history. Londoners care about the Thames and it is a popular attraction for visitors and tourists.

Conserving the best aspects of the Thames and its riverside and bringing it into harmony with the commercial and recreational needs of Londoners in the twenty-first century is especially challenging. It can only be achieved if the whole range of public bodies, companies, voluntary organisations and individual property owners share a common view of what is valuable and how it can be maintained. This Strategy is an important step towards that common view.

At the launch of the government's 'response to Rio', I said that sustainable development can be defined as not cheating on our children. We must bequeath to our children a richer, more satisfying environment. This requires action now, set within the framework of a long-term strategy.

I am therefore pleased to be involved in the launch of this Strategy and commend it to the local communities. I shall follow its implementation with great interest.

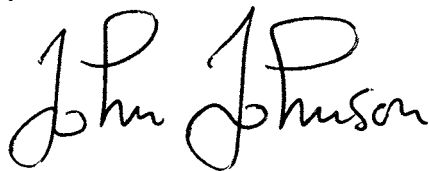


The Rt Hon John Gummer MP  
Secretary of State for the Environment

This Strategy is a notable milestone in the journey towards integrated environmental planning and management. Its strengths lie in the quality and breadth of its landscape analysis - wildlife, history, aesthetics and recreation - the union of vision and strategy with proposals for implementation, and the close involvement of the local communities in its preparation.

Turning vision into reality will require a sustained effort by a wide range of organisations and individuals. The local authorities have an especially important role through their regulatory powers, including town and country planning, and as major landowners along the river. We are very encouraged by the support and endorsement they have given the Strategy.

We shall play our part in implementation. The Strategy will provide an agreed framework for our statutory, advisory and promotional work in the area, influence the decisions we make on applications for financial assistance and be a material consideration in exercising our regulatory powers.



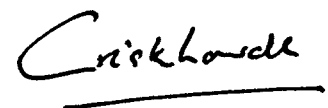
Sir John Johnson  
Countryside Commission



Jocelyn Stevens CVO  
English Heritage



The Earl of Cranbrook  
English Nature



Rt Hon The Lord Crickhowell  
National Rivers Authority



Sherban Cantacuzino CBE  
Royal Fine Art Commission

# LOCAL AUTHORITY DECISIONS ON ADOPTION

## **Borough of Elmbridge**

### *Town Planning Committee:*

1. The Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Thames Landscape Strategy: Draft for Consultation.
2. The Council, subject to the amendments set out in Appendix A, supports the policies contained in the consultation draft and agrees in principle to adopt them as supplementary planning guidance to the Elmbridge Borough Local Plan, once suitably amended.
3. The Council supports in principle the employment of a Project Officer.

### *Housing, Leisure and Community Services Committee:*

1. The Committee welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Thames Landscape Strategy: Draft for Consultation.
2. The Committee, subject to the comments set out at item 14 to the Committee's Agenda, notes the proposals and will have appropriate regard to them in the future management of land adjacent to the River Thames under the control of the Committee.

## **London Borough of Hounslow**

### *Planning and Transport and Leisure Services Committees:*

1. The Committees endorse the comments on the Draft Thames Landscape Strategy which, with other minor factual amendments, will be sent to the consultant.
2. The Director of Leisure Services and the Director of Planning and Transport respectively approve a contribution not exceeding £1,500 each towards the cost of a Project Officer from revenue budget provision in 1994/95.
3. The Committees recommend a member to serve on the Thames Steering Committee.
4. Subject to the necessary amendments, the Final Report will be adopted as supplementary planning guidance for the enhancement of the Thames riverside.

## **London Borough of Richmond upon Thames**

### *Planning and Transport and Leisure Services (points 1-4 only) Committees:*

1. The Committee welcomes and supports the strategy in principle, subject to the incorporation of amendments and additions. Implementation of projects will take place as the Council's resources permit, subject to detailed consideration and consultation.
2. The Committees support the appointment of a Project Officer, subject to officer involvement in the advertisement and selection procedure.
3. The Committees delegate authority to the Director of Planning, Transport and Client Services, Head of Planning and Building Control to participate in the recruitment of the Project Officer.
4. The Committees agree in principle to be represented on a permanent Thames Landscape Strategy Committee, subject to the composition of the Committee.
5. The Planning and Transport Committee will consider incorporating the appropriate policies, projects and management objectives detailed in Chapters 2 and 3 of the Strategy, into the Unitary Development Plan and supplementary planning guidance, to be published after consideration of the Inspector's report.
6. The Council would act as employing Authority for the Project Officer, at no additional cost.
7. The Committee will consider the Thames Landscape Strategy as a Millennium Project.
8. Authority is delegated to the Director of Planning, Transport and Client Services/Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Chairman, to consider and respond to the representations received.

