



The Edinburgh Union Canal Strategy

DECEMBER 2011

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YOUR COUNCIL – YOUR ENVIRONMENT



The Edinburgh Union Canal Strategy

Since its re-birth as part of the Millennium Link Project the Union Canal has come a long way from a derelict backwater to become one of Edinburgh's most important heritage, recreational and community assets. The Union Canal is now enjoyed on a daily basis by people from across the city and beyond for a variety of uses such as boating, rowing, walking, cycling and fishing.

The Union Canal is also a focus for new development, particularly at Fountainbridge, for new canal boat moorings and marinas and for canal-focused community activities. However, as the canal is developed, it must also be protected and its potential maximised for the benefit of the wider community and environment.

The City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) and British Waterways Scotland (BWS) have prepared this strategy for the Union Canal within the Edinburgh area to guide its development and to promote a vision of the place we wish the Union Canal to be.



"The Union Canal is one of Edinburgh's hidden gems. We hope this Strategy will allow more of our citizens to appreciate and benefit from its beauty as well as the economic development potential it provides."

Councillor Tim McKay, Edinburgh Canal Champion



"The publication of the new Edinburgh Canal Strategy is a major milestone in the renaissance of the two hundred year old Union Canal."

The draft strategy was very well received during the consultation process. It proved what an increasingly important role the canal plays within the capital and the appetite everyone has for making it a vibrant and unique place to work, live or play."

We now look forward to building on the consultation, working with the City of Edinburgh Council and local waterside communities to bring this exciting vision to life."

Steve Dunlop, Director, British Waterways (Scotland)

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Background

TIn early 2010 the Edinburgh Canal Development Group initiated the preparation of a strategy for the Union Canal within the City's administrative boundaries. A series of focus group meetings followed with local and community councillors, the canal community user groups and stakeholder bodies such as SEPA and Sustrans, to discuss the Union Canal, which led to the preparation of an Edinburgh Canal Strategy Consultation Document in September 2010.

The Consultation Document set out a number of questions, the aim of which was to discuss how to make the Union Canal into a recognisable place whilst identifying issues to be taken forward in the resultant Draft Canal Strategy. Between October and December 2010 a number of consultation events were held to discuss the questions set out within the Consultation Document. The key aim of the consultation exercise was to explore the opportunities and issues with a range of stakeholders whilst promoting community involvement in the current and future use of the Union Canal.

In May 2011, the draft Edinburgh Canal Strategy was prepared for public consultation. The draft Strategy set out a series of opportunities for development and a hub strategy around which development could be based. Between June and August, a number of further public consultation events were held, including at the annual Edinburgh Canal Festival, the aim of which was to:

- develop further ideas on how to improve the use of the canal as an asset of the city through the 'opportunities' outlined within the Strategy
- identify whether consultees agree/disagree with the proposed 'Hub Strategy' and consider the hubs in are the right place and have the right objectives;
- gather views on increasing the use of the water space along the canal, canal-side development proposals, and access points and,
- To consider whether anything was missing from the Strategy or should be removed.

Following the consultation, this final Edinburgh Union Canal Strategy has now been prepared. The Strategy and its accompanying Delivery Plan now set out policies and proposals which aim to make the Union Canal into a successful and recognisable place.



Key Aims and Objectives

The Key Aims and Objectives of the Edinburgh Union Canal Strategy are to:

- Set out the aspirations of the Council, British Waterways (Scotland), and other partner organisations in relation to the Union Canal within the Edinburgh boundary and in relation to the wider canal network;
- Identify and set out the key heritage, community and environmental considerations as a basis for the future protection of the Canal as it develops;
- Ensure that there is a balance between the creation and stimulation of a lively canal culture and increased use of the canal towpath and waterspace, as well as protecting the environment in terms of wildlife and biodiversity as well as existing communities;
- Present opportunities for development along the length of the Union Canal within the Edinburgh boundary and the creation of 7 canal hubs;
- Establish clear planning and environmental policies and guidance for developing beside or on the canal; and,
- Set out a Delivery Plan for the future development of the canal.



Canal Barge © Gorm Ritchie - www.photosofinedinburgh.co.uk



Current Context



Scotland's Canals

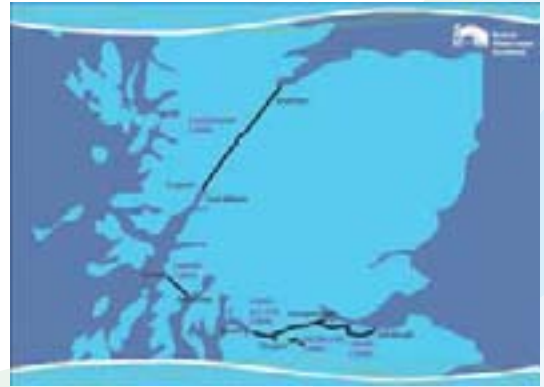
Scotland's canal network is over 200 years old and travels for 137 miles from Loch Ness in the north to Fort William and Glasgow in the west, via Falkirk to Edinburgh in the East. The Scottish canal network is a national and international asset, not just for its recreational value, but as for its important industrial heritage.

The Scottish canal network is made up of 5 canals, in the Highlands - the Caledonian and the Crinan, and in the Lowlands - the Monkland, the Forth and Clyde and the Edinburgh and Glasgow Union, known more simply as The Union Canal.

The Union Canal In Edinburgh

The Union Canal in Edinburgh runs for 16km between and through the communities of Ratho, Wester Hailes, Longstone, Craiglockhart, Merchiston, Polwarth and Tollcross, terminating at Fountainbridge in the city centre. The canal also passes Harrison Park, Meggetland and Hailes Park, and crosses over the Water of Leith via the 180m long Slateford Aqueduct.

The Union Canal is not just a heritage asset for Edinburgh, but also a navigable waterway for boating, an important wildlife habitat, a walking, jogging and cycling route, and a focus for new canal side development and for local community use.



History and Heritage

The Union Canal, the last of Scotland's major canals, was a commercial venture begun in 1818 and completed in 1822. It was built principally as a means of importing coal and lime into Edinburgh, and ran from Port Hopetoun in Edinburgh to join the Forth & Clyde Canal at Camelon, Stirlingshire.



Designed by the engineer Hugh Baird, the 31.5 mile Union Canal was built in only 4 years between 1818 and 1822 at a cost of £461,760 – twice its initial estimate. The Canal was built using picks, shovels and wheelbarrows by labourers known as navigators – 'navvies'. Many immigrants came from Ireland to work on the canal including notably William Burke and William Hare.

The canal was officially opened in May 1822, the first boat to make the complete journey by water bringing flagstones from Denny to Port Hopetoun. However, within 20 years of completion most of its passenger traffic was lost to the railways, and the Edinburgh basins closed in 1922. The rest of the canal remained navigational until 1965 when it was finally closed by an Act of Parliament.

In 2002, Britain's largest canal restoration project, The Millennium Link, restored navigation, and with an extension to the Union Canal and a link with the Forth & Clyde Canal through the Falkirk Wheel, boats were once more able to travel between Edinburgh and Glasgow.

The Union Canal is a significant industrial heritage asset not just for the city, but nationally and internationally and is recognised as such by its scheduled ancient monument status.

