

Foreword

Over centuries the River Thames has played a major role in shaping the lives of Londoners. Today it continues to play a vital role in terms of open space, recreation and the historic environment as well as functioning as a transport artery and a water and drainage resource.

The Kew to Chelsea stretch of the Thames is unique: it is the transition between the *Arcadia* of Kew and above, and the *Metropolis* of Lambeth, Westminster and below. So local people, and I believe most Londoners, while accepting the need for change, are concerned that its varied, verdant but vibrant character should be conserved and enhanced. We therefore see The Thames Strategy – Kew to Chelsea as providing a fundamental framework for a vision for the River as we move forward in the 21st Century.

The gestation of this Strategy is owed to several. The West London River Group (WLRG) brings together riparian amenity societies and residents groups, and the preparation and implementation of a Strategy has been one of its goals. Kim Wilkie, principal author of our sister strategy upstream, The Thames Landscape Strategy – Hampton to Kew (TLS), gave the WLRG help and encouragement. Tony Colman MP instigated an adjournment debate on Thames Riverside Development in the House of Commons back in February 1998. We enjoyed his support and that of his fellow MPs in the riparian boroughs. Philip Davies and Geoff Noble of English Heritage who together with the WLRG held the seminar at

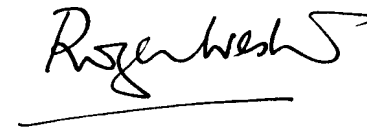
Fulham Palace in May 1999. The meeting, chaired by Nick Raynsford, then Minister for London, addressed by John Gummer, who was Secretary of State for Environment when the Strategic Planning Guidance for the Thames was prepared, and attended by representatives of the Agencies and Boroughs, agreed to set up the Steering Committee to prepare and implement the Thames Strategy – Kew to Chelsea. The Strategy has been made possible through partnership commitment and the core funding provided by the Government Office for London (GoL).

For me, a private citizen, membership of the Steering Committee and having been invited to chair it, have been stimulating and rewarding experiences. I would like to thank Chris Sumner of English Heritage (Vice Chairman), the riparian boroughs especially John Fannon, Nicola Spalding and Kirsty Johnson at Hammersmith & Fulham for contract management and administrative support, Stephen McAndrews (Hounslow) and Philip Wealthy (Richmond upon Thames), Angela Dixon and Peter Makower of the WLRG, Donna Clack and Jason Debney of the TLS, Jane Carlsen and Sarah Elliot of the Greater London Authority (formerly GOL and LPAC), Richard Copas of the Environment Agency, James Trimmer of the Port of London Authority, and Ian Munt of the London Rivers Association. I also thank WS Atkins Planning Consultants, who undertook the study, and in particular Richard Alvey and Joanna Chambers for their dedication and professionalism.

Throughout the evolution of this Strategy, wide

consultation has been a fundamental and extensive part of our work. Agencies, organisations and the wider public have played an essential role in its development and in suggesting mechanisms to deliver projects. We are grateful for all those who attended the workshops and public meetings for their valuable contributions and feedback. I hope they will see their input in this Strategy.

The Strategy however is only a starting point. It sets out a vision for the future. We need now to grasp and build on this unique opportunity.



Roger Weston
Chairman of the Thames Strategy - Kew to Chelsea
Steering Committee and Chairman of the West
London River Group