

BOROUGH OF SPELTHORNE

ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY
FOR

STAINES RIVERSIDE

(LAMMAS RECREATION GROUND
TO
ST. PETER'S CHURCH, LALEHAM ROAD)

MARCH 2000



CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Public Consultation
- 3.0 Background to the Preparation of this Strategy
- 4.0 Policy Context
 - The River Thames
 - Conservation Areas
 - Listed Buildings
 - Town Centres
 - Areas Liable to Flood
 - Protected Urban Open Space
 - Archaeology
- 5.0 Approach to Enhancing The Brief Area
- 6.0 Proposals
- 7.0 Contacts

Appendix 1 Survey of the Numbers of People Using the Riverside in Staines

Plan 1 Policy Areas

Plan 2 Proposals

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The River Thames is one of England's great natural assets and over 12 miles of its length provides the southern boundary to the Borough of Spelthorne.
- 1.2. Within Staines Town Centre there is a stretch of River frontage of about a mile from the Lammas Recreation Ground to St. Peter's Church, Laleham Road. The purpose of this Enhancement Strategy is to set out the approach to upgrading this section of Riverside in Staines and make specific proposals. Its objective is to realise the potential to create a Riverside environment in Staines of exceptional quality.
- 1.3. This Strategy also provides context to two separate Planning Briefs for part of the Riverside in Staines.
 - a) Cinema and former Carvery Site, Clarence Street, Staines -
In April 1999 the Council adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance a Planning Brief for this site which is bounded by the River Thames, Staines Bridge, Clarence Street and the River Colne. That brief was based on the national and local policies which underpin this document and is consistent with the detailed proposals set out in this Brief. The Cinema Brief in effect functions as an inset to this wider document.
 - b) Town Hall, Market Square, Memorial Gardens and Riverside Car Park, Staines -
The Council has published at the same time as this Strategy a separate Planning Brief that proposes the creation of a Staines Riverside Park and identifies possible alternative uses for the Town Hall.
- 1.4. This Strategy has the status of Supplementary Planning Guidance.

2.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 2.1. Prior to its adoption, this Strategy was subject to public consultation for a 6 week period from 25th October to 6th December 1999. The consultation arrangements included a press release, notification of some 350 addresses adjoining or near the site by letter (including those addresses of properties facing the Staines bank of the River Thames), consultation of amenity and other interest groups and making the Brief available for sale and inspection at the Council Offices and on the Council's website. A Special October Edition of the Borough Bulletin (which is delivered to every household in the Borough) on Staines Town Centre, included a 2 page feature on the proposals contained in this Strategy and the accompanying Planning Brief for the Town Hall, Market Square, Memorial Gardens and Riverside Car Park. A public exhibition on the proposals in both documents was held in the Elmsleigh Centre for 2 days (28th and 29th October 1999), at which staff from the Planning Section were available to talk to the public. The exhibition material was then displayed at 40-42 High Street (former Halfords shop) from 2nd November to 14th December.
- 2.2. The Council is satisfied that the consultation arrangements have been extensive and all those who might have wished to express a view have had the opportunity of doing so. 54 individuals and organisations commented on the issues in the Strategy in writing or by e-mail. The letters, e-mails, and comments in the exhibition book demonstrate public support for the Council's proposals and no party was fundamentally opposed to the principle of a strategy to enhance the riverside at Staines.

3.0 BACKGROUND TO THE PREPARATION OF THIS STRATEGY

- 3.1. The River Thames has in the past had a particular importance as a transport route and there is a towpath along much of its length over which the public has a right of access. This towpath with other connecting routes has now been designated as The Thames Path National Trail.

