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Waterways for Everyone

**The Government's strategy for the inland waterways of
England and Wales**

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The Government's Strategy for the Inland Waterways of England and Wales

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 From Roman times, the rivers of Britain have been used as routes for trade and commerce. Two centuries ago most of our canals were built to provide the transport infrastructure for the industrial revolution. Today our rivers and canals are used much less for trade and industry but they have gained a new importance in delivering a range of social, economic and environmental benefits unimagined even twenty years ago. Our waterways help to define our landscape, provide opportunities for recreation and quiet enjoyment, attract visitors by the million, and offer exciting possibilities for economic and social regeneration. The welcome renaissance of our waterways is reflected in the upgrading of our rivers, the restoration of derelict canals and the revitalisation of waterfronts in towns and cities throughout Britain

1.2 The publication of *Waterways for Tomorrow* in 2000 was an inspiration to everyone who values our rivers and canals. The weight of Government support was put behind the sometimes lonely efforts of waterway enthusiasts, most of them boaters, who had worked so hard to restore and recreate our waterway network after decades of neglect. Without their efforts Britain would be poorer and this policy statement could not have been written.

1.3 The past decade has been called a golden age for the waterways. Across Britain we can now see examples of just how our rivers and canals can improve the quality of our lives. But in many places the potential is still unrecognised. This policy statement aims to build on the success of *Waterways for Tomorrow* by demonstrating how millions more can enjoy the benefits of our rivers and canals. Inevitably that involves explaining how our waterways can be used to produce a range of benefits that are not immediately apparent to everyone. However that does not mean that we intend to forget about the needs of boaters and anglers who have worked so hard to improve our waterways inheritance. Our aim is widen interest and participation in the traditional water based activities as well as developing new opportunities and new benefits.

1.4 Waterways authorities have also played their part in transforming the waterways through restoration, regeneration and improved efficiency of delivery. This has reinvigorated the waterways network and delivered much of the aspirations set out in *Waterways for Tomorrow*.

1.5 The Government remains committed to working in partnership to “secure the continued and sustainable revival of the waterways and their contribution to the wealth, health and wellbeing of communities across the country”¹. An Inter-Departmental Group for Inland Waterways has been established to ensure that the benefits of inland waterways are more widely understood. *Waterways for Everyone*

¹ House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, *British Waterways: Government Response to the Committee’s Seventh Report of Session 2006-07*, 2007

has been prepared under the aegis of this Group, with contributions from a wide range of stakeholders.

1.6 *Waterways for Everyone* aims to take account of significant changes in the Government's policy agenda. These include:-

- a growing focus on evidence-based policy;
- a more stringent and competitive funding environment, both in terms of core funding for waterway authorities and in terms of the external funding opportunities (with reduced funding from the National Lottery and European programmes);
- increasing emphasis on specific policy areas which impact on inland waterways, notably:
 - climate change mitigation and adaptation;
 - environmental improvement;
 - healthy lifestyles and improved well-being;
 - neighbourhood renewal, including the role of green infrastructure and community cohesion and social inclusion;
- new European and national legislation, particularly environmental regulation and the reform of the planning system in England and Wales.

1.7 *Waterways for Everyone* sets out a vision for how waterways can contribute to a wide range of public policy objectives:

- **Place making and shaping.** Waterways are a catalyst for urban and rural regeneration, supporting employment and creating green infrastructure, which improves the quality of our lives. The improvement in our rivers and canals can bring life back to deprived areas and create a new sense of pride in local communities.
 - **The natural environment.** The waterway network forms an important environmental and ecological resource, providing wildlife corridors and a diversity of aquatic and riparian habitats, but there are also challenges to waterways management from environmental pressures and legislative requirements which put pressure on resources and require close partnership working.
 - **Climate change.** Waterways provide opportunities for climate change mitigation and adaptation. Canals form part of the drainage infrastructure and can provide flood relief capacity and non-potable water for industry. Waterways also offer opportunities for city cooling and even small-scale renewable energy generation. Adaptation to climate change must become an important feature of waterways policy and planning.
 - **Cultural heritage.** The river and canal network is a legacy of Britain's past and provides a unique insight into our industrial and social history.
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The waterways are rich in historic buildings and structures which provide a major educational resource and a focus for regeneration and tourism.

- **Health, well-being, recreation and sport.** Inland waterways provide recreational opportunities and sporting activities close to people's homes. The waterways can be used to encourage active lifestyles and contribute to mental well-being.
- **Sustainable transport.** There is scope for more freight and passengers to be carried on some inland waterways, particularly on estuarial waters. Greater potential is provided by waterside paths for off-road walking and cycle routes for school children, commuters, and city dwellers who want to get out into the countryside.
- **Tourism and business development.** Recreation and tourism activity on waterways supports business development by the private sector in marine and visitor economy industries, and workforce training.
- **Fairer, stronger and more active communities.** Waterways provide a range of activities suitable for all sections of the community, including an outdoor learning resource, out-of-school recreation for young people, and opportunities for volunteering. The waterways can aid social cohesion and host measures to combat social exclusion.

1.8 These eight themes are addressed separately in the following chapters, but many of the themes overlap and reinforce each other: the sum of the parts is greater than the individual elements. For example improving waterside paths can create benefits for health as well as providing opportunities for sustainable transport, tourism, business development and for creating green infrastructure.

1.9 We recognise that it will not be possible to deliver every benefit everywhere. The potential is great but initiatives will need to be prioritised to maximise public benefits from the resources available, taking account of the nature of each waterway. Difficult choices may have to be made between potential benefits.

1.10 *Government recognises the multi-functional role of waterways and the need to maintain and improve the quality of the waterway resource and infrastructure if the public benefits delivered are to be maintained and grown. Government Departments therefore encourage regional and local delivery bodies and stakeholders to take account of this in a holistic way through considering the waterways' potential contribution in regional strategies, Local Development Frameworks, Local Transport Plans, green infrastructure initiatives etc.*

Scope

1.11 *Waterways for Everyone* applies to inland waterways in England and Wales. We are primarily concerned with navigable or potentially navigable canals and rivers

that are regulated by lock and weir systems, together with supporting infrastructure. Most of these waterways are, or have been, managed by statutory waterway authorities. However many of our comments are also relevant to tidal rivers and estuaries, some of which come under the jurisdiction of port or harbour authorities.

1.12 The policy does not aim to address lakes (except those that are part of through navigations) and smaller unregulated rivers (which may be navigable by small unpowered craft such as canoes).

1.13 Since *Waterways for Tomorrow* was published in June 2000, the management and development of waterways has become more informed, through evidence collected by the waterway authorities, by the Inland Waterways Advisory Council (IWAC) and by the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA). *Waterways for Everyone* takes account of this work. We also include a number of illustrative case studies that demonstrate the range of public benefits delivered by the waterways.

1.14 The recent Operational Efficiency Programme review² recognised that there may be benefits in considering alternative models such as mutual or third sector structures for British Waterways business as a whole. The Government will therefore work closely with British Waterways and other stakeholders to evaluate these alternatives, building on the debate already started by British Waterways Twenty-Twenty Vision³.

1.15 In parallel with this consultation we are collecting a larger set of case studies to provide further examples of opportunities and best practice. These case studies will be incorporated into the final published version of *Waterways for Everyone*. Summaries of some of these case studies are included in this consultation document to show the wide range of projects that are already in place.

Q1. Do you agree that the range of benefits of inland waterways identified above and expanded upon in the following chapters are correct? Are there any benefits that we have missed or overstated?

² HM Government, Putting the Frontline First: Smarter Government - , Operational Efficiency Programme : Asset Portfolio 2009 <http://www.hmg.gov.uk/media/52715/oep-assetportfolio.pdf>

³ BW, *Twenty -Twenty: A vision for the future of our canals and rivers*, 2009

Chapter 2

Our inland waterways today

2.1 There are approximately 5,090kms (3,160 miles) of fully navigable inland waterways in England and Wales, about 445kms of which are tidal. British Waterways is responsible for about 2,615kms, of which about three quarters are canals. The Environment Agency manages almost 954kms, most of which are navigable rivers. The Broads Authority controls a 200km river-lake system. The Middle Level Commissioners manage 190kms, most of which have a dual function as drainage channels and navigations. The remainder are managed by a wide range of other bodies, including local authorities, port authorities and charitable trusts.

2.2 In addition there are about 890kms of managed un-navigable waterways, about half of which are the responsibility of British Waterways (320km) and the Environment Agency (120km). There are a further 2,095kms of abandoned un-navigable waterways. Many un-navigable and abandoned waterways are being restored to full navigation and there have been a number of significant additions to the navigable network over the past decade or so – including the full restoration of the Kennet and Avon, Huddersfield Narrow and Rochdale Canals and the opening of the Ribble Link and the Liverpool Canal Link.

2.3 Inland waterways are managed by more than 30 waterway authorities. Most are public bodies, and a few are from the private and voluntary sectors. This diversity of ownership reflects the complex historical evolution of the waterway system. Each authority has its own priorities, characteristics and legislative regime. In 1996 the Government encouraged the establishment of the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA)⁴ to give a single voice on waterway management issues. AINA is supported by Government and represents the collective views of waterway authorities to Government, regulators, other policy makers, funders and stakeholders. AINA develops and promotes good practice in the operation, management and development of inland waterways.

2.4 The Inland Waterways Advisory Council (IWAC)⁵ was established in 2007 as an independent statutory body to provide advice to Government, waterway authorities and other interested parties on matters relevant to inland waterways. IWAC is a successor to the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council (IWAAC) which was set up under the Transport Act 1968 to give advice to British Waterways on the amenity and recreational use of their waterways.

2.5 Whilst the creation of AINA and IWAC has strengthened the capacity of the sector as a whole, the responsibility for operating and developing the waterways remains with the individual waterway authorities. The difference between the authorities is illustrated by the four largest.

⁴ Website: www.aina.org.uk

⁵ Website: www.iwac.org.uk

2.6 **British Waterways** is a public corporation set up by the 1968 Transport Act and operates on a commercial basis consistent with its statutory powers and obligations for navigation and the environment. Its objectives are agreed with the Government and it is expected to promote the use of its waterways for leisure and recreation, tourism, regeneration and transport, whilst also conserving their built and natural heritage.

2.7 The **Environment Agency** is primarily an environmental regulatory body, which manages its waterways as an integral part of its other water management functions. All its waterways are rivers with a public right of navigation. It has a general duty to promote the recreational use of waterways, to connect people with their environment and to operate those waterways for which it is responsible in an efficient and business-like manner.

2.8 The **Broads Authority** manages its water space in Norfolk and Suffolk together with surrounding land on national park lines, combining its responsibility for the public navigation with conservation and recreation. It is also a harbour authority, and thus has additional duties imposed via marine legislation. It has a duty to manage the Broads for three specific and equally important functions: to conserve and enhance the Broads' natural beauty; to promote their enjoyment by the public; and to protect navigation interests. Additionally, and uniquely for a waterway authority, the Broads Authority is a Planning Authority.

2.9 The **Middle Level** in the English fens is a statutory corporation and is managed by Commissioners both from the agricultural sector who are directly rated and the non-agricultural sector represented by the three local authorities who raise the levy which, together with the rates, funds the drainage functions of the Middle Level. The watercourses in the Middle Level are mostly statutory navigations and, although the Commissioners possess residual and obsolete powers to raise tolls from the movement of freight, they have no legal right to raise revenue from recreational boaters.

2.10 Other waterways are managed by a wide variety of bodies. These include a large private company (Manchester Ship Canal); port authorities (tidal River Thames); the National Trust (River Wey Navigation); the Inland Waterways Association (Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation); charitable trusts (River Avon Navigation); and local authorities (Basingstoke Canal). A number of inland waterway authorities continue to operate under archaic legislation, some of which dates back four centuries. AINA⁶ has argued that waterways legislation should be brought up to date, unreasonable operational constraints should be removed and that navigation authorities should have modern powers to regulate safety and pollution, and to raise income.

⁶ AINA, *Empowered or hindered? An assessment of the effectiveness of existing legal powers in enabling navigation authorities to achieve their full potential*, 2009

Maintaining the waterways

2.11 Waterways are expensive to maintain and involve substantial liabilities, including significant duties in respect to public safety. The main waterway authorities have systems in place to manage this risk. Income to maintain and develop the waterways comes from a range of sources. Most authorities raise income directly from users, for example through licence fees, tolls and mooring charges paid by boaters; angling fees, rents and water sales are also important for some, though the availability and level vary widely. The Middle Level and some smaller authorities have no powers to raise revenue from recreational boaters. Waterside paths are a freely available resource, and no direct revenue is raised by waterway authorities from the many millions who use the paths. Some authorities can raise income through their property assets, which can be rented out, developed or sold. This internally generated income may be supplemented by grant and other funding from third parties for specific projects or activity.

2.12 British Waterways and the Environment Agency also receive support through grant-in-aid from central government. The Broads Authority is funded as a national park, although costs associated with the maintenance of the navigation have been met through income from boaters. Some additional Government support has been given for dredging which provides ecosystem services. Most smaller waterway authorities receive no support from public funds.

2.13 In recent years the productivity of public sector bodies managing inland waterways has increased, earned income has grown as a proportion of total income and output per employee has risen. Cost savings have been achieved through consolidation, outsourcing and increasingly flexible ways of working. With limited and reducing resources waterway authorities have delivered more for the general public with less. Because of pressure on public finances, improved asset management and improvements in efficiency will be even more important in the next few years.

2.14 Since the publication of *Waterways for Tomorrow*, British Waterways, the Environment Agency and the Broads Authority have each introduced asset management systems to improve their understanding of the condition of their waterways and to plan investment. Both British Waterways and the Environment Agency have identified significant funding gaps in current and future operations and have strategies in place to address the problem. The challenge of future funding for waterway authorities is addressed in Chapter 11 ("The way forward").

Q2. Do you consider that waterways are in a better condition now than they were 10 years ago? What have been the main achievements over this time and what could have been done better?

Chapter 3

Place making and Shaping

Green infrastructure

3.1 Most people like living, working and spending leisure time close to waterways. Inland waterways, with their banks and paths, give quiet permanence to Britain's landscape as well as providing green infrastructure, which the Government believes is essential for attractive, environmentally sustainable communities.

3.2 Inland waterways contribute to the "brand value" of cities, towns and rural areas. They create a sense of belonging within communities and enhance the feeling of civic pride. In a series of community surveys along the Kennet and Avon Canal in 2005, 91% of local residents thought that the canal made their "part of England special."⁷ When television companies produce features on cities like Birmingham, Manchester or Leeds, it is significant how often canals are used as the backdrop. When Councils and Regional authorities promote their area, the tourism literature usually includes pictures of waterways.

3.3 The natural attributes of many waterways - the mix of landscape, natural environment and heritage, coupled with public access by land and water – means that waterways can be used as a catalyst for urban and rural regeneration. Developers know that they can achieve a premium price for their houses and flats, businesses see waterside offices as an attractive location and entrepreneurs know that waterway visitors are available as customers for their goods and services. The cities of Birmingham and Manchester and the Docklands area of London have been transformed by the development of previously derelict or under-used waterfronts. In some parts of the country, and most noticeably in the Broads, the local economy and the identity of the area is intrinsically linked to the continued existence of the waterways.

3.4 As well as creating economic benefits, waterways also deliver a cluster of social and environmental benefits that we explore in later chapters:

- creating nature and wildlife corridors that link towns with the countryside (Chapter 5);
- supporting health and well-being through outdoor recreation opportunities and the creation of attractive and stimulating landscapes (Chapter 7);
- providing green transport corridors for walking and cycling (Chapter 8);
- creating accessible community spaces, supporting community cohesion and volunteering (Chapter 10); and
- supporting sustainable rural communities, where services for local people, such as shops, pubs and post offices that might otherwise have been closed are kept open by custom from tourists and recreational visitors (Chapter 9).

⁷) Maeer G and Millar G, *Evaluation of UK waterway regeneration and restoration*, in Municipal Engineer 157, June 2004

These considerable benefits have persuaded Bradford, Swindon, Daventry and Grantham, amongst others to plan major projects to re-introduce water into the centres of their cities and towns.

