

Arts, Leisure and Culture Select Committee

Review of River Based Leisure Facilities



March 2008

Arts, Leisure and Culture Select Committee
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Municipal Buildings
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Foreword

Councillor Jean O'Donnell
Chair

Councillor Andrew Sherris
Vice-Chair

Original Brief

1. Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?

Liveability, Economic Regeneration and Healthier Communities

2. What are the main issues?

Identify what may be done to generate more use and encourage growth for businesses, leisure and tourism, and how.

Identify levels of existing use and by whom, in particular amongst Stockton residents.

What growth has there been over the last 5 years?

Are there any barriers preventing/deterring greater use of the river? Rateable moorings/accessibility?

How do the Borough's residents view the river and its potential?

Is best use being made of what is a clean, international standard, 13 mile stretch of river (upstream from Barrage to Low Worsall, impounded stretch at fixed level). What opportunities exist for riverside leisure between the Barrage and Newport Bridge?

Ensure Stockton best placed to benefit from potential opportunities emanating from the period leading up to the 2012 Olympics.

3. The Thematic Select Committee's overall aim/ objectives in doing this work is:

To maximise the potential of the barrage and the river for businesses, residents and visitors.

4. The possible outputs/outcomes are:

An assessment of the viability of new initiatives (such as river taxis, hire boats).

An assessment of current river usage and existing users.

Increased awareness within the Borough of the opportunities presented by the river.

Recommendations highlighting what can be done to maximise future use.

5. What specific value can scrutiny add to this topic?

Detailed consideration of the issues. Using the scrutiny process to bring together a wide range of stakeholders involved in leisure provision on the river.

6. Who will the panel be trying to influence as part of their work?

Cabinet, key stakeholders in river-based business and leisure

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The River Tees represents the Borough's most important natural asset. For many years the Borough had neglected the river which had become heavily polluted as a legacy of the industry which used to line its banks. Following the industrial decline of the area, much of the land near the river remained undeveloped and the river itself was off-limits for recreational purposes. Over the last 10-15 years, there has been a concerted effort to remedy this situation. Following construction of the Tees Barrage the riverside is now seen as an attractive destination for a range of business and educational establishments, and a range of leisure and sporting facilities have been developed including a white water course, sporting clubs and leisure cruises.
- 1.2 The Arts, Leisure and Culture Select Committee has taken the opportunity to review the progress made so far and to examine ways of further improving recreational use of the Tees. The Committee examined the subject over a 10-month period. The Committee undertook a wide ranging consultation which included residents, local business, ward councillors, parish councils and a range of officers and representatives from a variety of organisations involved in river based leisure provision.
- 1.3 The review focussed on the section of the Tees which is within the boundary of the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees, concentrating on making better use of the 13 mile stretch of river upstream of the Tees Barrage to Low Worsall (the 'Tees Navigation').
- 1.4 The Barrage, and the adjacent white water course, remain attractions in themselves. The Committee support the planned improvements to the course which are necessary to maintain and improve the Barrage's position as a centre for watersports. This will have a range of associated benefits including making the course suitable for users from novice to elite, developing a centre of renewable energy and enhancing the development potential of the immediate area. In order to ensure that this is achieved, the Council should look to develop its relationship with managers of the site. During the review the Committee received the welcome news that the Barrage Reach and White Water Course had been selected to be put forward as one of the North East venues suitable to host national preparation camps in the lead up to the 2012 Olympic Games. This will be a main element of the Borough's opportunity to benefit from the lead-up to, and legacy of, the Games.
- 1.5 The Committee acknowledged that the river is now central to the planned regeneration of the Borough and is adjacent to several key developments. Although there has been significant, and welcome, development of riverside land since the construction of the Barrage, this has not always involved the best possible interaction with the adjacent waterspace. It is necessary to ensure that this is included in future developments including North Shore to continue the process of re-engaging the physical aspect of the Borough with the river. The process of producing design briefs as Supplementary Planning Documents is to be encouraged in order to ensure a quality riverside environment. The Committee welcome efforts made to address the issue of further barriers to the continuing regeneration of the riverside, and the accessibility of the waterway, including the removal of HMS Kellington.

- 1.6 The Committee found that the Tees Navigation Strategy, produced in 2002, produced an overarching framework for the future development of the Navigation. This has been superseded by further policy development to an extent, however it still represents a crucial document and there is an opportunity to review its contents in order to assess the feasibility of those schemes which have not yet been progressed.
- 1.7 Access to the river remains an issue. The Committee believe that this needs to be addressed and that the planning system provides the opportunity to do so whether through the allocation of land as part of the Local Development Framework, or through individual applications as part of planning obligations. The development of the 'River Tees Park' will be a step in the right direction and the Committee encourage further work in this area. The Committee believe that the development of some form of regular waterborne transport system would be a major improvement to the attractiveness of the Tees and that this should be investigated further.
- 1.8 Despite the effect of recent developments in terms of changing perceptions of the area, the Committee found that there is a need to further promote the Tees at various levels: within the Borough itself, the sub-regional level, throughout the North-East, nationally and beyond. Within the Borough further engagement needs to take place with schools in order to ensure that children have the opportunity to experience safe enjoyment of the river. The availability of watersports as a sporting option should be reinforced by Sports Development and Tees Active, and the tourist promotion of the Borough should be subjected to further examination. This engagement strategy should involve highlighting the opportunities available for business to be involved with events, community use and corporate hospitality provision.
- 1.9 There are several leisure providers established within the Borough and in order to attract more, the Committee believe it is necessary to investigate any impediments to further expansion, including issues surrounding business rates for riverside leisure providers. Furthermore, the Committee believes that efforts should be made to improve community safety on and near the river in order to provide a secure environment for the benefit of all river users, residents, businesses and visitors.
- 1.10 There are a wide variety of activities which take place on the river and several sporting clubs are in place. The Committee welcomes this but recognises that there must be an element of co-ordination in order to ensure that there is no conflicting growth, the events programme is maximised, and a communication strategy is developed for the benefit of all users. As part of this communication strategy it will be necessary to ensure that negative publicity such as that involving the fish pass is promptly addressed by partners.
- 1.11 The Committee therefore believe that Stockton Council should take the lead in co-ordinating the activities on the river and that this should involve focussing a member of staff on a range of issues which have been identified during the review. The Committee hopes that the excellent partnership arrangements identified during the review, especially with British Waterways, will remain an integral feature of future work.

1.12 The Committee recommend that:

- 1. The Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services consider focussing a senior officer resource for a fixed term basis on the range of river development issues to lead and provide immediate momentum to the issues identified during the review, including:**
 - a) a review of the Tees Navigation Strategy;**
 - b) developing the River Tees Park proposals to an action plan stage;**
 - c) to co-ordinate the diverse nature of water based activities on the river and develop a sustainable method of developing this sector, including a detailed review of the capacity of all watersports facilities, having regard to the potential relocation of facilities as part of the North Shore scheme;**
 - d) to explore options to maximise the funding available for the staging of major events linked to river based activities including development of an annual Stockton regatta in conjunction with partners including the University of Durham;**
 - e) to support the development of the ‘Tees River Trust’;**
 - f) developing the Council’s relationship with managers of the Tees Barrage White Water Course to assist it in developing its full potential;**
 - g) to undertake a feasibility study for a more regular water borne transport service, and to explore funding streams to achieve this, (including the Local Transport Plan);**
 - h) to develop a marketing strategy to promote and market the river at the local, regional, national and international level, working with Visit Tees Valley where appropriate. This should include work:**
 - to increase engagement with the local community**
 - to engage with local business to promote the river-based opportunities available**
 - to develop a communication strategy to ensure that the river is effectively promoted by all partners**
 - to develop a central hub of information including a website and a comprehensive information pack for users, including for schools use**
 - with Tees Active and Sports Development to raise the profile of watersports (including angling) as a sporting option for the people of the Borough and to ensure this is built into service planning**
 - with CESC, governors and headteachers to ensure that the educational and sporting opportunities for children and young people are fully promoted to schools within the Borough;**

- 2. Cabinet endorse the Committee's expectations regarding quality of development, access to and interaction with the adjacent waterspace and ensure that these are included within the various development and regeneration projects in place, in particular:**

 - within the North Shore masterplan and the planning application itself;
 - within the final plans for re-development of Preston Park, recognising its importance as a gateway location;
- 3. The Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services explore with partners, including HM Revenue and Customs, concerns surrounding business rates, mooring charges and rents for river-based businesses in Stockton Borough compared to other locations;**
- 4. The Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services so far as is possible and practical and possible ensures that access to the river is maintained and improved where possible through the LDF process and individual planning applications themselves;**
- 5. Ensure that the opportunities for the Borough in relation to the period leading up to the 2012 Olympic Games (and future international sporting events such as Glasgow 2014) are maximised through work with regional partners in particular ONE- in particular the opportunities to host a range of associated events;**
- 6. The Head of Community Protection be tasked with collating accurate and reliable data relating to river-related crime and anti-social behaviour, and to explore how best to ensure that river users are aware of the correct reporting mechanisms;**
- 7. SBC and partners including British Waterways are to ensure that all reasonable efforts are being made to ensure that the river remains safe, navigable and clean, including:**

 - the expediant removal of HMS Kellington from Stockton riverside
 - the efficient removal of debris and obstructions in the river itself
 - the cleanliness of the immediate riverside environment including footpaths;
- 8. Executive Scrutiny Committee be requested to include a review of issues surrounding the tourist promotion of the Borough within the scrutiny work programme.**

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 This report presents Cabinet with the findings of the review of River Based Leisure Facilities undertaken by the Arts, Leisure and Culture Select Committee between June 2007 and March 2008. The topic was identified during a meeting of the Scrutiny Liaison Forum in January 2007 and was confirmed by the Executive Scrutiny Committee in May. At the first meeting of the Committee in June it was agreed to spend the majority of the Committee's work programme for the municipal year 2007-08 on the review.
- 2.2 The River Tees represents the Borough's most important natural asset. For many years the Borough had neglected the river which had become heavily polluted as a legacy of the industry which used to line its banks. Following the industrial decline of the area, much of the land near the river remained undeveloped and the river itself was off-limits for recreational purposes.
- 2.3 Over the last 10-15 years, there has been a concerted effort to remedy this situation. The construction of the Tees Barrage in 1994 began the process of improving the water quality of the river, and the riverside is seen as an attractive destination for a range of business and educational establishments. A range of leisure and sporting facilities have been developed including a white water course, sporting clubs and leisure cruises.
- 2.4 However, there is a perception that, although the Tees and its environs now provide the Borough with an impressive asset of which it can be proud, opportunities for further improvement exist. The Committee has taken the opportunity to review the progress made so far and to examine ways of further improving recreational use of the Tees.
- 2.5 The review focussed on the section of the Tees which is within the boundary of the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees, concentrating on making better use of the 13 mile stretch of river upstream of the Tees Barrage to Low Worsall (the 'Tees Navigation').
- 2.6 The Committee undertook a widespread consultation in order to inform the findings of the review. This involved:
- hearing the evidence of officers from SBC Planning, Regeneration, Culture, Sports Developments and Countryside and Greenspace; British Waterways; Tees Active; visit Tees Valley; One North East; Tees Valley Regeneration; StocktonMiddlesbrough Initiative; Stockton Police; the owner of the 'Teesside Princess'; Yarm School; Yarm Town Council; Friends of River Tees Heritage Park; representatives of the various sporting clubs and associations based along the river and at the Tees Barrage, including the Universities of Teesside and Durham;
 - surveying the views of ward councillors, and the remaining riparian parish and town councils;
 - publicising the review via a press release which received good coverage in the local media and resulted in a number of contributions from members of the public. Further public involvement was secured

through the use of the Council's Adult and Youth Viewpoint consultation panels;

- seeking the views of local businesses by advertising the review through an article in The Vital Spark magazine, a survey and attendance at Teesdale Business Forum.

2.7 Alongside visiting the Tees Barrage and the River Tees Watersports Centre, Members of the Committee also undertook a site visit along the river on board the Teesside Princess river cruiser. The Committee are indebted to the assistance of Mr Joe Wilson who facilitated this visit.

