



Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust Limited



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21st December 2022

Local Plans
South Staffordshire Council
Wolverhampton Road
Codsall
South Staffordshire
WV8

Sent by email to localplans@sstaffs.gov.uk

Dear Sir

A New Development Strategy for South Staffordshire 2018-2039 The Local Plan Review Publication Plan (Regulation 19) November 2022

I refer to the Local Plan Review Publication Plan which has been issued for public consultation and comment. This response is issued on behalf of the Lichfield and Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust (LHCRT). LHCRT is a local charity and we have the aim of restoring both the Lichfield and Hatherton Canals, thereby creating a green and blue corridor for the benefit of our local and wider community and make them available for navigation.

Restoration of the canals will provide a range of benefits including:

- Green and blue space for walkers, runners, cyclists etc.
- Sustainable habitats for diversifying wildlife, increasing biodiversity and carbon capture
- A navigable route for boaters
- Economic benefits such as inward investment, tourism and new business for the wider community
- Training, development and skills opportunities for volunteers of all ages
- Health and wellbeing for volunteers and the public

The Hatherton canal is located largely within the boundary of South Staffordshire Council and as such is identified for consideration as part of the Local Plan Review. The relevant part of the review is in Chapter 14 Policy NB9: Canal Network.

On behalf of LHCRT I provide comment as below.

The Local Plan identifies the benefits of a fully restored canal which largely recognise those claimed by LHCRT and listed above. In addition, the restored canal can make a contribution to the delivery of other objectives and policies listed with the local plan review. These include the following:

- HC19: Green Infrastructure
- EC3: Employment & Skill
- EC4: Rural economy
- EC5: Tourism
- NB1: Protecting, enhancing and expanding natural assets
- NB2: Biodiversity
- NB4: Landscape Character
- NB7: Managing flood risk, sustainable drainage systems & water quality
- NB8: Protection and enhancement of the historic environment and heritage asset

LHCRT employed consultants Arup and Atkins to undertake technical feasibility studies which demonstrate that the canal restoration is technically feasible and confirm its benefits. These reports have been provided and are

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listed as key evidence in the Local Plan. Confirmation of viability is required in order that the council can justify the canal restoration being included in the local plan.

It is stated that "Prior to any canal being restored to a navigable condition, evidence will need to be provided to the Environment Agency to demonstrate that the abstraction of water to feed the canal is sustainable". I confirm that evidence of the availability of water supply from a range of sources has been confirmed in a Hatherton Canal Water Supply Study. This was undertaken by consultant Stantec with input from the Canal and River Trust. Prior to the undertaking of the study, the Environment Agency were consulted on the required scope.

I will provide a copy of the Hatherton Water Supply Study and request that it is also cited as key evidence in support of the Hatherton canal.

It is stated that "The route of the Hatherton Canal as shown on the Policies Map will be safeguarded from any development which would prejudice the restoration of the canal." This protection of the line of the canal is already provided in the current local plan. It is important that this protection is available because of the certainty it provides for restoration. LHCRT is often funded through grants and funding bodies require evidence that the protection is available.

The protected route is shown on "Lichfield Hatherton Canal Protection Line Inset Plan 54". I note that the Lichfield and the Hatherton canals are geographically separate and that the plan shows the Hatherton canal. I would suggest that in order to remove any ambiguity the plan title is changed to remove "Lichfield".

Unfortunately, this plan does not cover the full extent of the protected route. Part of the western section of the canal including its crossing of the M6 motorway and its termination at Hatherton junction is outside of the plan extent. The previous Inset Plan 50 of the 2018 Site Allocations Document did include the missing length of the Hatherton canal to its connection to the national canal network at Hatherton junction.

I assume that there is an error and it is intended that the route protection extends to the full length of the Hatherton canal. I request that this error is corrected and I shall be pleased if you will confirm this.

I trust my comments are helpful in local plan development and LHCRT looks forward to working with the council as we restore the canal.

Yours sincerely,



Derek Lord

Planning and Technical Trustee
for and on behalf of Lichfield and Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust