Water Environment Improvements
Project Evidence Form

Scope & Purpose

This form is to be used by the external Water Environment Governance Group (WEGG), to review, validate and formally approve the length of bluespaces improved for the Water Environment Improvements ODI. The form will be completed by the Water Environment Team with support from project partners and presented to the WEGG. After formal approval, the km of water environment improved will be recorded against the ODI and projects will be marked as completed on the Water Environment Scorecard and illustrated as delivered in the Bluespaces Mapping Portals.

Project Name

River Rom and Beam Restoration Project

Project Lead

Company/ Organisation	Named Lead	Position
Thames 21	Will Oliver	Catchment partnership development manager

Bluespaces Improved

Year	Claimed	Proposed	Reason For Any Change
Year 3	3.0 km	3.0 km	N/A

Water Environment Assurance

This project has been reviewed internally to ensure it has delivered benefits above and beyond our baseline and regulatory obligations to improve the water environment accessible to customers across at least two out of three aspects. Following our assurance process, the project was approved by both our internal and external groups for review before delivery. This form presents evidence of project completion and the outputs achieved, to request project sign off.

Level	Project Acceptance Date	Project Approval Date	Completed Project Sign Off Date
Project Team	October 2021	N/A	N/A
Water Environment Steering Group (Internal)	November 2021	December 2021	N/A
Water Environment Governance Group (External)	December 2021	December 2021	May 2023

Project Timescales

Candidate Project Approved	Project Initiated	Project Completed
December 2021	2021	October 2022

Project Summary and Highlights

Summary

Thames 21 and NWG have worked in partnership to improve 3.0 km of bluespaces along the River Rom, a tributary of the River Thames which has suffered from misconnections, sewer overflows, dredging and straightening of the channel and has been in need of focused improvement activity.

The main goal of this restoration project was to reconnect the River Rom to its floodplain to restore wetland diversity to the area, create a pollution buffer and provide an area for the local community to enjoy. As part of the restoration works, a large flood embankment was breached and three interconnected wetland scrapes were created, increasing connectivity, creating species rich seasonal wetland habitat and a natural space for people to enjoy.

Highlights

- Floodplain reconnection through breaching the embankment in three locations
- Creation of wetland scrape habitat, mounds and hibernacula
- Installation of large woody deflectors
- Re-alignment of a small tributary
- A series of community events, and a schedule of future planned community engagement and volunteer work parties
- Installation of interpretation throughout the Chase Local Nature Reserve

Figure 1: Bluespaces improved through the River Rom and Beam Restoration Project

Project Outputs, Benefits & Evidence Against Criteria

Access, Facilities & Recreation	
Expected Project Outcomes	**Benefits**
1. Creation of wetland habitat within the park and LNR alongside interpretation and communication to increase engagement and enjoyment of the water environment. 2. Community and volunteer work parties to increase engagement with the water environment and to benefit health and wellbeing 3. A new raised bund, bridge with cycle/footpath to improve access benefiting health and wellbeing and increasing enjoyment of the water environment	➢ A1: Increases access to, engagement with and enjoyment of the water environment ➢ A2: Benefits health and wellbeing

Outputs

1. Creation of three seasonal wetland scrapes connected to the river through breaching of the embankment
2. Several community and volunteer events carried out including litter picks, installation of wood debris and vegetation management
3. Creation of a raised bund with new bridge and a cycle/footpath

Evidence

Community and volunteer activity around the site and creation of a new bridge connecting to public footpaths