The Union Canal was built as a 'contour canal' - it follows a 73m contour throughout its length. The canal has no locks; instead it travels over three aqueducts, including the second largest aqueduct in Britain - the Avon Aqueduct by Linlithgow, Slateford Aqueduct that takes the canal over the Water of Leith in Edinburgh and the Almond Aqueduct near Ratho.

The canal also passes through the oldest and longest canal tunnel in Scotland - the 631m Falkirk Tunnel. At the Edinburgh end, the Leamington lift bridge can be found at Fountainbridge. This hydraulic bridge was built in 1906 by Armstrong of Newcastle and was refurbished and re-opened as part of the Millennium Link Project in 2002.



Port Hopetoun, Union Canal, Edinburgh.
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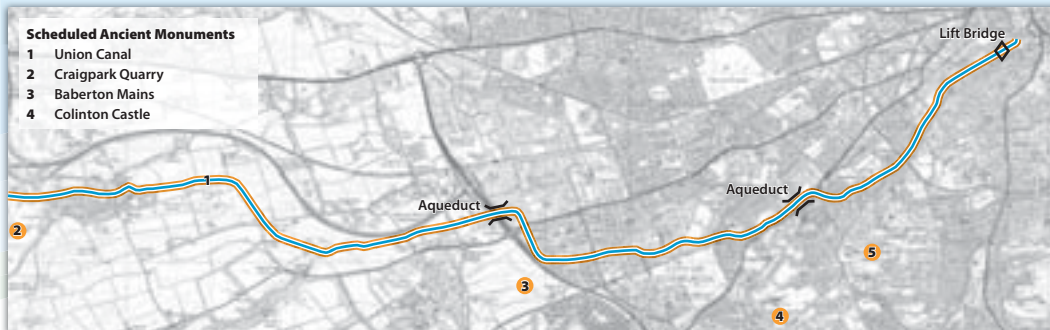
PORT HOPETOUN

Port Hopetoun formed the eastern terminus of the canal at Lothian Road. At the height of the canal trade in the mid-19th century Port Hopetoun was a busy port, employing a large workforce of dockers to unload the barges that brought coal, timber, stone, slate, brick, sand and lime into Edinburgh from the west. It was also the departure point for the fast passenger boats that ran day and night between Edinburgh and Glasgow, and the cattle boats that followed the same route.

However, as the canal trade declined the area around the port gradually deteriorated, and by the early 20th century the port was described as 'one of the most hideous features of Edinburgh'. The basin closed in 1922, and a new terminus, Lochrin Basin, established on the south side of Fountainbridge.



Port Hopetoun from Lothian Road/Fountainbridge during infill of basin
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Planning and Development

THE MILLENNIUM LINK PROJECT

Plans for reconnecting the Union Canal with the Forth and Clyde Canal 'The Millennium Link project' was launched by British Waterways in 1994, with funding secured in 1997.

The £84.5 million pound project started in March 1999 and included a number of significant engineering projects including on the Union Canal a new section of canal at Wester Hailes, the diversion of the canal by the M8 motorway and a new bridge, the reopening of the Leamington Lift Bridge and the joining together of the two canals by the Falkirk Wheel.

The Union Canal was officially reopened in 2001, with the Millennium Link completed with the opening of the Falkirk Wheel by HRH The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh in May 2002 marking the completion of the project.

PLANNING POLICY

The Edinburgh City Local Plan 2010 recognises that the restored canal network is a nationally significant asset with considerable potential for recreational use and canal related development. However, proposals have to take account of its interest as a scheduled ancient monument and its importance for wildlife.

The Plan recognises that there is potential for development within the urban area, and include most importantly sites around the terminal basin at Fountainbridge, identified by the Plan as one of its Central Area proposals (CA 3) and covered by the Fountainbridge Development Brief. Other urban area locations with special potential are Wester Hailes and Harrison Park, but recognises that any feasible proposal will need to be the subject of consultation with local communities.

The Plan highlights that development adjoining the canal should focus on the canal, by providing active frontages and a diversity of uses and by enhancing access for pedestrians and cyclists to the canal. Attention should also be paid to its nature conservation value.

FOUNTAINBRIDGE DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

The Fountainbridge Development Brief was approved by The City of Edinburgh Council in 2004 and amended in 2005. The Brief set out the planning context for the Edinburgh end of the Union Canal following the closure of Fountain Brewery by Scottish and Newcastle.

The purpose of the brief was to establish a comprehensive townscape and infrastructure framework for the Fountainbridge area. The brief sets out the main planning and design principles on which development in the area will be based, and seeks to maximise the benefits of regeneration for local communities and the City as a whole. The development brief covers 32.5 hectares and a wide range of uses.



EDINBURGH QUAY

Edinburgh Quay was the first significant commercial development to take advantage of the reopening canal, built on a largely derelict land at the canal's Edinburgh terminus at Lochrin Basin. As part of the development more than 5500sqm of office space has been created in the last five years. There has also been a significant level of residential and student housing development around the canal at Leamington Wharf and Fountain North as part of the Fountainbridge redevelopment.

There is still a significant amount of derelict land at Fountainbridge. The remainder of the Fountainbridge site is currently under consideration as part of a planning application.



THE CANAL WATERWAY

Traditionally canals were navigated by canal boats or 'narrow boats' designed to carry goods on the narrow canals. Larger wider boats such as 'barges' were also used. Today, many of these boats can still be seen moored at Lochrin Basin or along the canal banks at Harrison Park and Ratho.

There are many types of moorings available on the Union Canal, including long term moorings (otherwise known as home moorings) used for the general berthing of a boat, visitor moorings for those taking a holiday on the canal, commercial moorings for restaurants and offices, and residential moorings for people who wish to live permanently on a boat.



Environment and Biodiversity

The Union Canal is one of Edinburgh's most important wildlife corridors. Contained within a narrow strip of waterway and towing path one can find an astonishing range of different habitats, from slow flowing freshwater with its adjacent reed fringe to grassland, hedgerow and woodland. Since closure the canal has developed a diverse aquatic and emergent fringe flora.



The canal stretches through both rural and urban areas, linking adjacent woodlands, species rich grasslands and other watercourses, and allowing relatively easy movement through often otherwise hostile and more intensively managed surrounding land. For these reasons the canal is identified as a Local Nature Conservation Site (LNCS). All of the Union Canal receives protection from development in relevant local plans.

EDINBURGH LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN (ELBAP) 2010-2015

The Union Canal is included in the Freshwater and Wetland section of the Edinburgh Local Biodiversity Action Plan (ELBAP) 2010-2015. British Waterways is a partner in this plan. The canal is identified for its important function in the city, providing semi-natural habitat and commuting corridors for wildlife, as well as recreation and amenity benefits. The plan stressed that it is important that habitat and water quality is maintained and enhanced.

The overall aims of the ELBAP Freshwater and Wetland plan are

1. To maintain and enhance the biological diversity of Edinburgh's rivers, canals, lochs, ponds and other freshwater habitat.
2. To help deliver the requirements of the Water Framework Directive by helping to achieve good ecological status of Edinburgh's wetland habitats.

The ELBAP identifies that the Edinburgh Canal Strategy should include objectives for biodiversity enhancement.

