

THE RTS AND ITS IMPACT ON LALEHAM – AND POTENTIAL CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

Introduction

This paper summarises the potential impact of the River Thames Scheme (RTS) as seen by Laleham, and identifies some aspects on which the LRA and Laleham residents might wish to comment, as part of the current Statutory Consultation exercise. Statutory Consultation closes on 4 March.

Construction is expected to run from mid-2026 to early 2032, with the new flood relief channels in operation in 2030. It is therefore a major scheme.

This paper is based on RTS written documents and attendance at RTS “walk-in” events.

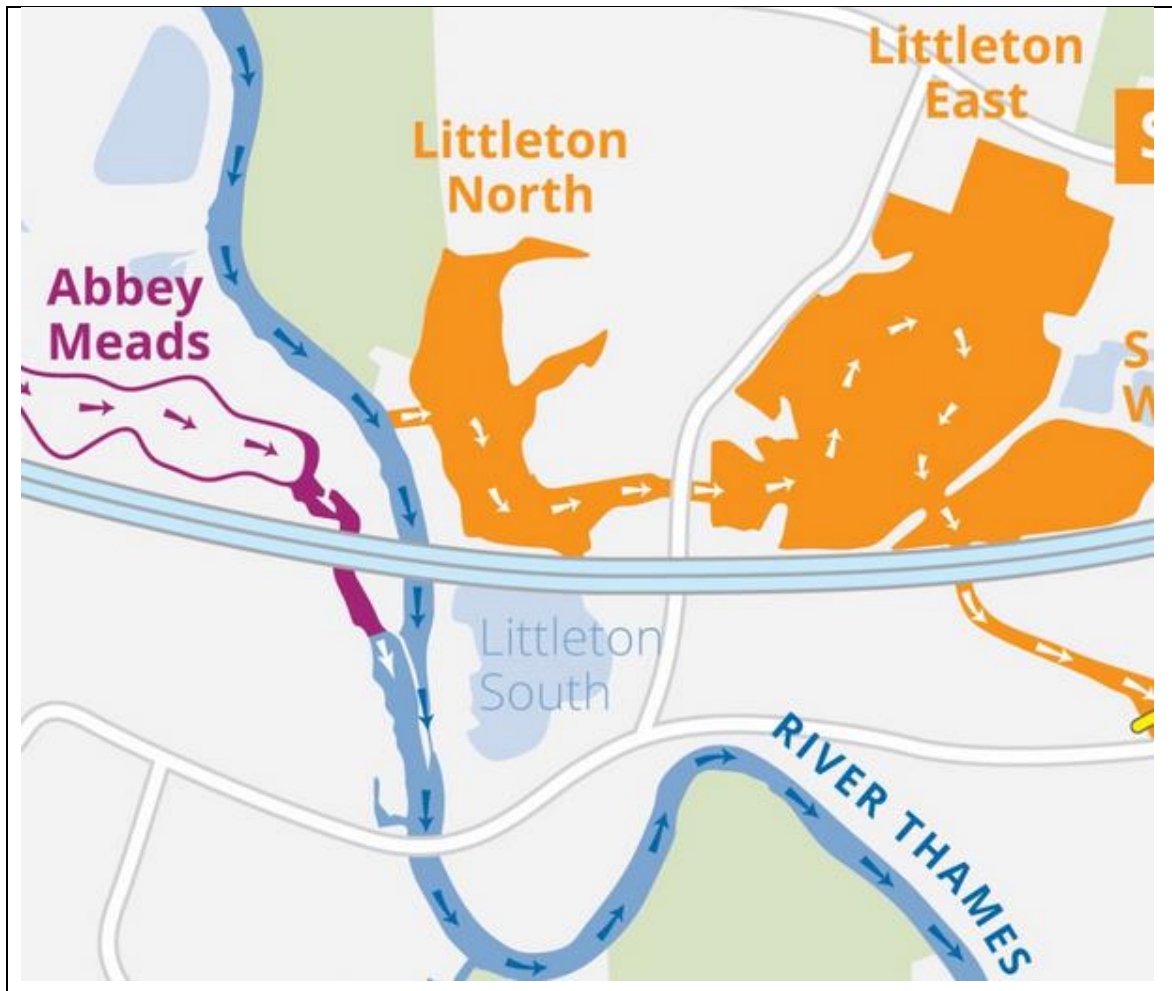
Primary benefit

The primary benefit will be to reduce the flood risk. The most pronounced effect will be downstream of Penton Hook Lock and upstream of Chertsey Lock. This will be a major benefit to Laleham and its residents, many of whom are in Flood Zone 3 (the highest risk).