- 3.2. In Spelthorne the historic towpath is on the south bank of the River through Staines town centre and only transfers to the north bank at the Railway Bridge in Thames Street. There is then a continuous towpath on the north bank of the Thames downstream to Shepperton Lock where the towpath again transfers to the south bank.
- 3.3. In Staines horses drawing barges either "hooked-off" or "hooked on" to their barge in the vicinity of the current Railway Bridge and the horses were then either walked over Staines Bridge to get to the opposite bank or ferried across. The pair of cottages now in the grounds of the Thames Lodge Hotel were called "Hook-On" and "Shoot-Off" reflecting this activity.
- 3.4. The first section of public access to the River was first created in 1897 with the laying out of gardens adjacent to the Town Hall. They were subsequently called the Memorial Gardens after the 1st World War. Hitherto the town had developed in a way which turned its back on the River. During the 1970's and 1980's bit by bit the amount of public access was increased in the context of various development schemes which in many respects compounded the effect of separating the town from the River.
- 3.5. In 1998, as part of a redevelopment at the Thames Lodge Hotel site the final section of River frontage was secured for public access providing for the first time a continuous 3/4 mile section of walk from the Victoria Gardens just south of the Railway Bridge up to the Lammas Recreation Ground at the Borough's boundary with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
- 3.6. As each new section of Riverside has been acquired for public use it has been laid out in a manner appropriate to the development or use of the site of which it is part. However, to date no comprehensive assessment of the Riverside in the town centre has been undertaken to assess how it might best be enhanced so its amenity value can be optimised and the fullest advantage is taken to contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre as a whole.
- 3.7. Staines Bridge is an important entrance point into the town centre and enhancement of the Riverside both up and downstream of this point also contributes to making this "gateway" point more attractive.
- 3.8. The Council recognises only the north bank of the River Thames at this point is within the Borough of Spelthorne but that proposals need to take account of the Riverside as a whole. The proposals have been formulated having regard to the character and impact on the south bank which is within the Borough of Runnymede and includes the Hythe Conservation Area.

4. POLICY CONTEXT

- 4.1. The following section sets out both the national and local planning context to the main issues affecting the Enhancement Strategy area. References to the Local Plan relate to the Deposit Draft of the Replacement Local Plan. This has been prepared in the context of both national policy guidance and the Surrey Structure Plan 1994. The Replacement Local Plan was due to be adopted in November 1999. The Secretary of State, however, served a 'direction' that Policy H6 (which relates to affordable housing) should be modified before adoption. At the time of publishing this Planning Brief, the Replacement Local Plan has not been adopted. However, the Council's proposed modifications to the Plan, including to those policies which are relevant to the context of this Strategy were agreed in May 1999 and are unaffected by the 'direction'.

The River Thames

- 4.2. "Strategic Planning Guidance for the River Thames" was published by the Government in February 1997 as Regional Planning Guidance (RPG 3B/9B). It deals with the section of the River Thames from Windsor to the sea. Its stated purpose is to provide formal planning guidance from the Secretary of State

to local planning authorities to assist them in their review of their development plans, in the exercise of their development control decisions, and in the formulation of their own policies in relation to the River and Riverside land.

- 4.3. The guidance aims to present a vision for the River which will provide a land use planning framework for enhancing its status and vitality.
- 4.4. The Government recognises the opportunity to develop and exploit the River's potential, enhance the quality of the riverside environment, improve the standard of urban design and bring back life to the river front. It makes clear that to achieve these aims requires a strategic framework and a consistent and coherent approach based on common objectives. The strategic guidance sets this out and Local Planning Authorities are required to take account of the guidance and specifically:-

"Riparian planning authorities, and other agencies involved in management of the River and its environs, should:

- * recognise the strategic importance of the Thames and the functions it serves for the region as a whole;
- * reflect these in development and other plans, and in land use decisions affecting the River and its hinterland; and
- * Collaborate to ensure a co-ordinated and cohesive approach to land use planning for and along the River."

- 4.5. The guidance sets out under three headings the overall objectives which guide Government planning policy in respect of the Thames. These have an obvious application at both the strategic and local level and are:-

" * **for the built environment:**

- * to secure a special quality for all new development on the River and riverside, appropriate to its context, and to improve the existing townscape;
- * to protect and enhance historic buildings, sites, structures, landscapes, skylines and views of importance;
- * to enhance the vitality of the river front by making best use of its potential attraction for a range of uses; by promoting the regeneration of redundant urban land and buildings; by promoting uses which enhance peoples' enjoyment of the River; and by discouraging development which neither contributes to, nor is appropriate for, a riverside location; and
- * to protect important archaeological remains.

* **for the natural environment:**

- * to improve the quality and provision of open space along the River; and
- * to conserve and where appropriate enhance the ecology of the River;
- * to respect green belt, metropolitan open land and other recognised designations denoting areas of ecological, conservation or landscape importance.