HABITATS AND SPECIES

The Union canal environment supports a wide range of associated fauna including ten different fish species, dragonflies, damselflies and other invertebrates, wetland birds, bats, badgers, seed eating birds, bees, otters and water voles.

In terms of habitats, these include the diverse water's edge and towpath grasslands. The boundary habitats of hedges and stone walls offer valuable habitats for mosses and lichens as well as small mammals such as weasels. The canal corridor is enclosed by these boundary features, which together with the canal's bridges, aqueducts and buildings, provides important habitat for bats.



Movement and Connectivity

Whilst the Union Canal towpath was once used by horses, attached to canal boats to pull them along the water, it is now a popular walking and cycling route. Around seven million people use the canal's towpath annually, ranging from running to walking the dog.

CYCLING AND WALKING

The towpath connects Edinburgh to Kirkintilloch and the Bowling Basin on the west coast of Scotland via the Forth and Clyde canal to Edinburgh. The towpath forms part of the 106km cycle route NCN 754 and 'Forth to Firth' pathway. The Union Canal also forms part of the 138km 'Forth to Clyde' cycle route (Sustrans route NCN 75).

The towpath is also popular for local commuting, either via cycle or foot as it provides a direct traffic-free route into the city centre and links with the Water of Leith and The Roseburn Path.

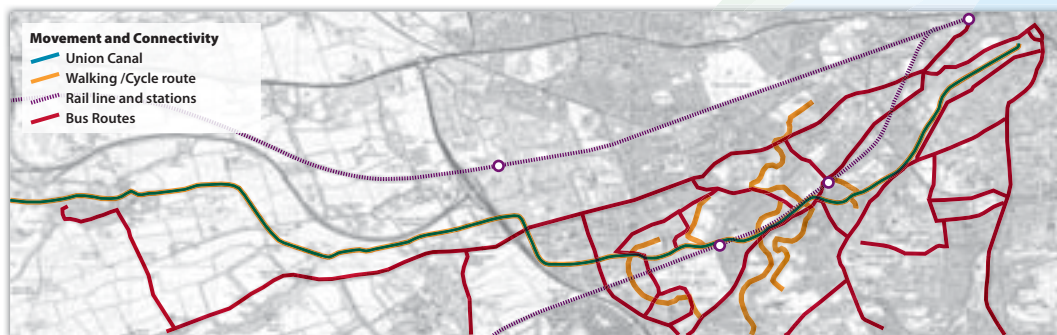
The Union Canal can also be reached by train from Haymarket, Slateford, Kingsknowe, Wester Hailes and Edinburgh Park Stations.

BOATING ON THE UNION CANAL

By the 1930s, leisure boating was a popular pastime, on the canal, with a boating station established at Slateford, and closer to the city centre at Johnston's Boat-houses at Port Hopetoun, then the eastern terminal basin of the canal.

The oldest rowing club on the canal, St Andrew's Boat Club at Meggetland, dates from 1846. Regattas between rival university clubs were popular throughout the 1920s and 1930s, and several Edinburgh schools also established boat clubs on the canal.

Today, the St Andrew's Rowing Club, George Watson's Rowing Club, Heriot's Rowing Club and Edinburgh University Rowing Clubs as well as the Forth Canoe Club are all based on the Union Canal at Meggetland and by Harrison Park.



Johnston's Boat-houses,
Lochrin Basin.
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Community and Tourism

THE EDINBURGH CANAL FESTIVAL



Edinburgh Quay

The annual Edinburgh Canal Festival, held at Edinburgh Quay in June, offers an opportunity for people of all ages to experience at first hand the appeal of the Union Canal. Organised by Re-union and sponsored by The City of Edinburgh Council and British Waterways the festival hosts the Edinburgh Raft Race, free boat and canoe trips, a wee boat flotilla, bands, an canal art exhibition, stalls and performers.

Lochrin basin at Edinburgh Quay has also been an Edinburgh festival venue, including hosting parties for the 2003 and 2007 Edinburgh Film Festival.

COMMUNITY

The Union Canal in Edinburgh is promoted by 3 third sector organisations, Edinburgh Canal Society, based at Harrison Park, Re-Union Canal Boats, who operate from Edinburgh Quay and the Seagull Trust who have a base at Ratho.

EDINBURGH CANAL SOCIETY

Edinburgh Canal Society was set up in 1986, to join the Linlithgow and Forth and Clyde Societies' work in promoting the canals' survival and regeneration. The Society was one of the official Millennium Link partners involved in the reopening of the Union Canal in 2001 and was involved in the first Edinburgh Canal Festival in 2009.

Edinburgh Canal Society are based at the iconic Ashley Terrace Boathouse by Harrison Park. The Society rents both rowing boats for up to six people every Sunday, as well as trips on a classic motor Kelvin Launch between Edinburgh Quay and Harrison Park. The boathouse was moved to its present location by Ashley Terrace Bridge in 1987 and is due to be refurbished.

RE-UNION

Re-Union Canal Boats is a social enterprise operating a widebeam canal boat from Edinburgh Quay. Re-Union work with volunteers from all walks of life and offer crew training through the NCBA and the RYA which allows their volunteers to operate a 35 passenger carrying boat to cruise the Union Canal. The boat offers a unique, fully accessible, venue and is available for community, corporate and private hire.

Re-Union also work with communities along the Union Canal and manage canoe building programmes, supported the development of Bridge 8 canoe club, host a floating youth club, planted an orchard and is working on the Calders Community Garden development.

Re-Union also co-ordinate canal based events and carry out regular community consultations. All of these activities are designed to encourage positive engagement with the community resource that is the Union Canal.

SEAGULL TRUST CRUISES

The Seagull Trust was formed in 1978 to provide free canal cruising for disabled people and to help revitalise the decaying Scottish Lowland Waterways.

In 1997 Seagull Trust Cruises was formed as a Company Limited by Guarantee to simplify some of the operational functions of the Trust. At the end of October 2007 the Seagull Trust was disbanded leaving the Company to manage the operation of the cruising programme. Initially cruises ran from Ratho on the Union Canal but there are now a total of four branches located in Scotland on the Union, Forth & Clyde and Caledonian Canals.

The Seagull trust currently operate two boats from their base by The Bridge Inn at Ratho - the Mackay Seagull and the St John Crusader II which both carry a maximum of 12 people.

Ashley Terrace Boathouse
© Grant Ritchie

The Strategy

The development of a strategy for the Union Canal within Edinburgh has provided the chance to discuss opportunities to make the canal into a recognisable place whilst addressing issues that may impair its potential. The Strategy is separated into sections which aim to promote, develop and protect the Union Canal whilst creating a sense of place.

