

## Guidance to Berth Owners and Operators

Whilst many of the berth owners and operators carrying out dredging on the Thames have been doing so for many years, there have been a number of changes in both the licensing procedure and, more generally, expectations in terms of environmental accountability. In 2002, the PLA made a number of important changes to its licensing procedure for both river works and dredging licences. The objectives of these changes included improving both accountability and the transparency of the decision-making process. The payment of fees was introduced; consultation and notification procedures were formalised, as was the reporting process, and provision was made to set and enforce conditions. These changes coincided with the development of the maintenance dredging framework, with its associated requirements for environmental and other information.

In 2002, some berth owners and operators attended workshops to discuss the developing strategy and a Notice to Berth Operators (similar to a Notice to Mariners) was issued to advise them of the likely environmental data requirements when submitting a dredging licence application. More detailed guidance will be provided as required to ensure that all berth owners and operators are fully familiar with the PLA's requirements.

Specifically, the guidance will describe the maintenance dredging framework and the information requirements for licence applications. Summary information will be provided on the dredging licence application process, relevant environmental legislation and its implications for both the PLA and licence applicants, and an indication of conditions which could be imposed. In addition, this guidance will set out the requirements for sediment sampling and analysis, and provide advice on the environmental issues that berth operators should consider when planning their dredging campaigns.