



## A Forward-Looking Upper Medway

### The 2024-2029 Plan

#### Into the Future

The objectives of the Board are now in the public domain and allow us to measure both the achievements and failures in regard to the major functions we perform in the district. It is with this positive attitude towards objective and forward thinking in mind, that this five-year plan looks to not only consolidate on the foundations already laid but to create a genuine pathway into the future.

#### What has changed since the last plan?

The Board now holds itself to account for its successes and failures and is able to demonstrate them more widely thanks to an increase in both social media presence and stakeholder interaction. This increase in visibility has allowed for a much-improved relationship with our local partners as we continue to seek opportunities for greater collaboration. Specifically, our engagement with the Environment Agency has led to a newly formed PSCA and closer working with their geomorphology and biodiversity teams, not only on ordinary watercourse but main river too. Kent County Council have now signed a PSCA with the Board for the first time in their history. This marks a new step for both us and them as we continue to engage and partner with local authorities that are not the EA. This agreement gives rise to the potential for further partnership with borough and parish councils as requested by the Board in 2022.

A revamped and detailed works plan has created a medium that allows us to track, display, and analyse how we work in the field and, combined with recruitment to take our team to 5 in the depot, we have given ourselves the room to complete more work, to a more considered standard, than ever before.

The Board commissioned Conservation Study began last year and highlighted a need to remove, not restore, the majority of structures within the district now that farming practices are shifting away from the need to abstract or create wet fencing. It is possible that we can create passage for aquatic life without the expensive process of full removal and this will be made part of the works plan in the next 2-3 years.

#### Key Objectives

The key objectives from last year are now outdated and require changes to reflect the increase in information that has been provided by the science from the ecology study and the changes in legislation since the last draft. The main area of change relates to the Environment Act and how this impacts upon our ability to work and expand, with KCC already sounding out an opportunity to bring the boundaries of the district out to incorporate more land than ever before. There is also a need to better understand how our staff operate and try to move away from the previously woolly expectations ensure smoother recruitment and training processes into the future. This will also touch upon the need to look longer term with our staff and how we bring future employees through the company in such a niche industry.

Finally, in terms of financing, the Board should be aiming to increase the levy each year by under 3% as a rule (inflation allowing), reducing to a target of 2% within the next 3-5 years. The ongoing financing for the expansion of teams will be sought from rechargeable works and SWDC until the budget can support staffing levels organically.

We will therefore be focusing on the following areas over the coming years to serve this change in need and create a platform for the future.

- **Sustainable Development**
- **Catchment Involvement**
- **Works**
- **Staffing**
- **Facilities**
- **Communication**

## YEAR 1

### Staffing

- Conservation Officer commencing upskilling
- Depot staff to return to 5

### Sustainable Development

- Delegation of responsibility regarding consenting to be revised
- New sustainable development policy and strategy to be launched

### Catchment Involvement

- Discussions with KCC over expansion locations
- KCC PSCA works to continue
- First major NFM project to be realised

### Facilities

- Storage within Lees Road to be addressed

### Works

- Works to be planned within time periods (year 1 trial)
- Section 20 works to continue throughout the year
- Culvert maintenance scheme in district to be trialled

## YEAR 2-3

### Staffing

- Sustainable development team increase
- Office junior to be brought in under Finance Officer
- Depot to go to 6

### Sustainable Development

- Byelaw 3 implementation on all catchment development
- Charging review on consents and SWDC

### Catchment Involvement

- Outline plan of key locations for adoption and expansion agreed with KCC
- Rating of land to be agreed with DEFRA and land owners (0%, same etc.)

### Facilities

- Board to consider need for larger or alternative premises
- Potential merge of office and depot locations

### Works

- Maintenance programs with LPA's to be established
- PSCA's with Parish Councils to begin

## YEAR 4-5

### Staffing

- Sustainable development team increase as required
- Office junior to be put through education in financial administration
- Depot to go to 7

### Sustainable Development

- Board to consider statutory consultee position on development

### Catchment Involvement

- Expand into first catchment

### Works

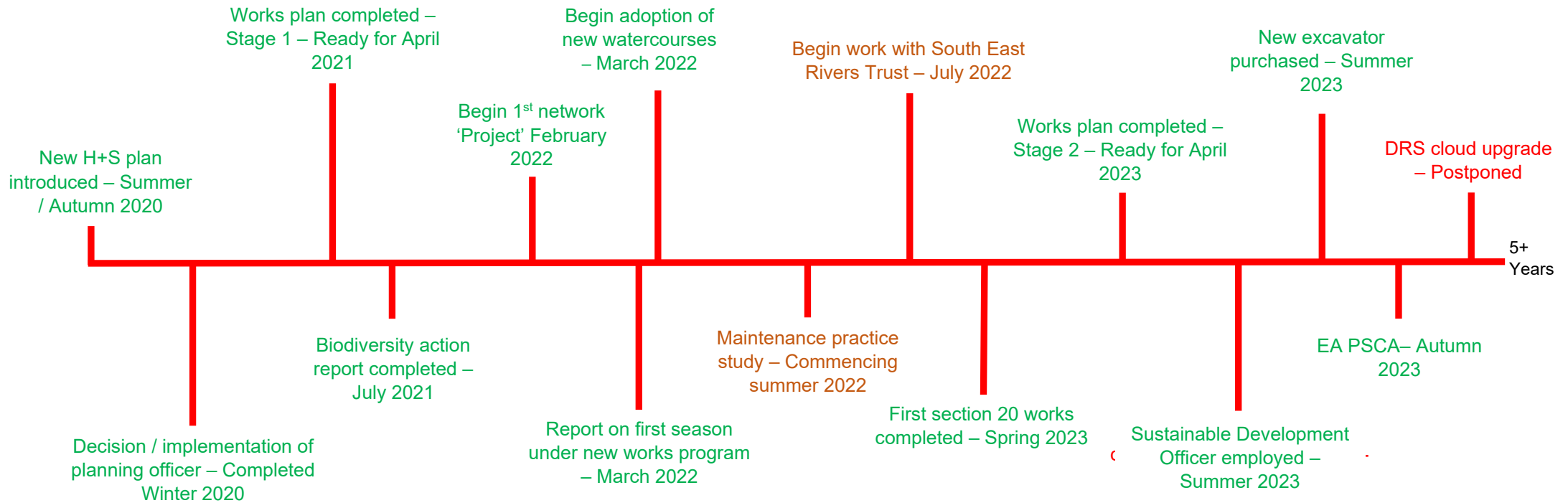
- Maintenance team to split into two teams with depot leader oversight
- Board to be recognised partner for all surface water works within catchment
- Board to have PSCA's with all LPA's and parishes within IDD

# Timeline of Events – To Present

## 2020-21

## Years 2021-22

## Years 2022-23



# Timeline of Events – Present to 2029

## Year 2023-24

## Years 2024-25

## Years 2026-2029