Waterway restoration

3.5 Economic regeneration and the conservation of the cultural heritage have provided the momentum for many of the canal restoration schemes undertaken in recent years. The Kennet and Avon Canal, Huddersfield Narrow Canal, Rochdale Canal, Lydney Harbour, Great Ouse Relief Channel and the Bugsworth Basin branch restorations were all completed since 2000 as well as the construction of completely new waterways – the Ribble Link and Liverpool Link, and the restoration of the link between the River Weaver and Trent and Mersey Canal via the Anderton Lift. These schemes added over 250km of navigable waterway to the network in England and Wales. Many more schemes are underway throughout the country at varying stages of development; 86 “live” schemes in England and Wales were identified by IWAC in 2006⁸.

3.6 The evaluation of schemes, such as the Kennet and Avon Canal restoration, demonstrates the contribution that restored waterways make to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the areas through which they pass.

Kennet and Avon Canal Restoration



The Kennet and Avon Canal is a 140 km long waterway link between the River Thames at Reading and the city of Bristol. Opened in 1810, the canal was closed to through navigation in 1955. Over the next 30 years the canal was gradually restored by a partnership consisting of the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust, British Waterways, local businesses and the riparian local authorities. Despite reopening in 1990, substantial work was still needed to secure the long term sustainability of the canal. The development and approval of a £27 million restoration project in 1996 - supported mainly through the Heritage Lottery Fund with supplementary funding from existing partners – has helped to achieve this sustainability.

⁸ IWAC, *Inland waterway restoration and development projects in England, Scotland and Wales*, 2006

By 2005, the restored canal has seen an increase in visits of 22% compared to the 1995 baseline with expenditure by these visitors increasing by 59% to £31 million per annum over the same period. The number of boats based on the canal grew by almost 40% to over 1,400.

The restoration delivered an additional 385 recreation and tourism-related jobs in the local economies along the canal in addition to over 700 jobs that were safeguarded by the scheme. Between 1995 and 2005 around £400 million of investment took place in waterside development along the canal, particularly in the Reading area, with around 2,700 people working in the canal side offices and retail developments.

The restoration has also been welcomed by communities along the canal corridor. In interview surveys of local people, 91% said that they felt that the restored canal made their part of England special, with 55% visiting it more frequently since it was restored.

Further information about the Kennet and Avon Canal and its restoration can be found on the websites of British Waterways (www.britishwaterways.co.uk/south-west/)

and Kennet and Avon Canal Trust (www.katrust.org/).

3.7 The Government continues to welcome waterway restoration and the creation of new waterway links which meet local priorities and benefit local communities. The House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee (EFRA) in its 2008 report into British Waterways⁹ emphasised the need for both the costs and risks of undertaking restoration to be borne amongst organisations representing the beneficiaries, rather than being carried by the waterway authorities, as was sometimes the case in the past. Again this emphasises the need for strong partnerships to deliver such projects, both to spread risk and to ensure that anticipated benefits are delivered.

3.8 However future restoration opportunities can be put at risk if the needs of waterway development are neglected in planning decisions. Planning Policy Guidance 13 (PPG13) encourages local authorities, in consultation with other stakeholders including waterway authorities, to identify and, where appropriate, protect disused waterways when there is a reasonable degree of certainty of the restoration project proceeding in whole or in part within the development plan period. In Wales, TAN 18 (Transport) specifies that care should be taken to avoid severing or adversely affecting inland waterways. These guidelines provide significant protection and it is important that due weight is given to them by planning authorities.

Regeneration and the growth agenda

3.9 The case studies and examples given in this chapter show that the role of inland waterways in contributing to place making and place shaping is widely recognised by public authorities and private developers. In its 2007 Report IWAC¹⁰ emphasised the value of waterway restoration and regeneration and recognised that considerable

⁹ House of Commons EFRA Committee, *British Waterways: Follow-up*, 2008

¹⁰ Inland Waterway Advisory Council, *The Inland Waterways of England and Wales in 2007*, 2007

progress has been made since the publication of *Waterways for Tomorrow*. However the report went on to note that the opportunities to use the waterways as a catalyst for place making and regeneration have not been appreciated everywhere. The Government expects that the success stories described in this policy statement will encourage local authorities and others to consider the opportunities in their area.

Birmingham's waterfront

Birmingham lies at the heart of the canal network. In the 1980s, Birmingham City Council recognised that the canals provided an opportunity to extend the city's central core out across the constraining barrier of the inner ring road. Initial developments in the Gas Street area were followed by two flagship waterside projects - the International Conference Centre and the National Indoor Arena. These schemes and the associated canal and public realm works were funded by Birmingham City Council and the European Regional Development Fund.



Since the early 1990s, the area has become an exemplar of waterside regeneration, with private sector-led mixed use developments, such as Brindley Place, the Water's Edge and the Mailbox, building on the initial, often public-sector led investment. It is estimated that over £1 billion has been invested in canal side developments – office, residential, retail and leisure - since the mid-1980s, with around 75% from the private sector. Approximately 2,500 residential units have also been created in waterside developments.

The canal in central Birmingham receives around 3 million visits per year and its waterside developments have created 2,200 to 2,600 net additional full-time equivalent jobs. Improvements to the public spaces associated with the canals have created an attractive environment which encourages and facilitates pedestrian flow into and around the city centre.

Birmingham's redeveloped canals are used as a key marketing tool for the city. This benefits the city's tourism and leisure industry and its wider competitiveness from a quality of life perspective.

3.10 The ability of waterway authorities to invest directly in regeneration projects varies. British Waterways has some financial flexibility through its status as a public corporation and through its property holdings. The future of the property portfolio managed by British Waterways was reviewed by HM Treasury in 2009¹¹. The review recognised the importance of British Waterways remaining focused on maximising gains from its property holdings to help finance the waterways and to ensure best value from the public estate, while still delivering excellence in the management of the waterways. It recommended that in the future British Waterways non-operational activities, including Joint Ventures should be managed through a dedicated, wholly-owned subsidiary. This process is being taken forward by British Waterways in consultation with HM Treasury, the Shareholder Executive and Defra.

3.11 However, as part of the recent wider review of publicly owned assets under the Operational Efficiency Programme¹² the Government recognises that there may be benefits in considering alternative structures for British Waterways business as a whole, including its property portfolio. The Government will therefore consider alternative models for British Waterways such as mutual or third sector structures. Under any scenario, ensuring the maintenance and protection of the waterways will continue to be an important objective for the Government.

3.12 The Environment Agency, as a non-departmental public body, has more restrictions on its activities and owns fewer non-operational properties. However the Government encourages the Agency to work in partnership with others to help improve infrastructure for navigation, flood risk management, and the environment. The Fenland Link project demonstrates what is possible and could be used as a model for initiatives elsewhere (see Chapter 11).

3.13 To ensure that the contribution of waterways to the Government's regeneration and growth agendas is maximised, there is a need to ensure that the needs of inland waterways are fully understood within the planning system. Greater recognition, at regional and local level, is required of the role of waterways as planning policy challenges often arise from the diversity of the waterways and their multi-functional, non-footloose and cross-boundary nature.

3.14 At a regional level, waterway authorities need to engage with the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), Leaders' Boards and other stakeholders in developing and implementing the new integrated Regional Strategies, particularly through the consultation process. At the same time, we recommend that RDAs and Leaders' Boards take account of the opportunities delivered by waterways in the formulation of the new Strategies. In regions with a strong waterway presence, regional partners should consider developing non-statutory regional waterway strategies that feed into the Regional Strategies. This would demonstrate how waterways can contribute to implementation of the strategies and determine priority measures and projects for implementation. The intention should be both to build on

¹¹ HM Treasury, *Operational Efficiency Programme: Final Report*, April 2009

¹² HM Government, *Putting the Frontline First: Smarter Government - , Operational Efficiency Programme : Asset Portfolio 2009* <http://www.hmg.gov.uk/media/52715/oep-assetportfolio.pdf>

the research that the East Midland Development Agency (emda) undertook to support its Waterways Regeneration Fund (2007) and to have regard to the Environment Agency's regional water recreation strategies¹³

3.15 At local level, it is important that waterway authorities work closely with local authorities as waterways can contribute to many of the outcome measures set for local authorities and local authority partnerships¹⁴. Where waterways have a clear role in the development of an area, waterway authorities should participate in the Local Strategic Partnership to ensure that the contribution of waterways to the future of the area is maximised and that the role of waterways is recognised in Local Area and Multi Area Agreements. Waterway authorities should also, where appropriate, work closely with the proposed Economic Prosperity Boards (EPBs) which, where established, are intended to support the delivery of economic development and regeneration at sub-regional level.

3.16 It is also important that waterway authorities, subject to the availability of resources and the need to prioritise, engage with the new Local Development Framework process, which will determine the spatial planning strategy for the area, and in the development of Local Transport Plans, which will set out future transport priorities, including provision for walking and cycling.

3.17 Where appropriate, waterway authorities should also consider more formal engagement with other Government agencies that support regeneration and the growth agenda, particularly the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), which aims to create high quality sustainable places for people to live. Both British Waterways and the Environment Agency have already established Memoranda of Understanding with the HCA.

Planning

3.18 *Waterways for Tomorrow* recognised that, at a local level, the on-going development of waterways needs to be supported through effective planning policies. While the role of waterways is recognised in PPG 13 (Transport), which cross-refers to *Waterways for Tomorrow*, greater recognition is also needed by local planning authorities of the wider role of the waterways, particularly as infrastructure and as a contributor to economic growth and social welfare, and of the inherent constraints the waterways face because of their non-footloose nature. It is also important that those involved in planning decisions understand that canals, because of their ability to control or isolate water flows, pose much less of a flood risk than rivers. Instead they often provide an important land drainage function.

3.19 The Town and Country Planning Association has produced a best practice note on how the planning system, at different spatial levels, can support the development

¹³ See Environment Agency website for latest published strategies - www.environment-agency.gov.uk

¹⁴ DCLG, *National Indicators for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships: Handbook of Definitions*, 2008

and regeneration of the country's inland waterway network¹⁵. The note provides useful tools to assist planning authorities and includes checklists for incorporating waterways within spatial policies and strategies and for development control issues. It also sets out a series of recommendations as to how local authorities can work with waterway authorities to make better use of the inland waterway assets in their areas.

3.20 *Government will continue to encourage planning authorities, where appropriate, to work closely with the waterway authorities and gain a better understanding of the specific issues faced by waterways.*

3.21 Developers and the occupants of waterside schemes benefit from enhanced amenity and high property values. Planning authorities may also consider how Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 Grant arrangements can be used for the creation and enhancement of waterways and their surroundings as green infrastructure. It may be appropriate to use planning obligations to mitigate the effects of waterside developments on waterways.

Q3. Do you agree that it is important for regional development bodies and local authorities to work closely with those responsible for managing the inland waterways to ensure that the potential benefits in respect of place making and shaping are maximised? Do you have any ideas as to how this can be achieved?

Q4. What more can navigation authorities do to encourage local authorities to consider using waterways to improve the quality of life of their local communities?

Q5. What do you think the barriers are to local authorities taking more interest in waterways in respect of place making?

¹⁵ Town and Country Planning Association, *Policy Advice Note: Inland Waterways*, 2009

Chapter 4

Climate change

Government policy

4.1 Our climate is changing and urgent action is required both to adapt to these effects and to reduce the carbon emissions that will cause further change in the future. The 2008 Climate Change Act introduced legally binding carbon budgets aiming to cut UK emissions by 34% by 2020. These limits on emissions will help drive change and every part of society and the economy will need to respond. Although, given the small size of the sector, the contribution that inland waterways can make is necessarily modest, the Government is determined that appropriate policies are put in place so that the waterways play their part in contributing to the national programme. In setting the strategic direction for the Environment Agency and British Waterways the Government will ensure that climate change goals are given appropriate priority.

Mitigating climate change

4.2 Potential contributions that the inland waterways can make to the Government's strategy for climate change mitigation include:

- as alternative green transport routes that encourage commuters to use their cars less and travel to work on foot or by bicycle;
- as potential green transport routes for freight and passengers;
- a resource to attract more of the British public to holiday at home; and
- opportunities for renewable energy generation, such as small-scale hydropower, wind turbines and potentially significant amounts of tidal power from our estuaries.

These possibilities are examined further in Chapters 8 (Sustainable transport), 9 (Tourism and business development) and below (Renewables).

4.3 Canal and river water is typically warmer than mid-winter air temperatures and cooler than air temperatures at the height of summer. British Waterways has developed a valuable method for using these temperature differentials to offer waterside buildings a green alternative to energy intensive air conditioning systems. The technology is being used in a number of successful installations including the Headquarters of GlaxoSmithKline at Brentford in West London. The Government welcomes this innovation and encourages British Waterways to seek further customers for this potentially important service.

4.4 Both British Waterways and the Environment Agency are exploring the possibility of deploying hydropower devices at suitable points on their navigations. British Waterways and the Small Hydro Company Ltd are working together to identify locations for the installation of small-scale hydropower plants and the Environment Agency is planning to install an Archimedes turbine at Romney weir on the Thames near Windsor.

4.5 To ensure that hydropower generators can be installed without ecological damage, the Environment Agency – following discussions with the British Hydropower Association – has published a Good Practice Guide which is available at www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/topics/water/32022.aspx. Developers are showing considerable interest in the potential for hydropower on rivers, and it is very important that this guidance is followed in all future installations.

4.6 Both British Waterways and the Environment Agency have also agreed to use canal and riverside locations as sites for wind turbines. British Waterways is working with Partnerships for Renewables, a specialist company partly owned by the Carbon Trust, to build up to 50 wind turbines over the next 5 years, potentially saving around 100,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide per annum. The Environment Agency's plans are less advanced but it intends to sign firm agreements with Partnership for Renewables in 2010.

4.7 There is also potential for using the tidal power of our estuaries to generate significant amounts of renewable electricity. In addition to the cross Government Severn Tidal Power Feasibility Study, there are feasibility studies currently underway into the potential of the Mersey and the Solway Firth and a number of private developers have plans for schemes in several smaller estuaries down the West Coast and for larger estuaries on the East Coast such as the Thames, Wash and Humber.

4.8 The Broads Authority has introduced incentives for electric boats by discounting licence charges. Some success has been achieved with day hire boats but take-up overall has been limited. This is a long term project and the Broads Authority is considering what further measures might be put in place. It is possible that more progress could be made through greater encouragement of hybrid electric – diesel designs.

4.9 The Government welcomes the programmes developed by British Waterways, the Environment Agency and the Broads Authority to reduce their carbon footprints and urges all waterways authorities to develop comprehensive policies to mitigate climate change. Policies that should be considered are set out in the IWAC report *Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation*.¹⁶

4.10 In a joint initiative aimed at boaters, the British Marine Federation and the Royal Yachting Association has introduced the *Green Blue* initiative which encourages users and the inland boating industry to behave in an environmentally conscious way and, in particular, explains how best to reduce emissions of both greenhouse gases and water and atmospheric pollutants.

¹⁶ Inland Waterways Advisory Council, *Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation: Implications for Inland Waterways*, March 2009

The Green Blue



The Green Blue is a UK-wide environmental awareness initiative aimed at promoting the sustainable use of both inland and coastal waters by boaters and the boating industry. It is led by the Royal Yachting Association and the British Marine Federation. The scheme aims to educate and inform the recreational boating community about environmental and climate change impacts and to suggest how such impacts can be avoided or minimised. It is the only recreational focussed environment programme in the UK and the only source of environmental information specific to the boating sector.

The Green Blue produces a range of publications – guidance, fact sheets, codes of practice, posters and fliers – to support and promote its work. It also gives advice on “green” products and undertakes research into topical environmental issues. It has more than 750 documents in its research database, which is available to the public on-line. The scheme works closely with providers of marine services, such as marina operators, and with user groups, such as boat clubs, to promote awareness. It also participates in boat shows and special events and uses volunteers to spread the word about good practice.

Issues addressed concerning inland boating include:-

- Oil and fuel pollution;
- Noise and exhaust fumes;
- Avoidance of adverse impacts on wildlife and biodiversity, including the spread of invasive species;
- Cleaning and maintenance of boats;
- Reducing wash from boats;
- Disposal of waste; and
- The sustainable use of resources, such as reducing energy use, recycling etc.