## **Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames**

### *Development Committee:*

1. The draft Thames Landscape Strategy is welcomed by the Committee as a contribution, both in policy and resource terms, towards coordinating the conservation and enhancement of the landscape of the River Thames affecting the Royal Borough.
2. The Committee signals its intention to adopt the relevant elements of the Strategy, by means of the modifications to the UDP following consideration of the Inspector's report, or to use them to inform their policies, as appropriate.
3. The Committee will contribute £1,500 to the cost of the Project Officer.

### *Housing and Leisure Services Committee:*

1. The Committee welcomes the Thames Landscape Strategy and supports those elements of it which fall within the Committee's remit.
2. The Committee will agree payment of £1,500 from within the Committee's approved budget towards the cost of the Project Officer proposed in the report.

# THE THAMES LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

## Hampton to Kew

### A SUMMARY

#### THE THAMES THROUGH LONDON

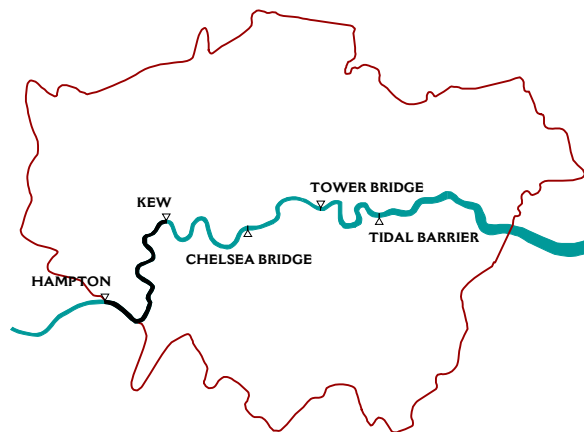
The Thames embodies both London's ancestry and its capacity for renewal and evolution. The river lies at the physical and spiritual centre of the capital, inspiring a special sense of identity in Londoners. The Thames flows through a metropolis of distinct towns and villages and unites them with a powerful natural force, linking London to the centre of England and the sea.

The river changes character through London. From the estuary in the east, the marshes and industrial areas give way to docklands upstream of the Tidal Barrier. Between Tower and Chelsea Bridges, the centre of the city is denser but turns greener and more residential towards Kew. Between Kew and Hampton the Thames meanders through a unique landscape of parks, palaces and working communities. Centuries of settlement have left a legacy of architecture, public access and nature conservation value unparalleled in the rest of the capital.

#### THE EVOLUTION OF THE STRATEGY



Old Father Thames - the spirit of the river



The Thames through London, gradually changing its character from the estuary inland

The Thames Landscape Strategy aims to understand the river landscape and to respect its character - both natural and man-made. The report draws together the history, topography, culture, politics and wildlife of this remarkable stretch of the river and forms the basis for future policy and design. Initially the Strategy developed from ideas about the network of vistas along and across the river, drawn up by Kim Wilkie Environmental Design for the Royal Fine Art Commission *Thames Connections* exhibition in 1991. Stimulated by the interest of local groups and by a growing awareness of the need for integrated policies for the Thames, 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.

#### THE STRATEGY PARTNERSHIP

The Strategy has been commissioned and guided by the Thames Landscape Steering Group, composed of representatives from principal environmental agencies and the London Boroughs of Hounslow and Richmond, the Royal Borough of Kingston and the Borough of Elmbridge. The Strategy has been jointly funded by the Countryside Commission, English Heritage and the Royal Fine Art Commission Trust, with contributions towards the preparation of the final report by English Nature, the National Rivers Authority and private benefactors.



