

Update: November 2011



Project Wins National Recognition

At this year's National Waterway Renaissance Awards, the Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway project won the special award for Outstanding Achievement as well as winning the Strategy & Master Planning award and was runner up in the Partnership category. All this underpins the professionalism of the work done to translate the vision for the waterway into a deliverable project.

Vision

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, flood management, and 'quality of life' benefits to local communities.

Planning

The Waterway is now in the Development Frameworks for each of the three local authority areas it passes through (Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes). This means that the route is fully protected and future development on the route will contribute to making the Waterway happen.

The route has been divided into an 'A to Z' list of sections, so that the Waterway can be constructed piece by piece, as local leisure facilities that get joined up over time. Planning permissions have been granted for several stretches.

First section complete!



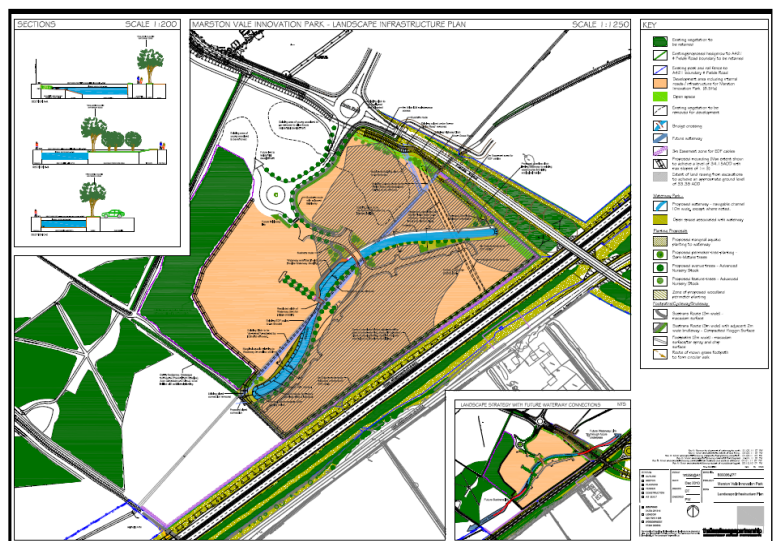
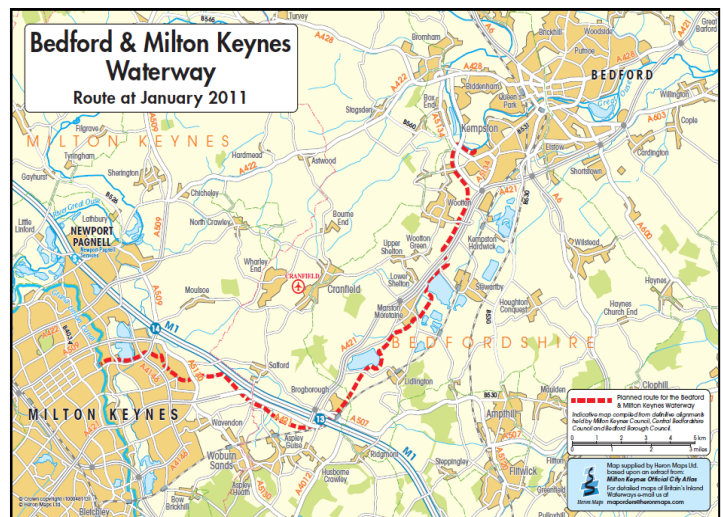
Thanks to local partners, the first piece of construction has been designed and built using Growth Area Funding: a 30 metre tunnel to

take the Waterway and a multi-user path safely under the new A421 dualling near Bedford.

Technical feasibility/Design

A 'line and level' design exists for the whole route, and outline designs for the first 6km in Milton Keynes and the last 6km in Bedford.

Detailed designs are available for specific stretches, such as the Marston Vale Innovation Park, where Bedford Borough has placed the Waterway at the heart of a new economic development site to the west of the town. Groundworks for phase 1 are planned to start in early summer 2012, after the newt breeding season.





B&MK
BEDFORD &
MILTON KEYNES
WATERWAY TRUST

Governance

The idea for the Waterway came from 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.

During 2000-2009, British Waterways and then the Trust led an informal project partnership. In 2010, eleven key partners – including the Trust – set up a formal Project Consortium to 'lock the project up to the next level' in terms of planning, design and build. The Consortium has two local authority Steering Groups (Bedford/Central Bedfordshire, and Milton Keynes).



Stakeholder & Community involvement

The Trust runs regular walks, talks, VIP boat trips, exhibitions and briefings, to ensure that local communities, organisations and businesses are aware of the benefits the Waterway can bring.

We also hold an Annual Partnership Conference in early November each year. This year there will be celebrations of the 200th anniversary of



the first proposal for a canal link, made by Bedford businessmen. The Trust has set up a Heritage Project to find out more about this historic proposal.

Funding

The cost of the Waterway is estimated at £180m. Funding will come from enabling development, a range of local, regional and national sources, charities, local businesses, and the public.

Long term, maintenance will pass to Milton Keynes Parks Trust and the Forest of Marston Vale, working with British Waterways and the Environment Agency, funded by endowments and commercial activity.

Almost all the route is in the hands of local authorities and



supportive developers. Research in 2009 showed positive economic returns, and the Consortium is currently reviewing economic development and funding opportunities. A DVD on the business case for the Waterway, presented by Kevin Whately, is on the Trust website.

Float our Boat!

Bedford Borough and the Environment Agency have funded a Waterspace Study, published at the end of September, which sees the B&MK as a "strategically significant project" to revitalise use of the river in Bedford.

With this in mind, the Trust's key project for 2011-2012 is to fund and operate a Community Boat, running river trips for schools, community groups and businesses, to build support for the Waterway and raise funds for the Trust. Details of how you can get involved are on the website www.b-mkwaterway.co.uk. Come on board!