- * **and, regarding use of the River and riverside:**
- * **to encourage and harness the transport potential of the River;**
- * **to promote and increase the use of the River for recreational purposes;**
- * **to safeguard land uses related to these functions; and**
- * **to maintain and improve public access to, along and across the River, taking account of the needs of disabled people."**

4.6. The Government summarises these requirements as follows:-

- * **"maintain and improve the quality of the built environment;**
- * **restore and promote the vitality of the riverside in areas of development opportunity;**
- * **conserve and enhance the character of the natural and historic environments; and**
- * **encourage and facilitate the use of the River and riverside for transport and recreational purposes."**

4.7. The section of the Regional Guidance dealing with the stretch of the Thames from Windsor to Hampton acknowledges that the use of the River here is predominantly recreational and there are opportunities for enhancing both the natural and built environment and for improving facilities for recreational use and public enjoyment of the Thames. Authorities in this stretch are encouraged to prepare strategies to achieve the principles and objectives of the Guidance.

4.8. The Local Plan has three policies in the Rural Environment Section relevant to the River Thames. These deal with nature conservation, views, and environmental character.

Policy RU5 deals with nature conservation and states:-

"To protect the attractiveness of the river corridors, development will only be permitted which does not detract from their landscape character, nature conservation or recreation value. The Borough Council will seek opportunities to make environmental improvements and extend public access to the riverside as appropriate and particularly in considering development proposals".

4.9. Policy RU6 deals with views and vistas and states:-

"The Borough Council will seek to protect and enhance views of the River Thames and its tributaries. When considering proposals for development and, or, landscaping schemes, the Council will seek to protect the existing visual closure of the River and its tributaries and ensure that the balance of tree cover and open spaces adjoining the Rivers is maintained".

4.10. Policy RU7 deals with environmental character and states:-

"The Borough Council will give careful consideration to development proposals affecting the River Thames Area of Special Character, which is defined on the Proposals Map, to ensure that the character and setting of the River are protected and that any uses proposed are appropriate

to a riverside location. Environmental improvements will be sought where appropriate. The Borough Council will seek to work with other agencies including the Environment Agency and adjoining riparian local authorities to achieve a co-ordinated approach to environmental enhancement".

- 4.11. The extent of the defined River Thames Area of Special Character is shown on Plan 1.
- 4.12. Policy R3 of the Plan supports the recreational use of water areas generally and including the River Thames subject, amongst other matters, to no conflict with nature conservation interests and no adverse impact on amenity. Policy R5 supports the provision of well equipped visitor mooring facilities in appropriate locations.

Conservation Areas

- 4.13. Over half of the River frontage in the Strategy area is within the Staines Conservation Area. The Hythe Conservation Area in Runnymede is situated just downstream of Staines Bridge. Both areas are shown on Plan 1.
- 4.14. National policy guidance on conservation areas is set out in PPG15 "Planning and the Historic Environment". The weight to be given to the historic environment and the value to be derived from its protection is summarised in paragraph 1.1 of the guidance:-

"1.1 It is fundamental to the Government's policies for environmental stewardship that there should be effective protection for all aspects of the historic environment. The physical survival of our past are to be valued and protected for their own sake, as a central part of our cultural heritage and our sense of national identity. They are an irreplaceable record which contributes, through formal education and in many other ways, to our understanding of both the present and the past. Their presence adds to the quality of our lives, by enhancing the familiar and cherished local scene and sustaining the sense of local distinctiveness which is so important an aspect of the character and appearance of our towns, villages and countryside. The historic environment is also of immense importance for leisure and recreation."

- 4.15. It explains that the historic environment is by its nature irreplaceable and full weight is required to be given to it in assessing the impact of new development. Conservation and sustainable economic growth are seen as complementary objectives. It recognises economic prosperity can secure the continued vitality of conservation areas and the continued use and maintenance of historic buildings provided there is a sufficiently realistic and imaginative approach to their alteration and change of use.
- 4.16. Section 71 of the Listed Building Act 1990 places a duty on local authorities from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. English Heritage helpfully explain in their document 'Conservation Area Practice' that preservation and enhancement is the process of reinforcing those special qualities which lead to the initial designation of an area.
- 4.17. Section 72 confirms that, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area:-
- "..... special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area".**
- 4.18. Policy BE25 of the Local Plan sets out the Council's commitment to seek to preserve and enhance the character of conservation areas by a range of measures and objectives including:

- a) the retention of buildings, trees and other features of importance to the character of the area,
 - b) protecting and seeking to enhance important views and vistas within, from and towards conservation areas,
 - c) maintenance of open spaces in an appropriate manner,
 - d) providing or seeking appropriate new or replacement street furniture and floorscape surfaces,
 - e) seeking to limit the harmful impact of traffic and parked cars.
- 4.19. The Plan includes a brief description of the Staines Conservation Area, including identifying the special characteristics of the area, that are defined as:-

"the juxtaposition of historic buildings and structures, old waterways, important vistas, trees, the River Thames and open spaces".

