

Project, a floating barge converted as a study centre for use by schools and other organisations, and the Environment Centre in Richmond town centre. Hounslow has its Brentford Initiative and a particular interest in the promotion of green chains to improve walking links through and out of the borough.

London-wide local authority liaison

The need for liaison between the London boroughs, and for advice on specialist issues, is fulfilled by associations of members of boroughs with political links and by an officer-level association. All these have an input into regional planning guidance and other London-wide issues through LPAC and through direct consultation with government departments on White Papers.

The member-level associations are the:

- **London Boroughs Association**
- **Association of London Authorities;**

and the 'chief officer' level bodies are the:

- **Association of London Borough Planning Officers**
- **London Chief Leisure Officers.**

OTHER STATUTORY AND NON-STATUTORY BODIES

Working with the local authorities are many other bodies which also offer advice, some controls and grant aid. The most relevant for the Strategy are listed alphabetically below:

The **Association of Gardens Trusts** is a national movement for the conservation and restoration of parks and gardens of national, regional and local importance and for the creation of new gardens. The London Historic Parks and Gardens Trust and the Surrey Gardens Trust are members of the Association with direct interest in the Thames between Hampton and Kew.

The **British Tourist Authority**, set up in 1969, promotes and advises on tourism. It has a particular interest in access to the Thames visitor attractions such as the parks, royal palaces and historic houses.

British Waterways owns and manages 2,000 miles of the inland waterway canal and river network in Britain. Within this area it has particular management, navigational, leisure and development interests around the Grand Union Canal at Brentford.

The **Countryside Commission** is a statutory agency which promotes the conservation and enhancement of landscape beauty in England. It encourages the provision and improvement of facilities in the countryside and works to secure access for open air recreation.

The Commission has always regarded the town and country planning system as crucial in conserving the landscape. Its publication *Planning for a Greener Countryside* sets out the Commission's policies and recommendations on how best to plan for an attractive countryside. The Commission has recently emphasised to local authorities that it will be working at a strategic level, not commenting on development casework. The involvement of the Commission in the Thames Landscape Strategy is an example of the Commission and local authorities working at a strategic level which the Commission hopes will be used as a model elsewhere.

The Countryside Commission grant aids landscape and access management. The Thames Path is the newest of the Commission's national trails. London Boroughs' UDPs identify where gaps in the route can gradually be linked up. The Path is being way-marked by the local authorities with grant aid from the Commission. A Public Art Strategy for the Thames Path has also been initiated. With its interest in working at a strategic level, the Commission is keen to fund a co-ordinating officer to assist the implementation of the Thames Landscape Strategy.

The Countryside Stewardship Scheme which offers funding towards the cost of managing land in a traditional and sympathetic manner is already helping to conserve the historic and waterside landscapes of Petersham Meadows and Ham Lands. It is hoped that the Scheme will help other landowners, such as Syon Park which is currently preparing a management plan with a view to entering the Scheme.

The **Department of the Environment** is responsible for planning and land use; local government; housing, construction, energy efficiency and property holdings; inner-city areas, new towns, environmental protection, conservation areas and countryside affairs. It funds the Countryside Commission and English Nature.

The DoE issues Strategic Planning Guidance for London which forms the framework for the 33 UDPs. LPAC's Strategic Advice indicates to the DoE what the boroughs wish to see in Strategic Guidance. The DoE will be preparing Strategic Guidance for the Thames through London in response to its 1993 consultation on the capital's future.³⁶

The **DoE London Policy Unit** was set up in 1993 to oversee the Secretary of State for the Environment's current initiatives for London. Operating within the DoE, it services the Cabinet Sub-Committee on London and is chaired by the Secretary of State. However, this Unit acts principally on new initiatives and does not have a role - other than that of liaison - within the established land use planning structure.

The **Department of National Heritage**, established in 1992, is responsible for government policy relating to the arts, broadcasting, the press, museums and galleries, libraries, sport and recreation, heritage and tourism. It funds the Arts Council of Great Britain and other arts bodies, including the National Heritage Memorial Fund. It also funds the Museums and Galleries Commission, the national museums and galleries in England, the British Library, the Sports Council, the British Tourist Authority and the English Tourist Board, and the British Film Institute. It is responsible for built heritage, including the Royal Parks and Historic Royal Palaces Executive Agencies. The DNH is also responsible for the policies and implementation of the National Lottery and the Millennium Fund.

The **Department of Transport's** River Thames Working Group has a special interest in the Thames for freight and passenger use, exploring the potential for continuing and expanding this use to relieve road congestion in the London area. The Working Group has yet to report, but is interested in the retention of working boatyards in the Strategy area for the repair of freight and passenger craft, and in increasing passenger use - in particular tourist use - of the Thames.

