



Update: May 2009

The Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway is a planned 26 km new broad waterway at the heart of a new series of Waterway Parks linking the Grand Union canal in Milton Keynes to the River Great Ouse in Bedford and the Fenland Waterways beyond. The Waterway will deliver sustainable recreational, leisure, economic, environmental and 'quality of life' benefits to inhabitants and visitors alike.

Planning

The Waterway is in the Milton Keynes local plan and the draft Local Development Frameworks for Bedford and Mid-Bedfordshire. It is in the Milton Keynes Partnership Business Plan, the East of England Regional Spatial Strategy, and Renaissance Bedford's Infrastructure and Water Management plans. It is also included in emerging Milton Keynes and Bedfordshire Green Infrastructure plans, and the Environment Agency's new Water Recreation Strategy.

We've achieved our goal of getting the Waterway into all relevant local plans and now securing planning permission for specific elements. The first 6km in Milton Keynes has planning permission with some reserved matters and we are making a minerals & waste application for the central 2km showcase 'Stewartby Stretch'.

Technical feasibility/Design

British Waterways have created a 'line and level' design for the whole route, and outline designs for the first 6km in MK and the last 6km in Bedford. The Waterway will enhance flood warning and flood risk management.

In late 2007 the Milton Keynes Waterway Park was one of just eleven projects rated, after rigorous appraisal, as 'fundable' by the BIG Lottery. This shows how robust the scheme is. We scored particularly well on sustainability, meeting need, community and stakeholder/partner support and involvement.

Stakeholder & Community involvement/Governance

The project is driven by the voluntary B&MK Waterway Trust which acts as an enabler, maximising partner and community involvement in developing a 'Waterway for All' that will be a source of pride now and for generations to come. The Trust works with developers and a 25+ partnership of local authorities, navigation bodies, agencies and user groups, and has secured a secondee from the department for Communities and Local Government to lead implementation.

Almost all the route is in the hands of local authorities and supportive developers. The partners' strategy is to work together in a Project Consortium to construct the Waterway in small sections as opportunities and funding become available. Long term maintenance will pass to MK Parks Trust and the Forest of Marston Vale, working with British Waterways and the Environment Agency, with appropriate arrangements for funding through endowment and commercial activity.

Thanks to local partners, the first piece of construction will be designed and delivered in 2009 using Growth Area Funding – a 30 metre tunnel to take the Waterway and a multi-user path safely under the new A421 dualling near Bedford.

Fundraising to design and build

The total cost of the project is estimated in the region of £180m. Funding is being sought from enabling development and from a range of local, regional and national sources, charities, local businesses, and the public. The project is divided into an A-Z of smaller self-standing projects which can be progressed as funding opportunities arise. New research into economic impact shows positive returns.

A short DVD setting out the business case for the Waterway, presented by Kevin Whately, is on our website www.b-mkwaterway.co.uk

Bedford & Milton Keynes
Waterway Trust

www.
B-MKWaterway.co.uk

Bedford Borough Council
Bedford Group of Drainage Boards
Bedford River Users Group
Bedfordshire County Council
British Marine Federation
British Waterways
Country Land & Business
Association & NFU
Countryside Agency
Cranfield University
East of England Tourist Board
East of England
Development Agency
English Nature
English Partnerships
Environment Agency
Forest of Marston Vale
Great Ouse Boating Association
Grand Union (South) Angling Club
Inland Waterways Association
Mid Bedfordshire District Council
Milton Keynes Council
Milton Keynes Parks Trust
Renaissance Bedford
South East England
Development Agency
Sport England
Sustrans
The Ramblers Association
The Waterways Trust