Listed Buildings

- 4.20. There are a number of listed buildings within the Strategy area including Staines Town Hall and Staines Bridge and around Market Square and in Clarence Street. These are shown on the accompanying Plan.
- 4.21. Local Authorities have a statutory duty under Section 16 of the Listed Building Act 1990 to:-
- "have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses."**
- 4.22. PPG15 sets out four general criteria relevant to the consideration of listed building consent applications but also helpful in considering other proposals which may have an effect on such buildings including assessing alternative uses, alterations and the preparation of planning guidance.
- 4.23. In summary the criteria to which regard should be had are:-
- i. the importance of the building, its intrinsic architectural and historic interest and rarity, in both national and local terms
 - ii. the particular physical features of the building which may include its design, plan, materials or location which justify its inclusion in the list:
 - iii. the building's setting and its contribution to the local scene, which may be very important, eg. where it forms an element in a group, park, garden or other townscape or landscape, or where it shares particular architectural forms or details with other buildings nearby;
 - iv. the extent to which the proposed works would bring substantial benefits for the community, in particular by contributing to the economic regeneration of the area or the enhancement of its environment (including other listed buildings).
- 4.24. Advice is offered on the issue of alternative uses which is relevant in considering the future use of Staines Town Hall. It advises:

"3.8 Generally the best way of securing the upkeep of historic buildings and areas is to keep them in active use. For the great majority this must mean economically viable uses

if they are to survive, and new, and even continuing, uses will often necessitate some degree of adaptation. The range and acceptability of possible uses must therefore usually be a major consideration when the future of listed buildings or buildings in conservation areas is in question.

3.9 Judging the best use is one of the most important and sensitive assessments that local planning authorities and other bodies involved in conservation have to make. It requires balancing the economic viability of possible uses against the effect of any changes they entail in the special architectural and historic interest of the building or area in question. In principle the aim should be to identify the optimum viable use that is compatible with the fabric, interior, and setting of the historic building. This may not necessarily be the most profitable use if that would entail more destructive alterations than other viable uses."

4.25. Policy BE23 of the Local Plan sets out the Council's approach to the preservation of listed buildings in the Borough. Amongst a range of matters it gives commitment to:-

- a) seeking to retain the original uses of buildings but allowing change of use where necessary to achieve the restoration or preservation of a building which will not detract from its character or the amenities or character of the area.
- b) requiring alterations to respect the building and for external and internal features of special historic or architectural importance to be retained.
- c) to have regard to preserving the setting of listed buildings.

4.26. Attention is drawn to the specific Planning Brief relating to the Town Hall, Memorial Gardens and Riverside Car Park which identifies potential opportunities for the Town Hall

Town Centres

4.27. It is Government policy to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres as a focus for shopping, employment and leisure uses. This can facilitate what are called multi-purpose trips and contribute to an overall reduction in the need to travel. PPG6 'Town Centres and Retail Developments' also emphasizes the importance of coherent town centre parking strategies.

4.28. It emphasises the importance of town centres providing high quality environments if they are to continue to be places where people wish to come.

4.29. Policy S1 of the Local Plan gives commitment to seeking to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of existing shopping centres. This to be achieved by a range of measures including:-

- a) additional shopping development.
- b) improving the environment.

Policy S2 deals specifically with Staines and identifies additional retail provision north of the High Street (now Two Rivers / Tilly's Lane) and an extension to the Elmsleigh Centre. Environmental enhancement of the town centre as a whole is specifically identified.

Areas Liable to Flood

- 4.30. Local authorities are required to avoid increasing the amount of development in areas liable to flooding. Much of the Staines riverside is in an area liable to flooding. The Local Plan policy BE32 on development in areas liable to flood, amongst other matters, requires:-
- no increase in impedance to the flow of flood water
 - no reduction in the site's contribution to the capacity of the flood plain to store water
 - no increases in the number of people or property at risk from significant adverse affects of flooding

Protected Urban Open Space

- 4.31. The Memorial Gardens is an area of Protected Urban Open Space. Policy BE17 seeks to protect such areas which contribute to the character or environment of a locality. The policy makes clear that permission will not be granted for development which would result in the loss of such areas.

