

A Catchment Plan for the River Wandle



**Prepared by the Wandle Trust on behalf of the
communities and stakeholders of the Wandle
Catchment**



Written by Theo Pike, Claire Bedford, Bella Davies and Dave Brown

THE RIVER WANDLE CATCHMENT PLAN **September 2014: v1**

0.1 EXECUTIVE NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

The Wandle Catchment Plan has been compiled to provide a holistic strategy for restoring south London's River Wandle to its former glory as one of the world's most famous chalk streams.

The Wandle rises on the north slopes of the North Downs in Carshalton and Croydon, and flows 23.5km through the London boroughs of Croydon, Sutton and Merton to join the Thames at Wandsworth.

Chalk streams like the Wandle are a globally-rare and precious part of our cultural heritage, but many now suffer from human modification and other pressures including over-abstraction of water, sources of pollution including roads and sewage treatment works, and the spread of industry and urban areas.

In recognition of these pressures on the Wandle, a wide-ranging partnership including the Environment Agency, local councils, the Wandle Trust, London Wildlife Trust, local anglers and many residents and Wandle Valley stakeholders have come together to create this shared plan for the future of their river.

The first component of this Catchment Plan is the Vision, which was published in 2012, and the second component is this more technical document. This is designed to be an aspirational, 'living' Action Plan based on evidence and sound science, which will also be updated in light of new knowledge and emerging research.

As such, it fits into the EA's national Catchment Based Approach for river management planning, and will help the Wandle to reach a state of health known as 'Good Ecological Potential' for the purposes of fulfilling the UK's obligations under the European Water Framework Directive.

In the course of compiling this Catchment Plan, the following Aims have been identified for sustainably improving the health of the Wandle, and its value to local people:

- **Water:** the river's water should be plentiful and clean, and varied in its flow speeds, widths and depths
- **Habitat and wildlife:** the river should support a mosaic of habitats with high biodiversity
- **Good access:** local people should be able to access sympathetically managed pathways along the whole river
- **Engagement:** everyone in the catchment should be aware of the river, and knows how their actions can affect it, with councils, businesses, government agencies and the public working together to improve the river

In turn, these Aims have generated a suite of shared Objectives:

- **Water quantity:** water supply in all sections of the river should be sufficient to sustain a healthy population of native flora and fauna and is resilient to risk of drought or flood from extreme weather events or management for human use
- **Water quality:** quality of water flowing in the River Wandle should meet the standards required for Good Ecological Potential and is stable with no risk of deterioration
- **Dynamics of flow:** the river should have a re-naturalised varied profile that creates a diversity of flow speeds and water quantity to provide all the key habitat types required by the native flora and fauna associated with lowland chalk streams

- **Fish and fisheries:** thriving populations of native fish associated with chalk rivers should be present and able to move freely
- **Macrophytes, trees and the wider river habitat:** communities associated with chalk rivers should be abundant along the river, providing good habitat variety for wildlife and for people
- **Invertebrates:** the diverse communities associated with chalk rivers should be abundant along the river, playing important roles in ecosystem function and complexity, such as providing a food source for other wildlife
- **Phytobenthos:** good populations associated with chalk rivers should be present along the river

Under each Objective, a range of Targets and Actions has also been identified for the river's benefit, and to increase the environmental and cultural benefits (also known as ecosystem services) which it provides for local people.

These Actions are listed in tables at the end of each section of the Catchment Plan, with indicative costs. Future pressures and changes – including climate change, demand for water, population increase and other socio-economic pressures are also considered, and broad brush solutions are suggested where possible.

Supporting documentation such as the Environment Agency's Catchment Summary Sheets are incorporated into the Catchment Plan in the form of easily-updatable Appendices, and further reading and opportunities for research are identified wherever relevant.

By progressively implementing the measures identified in this Catchment Plan, all partners involved hope that the River Wandle can be restored to good health as a shining example of an urban chalk stream, enhancing the wellbeing of local communities, and resilient to present and future pressures.

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0.3 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Wandle Catchment Plan is the creation of a partnership project involving the following organisations:

The Wandle Trust (WT), Environment Agency (EA), Natural England (NE), WWF-UK, Thames Water (TW), Sutton & East Surrey Water (S&ESW), London Boroughs of Wandsworth (LBW), Merton (LBM), Sutton (LBS) and Croydon (LBC), London Wildlife Trust (LWT), National Trust (Morden Hall Park) (NT), Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust (WVRPT), Beddington Farmlands (BF), The Angling Trust (AT), The Rivers Trust (RT).

It would not have been possible to produce this document without the invaluable input and support of many people, and we extend our warmest thanks to all of them. They are:

The Steering Group:

Dave Webb and Angela Gorman (EA), Caroline Birchall and Francis Davies (NE), Kathy Hughes (WWF-UK), Rupert Newby and Claudia Innes (TW), Lester Sondon and Alison Murphy (S&ESW), Valerie Selby (LBW), Chris Lee and Martin Boyle (LBM), Mark Dalzell, Steve Pearce and Hendryk Jurk (LBS), Andrew Williams and Malcolm Kendall (LBC), Petra Davies and Mathew Frith (LWT), Zoe Colbeck and Nick Allison (NT), Peter Wilkinson and Sue Morgan (WVRPT), Will O'Connor (BF), Dave Harvey (representing AT), Barry Bendall (RT).

The Wandle Trust:

Dr Bella Davies, Dr Dave Brown, Theo Pike, Laurence Evans, Toby Hull, Tim Longstaff, Erica Evans, Claire Shahbazian Bedford

Fish Technical Advisory Group:

Tom Cousins (EA), Dave Bartlett (EA), Darryl Clifton-Dey (EA), Professor Ian Cowx (Hull Fisheries Institute), Dr Dave Brown (WT), Theo Pike (WT), Tim Longstaff (WT), Rupert Newby (TW)

Surface Water Technical Advisory Group:

Peter Ehmann (EA), Richard Maile (EA), Paul Stewart (EA), Brigid Rowan (TW), Nathan Cloney (TW), Dr Lian Lundy (Middlesex University), Patrick Whitter (LBS), Gerry McCloughlin

Groundwater Technical Advisory Group:

Steve Barrow (EA), Dr Richard Taylor (UCL)

Invertebrates and Plants Technical Advisory Groups:

June Jones (EA), Petra Davies (LWT), Dr Mike Chadwick (KCL)

Urban River Survey:

Professor Angela Gurnell (QMUL), Dr Lucy Shuker (QMUL / EA)

Other technical advice and support:

Dr Mike Chadwick (KCL), Dr Nic Bury (KCL), Dr Carl Sayer (UCL), Dave Harvey (Thames Anglers' Conservancy), Robert Kenway (EA), Derek Coleman (LWT), William Tall (Wandle Piscators) and the staff and Trustees of the Wandle Trust

Other thanks:

Rose Timlett (WWF-UK) for advice and funding, Sally Pike for library research, Jane Porter for Vision artwork

And of course – and perhaps most importantly - the community in the Wandle Catchment!

The Wandle Catchment Plan was compiled and written by Claire Shahbazian Bedford and Theo Pike, with support from Dr Bella Davies and Dr Dave Brown.