Opportunities for the Canal have been group into four sections and set out key opportunities and projects under each heading:

- Access to the Union Canal
- Development and Environment
- Community, Recreation and Tourism
- Infrastructure, drainage and climate change

The Strategy promotes the creation of seven Canal Hubs, each with their own special character. These hubs will become a focus for canal related and canal side developments including moorings, public realm and access improvements whilst protecting the natural and built environment and existing communities. The Canal Hubs are:

- Ratho
- Wester Hailes - The Calders
 - Town Centre
 - Hailes Quarry Park
- Meggetland
- Harrison Park
- Lochrin Basin



Opportunity 1 - Access to the Union Canal

The Union Canal is an important resource for the city; the towpath is used as a walking and cycling commuter route, for informal leisure activities, and the waterspace for boating, rowing and canoeing. The canal corridor also helps connect canalside communities with the wider city. Promoting and managing these uses whilst enhancing and protecting the canal environment is one of the aims of the Edinburgh Canal Strategy.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- Using the Canal as a means of sustainable transport, for both leisure and commuting users
- Improving local use, access and visual connections with the canal corridor, the local communities and the wider City
- Managing competing canal and canal uses - canoeists, rowers, leisure boaters, commercial craft, walkers, cyclists and anglers
- Improving the sense of safety and securing the future maintenance of the canal.



PROJECTS

1. CANAL USER MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

“Safety should rely on other users adopting a responsible conduct as well, such as having one’s dog (or sometimes one’s toddler!) under control”

Responsible code of conduct - guidance, information or code of practice to be developed with canal community and towpath users to help prevent conflict

- Development of signage and traffic calming measures such as chicanes, speed bumps and other hard measure where appropriate



2. TOWPATH CAPACITY MANAGEMENT

“Organise cycling/walking routes from residential areas further away from the canal to the canal corridor to improve sustainable transport options. Create / enable more traffic free cycle routes to town for commuters”

The Union Canal towpath is part of a Family Network within The Council’s Active Travel Action Plan. The Family Network proposes greater use of routes such as the Union Canal by less experienced/leisure cyclists. For more experienced cyclists, a Cycle Friendly City Network is also being developed.

- The canal will form a key component of a wider network of routes for recreation as well as active travel, including the creation of additional links and routes
- Improvement to conditions on parallel roads as to make cycle-friendly as possible to encourage commuting cyclists to use the roads.
- Development of a commuter, community and tourism boat taxi / park and ride service from edge of city to city centre.

3. TOWPATH ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

“Creating more access points (especially in the section between Harrison Park and the canal basin); clearer marking of canal accesses and crossing places would significantly improve matters”

- Where the towpath is too narrow consideration should be given to widening to sustain multiple use including hedge and towpath management
- Access points improving existing access points to make them more evenly graded for cyclists and other users and the creation of new accesses
- Improved signage of access points, speed limits and awareness raising Lighting strategy - installing unobtrusive as possible low impact lighting
- Better and more frequent control of foliage growth.
- Disabled access for people with special needs requires more attention. Provision should be made for disabled people at key hub points - e.g. disabled parking, seats and ‘passing places’ at short intervals.
- Improved cycle storage facilities along the route.

Opportunity 2 - Waterway, development and environment

There is a challenge in promoting canal side developments whilst protecting the existing character of the proposed hubs including the village of Ratho and the canal environment at Harrison Park as well as the historic canal structure and environment and biodiversity.

Therefore it is important that the Canal Strategy promotes the proper integration between canal-side development and the canal corridor by establishing appropriate design principles both for new development on the canal banks and on the water.

The canal corridor also provides a very important landscape feature both from the natural heritage and historic environment perspective. The approach to development and management of the canal therefore has to strike a balance between the care of historic built environment features with living skin of wildlife habitats and species.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- Offering opportunities for large and small scale development ranging from new businesses and offices to small scale community housing and job opportunities at a number of development sites along the canal.
- Improving and developing appropriate canal-side facilities for boaters and non boaters including toilets, seating, signage, and lighting.
- Creating new waterspace and moorings where appropriate in order to establish a strong waterway community including residential moorings where residential amenity can be achieved and the existing local amenity and the environment will not be compromised.
- Securing the future maintenance of the canal and canalside environment by securing support for the canal corridor from canalside developments



PROJECTS

1. MOORINGS AND WATERSPACE

The Strategy supports the development of new canal boat moorings and waterspace where appropriate and identified within the Strategy. New residential and commercial moorings on the towpath and off-side as well as new fixed floating structures will require planning permission and will be assessed in terms of their impact on amenity and the environment. Change of use of existing moorings for canal boats within the hubs does not require planning permission.



Edinburgh Canal & Waterways www.edinburghcanal.co.uk

2. DEVELOPMENT OF CANAL DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

- Canal side and waterway developments should:
- Respect the setting of the canal as a scheduled ancient monument
- Accept that the waterway, towing path and environs are an integral part of the public realm of new waterside development in terms of both design and management
- Treat the canal as a space and leisure and commercial resource in its own right not just a setting or backdrop for development.
- Be orientated so that of buildings optimise views of the water, generate natural surveillance of water space, and encourage and improve access to, along and from the water.
- Be designed to include for water-based development, use and enhancement.
- Maintain or provide public access to the canal edge and towpath and enhance access for pedestrians, cyclists, canoeists, rowers and boaters.
- Encourage the creation of canal side communities with a range of complementary uses and space for activity
- Strike a balance between the range of mooring types and between mobile and static commercial boats.
- Include designs which enhance biodiversity value e.g. green roofs, sustainable urban drainage systems, vegetated areas which link to the canal and new buildings including nestboxes for species such as swallows and house martins.

3. CANAL ENVIRONMENT

The Edinburgh Canal Strategy proposes to:

- Support the protection, conservation and enhancement of the Union Canal and the character, feature and quality of its biodiversity including its waterway habitats and protected species, flora and fauna.
- Consider the collection of integrated habitat network information to inform habitat connectivity enhancements to contribute to the wider Central Scotland Green Network
- Develop the riparian corridor of the union canal through the rural west.
- Continue British Waterways annual wildlife survey.
- Develop volunteer involvement in habitat management
- Eradicate invasive plant species including Japanese knotweed and Himalayan Balsam and management of Dutch elm diseased trees

Opportunity 3 - Community, Recreation and Tourism

The Canal connects Edinburgh to the rest of the central belt of Scotland and brings the waterway right into the heart of the city. It is this that can be built on to provide new high-quality community and tourist destinations/facilities, raise awareness of the canal system, its significance, and its value to potential visitors. The canal is also an educational resource in this own right, providing a source of open air activity.

Given the national and city wide significance and the quality of its historic, natural and recreational resources, the Union Canal should be a key part of and contributor to the Edinburgh economy and for the city's residents. However, despite this, the Union Canal does not have the status that it deserves.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- Improving the environment by providing green space and recreational facilities within the urban area by improving and developing appropriate canal-side facilities
- Improving the relationship of surrounding communities and local use, using the canal as a catalyst to community regeneration
- Raise awareness of the scheduled status of the canal and to promote its heritage value.
- Improving the appeal and visibility of the canal as a tourist attraction with accessible information on things to do and see



PROJECTS

1. INTERPRETATION AND PUBLIC ART

- Encourage joint working between The Council, Historic Scotland, British Waterways Scotland and other interested parties could help to achieve better promotion of the heritage value of the canal including the promotion of heritage structures such as the Leamington Lift Bridge
- Provide innovative means of interpreting and showcasing the Canal's built and natural heritage through interpretive displays, sculptures/artwork and events.
- Introduce public art along the canal corridor to create a unique sense of place.
- Install brown tourist signage, particularly at the Hubs.

2. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- Promote the importance of the safe and attractive route provided along the canal for walking, cycling, canoeing, rowing, boating, horse riding, and fishing.
- Improve facilities for water uses along the canal, with specific focus on community facilities to engage the wider public.
- Encourage small scale canal side commercial developments to enhance the canal as a place to go
- Create and improve greenspace, where possible, around the defined Hubs and along the canal length.
- Increase awareness in local schools to promote the canal as a key part of the community.
- Reduce vandalism and graffiti



Opportunity 4 - Infrastructure, drainage, climate change

The Union Canal is not just a community and environmental resource but part of the land drainage system and a source of renewable energy and form. Therefore, any new development or redevelopment of existing property on or close to the canal should consider the sustainable benefits the canal has to offer.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- Exploring the canal as a water resource including improving water quality, managing land drainage and avoiding, reducing and managing flood risk
- Considering how the canal can contribute to supporting climate change, carbon reduction and Environmental Sustainability
- Promoting the innovative use of the canal towpath as a utility and telecommunications route

PROJECTS

1. SURFACE WATER

With a great demand on Scotland's sewerage system, any process that results in surface water being treated in a sustainable way is a real advantage. The canal is well placed in Edinburgh to take surface water from existing and new developments. As such the canal should be considered as a cost effective solution for the receiver of all surface water generated from new developments.

2. RENEWABLE ENERGY, HEATING AND COOLING

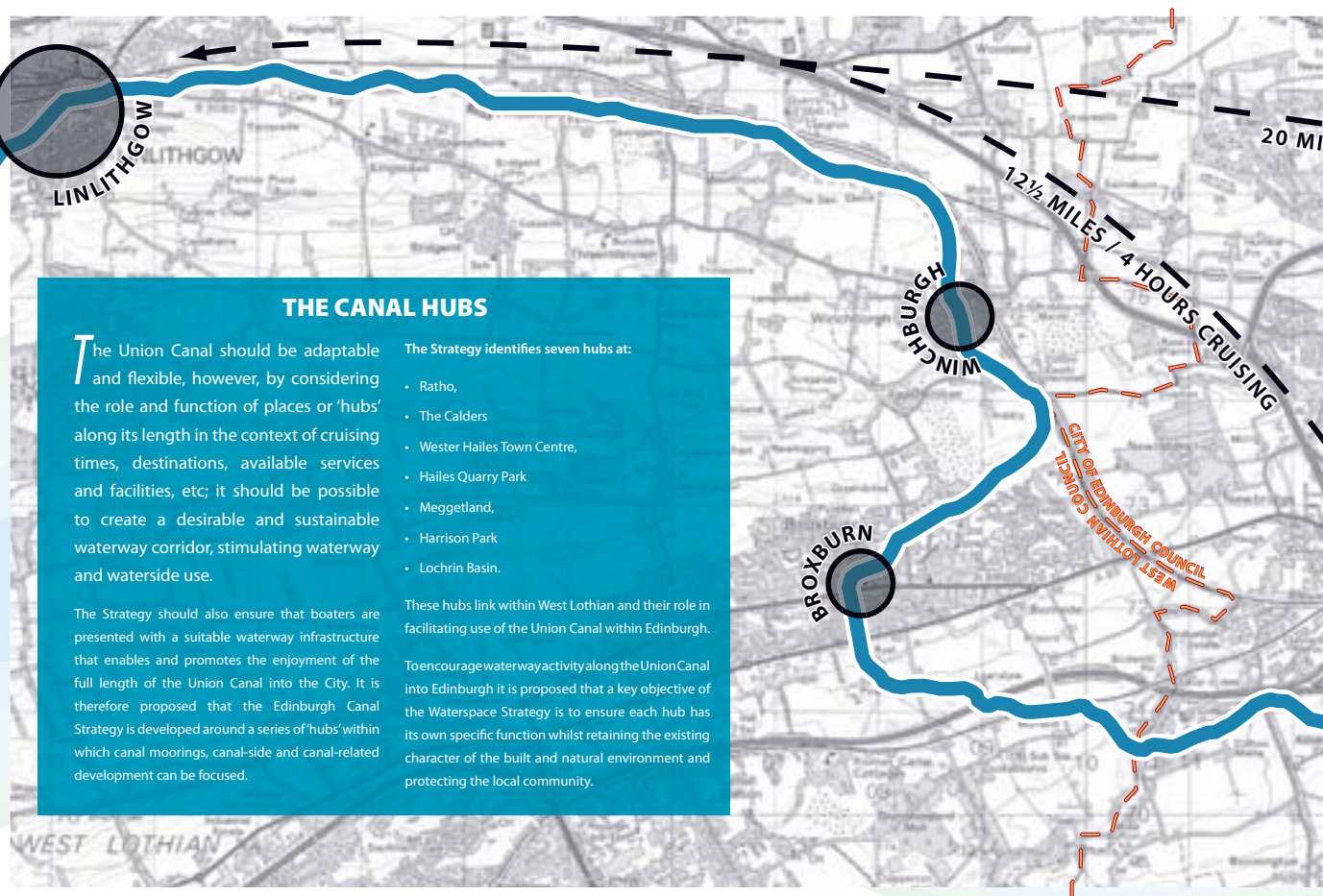
The canal is a renewable energy resource – for example, generating onshore hydro electric power, using canal water for heating and cooling buildings. This heat exchange technology is being used throughout the UK and extensively in Northern Europe. Companies that adopt the canal cooling/heating concept can potentially recoup their initial outlay within four years through electricity savings, and then go on to enjoy cheaper utility bills, as well as substantially reducing their carbon footprint. Any development that occurs within a 250m proximity of the canal should consider the use of this cutting edge technology as a long term sustainable solution.