Archaeology

- 4.32. Staines Town Centre was a significant Roman settlement and much of the area around the Town Hall, Market Square and the High Street is identified as being of an Area of High Archeological Potential. Appropriate programmes of assessment, investigation, recording and protection are required in the context of development schemes.

5.0 APPROACH TO ENHANCING THE AREA COVERED BY THIS STRATEGY

- 5.1. The assessment of policy has identified a number of complimentary issues. These include the duty to preserve and enhance the character of the River Thames and its immediate area, as well as the conservation areas and listed buildings. This reflects the intrinsic qualities of these features and widespread support for their protection. Historic buildings, and their surrounds generally, together with attractive environments such as conservation areas and rivers can give towns a sense of heritage and character. The perception and reality of a distinctive character can be used to add to the quality of the shopping and visitor 'experience' generally and contribute in turn to a town's vitality and viability.
- 5.2. In the case of Staines the River Thames generally is very close to the heart of the town centre and access to some existing areas of open space adjoining the river are even closer to the centre. The Staines Conservation Area includes Staines Bridge and Clarence Street which are the main vehicular route to the Town Centre from the west. Within the area of Clarence Street and Market Square are a number of listed buildings and others of more local interest reflecting the historic character of this part of the town centre.
- 5.3. The Council's duty to enhance the River Thames, the Staines Conservation Area and Listed Buildings generally for their own sake, is also an important opportunity to further its objectives to enhance the vitality and viability of Staines as a shopping centre.
- 5.4. Having regard to the above it is considered that the approach to the Enhancement Strategy Area should be based on the following four objectives.

1. To protect and enhance the special quality of the River Thames by:-
 - a) improving where possible its built environment
 - b) conserving and enhancing as appropriate the landscape and ecological value of the river and its banks
 - c) encouraging and facilitating its use for recreational purposes.
2. Enhancing that part of the Staines Conservation Area around Staines Bridge, Clarence Street and Market Square so as to improve the attractiveness of one of the main approaches to Staines Town Centre and the historic setting to the adjoining section of Riverside.
3. Promote the preservation and enhancement of the 'listed buildings' adjoining and otherwise visible from the River, including their setting, for their own sake and to enhance the attractiveness of the town centre and Riverside.
4. To preserve and enhance the River Thames, Staines Conservation Area and listed buildings and to pursue opportunities to improve the relationship of the Riverside and the town centre in an appropriate manner to contribute to the continued vitality and viability of Staines as a shopping centre.
- 5.5. These objectives are closely interconnected and require a comprehensive approach to ensure the benefits to be gained for the town centre as a whole are optimised without prejudicing the statutory duties of preservation or enhancement of the historic and natural environment.

6. **PROPOSALS**

- 6.1. The Council's objective is to secure enhancement of the Riverside where required and its on-going maintenance to an appropriate and consistently high standard. To achieve this a co-ordinated and comprehensive approach is required.
- 6.2. Specific proposals are already made in the Planning Briefs for the Staines Cinema and former Carvery site in Clarence Street and for the Town Hall, Market Square, Memorial Gardens and Riverside Car Park. This section identifies both general issues as well as specific proposals for the remaining areas of riverside. It does not, however, seek to repeat the detail contained in these other two documents.
- i) **Overview**
- 6.3. The River frontage in the Strategy area is some 1,300 metres (just over ¾ mile) in length and includes 3 public parks and gardens. There is the potential for significant improvement of the Riverside at certain points. This will help secure enhancement of this area for its own sake but also to the benefit of the town centre as a whole. At its closest point the River is just 200m walking distance from the High Street which commences at Debenhams and 250m from the bus station and southern entrance to the Elmsleigh Centre.
- 6.4. As part of the preparation of this Strategy some counts have been made of people using the Riverside. The results are set out in Appendix 1. They are "snap shot" counts of people present at a given moment within the count period. There is no double counting. The results show a significant number of people on warm sunny days come to the Riverside to walk or sit. During the surveys it was observed that the seats that are provided were well used and many people sat on sections of wall, railings or on the ground or even their own chairs. This suggests there may be a latent demand for informal use of the Riverside.

ii) **Assessment of Each Section of the Strategy Area**

- 6.5. Consideration has been given to individual areas/sections as well as an overview of the area as a whole. Specific issues and actions are identified.

