

## OUR FORWARD LOOK

Our general outlook is positive; we are a growing port anticipating a material increase in cargo volumes over the next few years. We have investment and recruitment plans in place to make sure we are able to meet an increase in demand while maintaining consistently high safety standards and service levels while building resilience.

## 2024: PRIORITIES

- Continuing to focus on our pilotage service, we took on 10 trainee pilots in 2023 with a further 14 recruits planned for 2024. The new-build pilot vessel will enter service in 2024.
  - Masterplanning process continues, with masterplans launched for Tower Hamlets and Newham in early 2024, and another three planned by the end of the year.
  - Exploring opportunities to decarbonise logistics and move light freight and parcels on to the river.
  - In collaboration with SEA-KIT International, the PLA is playing a leading role in the development and use of a hydrogen-fuelled, uncrewed surface vessel (USV), a world first.
  - The Net Zero coalition has been established and a Net Zero River Plan published in early 2024. We will continue to work with stakeholders on plans for decarbonising the river.
  - Active Thames, a PLA-led partnership promoting use of the river for sport and walking, will award grants totalling £100,000 to sports clubs and other groups across London, Kent and Essex.
- Over the next five years, the PLA will invest significantly in capital projects to ensure we can keep pace with increased demand from our customers, make the most of technological improvements and maintain our core asset base.
- The Marine Centre Transformation Programme which will deliver a state-of-the-art Port Control Centre, equipped with the latest VTS system.
  - Asset and vessel fleet replacements, delivering new-build pilot boat, emergency response vessels and workboats, and replacement of the main PLA operations berths.
  - Simulator replacement – investment in our ship handling and tug simulator, to ensure it remains fit-for-purpose for training pilots, applicants for pilotage exemption certificates (PECs) and others.
  - Radar replacement – upgrade of 17 radar sensors along the length of the tidal Thames.

## 2023 AT A GLANCE

### RIVER USE

London remains the UK's largest port by volume. Reflecting the wider economic situation, port trade in 2023 decreased 6% to 51.6 million tonnes (2022: 54.9 million tonnes).

3.06 million tonnes of freight was moved inland between terminals on the Thames, including domestic and commercial waste, and aggregates destined for construction projects in Greater London.

The post pandemic recovery of passenger numbers continues, with leisure, commuter and tourist trips increasing to 9 million (estimated) in 2023.

<b>51.6m</b> Tonnes of goods handled	↓
<b>9m</b> Passenger journeys (approx)	↑
<b>3.06m</b> Tonnes of inland waterways freight	↑
<b>55,400</b> Light freight packages	↓
<b>645</b> Sporting events	↑

### NAVIGATION & SAFETY

The PLA's three-year Marine Safety Plan (2021-23) saw an 87% reduction in serious navigational safety incidents compared with the previous plan period, with two incidents compared to 15. There were no serious incidents reported in 2023.

Pilotage acts in the year were almost unchanged at 13,728 (2022: 13,699). These were delivered to an exceptional service level of 99.6% (2022: 98.5%) and ahead of our 98% target.

<b>0</b> Serious navigational incidents	↓
<b>13,728</b> Pilotage Acts	↑

### STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The tidal Thames is a hub of activity, whether for trade, travel or sports, and a catalyst for investment. At the PLA we have a unique role in bringing people together and acting as an advocate for the river and its users.

<b>1,062</b> People attending public and online forums	↓
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### ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

In 2023, the emissions for the PLA Group, including newly-acquired Estuary Services Limited, were 2,521tCO<sub>2</sub>e. Excluding ESL, our emissions were 307tCO<sub>2</sub>e represents an 83% decrease from 2014 and ahead of target of reaching 488tCO<sub>2</sub>e by 2023. This was achieved by transitioning our diesel vessel fleet to sustainable biofuels (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil from sustainable sources) and our vehicle fleet to electric.

In June, we published our Clean Thames Manifesto, bringing together Anglian Water, Southern Water and Thames Water to fast-track work to reduce sewage and storm water discharges from overflow points and treatment works.

<b>29</b> Tonnes of driftwood recovered	↓
<b>2,521</b> CO <sub>2</sub> emissions (equivalent tonnes)	↓
<b>111,787</b> Kilowatt hours generated	↑
<b>102</b> Foreshore clean-ups supported	↑

### FINANCE

PLA delivered strong financial results in 2023, with a turnover of £90.8m (2022: £78.2m) generating an operating surplus of £16.9m (2022: £12.2m). This surplus will be reinvested to support our Thames Vision goals.

We estimate our total stakeholder benefit for the year at £52.8m (2022: £48.9m).

<b>£52.8m</b> Stakeholder benefit	↑
<b>£6.0m</b> PLA and ESL capital investment	↑
<b>£16.9m</b> Operating surplus	↑

### HEALTH & SAFETY

There were three lost time injuries reported in 2023. Near miss reporting continues to be a priority for the PLA, working with operators and river users. 112 near misses were reported in 2023, an increase of 23% on the previous year.

To further improve safety in the years ahead, we have mandated Thames Continuing Professional Development from 1 January 2024. By the end of 2023, 390 intra-port Masters, crew, apprentices, specialists and other river users had enrolled in the scheme.