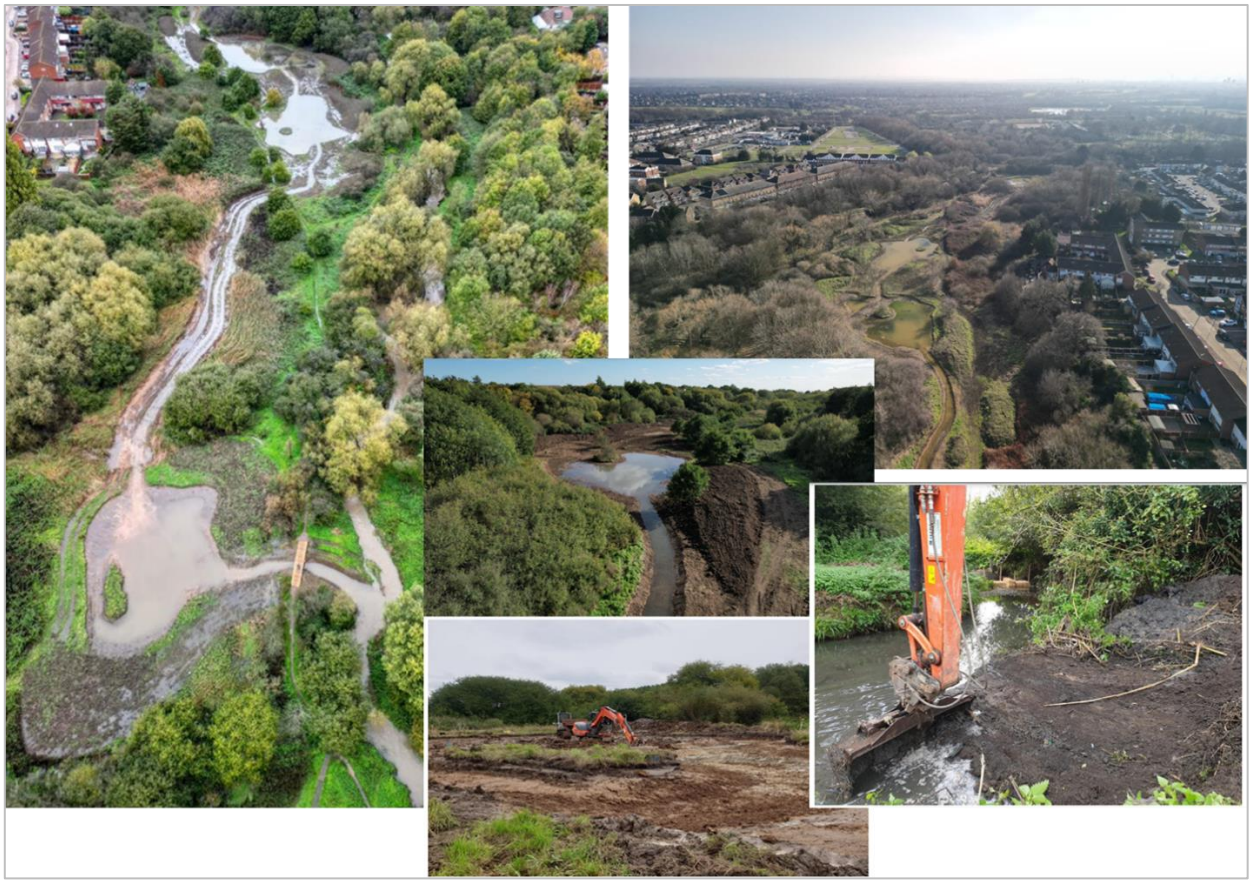
Wildlife & Biodiversity

Expected Project Outcomes	Benefits
1. Improvements to the riparian habitat and re-connecting the floodplain and river to improve the quantity, quality and connectivity of the water environment 2. Installation of natural woody debris and naturalisation of the river to improve species abundance and distribution 3. Reduce the impact of invasive non-native species growing along the riverbank	➢ B1: Improves the quantity, quality and connectivity of habitats ➢ B2: Improves the conservation status and or abundance or distribution of species ➢ B3: Reduces risk or impact of invasive non-native species (INNS)

Outputs

1. The creation of shallow wetland scrapes within the floodplain and connected to the river directly improves the water environment of the area
2. Installation of 11 woody debris structures helped naturalise the water environment and provides habitat for wildlife
3. Removal of invasive Japanese knotweed along the riverbank reduced the impact and created additional habitat for native species

Evidence



Wetland habitat creation showing during and after construction and the beaching of the river embankment