Fig. 1. Members of the Committee visiting Tees Barrage



2.8 Unless otherwise stated, any mention of 'the Tees' contained within this report refers to the impounded stretch of the river upstream of the Barrage.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The Tees Barrage was constructed in 1994 by the Teesside Development Corporation. This represented the catalyst for the remarkable reversal of fortune for the Tees, as it moved from being a heavily polluted river to one suitable for a range of recreational activities. Historically the Tees had been noted for the quality and range of its fishing, but by 1937 pollution had eliminated the salmon and by 1970 the Tees was surrounded by industry, leading to the estuary being considered the most polluted in the country. Over 500 tonnes of waste was being discharged into the river each day.
- 3.2 The Barrage is a physical barrier to the tidal movements of the Tees and this, combined with stricter controls on pollution, has led to environmental improvements. Within six months of the Barrage being completed, water quality upstream had improved and the quality is now officially classed as 'good'. By controlling the flow of the river through it, the Barrage is also able to maintain a constant level of water. This has in effect created a freshwater 'lake' suitable for recreational and associated activity.
- 3.3 The Barrage structure is comprised of the following features:
- Sluice gates
 - River lock gates (with capacity of vessels of 25m in length and 6m width)
 - Canoe Slalom (or 'white water') course
 - Fish Pass
- 3.4 As with other rivers and canals, British Waterways is responsible, and obliged by Statutory Duty, for a variety of river operations including maintenance of the river banks and water control and monitoring. In addition, British Waterways, under its responsibilities derived from the Tees Barrage and Crossing Act, undertakes the enforcement of all bye-laws in place along the length of the Navigation, alongside the operation of the Barrage itself.
- 3.5 Within the context of the Tees Navigation, should there be any conflict with any of its procedures, the following priorities are observed (in descending order):
- Protection of life and property on the river
 - Avoidance of flooding or serious drainage problems
 - Maintenance of upstream river levels
 - Emergency maintenance
 - Passage of migratory fish
 - Dissipate water of adverse quality
 - Operation of canoe slalom
 - Routine maintenance and testing
 - De-silting and general debris clearance
 - Operation of lock navigation system
- 3.6 When the river is experiencing levels of flood flow the sluice gates are lowered to maintain the normal levels. The gates also protect against tidal

surges, and provide protection against tides in excess of the highest ever recorded.

3.7 Alongside the attraction of the Barrage itself and the white water course (and the adjacent Four Seasons Watersports Centre), there are a number of established leisure facilities concentrated at Stockton Riverside and the Barrage Reach (the broad stretch between the town centre and Barrage). These include:

- Castlegate Quay Watersports Centre
- River Tees Watersports Centre at Dugdale Street
- Teesside Princess river cruiser and the replica of HM Bark Endeavour
- Restaurants at Castlegate Quay and adjacent to Victoria Bridge
- Riverside walkways and cycle paths

3.8 Stockton Borough's annual firework show is based on the riverside, as are a number of events associated with the Stockton International Riverside Festival (SIRF). Further upstream, the riverside is a popular destination for walking, fishing, and the river itself is used for rowing, canoeing, dragon boat racing, sailing, jet skiing, water skiing and motor cruising to various extents.

3.9 A number of strategies in relation to various aspects of the river have been developed. One of these was the Tees Corridor Environmental Strategy (Casella) was published in 2001, and this highlighted environmental improvements at 18 key sites from the centre of Stockton to Teesside International Nature Reserve.

3.10 The Tees Navigation Strategy was produced in 2002 by a British Waterways consultancy after being commissioned by a partnership comprising One North East, English Partnerships, British Waterways (North Yorkshire Navigations) and Stockton Council. This was due to recognition that although progress had been made, 'the River Tees and its environs are key assets that hold unrealised potential.' It had two main aims:

- 'To prepare a vision and strategy for the regeneration of the Tees Navigation and riverside areas with particular emphasis placed upon sustainable regeneration, development and management coupled with achievable actions and recommendations;
- To redefine the Tees Navigation and its environs, stressing the importance of place thereby creating the foundations for re-investment, employment and recreation recognising the Tees Navigation as the district's foremost resource.'

3.11 The strategy was intended to identify the potential for use of the 'waterspace' and adjacent land, re-engage the community with the river, identify schemes to encourage tourism, capitalise on the Tees as a linear recreational resource alongside providing an appreciation of the environmental concerns related to the river. To do this, it reviewed the physical and human resources present at the time and developed a series of action plans centred around the following: Biodiversity; Culture and Heritage; Waterspace and Water Recreation; Recreation. In addition, the Strategy identified case studies of

possible future developments at various locations¹, as well as the potential delivery mechanisms which could be utilised to bring these plans to fruition.

- 3.12 The Strategy included some themes which were outside the remit of the Committee, nevertheless it still represented a key document for the Committee to take into account during the review.

Fig 2. Geographical scope of the Navigation Strategy



- 3.13 The Strategy was intended to inform future development of the river and adjacent land. Since publication, a number of plans have been produced which built upon its themes, and the Strategy should be viewed as a framework within the changing policy context.

¹ Tees Barrage; Stockton Riverside (including Teesdale); Bowesfield; Preston Park; Yarm; Portknowle Farm.

4.0 Evidence/Findings

Riverside Regeneration

- 4.1 The Committee found that there a number of regeneration schemes in place which will have a major impact on the opportunities for river based leisure in the future. The general riverside area is now seen as being Stockton's prime asset and this is being reflected throughout the various initiatives taking place; a recurring theme throughout was the need to re-connect the river with the surrounding area.
- 4.2 During the course of the review the SBC Regeneration Strategy for Stockton Borough 2007-2012 was published. This re-affirms the commitment to make sure that the River Tees is central to the future development of the Borough; one of the Key Ambitions within the strategy is 'Better use of the River Tees'. The key regeneration sites can be seen at Appendix 1.
- 4.3 The Stockton Middlesbrough Initiative (SMi) is a partnership between Stockton and Middlesbrough Councils and is the major, long term programme of regeneration. The SMi is a 20-year vision for the future of the River Tees corridor between Stockton and Middlesbrough, and aims to use the 'natural asset of the river as a driver for regeneration' in order to 'create a quality environment and a step change in the facilities available in the City Region'.
- 4.4 The SMi's centrepiece is the Green Blue Heart project which is intended to enhance the largely derelict and contaminated range of sites between the two town centres. This is to be done by using the natural assets already in place (ie the river and nature reserves) together with the leisure asset of the Barrage and to use these to create a high quality landscape and parkland. The site is circa 248 hectares in size but does have a relatively simple pattern of land ownership.

Fig 3. Current situation of 'Green Blue Heart' site



- 4.5 It is intended to make the area into an attractive destination with the potential for housing and leisure activities where appropriate. A key aim of this project

is to enhance the image of the area and change the perceptions of the Tees Corridor.

Fig 4. Indicative image of Green Blue Heart area



- 4.6 The Committee noted that at present there are limited opportunities for leisure downstream of the Tees Barrage. There are the two nature reserves at Portrack Marsh and Maze Park which are managed by Tees Valley Wildlife Trust. However, it is recognised that these areas are in need of further regenerative work and the proposals for the Green Blue Heart are intended to take this forward.

Quality of Riverside Development

- 4.7 The Committee noted the problems which have been associated with the Teesdale development. This site contains mainly offices but also Stockton Riverside College and Durham University's Queen's Campus, with a small amount of residential provision. The Committee heard of complaints from residents and councillors that the area was confronted by a range of problems including a lack of car parking, a lack of on site facilities and buildings being constructed without consideration to the overall appearance of the area. These problems are exacerbated by a lack of mixed use, joined-up development which leads to the site becoming largely devoid of people on a night and weekend. There is a canal system in place within Teesdale which allows for a greater appreciation of the waterspace however there is no significant activity on the canals themselves.
- 4.8 The current situation of Stockton Riverside is not aided by the visual impact of the Castlegate Shopping Centre and Riverside Road, both of which create a physical barrier between High Street and river.
- 4.9 The Committee found that along with the proposals for the Green Blue Heart there a number of other major projects in place. Of these, the North Shore scheme is the most prominent. Tees Valley Regeneration is leading on this flagship development which aims to create a mixed use site between the Barrage and Stockton Town Centre, on the north bank of the Tees, opposite the Teesdale site. The appointed developers are AMEC in conjunction with Urban Splash. The proposals for this 56 acre, south facing site include:

- New residential and conference facilities for Durham University
- 25,000 sq ft of leisure space including a hotel, cafes, restaurants and associated leisure facilities
- 650,000 sq ft office space
- 480 residential units for high quality waterside living
- A new pedestrian and cycle bridge
- Riverside promenade

Fig 5. Artist's impression of the North Shore development



- 4.10 The planned area has been extended to include the former dairy and Kwikfit site adjacent to the Municipal Buildings, thereby ensuring the physical link with the town centre. The scheme is due for completion c.2015. The construction of the £15 million footbridge has begun and completion is expected in Spring 2009. This 'iconic' bridge will link Teesdale and North Shore, and allow better access by foot to Thornaby train station.

Fig 6. Artist's impression of footbridge



- 4.11 The Committee found that there has already been a revision to the original masterplan to ensure that the river is adequately integrated into the development and that the site is not merely an extension to the Teesdale development. In addition to improving the sightlines of the proposed buildings and an effort to reduce domination by office space, it is proposed that the eastern edge of the site should be 'softer' in tone in order to blend into the Barrage and nature reserve area. The developers have also sought to create

direct access to the water through the concept of a 'water playground' in an effort to allow for safe and manageable access, including the proposed inclusion of riverside 'beaches'.

- 4.12 The Committee welcomed the complementary aspects of the scheme and in particular the decision not to attract High Street shopping but to allow retail needed for those on site without leading to competition with established retail locations. The Committee also believe that North Shore should be regarded as being for the benefit of the whole community, and hope that the North Shore development will prompt more effective use of the remaining land at Teesdale. The Committee note the inclusive consultation style adopted by Tees Valley Regeneration in relation to the design of the scheme.
- 4.13 Other key projects include the Southern Gateway and Stockton Riverside. The Southern Gateway includes commercial development, riverside living and leisure facilities and the Riverside improvements include Boathouse Lane as well as potential development of the Riverside Car Park in order to complete the links with North Shore. There is a recognised need for attractions such as the Barrage and Castlegate Quay, there are few facilities for the casual visitor. These developments depend upon partnership working with the private sector. There is to be a phased approach and the North Shore and town centre projects will be developed first, with the Green Blue Heart to follow in succession, in order to build on the work of Tees Valley Regeneration.
- 4.14 The Committee heard evidence from the Head of Planning in relation to the Boathouse Lane development. This area is another which has suffered from industrial decline but is now subject to plans for development. In order to guide this development, SBC has adopted a Design Brief for Boathouse Lane as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), using the Local Development Framework. The SPD is a material consideration in the determination of all future planning applications for the site. The document sets out the standards that will be required of any development. As well as outlining the constraints in place (including a large number of land owners) the SPD ensures that developers are aware of and must have due regard to the commercial, residential, recreational and ecological opportunities the site provides. Angling, realignment of the Teesdale Way and continuation of the Eight Bridges Cycleway are specifically mentioned.
- 4.15 The layout and access principles for the site are shown at Appendix 2. The Committee note the support of British Waterways for the use of such methods of ensuring quality developments.
- 4.16 It is clear that there has been consideration given to the quality of riverside developments within the Borough. The Committee support this and believe that this must be included within all future developments in order to ensure mixed-use and a high quality, using tools such as Supplementary Planning Documents where appropriate.

Range and Co-ordination of activity upon the river

4.17 It rapidly became clear to the Committee that there was a wide variety of established users on the Tees. These users are mainly based at three centres situated in the Stockton Riverside/Barrage Reach area:

- Four Seasons at the White Water Course

This focuses on canoeing and kayaking, both on the flatwater and on the slalom course. It is also the home of Cleveland Canoe Club.

- River Tees Watersports Centre, Dugdale Street

This Centre was built in 2001 and is home to the range of users affiliated to the Tees River Users Trust: Tees Rowing Club, Queen's Campus Rowing Club, Teesside University Rowing Club, Powerhouse Dragon Boats, Tees Tigers Canoe (Water Polo) Club, Get Hooked On Fishing.

- Castlegate Quay Watersports Centre

This concentrates on entry level activity for the following activities: sailing, bell boating, canoing/kayaking, powerboating. It offers a range of courses and taster sessions and is managed by Tees Active.

Fig 7. Four Seasons



4.18 There are other groups based along the river. These include Stockton and Thornaby Canoe Club which is currently based at Yarm School, Castlegate Marine Club (motorboats) which has moorings adjacent to Princess Diana Bridge, Tees Water Ski Club which is based on the south bank near the Barrage and Tees Motorboat Club based south of Victoria Bridge.

4.19 The Committee found that the main three facilities are generally well used. Following a takeover from the Castlegate Trust, Tees Active has re-organised the Castlegate Watersports Centre's (CGWC) staff, and implemented a new marketing programme. Recent visitor figures are encouraging and can be found in the table below.

Fig 8. Recent visitor figures for CGWC

	2005/06	2006/07
Total visitors - including hospitality /meeting rooms	10,359	15,783
Active Participants - watersports activities	6537	9275

4.20 The CQWC is experiencing increasing corporate usages and has in place a corporate teambuilding programme which incorporates raft building, bell boating and powerboating. Powerboating is one of the few leisure activities which currently take place downstream of the Barrage. The Centre is geographically well placed as it is in the town centre with relatively good access to public transport and parking compared to other similar watersport centres around the country.

4.21 Taken together, all the facilities provide a wide choice of water-based activity. The Committee found that there is co-operation between clubs and British Waterways in order to 'zone' the river in order to provide a timetable of activity on the Barrage Reach to ensure that differing activities do not conflict, and that this system works well. It was noted that more children have been trained to water-ski on the Tees than any other river in the country.

4.22 The range of past and future events held on the Tees includes:

- SMi Triathlon
- Two Bridges Open Water Swim
- International Dragon Boat racing
- World Canoe Marathon
- Annual Tees Regatta
- World Angling Championships 2009

4.23 The Committee found that although there were many reasons to be positive about watersports on the Tees, there were a number of areas where improvements could be identified.