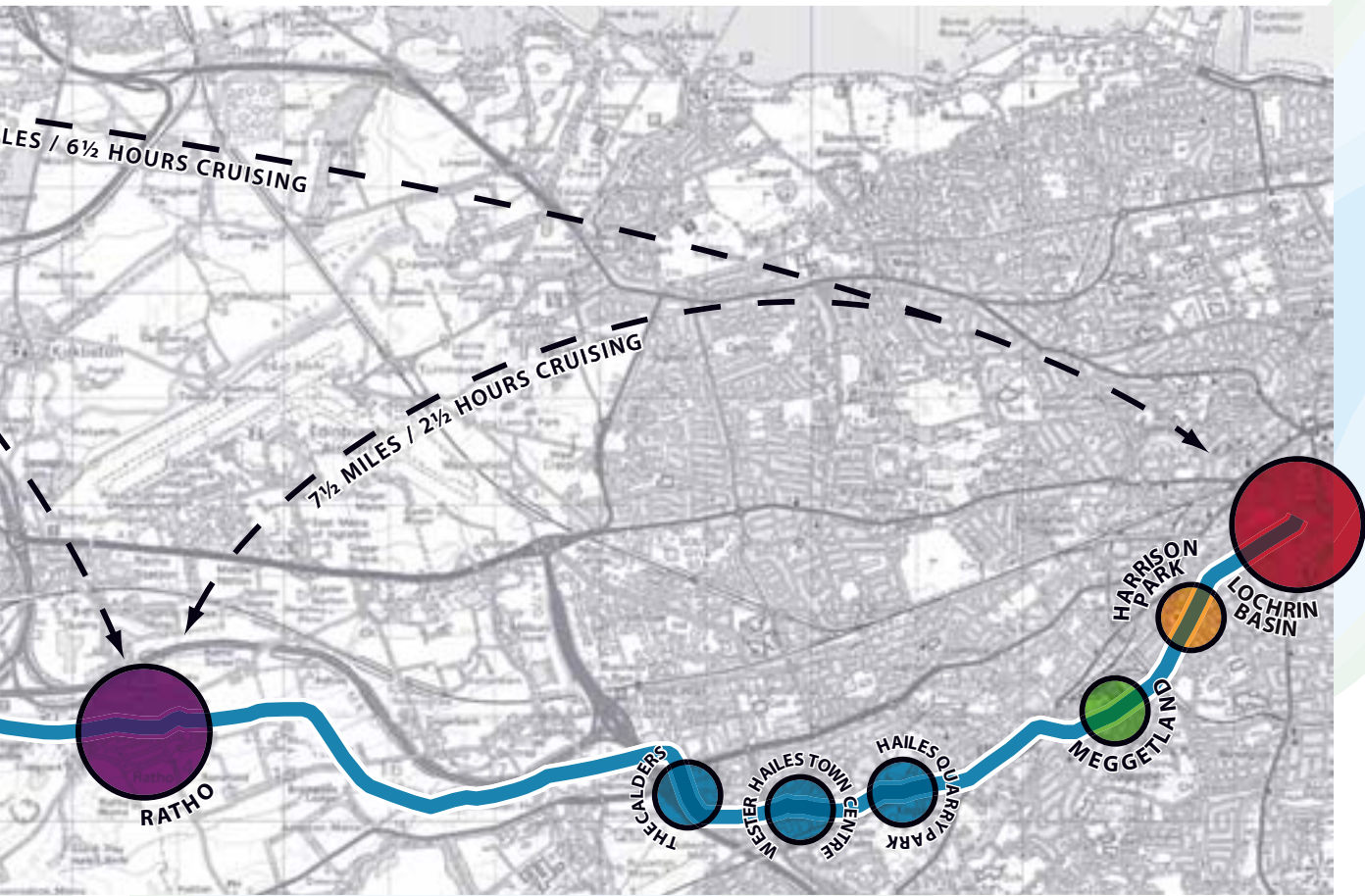
3. GREY WATER

Commercial users as well as social landlords should consider the use of the canal for the provision of grey water. Being used in the building heating and cooling process is considered above, however many companies use considerable amounts of water which does not have to be cleaned to the standard provided by Scottish Water. Rather than using drinking water for industrial processes or even in the toilets etc, the canal can be used for grey water in a sustainable way.



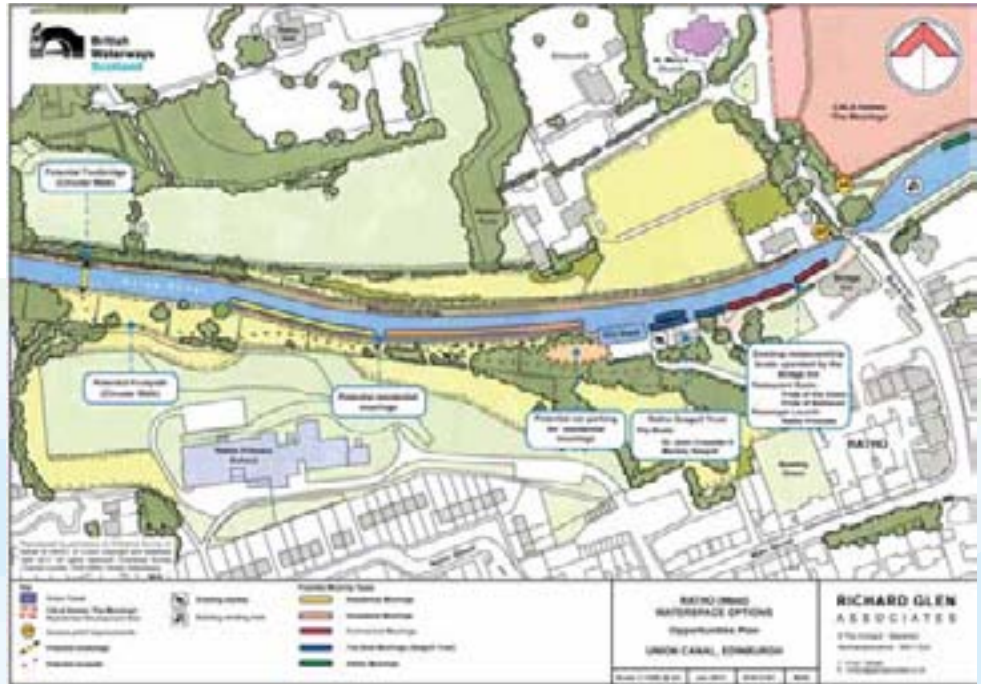
The Canal Hubs





Ratho is reasonably established as an attractive waterway destination. The existing waterside pub will be supplemented by proposed canal side residential moorings generating a strong waterway focus.

However the strategy should protect against the overdevelopment/urbanization of the canal side and promote co-ordination between developers, British Waterways and the community to upgrade and maintain quality of the canal.





In order to sustain the full waterway corridor the canal side at Ratho should not be further developed as a major overnight visitor mooring destination to avoid this distracting from Lochrin basin as the perceived destination and end to terminus to navigation in Edinburgh. Ratho should therefore be a place to pause and enjoy en route to the City.

PROJECTS

There are a number of opportunities for improving the canal at Ratho including:

- Improve the access between the canal and the village, particularly along the western edge of the village and promote the creation of a pedestrian / cycle loops along the canal
- Improving the condition of existing moorings and commercial offer on the canal
- A marina at Frelands Road with a mix of residential and commercial boats within new marina
- Improved links from the canal to the Adventure Centre, helping to promote the facility as accessible by bike and foot.
- Improving education, awareness, village information, and links with existing community uses, including the need for a public square along the canal and,
- Siting canal mooring facilities at Wilkies Basin alongside the Motorway

Wester Hailes

Wester Hailes marks the entrance of the canal to the urban area of Edinburgh. However, it is recognised that substantial pro-active work is required over time if the original regeneration theme of the canal is to hold good for Wester Hailes. However, both The City of Edinburgh Council and British Waterways Scotland are a major landowner and shareholder within Wester Hailes and this will enable canal focused regeneration to be addressed in a holistic manner.