English Heritage (The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England) advises the Department of the Environment (DoE) and the Department of National Heritage (DNH) on the listing of buildings and the scheduling of monuments, as well as on Planning Policy Guidance for historic buildings and conservation areas. Its remit includes advice on policy for historic parks and gardens, in particular the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England; it is also preparing advice on the designation of historic landscapes. A permanent garden grants scheme was introduced in 1993. The London Division of English Heritage (formerly the Historic Buildings Division of the GLC) advises the Boroughs directly on listed building consent applications and certain applications in Conservation Areas, and on conservation policy in strategic plans and SPG. English Heritage also administers grant aid for historic buildings and areas in London and directly manages over 350 properties, including the historic gardens and parks at Chiswick and Marble Hill.

In 1993 English Heritage produced the *Guidance for Local Planning Authorities on Management of Conservation Areas*. With an awareness that many authorities have designated conservation areas without a clear statement of the area's character and special interest, it advises that clear definition of the special interest of the area is an essential basis, both for better-defined policy to resist inappropriate development, and for implementation projects for enhancement. The analysis in the Strategy of the individual character of the reaches (many of which are designated conservation areas) establishes a firm base for policy and for future projects, consistent with this advice.

English Nature, set up in its present form by Act of Parliament in 1991, has responsibility for advising the government on nature conservation in England. It

promotes, both directly and through others, conservation of England's wildlife and natural features. It notifies Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and thereafter authorises work on notified land. Within the Strategy area, English Nature has a particular interest in the Richmond Park and Syon Park SSSIs.

English Nature provides grants for nature conservation projects on SSSIs, school grounds, local nature reserves and for community action projects. In early 1994 English Nature also launched a Local Authority Wildlife Action pack.³⁷

The **English Tourist Board** has responsibility for developing and marketing the tourist industry, particularly encouraging the provision and improvement of tourist amenities.

The **Garden History Society** is the chief national society concerned with historic parks and gardens. For this report the Society considered the impact of designed landscapes in the wider context of the cultural history of the area.

The **Georgian Group** was founded in 1937. It exists to save Georgian buildings, parks and gardens from destruction or disfigurement and to encourage public knowledge of all aspects of Georgian design. Among the buildings and landscapes on the Thames, notable examples of Georgian architecture and garden design include Marble Hill, Strawberry Hill and Syon Park.

The **London Ecology Committee**, a joint committee of participating London Boroughs deals with all aspects of ecology. The Committee includes English Nature and the Countryside Commission as well as voluntary organisations. Its remit covers ecological aspects of planning and management of open space in London.

The Committee oversees the work of the London Ecology Unit (LEU). The LEU provides an ecological service to local authorities and other agencies in London and much of its work emphasises social and economic benefits of nature conservation and promotes greater awareness of ecological issues.

The **London Planning Advisory Committee** (LPAC) is a statutory committee set up to advise the Government, the London Boroughs and other bodies on matters of common planning and transport interest. Strategic Advice recognises the value of the Thames in policies on new development, use of passenger and freight transport, recreation and tourism potential and protection of features of ecological and nature conservation significance.

The 1989 Guidance, noting that the Thames is one London's greatest assets, has now been reviewed and in June 1993 LPAC published for consultation its Draft 1993 Advice on Strategic Planning Guidance for London, focusing on a '*broader and longer term vision for London*', with '*a high quality environment*' being one of the four components of the vision. Detailed strategic policies stress that riverside development must be of '*special architectural quality*', take account of local and long-distance views, preserve waterside buildings and features of historic importance, maintain and improve public access and safeguard the ecological and conservation value of the water, banks and associated open spaces. It recognises that the Thames forms the backbone of the strategic open space network and should be identified in UDPs as the prime Area of Special Character. The Revised Advice, agreed by LPAC in February 1994, calls for the identification of all historic open spaces and landscapes in UDPs, with policies to conserve their character and long-term strategies for their protection and enhancement. It specifically acknowledges the valuable guidance to be found in the Thames Landscape Strategy.

LPAC has also published, in 1990, *Guidelines for Permanently Moored Vessels and Structures on the River Thames*, and advice on strategic views, including that from King Henry's Mound in Richmond Park to St Paul's. This was later issued as a Directive by the Secretary of State. In 1993 LPAC published research relevant to the Strategy on *Urban Environmental Quality*. The study recognises that Thames-side guidance and policy is '*thin on the ground*' and indicates the need for '*co-ordinated UDP policies for the Thames*'. It also states (para 5.21) that there are numerous London-wide issues relative to urban quality which span borough boundaries and for which a London-wide co-ordinating policy framework is needed. The '*obvious ones*' include Thames and Thames-side, and important cross-boundary views. The Study suggests that: '*Government and the Boroughs should recognise the unique functional, environmental and visual value to London of the Thames and Thames-*

side, and should undertake to prepare a comprehensive strategy and proposals to develop the river's potential (possibly as a linear Urban National Park)*.

