

Thames Water is pleased to invite you to the first stakeholder meeting for the Lower Lee investigations programme on 15 July 2015.

Brief Overview of the Lower Lee Investigations Programme

The Lower Lee investigation programme has been identified as a requirement by the Environment Agency to assess the potential effects of Thames Water's existing abstraction of water from the Lower Lee on river flows and any consequential impacts on the water environment and river users.

Thames Water abstracts water from the Lower Lee to supply the Lee Valley reservoirs, which in turn are a strategic source of water for London. The Lower Lee study area is defined as the River Lee downstream of the River Stort confluence at Feildes Weir (where the underlying geology changes from chalk to London Clay) all the way to the confluence with the River Thames (i.e. including the Tidal Lee).

The investigation programme will assess the extent to which the existing abstractions from the Lower Lee by Thames Water affect the downstream river flow regime, taking account of the significant man-made modifications that have been made to the river system over many centuries. These modifications have led to all sections of the Lower Lee being classified as "heavily modified waterbodies" under the Water Framework Directive. In particular, this designation recognises the important functions of the river for flood defence and navigation.

Having established the impact of the abstractions on river flows and water levels, the investigations will assess whether those impacts lead to adverse effects on river morphology, water quality, ecology and river users (e.g. for navigation, angling and other recreational activities). Should the investigations conclude that adverse effects occur, consideration will be given to potential mitigation measures to address these adverse effects.

It is anticipated that the investigations programme will take two years to reach conclusions as to whether Thames Water's abstractions are leading to any adverse effects on the river. The studies will include river monitoring activities, data analysis and use of computer models to help assess any effects due to abstraction and those that are due to other factors (for example, historic contamination of the river, river channel modification or pollution). The investigations programme will also involve dialogue with a range of interested stakeholders to discuss the approach, assessment methods and findings.

Scoping Study Consultation

Thames Water has appointed Cascade Consulting to undertake a Scoping Study to identify the key issues to be investigated and set out a proposed approach to carrying out the investigation programme. The Scoping Study has included a review of available data in the catchment and identification of flow sensitive reaches, sites and receptors that should be the focus of the investigations. A report summarising the Scoping Study and setting out the recommended approach to the investigations programme will be circulated in advance of the stakeholder consultation meeting.

The aims of the first consultation meeting are to discuss and gain feedback on:

- The proposed approach to the investigations, including key activities and timescales.
- The recommended priority receptors and flow sensitive reaches/sites to be investigated.
- The proposed monitoring programme and data collation activities.
- The assessment methodologies proposed for the investigations.
- The environmental objectives for the Lower Lee which will inform the assessment of impacts.
- Agree the consultation arrangements for ongoing dialogue during the investigations programme.

We look forward to meeting you on the 15 July .