Over a wider area, the RTS should reduce the risk of flooding to 11,000 homes and 1,600 businesses and infrastructure. These figures are as claimed in the RTS documentation, which is based on extensive modelling.

Local impact on Laleham

There will be a direct impact on one corner of Laleham.



In the above, the M3 is the major left to right feature. Items in orange are either existing lakes, or new linking channels to be created as part of the RTS. White arrows indicate water flow under flood conditions.

As shown above, a new channel (with gates to control water flow) will link the Thames with the existing Littleton Lake North (owned by Brett Aggregates). The new linking channel is south of

Laleham Park, well clear of the car park and children's playground. In times of flood, water will flow as shown by the arrows into further lakes and channels (outside of the above diagram) and re-join the Thames south of Shepperton.

This might cause Littleton Lake North to be deemed as part of the navigable Thames, and thus give the Canoe Club the legal right to canoe on it. It may well be possible to carry canoes across the gates between the Thames and Littleton Lake North.

The next diagram needs some concentration to be understood:



In the above, the River Thames is on the left, with the M3 running horizontally. Littleton Lake North (in dark blue) is in the top left quarter.

This not only shows the new water access from the Thames to the lake (at mid left), but also part of the new (non-motorised) access route from Staines to south of Shepperton. This is shown as a yellow line with red dots. It shows (barely visible) the new bridge across the Thames (again at mid left) to facilitate the new route. The loop in the route arises since there will be ramps, not steps, to support wheelchair etc access. The route exits near the bottom right corner.

The dark green areas represent potential new environment-friendly habitats, not open to the public.

The white area at upper mid centre is referred to as the "Shepperton Industrial Estate" (a new term?). This will receive an (anti) flood embankment, marked as three parallel grey lines.

There are no "Construction Compounds" envisaged within Laleham.

Wider impact

The RTS is not just about reduction of flood risk. There will be significant environmental benefits, improved public access, and the new (non-motorised) route from Staines to south of Shepperton, for pedestrians and cyclists. That is a very brief summary of what is expected.

Aspects for feedback as part of the Statutory Consultation

Feedback can be provided online, or via the relevant paper form. To provide feedback online, go to:

<https://www.surreysays.co.uk/river-thames-scheme-rts-team-communications-engagement/river-thames-scheme/>

The LRA will certainly provide feedback. Laleham residents are urged to do so too.

New options for the routing of channels relating to Ferris Meadow Lake

The scheme as currently researched, designed, and documented in considerable detail, assumes that the most easterly end of the new Spelthorne channel will run **through** Ferris Meadow Lake (in orange at right below). This is south of Shepperton.



However alternative new routings are now being considered, seemingly at a rather late stage. These options are referred to as Options 2, 3, 4, 5, 6A and 6B. (Option 1 is the original routing through the lake).

So here we have not one but 6 potential new routings. Assessing any one of these would be a significant task, involving new modelling of water flows, and any number of environmental and other investigations. This may impact the overall scheme schedule, and add to its cost. This might then exceed the budget.

In its comments, the LRA will be raising a concern that considering new options at this stage might well delay the scheme, and thus delay the reduction of flood risk to Laleham residents. Laleham residents might wish to submit a similar comment.

Construction impact

Construction is expected to run from mid-2026 to early 2032 (it is not clear whether this period applies to all areas of Spelthorne and Runnymede boroughs), with the new channels in operation in 2030.

Construction of the scheme will inevitably create additional road traffic, noise and disruption. Construction of the new channels will require the removal of significant quantities of gravel, earth etc. The scheme documents already recognise this, and already provide for some of this material to be incorporated into landscaping. The LRA might well comment that:

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- Strict protocols should apply to the movement of lorries etc, concerning allocated routes, and the regular cleaning of mud from roads where appropriate.
- Provision of regular and timely information to residents, concerning forthcoming and ongoing disruption
- Use of waterborne transport of bulk material wherever possible

The LRA may still find other aspects to comment on, prior to the 4 March deadline.

Mike Garrett, 1 Feb 2024