

## 18.0 Services and facilities

### 18.1 Waterway standards

The Environment Agency has a commitment to publish standards of service and facility provision on its navigations. The scope of the standards is based on recommendations of the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities and the detail has been developed in consultation with river users. The draft standards are shown in the boxes below.

In addition, the Environment Agency's current Operational Standards give important commitments to levels of service for river users. These are detailed in Appendix 5. When the new standards are finalised following this consultation, they will be merged with the Environment Agency Operational Standards into a single standards document.

Achieving all these standards will take time and investment. Many lie outside the responsibility of the Environment Agency and their implementation will rely on action by others.

In general, the facility standards are intended to meet the needs of individuals. Commercial operators of passenger, trip, restaurant and hotel boats are expected to make suitable provision for their own operations.

### Waterway Standards~River Corridor

#### Public rights of way next to the river

##### 1. Obstructions

- 1.1 A readily passable and unobstructed route (including freedom from undergrowth and over growth)

##### 2. Surface

- 2.1 Path surface should be well managed, sustainable and sympathetic to the landscape.
- 2.2 Path surface should, as far as possible, be even and free from man-made obstacles or tripping hazards.
- 2.3 Path surface should, as far as possible, be free draining although flow conditions of the river will dictate whether or not the path is flooded in winter.

##### 3. Width

- 3.1 Where possible footpaths should allow two walkers to pass in comfort. Ideally there should be an available walking width of 2m but with a minimum of 1.8 m in urban areas and 1m in rural locations.
- 3.2 If the path is a bridleway or designated cycle path a 5m width is the ideal.

##### 4. Barriers

- 4.1 No unnecessary fences, stiles or steps will be erected across the line of the public right of way. Where they are necessary at legal access points such as roads or byway junctions, they should be designed to prevent undesirable uses like motorcycling, but allow access by users of wheelchairs and personal mobility vehicles.

##### 5. Litter and dog faeces

- 5.1 Appropriate bins provided and emptied at locations where there is a particular problem.

##### 6. Structural aesthetics

- 6.1 Agency structures (lock offices, pedestals, lock gates, timber and steelwork on lay-bys etc.) will be installed, painted and maintained in accordance with the River Thames Environment Design Handbook.
- 6.2 Other significant structures on or near the river should be managed and maintained so as not to spoil the river's beauty.

**7. Graffiti**

- 7.1 Offensive material will be removed within one week, other material within three months of awareness.

**8. Safety signage**

- 8.1 Warning signs prohibiting fishing and warning of danger should be erected in the vicinity of overhead powerlines.

**9. Toilets**

- 9.1 Provided at every lock.
- 9.2 The number of toilets should be adequate for volume and profile of visitors to the location, whether from river or on the bank.
- 9.3 At least a Unisex WC, with hand basin, hot and cold water, drinking water, lighting, toilet roll, hand towel, soap and mirror.
- 9.4 Where appropriate separate-sex WCs.
- 9.5 Facilities should be designed for people with disabilities.
- 9.6 They should be clean, tidy, and odourless with any mess cleaned within two hours of staff on site being aware of the condition.

**10. Drinking water**

- 10.1 Water supply for filling portable containers (but not necessarily a hose supply) will be provided at every lock.

**11. Car parking provision**

- 11.1 Teddington to Kings: Car parking, available for public use, is provided within 10 minutes walk of the river and Thames Path at least every five miles along the river. Should be well-drained and free of potholes and puddles.
- 11.2 Kings to Roundhouse Lechlade: Car parking, available for public use, is provided within 10 minutes walk of the river and Thames Path at every river crossing or riverside settlement or at least every 10 miles along the river. Should be well-drained and free of potholes and puddles.
- 11.3 Campsites to meet the needs of walkers (and other users like canoeists but not motorists) will be located at no greater than 16 kilometre intervals.
- 11.4 Sites should provide drinking water, toilet and shower facilities and refuse disposal.

**Waterway Standards~Lock Sites****12. Office**

- 12.1 There will be a lock office at every site. It will be staffed during published hours of service, providing information, advice, guidance and emergency assistance to all visitors.
- 12.2 There will be a sign giving an emergency out of hours telephone number.

**13. Lay-bys and landings**

- 13.1 Each lock has an upstream & downstream lay-by where boaters may alight from craft or wait for passage through the lock. Lay-bys will be designed to allow use in a range of water levels.
- 13.2 They will be clearly visible to approaching craft and designed and positioned so that craft entering or emerging from the lock are not obstructed.
- 13.3 Whether on land or offshore the surface will be level, firm and non-slip and of a length appropriate to the anticipated level of use of the lock.
- 13.4 A low level launching/exit (portage) point for canoes will be provided up and downstream of the lock with a well marked portage route to allow canoeists to bypass the lock.

**14. Toilets**

- 14.1 Provided at every lock.
- 14.2 The number of toilets should be adequate for volume and profile of visitors to the location, whether from river or on the bank.
- 14.3 At least a Unisex WC, with hand basin, hot and cold water, drinking water, lighting, toilet roll, hand towel, soap and mirror.
- 14.4 Where appropriate separate-sex WCs.
- 14.5 Facilities should be designed for people with disabilities.
- 14.6 They should be clean, tidy, and odourless with any mess cleaned within two hours of staff on site being aware of the condition.

