Maintenance Dredging on the Thames: a decision support framework

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The Port of London

- 70 plus operational berths, wharves, jetties, etc., privately owned and administered
- 26,000 vessel movements per year
- 50 million tonnes of cargo handled
- In top three UK ports
- Many ongoing operations and activities, future developments
Introduction to the PLA

The Port of London Authority (PLA) is a self-financing statutory authority. It aims to:

• facilitate safety of navigation on tidal Thames;
• deliver value for money services; promote the potential of the Port of London;
• respect the environment of the tidal Thames and pursue principles of sustainable development;
• provide an efficient, professional service to commercial/leisure users and riparian owners;
• safeguard navigational access to and the viability of the Port and its infrastructure.
Environmental Legislation

- Section 48a Harbours Act 1964
- EIA Directive/Marine Works (EIA) Regulations 2007
- Conservation (Natural Habitats &C.) Regulations 1994
- National Heritage Act 2002
- Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000
- EU Shellfish Waters Directive
- EU Water Framework Directive
- EU Environmental Liability Directive
Dredging in the PLA area

Channels
- maintained by PLA
- removal of shoals
  - capital projects

Individual operators
- responsible for dredging their berths
- licensed under Section 73 of Port of London Act

River Works Licensing Department manages the licensing process: environmental assessment; stakeholder consultation; monitoring compliance with licence conditions
PLA River Regime and Environment Department provides advice on:

- Dredging, River Works licences
- Planning applications
- Pre-application discussions
- Internally across departments
Background to maintenance dredging decision support framework

• to enable the PLA to meet its many environmental responsibilities in a fair, responsible, and innovative manner
• to enable the PLA to be able to achieve its core business aim of operating the Port of London in a safe, efficient and cost-effective way
Elements of dredging decision support framework

- Dredging liaison group
- Information exchange system – now Dredging Spatial Information System
- Environmental impact assessment procedures
- Guidance to berth owners and operators
- Beneficial uses promoted
- Monitoring and review
- Strategic, estuary-level research with Thames Estuary Partnership (TEP) and others
Dredging Liaison Group

• Established by Thames Estuary Partnership in January 2001
• Provides neutral, open forum to discuss ongoing and proposed maintenance dredging operations on the tidal Thames
• Meets 2-4 times/year
• Raises awareness
• Encourages:
  – discussion
  – collaboration
  – co-operation
  – data sharing
Dredging Liaison Group
Membership

• Port of London Authority, Port of Tilbury
• Thames Estuary Partnership (facilitator and secretariat)
• Environment Agency
• Natural England
• Kent and Essex Sea Fisheries Committee
• RSPB
• Greater Thames Archaeological Committee
• Government representatives
• Dredging companies
Dredging Spatial Information System (DSIS)

• Drivers:
  – involve stakeholders as partners in decision-making;
  – share information; and
  – produce an excellent baseline of environmental data

• GIS application to inform licensing decisions

• Consultation tool for dredging applications

• Input from Environment Agency, Natural England, RSPB, Kent and Essex Sea Fisheries Committee, dredging companies and others
DSIS functionality

Please select one of the following options:
- Current dredge licence applications
- Proposed dredge sites
- Licensed dredge sites
- Inactive dredge sites
- PLA dredge sites
- All dredge sites
- Identity dredge site using the map
Map Layers

Click ± to expand the tree and ± to contract it. To make a layer visible put a tick in the tick box. To make a layer invisible ensure there is no tick in the tick box. Click  to apply the changes.

To query the map select the overlay(s) of interest, click  then click the map. To select multiple overlays press and hold the Control Key while selecting the overlays.

- Layers
  - Designated Conservation Sites
  - Ecology
  - Fisheries
  - Dredge Sites
    - Proposed Dredge Sites
    - Licensed Dredge Sites
    - Inactive Dredge Sites
    - PLA Dredge Sites
    - Current Dredge Licence Applications
  - Map
    - Water Quality
    - Sediment
Sediment Quality
Fisheries Information
Future use of DSIS

- Access to site is currently limited to Dredging Liaison Group members
- DSIS may be developed into a public consultation tool, accessible to all via PLA website
- Some sensitive information will remain password protected
- DSIS may be further developed for use with any port development project, not just dredging
Conservation Management Framework (CMF)

- Safety of navigation, port development and conservation can result in conflicting objectives
- CMF provides guidance/procedures for PLA functions that may affect conservation including:
  - port operations
  - recreational activities
  - regulatory decision-making
  - research and monitoring
- Partnership agreement with RSPB
- CMF will be web-based document on PLA website
Thanks for listening!

For more on the PLA, see www.pla.co.uk