4.24 The operation of the white water course is currently dependent on the tide. The course relies on there being a sufficient differential in water levels between the river upstream and the river downstream of the Barrage. This limits the time when the course can be used to a three hour window either side of low tide. This restricts the potential use of the site and prevents the course from being of international standard, together with a lack of appropriate facilities nearby.

4.25 As part of the SMi programme, it is planned to re-configure the course and to upgrade it so that it becomes a pumped course. This is to be done by using a version of an Archimedes Screw. It is planned to install four of these

screw pumps at the Barrage in order to be able to draw water up into the course and enabling it to be used at any time. This ability to better control the flow of water will make sure the course can meet the needs of a range of users from novice to elite, thereby enabling the course can host top class international standard events.

- 4.26 When the course is not in use, the screws can be reversed and the water would flow down, producing electricity as it went. This element of renewable energy, together with the screw pumps themselves, will add to the Barrage's attractiveness as a visitor destination in itself. The Course would be the best course in the UK, in the top five within Europe and have the distinction of being the only fully sustainable pumped white water course in the world. Following the construction of other courses in the UK, most notably the Olympic course at Broxbourne, the Tees White Water Course would remain in the UK's top five courses well into the future.
- 4.27 The Committee heard that the cost for this scheme will be c. £3.5m, and this funding is in the process of being secured, with the technical work almost complete. The Committee were pleased to learn of the planned developments and are keen to ensure that the Barrage location reaches its full potential.
- 4.28 The range of events is increasing however the Committee found that they are not being as effectively promoted as could be the case. Indeed, Members of the Committee were frequently surprised to learn of the range of activity that takes place, and it was clear that this perception is widespread. It was reported that the attendance at these events in terms of casual visitors is poor. This can be linked to the lack of visitor facilities but must also be linked to the need for a greater promotion of the events on offer.
- 4.29 The Stockton International Waterzone Study (Pan-Leisure Consulting Ltd) was produced in 2004. This aims to build on previous work and highlight what could be done to 'establish Stockton International Waterzone as a premier events venue and water activity centre in the UK.' The proposed 'Waterzone' is concentrated on the Barrage Reach and Stockton Riverside.
- 4.30 As detailed at 4.22, there are a range of events which currently take place, including the World Angling Championships in 2009. However the Study envisages a more intensive programme of events than is currently in place, and produced an indicative annual plan of events as well as a summary of the economic benefits which could follow.
- 4.31 The Tees Regatta is a popular regatta of regional importance. The 2007 event had races in various categories every three minutes from 9.30am until 6pm, featuring a range of teams from boat clubs around the region and beyond, including the University of Teesside, with previous involvement from the Durham University colleges at Queen's Campus. Conversely the regatta does not appear to figure highly within the Borough's consciousness. Spectators are mainly from the friends and families of those taking part. Wider involvement of the community has been suggested by the Queen's Campus Sports Development Officer. One suggested method would be to incorporate a community/corporate challenge event. In Victoria, Canada, teams from community groups and local businesses pay entry fees and have coached practice sessions for seven weeks before entering a Championship

Regatta. The event attracts large amounts of spectators and raises funds which are ploughed back into the sport including the 'Dynamic Opportunities for Youth' fund.

- 4.32 The Committee feel that the further development of the Regatta is an opportunity to build upon the river as an important asset, and that this should be done in conjunction with partners including all colleges at Durham University, building on the links with Queen's Campus. Where possible there should be consideration to linkages with other existing events such as SIRF and the re-constituted Yarm Gala.
- 4.33 Therefore there should be wider promotion and recognition of the events which already take place, as well as being mindful of the full potential of the 'WaterZone' as contained within the Study. The event scene is constantly developing, the SMi Triathlon was held for the first time in 2007, as was the Two Bridges Open Water Swim; these events aim to develop further as they progress, with the hope of attracting a national open swim event for example.
- 4.34 During the course of the review, it was reported that there had been an increase in dialogue between the various watersport centres and British Waterways. The Committee recognised the need for this and would like to see this co-operation extended. In the main, it seems that there is lack of co-ordination between the different clubs, and representatives of all three centres highlighted this as an area for improvement on separate occasions.
- 4.35 Some of the clubs involved in the Tees River Users Trust have separately applied for sponsorship help but these individual approaches have not been successful. Members also reported that although some had been successful when applying external funding, extra help with applications would be appreciated.
- 4.36 The diverse nature of the activities is not being sufficiently promoted, but there is a need to co-ordinate activity so that there is no overlap in the future which could compromise the recreational 'offer' of the Tees. There is currently no central point of information, such as a website, for either users or visitors and the Committee believe that some one needs to take the lead on this issue. With such a wide variety of users, communication is important so that any potential for conflict can be minimised.
- 4.37 It is also clear that there are capacity issues facing several clubs which will need to be addressed in the near future. The River Tees Watersports Centre (RTWC) is full to capacity and this is limiting the future expansion of the College rowing teams of Queen's Campus. Tees Rowing Club is popular and has a varied membership however there is a limit to how many members they can now accommodate. Stockton and Thornaby Canoe Club is currently based at Yarm School but frequently moves its base. As can be seen at 4.46 there is a general demand for increased access to the river in the vicinity of Yarm. Whether this translates to the need for a formal clubhouse facility will need to be assessed via a business case in order to ensure its sustainability. Access to funding such as that of Sport England is often dependent on the amount of existing facilities within a certain area and this will need to be taken into account.

- 4.38 The North Shore development has been welcomed by the organisations currently on site, namely the Users Trust and Castlegate Marine Club. The Committee believes that this also represents an opportune time to look at capacity issues as whole, and to assess demand for such facilities along the length of the river.

Tees River Trust

- 4.39 One element of co-ordination could be provided by the emerging 'Tees River Trust'. River Trusts are present on most of the major rivers around the country and are independent, charitable organisations which focus on making environmental and habitat improvements within their river catchment areas. The precise activities of a Trust can vary from river to river with some preferring to concentrate on fishery improvements, while others such as the Tyne Trust aim to do this as well as providing information for river users such as water levels, promoting the opportunities for river-based tourism and engage local communities through education projects.
- 4.40 As they are charities they are able to access funding streams which may be unavailable to others. The Committee found that the Tyne Trust has recently been successful in attracting £365,000 from One North East, and that some Trusts are able to attract an income of more than £3m. Many have been successful in attracting European Union structural funds.
- 4.41 The Committee received evidence from Mr George Coulson who was a member of the group that is involved in setting up a Trust for the River Tees. It was reported that the Tees version would seek to take an overview of all environmental issues along the whole length of the river. Accommodation had been secured and the group sought to attract funding from local authorities, businesses and related organisations. Darlington Borough Council and the Environment Agency have offered initial funding. It was hoped that the Trust would be formally in existence by June 2008. The Committee feel that the Trust will be an important and welcome addition to the family of organisations associated with the Tees and that the Council should support its development where possible.

Access to the River

- 4.42 The Committee found that a recurring theme throughout the review has been the issue of access to both the river itself and also to the immediate vicinity of the water. It is clear that there are long standing demands for increased access, as the consultation carried out on behalf of the Navigation Strategy shows that little appears to have changed in the intervening six years.
- 4.43 The Tees is suitable for sailing and motorboats as well canoeing and rowing. There are moorings at Castlegate Marine Club, and the Tees Motor Boat Club adjacent to Victoria Bridge. There are public slipways at the Barrage and Stockton Riverside, however the Riverside slipway is currently out of use. Sailing boats trying to access the attractive stretches of the river near

- Thornaby, Ingleby Barwick and beyond can take a considerable time to do so, including the need to negotiate several bridges.
- 4.44 Evidence submitted by ward councillors, parish councils, members of the public and associations such as the Tees Barrage Upstream Sailing Association, all called for increased facilities. The lack of slipway and mooring provision severely restricts the attractiveness of the Tees in this regard. Moorings need to be provided which include appropriate facilities including fuel, water and toilets, before casual users will be continually attracted to the area.
- 4.45 It is the view of several consultees including British Waterways, that such provision could have additional economic benefits if they are linked to nearby developments such as pubs and restaurants. It has previously been suggested that there could be increased moorings, possibly including a marina, at the Bowesfield site. The Committee would also support efforts to attract private investment in order to develop St Mark's Basin which remains a prime potential location for moorings or a marina of some kind. Indeed there is a waiting list of nine people who have expressed an interest in using this location as a mooring.
- 4.46 As with boating, improved access for canoeists and rowers has also been raised with the Committee. Although there are capacity issues, the watersports centres concentrated in Stockton provide good access in that area. However, further upstream there are more requests for increased access. The waters surrounding Yarm and Eaglescliffe are quieter and considered to be more suitable for the more recreational side of watersports rather than the competitive. The Committee heard from representatives of both Tees Rowing Club and Stockton and Thornaby Canoe Club that the area would be suitable and more attractive for 'touring rowing' and recreational users more suited to the area than the more intensive Barrage Reach watersport zone. Representatives of the British Canoe Union would support increased canoe launching facilities in the Yarm area.
- 4.47 Yarm Town Council informed the Committee of the plans for re-establishing Yarm Gala during 2008, which will include an element of interaction with the river. However, the lack of sufficient access to the river, and the potential traffic problems, precludes organisers from organising a fully fledged regatta. Consequently, British Waterways are working in partnership in order to facilitate the transport of pontoons the distance of from the Barrage to Yarm.
- 4.48 The Navigation Strategy highlighted a number of potential improvements to recreational access on the Tees and these can be found at Appendix 3. As has been shown these proposals largely remain unrealised. One such proposal was linked to the issues surrounding the Yarm area. The Committee found that there have been numerous schemes proposed in relation to the site of the Old Vinegar Works which is in Eaglescliffe, situated between Yarm Viaduct and Yarm Bridge and owned by Stockton Borough Council. These plans revolve around the design of a recreational watersports facility including canoe and rowing boat launching facilities, including adjacent changing facilities and boat storage units.
- 4.49 Recent proposals have originated from the Environment Agency and during the review, the Committee received a submission outlining the proposal of

Yarm Town Council. The latter was in recognition of the Town Council's belief that the river was under-utilised in their area, and included provision for a social facility in order to make such a centre sustainable.

- 4.50 The Committee received evidence from the Head of Planning in relation to this issue. The Committee found that the availability of money for any related scheme would not be regarded as a material consideration in terms of any planning application. Irrespective of this, there are a number of planning policies which restrict the scope for building on this site. These policies included the site being classified as a green wedge, being within a conservation area, and being next to Yarm Bridge which was a Scheduled Ancient Monument and the viaduct which was a Listed Building.
- 4.51 In 1993, a developer had applied for a Certificate of Appropriate Alternative Development including proposals for a riverside marina boating facility and riverside recreation centre. The Council refused these proposals on the basis of the site's location within a Green Wedge, the impact upon the surrounding structures and the setting of the Conservation Areas of Eaglescliffe and Yarm, and the unsuitability of the access to the site. Upon appeal, the Planning Inspector ruled in favour of the Council. Subsequent to this, in 1996 the Council successfully applied for a Change of Use and reclamation of the site to create an area of Public Open Space.
- 4.52 In addition to the policy considerations, it was reported that access to the site via Yarm Road was problematic due to the sightlines involved and the levels of traffic already experienced. Use of this site for launching would necessarily involve some element of boat trailers being used. The Committee also found that access via Aislaby Road would entail securing access over private land. Concerns relating to traffic have also been raised with the Committee by an Eaglescliffe ward councillor.
- 4.53 The Committee note the reasons surrounding the lack of development on the Vinegar Works site; however it recognises the general desire to improve the level of facilities in the area and would like to see effective partnership working to bring that about, especially in light of the capacity issues in relation to the various sporting clubs.
- 4.54 It is clear from the Committee's public consultation that activities surrounding the river such as walking and cycling are as important, if not more so, than watersports themselves. Concerns relating to the maintenance and route of footpaths have been received by the Committee, in particular from residents and the Viewpoint panel. These concerns were also present during the Navigation Strategy of 2002. Overall it was clear that many people appreciate the riverside walks available and that they are relatively well used, however issues include:
- The lack of a continuous footpath along the Tees within the Borough, disruptions include Egglecliffe Golf Course, lack of footpath along river banks near Ingleby Barwick
 - Occasional footpath closures
 - Lack of car parking facilities apart from central Stockton and Preston Park, including lack of disabled parking
 - Litter
 - Lack of crossing points