<b>112</b> Near miss reports	↑
<b>3</b> Lost Time Incidents	↑

## 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

- First ever Safe Boarding week in March, a seven-day safety initiative aimed at increasing safe access to and from vessels.
- Refurbishment of the Grade II listed Royal Terrace Pier in Gravesend completed in late 2023.
- Work started on our new Port Control Centre which will future-proof the port's next 25 years of growth.
- The Clean Thames Manifesto was launched with robust commitments from three local water companies to reduce sewage in the river.
- On World Hydrography Day, Maritime Minister, Baroness Vere of Norbiton, named the first fully electric, remotely operated survey vessel, *UCL Tamesis*.
- A new purpose-built passive debris collector, designed by a PLA colleague, was launched in the Thames Estuary.
- The world's first methanol-fuelled container vessel, *Laura Maersk*, made its maiden call to the UK.
- We hosted the British Ports Association's annual conference, bringing together sector leaders from across the UK.
- Bexley became the first subject of borough-by-borough analysis by the PLA, when its Masterplan was published.
- With Thames Estuary Growth Board, we published the case for three zero emission river crossings in East London.
- We hosted our first Active Thames Hub, attended by over 100 people from 60 different sports clubs.

# ABOUT THE TIDAL THAMES

The tidal Thames is 95 miles of river from Teddington Lock, through central London, out to the North Sea. The river is home to the UK's biggest port, the busiest inland waterway for freight and passengers and a growing centre for sporting activity.

## ABOUT THE PLA

As a Trust Port, we hold the Thames in trust for future generations. We have no shareholders, so operate for the benefit of customers and stakeholders now and in the future.

## OUR VISION FOR THE THAMES IN 2050

The UK's leading port, central to the nation's economy, with Net Zero emissions. A clean river, free of pollution and rubbish, supporting more sport, passengers and freight. A resilient Estuary, adapting to climate change and richer in wildlife. A more diverse Thames, providing jobs, learning and enjoyment to the whole community, and always, everyone, staying safe.



### Trading Thames



The No. 1 Net Zero UK trading hub



### Destination Thames



A place to live, visit, play and enjoy



### Natural Thames



Clean air, water and land supporting diverse wildlife

## THAMES VISION ACTION PLAN: 2023 PROGRESS REPORT

Full details of our progress is available on our website.

Our 2030 Action Plan sets out short- and medium-term deliverables which all contribute towards the long-term goals of the Thames Vision 2050. In 2023, significant progress was made against a number of these deliverables, as well as identifying areas where additional focus will be made in 2024.

### TRADING

Lead	Action	Update: 2023	Progress
PLA	Consistent pilotage service reliability (98%+)	99.6%+ pilotage service reliability achieved in 2023	●
PLA	Reactivate three safeguarded wharves	Two reactivated; planning permission sought for third.	●
PLA, TfL, TEGB, CRP, pier owners	Develop and implement pier adaptation plans to support light freight operations	Thames Freight Infrastructure – Design Guidelines for Piers – published in August. Trial to/from Dartford and two piers in London undertaken.	●

### DESTINATION

Lead	Action	Update: 2023	Progress
PLA	Safe and appropriate public use of the tidal Thames foreshore	Continued focus on safety, not yet developed a specific programme to encourage access. Focus in 2024.	●
PLA	Publish study on the public and business benefit case for electric ferry river crossings	Report, published in December and supported by a number of stakeholders, identifies three feasible zero emission ferry crossings.	●
Active Thames Partners	Award Active Thames funding, focusing on improved access, diversity and inclusion	£150,000 funding awarded to 23 projects in London, Kent and Essex; focus on people with disabilities and long-term health conditions.	●

### NATURAL AND NET ZERO

Lead	Action	Update: 2023	Progress
PLA	Biodiversity Net Gain: improve status and quantum of high quality, resilient Thames habitats	Assessment submitted to Defra. Outputs for Tower Hamlets and Newham included in masterplan consultations published December.	●
Tideway, Thames Water, PLA	Tideway Tunnel – complete by 2025	Tideway Tunnel on track for commissioning in 2024. Key PLA role in licensing, safety case, environmental benefits and supporting use of river for project's cargo needs.	●
PLA	Advocate for further reduction in untreated sewage releases in Thames	Clean Thames Manifesto launched in June; includes commitments from water companies to work towards reductions in sewage and storm water.	●
PLA and partners	Convene the Thames Net Zero coalition	Net Zero coalition established and produced Net Zero River Plan setting out how decarbonisation will be accelerated.	●

### SAFETY

Lead	Action	Update: 2023	Progress
TSA, PLA, Company of Watermen & Lightermen	Continuous Professional Development for masters and unsupervised watchkeepers	CPD scheme introduced in 2023; good levels of sign-up. Ongoing campaign to encourage continued engagement.	●
PLA and partners	Deliver actions in the Tidal Thames Water Safety Drowning Prevention Strategy	Continued active engagement in the Forum; progress report published.	●

### TECHNOLOGY

Lead	Action	Update: 2023	Progress
Thames Clippers, Cory	Completed clean maritime demonstrator projects, including self-propelled autonomous barge feasibility assessment	Completed. <a href="#">Report published.</a>	●