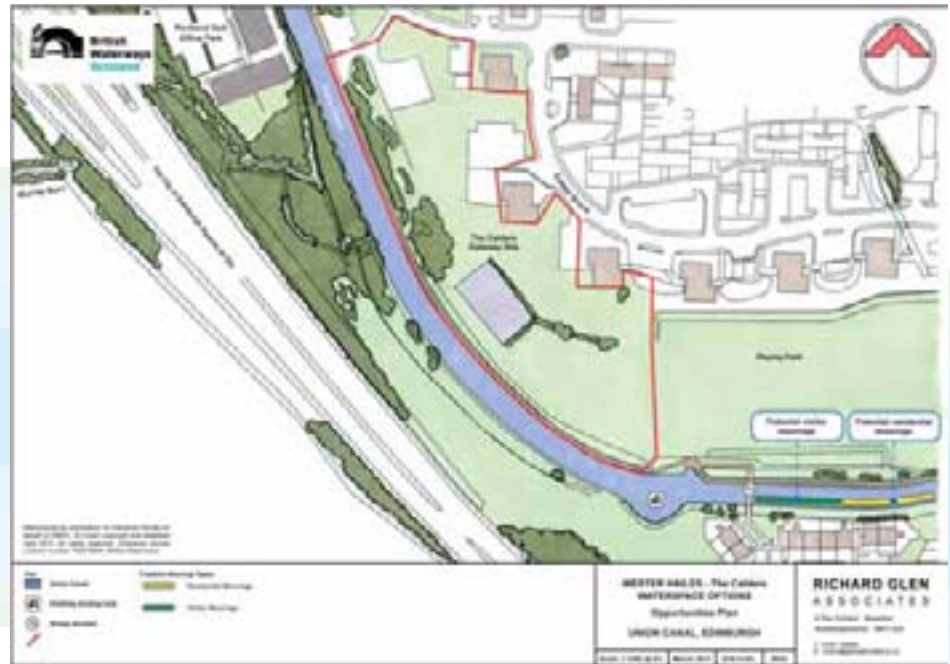
The key aim of the Strategy at Wester Hailes is to stimulate a range of canal-side, recreational, business, and community uses in 3 distinct hubs whilst marking the arrival of canal users into Edinburgh.

The Calders

The Calder's Hub provides an opportunity to create a gateway site to the city centred on the canal that can act as a driver for wider engagement in Wester Hailes with the canal.

PROJECTS

- Explore the potential for canal side development as part of the Edinburgh Local Development Plan
- increase water activity through the introduction of residential visitor moorings
- Improve linkages between existing communities and the canal



Hailes Quarry Park

There is also an opportunity for canal side community development such as community water sports clubs, sea scouts etc also exists in Wester Hailes. With Hailes Quarry Park offering a unique opportunity. Wester Hailes also has good links to the city centre from Kingsknowe Railway Station and public transport links at Hailesland Road and Murrayburn Road.

PROJECTS

- Possible redevelopment of the site to the rear of Hailesland Park
- Improvement of Hailes Quarry Park and its link with the canal and tow path.
- Creation/upgrade to the community centre with links to the waterspace to provide canal related activities.



Wester Hailes

Town Centre

Within the town centre, the proximity to the shopping centre and supermarket make Wester Hailes a potentially useful stopping point for boaters to stock up on provisions. This servicing function could be supplemented by additional facilities such as waterpoints, refuse stores and pump outs; and suitable sites for boat repairs/boat building.

PROJECTS

- Improving links to the town centre
- Development of a residential marina
- Promoting community pride in the canal and improving confidence in the waterway ,
- Increasing safety on and along the canal through natural surveillance and environmental improvements





Meggetland

Meggetland is currently home to a number of boathouses, however, they are of poor quality and lack the required facilities. The ECS proposes that a watersports centre for rowing and canoeing be developed beside the canal, with links to the community sports hub at Meggetland. This would

PROJECTS

- The creation of a watersports centre beside the canal in conjunction with the creation of a community sports hub at Meggetland, this would provide shared facilities for the rowing clubs based on the canal and include better quality storage and changing facilities for rowing and canoeing
- Improved access to the canal, including maintenance of hedging, Installation of street furniture and introduction of new steps.
- The possible creation of a slalom for canoes.





Harrison Park

Harrison Park is a relaxed green waterside space for people. To optimise the potential it is important to establish a waterway neighbourhood beside the park. This should include visitor and residential moorings, activities linking the park and support for a café and other commercial moorings.

However, it is important to protect what currently makes Harrison Park the place it is, and any development along the canal must ensure that it respects character of the park and respect existing neighbourhood amenity. Any change to the canal side at Harrison Park should be limited to access improvements or minor alterations to cater for canal uses.

It is recognised that the existing facilities block for visiting canal boats at Harrison Park is of poor quality and needs upgrading. The Strategy has identified an alternative location for this block, including the creation of a service mooring. Service blocks are provided by British Waterways Scotland as part of the operational management of the canal.





PROJECTS

- Improving the integration of canal with the park
- Creation of new residential and visitor moorings
- Introduction of café's/commercial enterprises on canal
- Improvement in the quality of access to the tow path from bridges at Ogilvie Terrace and Harrison Road
- Improvement to the existing slip way and parking provision for this
- An upgraded service block for canal boat users.