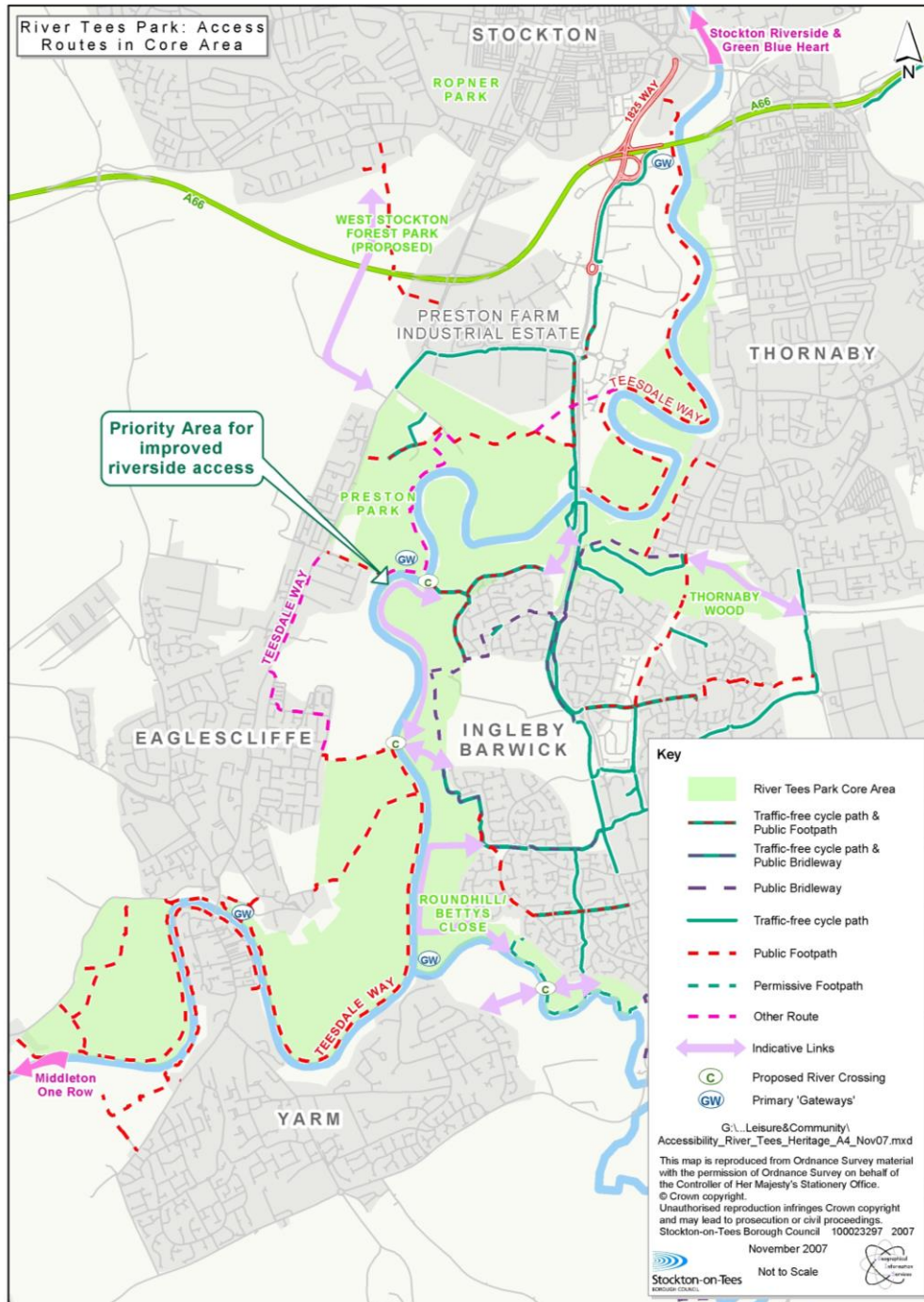
- Lack of signposting
- 4.55 The Committee found that it would be possible to use the planning system in order to ensure access is improved where possible. There are a number of policies related to the recreational aspects of the Tees. These are outlined at Appendix 4 and include emerging options for the Core Strategy and Regeneration Development Plan as part of Stockton Borough's Local Development Framework (LDF), in addition to Local Plan saved policies which will apply until the LDF is adopted.
- 4.56 The Committee support the use of Planning Obligations (or section 106) in order to secure better access wherever possible. Examples of this include:
- Banks Development at Bowesfield – this led to contributions towards the nature reserve area now managed by Tees Valley Wildlife Trust
 - Betty's Close – developers of this section of Ingleby Barwick have contributed towards footpath and mooring provision, in addition to SBC taking over a section of land adjacent to the river which could be included as part of the River Tees Park project.
- 4.57 It is hoped that the River Tees Park project will go a long way towards addressing some of the access issues which have been highlighted during the review. Nevertheless the Committee would like to ensure that access to the river is maintained and improved wherever possible and that the Council should build upon the progress already made in relation to the use of Planning Obligations and the LDF process as a whole.

River Tees Park

- 4.58 The idea of a 'River Tees Park' is well documented and this was also included in the Navigation Strategy. The Committee found that this was now being taken forward as a project which involves key partners including Stockton Council, British Waterways, Environment Agency, Tees Valley Wildlife Trust, Tees Archaeology and North East Community Forests. The aim of the Park is to build on the Tees and surrounding landscape in order to achieve the following suggested objectives:
- Develop a continuous green corridor – providing a high quality setting for major regeneration projects, enhancing the area's image and contributing to Stockton and Tees Valleys's tourism offer;
 - Integrate green infrastructure planning with Green Blue Heart and other strategic regeneration initiatives;
 - Develop infrastructure for sustainable travel and improve access and green infrastructure links into business and housing areas;
 - Protect and enhance strategic countryside, greenspace, biodiversity and cultural assets between the Tees Barrage and Yarm;
 - Encourage use of the river corridor for sport, recreation and leisure by improving access throughout the river corridor and through the provision of high quality facilities and visitor destinations;

- Engage with local communities - 're-connecting' people to the river and their local environment, creating a 'sense of place', contributing to improved quality of life and promoting learning and understanding.
- 4.59 The Committee found that the plans are to initially concentrate on the land between central Stockton and Yarm, however there may be future potential to extend the geographical area both north and south. During the review, closer links were forged with the SMi Green Blue Heart project.
- 4.60 The Committee noted the community engagement which has taken place and was pleased to witness the support of the Friends of River Tees Heritage Park. It was noted that the 'River Tees Park' project did not aim to stop further development, but those developments should be right for the area, allow for public access to the river and enhance the quality of the local environment.
- 4.61 The exact form which the 'Park' will take, including its name, has yet to be decided between the partners however the Committee agrees that the overall scheme presents an excellent opportunity to enhance the accessibility of the Tees. Fig. 9 outlines current and potential access routes. Specific opportunities include:
- Increased amenities within the park area could create opportunities for a more regular water transport service and further attractions for businesses such as the Teesside Princess;
 - Stockton Borough benefited from the success of the Sustrans Connect2 project which entered a national competition to gain funding. The relevant project aims to link Ingleby Barwick, Yarm, Thornaby and Eaglescliffe by improving pedestrian and cycle links between them. This includes provision for a bridge between the Eaglescliffe side of the river and land south west of Barwick Farm. This would significantly improve the connectivity within the Park;
 - It is likely that the partners will need to acquire land, in particular the land on the east bank, south of Preston Park. Access could be from Preston Park also via a bridge or form of river boat service. If achieved this will allow for a connection to the Connect2 bridge and the opportunity for a re-alignment of the Teesdale Way which currently detours through Eaglescliffe, and is one of the interruptions to the riverside footpath reported in the consultation results
- 4.62 The Committee was pleased to note that this project is being taken forward, and that existing plans are being acted upon, and would like to place on record its support for the scheme. The proposals are incorporated within the Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy and it is important that they are included within the consequent Implementation Plan in order to access One North East funding.

Fig 9. Current and suggested access routes within Park area



Preston Park

4.63 The Committee noted the importance of Preston Park in relation to its current status as an important riverside attraction and one of the few easily accessible points along the river, and also its possible future status as a 'gateway' to the 'Tees Park'. Following a previous work and a scrutiny review of Preston Hall and Park during 2006-07, the Park is undergoing a re-development programme in order to update the attraction.

Fig 10. Preston Park Landing Stage



- 4.64 A masterplan for Park has been produced and there will be an application for stage one funding from the Lottery's *Parks for People* initiative in March 2008. Within the masterplan there are a number of proposals related to the river including improvements to the landing stage, options for the crossing of the Tees by cycle and foot, and improving the access to the Tees via the footpaths on site. An upgrade to the car parking arrangements is planned which would further improve the access situation. The Committee believe that opportunities such as the re-establishment of hire boats should be considered where appropriate. The Committee believe that all opportunities for interaction with the river must be taken during the re-development process.

Angling

- 4.65 Following the water quality improvements that have taken place, the Tees is once again a popular fishing destination. The Environment Agency now rate the Tees as being Grade A* standard for coarse fishing and the World Angling Championships are to be held on the river in 2009.
- 4.66 Management of fishing on the river is an important factor as the use of the Tees increases. As the Tees above the Barrage was once tidal, the bed is classed as being subject to Crown rights and riparian property rights do not apply. Local clubs manage access to the water with the exception of Thornaby where the Town Council have maintained a 'free fishing' policy. This allows open access for local residents however this can lead to a lack of accountability if anglers are not responsible to a particular club. Some residents have reported that related car parking can cause difficulty when accessing their properties, and elsewhere litter left by anglers has been mentioned.
- 4.67 Connected with this is the issue of fishing taking place within the vicinity of the Barrage. The Barrage Reach is designated as a 'no-fishing' area due to potential conflict with the more active watersports which take place there, following an agreement with the Teesside Development Corporation. However, a small section has been set aside for the Get Hooked on Fishing scheme and this has led some to assume that the area is also free fishing.

The areas of land managed by clubs tend to be self-policing and members are responsible to their clubs.

- 4.68 The Committee found that, in the main, there are few instances of conflict between anglers and other river users. Previously there had been some issues in relation to canoeists and anglers, however this is now rare. The Committee feel that increased communication between the various user groups will minimise the potential for conflict even further.
- 4.69 The Committee praised the work of Get Hooked on Fishing. This scheme aims to attract children and young people into the sport of fishing in order to create opportunities for young people to improve their skills and confidence with the explicit aims of reducing anti-social behaviour and truancy. On Teesside the local scheme works closely with the Fire Brigade.
- 4.70 During the review the Committee investigated the issue of the dispute regarding the fish pass at the Barrage. The fish pass is intended to allow the passage of migratory, game fish namely salmon and sea trout (as opposed to coarse fish such as pike, bream and perch). This is so that the fish can reach their spawning grounds upstream. It became apparent that there was a long running correspondence in the local media in relation to this issue, accompanying a series of articles. The Anglers' Conservation Association (ACA) had been prominent during the debate on the fish pass and was invited to submit evidence to the review. The groups (which includes some local residents) who had been critical of the fish pass maintained that it was inefficient in terms of allowing fish to pass through the physical barrier of the Barrage which led to potentially lower numbers upstream (compared to rivers such as the Tyne), a problem which was exacerbated by predation from a resident seal population. The ACA had been campaigning to have the fish pass upgraded without waiting for a planned monitoring programme.
- 4.71 In response the following information was put forward by British Waterways:
- The only way to be sure of the efficiency of the pass would be for a monitoring programme by electronic tagging to take place. This would also provide conclusive proof of the route taken by salmon through the Barrage as it was also possible for them to travel over the gates and up through the canoe slalom. This had not yet taken place but British Waterways were now under a legal duty to do so and would be implementing this to ascertain the scientific evidence.
 - Since the Barrage was put in place, salmon stocks had increased year on year when previously there had been very few. The rod catch figures show increasing salmon and sea trout catches with an especially good year in 2004. See Fig. 11 and 12.
 - It did not appear that the environmental factors were being taken into account. Due to its particular type of bedrock, the Tees was particularly susceptible to climate change and water temperatures of more than 20 degrees Celsius would deter salmon. This would not be affected by the Barrage but would have an effect on fish stocks.
 - Although great strides had been made, the Tees was 25 years behind the Tyne in terms of recovery from pollution.

4.72 Furthermore, the Committee noted that the Chairman of the Tees Valley Rivers and Fisheries Association praised the Tees Barrage and the effect it has had on water quality. Ingleby Barwick Town Council had asked for reassurance that everything was being done to maintain the fish stocks in the river in view of its popularity.

