

From: Rowley, Denise <Denise.Rowley@pla.co.uk>
Sent: 29 June 2017 08:50
To: Smith Peter: H&F
Cc: Casey Rachel: H&F
Subject: FW: Hammersmith and Fulham Biodiversity Commission - Call for Evidence

Dear Mr Smith

Thank you for the invitation from Morag Carmichael via email from Rachel Casey to respond to the Biodiversity Commission Call for Evidence.

The Port of London Authority (PLA) has responsibility for conservancy of the tidal Thames from Teddington to the Outer Estuary, and for its tidal tributaries. As such we are your southern neighbours.

The PLA and stakeholders recently developed a Vision for the Tidal Thames (<http://www.pla.co.uk/About-Us/The-Thames-Vision>) which includes a goal to make the river the cleanest since the Industrial Revolution. To achieve this there are a number of priority actions, including “*Improve biodiversity of sites recognised for their wildlife interest, and the connections between them*”. To achieve this action we have recently set up a Biodiversity Group of relevant environmental regulators and charities. This Group is looking at many of the same issues that your Biodiversity Commission is – principally what data is available, how can we encourage creation of green corridors and improve biodiversity of sites and how can we monitor improvements. The Vision is looking to enhance connections along the river corridor and for 500m inland of Mean High Water. We have also established an Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) Group of interested stakeholders to look at tackling the issue of INNS in the river and the riverside land to 500m inland.

To achieve the aims of both the LBHF Biodiversity Commission and the Thames Vision Biodiversity Action there would be benefits to closer cooperation and sharing of data.

To answer your questions we have focused on the river environment as our key area of interest:

Q1 What can be done to enhance the biodiversity of a densely populated urban environment such as Hammersmith and Fulham?

To enhance biodiversity in densely populated areas it will be important to utilise all suitable structures. The Environment Agency have produced a guidance document “Estuary Edges” (currently being rewritten and updated but the existing version is available here - <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140328084622/http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/sectors/100745.aspx>). This outlines the types of enhancements that can be made to hard riverside structures.

Working to prevent the establishment of invasive non-native species (INNS) will also enhance biodiversity in your Borough.

Preventing litter can also improve visual appearance and prevent harm to animals, birds and fish. The Cleaner Thames campaign, coordinated by the PLA and supported by organisations like Tideway, Thames 21 and the Thames Litter Forum, has been working since September 2015 to raise awareness of the impacts of litter on the river environment and to encourage people to bin their litter.

Appropriate design of lighting to prevent light spill can encourage wildlife by taking away the disorientating effects of artificial light.

Q2 What examples of good practice can we draw upon? (especially interested in examples of creating green corridors and of involving local people).

Good examples for improving the river edge environment can be found in the EA’s Estuary Edges Guidance mentioned above.

In terms of examples of creating green corridors and involving local people we would suggest looking at the following organisations:

- The Thames Landscape Strategy are a good example of volunteers and community involvement in landscape improvement schemes.
- Thames21 are also a volunteer organisation whose aim is to protect and restore the river and it's tributaries. Their activities enhance biodiversity by litter-picking, removal of INNS and encouraging Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS).
- The Zoological Society of London (ZSL) undertake fish surveys in the river and utilise volunteer Citizen Scientists. They have developed a guidance document for developers "Conservation of Tidal Thames Fish through the Planning Process".
- BugLife have developed a Beelines project which aims to create networks of flower-rich pathways and their project may offer some suitable examples of land-based green corridors.

Q3 How best can we monitor improvements?

We are currently considering this question to quantify the progress towards the aims of the Thames Vision. Ideas that have been suggested include:

- Regular surveying for "flagship" species which can represent a wider range of species or a particular biodiversity community.
- Aerial surveys looking at "green" coverage could give a guide to loss or gain of vegetative cover.
- Number of river frontage developments that have been designed in accordance with "Estuary Edges".
- Control of INNS

Q4 Where should responsibility lie for delivering such improvements?

Responsibility for delivering such improvements ultimately lies with the landowner. Although the PLA owns much of the tidal River Thames and it's tidal tributaries, the river edges are the responsibility of the riparian landowner. There is opportunity to influence developers and those doing repairs and refurbishment during the planning process by responding to planning consultations.

We trust this provides sufficient information for your consultation, but should you require further information or wish to discuss opportunities to work together towards improving biodiversity along the riverfront, please contact Tanya Ferry or myself at our team email address of environment@pla.co.uk

Regards

Denise

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Find out about the Cleaner Thames campaign:

- Website: www.pla.co.uk/Cleaner-Thames
- Film: <https://youtu.be/9bsLmgzpHQE>
- Twitter: @LondonPortAuth #cleanerthames

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