Water Quality

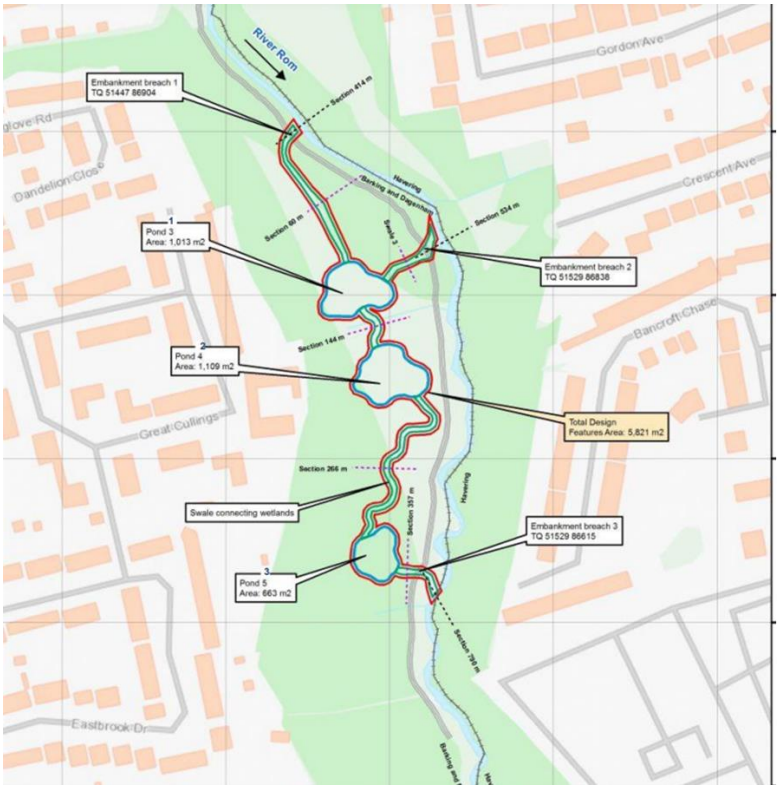
Expected Project Outcomes	Benefits
1. Reconnection of the river to the floodplain to help improve natural functioning and ecological processes contributing towards good ecological status 2. Improved state, functioning, naturalisation and aesthetics of the river through wetland creation and community events such as litter picking	➢ C2: Contributes towards improved status or no deterioration of rivers or bathing waters or protecting drinking water ➢ C3: Improves state and function of water, including naturalisation, visual appearance, litter and odour

Outputs

1. The river embankment was breached in three locations allowing water to flow into the newly created wetland scrape habitat and woody debris created which improved naturalisation, ecological function and contributing towards improved water quality

2. Work parties removed litter from the reserve and river improving the visual appearance and quantity of litter

Evidence



Design of the wetland creation, breach and litter pic

Additional & Secondary Benefits

Expected Project Outcomes	Benefits
1. Creation of wetland habitat and restoration of natural channels to increase the resilience and capacity of the riverine system and to help reduce the risk of localised flooding 2. Access to an improved area of water environment will benefit the local community 3. This project forms part of a strategic plan aimed at improving freshwater ecosystems across London	➢ D1: Provides resilience and adaptation to climate change and/or reduces the risk of flooding ➢ D2: Provides benefits to local communities, the local economy or NWG ➢ D3: Supports strategic project or investment into strategic partnership or landscape/regional activity