a) **General Matters**

Issue/Proposals

Action

1. Maintaining views of the River - Ensuring long views up and down the River from the bank adds visual interest and thereby the quality of recreational experience to those walking or just sitting

On going maintenance to tree cover to ensure an appropriate minimum canopy height and trimming of growth at the bank edge to maintain views up and down stream

2. Moorings/Passenger Ferry Points - There is an existing 24 hour visitor mooring facility at the rear of the cinema and landing stage. There is scope to increase 24 hours visitor moorings to promote the River's recreational use and provide added visual interest to those on the bank. There is a landing point for pleasure craft at the rear of the Town Hall and adjacent to the existing Riverside Car Park and also a passenger stopping point at Victoria Gardens. The signage and information about available passenger ferry points and times could be improved.

Discuss navigational and construction issues associated with landing stages with the Environment Agency to confirm location and extent of additional 24hr mooring. Liaise with other appropriate organisations and user groups. Discuss the signage of passenger ferry facilities with operators

3. Structural/visual improvements to bank retaining walls particularly alongside the Riverside Car Park, rear of Town Hall and rear of Colne Bridge Close.

Seek structural advice on the extent and priority of work

4. Lighting - Assess scope for comprehensive scheme on Riverside consistent with amenity, nature conservation and security requirements and scope for lighting key structures such as Staines Bridge, Town Hall, specific specimen trees etc.

Develop in conjunction with detailed design work. Discuss lighting proposals with the Surrey Wildlife Trust and the Environment Agency. Discuss lighting of Staines Bridge with Surrey County Council and Runnymede Borough Council.

5. Security - Ensure all designs and maintenance programmes assist in designing out crime. Consider extension of CCTV coverage.

Liaise with Crime Prevention Officer and the Community Safety Unit (on-going).

6. Signage - Consider comprehensive scheme of signage for and to the riverside and facilities in its vicinity.

Develop in conjunction with detailed design work.

7. Adopt consistent and appropriate management/maintenance programmes appropriate to the objectives of the Strategy.

Develop alongside preparation of detailed schemes.

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|--|---|
| 8. Street Furniture - Implement a consistent style of lighting, seats, litter bins, etc as elsewhere in the Town Centre including the provision of additional seating. | Develop in conjunction with detailed design work. |
| 9. Landscape and Nature Conservation - Ensure that opportunities to improve the landscape and nature conservation value of the River corridor are fully assessed. | Liaise with Surrey Wildlife Trust and the Environment Agency. |
| 10. Dog Fouling - Ensure enhancement proposals address issue of controlling dog fouling along the towpath. | Liaise with the Environment Agency. |

b) **Lammas Recreation Ground**

Description

- 6.6. This is a long-established recreation ground of some 6.3 ha. It has a River frontage of some 190m and seating and grassed areas close to the river. There is a children's swimming pool, tennis court, putting etc. There is also a kiosk selling light refreshments. A car park is accessed from the Wraysbury Road entrance. This is a well maintained and popular area which has benefited from various improvements to footways, seating areas and planting in recent years.

Proposals

Action

- | | |
|---|--|
| No further specific improvements to this area itself. However, replacement of the chain-link boundary fence with Church Street be considered. | Propose a scheme of replacement for the fence. |
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c) **Towpath from Church Street to Staines Bridge**

Description

- 6.7. This is some 310m in length and is already very attractive. The section adjacent to Church Island Close is well treed and the hoggan path weaves through a grassed area some 14m wide. The section nearest Staines Bridge has a recent office building, which received a Spelthorne Design Award in 1999, and the Staines Sea Scouts Headquarters and the single decked riverside car park. The section of River bank adjacent to the car park has dense tree growth giving an enclosed feel to the towpath accentuated by the car park structure. A footpath leaves the towpath towards Bridge Street/Clarence Street adjacent to the west side of the bridge arches.

The arches are/have been let in the past and enclosed but the enclosings to the arches are poorly maintained which gives this particular area an air of neglect. On the opposite bank there is a towpath and grassed amenity area within the grounds of recent office development. This area is very popular for walking and sitting out at lunch times. Appendix 1 gives some details of the number of people using this area.

Proposals

Completion of the paved area outside of the recently completed Hanover House and junction with hoggin surface of the riverside walk.

Action

Discussion with developer.