LPAC leads the Thames-side Working Party, which meets quarterly and which includes officers of all the riparian boroughs and representatives of the statutory and non-statutory bodies with an interest in the Thames together with observers from the DoE and DTp. LPAC's intention is to update the 1985 Thames-side Guidelines (published in 1985 by the former GLC) when resources permit.

London First, a private sector-led partnership of business, local government and voluntary interests, aims to improve the capital and promote London as a world class city. Chaired by Sir Allen Sheppard, London First will be co-ordinating *London Pride* - a practical prospectus for joint action in London, involving local authorities, the business community, the voluntary sector and public agencies.

The **London Rivers Association** represents the interests of many of the riparian boroughs and other bodies and carries out important research into the Thames-side issues.

The **National Rivers Authority** (NRA) was set up as an independent government authority by the 1989 Water Act. Its responsibilities include the regulation of water resources and water quality, flood defence, fisheries, conservation, recreation and navigation.

The NRA (Thames Region) provides grant aid for appropriate amenity and recreation projects and provides help in kind for selected wildlife habitat creation and enhancement projects. Together with the Sports Council, the NRA is currently preparing a Recreation Strategy for the whole length of the Thames to provide guidance on optimising the recreational use of the river. The Recreation Strategy will be published in 1995.

The NRA Thames Region Landscape Architecture Group is currently undertaking a landscape assessment of the tidal Thames to classify and evaluate the landscape quality of the river, with a view to developing a catchment management plan with appropriate landscape policies. The upstream Thames has previously been subject to a landscape assessment which formed the basis for the guidance on environmental planning and design contained in the *Thames Environment Design Handbook*.

The **Port of London Authority**, a public trust constituted in 1908, is the governing body for the Port of London, covering the tidal portion of the River Thames from Teddington to the seaward limit. It is also responsible for the provision of navigational services for vessels within this area, and for the compulsory licensing of river works on, in, over or under the tidal Thames.

The **Royal Fine Art Commission** was established in 1924 as an autonomous authority to advise central government and local planning authorities on the design of new development and the effects on the visual environment. It also plays a major role in promoting ideas for the improvement of the built environment through its publications, one of which generated this Strategy.