Fig 11. Historical rod catch figures for River Tees

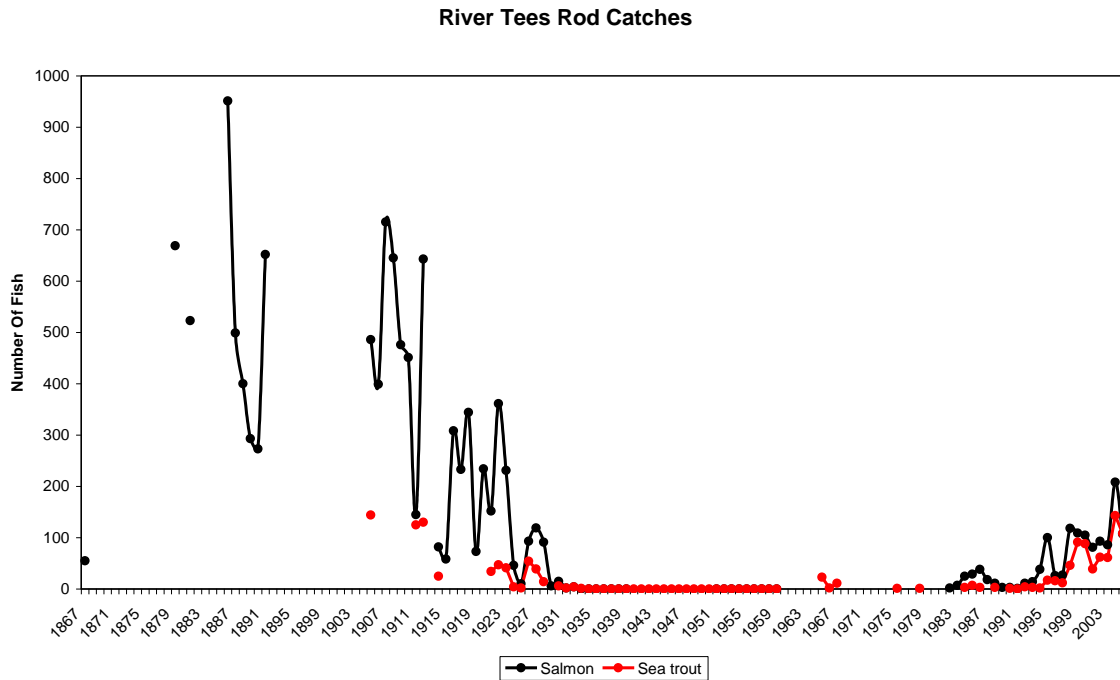
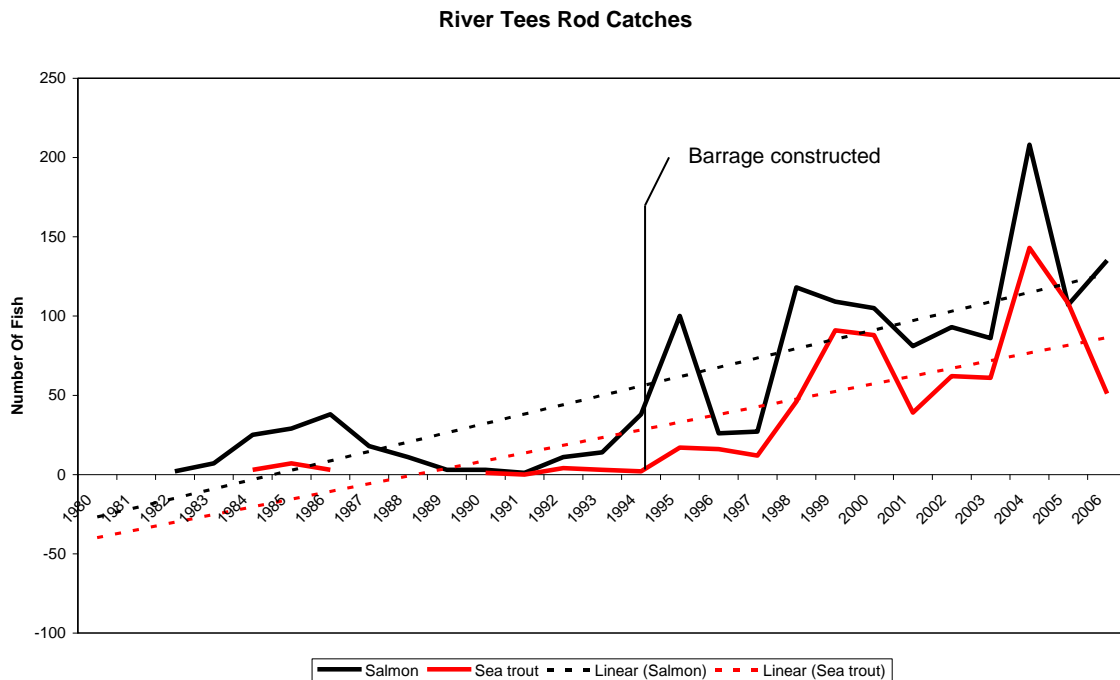


Fig. 12. Recent trends in rod catch figures



- 4.73 The Committee welcomes the proposed monitoring programme in order to provide further clarity on this issue; however it is also reassured that angling on the Tees is benefiting from the presence of the Barrage. In view of the damaging effect that negative publicity can have, the Committee believe that partners involved in the river, including British Waterways, should be encouraged to reply promptly to any future stories in this regard, as part of a wider communication strategy for the promotion of the river. In recognition of the work of Get Hooked on Fishing, and of the quality of the sport within the Borough, the Committee considers that angling should be further promoted as a sporting option for local residents.

Viewpoint of the Borough's population

- 4.74 The results of the Committee's Viewpoint survey showed that there was widespread knowledge of the river's cleanliness and suitability for recreational purposes. 85% of adult respondees were aware however this figure fell to 53.8% amongst 18-24yr olds and to 46.4% amongst 25-34yr olds. Only 33% of those surveyed used the river for recreational purposes, this figure was again smaller for the 18-24 age group (7.7%). Of those who did use the river, most use was within the last six months of longer. The detailed figures are outlined at Appendix 5.
- 4.75 It was apparent that some respondents believe that their age or disability would prevent their taking part in activities river-based activities. Walking, and eating and drinking were the most popular activities amongst the adults. The Committee heard from the sporting clubs that the events held on the Tees were not widely attended by the wider public, and one of the aims of the SMi project was to draw more local people towards the riverside.
- 4.76 A Youth Viewpoint survey was also undertaken. Just over half the respondents were aware of the river's suitability, although 39% did use it in some capacity. Those using it on a weekly or monthly basis were again in the minority. Members of the Tees Users Trust had tried to engage with young people who had waited around in the vicinity of the Watersports Centre, but had encountered the belief that waterposrts were not 'for the likes of us.' It is considered that schemes such as Get Hooked on Fishing provide a good example in terms of youth engagement.
- 4.77 The Tees Navigation Strategy consultation of 2002 involved the public, local business, river users and farmers. As has been recorded elsewhere, it is clear that there is some continuity in terms of the comments made, especially in relation to access issues. However it must be recorded that many respondents to both consultations were positive about the changes to the river and that some comments made clear that the facilities were good but not widely advertised.

School use of the River Tees

- 4.78 From evidence provided by Tees Active, the Committee found that although use of the Castlegate Quay Watersports Centre was increasing, the proportion of usage from Stockton schools was comparatively low. Currently there are only four Stockton schools using the Centre on a regular basis (one private, three LEA). This regular use involves children undertaking 6-week accredited Royal Yachting Association (RYA)/British Canoe Union (BCU)-accredited courses. A number of other local schools have taken part in one-off events such as the Stockton Schools Bell-boating regatta. A range of youth groups also use the Centre, including Guides, Scouts, and a range of youth inclusion organisations.
- 4.79 Generally speaking, 80-90% of the Centre's visitors came from outside the Borough and other schools travelled from Darlington, Middlesbrough and York. Macmillan College in Middlesbrough has a contract involving 225 pupils experiencing a range of activities. The Youth Viewpoint Survey response indicated that a majority of children would enjoy the chance to experience the river through school, if they did not already. The Four Seasons canoe club also reported a lack of involvement with local schools.
- 4.80 Tees Active state that much promotional work does take place with schools, and this involves presentations in schools and meetings with head teachers. The Centre also benefits from the work of a full-time RYA Onboard Development Officer. The Onboard scheme is designed to introduce children to the sport of sailing and part of this role involves interacting with schools.
- 4.81 The Committee requested feedback on this issue from the Borough's School Sports Network. This network is led by the Sports Colleges at Blakeston and Northfield and links to 60 primary schools and 16 secondary schools. The Sports Development Officer provided this feedback to the Committee, and although the facilities at CQWC were regarded as being of high quality, there were a number of issues relating to schools use of them. These included:
- the pressure of other curriculum and exam targets, coupled with the general decline in outward bound-type activity;
 - courses that are usually suited to 10-12 pupils maximum and this limits the opportunity for whole classes to take part;
 - off site activities now require at least two supervisors rather than just one teacher/driver;
 - transport to and from the river can take time, and be costly, when most PE timetable slots are just one hour, and many schools do not have access to their own transport;
 - previous funding such as the NRF Children's Fund is no longer available;
 - schools such as Macmillan Academy have access to different funding streams to other LEA schools.
- 4.82 Schools were under pressure to achieve two hours of PE per pupil per week and this is due to rise to five hours by 2010. Currently 95% of primaries and 85% of secondary schools are reaching this target. Overall it was more cost effective for schools to use their own facilities to reach the target, although due to pressures on timetables, funding was not the only issue.

- 4.83 The Committee appreciate the real issues that confronted local schools. However, it believes that such assets that exist on the Tees, within their own Borough, cannot be allowed to go unused by local children. Schemes such as the BCU's Paddlepower and the Onboard programme exist within the local area and there is a need to introduce children to these opportunities. An important part of this is the need to promote water safety. Respondents to the Viewpoint surveys cited 'fear of water' or 'having no confidence' as being reasons they did not take part in watersports. This is linked to the need to impress on youngsters the necessary water safety messages. A previous attempt to invite schools to receive the benefit of the water safety training on offer at the Barrage only received one response from a school in Hambleton.

River-related anti-social behaviour and crime

- 4.84 During the review the Committee became aware of several issues in relation to misbehaviour on and near the river. The manager of the Tees Barrage reported that previous jet-ski events had been disrupted due to anti-social behaviour which had affected visitors to the Borough, along with the problems associated with young people mixing alcohol with water. The Tees Users Trust reported that the River Tees Watersports Centre landing stage would often attract large groups of young people especially during the summer, Castlegate Marine Club reported regular instances of vandalism and various users reported anti-social behaviour when on the river upstream towards Preston Park. The Committee were also made aware of the continued problem in relation to the theft of lifebelts from the riverside area.
- 4.85 The Committee heard evidence from the Borough Commander of Stockton Police. Between 1 January and 1 October 2007 there were 74 recorded incidents in relation to the river. The majority of these were classed as anti-social behaviour including rowdy/inconsiderate behaviour, and suspicious incidents mainly involving young people. Small numbers had been logged at Castlegate Quay, HMS Kellington and the Barrage, however the statistics did not show any repeat locations for youths offending. Eleven incidents involved vehicles including jet skis and speeding cars around the Tees Barrage area.
- 4.86 The lack of any repeat locations may suggest that users are not reporting each incident as they occur, leading to 'hot-spots' not being identified, or that the problem is not as widespread as had been thought.
- 4.87 Dangerous behaviour on the water was the responsibility of British Waterways. River users are required to register with British Waterways who had the power under the river by-laws to restrict access following misbehaviour. One police officer and two community support officers were tasked to supervise the river corridor within Stockton, and British Waterways had fortnightly meetings with the local Team. The Police did not consider daily patrols to be the answer and believed it was important to keep a balance between rowdy behaviour and any actual offences being committed. However it was agreed that the profile of the river did merit more attention, especially in relation to events.

- 4.88 It was agreed that a partnership approach was needed to tackle the issues. Following the Committee meeting it was agreed that:
- Increased collaboration would take place between the relevant Neighbourhood Policing Team and British Waterways;
 - Priority response status would be given to events at the Reach, and an action plan for the summer months would be investigated;
 - The Council's Neighbourhood Enforcement Service were made aware of potential issues relating to the riverside for their patrols and contact details were distributed;
 - Advice given that users should make contact with the local police officers as well as reporting the incidents themselves.
- 4.89 It was agreed that finding ways to engage with young people was part of the answer. Further to this the Committee wish to ensure that action is taken to understand the extent of this issue due to the potential effect on current river users and the impact on the perceptions of visitors to the Borough. Therefore it is requested that an evidence base of incidents is produced and that efforts should be made to make all river users aware of the correct reporting mechanisms.

HMS Kellington

- 4.90 During the review the Committee was kept informed of the situation regarding HMS Kellington. The Kellington is the wooden hulled minesweeper moored on Stockton Riverside adjacent to Princess Diana Bridge. She is owned by the Sea Cadets having been sold by the Ministry of Defence and had been used for training before falling into disuse. The vessel now presents a series of problems for the river. It remains a potential hazard should the fabric of the hull fail which could lead to it sinking at its moorings, it is no longer suited to its surroundings and represents a physical barrier to further development of the riverside area, and it is a magnet for anti-social behaviour. The vessel is constantly monitored for the intake of water and levels of deterioration.

Fig 13. HMS Kellington at Stockton Riverside



- 4.91 The Committee found that over the last few years there had been concerted local efforts to find a solution to the issue. In conjunction with the MP for Stockton North, Frank Cook, Stockton Council have been working in partnership with British Waterways and the Sea Cadets. In early 2007 the bilges were pumped out with assistance from the Environment Agency in order to reduce the environmental risk.
- 4.92 The Committee was pleased to receive a positive update towards the end of the review. There is now in development a project plan in place which could see the Kellington's superstructure removed in situ, allowing the vessel to be moved to where further dismantling may be possible. The MoD's Chief Salvage Officer has offered skills and expertise in order to project manage and oversee the operation.
- 4.93 The Committee believes that the greatest risk would be to leave the vessel where it is currently moored and are encouraged by the most recent news. The Committee recommend that all efforts should continue to be made to ensure the early removal of the Kellington from Stockton Riverside.
- 4.94 The Kellington also attracts debris and litter between its hull and the riverbank. Debris has been highlighted as an issue by residents and councillors during the review. British Waterways is responsible for keeping the waterway clear but there should be an element of responsibility from landowners to ensure that their land is not contributing to the problem.