The river is a focus for local communities

## THE COMMUNITY

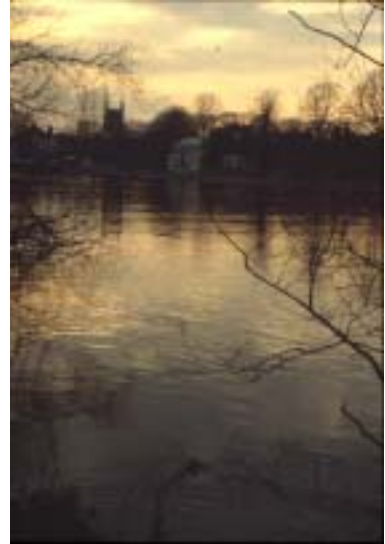
The local community has also played an important part in advocating, directing and supporting the Strategy. Extensive discussions with local authorities, national and local interest groups and private landowners and tenants have guided the project over the last two years, culminating in the recommendations presented for consultation to local authority committees in February 1994. The final Strategy report of June 1994 incorporates the consultation comments and amendments. The Strategy, besides being a technical document incorporated in planning legislation, is also intended as a detailed handbook to help local people appreciate and protect their river.

## THE LANDSCAPE AS A WHOLE

The character of the landscape has evolved from its geology and history of settlement. The river flows north in tight bends around the mass of Richmond Hill, creating a sequence of intimate reaches. The towns and villages along the river banks retain distinct identities, each with its particular history, economy and architectural character, separated by rural open spaces.

Many of these open spaces are the legacy of royal ownership. The sequence of palaces and villas established a landscape structure of riverside parks and gardens, ranging from Hampton Court Park to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. This stretch of the Thames was also the particular focus for royal and aristocratic patronage during the 17th and 18th centuries, becoming the cradle of the English Landscape Movement. The landscape is connected by an elaborate network of avenues and vistas and the river valley has become a symbol of idealised English scenery, still inspiring artists, musicians and writers.

Interwoven with the royal landscape is a constantly evolving working landscape of boatyards, wharves and commercial frontages. This dynamism and activity brings the landscape alive and the details of the domestic architecture and boathouses contribute an essential element to the overall character of the river landscape.



Isleworth, one of the series of distinct village waterfronts along the river



The view from Richmond Hill which helped to inspire the English Landscape Movement



The working landscape at Eel Pie Island, Twickenham



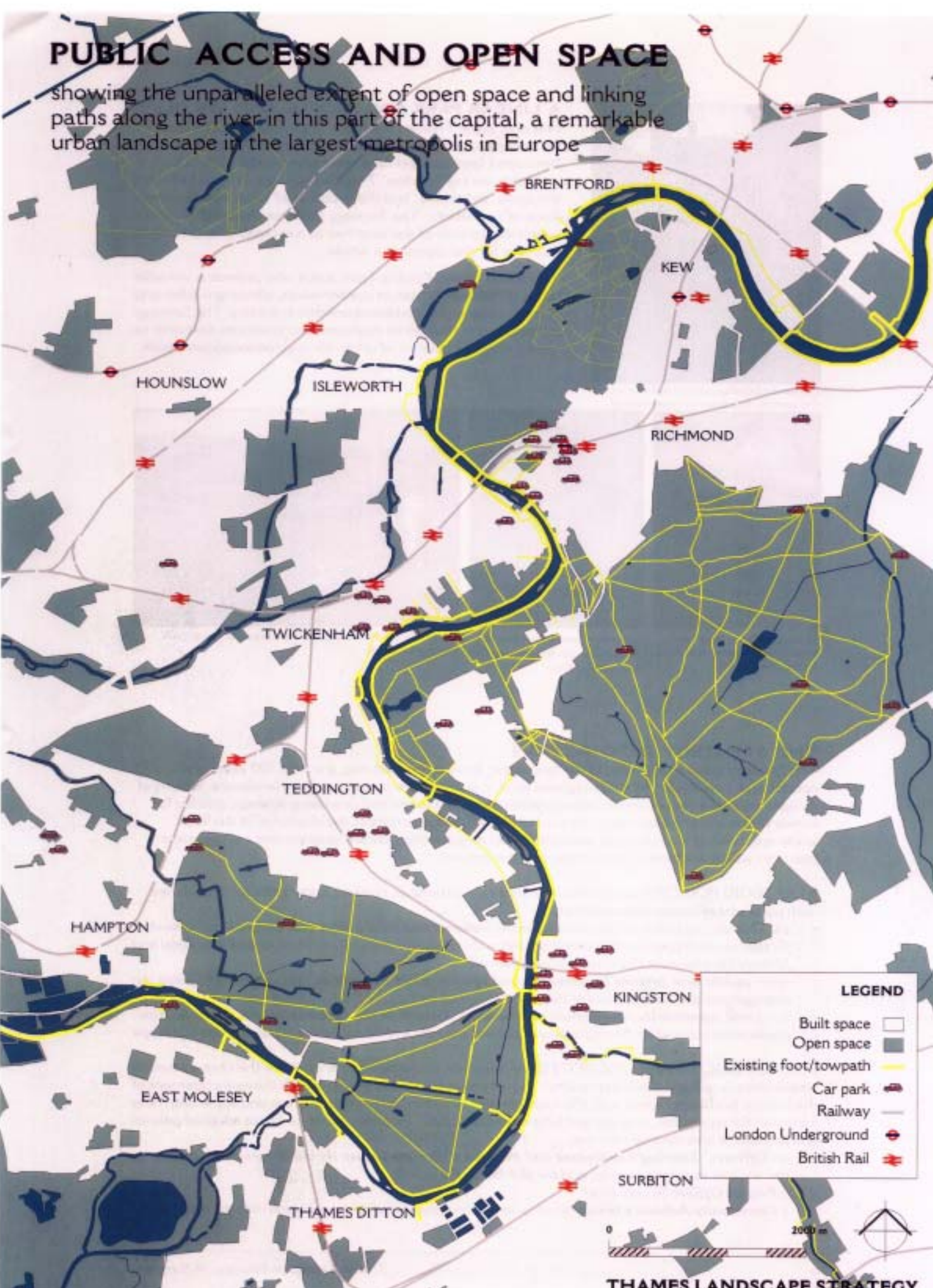
Important historic vistas still survive, such as the 10 mile view of St Paul's Cathedral from King Henry VIII's Mound in Richmond Park