Further information can be found at www.thegreenblue.org.uk/.

Adapting to climate change

4.11 Inland waterways can help Britain adapt to the effects of climate change by:

- managing water. River navigation structures can be used to maintain water levels during low flow drought periods benefiting local ecology and providing amenity space. Maintaining water level is also crucial to many surface water potable water abstractions. River structures can also be used during floods to manage peak flows to reduce flood risk. Water levels in canals can also be drawn down to provide extra capacity to manage excess water, while in the summer canals and associated reservoirs can hold back water to ensure availability for navigation;
- contributing to city cooling. An early effect of climate change is likely to be increased urban temperatures – the so-called “heat island” effect. Waterways can help through the cooling presence of water in towns and cities and by supplying water for vegetation and trees to provide shade;
- providing ecological corridors. As temperatures rise animals and plant species will seek to migrate northwards. Waterways provide routeways for this migration.

4.12 The 2009 IWAC report *Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation* explains the implications of climate change for inland waterways. Potential impacts include:

- reduced availability of water supply, due to lower water flows in summer;
- flooding impact, caused by increased winter precipitation and intense summer storms;
- increased risk of sedimentation, weed growth, algal blooms and the spread of invasive species;
- increased pressures on structures, such as culverts, embankments and bridges.

4.13 Waterway authorities will need to implement practical measures to mitigate these effects. In some cases this could be delivered by raising awareness and encouraging behaviour change in boat owners. The Environment Agency has a new strong stream advisory service for the river Thames which informs boaters on a daily basis of river conditions. This service is proving highly popular and will be extended to its other waterways. Other interventions such as increasing reservoir capacity to store winter water or creating buffer strips to intercept sediment and nutrients will require investment and should now be considered in long term plans.

4.14 These measures will have cost implications for waterway authorities who, in partnership with other stakeholders, should seek to integrate works being undertaken on the waterways with other responses to climate change, such as flood risk management. The Environment Agency has, through its waterways climate change plan, identified synergies and actions with flood risk management to adapt more efficiently to a changing climate. The Fenland Link project demonstrates how

this approach can widen the opportunities for securing funding for initiatives that deliver multiple benefits.

4.15 Joint working will, in any event, be needed to ensure that canals are integrated within surface water control systems to contribute to the management of flood risk. Several measures are needed:

- the development of a greater understanding by all stakeholders of the role that waterways can play in drainage and flood risk management;
- an increasingly close working relationship between British Waterways, the Environment Agency and local authorities;
- in respect of planning decisions, local authorities and the Environment Agency will need to take account of potential flood risk from new developments that might impact on waterways and their structures, such as culverts and weirs as required by PPS 25¹⁷.

4.16 Of course it should be noted that not all effects of climate change will be damaging to waterway authorities. Climate change may also provide additional opportunities for water-based tourism. These opportunities are discussed in Chapter 9 (Tourism and business development).

4.17 The Environment Agency and British Waterways will report on their adaptation plans under the new reporting requirements of the Climate Change Act 2008. Other stakeholders need to work together with waterway authorities to achieve effective adaptation strategies.

Q6. Do you agree that Inland Waterways offer an opportunity to help the UK mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change? Are there any areas you consider that should be explored further in this context, including how the waterways themselves will need to adapt?

¹⁷ DCLG, *Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and flood risk*, 2006

Chapter 5

The natural environment

Ecology and biodiversity

5.1 *Waterways for Tomorrow* recognised the role of inland waterways in providing aquatic and riparian habitats, thereby supporting biodiversity and enhancing the quality of the landscape. Inland waterways provide a range of habitats, from woodland and hedgerow, through to grassland, wetlands and open water, as well as providing important links between habitats in an increasingly fragmented landscape. The British Waterways network alone includes all or part of 73 Special Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and links with a further 1,566 non-statutory nature sites.

5.2 Significant parts of the waterway network are easily accessible by the public both from the land and by water. The waterway corridor constitutes a “living landscape”, giving millions of people the opportunity to visit and enjoy the natural environment.

5.3 In its report *Britain’s inland waterways: Balancing the needs of navigation and aquatic wildlife*¹⁸, IWAC concluded that boating posed no threat to aquatic wildlife on most waterways. IWAC offered detailed guidance on the best practices that should be followed to promote sustainable navigation, whilst protecting and, where possible enhancing biodiversity.

5.4 However IWAC recognised that there are a few sites where the environmental and ecological risks are so great that particular care is required. In such cases there is a need for waterway authorities to work with other stakeholders such as Natural England and the Countryside Council for Wales to secure a sensitive approach. The Conservation Management Strategy for the Montgomery Canal¹⁹ is a good example of where a partnership approach has been successful.

¹⁸ Inland Waterway Advisory Council, *Britain’s inland waterways: Balancing the needs of navigation and aquatic wildlife*, 2008

¹⁹ Montgomery Canal Partnership, *The Montgomery Canal: A Sustainable Restoration*, 2004

Montgomery Canal Conservation Management Strategy

The Montgomery Canal is a rural cross-border waterway, linking Powys (Wales) and Shropshire (England). The canal was officially closed to navigation in 1944, but, since 1969 there has been an on-going campaign to restore the canal. Two stretches are now navigable again. As well as delivering economic and social benefits to local communities, restoration provides the best solution for securing the built heritage of the canal which incorporates 127 listed buildings and structures.



All of the Welsh section and part of the English section of the canal are designated as Special Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSI) with the Welsh section also being a candidate for EU listing as a “Special Area of Conservation”. These designations are largely because of the wide range of rare aquatic plants that have flourished since the canal’s closure to navigation. While these aquatic plants are sensitive to disturbance from boats, they would also be at risk in the long term if the canal was left to nature – with the canal reverting to swamp and eventually woodland if maintenance ceased.

To enable the restoration of navigation on the canal and also maintain biodiversity the Montgomery Canal Partnership (MCP) has developed a Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) that provides a framework for the on-going restoration of the canal which balanced the varied interests of the stakeholders involved. The MCP brings together groups with an interest in the canal – including local authorities, conservation organisations (both built and natural heritage) and waterway groups, including British Waterways and canal societies. The CMS was part-funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and European Social Fund. The CMS can be viewed at:

www.britishwaterways.co.uk/montgomery/conservation-management-strategy

Environmental management

5.5 As recognised by IWAC in its 2007 Report²⁰, much has been done by waterway authorities to protect and conserve the environment through their response to environmental legislation and through the implementation of environmental codes of practice and Biodiversity Action Plans. This is supported by guidance produced by waterway authorities. The Environment Agency, in its regulatory role, has helped to secure great improvements in the chemical quality of surface waters in recent years. The Water Framework Directive (WFD) introduces additional requirements related to

²⁰ Inland Waterways Advisory Council, *The Inland Waterways of England and Wales in 2007*, 2007

waterway ecology that now need to be addressed by waterway authorities. The implementation of WFD has caused anxiety to many boaters and boating organisations who are concerned that it might result in navigations having to be closed.

5.6 The WFD categorises most navigable canals and rivers as “artificial or heavily modified water bodies”. This reflects their creation or modification for a particular use, such as navigation. With this categorisation, there is a requirement for mitigation of the impact of the designated use, as long as it does not have a significant adverse effect on that use and is cost-effective. Possible mitigation measures have been reviewed by AINA²¹.

5.7 Waterway authorities are doing much already through:-

- the implementation of “green” techniques of waterway management, where it is cost effective by, for example using soft bank protection such as coir rolls or asphalt matting;
- undertaking channel maintenance work, such as dredging, aquatic weed control and de-watering, using best practice techniques that minimise ecological damage;
- mitigating the effects of boat traffic by imposing speed limits and use of best practice, as proposed by the *Green Blue* initiative;
- working with riparian landowners to improve the ecological quality of adjacent farmland, thus extending the environmental corridor based on the waterway and improving ecological connectivity. At the same time it is possible to introduce measures to intercept nutrients and sediment entering the water course, thus reducing weed and algae growth and the need to dredge. These measures are likely to become even more important in the future as the climate changes.

5.8 Waterway restoration schemes can pose a particular challenge in relation to maintaining ecological quality. While in some cases, new water environments are created, in others the re-introduction of navigation can have a detrimental effect on the quality of the ecology that has evolved in its absence. In such cases careful planning is required to ensure that any adverse effects are mitigated by, for instance the creation of reserves to which plant and animal species can migrate or where legal powers exist, by the control of boat numbers and traffic. The IWAC Report offers clear guidance to restoration groups and other stakeholders.

²¹ AINA, *Management strategies and mitigation measures for the inland waterway sector in relation to ecological potential for inland waterways*, 2007

Barton Broad restoration



Owned by Norfolk Wildlife Trust Barton Broad is the second largest of all the Broads. Clear Water 2000 was the Broads Authority's millennium project to restore Barton Broad.

The aims of the project were to:

- Improve water quality;
- Increase water depth and the area of water open for navigation;
- Create clear water areas to facilitate re-growth of water plants;
- Create a better habitat for wildlife ;
- Improve accessibility and facilities for visitors; and
- Interpret the science for visitors.

Barton Broad was dredged between 1996 and 2001 with other elements of the project still underway. Two techniques were principally employed - suction dredging to remove phosphorus from the sediment and biomanipulation to encourage the return of clear water and wildlife. Dredging reduced nutrient leaking from the sediment into the water, which fuels algal growth, and increased the water depth to safeguard navigation. Biomanipulation involved the temporary removal of selected fish species in parts of the Broad to increase the number of grazer zooplankton, particularly *Daphnia* species. This effected a change in the ecosystem, gaining clear water and plant re-growth.

An innovative public boat trip is available on Britain's first solar-powered passenger boat, which is wheelchair accessible. A boarded walkway, also wheelchair accessible, takes visitors through ancient, wet Carr woodland to a viewing platform. A green building was provided at the How Hill study centre to improve facilities for educational visits.

Partners and funders of the £3 million project included the Barton Broad Liaison Group, (made up of representatives from many local organisations and interest groups) Anglian Water, Anglian Water Environmental Partnership, the Countryside Agency, the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, the East of England Development Agency, English Nature, the Environment Agency, the Millennium Commission, Norfolk Environmental Waste Services, the Norfolk Wildlife Trust and the UK Cleaning Products Industry Association (some names have subsequently changed).

More information, publications and monitoring data are available at:

5.9 Waterway authorities should continue to build on research and initiatives being undertaken around the country to:

- respond to the emerging requirements of the WFD by commenting to Defra and the Environment Agency during the consultation periods, and through involvement with River Basin Liaison Panels;
- help develop appropriate programmes of measures in the River Basin Management Plans;
- maintain and where possible enhance biodiversity and ecological quality, whilst delivering the economic and social benefits that waterways provide. Many benefits, particularly in terms of tourism and recreation, are underpinned by a high quality and attractive environment.

5.10 In the Government's view there is no reason why implementation of environmental legislation should threaten navigation. ***The Government will work with waterway authorities and regulators to ensure that the implementation of environmental legislation takes proper account of the need to sustain navigation and recreation and their associated public benefits.***

5.11 In the context of the WFD, a key challenge is the need to provide fish passes at certain weirs and fish screens on many water intakes and discharges. Fish passes and screens are used to allow the free passage of fish, allowing access to breeding, nursery and feeding grounds. Whether fish thrive is a key indicator of the state of a waterway and installing fish passes and screens in necessary locations will enable the UK to meet its obligation to reach Good Ecological Status (GES) or Good Ecological Potential (GEP) under the Water Framework Directive.

5.12 The Environment Agency is developing a prioritisation scheme to enable effective targeting of the critical obstructions. The Agency accepts that not all obstructions will require a fish pass. The Agency will work closely and collaboratively with owners and developers of obstructions and abstractions, including British Waterways and other stakeholders, when producing the prioritisation scheme and implementing the necessary measures. The Environment Agency will take account of the needs of navigation during the process.

5.13 Dredging is often an essential activity in maintaining watercourses but can also be controversial. Most commonly, dredging is necessary to preserve or restore the efficient functioning of a watercourse, whether that is to permit navigation or to carry a particular flow of water (an important aspect in dealing with flood risk and land drainage). Properly undertaken, dredging need not have an adverse environmental effect and can sustain the ecology and biodiversity of the waterways and adjacent land, and can contribute to the management of flood risk and land drainage. However because dredging carried out without sufficient care for the environment can be damaging, dredging is a formally regulated activity. *Waste Management for*

*Dredging Operations: A good practice guide*²² is available from AINA to help both the navigation and drainage authorities to understand and interpret legislative requirements in respect of dredging in an economic and environmentally friendly manner. Best practice guidance on the waste management aspects of dredging is in preparation by the Environment Agency and is intended to help practitioners avoid potential pitfalls.

5.14 Waterway authorities should seek to work with adjacent landowners, in partnership with other stakeholders such as Natural England and the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group to encourage the better environmental management of the wider waterway corridor. Particular objectives should be to reduce sediments, nutrients and other pollutants entering the water course and to improve ecological connectivity and opportunities for species migration. Waterway authorities have their own environmental management systems. They should be familiar with agri-environment and catchment sensitive farming schemes and how far these schemes provide mechanisms to deliver benefits in the waterway corridor²³.

Grand Western Canal - Siltation and nutrient management



Silt management is an important issue for waterways. Excessive silt can restrict navigation and usually needs to be removed by costly dredging which, if not carried out in a sustainable way, can have adverse environmental effects. Siltation often arises through run-off from adjacent agricultural land and brings with it nutrients which can stimulate plant and algae growth in water courses.

Between 2003 and 2006 the Grand Western Canal in Devon, which is managed by Devon County Council as a country park, implemented a programme of work to slow down siltation in order to reduce the need for dredging in the future. Initiatives carried out included:-- fencing off a 3 metre strip of agricultural land on the canal offside, to stop stock encroachment and installing surfaced stock drinking points;

- excavating and restoring silt traps in watercourses and ditches flowing into the canal;

²² AINA, *Waste management for dredging operations: A good practice guide for navigation authorities*

²³ See www.defra.gov.uk/farm/environment/water/csf/ and www.naturalengland.gov.uk/ourwork/farming/funding/es/default.aspx and <http://cymru.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/farming/agrienvironmentchemes/tirgofal/?jsessionid=phQCKX7Ld2QhtYZGMh01Qq1wRGRL0YZgpVR4nHg7LZlsrpMTmvnC!-1895006922?cr=3&lang=en>

- working in partnership with the UK Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group to help farmers understand the problems that can arise from soil erosion on their farms and excessive nutrient inputs, and to identify solutions to these problems using agri-environment funding sources as appropriate;
- using a specialised boat to enable increased weed cutting;
- cutting overhanging branches to reduce leaf-fall into the canal. This also improves ecological conditions by reducing the area of the canal in shade.

The work was part funded through the EU Interreg IIIB North West Europe Crosscut project (see Crosscut study in Chapter.11).

A summary of the work undertaken can be found at:-

[www.crosscut-nwe.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/meetings/presentations/Crosscut_Lille_28Jun07 - 15-Baker.pdf](http://www.crosscut-nwe.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/meetings/presentations/Crosscut_Lille_28Jun07_-_15-Baker.pdf)

5.15 The control of alien invasive species is a major problem for waterway authorities. Unfortunately the waterway corridors which are valuable for the migration of species threatened by climate change also provide ample opportunities for alien plant species, such as Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) and floating pennywort (*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*) to spread. It is estimated that the control of such plants costs the inland waterways sector about £2 million per year. Invasive animal species, including fish, are also threatening native species. The introduction of the signal crayfish has led to a decline in numbers of the native white-clawed crayfish while the Chinese mitten crab spreads disease and causes erosion in river banks through burrowing. The WFD will require measures to be taken in some water bodies to deal with invasive species, including awareness raising amongst recreational users to reduce the risk of species being spread by boats. Waterway authorities are supporting research and initiatives to deal with invasive species that, if successful, will reduce costs in the future. However climate change is encouraging the migration of species and the protection of native species might prove increasingly difficult and costly.