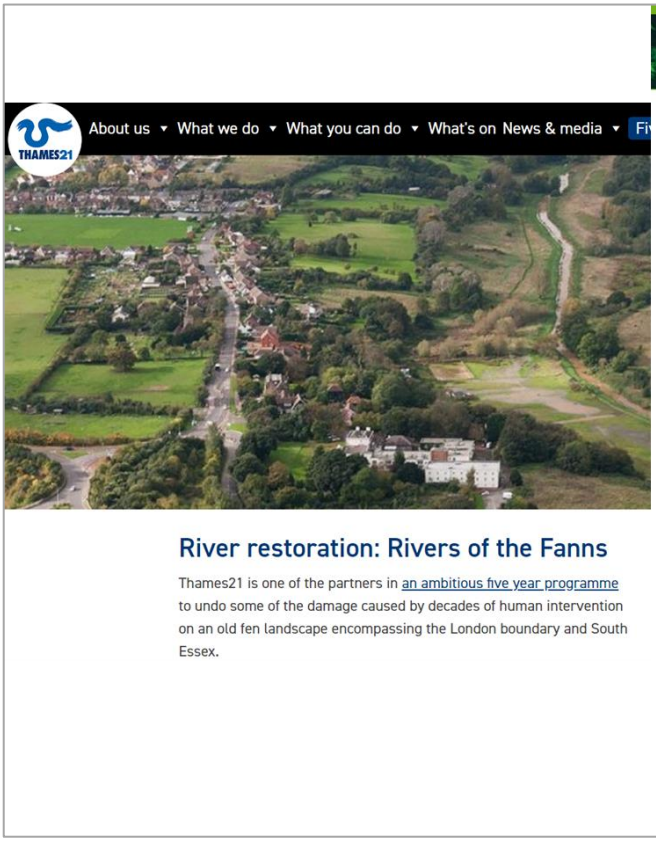
Outputs

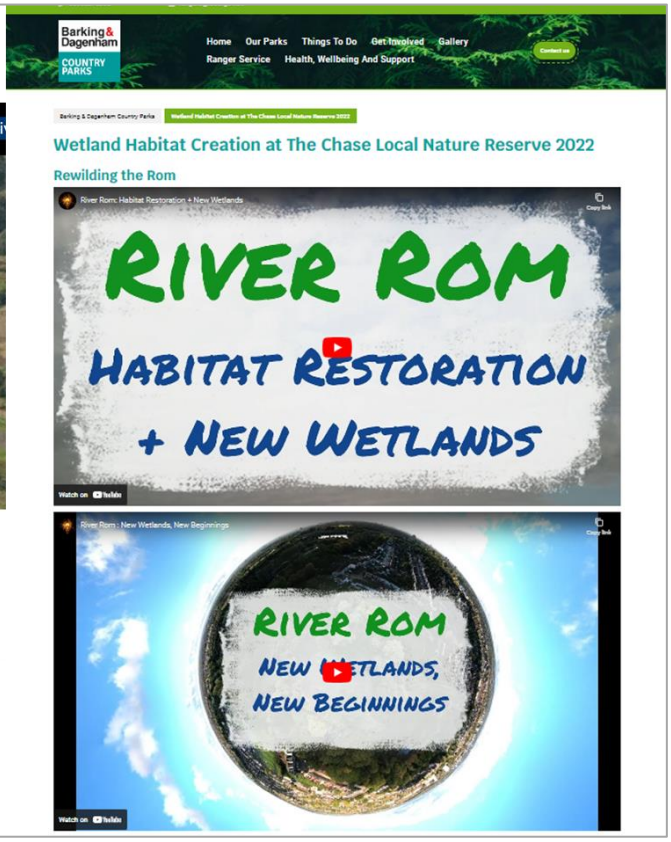
1. Habitat creation, re-meandering and connection to the river has helped naturalise and increase the capacity and diversity of the river

2. Work parties and community engagement has been well received and further events to promote the area to visitors and local people alike are planned

3. The wider project has improved water environments across London with work upstream of the River Rom also completed

Evidence





Customer Testimonies & Media

- Barking and Dagenham Country Parks coverage: https://barkinganddagenhamcountryparks.com/wetland-habitat-creation-at-the-chase-local-nature-reserve-2022/
- Thames 21 Coverage: https://www.thames21.org.uk/improving-rivers/rewilding-the-rom/

Romford Recorder

Partnership launches project to deliver vital restoration of River Rom

River Rom Project Restoration Launch, at Grenfell Park, Rush Green Road, Romford. *(Image: Archant)*

By April Roach

Share Comments

A partnership scheme that aims to improve habitats for wildlife by restoring the River Rom is encouraging residents to get involved.

Article in Romford Recorder

Peter West a local resident, ecologist, and member of the Havering Wildlife Group:

"*Looks good. I think that the outfall from the floodplain and its pond above will benefit fish by providing the quiet water which the steeply banked flash flooding River Rom lacks. The Minnow Phoxinus phoxinus and the three-spined stickleback Gastrocercus do occur in the Rom Beam River, but fish and their eggs are washed away from their spawning grounds on unsheltered patches of gravel. The pond above and lower outfall can provide such a sheltered embayment*."

Nancy is a local resident who joined volunteering event on 23/01/2023:

