

Lord Chris Smith – Chairman

23 December 2012

25th Floor, Milbank Tower
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Dear Chris,

On behalf of my colleagues who were with me yesterday I thank you, Suzanne and Ruth for listening to us so attentively and we appreciated the opportunity. It was good that Howard and Matt were also in attendance.

I do understand that our presentations were intense and covered an enormous amount of detail but they are testament to the emotion, passion and from an understanding and knowledge of the issues facing both the Agency and the user. In the New Year I will send you a copy of the brief to which we spoke.

You assured us that the Future of Navigation Project was not set up to “gold plate” assets leading to CRT absorbing the EA Navigations but to identify the wider future of managing the river. At the same time you also assured us that it was not the intention to dispense with the services of the resident lock keeper or sell the lock houses.

We are comfortable with your summation at the close of the meeting advising that your Board will be looking carefully at the EA’s proposition which seems now to be called ‘Plan A’ against the alternative we have suggested now identified as ‘Plan B’.

I end by commenting that taking out the ‘dogma’ of the supposed financial benefit of leasing the Lock Houses, which has to be seen as a myth, our ‘Plan B’ would make the Thames Navigation Customer Charter work: whereas without Resident Lock Keepers there has to be considerable doubt that it could be delivered.

And the irony of all of this is that ‘Plan B’ is more efficient, more flexible and costs less than now being suggested under the Customer Charter consultation.

We will continue to work with Howard and his team to find a resolution to what could turn out to just be a sad hiccup with our relationships with the EA and I wish you all the compliments of the season and a less tumultuous New Year.

Most sincerely

Michael