

The Port of London Authority

The Port of London Authority (PLA) is the port authority for 150 km (95 miles) of the tidal Thames from Teddington to the sea. It provides navigational and pilotage services for ships using the Port of London, including the maintenance of shipping channels.

The PLA is a public trust, established in 1908 to administer, preserve and improve the Port of London. It is currently constituted under the 1968 Port of London Act. In addition, the PLA owns much of the river bed and foreshore to the high water mark.

The Port of London comprises over 70 independently owned terminals and port facilities, which handle a very wide range of cargoes. London is the second largest port in the UK and handles over 50 million tonnes of cargo every year.

The PLA provides navigational services for ships using the Port of London. These services include the continual monitoring: by hydrographic survey, and marking of the navigation channels in this dynamic environment; providing up to the minute information to ships' masters and berth operators (including real time tide observation); the maintenance of shipping channels, moorings, lights, and buoys; and occasional maintenance dredging to remove sediments which have been deposited in the main navigation channels. The PLA also licences dredging by others including capital dredging associated with a new project or deepening exercise and maintenance dredging to restore approved or required depths. Such dredging is undertaken by or on behalf of the owners or operators of the operational wharves, terminals, berths, jetties and other private frontages along the Thames.



Figure 3 "Tug and Tow" near Canary Wharf." Copyright PLA