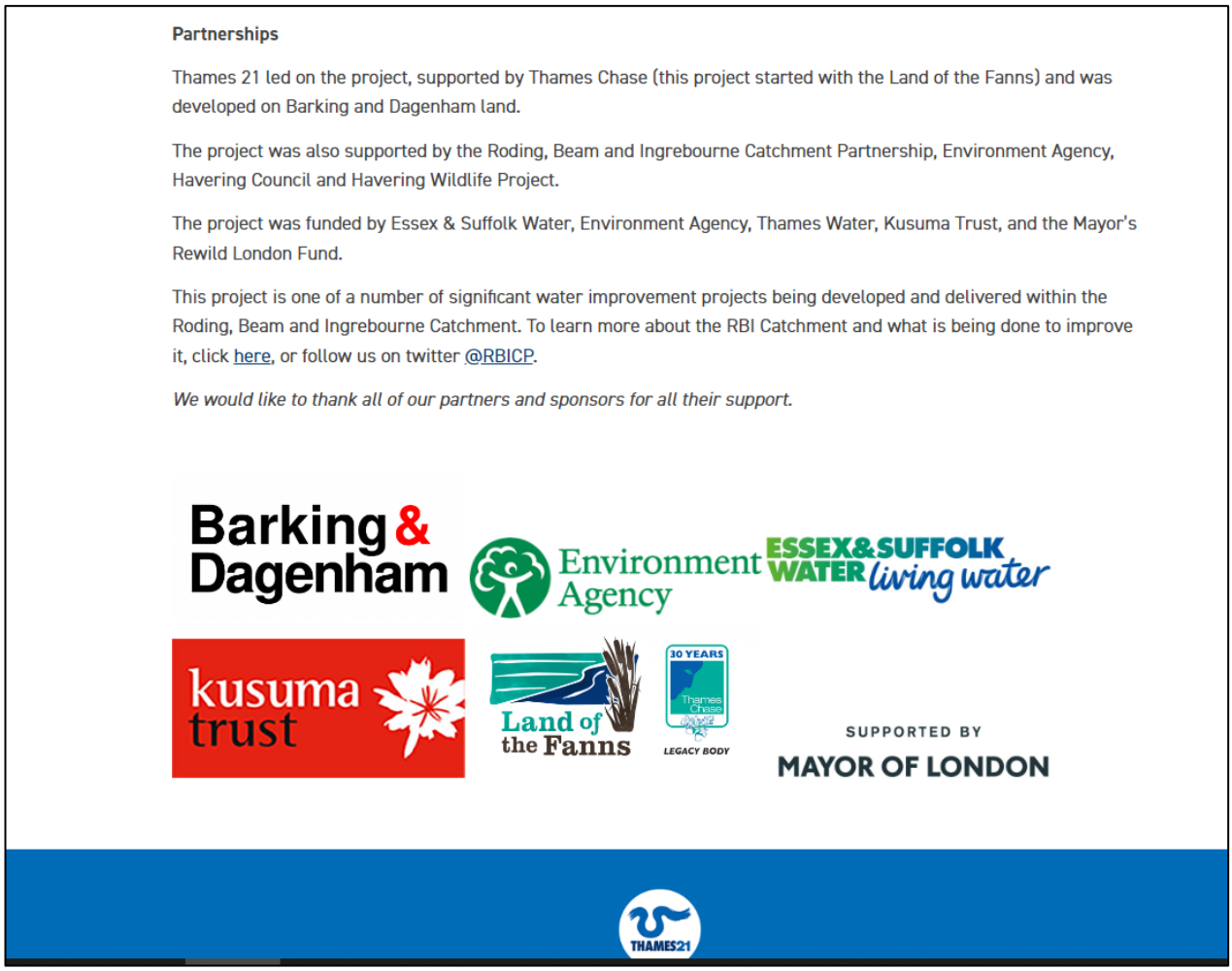
"*I have lived close to this area for my whole life and remember the site back when it was a working gravel pit. I am so proud that we have this green space for everyone to access and enjoy"*

Lead Partner Quotes & Testimonials

"It has been brilliant to watch this area be transformed from simple grass and bramble scrubland, with relatively low biodiversity, to an area brimming with enhanced biodiversity potential. We have already seen animals begin to make use of the site, including a stoat taking refuge in one of the hibernacula mounds, various species of waterfowl like grey herons, mallards and an unconfirmed wigeon sighting across the wetland pools, and a kingfisher zipping along the river channel in the area. The local birdwatching group are buzzing about the potential of the site as it develops, and local volunteers have all given really positive feedback on the site and their experiences helping the wetlands to establish."

Rebecca Stubbs, Delivery Lead, Thames21

Other Supporting Evidence



Partnerships

Thames 21 led on the project, supported by Thames Chase (this project started with the Land of the Fanns) and was developed on Barking and Dagenham land.

The project was also supported by the Roding, Beam and Ingrebourne Catchment Partnership, Environment Agency, Havering Council and Havering Wildlife Project.

The project was funded by Essex & Suffolk Water, Environment Agency, Thames Water, Kusuma Trust, and the Mayor's Rewild London Fund.

This project is one of a number of significant water improvement projects being developed and delivered within the Roding, Beam and Ingrebourne Catchment. To learn more about the RBI Catchment and what is being done to improve it, click here, or follow us on twitter @RBICP.

We would like to thank all of our partners and sponsors for all their support.

Barking & Dagenham

Environment Agency

ESSEX&SUFFOLK WATER living water

kusuma trust

Land of the Fanns

30 YEARS Thames Chase LEGACY BODY

SUPPORTED BY MAYOR OF LONDON

THAMES21