Traditional boatbuilding skills continue at Richmond Pier

# PUBLIC ACCESS AND OPEN SPACE

showing the unparalleled extent of open space and linking paths along the river in this part of the capital, a remarkable urban landscape in the largest metropolis in Europe







Domestic boathouses contribute to the special character of waterfronts

## A LINEAR PARK FOR PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE

Not only is the Thames the focus of the capital, it is a corridor for transport, people and wildlife; a linear park through the city. Between Hampton and Kew there is more open space than in any other part of London. The towpaths act as a link between the parks and towns, and the water itself is popular for many kinds of recreation. The Strategy explores the great potential which this stretch of the river has as a recreation and tourism resource for the capital as a whole.

The linked areas of public open space also provide a valuable range of habitats for nature conservation, allowing wildlife and human beings to live beside one another in the city. The Strategy addresses the traditional management practices essential to maintaining the balance of urban life and nature conservation.



Great crested grebes now breed in increasing numbers on the river



Clouds of purple hairstreak butterflies can be seen by the towpath at Kew



The river banks have become a popular linear park through the city

## THE STRATEGY INTO ACTION

The Strategy takes a long view of the landscape, looking forward over the next 100 years and operating at two levels. At a sub-regional level, it analyses the structure of the landscape, looking at its significance for nature conservation, recreation and tourism and proposing strategic policies for conservation and enhancement. At a detailed level, it then explores the character of the local landscape, relating it to strategic issues and proposing specific policies, projects and management practices which will have a direct impact on the ground.