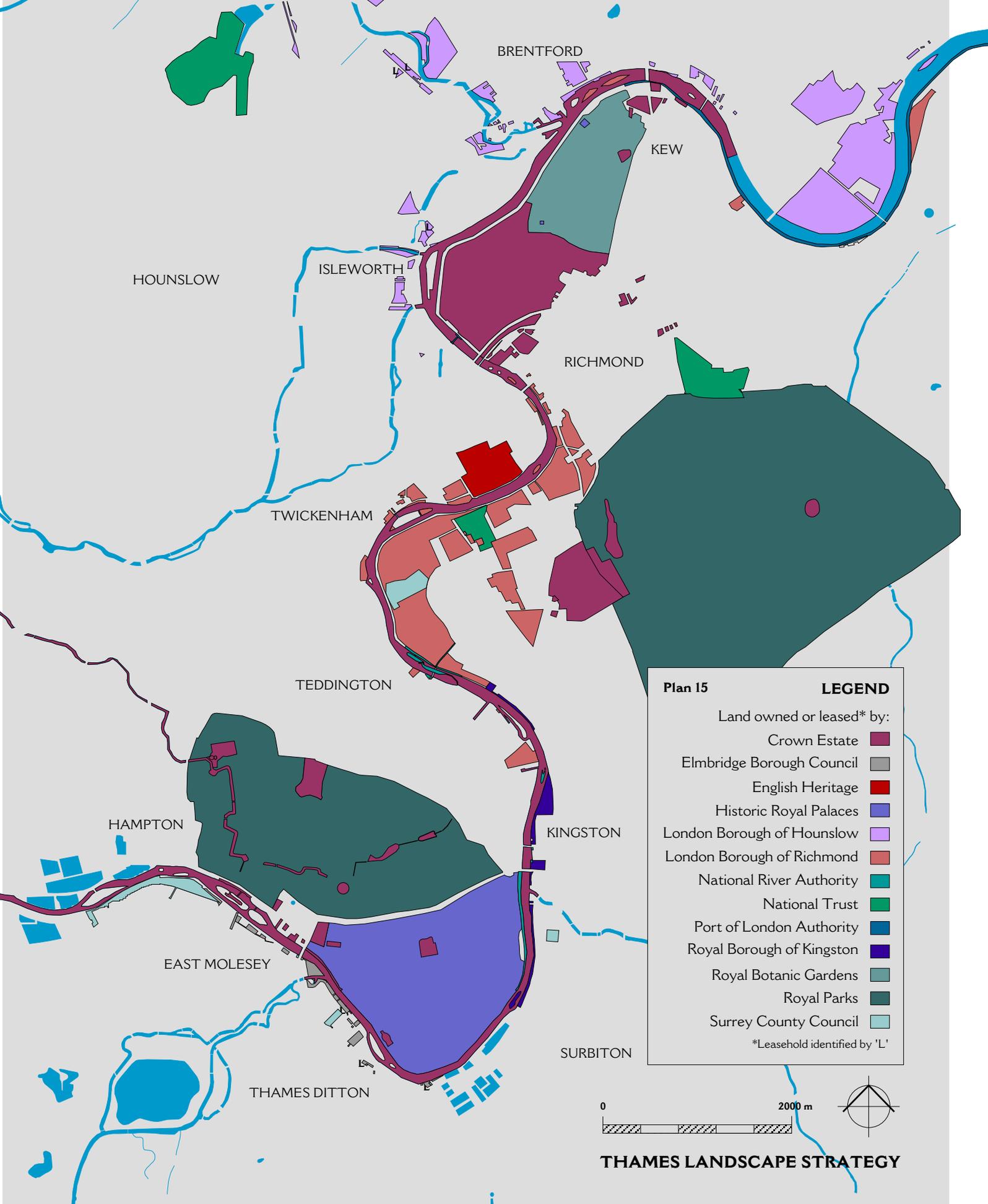
The **Sports Council**, created under royal charter, promotes the development of sport and fosters the provision of facilities for sport and recreation. South-west London has extensive national-level sports facilities. There are also the many London-based institutions and organisations which have their private sports grounds located here, such as Shell's Lensbury Club at Teddington.

The **Victorian Society** is the national amenity society concerned with the preservation of Victorian and Edwardian architecture. It has been particularly concerned to conserve the boathouses, which are both buildings of importance in their own right and contribute so vitally to the character of the river.

Voluntary Initiatives are playing an increasingly important role in river projects. There is an enormous range of voluntary organisations within the Strategy area, both as branches of London-based or national organisations or as entirely locally based groups. Some, such as the River Thames Society, are directly river-related; others, such as the local residents associations and amenity societies, have an interest in the Thames because their areas border the river.

Many voluntary groups carry out practical projects as well; the Friends of Radnor Gardens and its parent body, the Environment Trust for Richmond upon Thames, have been active in raising money for river-related projects in Richmond and

PUBLIC AND CHARITABLE LANDOWNERSHIP along the river



Plan 15

LEGEND

Land owned or leased* by:

- Crown Estate
- Elmbridge Borough Council
- English Heritage
- Historic Royal Palaces
- London Borough of Hounslow
- London Borough of Richmond
- National River Authority
- National Trust
- Port of London Authority
- Royal Borough of Kingston
- Royal Botanic Gardens
- Royal Parks
- Surrey County Council

*Leasehold identified by 'L'



Twickenham, and the Richmond Society has recently successfully restored the statue of the River God in Terrace Gardens. The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) is likely to be involved in much work on the Thames banks and riverside land during the implementation of Strategy projects. The BTCV has been long established in this area.

However, not all voluntary interest is 'hands on' - there is extensive local knowledge and expertise in academic and historic aspects of the Thames and many societies are used to working in partnership with statutory organisations and professional bodies on projects and publications. Intense interest, and enthusiastic and informed support has already been given to the principle of this Strategy by the voluntary sector.

LAND MANAGEMENT

There is an unusually high proportion of public and charity owned land along the Thames between Hampton and Kew, managed with the public benefit as a priority. Private landowners are also keen to manage their properties in harmony with the river landscape, encouraged and advised by incentives, such as the Countryside Commission Stewardship Scheme and the English Heritage grants for historic parks and gardens. The main public and charitable landowners are the:

- **Borough of Elmbridge**
- **Crown Estate Commissioners**
- **English Heritage**
- **Historic Royal Palaces Agency**
- **London Borough of Hounslow**
- **London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames**
- **Lovaine Trust, Syon**
- **National Rivers Authority**
- **National Trust**
- **Port of London Authority**
- **Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames**
- **Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew**
- **Royal Parks Executive Agency**
- **Surrey County Council**