Opportunities and challenges for business

- 4.95 The Committee found that river based leisure businesses face a number of challenges. The Committee received evidence from Mr Joe Wilson, operator of the Teesside Princess and HM Bark Endeavour. These are based at Castlegate Quay. The Teesside Princess is a two-decked, river cruiser which provides daytimes services between Stockton and Yarm with a stopping point at Preston Park, and evening 'party cruises'. The business also operates a similar service in Nottingham although Mr Wilson states that this side is more profitable and there are two cruisers on the Trent, including a single-deck version. Within Stockton, the evening cruises are provide a greater return than the daytime service.
- 4.96 Mr Wilson's business acquired the replica of HM Bark Endeavour in 2004, from the defunct Castlegate Trust charity. This represents an opportunity for educational and corporate use, and is fully fitted out with facilities which could allow for overnight accommodation if required. It is the only replica of the Endeavour in the Northern Hemisphere. The Committee found that the overall business faced significant difficulties after acquiring the Endeavour. The maintenance costs are significant however the main issue surrounds business rates. Mr Wilson states that the rates increased to £22,000 and that it is very high compared to similar locations and even more exclusive locations such as moorings on the Thames. Mr Wilson remains in dialogue with HM Customs and Revenue with regard to this matter and the Committee wish to support him in his efforts in recognition of the service that is provided, and to ensure the long term viability of this prominent river based facility.

British Waterways levy a commercial boat registration fee for use of the river by the Princess in line with normal procedure.

- 4.97 The Committee noted that the operator does not believe that the attractions near the river are promoted sufficiently. It was noted that many of his customers use the Teesside Princess for a lunch stop as they travel to another district, rather than staying to visit the Borough itself. It was noted that access issues also affect the operation of the business; the lack of parking affects where people can join and disembark from the vessel. An increased provision of amenities within the Tees corridor would enhance the attraction of the river cruise.
- 4.98 The Committee found that various consultees expressed views on the potential for more regular waterborne transport provision upon the river, ie water bus or taxi, including residents, ward councillors, British Waterways and local business.
- 4.99 Some concern was expressed with regard to the speed limit in place on the river (5 mph) and the effect of wake action upon the river banks that any necessary increase in speed by boats may have. However it was noted that it was now possible to design boats so that the effect was minimised while increasing the allowable speed, and that several other UK towns and cities had water bus schemes in place including Leeds, Spalding and Cardiff.
- 4.100 It was reported that water buses can have a good level of fuel efficiency and that water bus schemes could be part of a wider sustainable travel strategy. The Committee felt that the developments near the river, including North Shore and Bowesfield, together with the existing communities, will lead to an increasing number of residents and employees near the river and that this presents an opportunity to assess the viability of a scheme in Stockton Borough. Members of Teesdale Business Forum highlighted the current transport problems on the Teesdale site and welcomed the possibility of a water bus scheme which could form part of the solution to a severe lack of parking and public transport. Stopping points could be linked to park and ride schemes and cycle storage points. The length of the journey may preclude the use of the whole length of river for a commuter service but a more regular service with more stopping points would have several benefits, including linkages with the proposed Tees Park, and this should be investigated.
- 4.101 There are various corporate hospitality and team building opportunities based around the Tees, including the White Water Course, Castlegate Quay Centre and the Endeavour replica. The Committee found that there is a perception by some users that riverside businesses, although benefiting from their location, could be contributing more to the local community use of the river and the larger events.
- 4.102 Although limited, feedback from businesses suggests that any approach for sponsorship or other involvement should be part of a coherent offer, preferably related to business objectives if possible, rather than individual approaches for help. It was suggested that it would be useful to have a central, co-ordinated yearly events programme which would allow businesses to plan ahead and allocate money from their annual budget if they were able to. Suggestions for varying levels of involvement have included involvement with school and education use; for instance raft building and boat design

activities would be beneficial for engineering companies in order to introduce children to the subject. As suggested above, there may be the potential for increased corporate and community involvement in the regatta.

Tourist Promotion

- 4.103 The Committee investigated the tourist promotion of the river and the visitor attractions nearby. Since 2003, One NorthEast has assumed responsibility for the strategic leadership of the tourism industry in the North East. In 2004, it took over the Northumbria Tourist Board and created One NorthEast Tourism. The first Regional Tourism Strategy proposed the creation of 4 Area Tourism Partnerships (ATPs). These Partnerships are public-private partnerships with an independent board on which the private sector is on the majority. Funding comes from the Local Authorities, private sector contribution and Single Programme support, as agreed through the relevant Sub-Regional Partnership. 'visitTees Valley' is the ATP for the Tees Valley area.
- 4.104 visitTeesvalley is a formal partnership and Board members include representatives from Stockton, Hartlepool and Middlesbrough Councils, restaurants, hotels, and visitor attractions. Much of the responsibility for promoting the area now rests with visitTees Valley, although individual guides to local areas are still produced – this is sometimes a joint process as with the SMi which produced a visitor 'Guide to Stockton/Middlesbrough 2006-07'. Local Authorities support the work of the ATP and are crucial to the success of the present arrangements, but the Network allows for Authorities to concentrate on managing infrastructure, attractions, town centres, festivals and major events.
- 4.105 The ATP has had some successes within the sub-region, including increasing the numbers of accredited attractions, promoting a number of award winning events including SIRF and establishing a number of partner forums eg. attraction and hotel groups. The Committee found that there are various challenges facing the sub-region as a whole including the lack of a mature tourist economy compared to more established regions, and the lack of hotel accommodation. The Committee found that there is a need for a more coherent offer of what is available on the Tees. As part of this there should be a concentration on events which already take place, linkages to the range of watersports available and not just the 'extreme' element, links to the adjacent assets such as the shopping and nightlife in Yarm, and a need to promote what many consider to be one of the best rivers in the country and a major asset for the Borough. At present, it is considered that the area remains too much of a 'hidden gem'. This will need further work with partners at the local, sub-regional and regional level.
- 4.106 The Committee welcomes future ATP initiatives including campaigns focussing on 'green and nature-based tourism' and extreme sports, both of which will benefit developments at the Barrage – the upgraded slalom course and the events which take place - and the rivers impressive natural assets. However the Committee believe the issues of promotion of the 'tourist product' of the Borough as a whole merits further examination by a future scrutiny review.

Preparation for the 2012 Olympics

- 4.107 During the review the Committee received evidence from the Sport Specialist Advisor at One North East. The Regional Development Agency, One NorthEast (ONE), and Sport England are the lead regional organisations in relation to maximising opportunities arising from the London 2012 Olympics.
- 4.108 A regional forum has been established to develop and deliver a regional plan for the London 2012 Games. The regional plan will focus on a variety of themes. One North East are responsible for the following:
- Business: to ensure that regional businesses are best placed to access the range of contracts associated with the 2012 Games and to build regional capacity in relation to other major sporting contracts.
 - Tourism/Image: to ensure that North East England attracts a share of the overseas visitors expected to visit London before, during and after the 2012 Games.
 - Culture: to ensure full engagement and representation of North East England communities, individuals and talent in the cultural celebrations associated with the 2012 Games.
 - Skills and Volunteering: to ensure that regional communities and individuals are given the opportunity to develop talent and skills.
- 4.109 Sport England are the key organisation in terms of increasing participation and lead on:
- Facilities: to ensure that the North East maximises on the world-class regional facilities that exist and creates propositions capable of attracting visiting teams and events both in the lead up to and following on from the 2012 Games.
 - Performance Sport: to ensure that the region's talented performers have every opportunity and are given appropriate support to participate in the 2012 Games.
 - Children and Young People: to ensure that the educational and inspirational spirit of the 2012 Games inspires and informs the region's children and young people.
 - Health: to ensure that the 2012 Games acts to inspire regional communities and individuals to make positive improvements to their general health and well being through sport and physical activity.
- 4.110 The Committee found that the River Tees provides the greatest opportunity for the Borough to gain from the sport event element of 2012, specifically the potential for hosting pre-games training camps of national teams or preliminary competitive events for elite athletes. Alongside the rowing and canoeing opportunities provided by the river itself, the proposals for the White Water Course at the Barrage will further increase its potential in this regard. Looking ahead, the upgrading to a pumped course suitable for the whole range of abilities will increase the attractiveness of the site and the economic benefits that may follow, irrespective of the Olympic opportunities. The Committee found that this was important and that nothing should be done in relation to the Olympics unless there were clear lasting benefits. The facility should be marketed as a key, sustainable tourism attraction in the region.

- 4.111 Towards the end of the review, the Committee received the good news that the Barrage had been accepted on the list of North East venues which have been approved to host preparation camps for national slalom and flatwater canoeing teams, in the period leading up to the 2012 Games.
- 4.112 In addition, the Committee found that it was important for local authorities to engage with the regional themes especially Health, Children and Young People and Culture. Other opportunities include:
- The ability of local companies to tender for the hundreds of contracts arising from the Games;
 - The importance of tourism;
 - The ability to access re-usable structures used at the London venues – individual sporting venues should report their interest to ONE
 - The opportunity to increase sporting participation using the local facilities available;
 - The opportunities to stage events and elite competitions in the period leading up to 2012 and beyond in order to help towards establishing the Tees as a major watersports venue, while being mindful of the opportunities for similar international tournaments including Commonwealth Games at Glasgow 2014.
- 4.113 The Committee was reassured that preparations to maximise the opportunities emanating from the Olympics were progressing well. The Committee recognise the key message that opportunities must be aligned with what is happening anyway, the importance of a sustainable legacy and the need to manage expectations of what is possible.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 The Committee have found that the River Tees represents the Borough's major asset. The construction of the Barrage has led to the renaissance of the riverside and made it possible for a wide range of recreational activities to thrive.
- 5.2 The Barrage, and the adjacent white water course, remain attractions in themselves. The Committee support the planned improvements to the course which are necessary to maintain and improve the Barrage's position as a centre for watersports. This will have a range of associated benefits including making the course suitable for users from novice to elite, developing a centre of renewable energy and enhancing the development potential of the immediate area. In order to ensure that this is achieved, the Council should look to develop its relationship with managers of the site.
- 5.3 The planned improvements have assisted the course gain its status as a potential venue for 2012 Olympic Games preparation camps. The Committee congratulate the course on this achievement and believe that the Borough as a whole should strive to take advantage of all opportunities for the Borough to benefit from the periods leading up to, and beyond, the Games.
- 5.4 The Committee acknowledged that the river is now central to the planned regeneration of the Borough and adjacent to several key locations. Although there has been significant, and welcome, development of riverside land since the construction of the Barrage, this has not always involved the best possible interaction with the adjacent waterspace. It is necessary to ensure that this is included in future developments including North Shore to continue the process of re-engaging the physical aspect of the Borough with the river. The process of producing design briefs as Supplementary Planning Documents is to be encouraged in order to ensure a quality riverside environment.
- 5.5 The Committee found that the Tees Navigation Strategy, produced in 2002, produced an overarching framework for the future development of the Navigation. This has been superseded by further policy development to an extent, however it still represents a crucial document and there is an opportunity to review its contents in order to assess the feasibility of those schemes which have not yet been progressed.
- 5.6 Access to the river remains an issue. The Committee believe that this needs to be addressed and that the planning system provides the opportunity to do so whether through the allocation of land as part of the Local Development Framework, or through individual applications as part of planning obligations. The development of the 'River Tees Park' will be a step in the right direction and the Committee encourage further work. The Committee believe that the development of some form of regular waterborne transport system would be a major improvement to the attractiveness of the Tees and that this should be investigated further.
- 5.7 The Committee welcome efforts made to address the issue of further barriers to the continuing regeneration of the riverside, and the accessibility of the waterway, including the removal of HMS Kellington.