5.16 The environmental management of waterways involves dealing with man-made environmental problems. The legacy of past industry creates pollution challenges, particularly the need to deal with contaminated silt through dredging work. Waterways are also easily accessible to those who want to dump litter and more substantial loads of waste, or those who want to damage a waterway and its equipment, or to spray graffiti. Addressing these issues imposes additional costs on waterway authorities.

5.17 Waterway authorities have been working to develop systems to prevent and manage the dumping of waste and deal with anti-social behaviour. British Waterways, the Environment Agency and the National Trust are members of the National Fly Tipping Prevention Group²⁴, which is working to reduce the extent of fly tipping.

²⁴ See www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/waste/flytipping/37879.aspx

Water management

5.18 Navigable inland waterways form part of the country's land drainage infrastructure. This role is recognised in the research undertaken by Defra into the public benefits of waterways, although there is currently insufficient information available to enable the drainage benefit of inland waterways to be properly quantified.

5.19 The Government will work to gain a greater understanding of the drainage function of waterways and its economic, social and environmental impacts and to look at any implications for funding.

5.20 Under the Highways Act 1980, in the case of public highways, waterway authorities can be compensated for damage caused in receiving water discharges. However there is no right to compensation for the public good element in receiving this water.

5.21 Waterway authorities have a statutory duty to maintain waterways in a navigable and safe condition; sufficient water needs to be available to allow navigation. In winter, enough water comes from rivers and streams or artesian groundwater sources. However during the summer boating season, water to canals usually has to be supplied from so-called controlled sources, including pumping from groundwater or rivers and streams. In future, this will require an abstraction licence. British Waterways manages over 90 reservoirs so that it can restrict water demand from these controlled sources. British Waterways also aims to keep abstractions from controlled sources to a minimum by using a computerised water management system and by educating users to minimise wastage.

5.22 Climate change will put further pressure on water supplies particularly during the summer in the English Midlands and in the south. Some concerns have been expressed by boaters about the draft River Basin Management Plans developed through river basin district liaison panels, established to implement WFD. However, the Environment Agency is required to have regard to the statutory duties of waterway authorities when it takes decisions on licensing of water abstractions. Water used for navigation also delivers other benefits, such as maintaining the quality of canal ecology, supplying non-potable water to industry in place of drinking water and, in the future, supporting city cooling. While recognising the pressure on limited water supplies, the Environment Agency will take the needs of navigation into account in implementing the River Basin Management Plans.

Chapter 6

Cultural heritage

6.1 Britain's network of rivers and canals is a picturesque reminder of two thousand years of our history. In the valley of the Thames alone, within 500 metres of the river itself, there are no less than 5237 heritage assets - World Heritage sites, battlefields, historic parks, listed buildings, protected wrecks and scheduled monuments recording the story of our country since the Roman invasion. A tour of the Thames valley gives an insight into the shaping of our society that no history book will ever match.

6.2 Our canal network was built some two centuries ago to bring raw materials to the newly built factories where - using first water and then steam power – cotton, wool, china clay, and iron were made into manufactured goods. Then back onto the canals to be delivered to customers in Britain or to the ports to supply newly created markets in Europe and beyond. Britain's canals were essential to the transformation of Britain into the world's first industrial nation. As a result of that industrial revolution, Britain became a mainly urban country, and the massive social, economic and political changes of that period formed the framework for much of present day society. The canals did not create the industrial revolution but, without the canals, British history would be notably different. A study of Britain's canal is, in part, a study of the making of modern Britain.

6.3 The long history of the use of our rivers and canals has bequeathed us an enormous range of heritage assets to be protected and conserved. One estimate is that the waterway authorities between them have more than 4000 heritage assets for which they are specifically responsible, ranging from listed buildings and engineering structures to conservation areas and monuments. British Waterways alone is the third largest owner of historic structures in the country. British Waterways estate in England and Wales includes well over 2000 listed buildings and structures, over 300 conservation areas and 5 World Heritage Sites.

6.4 Waterway heritage is immensely diverse, including waterside buildings, wharves and cottages, ancient weirs, aqueducts and lockflights, waterwheels, windmills and pumping machines, historic boats and archaeological remains, and a vast treasury of archive material. Associated craft skills such as boat building and reed cutting also add to the heritage skills available in many areas.

6.5 The Government's vision for our historic heritage is not just to protect the assets but to use them to help deliver a wide range of social and economic benefits through viable and sympathetic new use. The opportunities are considerable:

- Heritage sites can provide an important focus for tourism. Popular visitors' attractions support waterside businesses including shops restaurants and hotels. These tourism and business opportunities are discussed in Chapter 9.
 - The historic associations of important waterways can be used to enhance the boating experience on rivers and canals. Creating attractive places for outdoor recreation is discussed in Chapter 7.
-

- The educational potential of our waterway heritage is enormous. Most people live close to a river or canal and a visit to a waterway can illuminate and illustrate many subjects taught in schools and colleges. How this educational resource can be used more effectively is discussed in Chapter 10.
- The protection and management of heritage assets can provide a focus for volunteering. This opportunity is discussed in Chapter 10.
- Regeneration initiatives can be based on historic waterfronts and sites. These possibilities are discussed in Chapters 3 and 10.

6.6 Public awareness of the heritage and traditions associated with the waterways can be enhanced by effective interpretation, and through participation in events such as the annual Heritage Open Days, when a number of waterways locations organise special events for the public, supported by voluntary interest groups. There is a case for spreading best practice and the Government suggests that AINA takes the lead in developing guidelines for promoting public awareness of our waterways heritage.

6.7 Heritage also needs to be relevant for the future and whilst care needs to be taken in developing new uses for redundant historic buildings, sympathetic development can be important for successful waterside regeneration. Authoritative advice is available from:

- English Heritage on its HELM Website (www.helm.org.uk) on how the historic environment can support regeneration and contribute to the quality of green infrastructure;
- The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) works closely with English Heritage and British Waterways to advise on waterways heritage regeneration projects involving new design. British Waterways has been appointed as an enabling partner by CABE. Case studies are available on their website www.cabe.org.uk ;
- The Town and Country Planning Association policy advice note on inland waterways provides detailed guidance on how the waterways can be better supported by the planning system (see para 3.18).

In the near future British Waterways and English Heritage also intend to publish joint guidance on the quality of waterside design.

6.8 Waterways museums, including those managed by The Waterways Trust at Gloucester Docks, Ellesmere Port and Stoke Bruerne provide an opportunity to create an imaginative resource that is relevant to modern society and local communities, while demonstrating how our waterway network helped transform the economy of Britain and of the world.

6.9 Waterway authorities are responding to the challenges of the Government's (draft) vision for the historic environment²⁵ by taking a more proactive approach to heritage management.

²⁵ DCMS, *The Government's vision statement on the historic environment for England*, 2009

6.10 English Heritage and Cadw in Wales recognise that such actions have greatly improved the quantity and quality of heritage conservation of waterways in recent years. There remain 35 'at risk' structures (with 11 of these fully repaired and awaiting removal from lists) belonging to British Waterways in Local Authority registers now, compared to 125 in 2005. Care still needs to be taken to ensure that the approach to conservation is consistent around the country and that the heritage value of waterways is recognised and enhanced through waterside regeneration schemes.

Stourport regeneration

Stourport-on-Severn is a unique and historic canal town in the West Midlands. An inland port was developed at Stourport in the late 18th Century to link the River Severn with the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal. The town grew up around the port, which now consists of 5 inter-connected basins, within a conservation area, providing moorings for over 100 recreational craft.

Between 2006 and 2008 a £4 million programme of work was carried out to:

- Improve pedestrian links between the basins and the town.
- Conserve the deteriorating buildings, basins and historic structures. Through the programme 22 historic buildings and structures were renovated using to a high standard, blending in with the historic environment and making use of quality materials - cast iron gutters; drain pipes; historic iron work repairs to railings; bespoke carpentry etc. The work also enabled local people to be trained in heritage restoration techniques.
- Increase the awareness and involvement of local people in the development of the basin area through activities including an arts programme, community events, involving local schools, volunteering initiatives and guided walks.
- Create habitats for rare species such as kingfishers, otters and bats.
- Provide opportunities for local businesses through increased visitor footfall and expenditure.

The project was delivered through a partnership led by British Waterways and including of Stourport Forward, Stourport Town Council, Wyre Forest District Council and Worcestershire County Council. Funding support was secured from a number of sources including Heritage Lottery Fund, Advantage West Midlands and the Arts Council.

Since completion, the scheme has won a number of awards, including:

- British Urban Regeneration Association (BURA) Waterway Renaissance Awards - 2008 Winners in the Historic Environment category
- National Lottery Awards – 2009 Winner – Best Heritage Project

Further information can be found at:-

www.stourporttown.co.uk/stourport_basins.html

6.11 In England Planning Guidance Notes 15 and 16 are being merged into a single Planning Policy Statement (PPS). The new PPS will take on board the Government's

commitment to streamline the existing suite of planning policy documents and separate out policy from guidance. This is currently the subject of public consultation.

Q7. Do you agree that the unique cultural heritage associated with inland waterways provides a key benefit to those who use and visit waterways? How can these resources be used to further enhance and encourage use of the waterways?

Q8. Do you consider the protection of the natural and built heritage to be one of the Waterway Authorities primary tasks?

Q9. What area of waterway heritage do you consider most under threat?

Chapter 7

Health, well-being, recreation and sport

Health and well-being

7.1 The waterways of England and Wales provide perhaps the most accessible and well-used facilities for recreation in the country. The numbers are impressive. During 2008 there were over 11 million individual boat trips on our inland waterways and our rivers canals were fished by over a million anglers. Surveys conducted by the navigation authorities suggest that well over 300 million visits are made by walkers and cyclists to waterside paths. Many thousands more use the waterways for sports like canoeing, rowing, dinghy sailing and water skiing. The Government's aim is to build on these encouraging figures so that the waterway network becomes a major focus for the delivery of Government plans to improve the health and well-being of the nation.

7.2 Government strategies to promote better health and well-being in England are set out in the Department of Health's physical activity plan – "*Be Active: Be Healthy*"²⁶ and the cross-government obesity strategy *Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives*. In Wales the policies are described in "*Climbing higher: Creating an active Wales*"²⁷. Active lifestyles are known to be essential for good health and an important contributor to general well-being. Evidence from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) shows that "increasing physical activity levels in the population will help prevent or manage over twenty conditions and diseases", including coronary heart disease, diabetes, some cancers and obesity²⁸.

7.3 The role of well managed environmental and heritage resources, such as waterways, in promoting mental well-being and combating stress has been described in research carried out for the Countryside Recreation Network.²⁹ The waterways can contribute in two distinct ways:

- by encouraging use of the water itself for recreation, and
- by facilitating the use of the riverside paths and towpaths.

Expanding water based recreation and waterside recreation require different policies and the resolution of distinct problems.

²⁶ Department of Health, *Be Active : Be Healthy*, 2009

²⁷ Wales Assembly Government, *Climbing higher: Creating an active Wales* (due to be launched January 2010)

²⁸ National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, *Promoting and creating built or natural environments that encourage and support physical activity*, NICE Public Health Guidance 8, 2008

²⁹ Pretty J, Griffin R, Peacock J, Hine R, Sellens M, South N, *A Countryside for Health and Well-being: The Physical and Mental Health Benefits of Green Exercise*, Countryside Recreation Network, 2005

Water based sport and recreation

7.4 Waterways host a range of recreational and sporting activities where participation can be increased.

7.5 British Waterways, the Broads Authority and the Environment Agency have policies in place to expand boating on their navigations. Overall the numbers of privately-owned boats on the waterways managed by these navigation authorities has increased by 11% since 2000 to over 68,000. This growth is almost entirely due to the very rapid increase in privately owned boats on British Waterways navigations: a rise of 40% from 18,288 in 1999/2000 to 25,652 in 2008/09. During the same period, the number of powered boats registered on Environment Agency waterways has remained steady at around 32,000 with the number of privately owned boats on the Broads stabilising at close to 11,000.

7.6 Because boat ownership involves a substantial financial commitment, the ability to expand participation in this way is limited. However hire boats can make boating available to more of the population and the Government applauds those companies who are using innovative schemes to widen the market. Community Boat Associations are also performing a valuable service by opening boating to groups who suffer particular disadvantage. AINA has a particular role in identifying opportunities to expand boating.

7.7 Canoeing involves a much lower initial cost, brings significant health benefits and has a particular appeal for young people. Local canoe clubs are based along the waterway network and have a good record in widening participation in the sport. As well as informal canoeing, navigable waterways host long distance flat water canoeing, encompassing canoe trails and races, such as the annual Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race on the Kennet and Avon Canal and River Thames. There are also a number of canoe hire businesses, providing opportunity for novices to try the activity.

7.8 Some of the broader rivers and canals are used for rowing. The River Thames hosts major international events such as the Henley Royal Regatta and the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race.

7.9 Specific navigations also host:

- dinghy and yacht sailing on some of the larger rivers, the Broads and on some canal reservoirs. This includes calendars of racing events and regattas as well as informal cruising.
 - waterskiing in several rivers usually managed via zoning arrangements and organised by clubs;
 - power boat racing, including world championships, which takes place in the Broads.
-

7.10 Recreational angling is the most popular participation sport in the country. The Environment Agency sells over 1.25 million rod licences each year and sales are increasing. The navigable waterway network forms the biggest and most valuable coarse fishing resource in the country. The Environment Agency and British Waterways have policies in place to encourage further participation, particularly amongst young people, women and people from minority ethnic communities. A recent example is the series of junior focussed angling taster events coordinated by the Environment Agency with the Angling Development Board.

7.11 Sport England and the Sports Council for Wales have programmes to encourage greater participation in waterways activities such as canoeing and rowing among the over 16 age group. The National Governing bodies for each sport also have promotional policies. Waterway authorities should work in partnership with the relevant National Governing Bodies³⁰ to develop initiatives to encourage more people to take up the activity, to widen the diversity of participants, and to attract and retain qualified volunteers.

7.12 Waterway authorities may also wish to seek engagement with the County Sport and Physical Activity Partnerships who receive funding from Sport England to support national governing bodies to deliver their priorities as well as funding from the Department of Health to coordinate local programmes and investment to deliver physical activity.

7.13 As well as working to increase participation in specific water based activities the Government supports the Environment Agency in preparing regional strategies for the development of all forms of water recreation in a sustainable way across England and Wales. The first strategy was launched in Wales in 2008³¹. Subsequently the Welsh Assembly Government has supported a funding programme (SPLASH) to help take the strategy forward. The SPLASH programme supports projects securing new or improved public access to Wales' rivers, lakes, canals, reservoirs and coastal waters for recreational and educational activities. Further water recreation strategies are being developed by the Environment Agency in consultation with partners and, as they become available, the Government commends the SPLASH approach to Regional Development Agencies in England.

Lee Valley Fisheries Action Plan

The River Lee Valley covers parts of Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Essex and North London. In 2002 the Lee Valley Fisheries Action Plan (FAP) was developed to increase the involvement of over 22,000 local anglers in the management and development of river and still water fisheries within the catchment. The Lee Valley FAP group consists of representatives from the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, Thames Water Plc, British Waterways, the Environment Agency, the Lee Anglers Consortium and the Lee Valley Anglers Consultative Association. The group share a common goal - to

³⁰ In England, these include the National Federation of Anglers (angling), British Canoe Union (canoeing), Amateur Rowing Association (rowing)

³¹ Environment Agency Wales, *A better place in play in Wales: Wales' strategy for water related recreation 2008 – 2012*, 2008

protect and enhance fisheries within the Lee Valley.

The River Lee FAP has already had a positive impact on the river, with local groups fully participating in important actions such as projects to improve fish numbers, fish habitat, angling access and participation, as well as species specific studies of brown trout, barbel, zander and non-native crayfish.

The development of 'Angling Development Zones' initially piloted at Enfield Lock is just one project put into place as part of the Lee Valley FAP. Fish numbers throughout the Lee Navigation have declined over the last decade due a lack of fish spawning, predation by cormorants and variable water quality. To tackle these problems, a series of floating marginal reed rafts were installed near Enfield Lock, providing valuable spawning habitat and cover for fish. A recent poll showed that 78% of anglers who fish at Enfield believe that the refuges have improved the quality of fishing.