**15. Drinking water**

- 15.1 Water supply for filling portable containers (but not necessarily a hose supply) will be provided at every lock.

**16. Access**

- 16.1 Access ramps or steps with handrail will be provided where practical. On heavily visited sites or where busy public rights of way cross lock gates, moveable ramps will be provided as necessary to facilitate passage.
- 16.2 Hard surface, e.g. tarmac or concrete, that drains immediately, around the vicinity of the lock providing safe walking surface for boaters and other visitors.

**17. Information**

- 17.1 Information panels giving information about the immediate reach up and downstream of the lock and the surrounding corridor with indications as to where to get further information.
- 17.2 Signage to show what facilities are available at the lock and indicating where the next such facilities can be found in both directions.
- 17.3 A range of information and interpretation material in leaflets or on dedicated notice boards will be provided. This will include information on facilities, boating, fishing, water recreation generally, wildlife, landscape and safety.
- 17.4 Information will be kept clear, legible, accurate and up-to-date.
- 17.5 Any damage or defacement will be remedied within seven days or removal and replacement initiated if appropriate.

**18. Seating etc.**

- 18.1 Informal seating for visitors provided as appropriate to the location and its level of use.
- 18.2 Picnic tables provided at "honeypot" locations.
- 18.3 Bicycle parking provided on sites where access to the river by bicycle is likely or to be encouraged.

## Waterway Standards~Navigation

*(Cruising times are based on a speed of 8 kilometres per hour with an allowance of 20 minutes for passage through a lock.)*

### 19. Dredging

19.1 Dredging for navigation will be carried out by the Environment Agency on a site by site basis when necessary to achieve the navigable depth for the fairway (as defined in Appendix 5)

### 20. Safe havens

20.1 Location(s) will be identified within every reach where boats may be moored during periods of high flow conditions.

20.2 Guidance as to what to do when river levels are rising will be produced and publicised.

### 21. Weirs

21.1 Guards will be constructed across all Environment Agency weirs on the main navigation channel.

### 22. Landing points

22.1 Landing points will be provided at sites requiring access from the river e.g. sanitary stations and water points. Whether on land or offshore the surface will be level, firm and non-slip and of a length appropriate to the anticipated level of use.

### 23. Bulk water

23.1 Drinking water, with adequate water pressure for supply by hose to boats, will be provided every two hours cruising.

23.2 In normal circumstances, waiting time not to exceed 30 minutes.

23.3 Good site drainage. Space for two typical craft to moor alongside without obstructing the fairway.

### 24. Sewage pump out

24.1 Provided every three hours cruising.

24.2 Payment at Environment Agency sites by pre-purchased card or token.

24.3 Facility separated by appropriate distance from water supply for public use.

24.4 Hand washing facilities provided.

24.5 They should be clean, tidy, and odourless with any mess cleaned within two hours of staff on site being aware of the condition.

### 25. Chemical (Elsan) disposal

25.1 Teddington to Kings Lock, Oxford: Provided every three hours cruising.

25.2 Kings Lock, Oxford to Roundhouse Lechlade: Provided every four hours cruising.

25.3 Hand washing facilities provided.

25.4 They should be clean, tidy, and odourless with any mess cleaned within two hours of staff on site being aware of the condition.

### 26. Showers

26.1 Teddington to Kings: Provided every four hours cruising.

26.2 Kings to Roundhouse Lechlade: Provided every six hours cruising.

26.3 Payment at Environment Agency sites by pre-purchased card or token.

26.4 They should be clean, tidy, and odourless with any mess cleaned within two hours of staff on site being aware of the condition.

**27. Dry refuse disposal and recycling collection points**

- 27.1 Teddington to Kings: Provided every one hours cruising.
- 27.2 Kings to Roundhouse Lechlade: Provided every two hours cruising.
- 27.3 Provided in a screened and visually unobtrusive but clearly marked location. Managed to keep clean and tidy with refuse containers never more than 90% full.
- 27.4 Ground surface metalled.
- 27.5 Containers for glass, tins and plastics.

**28. Electric hook-up point**

- 28.1 Provided every three hours cruising.

**29. 24hr / overnight visitor moorings**

- 29.1 Clearly identified sites will be provided every 30 minutes cruising with adjacent facilities where convenient/necessary. (No minimum length is specified as it is better to seek lots of locations, and if necessary encourage rafting out, rather than ruling out small sites.) Wherever possible, mooring lengths should be sufficient to meet the demand.
- 29.2 Available throughout the year (subject to flood conditions).
- 29.3 Depth of water should allow craft typical of that part of the river to moor.
- 29.4 Moorings at attractions should provide information on what is available in the local area.
- 29.5 Moorings at facilities should provide information on what is available.
- 29.6 Where practical, disabled access should be provided from the moorings to adjacent road/footway, pub, shops, attraction or other facilities.
- 29.7 Sites with natural banks should be reasonably level and firm with no holes or trip hazards. Where possible they should have mooring posts. The surface will be grazed or cut to a short sward.
- 29.8 Sites with hard edges should have a level surface and mooring rings or bollards at appropriate intervals.