- 5.8 Despite the effect of recent developments in terms of changing perceptions of the area, the Committee found that there is a need to further promote the Tees at various levels: within the Borough itself, the sub-regional level, throughout the North-East and then at the international level. Within the Borough further engagement needs to take place with schools in order to ensure that children have the opportunity to experience safe enjoyment of the river. The availability of watersports as a sporting option should be reinforced by Sports Development and Tees Active, and the tourist promotion of the Borough should be subjected to further examination. This engagement strategy should involve highlighting the opportunities available for business to be involved with events, community use and corporate hospitality provision.
- 5.9 There are several leisure providers established within the Borough and in order to attract more, the Committee believe it is necessary to investigate any impediments to further expansion, including issues surrounding business rates for riverside leisure providers. Furthermore, the Committee believes that efforts should be made to improve community safety on and near the river in order to provide a secure environment for the benefit of all river users, residents, businesses and visitors.
- 5.10 There are a wide variety of sporting activities which take place on the river. The Committee welcomes this but recognises that there must be an element of co-ordination in order to ensure that there is no conflicting growth, the events programme is maximised, and that a communication strategy is developed for the benefit of all users. As part of this communication strategy it will be necessary to ensure that negative publicity such as that involving the fish pass is promptly addressed by partners.
- 5.11 The Committee therefore believe that Stockton Council should take the lead in co-ordinating the activities on the river. This should involve focussing a member of staff on a range of issues which have been identified during the review. The Committee believe that it will be important for the excellent partnership working identified during the review to continue.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 The Committee recommend that:

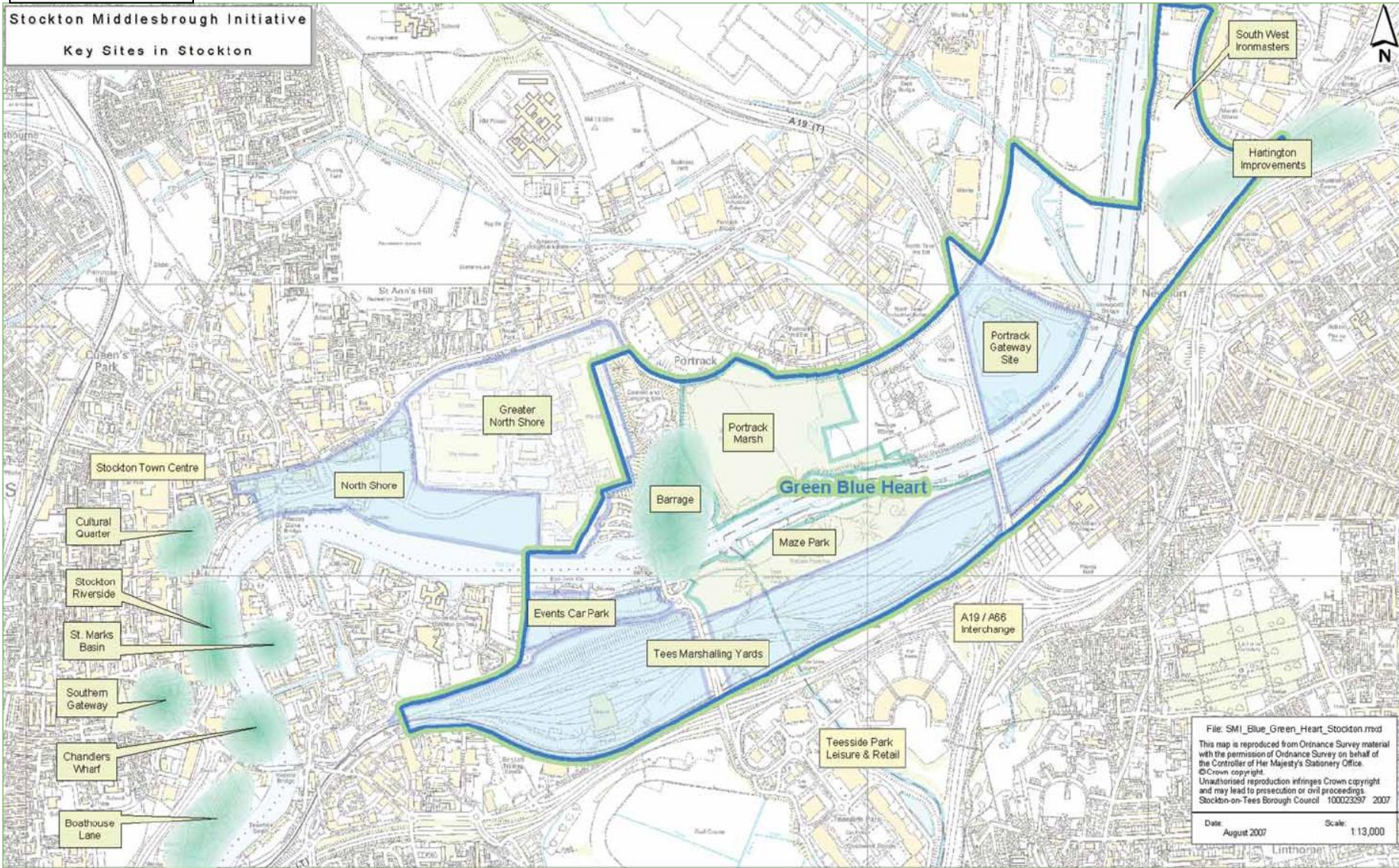
1. The Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services consider focussing a senior officer resource for a fixed term basis on the range of river development issues to lead and provide immediate momentum to the issues identified during the review, including:

- a) a review of the Tees Navigation Strategy;**
- b) developing the River Tees Park proposals to an action plan stage;**
- c) to co-ordinate of the diverse nature of water based activities on the river and develop a sustainable method of developing this sector, including a detailed review of the capacity of all watersports facilities, having regard to the potential relocation of facilities as part of the North Shore scheme;**
- d) to explore options to maximise the funding available for the staging of major events linked to river based activities including development of an annual Stockton regatta in conjunction with partners including the University of Durham;**
- e) to support the development of the ‘Tees River Trust’;**
- g) developing the Council’s relationship with managers of the Tees Barrage White Water Course to assist it in developing its full potential;**
- g) to undertake a feasibility study for a more regular water borne transport service, and to explore funding streams to achieve this, (including the Local Transport Plan);**
- i) to develop a marketing strategy to promote and market the river at the local, regional, national and international level, working with Visit Tees Valley where appropriate. This should include work:**
 - to increase engagement with the local community**
 - to engage with local business to promote the river-based opportunities available**
 - to develop a communication strategy to ensure that the river is effectively promoted by all partners**
 - to develop a central hub of information including a website and a comprehensive information pack for users, including for schools use**
 - with Tees Active and Sports Development to raise the profile of watersports (including angling) as a sporting option for the people of the Borough and to ensure this is built into service planning**
 - with CESC, governors and headteachers to ensure that the educational and sporting opportunities for children and young people are fully promoted to schools within the Borough;**

2. **Cabinet endorse the Committee's expectations regarding quality of development, access to and interaction with the adjacent waterspace and ensure that these are included within the various development and regeneration projects in place, in particular:**
 - within the North Shore masterplan and the planning application itself;
 - within the final plans for re-development of Preston Park, recognising its importance as a gateway location;
3. **The Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services explore with partners, including HM Revenue and Customs, concerns surrounding business rates, mooring charges and rents for river-based businesses in Stockton Borough compared to other locations;**
4. **The Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services so far as is possible and practical and possible ensures that access to the river is maintained and improved where possible through the LDF process and individual planning applications themselves;**
5. **Ensure that the opportunities for the Borough in relation to the period leading up to the 2012 Olympic Games (and future international sporting events such as Glasgow 2014) are maximised through work with regional partners in particular ONE- in particular the opportunities to host a range of associated events;**
6. **The Head of Community Protection be tasked with collating accurate and reliable data relating to river-related crime and anti-social behaviour, and to explore how best to ensure that river users are aware of the correct reporting mechanisms;**
7. **SBC and partners including British Waterways to ensure that all reasonable efforts are being made to ensure that the river remains safe, navigable and clean, including:**
 - the expediant removal of HMS Kellington from Stockton riverside
 - the efficient removal of debris and obstructions in the river itself
 - the cleanliness of the immediate riverside environment including footpaths;
8. **Executive Scrutiny Committee be requested to include a review of issues surrounding the tourist promotion of the Borough within the scrutiny work programme.**

Appendix 1

Stockton Middlesbrough Initiative Key Sites in Stockton



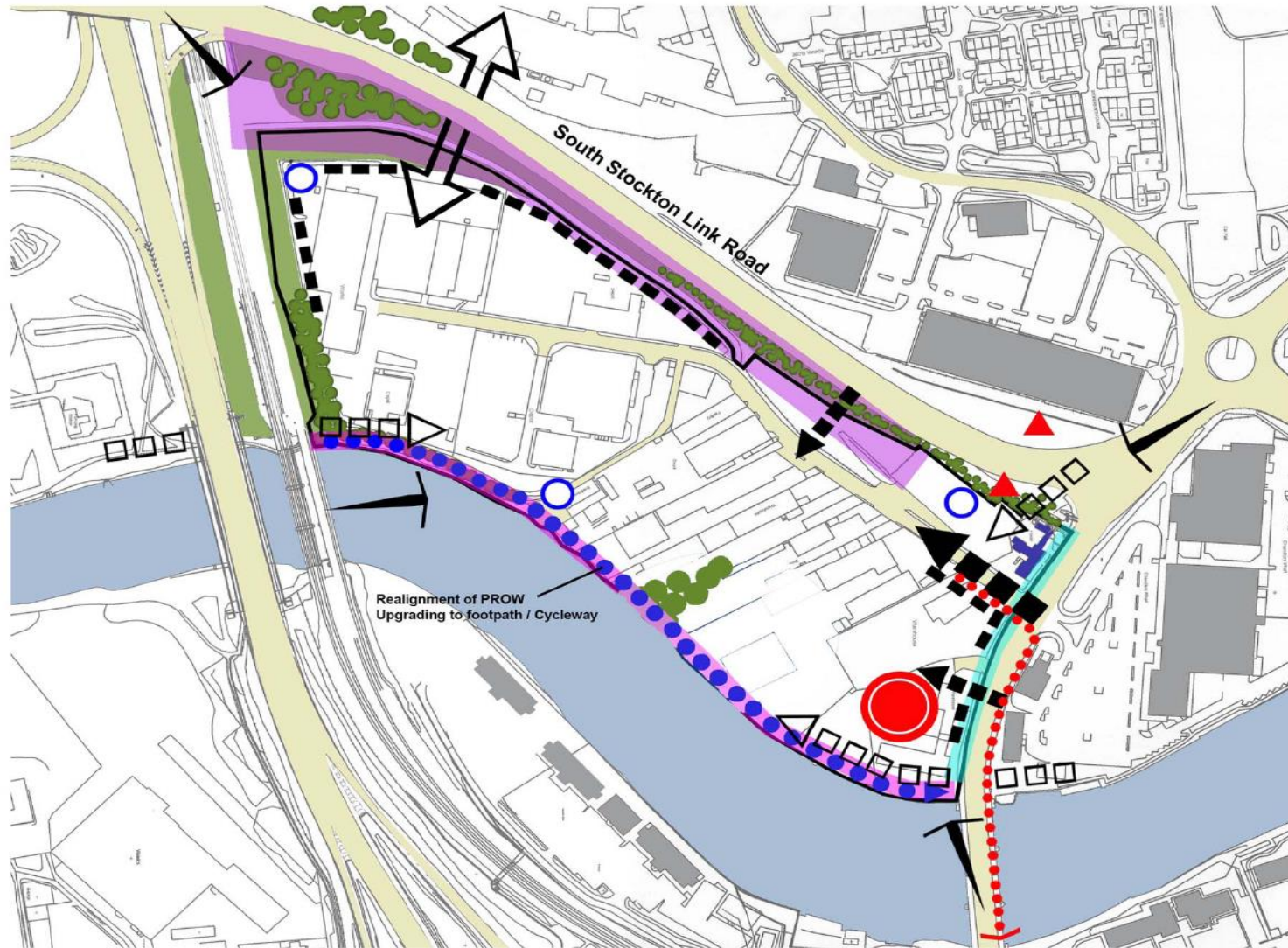
File: SMI_Blue_Green_Heart_Stockton.rmd
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 Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council 10002397 2007

Date: August 2007 Scale: 1:13,000

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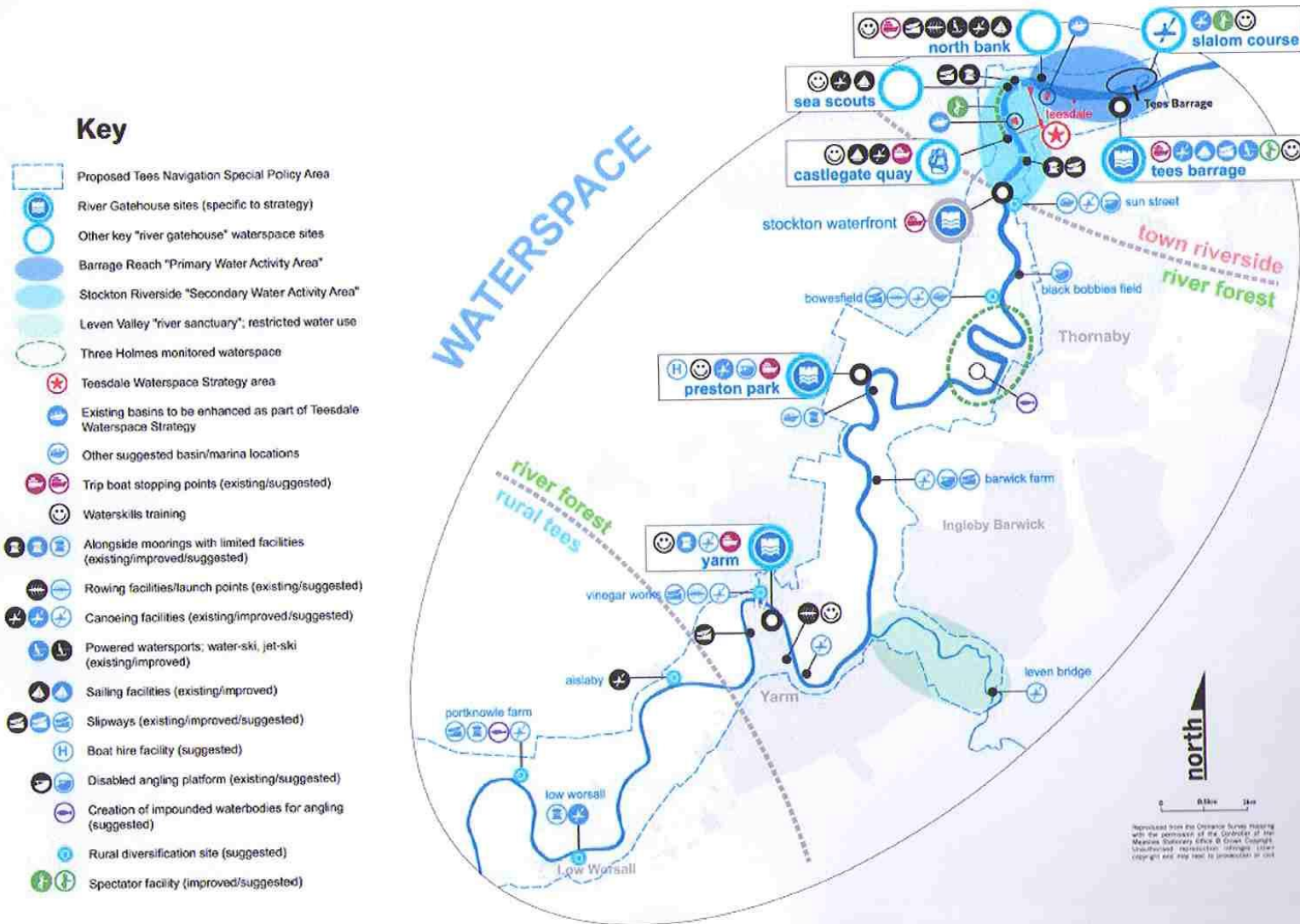