The Lee Valley FAP continues to influence local developments, such as the Olympics 2012, and London-wide strategies and provides a link to broader initiatives, including the Water Framework Directive.

Further Information on Fisheries Action Plans can be obtained from:-

www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/library/publications/33971.aspx

Waterside sport and recreation

7.14 Riverside paths and canal towpaths are well used for recreation by walkers, cyclists, joggers and sightseers, as well as providing attractive off-road routes for activities such as commuting and dog walking³². Canal towpaths are often flat and level, enabling their use by a wide range of people of all ages and abilities to improve their physical fitness through moderate regular exercise.

7.15 Waterway paths link the centres of towns and cities with the surrounding countryside. Most of the inhabitants of England and Wales live within 5 kilometres of an inland waterway³³. Waterways pass through inner city areas with high instances of multiple deprivation.³⁴ The availability of waterside pathways contributes to the amount and intensity of exercise undertaken by local people, thus improving their health and well-being. In a series of towpath surveys on British Waterways canals in 2003, 62% of respondents said that the availability of the canal towpath increased the amount of physical activity they regularly undertake. Of this total, 42% indicated that it had increased by a large amount³⁵.

³² British Waterways Inland Waterway Day Visit Surveys – average of 4 years 2004 - 2007

³³ British Waterways GIS analysis, based on 2001 Census

³⁴ British Waterways GIS analysis, based on Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2005

³⁵ Pretty J, Griffin R, Peacock J, Hine R, Sellens M, South N, *A Countryside for Health and Well-being: The Physical and Mental Health Benefits of Green Exercise*, Countryside Recreation Network, 2005

Canals for the Community – North Staffordshire

In 2006 work to improve the canal towpath under the North Staffordshire Canals and Connecting Routeways project was drawing to a close. To ensure that the whole community could benefit from this regeneration, a survey was carried out to identify what could be done to encourage non-users to make use of this resource. The survey indicated that a Project Officer would make the canal livelier and more vibrant, as a result of this the Canals for the Community project was born.

The project covers the canal side communities of the Trent and Mersey and Caldon Canal through Stoke-on-Trent and aims to reduce social exclusion to the canal, creating a more vibrant and desirable place for the community to use for leisure and recreation. Funding of just over £180,000 has been awarded through the Big Lottery Fund's Reaching Communities programme. Partners include Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Stoke Angling for Everyone (SAFE), BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers), Walking for Health and the Federation of Stadium Communities.

Outputs are being delivered under the themes of conservation and training, arts and interpretation and events and activities; conservation training and taster days, fishing training and taster days, community arts and interpretation projects, topical guided walks and weekly health walks, cycling events, towpath tidies and celebratory events.

In the first year of the project there has been over 100 promotional opportunities to encourage new canal users, 44 events and activities have been held with 4 additional community consultation events. Initial expectations were that around 100 people would be engaged with their local canals, the total at the end of year one was just under 2,000. This seems to bear out the findings of the earlier consultation – that with effective encouragement people will take advantage of activities, resulting in the real legacy of the regenerated waterways.

7.16 However, an increase in waterside recreation requires that the waterside paths are in reasonable condition. This point was made strongly by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) in its guidance. According to NICE, designers and managers of public open space and paths (including “riverside paths and canal towpaths”) should:

- “Ensure public open spaces and public paths can be reached on foot, by bicycle and using other modes of transport involving physical activity. They should also be accessible by public transport.”
- “Ensure public open spaces and public paths are maintained to a high standard. They should be safe, attractive and welcoming to everyone.”

7.17 Both *Be Active: Be Healthy* and *Climbing Higher* explicitly acknowledge the role of inland waterways in improving people's physical health and mental well-being. However, both documents recognise that the quality of the environment has a major influence upon levels of physical activity, thus emphasising the need to invest in waterways and towpaths to create more attractive environments that people want to visit. In turn, more visitors create a greater sense of safety and security.

7.18 Unfortunately, although waterway authorities have a clear responsibility to maintain the waterway itself in a navigable and safe condition, no public authority is required or funded to maintain many riverside paths and towpaths although many towpaths are public rights of way and as such, both the owner and the local authority have responsibilities to keep them open and accessible. A number of initiatives exist such as the Department of Transport *Cycling City and Cycling Towns* schemes and the Sustrans-administered *Safe Routes to Schools* and *Connect 2* programmes and these have proved helpful. Nevertheless, the requirement for the improvement of waterway infrastructure emphasises the need for waterway authorities to be involved in Local Strategic Partnerships, which bring together local authorities with Primary Care Trusts and other stakeholders. Local authorities should appreciate that waterways can make a significant contribution to a number of local authority indicators, particularly “*adult participation in sport and active recreation*” and “*access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling*”. Waterway authorities should be encouraged to engage with their Local County Sport and Physical Activity Partnerships to further explore and promote physical opportunities associated with waterside paths. (The improvement to waterside paths is also discussed in Chapter 9).

7.19 In England the Department of Health is supporting the development of the Physical Activity Alliance, which brings together public, private and voluntary sector organisations seeking to increase physical activity in England. Both British Waterways and the Environment Agency are involved in the Physical Activity Alliance through their membership of the Outdoor Health Forum.

7.20 Around the country there are a wide range of schemes aimed at promoting active lifestyles. National initiatives include Natural England’s *Walking for Health* programme³⁶, *Let’s Walk Cymru*, in Wales³⁷, the Department of Health’s *Change4Life*³⁸, the *Blue Gym* scheme, originating from the Peninsula Medical School in the South West, *Active Challenge Routes*, organised by the Department of Health and Walk England, and the *Lets Get Moving* initiative designed to help inactive adults to become more active.

7.21 These developments provide important opportunities for waterway authorities to gain support and even some funding. Waterway authorities should consider aligning their policies with these national initiatives and seeking co-branding with *Change4Life* and other sub-brands such as *Walk4Life*, *Swim4Life*, *Bike4Life* and *Muckin4Life*.

7.22 *The Government will promote the role waterways can play in delivering improved health and well-being to Primary Care Trusts and other physical activity partners.*

³⁶ See www.whi.org.uk/

³⁷ See www.ww2h.org.uk/

³⁸ See www.nhs.uk/change4life/Pages/Default.aspx

Q10. Do you agree that inland waterways, including their paths and surrounding environments provide an important resource for outdoor recreation, sport and improving public well being? What more can be done to protect and improve these important resources?

Q11. What needs to be done to make waterside paths more accessible and better appreciated by local communities?

Chapter 8

Sustainable transport

Freight transport

8.1 As explained in Chapter 6, much of Britain's inland waterway network was constructed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for the transport of freight. However, with the development, first of rail and then of road transport, the use of the inland waterway system for the movement of freight has declined until it now accounts for less than 1% of total freight moved. Today the movement of goods is largely confined to the wider and deeper waterways and to the major estuaries.

8.2 In 2007, the total traffic on inland waterways in the UK, as defined by the Department for Transport, was 52.0 million tonnes, down from 63.1 million tonnes in 1991³⁹. During the same period purely inland traffic⁴⁰ declined from 5.4 million tonnes to 3.4 million tonnes. We now need to focus on if, and how, this downward trend can be reversed.

8.3 Moving freight traffic off the roads and onto the water can produce significant public benefits. Congestion on our roads can be reduced; air quality can be improved; and carbon emissions can be reduced. Freight transport by water can be cleaner than transport by road as moving goods by water can be more fuel efficient, leading to CO₂ emissions that can be one-quarter those of road transport.⁴¹

8.4 However, expectations about the possible increase in waterborne freight need to be realistic. The greatest opportunities for the increase in waterborne freight will be on the major estuaries (such as the Thames and the Humber), the larger river navigations and the commercial waterways. These still carry freight and could take more traffic.

8.5 It is recognised to be unlikely that substantive freight traffic will return to the country's narrow cruising waterway network as these waterways cannot accommodate the larger barges needed to serve the needs of most freight customers in an economic way. Nevertheless, even though freight is no longer a primary function of these waterways, they remain suitable for a few specific markets, provided freight transport can cope with the constraints of the existing infrastructure and due allowance is made for the needs of other users.

8.6 In the right locations and for suitable traffic, inland waterways can compete effectively. Waterways are particularly suitable for the transport of bulk cargos where origins and destinations are directly accessible by water. The waterways and

³⁹ Department for Transport, *Transport Statistics Bulletin: Waterborne Freight in the United Kingdom 2007*, 2008

⁴⁰ I.e. traffic moving between origins and destinations that are both on inland waterways

⁴¹ Tyndall Centre for Climate Change

estuaries can also offer effective routes for moving large indivisible loads and project cargo. Increasing transport costs, congestion on other modes and a growing requirement for sustainability are causing shippers of goods to look to alternatives to road transport to move goods.⁴²

8.7 However, the Government recognises that there are a number of challenges to the greater use of the inland waterways for freight transport. These challenges include:-

- the direct cost of using the inland waterways to transport freight can be more expensive than moving goods by road;
- even where waterborne freight has a direct cost advantage over other modes, potential customers have tended to view the cost differential as marginal and not sufficient to encourage modal shift;
- expertise dealing with inland water freight within potential customers and non-waterway logistics companies is limited. It can be time consuming to obtain cost and service information, and authoritative advice on the waterborne options open to customers is less easily obtained than for other modes;
- a shortage of suitably skilled staff and a corresponding shortage of training programmes;
- a shortage of wharves and suitable waterside infrastructure. Most historic wharves are located in areas in inner cities where they cannot be easily accessed in a way that meets 21st century freight needs. In addition preserving them may be increasingly difficult as they come under pressure from other uses, such as waterside housing, development or public space requirements;
- limiting dimensions such as low bridges, may also provide significant barriers;

8.8 The Government will support the transfer of freight from road to water, where it is practical and economically and environmentally sustainable to do so, in line with the recommendations of the Freight Study Group⁴³. The Department of Transport (DfT) is working with customers and shippers of freight to encourage these opportunities to be taken. DfT can support the transfer of goods from road to water through the Sustainable Distribution Fund in recognition of the resulting environmental and social benefits. The Freight Facilities Grant (FFG)⁴⁴ helps offset the capital costs of providing water (and rail) freight handling facilities. Up to £10m is available in 2010/11, increasing to £16m in 2011/12 and reaching £25m by 2013/14. The new Mode Shift Revenue Scheme (MSRS), launched in August 2009, is also in place to assist companies with the higher operating costs associated with using water freight transport as opposed to road. MSRS is more flexible than the previous operating grant scheme for inland waterway freight traffic and it is hoped that it will improve the commercial viability of the sector over the

⁴² IWAC, *Decreasing our Carbon Footprint: Moving Freight onto the Inland Waterways of England and Wales*, 2008

⁴³ Defra, *Freight on water: A new perspective. The report of the Freight Study Group*, 2002

⁴⁴ Department for Transport, *Guide to Freight Facilities Grant (FFG) in England*, 2006. The Wales Assembly Government runs a similar scheme in Wales.

medium term. These schemes operate in England, Scotland and Wales. More information can be obtained from:

www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/freight/waterfreight/grants.

8.9 There are a number of bodies who seek to promote the inland waterways for freight. Expert advice is available from the Commercial Boat Operators Association and Freight by Water (formerly Sea & Water)⁴⁵, which also provides resources to assist potential users. Through its interactive website, Freight by Water can supply potential customers with immediate, up-to-date and authoritative information on the available options and further contacts where additional information can be obtained. Advice is also available from the DfT's Freight Best Practice programme. This includes the free guide "Choosing and Developing a Multi-modal Transport Solution": www.freightbestpractice.org.uk/multi-modal.

8.10 Regional and local authorities should encourage and support waterborne freight initiatives, where clear benefits arise in the localities served. PPG 13 (Transport) states that local authorities should work with other stakeholders in the inland waterway sector to develop the potential of inland waterways. Consideration should be given to protecting viable freight wharf sites, to ensure that places for loading and unloading goods to/from water are available in the future. Such an approach has been taken in London, where a number of "safeguarded wharves" have been designated.

8.11 Local authorities should also consider applying planning conditions to developments to ensure that, in order to reduce congestion and limit emissions, some goods are moved by water. There is a particular opportunity for traffic associated with the building industry – construction materials and waste. At a national level, there is already a policy giving preference to the use of water transport for moving abnormal indivisible loads where water freight can provide a practical, economic and environmentally desirable solution⁴⁶.

8.12 In order to make effective use of water freight, logistics businesses, water freight operators and their customers all need a degree of certainty about the networks that will be available to them. Last year, DfT mapped the inland waterway network to identify those waterways where, on the basis of width and depth, there is the most potential for the waterway to take freight traffic. The supporting report and maps are available from the Departments web site. www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/freight/waterfreight/.

8.13 To support transparency and certainty for potential freight customers and operators, and to focus available resources on those waterways with the greatest freight potential, the Government will consider options for reassessing the

⁴⁵ See www.freightbywater.org/

⁴⁶ Highways Agency, *Water preferred policy guidelines for the movement of abnormal indivisible loads*

classification and management of the commercial waterways⁴⁷, which were established in the 1968 Transport Act. The significant changes in transport choices over the past forty years and the lack of use of some commercial waterways for freight, may mean that some of the original designations are no longer appropriate.

8.14 We want to hear the opinions of stakeholders about the options available to us. We will also work to promote a dialogue between waterway authorities, freight customers, logistics businesses, transport interests and regional and local authorities to determine how the commercial waterways can be best managed in the future and to reach an understanding of the costs and benefits of accommodating freight, taking account of the prospects for future freight traffic.

8.15 This dialogue will be informed by the conclusions of DfT's ongoing work to understand more fully current and future opportunities for freight modal shift from road to water (and rail). This research is drawing on a new understanding of current HGV movements and demand to identify the extent to which water freight can become a realistic alternative for existing road traffic. The Government expects that, once complete, this will allow a more informed view to be taken on whether or not the recent downward trend in inland waterway traffic can be reversed.

Passenger transport

8.16 Passenger transport on inland waterways largely consists of services for tourists. Scheduled transport services are run in London, with some commuter services in Liverpool, Bristol and Cardiff. In London, continuous support from Transport for London has allowed services to grow and the frequency of the services to increase. In 2007/08, nearly 1.8 million tickets were sold for the riverboat services: this represents an increase of 14% from 2000/2001⁴⁸.

8.17 Although opportunities for scheduled services may be limited, water passenger transport should be supported as and when opportunities arise. The extensive experience in London should be used by authorities and operators who are planning services.

Walking and cycling

8.18 As explained in Chapter 7, the Government wishes to encourage people to get out of their cars and to walk and cycle. The benefits include better health and well-being and a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions. In some areas such as the Broads, waterway paths encourage outdoor recreation activity by enabling access to areas of the countryside that could not otherwise be reached. The normally gentle gradients of these paths also help to attract a much wider range of users than in other areas.

⁴⁷ The Commercial Waterways are designated by the 1968 Transport Act. Some of the designated Commercial Waterways are extensively used for the movement of freight, while others have ceased to be used for the carriage of goods.

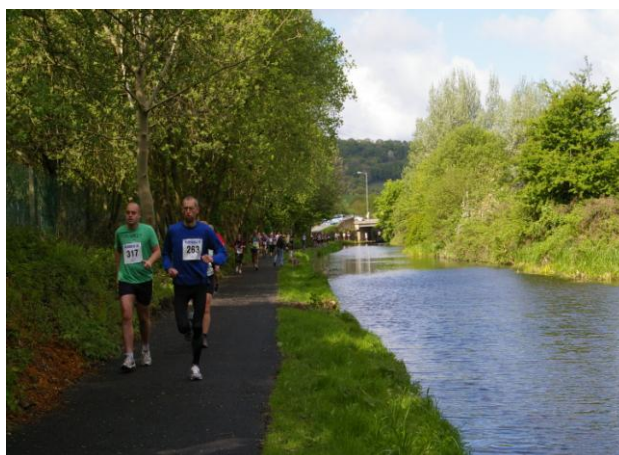
⁴⁸ Transport for London, *London Travel Report [xxx]*

8.19 Waterside paths are already widely used by walkers and cyclists for commuting and other functional activities. British Waterways estimates that in 2007 there were around 82 million visits to the pathways alongside its canals and rivers for cycling and using the path as a means “to get somewhere.”⁴⁹ The Thames path is one of the most well used recreational pathways in Britain.