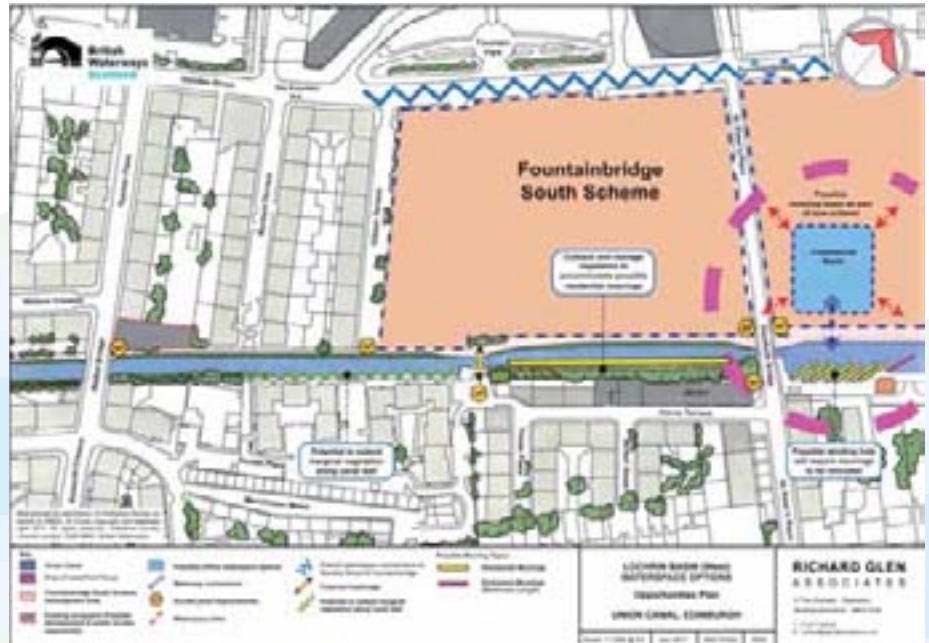
Lochrin Basin

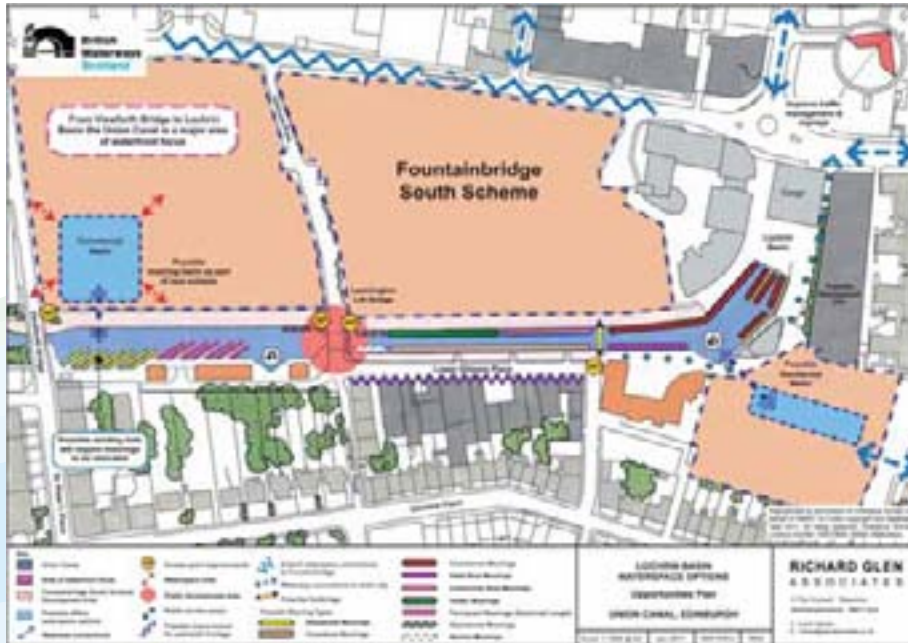
The Edinburgh Canal Quarter identifies the Edinburgh end of the Union canal and stretches from Harrison Park in the west to Edinburgh Quay at Lochrin Basin. This quarter includes the range of existing and new uses and developments coming forward at Fountainbridge, linked by new water space, and high quality public realm, in a linear route to the City Centre.

Lochrin Basin needs to generate adequate waterway traffic to animate the waterspace. High quality visitor moorings should be complimented by commercial and residential moorings to create a vibrant sustainable waterway neighbourhood throughout the year. Additionally, for the hub to be successful, the existing commercial premises at Edinburgh Quay need to be brought into use, however, over time with the development of the Fountainbridge Brewery Site providing the critical mass that is required.



Leaning Tower of Bridge © David Hume/PhotoLibrary.co.uk





PROJECTS

- The creation of a waterway destination at the terminus of the Union Canal;
- The creation of a visual/ physical link between Lochrin Place and the canal;
- Improving the balance of uses both on and off water, to increase and sustain appropriate activity;
- The creation of residential moorings;
- New links between urban area and tow path particularly at Dorset Place, New Freer Street and Walker Bridge
- Treatment of wall to rear of tenements on Watson Crescent/ or reuse of wall through art installations.
- Encourage a boat hire base,
- Improve links to existing cycle networks,
- Formalizing of canal access to Ogilvie Terrace



Delivery Plan

OVERARCHING PROJECTS	
SHORT TERM	Form a stakeholder group in each node with owners, occupiers, and community groups to investigate initiatives to improve the node
	Agree and implement signage, public art and lighting strategy
	Develop a canal user management strategy
	Develop towpath capacity management projects
	Investigate Development Proposals
MEDIUM TERM	Implement funding strategy and identify initial sources
	Implement towpath access improvements
	Implement waterspace and moorings strategy
	Agree canal development and canal environment Principles
LONG TERM	Explore the canal as a water resource including improving water quality, managing land drainage and avoiding, reducing and managing flood risk

RATHO	
SHORT TERM	Implement Signage, Information Panels and branding initiative
	Investigate and implement ideas with stakeholders to improve the use of the canal ie: community uses, floating homes, further residential moorings, floating businesses etc
	BWS to formulate a strategic plan for the canal to improve the management of the existing mooring offer
	Implement the mix used water space strategy for the node
	Upgrade canal towpath
MEDIUM/ LONG TERM	Work in partnership with stakeholders to produce vision document for the node
	Deliver improved waterspace in line with stakeholder requirements
	Implement pedestrian and cycle route
	Investigate strategic purchases together such areas to improve car parking
	Ensure provision of new marina from Cala development
	Work to improve the tourism offer ie: good mix of commercial, information, amenity and facilities and security and look to relocate any uses/users from the hub that do not fit with the strategy

WESTER HAILES, THE CALDERS AND HAILES QUARRY PARK	
SHORT TERM	Implement Signage, Information Panels and branding initiative
	Investigate and implement ideas with stakeholders to improve the use of the canal ie: community uses, residential moorings and floating homes, floating businesses, short term uses ie: nearby markets, etc etc
	BWS to formulate a strategic plan for the canal to start to have a mooring offer – especially residential to help provide vibrancy and animation and security
	Implement the mix used water space strategy for the node
	Identify small scale regeneration developments we can undertake to bring life into the canal
	Ensure the canal continues to look its best – proactive maintenance plan and look to improve the canal edge
MEDIUM/ LONG TERM	Agree strategy for The Calder's Gateway site
	Work in partnership with stakeholders to produce vision document for the node
	Deliver improved waterspace in line with stakeholder requirements
	Form collaboration with stakeholders and deliver vision document and masterplan for whole area
	Work to improve the tourism offer ie: good mix of commercial, information, amenity and facilities and security and look to relocate any uses/users from the hub that do not fit with the strategy

MEGETLAND	
SHORT TERM	Form a stakeholder group with sports clubs and Edinburgh leisure to investigate sports hub initiative
	Agree potential routes for funding of the sports hub
	Signage, Information Panels and branding initiative
	Investigate and implement access requirements with stakeholders particularly the sports clubs to improve accessibility onto the canal and into the canal
	BWS to formulate a strategic management plan for the canal to improve the facilities for the sports club ie: weed cutting, timetable for better use of the canal at peak times etc
MEDIUM/ LONG TERM	Improve the look of the buildings at the hub – rowing pavilions, interaction with landscaping etc
	Work in partnership with local stakeholders to produce vision document for the node
	Agree funding for sports hub and implement
	Deliver improvements as agreed with sports clubs
	Work to improve the tourism offer ie: good mix of commercial, information, amenity and facilities and security and look to relocate any uses/users from the hub that do not fit with the strategy
HARRISON PARK	
SHORT TERM	Signage, Information Panels and branding initiative
	Investigate and implement access requirements with stakeholders to improve accessibility onto the canal especially from the park onto the towpath
	BWS to formulate a strategic management plan for the canal to improve mooring offer, facilities and number of boats on the canal including commercial uses especially café, arts and crafts, markets etc
	Agree with residents the accessing and mooring strategy for the offside
	Improve the look of the buildings at the hub – facilities, canoe hire pavilion etc
MEDIUM/ LONG TERM	Work in partnership with stakeholders to produce vision document for the node
	Deliver improved moorings in line with stakeholder requirements
	Work to improve the tourism offer ie: good mix of commercial, information, amenity and facilities and security and look to relocate any uses/users from the hub that do not fit with the strategy
LOCHRIN BASIN	
SHORT TERM	Signage, Information Panels and branding initiative for the basin
	Investigate and implement access requirements with stakeholders to improve accessibility onto the canal from main thoroughfares including potential new bridges across the canal
	Implement and promote the mix used water space strategy for the basin
	Agree with residents the improvement of the wall fronting the canal at Watson Crescent
	Work in partnership with Fountainbridge development sites to ensure all canal redevelopment aspirations are met
MEDIUM/ LONG TERM	Agree and implement a development strategy for canal side development sites

The Edinburgh Union Canal Strategy

DECEMBER 2011

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