

# PORT OF LONDON AUTHORITY ENFORCEMENT POLICY

## 1. Purpose and Mandate

The Port of London Authority (PLA) has a broad statutory mandate under the Port of London Act 1968 (the Act) for the administration, preservation, and improvement of the Port of London. This mandate extends to regulation of the river's physical environment, consenting of river works and dredging, and the protection of the tidal Thames.

As a Statutory Harbour Authority, the PLA is committed to a fair, transparent, and consistent enforcement regime. This policy ensures that the PLA effectively monitors compliance and applies proportionate sanctions to protect navigational safety, the environment, and the integrity of the river's infrastructure.

## 2. Scope of Enforcement Powers

This policy applies to all areas where the PLA holds regulatory and enforcement powers under the Act and associated legislation, including:

- **Navigational Safety:** Compliance with General Directions, Byelaws, and the management of vessel traffic to ensure safety of life and property.
- **Consenting of Works:** Ensuring no person carries out works in, under, or over the tidal Thames without the consent of the PLA and that all works comply with all conditions.
- **Dredging:** Regulating dredging to ensure it is conducted safely and without environmental or other adverse impacts.
- **Vessel and Personnel Licensing:** Ensuring that commercial inland waterways vessels and their crews meet prescribed safety and competency standards in accordance with the Act.
- **Environmental Protection:** Enforcing regulations related to pollution, waste disposal, and the protection of the river ecosystem.
- **Property and Foreshore:** Protecting the PLA's interests in the bed and foreshore of the tidal Thames.

## 3. Principles of Enforcement

The PLA aligns its enforcement approach with the standards for good regulatory practice:

- **Proportionality:** Enforcement action will be proportionate to the risks posed and the seriousness of the breach.
- **Consistency:** The PLA will strive to ensure a similar approach is taken in similar circumstances to achieve fair and equal treatment.
- **Transparency:** The PLA will ensure that river users and stakeholders understand what is expected of them and what they should expect from the PLA.
- **Prioritisation:** Enforcement resources will be concentrated on activities that pose the greatest risk to safety, the environment, and the statutory order of the Port, with the emphasis on preventing harm.

## 4. Range of Enforcement Options

The PLA has a range of enforcement action available, from education and advice, through to prosecution. The decision on which measure to use will be based on the Principles of Enforcement above, with the emphasis on preventing harm. Prosecution is only used for the most serious breaches, or repeat offences, where it is considered in the public interest to do so.

## 5. Policy Commitments

The PLA shall:

- Maintain and regularly review effective regulatory frameworks consistent with international and national legislation.
- Ensure that all regulations, licensing requirements and associated guidance are widely available to river users and riparian developers.
- Ensure that all staff involved in the investigation of relevant incidents, or who are required to follow PLA enforcement procedures, receive effective and relevant training.
- Investigate all navigational incidents, unauthorised works and dredging, taking proper account of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) where appropriate.
- Maintain effective monitoring and spot check regimes, to scrutinise compliance with and detect breaches of relevant regulations.
- Where a breach is committed by a corporate body with the consent, connivance, or neglect of a director or manager, seek to hold those individuals personally accountable.
- Maintain sufficient resources and craft to monitor compliance, detect breaches, and gather evidence that meets the standards required for legal proceedings.
- Observe the Code for Crown Prosecutors and any internal authorisations and ensure the Chief Harbour Master or relevant Director authorises the initiation of criminal proceedings.

## 6. Audit and Review

This policy shall be formally reviewed every three years or following significant legislative change.

This policy was approved by the PLA Executive Committee in June 2026.

Robin Mortimer  
Chief Executive