Fig 4: Access & Layout Principles



- Notation**
- Area covered by the brief
 - Roads
 - Existing Buildings
 - Grade II* & II Listed Building - Original Ticket Office
 - Embankment
 - Existing Tree & Shrubs
 - Principle vehicle & pedestrian access points
 - Secondary vehicle & pedestrian access points
 - Potential pedestrian access points
 - Potential decorative building frontage
 - New Cycleway connection
 - Bus lane improvements
 - Gateway Iconic Building
 - Focal Points
 - Important Views
 - Enhancement of Waterfrontage
 - Linear park
 - Study Options for pedestrian & cycle linkage
 - Gateway Art features

Appendix 3



Appendix 4

River Related Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Guidance - PPG and PPS

PPG17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation.

This document provides guidance for local authorities for preparation of the LDF and determining planning applications. The main aims of the guidance is to provide sufficient space to promote an urban renaissance; rural renewal; social inclusion; health and well being and; sustainable development.

PPS25 - Development and Flood Risk

PPS25 advocates a risk-based approach at all levels of planning to ensure flood risk is considered during the decision making process and that development is directed away from areas of high risk. Local Planning Authorities should therefore prepare and implement strategies that help to deliver sustainable development by:

- Appraising the risk and degree of flooding.
- Managing Risk by locating development avoiding areas of flood risk.
- Reducing risk by safeguarding land for future flood management use.

Emerging Regional Spatial Strategy – Further Proposed Modifications

The following tourism and river based policies are included within the RSS:

Policy 2 - Sustainable Development.

This policy aims to protect and enhance the quality of the Region's ground, river and sea waters; prevent inappropriate development in flood plains and; promote the concept of green infrastructure, a network of linked, multifunctional green space in and around the Region's towns and cities.

Policy 58 - Protecting And Enhancing The Environment.

This policy recognises the importance of protecting and enhancing environmental assets such as historic parks and gardens; ancient woodland; Community Forest; Green Infrastructure, Wildlife Corridors.

Policy 13 - Brownfield Mixed-Use Locations

Strategies, plans and programmes should support brownfield mixed use developments in sustainable locations throughout the Region. The North Shore site in Stockton is one site identified for major mixed-use regeneration projects in the region.

Policy 16 - Culture and Tourism

This policy supports cultural, sports, leisure, recreation and tourism related development which; improve first impressions of the regions; invest in the natural and built heritage of the area; support the local economy without diminishing the attractiveness of the place; supports regeneration schemes; is sustainable and serviceable by a range of transport modes.

Policy 37 - Flood Risk

This policy deals with management of flood risk issues in the region and takes into account flooding from tidal, fluvial and surface water sources. The policy recommends that new developments be considered sequentially in accordance with guidance set out in PPS25.

Emerging Core Strategy – Preferred Options

The Council's Preferred Options for the Core Strategy include the following:

Draft Core Strategy Policy 4 - Economic Regeneration seeks to:

- Protect and enhance the role of the River Tees corridor as a key economic driver, recognising the importance of a quality environment in attracting inward investment.
- Support growth in sustainable tourism through improvements and enhancements to the environment in key areas where this contributes to towards the tourism offer, including the River Tees as a water sports destination, ... the River Tees Park, and Preston Park.

Draft Core Strategy Policy 5 - Town Centres includes a reference to "other initiatives to support Stockton town centre, including

- Promoting a balanced and socially inclusive cultural sector... along the River Tees".

Draft Core Strategy Policy 6 - Community Facilities refers to ensuring the provision of additional facilities to meet the needs of the Borough which:

- Take advantage of opportunities within the river corridor and the green blue heart to widen the Borough's cultural, sport, recreation and leisure offer.

Draft Core Strategy Policy 10 - Environmental Protection includes reference to

- Enhancing the openness of green wedges, including the River Tees Valley from Surtees Bridge, Stockton to Yarm.

Emerging Regeneration Development Plan Document: Issues and Options

Issue - The Green Blue Heart

The longer-term development of the riverside is being planned for through the proposals for the Green Blue Heart. This is environmental and landscape led regeneration of a number of connected, largely derelict, contaminated sites along the Tees Corridor between the core areas of Stockton and Middlesbrough. The vision for the Green Blue Heart includes the following objectives:

- Transforming the area to create a waterfront of regional, national and international standing.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities for leisure, recreation and sporting activities.
- Transforming the accessibility of the area i.e. making it much easier to get to and from.

Projects that have been discussed include:

- High quality landscaping and public art.
- A freshwater beach on the marsh.
- Outdoor arena and sports pitches.

Issue - North Shore

The development proposed by Tees Valley Regeneration includes restaurants, bars, hotel and a new iconic footbridge linking the south side of the River Tees.

Issues - Bowesfield Lane

The existing Bowesfield Lane area has the potential to be part of an attractive waterfront landscape.

Issue - New River Crossings

The Council is currently investigating the feasibility of introducing new cycle and pedestrian routes linking Ingleby Barwick with Eaglescliffe, Preston Park, Thornaby and Yarm, in line with priorities identified during the development of the second Stockton-on-Tees Local Transport Plan. As well as improving connectivity between these communities, the proposed routes would also be consistent with the Council's aspirations to revitalize Preston Hall and Park and to facilitate improved access to the River Tees corridor between Stockton and Yarm for leisure purposes.

Issue: Linking Stockton Town Centre with the Riverside

The riverside at Stockton has undergone massive change, having seen the decline of the heavy polluting iron and steel industries and then more recently the greening and cleaning of the river following the construction of the Barrage. The riverside is now a much more pleasant and attractive place to be, although there are still issues to overcome if it is to realize its potential and link into the town centre.

Local Plan Saved Policies

Environmental Policies

The Council's adopted Local Plan (1997) includes the following saved environment based policies which are relevant to the study, these include:

- EN2 (Local Nature Reserves);
- EN4 (Sites of Nature Conservation Importance);
- EN7 (Special Landscape areas);
- EN11 (Cleveland Community Forest, now Tees Forest); and
- EN14 (Green Wedges).

These policies relate to specific site designations, which aim to protect and enhance the natural environment and landscape along the river Tees Corridor.

Recreation Policies

In addition to the above a number of relevant recreation related policies have also been saved, these are:

- REC8 (Tees and LevenCountry Park);
- REC11 (Designated footpaths);
- REC13 (Cable Ski Course);
- REC16 (Marina);
- REC17 (Public Landing Points);
- REC18 (Slipways);
- REC19 (New slipways);
- REC20 (New footpaths and cycle routes);and
- REC21 (New bridges across the Tees and Leven).

The main aims of these polices are to provide recreational destinations within the borough, particularly along the river corridor. Improved access to the river is also encouraged through these polices for pedestrians and cyclists as well as boats / canoes etc.

Appendix 5



Adult Viewpoint River Consultation

The sample

The questionnaire was sent out to all members of the panel, which equated to 1417 individuals (a balanced sample based on gender, age and geographical location).

Response rates

A response rate of 48% was achieved. The total number returned was 685.

Questions and results

1. **Are you aware that the River Tees upstream from the Tees Barrage is now a clean international standard river suitable for a range of watersports?**

Yes 85% No 15%

Awareness was comparatively low amongst the 18-24 (53.8% said no) and 25-34 (46.4 % said no) age ranges.

BME response was slightly less with 72.7% saying yes.

Awareness was slightly less amongst females compared to males.

2. **Do you ever use the river for recreational and sporting use?**

Yes 33% No 67% If no, please go to Q9

There is an even spread of responses apart from 18-24 age range were 92.3% said 'no'.

BME response is higher than average (45.5% said yes).

Of those with disabilities, 78.2% said 'no'.

3. **If yes, what type of leisure activity do you use on or near by the river?
(Please tick all that apply)**

White Water Rafting 14 (2%) Canoeing 17 (3%)

Cycling	28 (4%)	Walking	181 (26%)
Sailing	8 (1%)	Rowing	10 (2%)
Fishing	17 (3%)	River trips	83 (12%)
Eating/drinking	68 (10%)		

Other	Frequency
Bird watching	2

Of those with a disability, the most popular activities were walking, river trips and eating/drinking.

4. How often do you use the river for leisure?

Almost every day	At least once a week	At least once a month	Within the last six months	Within the last year	Longer	Never used
2%	10%	21%	30%	14%	11%	12%

5. Who do you usually go to the riverside with?

Friends	110 (16%)	Family	179 (26%)
College/University	3 (*)	Sporting club	12 (2%)

Other	Frequency
Alone	17
Dog	5
Scouts/guides	4

6. Have you ever experienced problems with access to the river, for example, with car parking or with footpaths?

Yes 18% No 82%

7. If yes, please write below what problem/s you have experienced.

Problem	Frequency
Car parking/disabled parking	15
Poorly maintained footpaths	10

- 8. Please write below any other comments or concerns you may have regarding your experience of using the river and its surrounding area.**

Comments	Frequency
Too much litter and weeds	9
Too much debris	5
Maintenance of footpaths	5
Superb area much more attractive	5

- 9. If you have never considered leisure facilities such as rowing and canoeing on the river, please give your reasons below.**

Reasons	Frequency
No interest in watersports	67
Disabled/health problems	37
Can't swim/no confidence	30
Fear of water	16



Youth Viewpoint River Consultation

The sample

The questionnaire was sent out to all members of the panel, which equated to 503 individuals (a balanced sample based on gender, age and geographical location).

Response rates

A response rate of 27% was achieved. The total number returned was 135.

Questions and results

1. **Are you aware that the River Tees upstream from the Tees Barrage is now a clean, international standard river suitable for a range of watersports?**

Yes 55% No 45%

2. **Do you ever use the river for recreational and sporting use?**

Yes 39% No 61% If no, please go to Q10

Numbers were small, but of those with a disability 50% said 'yes'.
Numbers were small, but 80% of BME respondents said 'no'.

3. **If yes, what type of leisure activity do you use on or near by the river? (Please tick all that apply)**

White Rafting	Water 5 (4%)	Canoeing	34 (24%)
Cycling	18 (13%)	Walking	19 (14%)

Sailing	14 (10%)	Rowing	16 (12%)
Fishing	9 (7%)	River trips	9 (7%)

Activity	Frequency
Bell boating	2
Kayaking	2
Raft building	1
Picnics	1
Walking	1

Canoeing was especially popular amongst girls, as was walking.

4. How often do you use the river for leisure?

Almost every day	At least once a week	At least once a month	Within the last six months	Within the last year	Longer	Never used
*	2%	8%	31%	16%	29%	15%

Of those with a disability and BME respondents, all had not used the river for at least a year.

5. Who do you usually go to the riverside with?

Friends	33 (24%)	Family	26 (19%)
School	15 (11%)	Sporting club	7 (5%)

Who	Frequency
Scouts and guides	3
Drama club	1
Holiday club	1

6. If you do go to the riverside with a sporting club or your school, please write the name of the club or school below?

Who	Frequency
Bishopsgarth School	4
Macmillan College	3
Guides/Scouts	2
St Patricks Primary	1
Tilery Primary	1
Mill Lane Primary	1
Grangefield	1
Harrogate Primary	1
Stockton Unicycle and Juggling Club	1

Castlegate Quay & Watersports Centre	1
Teesside Youth Bowling Club	1

7. Does your school offer these activities?

Yes 30% No 70%

8. If no, would you be interested if they did in the future?

Yes 71% No 11% I don't know 18%

9. Please write below any other comments or suggestions you may have regarding your experience of using the river?

Comments or suggestions	Frequency
Cleaner environment water & litter	5
Experience was good	4
More publicity need about facilities	2
Costs involved	2
More activities needed	2

10. If you have never considered leisure activities such as rowing or canoeing, please give your reasons below?

Reasons	Frequency
Not interested	14
Not aware/Don't know who to contact	9
Don't like water sports	5
Costs involved	4
Never had the opportunity	3
Never been asked	3
In school or college	2