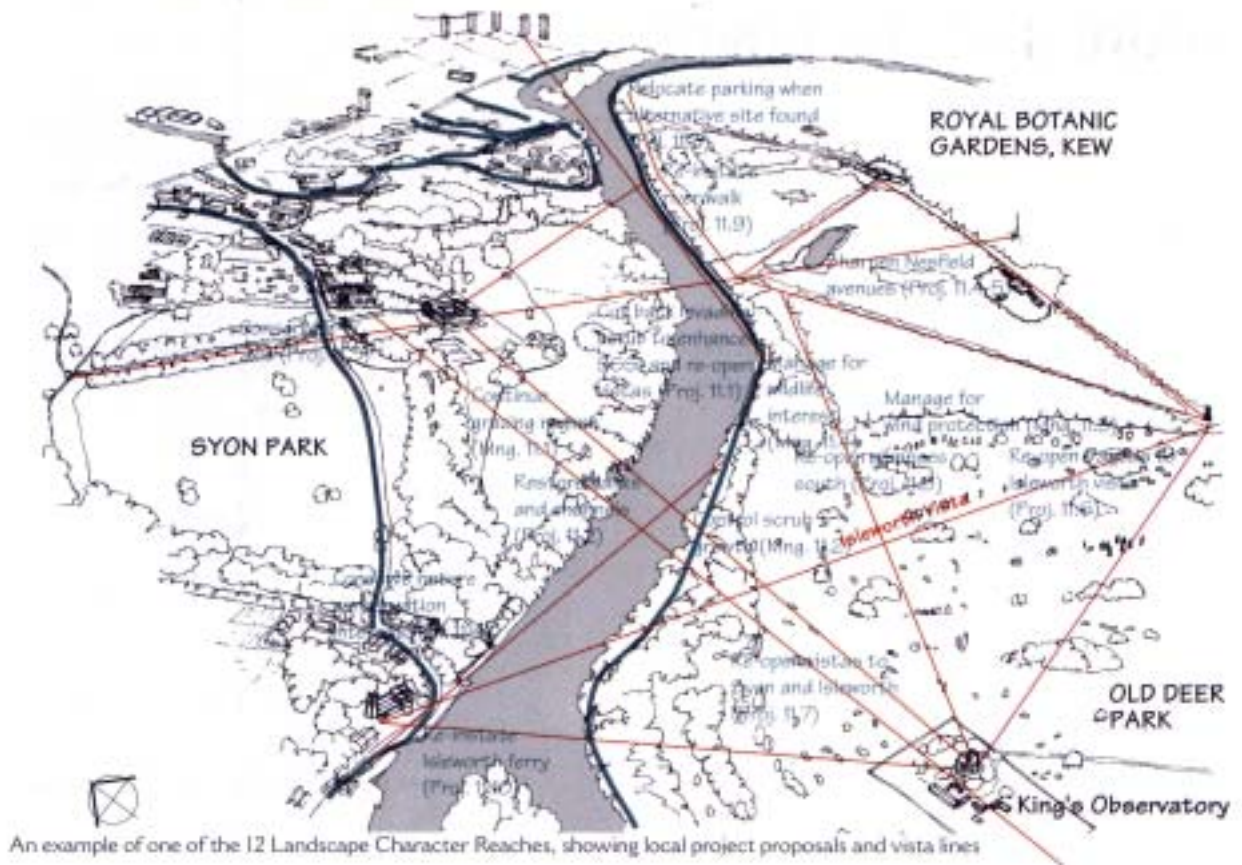
STRATEGIC POLICIES propose a co-ordinating partnership, crossing administrative boundaries, with particular recommendations that:

- *the Thames Landscape Strategy be adopted by **national and local authorities** as the policy framework for their ownership and management of land in the area, and gradually be incorporated into Local and Unitary Development Plans as they are reviewed*
- *other **public and private landowners** and tenants adopt the policies and proposals to guide the management and development of their land*
- *the **local community** be involved as closely as possible in the communication, identification, implementation and continuing review of policies, projects and management of the riverside landscape*

LOCAL POLICIES AND PROJECTS are based on more detailed analysis of the river in twelve consecutive landscape character reaches. Some projects for example, deal with the re-instatement of the historic landscape, some with the management of nature conservation areas and some with new initiatives for recreation, tourism and future development. To guide and co-ordinate adopted policies and projects, it is recommended that:

- *an **Officers' Steering Committee** and **Members' Review Group** should be convened, combining the relevant statutory agencies and the four boroughs*
- *a **Project Officer** be appointed*
- *a **Community Advisory Group** be set up as a formal channel of communication with the wider public*

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER REACH 11: SYON



**FUNDING:** Although many of the Strategy proposals need not be expensive and existing budgets can form the core funding, some major projects will require substantial funds and a range of possible sources are identified:

- **grant aid** from national agencies, the European Commission and the Millennium Fund
- **sponsorship** for specific projects from local businesses and other concerned enterprises
- **voluntary sector** support in organising and implementing work

**COMMUNICATING** the significance of the river corridor and consulting on and explaining projects will be critical to the agreement and involvement of the people who live and work in the landscape. In addition to the Community Advisory Group and the Project Officer, it is recommended that:

- people are kept informed through a **broadsheet**, newsletters and the media
- local **schools** be involved in the practical implementation of projects and that the Strategy be used as an educational resource
- a joint **marketing and tourism** strategy be promoted between the riverside attractions

Finally the Strategy looks at the implications for the rest of the river and the future, and suggests that this approach to planning the landscape be extended down the remainder of the Thames, associated with the Department of the Environment's proposals for the future of the capital based on its responses to consultation, 'Ten thousand views of London'.



Tourists enjoying the river at Kingston



Sustainability: wildlife and people in the city

# THAMES VISTA LINES



**KIM WILKIE**  
ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

21 Crown Point Road Richmond TW9 1DF Tel: 0181 552 5141 Fax: 0181 748 2811

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