**30. Slipways**

- 30.1 Teddington to Kings: Provided at suitable points approximately every three hours cruising.
- 30.2 Kings to Roundhouse Lechlade: Provided at suitable points approximately every four hours cruising.
- 30.3 At minimum designed for craft up to 25' in length.
- 30.4 Built with solid base and providing jetty and boating information.
- 30.5 Secure parking for at least five vehicles and trailers within five minutes walk.

**31. Boatyards**

- 31.1 Repair, craneage and dry dock facilities available every eight hours cruising.

**32. Fuel**

- 32.1 Petrol, diesel and bottled gas available every four hours cruising.

**Q**

Are there any other facilities that need standards?  
(Use section 5 – Waterway standards)

## 18.2 Facility gap analysis (map 21)

We have started the task of mapping the location of existing facilities and have so far identified the following gaps in provision against the proposed standards.

See Appendix 6 for an example of a facility gap analysis map.

### Figure 7

#### Number of lengths of the river with a significant gap in the provision of facility

Dry refuse disposal and recycling collection points	11
Bulk water	6
Electric hook-up point	6
24hr / overnight visitor moorings	6
Camp sites	5
Sewage pump out	4
Chemical (Elsan) disposal	4
Showers	2
<b>Number of lock sites lacking facility</b>	
Toilets	22
Drinking water	16

Half the locks do not have toilets available to users and 16 lack drinking water fountains. Of the other gaps three are insignificant and a further seven are within 15% of the target. The remaining 37 facility gaps are greater, with 22 missing the relevant target by over 50%.

The standard that is least well met is for refuse disposal.

We have not yet looked at all of the standards so we will be collecting information about all the standards that are agreed in the final plan and performing a final gap analysis.

We will utilise Strategic Sustainability Assessment to gauge the impacts of filling gaps and, where appropriate and possible we will group them at the same site. We will avoid putting new facilities in environmentally sensitive areas.

We will prepare recommended design guidelines for new facilities that follow the River Thames Environment Design Handbook principles and include environmental considerations (e.g. toilets to incorporate water efficiency techniques such as dual flush, dry urinals, spray timer taps, grey water recycling, with posters to explain and promote efficient use of water). Advice on the use of flood resistant construction will also be included.

As a significant amount of facility provision is at Environment Agency lock sites, we will develop specific management plans for every lock.

**Service & facilities policy** We will provide services and facilities that meet the reasonable needs of all our users.

#### Possible actions

- 1 set waterway standards for the provision of services and facilities
- 2 identify gaps in provision and introduce new or improved facilities to meet need
- 3 produce design guidelines for new facilities
- 4 produce lock site management plans

Other competitor waterways have already established standards. We will lose users if we fail to meet expectations.

Q

Can you identify sites that would be suitable to fill any of the gaps in facility provision? (Use section 8 – Aspirations)

## 19.0 Targets, monitoring and review

It is important to be able to judge over time how successful we are in meeting the plan's core objectives to:

- improve and promote access and information for all users (on water and land)
- improve and maintain the river infrastructure and facilities and services for all users
- contribute to enhanced biodiversity, heritage, and landscape value in the waterway corridor
- increase use of the river and its corridor.

We will judge the plan's success by the following key performance measures:

- The numbers using the river
- User satisfaction
- Achieving waterway standards
- Enhanced biodiversity, heritage and landscape value.

We will need to establish robust baseline data and measure changes. For boating, the number of craft registered provides a reliable measure. However we will need to find ways to measure levels of participation in sport and recreation (for example number of oarsmen, canoeists, walkers, anglers and cyclists.)

It would also be very valuable to establish a programme of research that measures user satisfaction and identifies the extent to which use is socially inclusive.

Key indicators of success in maintaining the river's infrastructure and facilities will be reducing the value of maintenance arrears and progress in meeting the waterway standards.

Advice is particularly sought on ways to measure enhanced biodiversity, heritage, and landscape value in the waterway corridor. They could include area of new riverside habitat created and lengths of natural riverbank retained.

**Monitoring & review policy** We will monitor the impacts from implementing the Thames waterway plan.

### Possible actions

- 1 carry out Strategic Sustainability Assessment of the plan as it is developed and reviewed
- 2 gather data and research patterns of recreation use
- 3 set realistic, measurable targets with time scales, for every policy
- 4 measure social, economic and environmental impacts
- 5 formally review the plan in 2010

We need to be able to assess how successful we are in meeting the plan's objectives. It is important to respond to changes in people's activities and lifestyles. We must also be able to detect any adverse cumulative impacts from incremental change.

Q

What do consider the key performance measures should be? Do you currently collect data that may be of value? Would you be prepared to contribute to a coordinated research programme to measure the impacts of the plan? (Use section 7 – Targets and Monitoring)

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