8.20 Increased use of waterside paths means that they must be maintained in good condition. Chapter 7 noted that no public authority is required or funded to maintain many riverside paths and towpaths. However certain waterside paths around the country are being upgraded and improved through walking and cycling initiatives such as the Department of Transport *Cycling City and Cycling Towns* schemes and the Sustrans-administered *Safe Routes to Schools* and *Connect 2* programmes. Support for improvement schemes, particularly in urban areas, also comes through Local Transport Plans, to help alleviate congestion and promote healthy outdoor activity.

8.21 A complaint sometimes heard from users is that conflict between towpath users, particularly between walkers and cyclists, is not properly managed. Where demand is at such a level for potential conflict to occur, waterway and local authorities should be encouraged to work together to establish the size of the problem and identify possible solutions.

Calder Valley Greenway



The Calder Valley Greenway is a linear off-road multi-user route along the Calder and Hebble Navigation, connecting communities around Halifax in West Yorkshire. It will eventually link with the highly regarded Spen Valley Greenway to form a wider network of off-road routes in Calderdale and Kirklees Districts.

Recently Calderdale District Council's Local Transport Plan invested around

⁴⁹ British Waterways, *Inland Waterway Day Visits Survey 2007, 2008*

£500,000 to upgrade around 5 km of towpath. This has improved local green space and provided opportunities for local people to take ownership and benefit from all their local canal has to offer. Usage of the waterways in the area has increased by 300% amongst joggers, walkers and cyclists following the improvements.

As well as delivering a sustainable transport route along the valley, the Greenway has created an improved recreational resource for local people. It has created an opportunity for people to become more physically active and provides a place where people can relax, meet and enjoy the natural environment.

Local communities were directly involved in the project through participation in local events on the waterway. To further local involvement, schemes such as a wildflower and vegetable planting project were delivered as part of the overall improvements, thus enhancing biodiversity and local wildlife habitats along the waterway corridor.

8.22 The Government believes that there is considerable opportunity to do more to develop waterside paths as spine transport routes for use by commuters and for off-road recreation. The aim should be to link urban areas to the surrounding countryside and to make connections to other off-road routes and green spaces. Local authorities should work with waterway authorities and other key stakeholders, such as Sustrans and Natural England, to deliver schemes and ensure that the transport potential of waterway towpaths is recognised and exploited in Local Transport Plans.

8.23 The Government is currently developing an Active Travel Strategy to promote walking and cycling as a mainstream form of personal transport. This plan will set out the role that local authorities, the NHS, public transport operators, employers and schools can play in delivering an active travel revolution across the country.

8.24 *The Government will therefore promote the contribution that waterways make to sustainable transport to their agencies and local transport authorities, particularly in relation to the use of towpaths as walking and cycling route.*

Q12. Do you agree that waterside paths offer considerable potential for increasing green commuting, both for pedestrians and cyclists? What more can be done to encourage this further?

Q13. What can be done to reverse the decline in freight on the inland waterways in recent years? Which elements of the commercial waterways have the greatest potential for freight use? How should the planning process ensure the protection of freight interests in those areas with greatest freight potential?

Chapter 9

Tourism and business development

9.1 The inland waterways of England and Wales bring together a unique cultural heritage with picturesque scenery and the opportunity to take part in a variety of recreational and leisure activities. The Broads, the Thames path, the Foxton locks, the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct (newly designated as a World Heritage site), the Waterways Museum at Ellesmere Port and the Anderton Lift, represent a tiny selection from the treasury of attractions that tourists can visit and enjoy. The Government's aim is to ensure that we use these stunning advantages to increase tourism, to build businesses and to create jobs

9.2 At present, tourism and recreation, taken together, underpin a cluster of businesses, often small and medium sized enterprises that have grown up to serve the visitor economy – marinas, holiday hire boat companies, trip boat operators, boat builders, repairers and chandlers, pubs and restaurants, hotels and guest houses, holiday cottages and apartments. Working with landowners can deliver economic outcomes, such as diversification of the rural economy through, for example, the creation of marinas and the opening up of new recreation access opportunities. A study by the British Marine Federation published in 2008⁵⁰ estimates that the inland marina sector alone generates some £47 million turnover each year. When on-site businesses, suppliers and visitor and employee expenditure in the wider economy are taken into account, the inland marina sector is estimated to support the equivalent of about 10,000 full-time jobs in local economies around the UK. Revenue from hire boat businesses amounted to nearly £90 million in the same year and supported over 1,700 full-time jobs.

Mercia Marina

Mercia Marina was created through the redevelopment of the former Willington Lake trout fishery in South Derbyshire into an inland marina served by the Trent and Mersey Canal. There was considerable support for the project helped by the site's central location close to the A.50 trunk road, providing access to the cities of Derby and Nottingham, and the potential to stimulate tourism in the South Derbyshire / National Forest area. There was also an urgent need to create more moorings for boats as a result of the growing demand for canal boating in this area.

The site owners Madecorn Leisure, worked closely with British Waterways and South Derbyshire District Council to deliver a new high profile inland marina, which is a destination in its own right. It provides an attractive and quality environment for private boat owners, comprising a 585 berth marina, tea room, workshop, convenience store, facilities block, boat hire centre and amenity lake. The marina was created by constructing a 400m link into the adjoining Trent and Mersey Canal. The entire site covers approximately 30 hectares (74.5 acres), of which 7.5 hectares (18.7 acres) is water. There are plans for further developments at the site - a pub/restaurant, chandlery, holiday lodges and additional retail space. To date 23 full time jobs and four new businesses have been created on the site.

⁵⁰ British Marine Federation, *Economic Benefits of Inland Marinas in the UK*, 2008

The total cost of the scheme was £6.6m of which East Midlands Development Agency (emda) provided £500,000 through its 2007 Waterway Regeneration programme. The balance of funding was provided by Madecorn Leisure. emda funding allowed the marina to be completed to a higher environmental standard than would otherwise have been the case. In the long term, this will encourage growth in the economic potential of the site through ancillary facilities.

9.3 Waterway tourism is particularly important in rural areas. In 2008 there were 11 million visits to the Broads and those visits were worth £413 million to the local economy. In many other parts of the country, particularly in areas outside the coastal tourist areas and the National Parks, waterways form the key tourism resource. British Waterways estimates indicate that the canal-based holiday hire sector contributes up to £30 million per year to the UK's balance of payments⁵¹, while the Environment Agency's largest waterway, the non-tidal Thames above Teddington Lock, is home to about a quarter of the total inland fleet of powered leisure craft in England and Wales, and provides the customer base for businesses to serve the boaters and service the vessels.

9.4 Alongside tourism and recreation are other businesses whose future depends on thriving waterways. The construction sector benefits from waterway maintenance and development contracts, communications (through fibre-optic cables in waterside paths) and the installation of renewable energy systems creates and sustains business and employment.

9.5 Working from this substantial base, waterway authorities should encourage business development, and expansion. Quality is the key to sustained growth. Support for work on quality enhancement is available through Business Link⁵². A good visitor experience will generate more visits, increasing both the amount and security of revenue.

9.6 The clustering of activities is one approach that can be adopted to encourage innovation, and clustering also facilitates the joint development of products like diverse tourism packages, joint marketing and the sharing of resources. In some cases, there may be a need for waterway authorities to intervene directly to assist businesses, particularly to address market failure. British Waterways has established a "New Marinas Unit"⁵³, to support the creation of greater marina capacity by the private sector. This is in response to the growing demand for canal boating and the need to develop greater mooring capacity. The Environment Agency discounted hire boat licences in 2007 to help companies through that season of floods.

⁵¹ British Waterways estimates, 2008

⁵² See www.businesslink.gov.uk/

⁵³ For more information see www.britishwaterways.co.uk/our-work/boating/new-marinas-unit

River Thames Alliance

The River Thames Alliance (RTA) was formed in 2003 to bring together a wide range of organisations and interest groups to work together to encourage more people to visit, use, contribute to, appreciate and care for the River Thames. The vision of the RTA is presented in the Thames Waterway Plan 2006-2011 as “the healthy growth in the use of the freshwater Thames for communities, wildlife, leisure and business”.

The River Thames Alliance currently has 82 members made up of 21 riparian Local Authorities, 5 Town Councils, 3 council representative groups/associations, 39 user groups, 8 public bodies, 5 charitable organisations and 1 utility company.

Working informally as a sub-group of the RTA since 2004, and then formally established in 2007, the River Thames Alliance Marketing Partnership (RTAMP) is the first river-focussed destination marketing partnership, which promotes the non-tidal River Thames as a leisure destination. The RTAMP is delivering actions under the Tourism Policy of the Thames Waterway Plan to promote the Thames as a ‘must visit’ destination.

In July 2009, RTAMP had 37 businesses and organisations as paid-up members who benefit from the marketing campaigns being delivered using the income from subscription fees. The campaigns, targeted at certain segments of the population, direct traffic to the [visitthames.co.uk](http://www.visitthames.co.uk) website which holds comprehensive information about the wide variety of activities available on the river. Traffic to this site has increased year on year to around 25,000 unique visitors a month.

RTAMP activity is similar to that of a destination management organisation. As well as local hotels, restaurants, attractions and boat operators, the destination managers within the Thames Valley also are part of RTAMP, with the river offering a new angle to both bring people into their destination, and encourage local people to take greater advantage of the environment on their doorstep.

9.7 Support for tourism, marketing and promotion is available from a variety of sources. The national marketing web sites hosted by Visit England (www.enjoyengland.com), Visit Britain (www.visitbritain.co.uk) and Visit Wales (www.visitwales.co.uk) cover a range of waterways activities and attractions. These organisations will continue to work with the waterways and local businesses to promote tourism on the waterway network. Links are also provided to waterscape.com, the British Waterways dedicated leisure site. Activities along the River Thames are promoted by the Environment Agency and River Thames Alliance through their website (www.visitthames.co.uk). Similar websites are being developed by the Environment Agency for their other waterways. The Broads Authority is a signatory to the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism and has developed the Broads Tourism Forum in order to support local businesses in the promotion of their activities.

9.8 *Waterways for Everyone* encourages all waterways stakeholders to take a long term view of opportunities and challenges. For example, if the current trend for “staycations” – people spending more of their holiday time in Britain - is to be

maintained, British holiday packages will need to be imaginatively matched to the needs of potential customers and will need to be competitive on price. However, there is no doubt that the possibilities for companies providing holidays in Britain are exciting. What we are seeing in 2009 might be a glimpse of the future and the waterways sector should be prepared to make the most of a growing business opportunity.

9.9 In view of these likely trends, it is timely to give further thought to how the waterways should be marketed and promoted. The main waterway authorities within AINA are encouraged to discuss with other stakeholders – particularly the British Marine Federation (BMF), the hire boat trade, Visit England, Visit Wales, the Inland Waterways Association and IWAC – what changes need to be made to prepare for the likely expansion in visitor numbers.

Skills development and training

9.10 New business opportunities will require skilled staff. Waterways provide a focus for training and skills development, but activity is often fragmented and opportunistic. Initiatives range from schemes aimed at maintaining traditional skills to more general programmes through New Deal or Intermediate Labour Markets (ILMs), which focus on getting the unemployed back into work or providing training for excluded adults. There are opportunities for an enhanced and more coordinated role for waterways as a vehicle for skills development, through:

- apprenticeships and traineeships directly provided by waterway authorities and other stakeholders;
- heritage and environment skills initiatives - an area of acknowledged shortage;
- leadership and sports/outdoor pursuits;
- raising the skills and capacity of volunteers;
- delivery of assisted employment schemes via New Deal, ILMs and other initiatives, such as the Future Jobs Fund.

9.11 Training schemes would not necessarily be delivered directly by the waterway authorities; intermediaries such as the Groundwork Trusts or the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) are available to provide advice and training services.

Q14. How can we best encourage a common purpose between different users of the waterways? What can be done to better manage potential conflicts?

Q15. What do you believe should be done to maintain and increase the number of boat registrations on our inland waterways?

Q16. How can the waterways increase their share of the holiday market?

Chapter 10

Fairer, stronger and more active communities

10.1 Used imaginatively, the inland waterways can help to create and sustain stronger and more cohesive communities. In Chapter 3 we showed how the waterways can contribute to community self esteem and to an increased sense of civic pride. In this chapter we describe how the waterways can be used to expand the educational experience of young people, how the waterways can be used as a focus for volunteering and how the waterways can encourage community cohesion and combat the social exclusion of people suffering particular disadvantage.

Education and young people

10.2 *Waterways for Tomorrow* recognised the role that inland waterways can play in formal education in a diverse range of subjects. A study of the waterways can give an insight into important social and historical changes, into aspects of the natural sciences, into the development of engineering and industrial construction, and of course into climate change and environmental protection. The waterways provide many opportunities to demonstrate, in a real life setting, the importance of the so-called STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).

10.3 Because most schools are within easy reach of waterways, visits to local waterways are feasible for most pupils. In some cases schools may be able to take advantage of such initiatives as “floating classrooms” offered by third sector trusts. Ofsted recognises that learning outside the classroom leads to better outcomes for pupils, in terms of achievement, standards, motivation, personal development and behaviour⁵⁴. This connects with the Government’s increased emphasis on such activities, as set out in the *Learning outside the classroom manifesto*⁵⁵.

10.4 Learning outside the classroom also creates an opportunity to give clear and relevant advice to young people about how to keep themselves safe near water. There is an obvious need for waterway authorities to ensure that the infrastructure is safe and of good quality: the Environment Agency, British Waterways and the Broads Authority have worked hard in recent years to promote visitor safety.

10.5 Since *Waterways for Tomorrow* was published in 2000, Government has placed an increased emphasis on the delivery of basic literacy and numeracy skills. This is reflected in recent initiatives, such as British Waterways *Wild Over Waterways* (WOW) website⁵⁶. WOW provides learning resources both for teachers and children and offers:

⁵⁴ Ofsted, *Learning outside the classroom*, 2008

⁵⁵ DfES, *Learning outside the classroom manifesto*, 2006

⁵⁶ See www.wow4water.net

- school visits with associated learning resources and on-site education trails, supported by a programme of activities to raise awareness and confidence amongst teachers;
- on-line learning resources, with a new focus on a cross-curricular approach;
- events aimed at children.

10.6 WOW aims to provide inspirational resources and visits that help teachers deliver the National Curriculum. WOW is linked to the CABE / English Heritage “Engaging Places” website⁵⁷, which encourages schools to use the built and historic environment as a resource to support the curriculum.

Forest Schools

The forest schools project originated from the idea and wish to use a country park as an innovative learning space. Forest schools is an education project aimed at getting young people out of the classroom and into the outdoors. The country park is situated within 2 miles of Norwich City Centre. The course is aimed at excluded young people from areas of social deprivation within the centre of Norwich.

The aims of the course are to engage young people in educational projects based around conservation and sustainability in and around the waterways of the Broads. The course is currently operating at an 85% retention rate, which is outstanding in terms of this target group, has built in learning outcomes and offers a range of qualifications as part of the programme including the John Muir Award, ASDAN qualifications and the Duke of Edinburgh award.

Schools individually fund their own attendance and the country park staff assist in looking for and applying for funding in partnership with schools.

10.7 Working more closely with schools and colleges brings substantial advantages to waterways authorities. There is considerable evidence that contact with rivers and canals at an early age engenders an interest that lasts through life, including the wish to take boating holidays and even to move on to boat ownership. Research commissioned by English Heritage in 2007 from data in the annual “Taking Part”⁵⁸ survey demonstrated that the strongest factor influencing visits to heritage sites was whether a person had been taken to a heritage site as a child. There is also some evidence that educating young people to value the waterways helps to reduce vandalism.

10.8 Visits to the waterways may also open opportunities for encouraging young people to participate in more outdoor activities⁵⁹. This requires waterway authorities to work in partnership with sporting and recreational organisations to ensure that there is a ready welcome for young people and that issues such as risk assessments have been professionally handled.