Trees adjacent to Bridge Street Car Park - Management of bankside trees

Already contracted.

Enhancement of the enclosures to three of the bridge arches and the one containing the public access to the front of the cinema site.

Discuss with developer for Cinema site and Surrey County Council.

d) Colne Bridge To Town Hall

Description

- 6.8. This section has a river frontage of some 190 metres. The wooden bridge over the Colne was constructed in early 1980s following the building of Colnbridge Close and dedication to the Council of land for a section of riverside walk.

The bridge has a curved deck and provides a point of visual interest and change of levels along the tow path. The section of walk in front of Colnbridge Close is narrow with no opportunity for seating. The path widens a little to the rear of the Town Hall / Day Centre with some ornamental flower/shrub beds.

Proposals

Minor improvements may be appropriate to the path surface (unevenness of slabs), improvement to the railings (possibly painting to match those in the Memorial Gardens). Further lift pruning of trees to increase light onto and visibility of/from the Day Centre.

Action

Short term.

e) Thames Lodge Hotel

Description

- 6.9. In 1997 planning permission was granted for an extension to the Hotel including the restoration, extension and conversion of two historic cottages (Hook On and Shoot Off), and permissive right of access to a new section of Riverside walk. The scheme was completed in 1999. The Hotel site has a River frontage of some 115 metres.

Proposals

Scheme yet to finally be completed, but includes appropriate signage. Otherwise no further action required.

Action

Need to ensure full compliance with planning permission and legal agreement.

f) **Obelisk, Thames Street.**

Description

- 6.10. The Obelisk is an historic coal and wine tax post dating from 1837. It is "listed" as Grade II. It is in the ownership of Railtrack but they have recently altered the line of the boundary fence to their embankment which in effect now makes its surrounds a public area. The Council will be laying the area to grass and painting this metal structure.

Proposals

Action

Implement the Council's enhancement scheme. Short term.

g) **Railway Bridge over the River Thames**

Description

- 6.11. The railway bridge crosses the River Thames from a point just south of the Thames Lodge Hotel on the east bank to a point south of the Staines Boat Club on the west bank. It was built in 1855-56. The Council wishes to see the bridge repainted, perhaps in a style similar to the Iron Bridge over the High Street.

Proposals

Action

Continue discussions with Railtrack to secure repainting of this structure. Medium term.

h) **Victoria Gardens**

Description

- 6.12. This area includes an historic slipway for boats and section of towpath under the Staines to Reading railway line which crosses the Thames at this point. The gardens were laid out in 1897 to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. It comprises a wide riverside walk and similar width of area for seating and flower beds and it has a river frontage of some 112 metres. There is scope to further improve the formal flower / shrub beds and seating and continue some upgrading already undertaken.

Proposals

Action

A comprehensive scheme to sympathetically enhance this small area is needed. Medium term.

i) **Victoria Gardens to St. Peter's Church**

Description

- 6.13. This section of the riverside currently has a rather untidy appearance. Along the riverbank itself, the vegetation is overgrown in places and attracts rubbish. This area would benefit from improved management having regard to the need to balance nature conservation and amenity interests. Other measures to enhance views of the river and the approach to the town centre will be considered.

Proposals

Action

Improve the management of this section of towpath in discussion with the Environment Agency.

Medium term.

7.0 CONTACTS

7.1. For further information about this strategy please contact:-

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Appendix 1

SURVEY OF THE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE USING THE RIVERSIDE IN STAINES

	DAY					
	Tuesday 15 June 99 1.00-1.15pm Weather sunny 24°c		Thursday 17 June 99 1.15pm-1.30pm Weather cloudy 20°c		Wednesday 7 July 99 1.15-1.20pm Weather sunny 27°c	
SECTION OF RIVERSIDE	Walking	Sitting	Walking	Sitting	Walking	Sitting
Victoria Gardens	9	4	1	-	6	3
Thames Lodge	1	-	-	-	-	-
Riverside Car Park	4	17	2	4	4	8
Memorial Gardens	3	28	5	25	5	33
Town Hall to Colne Bridge	4	-	5	-	4	3
Rear of Cinema	1	7	5	1	2	12
Staines Bridge to Church Street	4	4	7	2	2	2
Lammas Recreation Ground	5	22	8	14	8	32
TOTAL	31	82	33	46	31	93
South of River - Staines Bridge upstream to footbridge over inlet entrance	10	40	8	16	10	13