⁵⁷ See www.engagingplaces.org.uk

⁵⁸ DCMS, *Taking Part: The National Survey of Culture, Leisure and Sport*

⁵⁹ Countryside Recreation Network, *Growing Up Outdoors*, Seminar Proceedings, 2008

10.9 While the delivery of educational benefits will need to be handled principally by the education and voluntary sectors, the waterway authorities can act as facilitators. Waterways authorities can help generate interest by preparing briefing packs for teaching staff and by producing “taster” material for pupils. The waterway network can provide many opportunities to help deliver the Government’s educational strategy and is a valuable resource for increasing outdoor learning and other outdoor activities for children and young people.

Volunteering and the social economy

10.10 Volunteers have played an essential part in the renaissance of Britain’s waterways during the last 50 years. Many canals would no longer be in operation had volunteers not worked so hard to safeguard and restore the system in the years after the Second World War. Nowadays volunteers work to create new waterways, to restore disused and underdeveloped waterways, and to enhance and improve waterway services and the experience of people using rivers and canals. Many volunteers are active in the Inland Waterways Association (IWA), the Royal Yachting Association (RYA), and in the numerous canal and waterway societies and trusts around the country.

10.11 Waterway authorities are working to increase opportunities for volunteering on waterways by:

- creating new volunteering opportunities. Although other opportunities exist, in areas such as angling, bailiffing and sports coaching, waterways volunteering is often viewed as involving manual labour, particularly in canal restoration or environmental improvement. Other opportunities for volunteering, such as providing visitor services and engaging the support of people who possess design and administrative skills, for example, need to be developed.
- widening the volunteer base. Waterway volunteering includes many opportunities for the over 50s, and there is a need to widen the support base by attracting young people. The Waterways Trust and British Waterways are working with “V” (the national youth volunteering organisation) to create volunteering opportunities for 16 – 25 year-olds on canals in the north-west of England.
- supporting capacity building amongst volunteers, through training schemes and the attainment of appropriate qualifications.

10.12 However, much remains to be done. Government policy is to increase volunteering and the Compact provides a useful basis to promote the necessary cooperation between volunteering organisations and the public sector. Defra is keen to work more closely with the third sector to protect the environment and promote greener lifestyles⁶⁰. There is potential to develop alternative forms of engagement with volunteers through, for example, the promotion of social enterprises to deliver visitor service and training schemes.

⁶⁰ Defra, *Third Sector Strategy*, 2008

10.13 Many authorities are developing and implementing a strategic approach to volunteering. Initiatives are under way by British Waterways, the Environment Agency and the Broads Authority and by local authorities, such as Newport City Council, Torfaen County Borough Council and Derbyshire County Council, building on existing volunteer activity coordinated by the IWA and by the canal societies. AINA is preparing best practice guidelines and IWAC intends to examine what lessons can be learnt from organisations outside the waterway communities. The debate which British Waterways is leading on its *Twenty-Twenty Vision* proposals will create further opportunities for considering the measures that need to be taken to expand volunteering. Issues that need to be addressed include the means of delivery, the nature of the contracts between waterway authorities and the volunteer organisations, training and capacity building, a well balanced approach to health and safety issues and the possibility of a “volunteer exchange” for volunteer recruitment.

Community cohesion and social exclusion

10.14 Surveys by British Waterways and others indicate that, in spite of all the developments of the last ten years, public awareness of the waterways and of the benefits that waterways can deliver, is still confined to a relatively small part of the population. Defra’s research into the value of public benefits derived from the waterways reinforces the conclusion that, while some people regard the waterways as a vital feature of their community and of their lives, a majority of the population feel no strong attachment.

10.15 The main objective of *Waterways for Everyone* is therefore to increase the range of benefits that waterways provide across the country and to ensure that the benefits are both relevant and visible to many more people. The advantages of having a waterway close by should become obvious to everyone and should be one of the shared opinions that binds the community together. If the many initiatives set out in these chapters on issues as diverse as educational provision, economic regeneration, sustainable transport, recreation and sport, are delivered then the appeal of the waterways will increase and local support will be consolidated.

10.16 In some communities, events and initiatives have been organised specifically to raise the profile of the waterway or to make a particular improvement. Examples include community fairs and festivals, waterway adoption schemes and clean-ups, and projects to improve the quality of the waterway environment and associated open space. Events and initiatives are sometimes organised by the public sector, including waterway authorities and sometimes by third sector organisations. Particularly in urban areas, an initiative to create and maintain a public space which is accessible, secure and attractive, is usually very well supported and helps to build community cohesion. Boaters may see a particular advantage in widening support for the waterways by demonstrating that the waterways are not just for them, but for the whole population.

10.17 Another group of initiatives that should be applauded involves the use of rivers and canals to combat social exclusion. A report by IWAC⁶¹ has shown how the waterways can be used to build up the self esteem of people in distress or to rehabilitate people who have suffered disadvantage. People who have been helped include excluded school children, individuals with medical problems of many kinds, offenders and ex-offenders and elderly persons in care. Starting with boat trips and the opportunity, without pressure, to enjoy the quiet comfort of a secure environment, most projects provide training in one or more of the many skills needed to crew a barge or narrowboat. Members of the National Community Boats Association (NCBA) deliver most of the initiatives which may be funded by local authorities, by Primary Care Trusts or even by the prison and probationary service. One project, run by the British Canoe Union in Devon is aimed at young people at risk and is supported by a consortium which includes the Police.

Sobriety Project, Goole

Founded as a school project in 1973 to introduce young people to the skills and way of life of the 'port in green fields' (Goole), *Sobriety* takes its name from a 100 year old Humber Keel. During the last 10 years the project has been replicated in Rotherham, Thorne, Selby and York.

Project headquarters are the accredited and award winning Yorkshire Waterways Museum, a popular visitor attraction and a land base for using the waterways to combat the effects of social exclusion. The aim is to inspire volunteers and beneficiaries to embrace the common purpose of making the museum a better place for visitors.

By working together to look after customers, young people get the skills to manage their own futures. The diversity of users and activities helps the project deliver outcomes and results for organisations with no waterways connection. The current priority is to help public bodies in the region deliver public service targets relating to :

- Young people excluded from school and/or at risk of offending - 60 per year, with a length of stay of 3 months.
- People leaving prison - 40 per year : length of stay 4 months :
- Previously housebound women getting into the labour market -10 per year:
- Reducing carbon footprint through local food and renewable energy.

Partners and funders include East Riding Youth Offending Team, Yorkshire Forward, Doncaster Neighbourhood Renewal, Wakefield Primary Care Trust, Coalfields Regeneration Trust, Coast Wolds Wetlands and Waterways Leader partnership and the Museums Libraries and Archives Council.

With an annual turnover of £500,000 from 30 sources and £100,000 income from the museum cafe, catering, conferences, floating gallery, gift shop, accredited courses and boat trips, *Sobriety* employs 15 full and part time staff to achieve its business objectives.

More information is available at www.waterwaysmuseum.org.uk

⁶¹ Inland Waterways Advisory Council, *Using Inland Waterways to Combat the Effects of Social Exclusion*, 2008

10.18 In its report, IWAC recommends that evidence is gathered to demonstrate that this form of intervention is effective and that, if the evidence is positive, the initiatives should be promoted to the relevant agencies who may wish to support projects on the waterways. The Government supports this approach and urges all stakeholders, including waterway authorities, local authorities and NCBA members to engage with this process.

Access to the waterways

10.19 Waterway authorities have worked for many years to improve the quality of access to waterways and towpaths. Inland waterways provide opportunities for good quality outdoor access for all sectors of the community close to where people live. Waterside paths tend to be flat and level, and often provide a more readily accessible resource than other outdoor recreation opportunities. Although more remains to be done to improve access, perhaps the greatest need is for more and better quality information to raise peoples' awareness of what is available and to allow people to make informed choices about where to go and what to do on the waterways. British Waterways "Yours to Enjoy" campaign has sought to raise local community awareness of the waterways in their local area.

Equal Shares for All – Waterways in Wales



The *Equal Shares for All* project promoted equal opportunities for people in Wales. It was funded under the EU *Equal Programme* and was led by Innovate Trust, based in Cardiff. British Waterways contributed to the project by working on access to the outdoors for people with disabilities, including access to employment opportunities. The project ran from 2005 to 2007.

British Waterways activities included:-

- An investigation of the opportunities for employment creation for people with disabilities, through visitor services and undertaking work on canals;
- Development of a geographic information system-based methodology for auditing access provision on canal, from a disability perspective and securing photographic records of access conditions. Through this work, a toolkit was developed to explain the methodology to outside organisations seeking to adopt a similar approach;
- A disabled access audit of all canals in Wales to determine works required to improve access and to promote good quality access to potential users.

Improvement works identified were entered into British Waterways' internal management system for implementation;

- Promotional material to encourage disabled people to visit canals in Wales, using a mix of leaflets, DVD, "open day" events and web-based information. The DVD was produced by *Equal Vision*, another partner in the *Equal Shares for All* consortium, as a part of their training programme for disabled people.

Since the end of the project, the audit work undertaken has provided a basis for on-going improvements to canals in Wales, such as towpath and access works delivered on the Montgomery Canal through the Powys Canal Tourism project.

Further details of the project and its findings, including the access audit toolkit, can be found at:-

www.britishwaterways.co.uk/responsibilities/social_inclusion/equal_shares_project.html

10.20 Good quality waterside paths are of particular benefit to elderly people, helping them to sustain active, healthy lifestyles into old age through the availability of outdoor recreation close to home. Active retired people have been key participants in waterway volunteering and boat ownership in particular. In this respect the inland waterways support the Government's strategy for an ageing population⁶².

10.21 Survey information suggests that, in many respects visitors to the waterways tend to be as diverse as the general population. However an important exception is that fewer people from black and ethnic minority communities visit the waterways than might have been expected. Surveys of boaters and anglers show significantly less diversity than amongst other visitors. Waterways provide opportunities for outreach and awareness-raising initiatives by other stakeholders to increase the diversity of users, in line with the Government's *Outdoors for All* action plan⁶³. Further, thought should be given as whether a cohesive, strategic approach could be developed for all waterways in respect of the diversity agenda in response to *Outdoors for All*. This could open up new opportunities to support schemes for waterway enhancement and promotion in relation to these groups, as well as demonstrating a commitment to diversity and inclusivity in response to the new equality legislation.

Q17. Do you agree that there is scope for increasing waterway related volunteering activity? How can this be achieved?

Q18. How can schools and colleges be encouraged to make greater use of the waterways for educational purposes?

Q19. What can be done to help NCBA to increase the use of waterways to improve social inclusion?

Q20. What can be done to overcome barriers to achieving greater diversity among boaters and anglers using the waterways?

⁶² Department of Work and Pensions, *Building a society for all ages*, 2009

⁶³ Defra, *Outdoors for All: An action plan to increase the number of people from under-represented groups who access the natural environment*, 2008

Olympic Games 2012

The site for the London Olympics in 2012 in the lower Lea Valley in east London is surrounded by navigable and potentially navigable waterways – the River Lea itself and the Bow Back Rivers network, managed by British Waterways. These waterways provide an opportunity to create good quality water-based green infrastructure within and around the main Olympics site. British Waterways, the Environment Agency and Natural England have developed a waterway strategy to create a shared vision for the disparate partners with an interest in the development of the area.

The waterway network will also support sustainable construction of the Olympics stadia and facilities through the transport of building materials and waste by water through the Prescott Channel, where a £20 million project to construct a new lock and weir was completed in 2008.

During Games time, the waterways may also support a water passenger transport services to the Games itself.

Besides the Games and venue delivery, there will be an on-going role for waterways in the delivery of the Games Legacy in East London. British Waterways will work with other stakeholders, including the Olympics Delivery Authority and Thames Gateway Partnership, to contribute to the Legacy Masterplan Framework in respect of waterways and open space.

In this context, there is a need for waterspace to be seen as integral to the vision for the legacy of the Olympics site and not just a backdrop. The waterways as green infrastructure have a potential to encourage developer interest in the legacy. However it is important that waterways are seen as integrating factors in the lower Lea Valley, and not as boundaries.

During the legacy phase, there will also be opportunities to use the waterways as transport routes for :

- the transport of freight by water, particularly the movement of waste out and construction materials (and possibly fuel such as biomass);
- linking the legacy development through water passenger transport and walking / cycling routes with the Lea Valley Regional Park and the River Thames, Docklands and the O2 arena.

Activity in the UK in respect of the 2012 Olympics is not limited to the London area and waterways have roles to play in helping ensure that the benefits of the Olympics are spread throughout the country by means of:-

- The incorporation of waterway-related events and activity into the Cultural Olympiad, together with the promotion of water-based tourism as a distinctive UK product in association with the Olympic Games. This could be done through involvement with the Cultural Olympiad signature projects (such as the expansion of heritage open days as envisaged by Heritage Link) or via Inspire Mark.
 - Developments associated with the use of water venues for training in the build-up to the Games – for example at Tees Barrage and on the River Thames in association with the Eton Dorney rowing venue.
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Chapter 11

The Way Forward

Partnership working

11.1 Acting alone, waterway authorities cannot be expected to deliver the wide range of public benefits described in the chapters of *Waterways for Everyone*, while maintaining the fabric of the network on which all public benefits depend. Partnership working with the public, private and voluntary sectors is the best way forward.

11.2 In recent years there has been increasing pressure on the core funding of waterway authorities along with the need to prioritise Government spending and this tight public finance context will be intensified in the next few years. At the same time, competition for funding from third party grant sources, such as the European structural funds and national lottery programmes has intensified, while waterways authorities have had to meet increased costs arising from environmental legislation and the growing costs of construction. Increased partnership working, whereby delivering the outcomes that waterways create are shared amongst beneficiaries in accordance with their priorities and expertise is now much needed. Without this, there is a real danger of our inland waterways entering into a cycle of decline, with the loss of the benefits to society that they currently provide. Vibrant waterways help the local communities through which they pass to thrive, but waterways that are left to decay will drag an area down.

11.3 A number of policy measures have been introduced to encourage and facilitate working in partnership. In 1999, the then Department of Transport, Environment and the Regions published the document *Unlocking the potential – A new future for British Waterways*⁶⁴. Through this British Waterways was encouraged to establish public/private partnerships to take full advantage of the skills, expertise, innovation and funding opportunities offered by the private sector. A number of such partnerships have now been successfully established, for example in property development which have helped regeneration of both communities and the waterways which pass through them. British Waterways' Twenty-Twenty strategy⁶⁵ takes this further, with an emphasis on delivering wider public benefits by working ever more closely with local communities. Partnership working is at the heart of this approach which the Government supports and which we hope will further public involvement with the waterways and lead to a greater resilience in the future.

11.4 There are also numerous examples of local partnerships established to deliver specific projects and programmes, involving both the public and voluntary sectors. Partnerships of this type have been crucial in delivering the many waterway restoration projects undertaken in recent years.

⁶⁴ DETR, *Unlocking the potential – A new future for British Waterways*, 1999

⁶⁵ BW, *Twenty -Twenty: A vision for the future of our canals and rivers*, 2009

Fens Waterway Link



The Fens Waterways Link (FWL) represents one of the most significant strategic developments of the inland navigation network of the UK in two centuries. It complements other waterway projects, notably the Milton Keynes to Bedford Waterways Park and the connecting waterways being developed by the Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership. The new link will revitalise the region for the good of all and create a leisure and tourism destination of national and international importance. It is anticipated that the link will attract around 1 million additional visitors per year bringing in around £14m per year to the region's economy.

Ultimately the scheme will create an inland water link between the Fenland rivers – Witham, Welland, Glen and Nene. The first phase of construction for the link has already been implemented with the opening of the Boston Lock Link in 2009.

Boston's new Black Sluice Lock, a Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership (LWP) project, opens up routes that have been inaccessible to boaters for the past 40 years. The Boston Lock project was funded by Lincolnshire County Council (£4 million), the European Regional Development Fund (£2.5 million) and the East Midlands Development Agency (£2 million).

The next stage of the FWL project is to develop a business case to extend the navigation a further 27 km between Donnington Bridge on the South Forty Foot Drain and Surfleet Seas End on the River Glen. Although the scope of works has yet to be fully appraised, it is likely that it will involve major dredging work and the construction of new channel and several locks.

LWP has secured funding for the appraisal of the Donnington to Surfleet Link and has asked the Environment Agency to project manage the work. The funding is from Lincolnshire County Council, East Midlands Development Agency and Environment Agency.

Contacts for the project are www.environment-agency.gov.uk and www.visitlincolnshire.com

11.5 International partnerships have also been created to draw down support from various European Union transnational programmes to foster the joint development and implementation of new approaches to waterway management and development. For example, the *Waterways for Growth* project (2009 -2011) ⁶⁶, supported by the Interreg IVB North Sea Region programme, aims to further the sustainable development of waterways in Norway, Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and the UK.

Crosscut



The Crosscut project was funded under the EU Interreg IIIB North West Europe programme, involving 8 partners from Belgium, the Netherlands, Ireland and the UK with the UK partners being British Waterways (leader of the overall project), Torfaen County Borough Council and Devon County Council.

The project ran from 2004 to 2008 with the aims to (1) review the implications of the proposed UN Economic Commission for Europe classification system for recreational waterways in Europe and identify gaps in the network; and (2) develop and implement practical approaches to restoration and development of recreational inland waterways in North West Europe, with a focus on environmental management, taking account of the implications of the Water Framework Directive.

In the UK, *Crosscut* delivered practical projects to:-

- restore the section of the Montgomery Canal between Gronwen and Redwith, together with the creation of an off-line nature reserve;
- create a new canal basin at South Sebastolpol (between Pontypool and Cwmbran) on the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal, together with education and community projects;
- deliver environmental management works on the Grand Western Canal in Devon.

It also supported a series of volunteer exchanges between partners to deliver practical work programmes on participating waterways.

The total project budget was €7.5 million, of which €4.3 million was spent in the UK. Almost 60% of the funding came from Interreg, with the balance from partners' own funds and third party sources such as Heritage Lottery Fund.

More information can be found on the Crosscut website - www.crosscut-nwe.eu/.

⁶⁶ See www.waterwaysforgrowth.eu

11.6 Local authorities and government agencies are encouraged to work in partnership with waterway authorities to deliver outcomes to mutual benefit, through the Local Area Agreement / Multi-Area Agreement process and other appropriate mechanisms. Consideration should be given to developing model corridor development agreements with local authorities or groups of local authorities to feed into Local Development Frameworks. In some cases it would be possible for waterway authorities to deliver specific outcomes for local authorities, related to, for example, national indicators such as satisfaction with the local area, volunteering and participation in sport and active recreation. In other cases, there might be opportunities for cost savings or more efficient working through sharing resources.

11.7 Waterway authorities are encouraged to work with voluntary sector organisations to deliver work and services on the waterways and to expand volunteering activity. The Waterways Trust, the Inland Waterways Association (IWA) and the multitude of canal societies and trusts have roles here as conduits for charitable sector funding. Waterway authorities should also consider working with volunteer organisations to secure external seed-corn funding to support and stimulate third sector activity where appropriate.

11.8 Further opportunities for partnership development and joint working arise through the participation of waterways authorities in external fora and networks addressing particular themes e.g. outdoor recreation – via the Countryside Recreation Network (CRN)⁶⁷; built environment via the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)⁶⁸; physical activity and health via the Outdoor Health Forum (OHF)⁶⁹.

11.9 Effective partnership working between organisations with different strategies and different funding pressures can be very difficult. IWAC has reviewed the experience of the most successful waterways partnerships and later this year will publish a report distilling that experience and offering advice to organisations who aim to set up new partnerships.

Cooperation between waterway authorities

11.10 Wider cooperation between waterway authorities is also necessary. AINA provides a vehicle for this initiative, working to facilitate collaboration agreements between two or more authorities. British Waterways and the Environment Agency already have such an agreement. In its Report *The Inland Waterways of England and Wales in 2007*, IWAC strongly recommended that the two waterways authorities should build on their co-operation agreement, to cover the provision of advice by the Environment Agency on environmental issues, such as implementation of the WFD and flood risk management, with British Waterways sharing their experience of commercialisation of their assets. Such agreements might also offer opportunities for efficiency savings and enhanced customer service through the sharing of

⁶⁷ See www.countrysidecreation.org.uk

⁶⁸ See www.cabe.org.uk

⁶⁹ See www.outdoorhealthforum.com

resources. The search for such benefits from collaboration will need to be stepped up over the next few years.

Legislative issues

11.11 As outlined in Chapter 2, AINA has undertaken a comprehensive review of current waterway legislation⁷⁰. The review indicates that many authorities are compromised in their ability to raise income, to deliver services and apply a proper duty of care because of the archaic legislative powers covering their waterways. Experience to date is that this legislation has proved to be difficult and expensive to modify. **The Government will therefore support waterway authorities in seeking changes to legislation where there is a strong business case for doing so, but recognising that secondary legislation is more likely to be achieved than primary.**

Citizen engagement with waterways

11.12 All the major waterway authorities have programmes in place to promote recreational opportunities on their canals and rivers. For example British Waterways has established the *Waterscape* website (www.waterscape.com) to supply information on recreational opportunities on waterways throughout Great Britain. The Environment Agency's 'Visit' websites (including www.visitthames.co.uk supported by the River Thames Alliance) provide a range of information promoting recreation and public use of their river navigations. However, research by British Waterways has demonstrated that awareness of waterways is still relatively low within many nearby communities.

11.13 *Waterways for Everyone* aims to make waterways more relevant to peoples' lives in the 21st century. It might therefore be timely to give further thought to how the waterways are, and should be, marketed and promoted. The main water authorities are encouraged to discuss with other stakeholders – for example IWAC, the Inland Waterways Association and The Waterways Trust – the merits of such an approach which would link up with Defra's desire to engage citizens more on the natural environment and with British Waterways' Twenty-Twenty Vision. Work should be considered on customer insight so the differing needs and wishes of people are taken into account in planning waterways based services and opportunities.

Funding

11.14 The greatest challenge faced by waterway authorities is increased pressure on funding. Both British Waterways and the Environment Agency are dependent upon Government funding to support their infrastructure. This is likely to get tighter as public debt is addressed, while other authorities receive no direct funding from Government for navigation. The cost of managing the waterways is rising, especially for our historic canals which are now some 200 years old, and also as a result of increasing legislative requirements and the desire to enhance the public benefits that waterways deliver. While increasing internally generated revenue and greater

⁷⁰ AINA, Empowered or hindered? *An assessment of the effectiveness of existing legal powers in enabling navigation authorities to achieve their full potential*, 2009

efficiency and collaboration are approaches to meeting this growing funding gap, they are unlikely to provide the whole answer. Greater partnership working has a vital role to play in making the most of funding opportunities for our waterways in the future.

11.15 *Waterways for Everyone* has been developed during 2009 in an economic downturn. Waterways can help economies move out of recession, because:

- enhanced residential property values make waterside properties attractive to developers as the economy begins to grow again;
- more UK residents are likely to holiday at home, rather than abroad, thus supporting the potential market for waterway-based holidays and activity;
- there are opportunities for the creation of “green” jobs and training and volunteering initiatives through the delivery of waterway improvements and by waterway-based businesses in terms of sustainable tourism, transport and renewable energy etc.
- the availability of good quality, local recreational resources becomes more important to communities as other forms of recreation become unaffordable to maintain health and well being.

11.16 Maintaining investment in the quality and quantity of waterway infrastructure during times of recession to support these opportunities for economic growth should be considered by Government and its agencies at all levels.

11.17 The Government welcomes the debate started by British Waterways’ Twenty-Twenty vision about whether alternative models such as mutual or third sector structures offer a more sustainable alternative model for British Waterways. We will therefore be considering these alternative structural options which could deliver greater efficiencies, volunteering growth, better local community engagement and grow income from other sources potentially enabling the waterways to better deliver wider public benefits.

11.18 Adopting an ecosystems services approach should also provide a framework on which to base future investment decisions. Defra, supported by IWAC⁷¹, has undertaken research into the economic value of waterways. This has identified and quantified where possible, the wide range of public benefits that waterways deliver, within an ecosystems services approach⁷², which provides a framework for considering the full range of benefits in relation to the use or development of inland waterways and their surrounding areas. This work recognises that “where the wider value of inland waterways is not fully appreciated, there is a risk that opportunities to realise important benefits are missed and/or that other benefits provided by waterways are compromised”. The research provides a framework that can be developed over time, as more information becomes available and follow-up work is undertaken.

⁷¹ Defra and IWAC, *The Benefits of Inland Waterways*, 2009

⁷² An ecosystems services approach is a system for categorising and valuing the benefits people obtain from ecosystems.

11.19 Using environmental economic techniques, British Waterways has valued the benefits their waterways alone deliver at around £500 million per year, while over 20,000 jobs are supported in local economies throughout the country. For the Broads, an ecosystems services report estimated that visitors generate some £320 million per annum. Defra's Research and Development programme into the ecosystem services waterways provide will draw on and validate such studies and the framework of values being developed can then be applied to waterway projects in future.

11.20 *The Government, with the waterway authorities will pursue the application of an ecosystems services approach to inland waterways, which will:*

- establish and quantify the wide range of goods and services delivered by inland waterways, building upon the initial work carried by Defra into the benefits of inland waterways based on existing studies;***
- inform the policy leads and beneficiaries of these benefits;***
- carry out further research into benefits to close the gaps; and look to identify new and innovative funding mechanisms to support the delivery of the goods and services that waterways provide.***

Tracking success

11.20 In developing this policy document, it has become clear that there is a lack of comprehensive statistical data on inland waterways. Individual authorities may collect information related to their own waterways, but the definitions of data sets are not always compatible. We welcome the recent initiative by AINA to assemble national inland waterway boating statistics. Defra will work with AINA and IWAC to:

- review what other statistics should be collected (e.g. data related to heritage and environmental assets); and***
- determine how this might be implemented and at what frequency.***

We will also seek to widen the British Waterways Visitor Survey to collect a wider range of information and cover a wider range of waterways.

11.21 We are also developing metrics to enable us to monitor progress against this strategy in the future. While we have yet to agree the exact metrics they are likely to include a mix of the following - British Waterways stewardship score; Environment Agency's asset condition; number of visitors; boats using waterways; earned income by waterways authorities; use of waterways for social inclusion/education etc; references to waterways in regional strategies or Local Development Frameworks; cycling and sustainable transport usage; freight carried; businesses based on the waterways and jobs provided; numbers of volunteers; and the outcome from user survey results. The agreed metrics will be kept under review and amended as necessary.

Q21. In view of the pressure on public finances, how can waterway authorities make the most of their resources over the next few years? Would mutual or Third Sector status for British Waterways be beneficial in this respect?

Q22. What scope is there for enhanced partnership working to improve the resources available to protect and enhance the benefits delivered by inland waterways?

Q23. What activity should be undertaken to monitor the benefits delivered by the inland waterways over the coming years?

Summary List of Government Actions

The commitments proposed by central government in the chapters above are summarised below for ease of reference.

- Government recognises the multi-functional role of waterways and the need to maintain and improve the quality of the waterway resource and infrastructure if the public benefits delivered are to be maintained and grown. Government Departments therefore encourage regional and local delivery bodies and stakeholders to take account of this in a holistic way through considering the waterways potential contribution in regional strategies, Local Development Frameworks, Local Transport Plans, green infrastructure initiatives etc.
 - Government will continue to encourage planning authorities, where appropriate, to work with the waterway authorities and gain a better understanding of the specific issues faced by waterways.
 - Government to work with waterway authorities and regulators to ensure that the implementation of environmental legislation takes proper account of the need to sustain navigation and recreation and their associated public benefits.
 - Government to gain greater understanding of the drainage function of waterways and its economic / social / environmental impact and to look at any implications for funding
 - Government to promote the role waterways can play in delivering improved health and well-being to Primary Care Trusts and other physical activity partners.
 - Government to support the transfer of freight from road to water, where it is practical and economically and environmentally sustainable to do so, in line with the recommendations of the Freight Study Group.
 - Government will promote the contribution that waterways make to sustainable transport to their agencies and local transport authorities, particularly in relation to the use of towpaths as walking and cycling routes.
 - Government to support waterway authorities in seeking changes to legislation where there is a strong business case for doing so, but recognising that secondary legislation is more likely to be achieved than primary.
 - Government with the waterway authorities, will pursue the application of an ecosystems services approach to inland waterways, which will:-
 - establish and quantify the wide range of goods and services delivered by inland waterways, building upon the initial work carried out by Defra into the benefits of inland waterways;
 - carry out further research to close gaps in evidence
 - inform the policy leads and beneficiaries of these benefits; and
 - look to identify new and innovative funding mechanisms to support the delivery of the goods and services that waterways provide.
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Summary list of questions

Q1. Do you agree that the range of benefits of inland waterways identified above and expanded upon in the following chapters are correct? Are there any benefits that we have missed or overstated?

Q2. Do you consider that waterways are in a better condition now than they were 10 years ago? What have been the main achievements over this time and what could have been done better?

Q3. Do you agree that it is important for regional development bodies and local authorities to work closely with those responsible for managing the Inland Waterways to ensure that the potential benefits in respect of place making and shaping are maximised? Do you have any ideas as to how this can be achieved?

Q4. What more can navigation authorities do to encourage local authorities to consider using waterways to improve the quality of life of their local communities?

Q5. What do you think the barriers are to local authorities taking more interest in waterways in respect of place making?

Q6. Do you agree that inland waterways offer an opportunity to help the UK mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change? Are there any areas you consider that should be explored further in this context, including how the waterways themselves will need to adapt?

Q7. Do you agree that the unique cultural heritage associated with inland waterways provide a key benefit to those who use and visit waterways? How can these resources be used to further enhance and encourage use of the waterways?

Q8. Do you consider the protection of the natural and built heritage to be one of the waterway authorities primary tasks?

Q9. What area of waterway heritage do you consider most under threat?

Q10. Do you agree that inland waterways, including their paths and surrounding environments provide an important resource for outdoor recreation, sport and improving public well being? What more can be done to protect and improve these important resources?

Q11. What needs to be done to make waterside paths more accessible and better appreciated by local communities?

Q12. Do you agree that waterside paths offer considerable potential for increasing green commuting, both for pedestrian and cyclists? What more can be done to encourage this further?

Q13. What can be done to reverse the decline in freight on the inland waterways in recent years? Which elements of the commercial waterways have the greatest potential for freight use? How should the planning process ensure the protection of freight interests in those areas with greatest freight potential?

Q14. How can we best encourage a common purpose between different users of the waterways? What can be done to better manage potential conflicts?

Q15. What do you believe should be done to maintain and increase the number of boat registrations on our inland waterways?

Q16. How can the waterways increase their share of the holiday market?

Q17. Do you agree that there is scope for increasing waterway related volunteering activity? How can this be achieved?

Q18. How can schools and colleges be encouraged to make greater use of the waterways for educational purposes?

Q19. What can be done to help NCBA to increase the use of waterways to improve social inclusion?

Q20. What can be done to overcome barriers to achieving greater diversity among boaters and anglers using the waterways?

Q21. In view of the pressure on public finances, how can waterway authorities make the most of their resources over the next few years? Would mutual or third Sector status for British Waterways be beneficial in this respect?

Q22. What scope is there for enhanced partnership working to improve the resources available to protect and enhance the benefits delivered by inland waterways?

Q23. What activity should be undertaken to monitor the benefits delivered by the inland waterways over the coming years?

Glossary

Ecosystem Services - Services provided by the natural environment that benefit people.

Ecosystem - Defined at the most basic level as a natural unit of living things (animals, plants and micro-organisms) and their physical environment.

AINA – Association of Inland Navigation Authorities

IWAC – Inland Waterway Advisory Council

Waterway authority - includes navigation authority, port authority and harbour authority

Inland Waterway - navigable or potentially navigable canals and rivers that are regulated by lock and weir systems, together with supporting infrastructure.

Inter-Departmental Group on Inland Waterways (IDG) - established in response to a recommendation from the Environment Food and Rural Affairs Committee in their report published in 2007 on British Waterways.

IWA – Inland Waterways Association

WFD – Water Framework Directive
